

**Superstitions of the Heathen:  
Foreign Missions and the Fashioning of  
American Exceptionalism, 1800–1861**

David Golding

Claremont Graduate University  
2016

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## **Approval of the Review Committee**

This dissertation has been duly read, reviewed, and critiqued by the Committee listed below, which hereby approves the manuscript of David Golding as fulfilling the scope and quality requirements for meriting the degree of Ph.D. in Religion.

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## **Abstract**

### **Superstitions of the Heathen: Foreign Missions and the Fashioning of American Exceptionalism, 1800–1861**

by  
David Golding

Claremont Graduate University: 2016

In 1800, the first missionary magazines to be published in the United States entered circulation. Readers would soon rely on this growing literature for information about the world beyond. As missionary writers abroad interacted within foreign contexts, they would fashion and delimit categories of difference separating the foreign from the domestic. Their conceptions not only exoticized their foreign hosts, but also implied and reinforced an identity for themselves. Magazine editors and writers predicated their identity on there being heathen in the world and stood ready to track “superstition” in the interest of alerting supporters to the presence of the unevangelized. The predominant narratives between the first magazine issues and the outbreak of civil war in 1861 cast several changing complexions of the foreign, moving from expectations of the “heathen” as ethnically distinct and religiously inferior to threatening rivals capable of colluding with state powers. Whether adjusting for tepid results among Native Americans and Jews, or factoring degrees of conversion among Islanders and West Africans, or appropriating native assistants in Burman church planting, or crafting diplomatic strategies among the Chinese, writers and editors perpetuated a willingness to believe in heathen inferiority no matter the situation. In all, proselytes remained attached to the class of the unconverted unless

they exhibited traits of American domesticity. Only when factional controversies disrupted the organizations and media of the foreign missions enterprise did the persistence of a strong missionary identity give way. A plurality of missionary types joined the plurality of “heathen” types during the Civil War era, further complicating the missions movement for the next century and the exceptionalisms once taken for granted.

For Camille, Kenny, and Samantha—who know the words that cannot be written



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I thank Patrick Mason for his kind and precise direction. As a mentor and advisor, he provided inspiration and assistance well beyond his duties. It seems befitting this project, a study in global networks of missionary reporting, that it would meet its final review from committee members in three continents. Karen Torjesen, Esther Chung-Kim, and Ian Tyrrell accommodated unusual arrangements to evaluate my work, and more significantly, instructed me by example in both professionalism and generosity. I would guess their discerning, expert, and unassuming minds would give exception, but I believe I could not have found a finer combination of committee reviewers.

Spencer Fluhman opened his schedule to me at crucial moments of the researching and writing process. I am grateful for his first-rate mentoring and for alerting me to thinking about liminal actors early in my search for a dissertation topic. Richard Bushman provided careful

reviews of early papers that would evolve into the dissertation prospectus. His persistent challenge to consider my writing style improved my awareness considerably. Armand Mauss cheered me on, sending impromptu emails building my confidence. I will remember always the adage he was eager to pass on: “The road to graduate school hell is paved with the bones of unfinished dissertations.” He preached the truth with a genuine concern for students. Rachel Cope and J. B. Haws gave timely and helpful advice on researching and planning that spared me many headaches. Michael Altman coached me on India sources, methods, and theory. David Grua suggested applicable studies on Native American education.

Peers who had dissertations of their own to finish took time to entertain my work. Christopher Jones clued me in on early American settings where concepts of mission and the foreign were debated. Benjamin Park shared bibliographies and insights into early American nationalism. Jordan Watkins read drafts and made suggestions on the level of a faculty advisor. I would not have completed milestones when I did without his valuable advice.

I received assistance from Nastassia Barnes, Michael Annis, Samantha Rife, and Samantha Loomis in surveying magazine issues for themes. Matt Merrell lent resources in a moment of urgency. Their support helped me over an early hurdle.

Family members gave love and encouragement in abundance. I am left without words for my good, good mother, Gwen Golding. She will know what I cannot articulate. Ours is a sacred experience told only to outsiders with the feeble images of a room in her home, a small fan blowing, a quiet tap on the door, and gifts of honey-roasted macadamias—but so, so much more than macadamias. My father, Chuck Golding, absorbed my stress almost magically, though I know in the practical realm of daily living he did this by adding tasks and concerns to his already full days and at personal sacrifice. Truly, he held me and my family safe. Auburn

and Matt Williams instilled in me confidence in my convictions, championed my work, and celebrated at the finish line with a degree of experience and solidarity known only to a family of a medical doctor on a grueling fellowship. I did not share their pain and achievement, but they led me to feel I had. Greg and Amy Golding sponsored many bursts of productivity and boosted morale with planning, bulk orders of energy shots, and rallying the family to my aid, to say nothing of the strategically placed diversions keeping me sound. Jordan and Krystal Golding were with me when the final draft was completed and were steadfast in their commitment to my children's happiness. Tyler Hackett also made ready visits, rejuvenating my spirits with laughs, rock climbing, movies, and free conversations about the loftiest and most adventurous of topics. Because of them, I can say without a hint of irony the dissertation was fun.





## Abbreviations

American Board	American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions
ACS	American Colonization Society
AMA	American Missionary Association
CMS	Church Missionary Society
<i>Connecticut Evangelical Magazine</i>	<i>The Connecticut Evangelical Magazine / Connecticut Evangelical Magazine; and Religious Intelligencer</i>
Episcopal Society	The Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America
London Jews' Society	London Society for the Promotion of Christianity Amongst the Jews
LMS	London Missionary Society
<i>Missionary Paper</i>	<i>Missionary Paper of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America</i>
<i>Missionary Record</i>	<i>Missionary Record of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society, of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America</i>

*New-York Missionary Magazine*

*The New-York Missionary Magazine, and Repository  
of Religious Intelligence*

SPG

The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in  
Foreign Parts

SPGNA

The Society for Propagating the Gospel Among the  
Indians and Others in North America

*United Brethren's Missionary Intelligencer*

*The United Brethren's Missionary Intelligencer, and  
Religious Miscellany*

United Brethren Missionary Society

Home, Frontier, and Foreign Missionary Society of  
the United Brethren in Christ

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## Introduction

Massachusetts clergyman Enoch Pond, renowned for his missionary homilies, compiled and published his most popular sermons in 1824 as *Short Missionary Discourses*. Before delving into his favorite topics like Paul's missionary labors, the power of prayer, or the Millennium, Pond squared off against critics of foreign missions. Their most stinging objection had particularly irked him, that missions were unnecessary because there were "heathens enough at home." Preposterous, he thought. For Pond, "heathens" as such could only exist in the foreign world; to suggest such a thing as a "domestic heathen" or an "American heathen" amounted to a contradiction in terms. "Where are the heathen in our towns and villages," he retorted, "who have never so much as heard of a Bible?" He agreed one could find many "ignorant, careless, stupid, and hardened" people within the borders of their young nation, but Pond did not consider even those bad-mannered Christians categorically heathenish. To qualify as a "heathen," one had to be totally ignorant of the Christian gospel, and it fell to the work of mission—not the work of pastoral ministry—to seek out and teach that ignorant class.<sup>1</sup>

Pond hardly realized how in defending the foreign mission enterprise in this way he had mapped the world in a single stroke. By his formulation there existed two domains: the world of those with access to the Christian gospel and the world of those without it. No one could expect the foreign world to initiate contact or bridge the divide—after all, they could not know what they did not know. So it behooved American Protestants to traverse those two worlds by sending

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1. Enoch Pond, *Short Missionary Discourses, or Monthly Concert Lectures* (Worcester: Dorr and Howland, 1824), 11–12. In today's scholarly climate, it probably goes without saying that I do not intend to assign the word "heathen" to any person or group of people. Its widespread use among antebellum Americans (and missionaries in particular) compel me to mention it. My use of the term, either in or out of quotation marks, will remain descriptive of the vocabulary of my research subjects and should not be considered part of my own worldview.

missionaries and educating the “ignorant” nations.<sup>2</sup>

This much was obvious, and Pond dedicated little energy to rallying his audiences around recognizing the need for foreign missions or that the foreign world posed an immediate frontier for Protestant evangelism. What missionaries and clergymen like Pond needed from their supporters was money and volunteers, so Pond and others tried to startle audiences into action by framing missions around the exotic and distant traits of the foreign. This strategy bore fruit—in the first two decades since the founding of Protestant missionary societies in the United States, missionary activity nearly quadrupled.<sup>3</sup> Such success only intensified American Protestants’ preoccupation with the foreign throughout the nineteenth century. Only in 1910 and the first World Missionary Conference did Protestant missionaries show signs of considering foreign missions more reflexively, as an abstract concern with ramifications for the evangelizers themselves and for global Christianity at large.<sup>4</sup>

The very essence of missionary work—what made it missional in nature and not merely

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2. The notion of “heathen ignorance” appeared very early in North American missions and (as is evident in the following chapters) remained a common trope well into the nineteenth century. Joseph Sewall, in delivering the first recorded missionary sermon in the British colonies in America, offered “turning” those under the pall of “heathen ignorance [to] marvellous light” as the foremost reason for evangelizing among Native Americans. See Joseph Sewall, *Christ Victorious over the Powers of Darkness, by the Light of His Preached Gospel: A Sermon Preached in Boston, December 12, 1733* (Boston: S. Kneeland and T. Green, 1733), 4; reprinted in R. Pierce Beaver, ed., *Pioneers in Mission: The Early Missionary Ordination Sermons, Charges, and Instructions* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1966), 46.

3. Around 124 agents were employed as missionaries by Protestant congregations or organizations before 1798; between 1798 and 1818 that number rose to about 463, according to the first published gazetteer of Protestant missions. When subtracting European agencies, the proportions were slightly greater for North American missions. See Walter Chapin, *The Missionary Gazetteer, Comprising a View of the Inhabitants, and a Geographical Description of the Countries and Places, Where Protestant Missionaries Have Labored* (Woodstock, Vermont: David Watson, 1825), 389–420.

4. Brian Stanley, *The World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh 1910* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2009). The reports of the World Missionary Conference held in Edinburgh in 1910 were published in nine volumes; see World Missionary Conference, *World Missionary Conference, 1910: To Consider Missionary Problems in Relation to the Non-Christian World*, 9 vols. (Edinburgh and London: Oliphant, Anderson, and Ferrier; New York, Chicago, and Toronto: Fleming H. Revell, 1910); digitized as “World Missionary Conference, 1910,” Digital General Collection, University of Michigan Library, Ann Arbor, Michigan, <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/t/text/text-id?c=genpub;idno=1936337> (archived at <https://perma.cc/4K6P-JYYU>).

vocational—demanded that missionaries actively pursue the foreign (with the intent to proselytize), which automatically rendered themselves liminal actors who occupied dual contexts. As they interacted within these contexts, missionaries would fashion and delimit categories of difference that separated the foreign from the domestic. Eventually, they would take advantage of print media to serve foreign correspondence to a larger national audience. This new foreign missionary literature would have implications for the whole nation. Just as the first missionary societies began publishing reports from abroad, the United States defeated the British a second and final time, inaugurating a widespread celebration of national identity, the “Era of Good Feelings,” and with it, a significant reappraisal of what it meant to be American. Few opinion leaders and informants held as much sway on the emerging nationalist discourse as the missionaries.<sup>5</sup>

The missionary magazine—Protestant missionaries’ principal conduit for delivering the

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5. Historians have questioned whether a coherent nationality representative of the United States emerged at all in the early republic. In any event, it is clear citizens of the United States participated in a discourse that included one or more nationalist identities, and it is to this development I am referring when I mention a post-revolutionary appraisal of American identity. Without entering the debate over early American nationalism(s), I mention here several important studies in the historiography: Liah Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992); Elie Kedourie, *Nationalism*, 4th ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993); John Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985); Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (London: Verso, 1991); Michael P. Kramer, *Imagining Language in America: From the Revolution to the Civil War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991); Jay Fliegleman, *Declaring Independence: Jefferson, National Language, and the Culture of Performance* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993); David Waldstreicher, *In the Midst of Perpetual Fêtes: The Making of American Nationalism, 1776–1820* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997); Sandra M. Gustafson, *Eloquence is Power: Oratory and Performance in Early America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); Martin Brückner, *The Geographic Revolution in Early America: Maps, Literacy, and National Identity* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006); Douglas Bradburn, *The Citizenship Revolution: Politics and the Creation of the American Union, 1774–1804* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2009); Carolyn Eastman, *A Nation of Speechifiers: Making an America Public after the Revolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009); Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, *This Violent Empire: The Birth of an American National Identity* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010); Seth Cotlar, *Tom Paine’s America: The Rise and Fall of Transatlantic Radicalism in the Early Republic* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2011); Kariann Akemi Yokota, *Unbecoming British: How Revolutionary America Became a Postcolonial Nation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); Benjamin E. Park, “Local Nationalism in Post-Revolutionary America” (Ph.D. thesis, University of Cambridge, 2014).



dividing line between foreign and domestic—came to eclipse even the secular press within thirty years of the first distinctly missionary periodical appearing in North America in 1800.<sup>6</sup> By 1829, missionary serials reached nearly 400,000 subscribers in a population less than thirteen million. That same year the Methodist weekly *Christian Advocate and Journal and Zion's Herald* exceeded the circulation of prominent European newspapers the *Times* in London and the *Berlin Gazette*, falling behind only the world's leading periodical, the *American National Preacher*. For Protestant missionaries, this command of print media meant they could popularize their idea of the foreign, which they did with enough frequency and coverage that before the Civil War their periodicals outranked other popular travel literature and foreign correspondence.<sup>7</sup>

American missionaries' conceptions of the foreign invite consideration of something that went largely undetected by missionary interlocutors and popular audiences. At the same moment they described the foreign, their correspondence, like a photographic negative, implied and reinforced an identity for themselves. To exoticize foreigners with names like "heathen," "cannibal," or "primitive," was to simultaneously and conversely identify the home audience as cultured, virtuous, and advanced, even if such self-identifications went unstated. This dissertation traces the line missionaries projected onto the world splitting the foreign from the domestic. It mines the corpus of missionary magazines published between the first issue in 1800 and the outbreak of civil war in 1861, and looks in both directions across the divide to reveal the identities the missionaries assumed and perpetuated of themselves—the domestic self as implied by the

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6. This magazine was the *New-York Missionary Magazine and Repository of Religious Intelligence*, which I take up in greater detail in Chapter 1. Roman Catholics in North America did not publish a periodical with an explicit missionary focus before the Civil War. Mormons embraced print media before even organizing into a church and issued several periodicals during this time period, however, their only paper expressly dedicated to missions, the short-lived *Elders' Journal of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints* (1837–1838), never reported from fields outside the United States.

7. Gaylord P. Albaugh, *History and Annotated Bibliography of American Religious Periodicals and Newspapers, Established from 1730 to 1830*, 2 vols. (Worcester: American Antiquarian Society, 1994), 1:xi–xiii.

foreign other.

While mission networks expanded and the missionary press grew, foreignness would take on various complexions in the predominant narratives published in the magazines. The following dissertation shows how a background perception of the home audience yet persisted, and argues this perception ultimately judged degrees of foreign difference not against the aggregate density of professing Christians nor against the level of cultural and political sophistication within a population, but against traits of American domesticity. It was the domain of the evangelical and proto-Victorian household and the expectations surrounding how the nuclear family arranged and comported itself that finally determined, in the accounts of the foreign-bound missionaries, whether proselytes remained in or escaped the class of the unconverted. This projection of domesticity conversely reinforced the moral superiority of the supporters back in the homeland.

This study contributes to at least three subjects religious studies scholars, historians, and non-specialists alike have renewed in recent years: American missionary history, American imperialism, and American exceptionalism. All three converge on the issue of how Americans have idealized themselves and understood their relation to the foreign; all three variously brush against each other in scholarly literature, sometimes even directly informing one another, but a thorough synthesis between them remains to be undertaken. Currents of American missions, imperialism, and exceptionalism flow together in the missionary magazines. When examined from a panoramic vantage point as opposed to the case study level, from the view of the macrocosm as opposed to the microcosm, the full span of issues displays a construction of the foreign in mission, a series of processes in which missionaries extended features of the American metropole into foreign environments, and a running negotiation of American uniqueness and superiority.<sup>8</sup>

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8. Not long after his first presidential inauguration, Barack Obama delivered several speeches abroad emphasizing diplomatic outreach and international cooperation. While in France, he was asked whether he subscribed to “the

## American Missionary History

Observing how Christianity had achieved global reach, missionary historian Stephen Neill pronounced in 1964 the civilizing mission of the European and American churches closed. “The age of missions is at an end,” he declared; “the age of mission has begun.”<sup>9</sup> His view of missions as a revolutionary force in the spread of modernity, a view shared by Neill’s colleagues, struck many academic historians as overtly triumphalistic. Those who arrived at mission studies via schools of postmodern, postcolonial, and Marxist theories were particularly critical of celebrations of Christianity’s world appeal.<sup>10</sup> When put to mission history, anti-colonialist perspectives in effect

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school of American exceptionalism” of his predecessors that saw the United States as “uniquely qualified to lead the world,” to which he responded he believed in American exceptionalism much as he suspected “the Brits believe in British exceptionalism and the Greeks believe in Greek exceptionalism.” This comment in the context of Obama’s foreign policy agenda ignited controversy among his political opponents, which has gone rather unabated in the interim; see White House Office of the Press Secretary, “News Conference by President Obama” (April 4, 2009), [http://whitehouse.gov/the\\_press\\_office/News-Conference-By-President-Obama-4-04-2009](http://whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/News-Conference-By-President-Obama-4-04-2009) (archived at [https://web.archive.org/web/20090406152549/http://www.whitehouse.gov/the\\_press\\_office/News-Conference-By-President-Obama-4-04-2009](https://web.archive.org/web/20090406152549/http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/News-Conference-By-President-Obama-4-04-2009)); Dick Cheney and Liz Cheney, *Exceptional: Why the World Needs a Powerful America* (New York: Threshold Editions, 2015). Such contention over American exceptionalism spilled over into academia, particularly in the case of curriculum changes made by the Texas State Board of Education in 2010. Board members mostly spurned history professors’ recommendations and instead opted for new standards that would play up America’s unique capacity to improve the world; see Katherine Mangan, “Ignoring Experts’ Pleas, Texas Board Approved Controversial Curriculum Standards,” *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (May 23, 2010); Ralph K. M. Haurwitz, “Pulitzer-Winning Historian to Leave UT,” *Statesman* (April 5, 2013).

9. Stephen Neill, *A History of Christian Missions* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1964), 572. Taking stock of the two decades following the first edition, the revised edition of Neill’s *History of Christian Missions* treated the mission revolution as a fact of history, rendering this statement in the past tense: “The age of missions ended. The age of mission began.” This change may have owed itself to the editorial work of Owen Chadwick, who prepared the revised edition after Neill’s death. Chadwick asserted any revisions were made “in accordance with the mind of Dr Neill”; see Stephen Neill, *A History of Christian Missions*, 2nd ed., revised by Owen Chadwick (New York: Penguin Books, 1986), 10, 477.

10. Foremost among this literature is Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Random House, 1978) and Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution*, 2 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991, 1997); others include Vine Deloria Jr., “Missionaries and the Religious Vacuum,” in *Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1969); Vine Deloria Jr., *God Is Red: A Native View of Religion* (New York: Putnam, 1973); George E. Tinker, *Missionary Conquest: The Gospel and Native American Cultural Genocide* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1993); Arthur Schlesinger Jr., “The Missionary Enterprise and Theories of Imperialism,” in *The Missionary Enterprise in China and America*, edited by John K. Fairbank, 336–373 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974); William R. Hutchison and Torben Christensen, eds., *Missionary Ideologies in the Imperialist Era: 1880–1920* (Aarhus, Denmark: Christensens Bogtrykkeri, 1982).

charged the missionary with complicity in spreading Western hegemony, a critique many scholars took for granted in the latter decades of the twentieth century.<sup>11</sup> The possibility of such serious offenses demanded serious investigation, and when Christian missiologists recognized how religious pluralism and the flourishing of new Christianities in the global south posed significant theological challenges, they commenced a crucial revision of missiology at large.<sup>12</sup>

In the supremely vast body of research on missions and missiology—one bibliography listing important missiological books published between 1960 and 2000 exceeds eight hundred pages—a branch of study began to develop that neither engaged in missionary apologetics nor in critical theory.<sup>13</sup> Historians of this school brought questions of power dynamics to the missionary

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11. The most egregious example is probably the coinage and wholesale acceptance within anthropological circles of the term “missionary position” to describe a (mistaken) missionary prohibition against woman-on-top sexual positions. Robert Priest found the anthropological work popularizing the term had been based on a willful misreading of Bronislaw Malinowski, *The Sexual Life of Savages in North-Western Melanesia* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1929). When *Current Anthropology* published Priest’s discovery, it followed the article with fourteen apologetic responses from leading anthropologists; see Robert Priest, “Missionary Positions: Christian, Modernist, Postmodernist,” *Current Anthropology* 42, no. 1 (February 2001): 29–68.

12. Leaders of this development included David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1991); Paul F. Knitter, *One Earth Many Religions: Multifaith Dialogue and Global Responsibility* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1995); Andrew F. Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark; Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1996); Adrian Hastings, ed., *A World History of Christianity* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1999). These trends in critical theory followed the larger historiography since the 1970s. The impact of the linguistic turn and Marxism on historical scholarship in addition to foreign missions historiography cannot be overstated; see Elizabeth A. Clark, *History, Theory, Text: Historians and the Linguistic Turn* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004). In two influential essays, Mark A. Noll argued missiology was the way through the crises postmodern approaches brought to modern historiography given its central focus on international and global events and processes (Noll, “The Challenges of Contemporary Church History, the Dilemmas of Modern History, and Missiology to the Rescue,” *Missiology* 24, no. 1 [January 1996]: 47–64; Noll, “The Potential of Missiology for the Crises of History,” in *History and the Christian Historian*, edited by Ronald A. Wells, 106–123 [Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1998]). While academic historians and missiologists yet maintain some methodological divisions, Noll’s observations can be said to have come to pass. The Yale-Edinburgh Group on the History of the Missionary Movement and World Christianity, begun as an informal interdisciplinary gathering of scholars sharing missionary and world Christianity interests, represents the most active collaboration to date of American academic historians with missiologists. Other prominent scholarly societies, such as the International Association for Mission Studies, Southern African Missiological Society, and the American Society of Missiology remain confessionally yet ecumenically committed to advancing Christianity.

13. Norman E. Thomas, ed., *International Mission Bibliography: 1960–2000*, ATLA Bibliographies, No. 48 (Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press, 2003). Dana Robert, subeditor of the section on the history of missions, observed that the literature to that point had introduced only “building blocks for the writing of ‘a genuinely global history’”; her selection included citations of works before 1960, amounting to 744 titles (*ibid.*, 21–77).

encounter, finding in the realms of public discourse and ideology evidence of complicated interactions. John K. Fairbank, past president of the American Historical Association, had lamented in 1968 how his colleagues had been content to let the American missionary alone; as more scholars cast light on the subject, the formerly “invisible” missionary came to resemble one who did not conform to the dominant, white, masculine, mainline-Protestant type.<sup>14</sup> Catholics, Moravians, Pentecostals, non-denominational evangelicals, and most especially women and indigenous missionaries, all appeared to have participated in and even sustained immense world-networks of evangelizers and receiving peoples. It became clear institutions and political powers did not capture the whole story. Scholars found added insights when pivoting their focus away from governments and organizations and toward the people in the trenches of the intercultural encounter, making missionary history (as opposed to *mission* history) a palatable and informative line of study for erstwhile wary historians.<sup>15</sup>

Seeing mission through the eyes of forgotten and subordinated actors alerted scholars to the potential of the missionary encounter to illuminate the larger history. Observers had long challenged Eurocentric narratives that relegated indigenous peoples to passive victims of imperial

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14. John K. Fairbank, “Assignment for the ’70’s,” *American Historical Review* 74, no. 1 (February 1969): 861–879. Fairbank thought the missionary history particularly insightful for Asian studies and Sinology, a view recent scholarship has confirmed in several noteworthy studies: Alwyn Austin, *China’s Millions: The China Inland Mission and Late Qing Society, 1832–1905* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2007); Liam Matthew Brockey, *Journey to the East: The Jesuit Mission to China, 1579–1724* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007); Jessie Gregory Lutz, *Opening China: Karl F. A. Gutzlaff and Sino-Western Relations, 1827–1852* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2008); Eugenio Menegon, *Ancestors, Virgins, and Friars: Christianity as a Local Religion in Late Imperial China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2009); Xi Lian, *Redeemed by Fire: The Rise of Popular Christianity in Modern China* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010); Jane Kilpatrick, *Fathers of Botany: The Discovery of Chinese Plants by European Missionaries* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014); Jonathan Y. Tan, *Christian Mission among the Peoples of Asia* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 2014). For an exhaustive bibliography on studies of mission work in China before 2000, see R. G. Tiedemann, *Reference Guide to Missionary Societies in China: From the 16th to the 20th Centuries* (London: M. E. Sharpe, 2009).

15. Kevin M. Schultz and Paul Harvey, “Everywhere and Nowhere: Recent Trends in American Religious History and Historiography,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 78, no. 1 (March 2010), 152; Dana L. Robert, “Introduction,” in *Converting Colonialism: Visions and Realities in Mission History, 1706–1914*, edited by Dana L. Robert (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2008), 1–6.

and settler invasion and stripped them of agency. After rigorous revising, historians presented more detailed, active, and complex views of Native America, Africa, Asia, and Oceania than the one-way American expansionist interpretation.<sup>16</sup>

Meanwhile, mission historians sought to answer a debate dating to Rufus Anderson, the famous administrator of the largest U.S. sending agency of the 1800s, and his contemporaries. Anderson had written in 1869 how “the proper test of success in missions” was not “the progress of civilization, but the evidence of a religious life,” siding with mission theorists who contended “Christianizing” took precedence over “civilizing” proselytes.<sup>17</sup> Opponents to the idea felt unevangelized peoples required the structures of a civilized society before missionaries could maintain any permanent churches abroad. Their disagreements over “Christ versus culture” so dominated Protestant missionary discourse that historians beginning with William R. Hutchison in 1987 wondered whether one strategy won out over the other.<sup>18</sup>

New approaches presented a different picture. These past societies were thoroughly multiplex: simultaneously maintaining and transmitting ideas, behaviors, and languages across vast cultural and geographical distances. And of this multiplex populace, some native peoples—in addition

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16. Donald A. Yerxa, ed., *Recent Themes in Early American History: Historians in Conversation* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2008). Detailed overviews of these historiographical developments appear in the following bibliographic essays: David J. Silverman, “Native American Religions,” in Atlantic History Series, *Oxford Bibliographies* (2012), <http://oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199730414/obo-9780199730414-0156.xml>; Jonathan Reynolds, “History and the Study of Africa,” in African Studies Series, *Oxford Bibliographies* (2013), <http://oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199846733/obo-9780199846733-0095.xml>; Charles W. Hayford, “Christianity in China,” in Chinese Studies Series, *Oxford Bibliographies* (2014), <http://oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199920082/obo-9780199920082-0104.xml>.

17. Rufus Anderson, *Foreign Missions: Their Relations and Claims* (New York: Charles Scribner, 1869), 118.

18. William R. Hutchison, *Errand to the World: American Protestant Thought and Foreign Missions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987). See also Charles R. Taber, *The World Is Too Much With Us: “Culture” in Modern Protestant Missions* (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1991); Paul William Harris, *Nothing But Christ: Rufus Anderson and the Ideology of Protestant Foreign Missions* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); 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); Wilbert R. Shenk, ed., *North American Foreign Missions, 1810–1914: Theology, Theory, and Policy* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2004).



to neighboring and invading societies—exhibited their own versions of empire, worked out their own channels of trade and diplomacy, appropriated the religion of colonizers, and evangelized their own hybridized Christianities. Taking these and other studies into account, all the variables together suggest the either/or proposition of the “Christ versus culture” debate only characterized the concerns of mission theorists. At ground level, receiving peoples and missionaries influenced each other and shaped new realities within shared contexts. Colonizers and colonized, evangelizers and evangelized all exercised options beyond accommodation or resistance strategies during their encounters. As soon as the focus pivoted toward non-missionary actors, concerns from other fields and disciplines began to inform missionary studies.<sup>19</sup>

The new focus on indigenous agency accommodated gender analysis, which continues to lead other topics in contemporary missionary history. Extending their research beyond the native/evangelizer encounter, scholars discovered ways women missionaries determined events and outcomes. Since 1997—the year Amanda Porterfield published her study of Mary Lyon and the Mount Holyoke missionaries and Dana L. Robert published her history of American women missionaries—gender analysis has commanded a wide range of missionary studies, from women’s

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19. James Axtell convincingly demonstrated in *The Invasion Within: The Contest of Cultures in Colonial North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985) how Native Americans in the early colonial period employed innovative commercial and diplomatic strategies when dealing with colonizers and settlers. Others have extended this analytical framework to other theaters, including most recently Gary Clayton Anderson, *The Conquest of Texas: Ethnic Cleansing in the Promised Land, 1820–1875* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2005); Diane J. Austin-Broos, *Arrernte Present, Arrernte Past: Invasion, Violence, and Imagination in Indigenous Central Australia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009); Alan Taylor, *The Civil War of 1812: American Citizens, British Subjects, Irish Rebels, and Indian Allies* (New York: Vintage, 2010). Pekka Hämäläinen masterfully navigates the entanglements between American and Native American imperial projects in *The Comanche Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008). Leading the historical analysis of indigenous evangelizers and evangelization are Jon F. Sensbach, *Rebecca’s Revival: Creating Black Christianity in the Atlantic World* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2005); Joel W. Martin and Mark A. Nicholas, eds., *Native Americans, Christianity, and the Reshaping of the American Religious Landscape* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010); Linford D. Fisher, *The Indian Great Awakening: Religion and the Shaping of Native Cultures in Early America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

organizational activities in promoting missions to maternalism within missionary households.<sup>20</sup>

This vast and growing body of research has overturned previous assumptions that men directed the missions and women merely joined them as married companions. Women appear in history who both subverted and exercised authority, fortified and undermined colonial regimes, exported religion to foreign environments, and imported foreign religion to home environments. The picture of the mission stations, native churches, and schoolhouses resembles a feminine space where women creatively adapted their religion and deliberately enforced their morality on others.<sup>21</sup> Even those areas of missionary life dominated by men have been shown to harbor greater complexity than once thought. At least one study revealed how different masculinities clashed in colonial New England during a high point of missionary activity.<sup>22</sup>

Other topics have flourished in recent years. Though to a lesser degree than agency and gender analysis, they nonetheless continue to expand lines of research into missionary history. At

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20. Amanda Porterfield, *Mary Lyon and the Mount Holyoke Missionaries* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); Dana L. Robert, *American Women in Mission: A Social History of Their Thought and Practice* (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1997).

21. This subfield is deserving of an extended bibliographic essay; the closest to such, though limited mainly to American women missionaries, is Barbara Reeves-Ellington, "Women, Protestant Missions, and American Cultural Expansion, 1800 to 1938: A Historiographical Sketch," *Social Sciences and Missions* 24 (2011): 190–206. Important studies include Margaret Jolly, *Women of the Place: Kastom, Colonialism and Gender in Vanuatu* (Reading: Harwood Academic Press, 1994); Catherine Brekus, *Strangers and Pilgrims: Female Preaching in America, 1740–1845* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998); Mary Taylor Huber and Nancy C. Lutkehaus, eds., *Gendered Missions: Women and Men in Missionary Discourse and Practice* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999); Lisa Joy Pruitt, *Looking-glass for Ladies: American Protestant Women and the Orient in the Nineteenth Century* (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 2005); Sensbach, *Rebecca's Revival*; Susan E. Smith, *Women in Mission: From the New Testament to Today* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 2007); Karen K. Seat, *"Providence Has Freed Our Hands": Women's Missions and the American Encounter with Japan* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2008); Elizabeth E. Prevost, *Communion of Women: Missions and Gender in Colonial Africa and the British Metropole* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010); Barbara Reeves-Ellington, Kathryn Kish Sklar, and Connie A. Shemo, eds., *Competing Kingdoms: Women, Mission, Nation, and the American Protestant Empire, 1812–1960* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010); Jennifer Thigpen, *Island Queens and Mission Wives: How Gender and Empire Remade Hawai'i's Pacific World* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014); Emily Conroy-Krutz, *Christian Imperialism: Converting the World in the Early American Republic* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015).

22. R. Todd Romero, *Making War and Minting Christians: Masculinity, Religion, and Colonialism in Early New England* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2011).



the nexus of themes coming into vogue is what might be conceptualized as a theory of tension. Whether observing slavery, caste, empire, or colony, historians have noted an intrinsic property of missionary activity: social friction. Sympathizers celebrated narratives of progress in which world society was moving from sinfulness to righteousness as converts embraced the religion of the missionary; critics, on the other hand, saw in the evidence a more invasive relationship at work. The trend in scholarship is toward a complexity model, an analytical orientation recognizing the prevalence of intense frictions. Missionaries and receiving peoples exhibited traits far outside the simple binary of colonizer-and-colonized. As such, they explain the mechanics of identity formation, religious and cultural hybridity, globalization and localization, and conversion and affiliation. Four themes, in addition to indigenous Christianities and gender studies, have emerged from this methodology and drive the field of missionary history: race, conversion, imperialism, and hitherto overlooked sites of encounter.<sup>23</sup>

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23. The preponderance of diverse topics confirms the interdisciplinary appeal of the new missionary history. The range of topics—in addition to those discussed outside of this note—in missionary history since 2007, even when limited to North American movements, is immense. For instance, indigeneity, imperialism, nationalism, identity, adaptation, democratization, statecraft, education, reverse missions, non-Western missionaries, Pentecostalism, and continental sites of the missionary encounter have all received serious attention in recent scholarly studies.

For indigeneity, see Rachel M. Wheeler, *To Live Upon Hope: Mohicans and Missionaries in the Eighteenth-Century Northeast* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008); Quincy D. Newell, *Constructing Lives at Mission San Francisco: Native Californians and Hispanic Colonists, 1776–1821* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2009).

For imperialism, see Anna Johnston, *Missionary Writing and Empire, 1800–1860* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Clare Pettit, *Dr. Livingstone, I Presume? Missionaries, Journalists, Explorers, and Empire* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007); Gray H. Whaley, *Oregon and the Collapse of Illahee: U.S. Empire and the Transformation of an Indigenous World, 1792–1859* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010); Ian R. Tyrrell, *Reforming the World: The Creation of America's Moral Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010); Linda Gregerson and Susan Juster, eds., *Empires of God: Religious Encounters in the Early Modern Atlantic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011); Steven S. Maughan, *Mighty England Do Good: Culture, Faith, Empire, and World in the Foreign Missions of the Church of England, 1850–1915* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2014); Conroy-Krutz, *Christian Imperialism*.

For nationalism and identity, see Chad M. Bauman, *Christian Identity and Dalit Religion in Hindu India, 1868–1947* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2008); Derek Chang, *Citizens of a Christian Nation: Evangelical Missions and the Problem of Race in the Nineteenth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010).

For adaptation, see William Lawrence Svelmoe, *A New Vision for Missions: William Cameron Townsend, the Wycliffe Bible Translators, and the Culture of Early Evangelical Faith Missions, 1917–1945* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2008); Jay Riley Case, *An Unpredictable Gospel: American Evangelicals and World Christianity, 1812–1920* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); Tracy Neal Leavelle, *The Catholic Calumet: Colonial*

Race, conversion, and imperialism command attention as *processes*, a novel perspective compared to prior histories that treated these as norms. When viewed as effects in motion constructed by people over time, they invite wholly different questions about subjectivity: Who adheres to a concept of race? Who participates in fashioning an empire? Who is objectified by social constructs? What motivates people to hold their various orientations? When applied to history, such questions probe the causes and effects surrounding events and yield profitable insights. Michael Pasquier showed, for example, how missionary sympathies with Southern mores of social conservatism, paternalism, and white supremacy contributed to the rise of Catholicism in North America.<sup>24</sup> Travis Glasson used a similar approach to make sense of black Protestantism and slavery in the Atlantic world, finding in Anglican missions a steady ambivalence between profiteering from the slave trade and fulfilling a religious mandate to save souls. As members of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts struggled to reconcile conflicting interests, they offered new support for slaveholding while also laying the

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*Conversions in French and Indian North America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012).

For democratization and statecraft, see José Pedro Zúquete, *Missionary Politics in Contemporary Europe* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2007); David Ekbladh, *Great American Mission: Modernization and the Construction of an American World Order* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010); Robert D. Woodberry, "The Missionary Roots of Liberal Democracy," *American Political Science Review* 106, no. 2 (May 2012): 244–274; Andrew Preston, *Sword of the Spirit, Shield of Faith: Religion in American War and Diplomacy* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2012); Sarah E. Ruble, *Gospel of Freedom and Power: Protestant Missionaries in American Culture after World War II* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012).

For education, see Paul Sedra, *From Mission to Modernity: Evangelicals, Reformers, and Education in Nineteenth-Century Egypt* (New York: I. B. Tauris, 2011); Hilary E. Wyss, *English Letters and Indian Literacies: Reading, Writing, and New England Missionary Schools, 1750–1830* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012); John Demos, *The Heathen School: A Story of Hope and Betrayal in the Age of the Early Republic* (New York: Vintage, 2014).

For reverse missions, see Rebecca Y. Kim, *Spirit Moves West: Korean Missionaries in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015).

For non-Western missionaries, see Arvind Sharma, *Hinduism as a Missionary Religion* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2011).

For Pentecostalism, see Gary B. McGee, *Miracles, Missions, and American Pentecostalism* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 2010); Allan Anderson, *To the Ends of the Earth: Pentecostalism and the Transformation of World Christianity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

24. Michael Pasquier, *Fathers on the Frontier: French Missionaries and Roman Catholic Priesthood in the United States, 1789–1870* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

foundation for black Protestantism—two amazingly divergent outcomes.<sup>25</sup>

Even conversion, a concept taken as a given by missionaries and their sponsors, is beginning to lose its last toehold in scholarship. Tracy Neal Leavelle, Linford D. Fisher, and others have brought evidence against the idea proselytes totally reversed themselves from ways of life and religion to adopt Christianity. Fisher favors the term *affiliation* over *conversion*, given the ubiquitous presence of multireligious belonging among colonial Native Americans. Better than the teleology embedded in traditional conversion narratives, a concept of blended worlds approximates the rapid changes apparent in Native American and missionary sources. The peoples involved created for themselves rich languages and symbols and infrequently (if ever) abandoned all trace of their religion of origin.<sup>26</sup>

While American missionary history has kept a tight radius around British, French, and Spanish colonies in North America, other sites of encounter have increasingly attracted interest.<sup>27</sup> Oceania and the Middle East offer encounters in which missionaries, by colonialist

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25. Travis Glasson, *Mastering Christianity: Missionary Anglicanism and Slavery in the Atlantic World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

26. Leavelle, *The Catholic Calumet*; Fisher, *The Indian Great Awakening*.

27. Heather J. Sharkey, ed., *Cultural Conversions: Unexpected Consequences of Christian Missionary Encounters in the Middle East, Africa, and South Asia* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2013); Timothy Yates, *The Conversion of the Maori: Years of Religious and Social Change, 1814–1842* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2013); Beth Baron, *The Orphan Scandal: Christian Missionaries and the Rise of the Muslim Brotherhood* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014); Adam H. Becker, *Revival and Awakening: American Evangelical Missionaries in Iran and the Origins of Assyrian Nationalism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015). For Africa as a site of the missionary encounter, see Roger S. Levine, *Living Man from Africa: Jan Tzatzoe, Xhosa Chief and Missionary, and the Making of Nineteenth-Century South Africa* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011); John Stuart, *British Missionaries and the End of Empire: East, Central, and Southern Africa, 1939–1964* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2011); Richard Gray, *Christianity, the Papacy, and Mission in Africa* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 2012); David Maxwell, *The Spiritual in the Secular: Missionaries and Knowledge about Africa* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2012); T. Jack Thompson, *Light on Darkness? Missionary Photography of Africa in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2012). For Asia, see note 14 above; see also Trent Pomplun, *Jesuit on the Roof of the World: Ippolito Desideri's Mission to Eighteenth-Century Tibet* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010); Gordon D. Laman, *Pioneers to Partners: The Reformed Church in America and Christian Mission with the Japanese* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2012). For a survey of missionary activity in the Middle East, see Eleanor H. Tejerian and Reeve Spector Simon, *Conflict, Conquest, and Conversion: Two Thousand Years of Christian Missions in the Middle East* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012).

and proselytizing measures, appear to have failed in their objectives. Historians working in these areas have observed changes to local nationalism and education brought about by interreligious exchanges.<sup>28</sup> In many political spheres, nongovernmental organizations had their start as missionary enterprises among Middle Eastern missions. Political forces stimulating nineteenth-century Zionism arose from American missionaries attempting to fulfill an expectation borne of biblical millennialism.<sup>29</sup> Still other scholars find missionaries and proselytes in the Middle East locked in a perpetual impasse, failing to convert and be converted by each other.<sup>30</sup>

As this brief review illustrates, the case study method reigns. Missionary studies most often zoom in on the microcosm to glean insights about the whole, keeping clear of overbroad arguments and favoring precise and traversable sources. In this environment, some questions persist. The panorama of national-level regimes, the ones perpetuating an American metropole and its satellites, begs to be seen. Historians have offered cases in abundance showing missionaries serving conflicting interests, and to students versed in their body of work, the trend line points consistently in the direction of complexity; missionaries are not fully exonerated from having caused social friction, but neither fully condemned. Postcolonial theory, an analytical approach concerned with the moment violence occurs within societies, uncovered subtleties of public discourse responsible for subordinating groups of people. The avowed proselytizer so immediately comes under the crosshairs of this critique that scholars studying the missionary encounter, especially those attuned to historical complexities, have tended to either avoid or spar

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28. Mehmet Ali Doğan and Heather J. Sharkey, eds., *American Missionaries and the Middle East: Foundational Encounters* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2011).

29. Hans-Lukas Kieser, *Nearest East: American Millennialism and Mission to the Middle East* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2010).

30. Ussama Makdisi, *Artillery of Heaven: American Missionaries and the Failed Conversion of the Middle East* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008).

with postcolonialism.<sup>31</sup> At least one feature of the theory could be integrated into missionary studies: isolating an effect of discourse when peoples encounter each other and interact such that they set themselves up as sovereign over others. In missionary writing, proselytizers assumed a sovereign status—they believed their religion superior. This much seems obvious beyond further thought. However, deep in the tangles of discourse, as missionaries and readers carried out a prolonged dialogue about their encounters, the sovereign/subordinate relationship endured, a relationship through which plans and actions were mediated. To unpack where and how missionaries installed this relationship would mean concentrating on a historical development of broad scale.<sup>32</sup>

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31. Most missionary histories avoid theorizing as a matter of historical method, leaving this ground to be tended by philosophers of history, sociologists, and other theorists. Those who do engage in postcolonial theory often critique the theory. For instance, Patricia Grimshaw and Andrew May took issue with postcolonial narratives for containing “within themselves ... the potential to over-determine the findings of historical research. While [such narratives] have persuasive impact at a globalizing level, postcolonial frameworks can serve to obscure the varieties of interactions that surrounded missionary ventures.” The case studies that followed collectively argued against blanketing mission history with the “colonizer” tag (Grimshaw and May, “Reappraisals of Mission History: An Introduction,” Chapter 1 in *Missionaries, Indigenous Peoples and Cultural Exchange*, edited by Patricia Grimshaw and Andrew F. May [Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2010], 2). Dana Robert considered postcolonialism both a rejection of mission and a “new and exciting theoretical space” that bred a paradox: “The paradox of the anti-missionary sentiment [borne of postcolonial critique] of the mid twentieth century was that mission education had created the opportunities and climate for indigenous leadership, and a disproportionate number of leaders of newly independent nations had attended mission school or been sponsored for western education by mission scholarship funds” (Robert, *Christian Mission: How Christianity Became a World Religion* [Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009], 68, 96).

32. This description of a postcolonial methodology borrows from Meyda Yeğenoğlu’s theoretical work in *Colonial Fantasies: Towards a Feminist Reading of Orientalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); see also Leela Gandhi, *Postcolonial Theory: A Critical Introduction* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 167–174. Postcolonialists speak of the binary relations a class of people imposes on itself and others, and derive their theoretical interventions in these binaries from postmodern theories, particularly Derridean deconstruction and Foucauldian genealogy. Said, *Orientalism*, remains the seminal study of epistemological constructions by Western peoples in their literature. Others like Said have taken different approaches but still variously examine Western hegemonic power over culture and discourse by interrogating discursive binaries; see Chandra Talpade Mohanty, “Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses,” *Boundary 2*, vols. 12/13, nos. 3/1 (Spring/Fall 1984): 333–358; Sara Suleri, “Woman Skin Deep: Feminism and the Postcolonial Condition,” *Critical Inquiry* 18 (Summer 1992): 756–769; Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993); Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994); Reina Lewis, *Gendering Orientalism: Race, Femininity, and Representation* (London: Routledge, 1996); Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999); Laura E. Donaldson and Kwok Pui-lan, eds., *Postcolonialism, Feminism, and Religious Discourse* (New York: Routledge, 2002).

Scholarship bears out convincingly that encounters engineered hybridized, racialized, and colonized outcomes, but a question lingers: To what extent did missionaries shape national discourse about who qualified as American and who qualified as foreigner? The following chapters report on the body of antebellum missionary magazines to work out how the sovereign relationship of the missionary and the missionized surfaced and changed over time. Through a method of consolidating and scanning the full print runs of the magazines, this dissertation advances a relatively new branch of missionary history, one focused on domesticity as an aspect of diversely blended societies. Considerations of home life as a prime domain for fixing categories of difference enjoy precious little coverage in current scholarship. The results of this study suggest American codes of domesticity factored into the metrics missionary correspondents marshaled when determining the end of the conversion process.<sup>33</sup>

### American Imperialism

While European empires raced to conquer the globe, the United States skirted identification

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33. To date, the most important contribution in this vein is Hyaeweol Choi and Margaret Jolly, eds., *Divine Domesticities: Christian Paradoxes in Asia and the Pacific* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 2014). Other important studies of missionary domesticities include Margaret Jolly and Martha Macintyre, eds., *Family and Gender in the Pacific: Domestic Contradictions and the Colonial Impact* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Karen Tranberg Hansen, ed., *African Encounters with Domesticity* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1992); Jolly, *Women of the Place*; T. O. Beidelman, "Altruism and Domesticity: Images of Missionizing Women among the Church Missionary Society in Nineteenth-Century East Africa," in *Gendered Missions: Women and Men in Missionary Discourse and Practice*, edited by Mary Taylor Huber and Nancy C. Lutkehaus, 113–143 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999); Dana L. Robert, "The 'Christian Home' as a Cornerstone of Anglo-American Missionary Thought and Practice," in *Converting Colonialism: Visions and Realities in Mission History, 1706–1914*, edited by Dana L. Robert, 134–165 (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2008); Hyaeweol Choi, *Gender and Mission: Encounters in Korea* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009); Barbara Reeves-Ellington, "Embracing Domesticity: Women, Mission, and Nation Building in Ottoman Europe, 1832–1872," in *Competing Kingdoms: Women, Mission, Nation, and the American Protestant Empire, 1812–1960*, edited by Barbara Reeves-Ellington, et al., 269–292 (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010); Reeves-Ellington, Sklar, and Shemo, eds., *Competing Kingdoms*; Thigpen, *Island Queens and Mission Wives*; Joy Schultz, "Birthing Empire: Economies of Childrearing and the Formation of American Colonialism in Hawai'i, 1820–1848," *Diplomatic History* 38, no. 5 (November 2014): 895–925.



as imperialistic, being taken for a republic and something of a deviation from the monarchical systems of the Old World. With the Spanish–American War of 1898 and its concluding Platt Amendment guaranteeing U.S. troops would remain in Cuba, American foreign policy began to reflect classic imperial diplomacy: leaders extended the state by forcefully annexing land. Ernest R. May in 1961 saw the events of 1898 as more than a military conquest—this conflict and its closing treaties had amounted to a turning point in the cultural ethos of the American people.<sup>34</sup> Other historians concurred; the more they examined American military action and diplomacy from 1898 to the First World War, the more they uncovered imperial agendas. Whether casting a “benevolent” tone or representing the “worst chapter in almost any book,” the American variety of imperialism was alive and working by the 1900s.<sup>35</sup>

Not long after the theme of empire moved beyond Europe to include the United States, Americanists studying the Early Republic brought strong counterpoints arguing for an improved definition of “empire.” Broadening the concept with a look to colonization and continental mobility had the effect of diminishing the significance of 1898. The Platt Amendment became not so much the launching pad for a new era of American empire, but the evidence of an abiding

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34. Ernest R. May, *Imperial Democracy: The Emergence of America as a Great Power* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1961).

35. James A. Field Jr., “American Imperialism: The Worst Chapter in Almost Any Book,” *American Historical Review* 83, no. 3 (June 1978): 644–668. Stuart Creighton Miller noted how Americans perceived their own aggressive expansionism in terms of “benevolence” and exceptionalism: “*Benevolent Assimilation: The American Conquest of the Philippines, 1899–1903* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983). Works responsible for solidifying 1898 as the start date for modern American imperialism include Walter LeFeber, *The New Empire: An Interpretation of American Expansion, 1860–1898* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1963); Philip S. Foner, *The Spanish–Cuban–American War and the Birth of American Imperialism, 1895–1902*, 2 vols. (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1972); Stanley Karnow, *In Our Image: America’s Empire in the Philippines* (New York: Random House, 1989); Ivan Musicant, *Empire by Default: The Spanish–American War and the Dawn of the American Century* (New York: Holt, 1998); Louis A. Pérez Jr., *The War of 1898: The United States and Cuba in History and Historiography* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998); Louis A. Pérez Jr., *Cuba in the American Imagination: Metaphor and the Imperial Ethos* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008); Paul T. McCartney, *Power and Progress: American National Identity, the War of 1898, and the Rise of American Imperialism* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2006).

imperial impulse, an extension of expansionist diplomacy dating back to the founding of the nation. Empire by another name, say “colony” or “republic,” could still smell as invasive; just because citizens of the United States, as Ann Stoler pointed out, “refused the term *empire*” did not mean they did not practice its “tactics.”<sup>36</sup> Armed with a more sophisticated concept of empire, scholars noticed imperialism permeating early American history, from the eagle of the Great Seal of the United States to Thomas Jefferson’s vision of America as an “empire of liberty”; from the American Revolution to Jacksonian politics of Indian removal.<sup>37</sup> Richard H. Immerman went so far as to call the United States fundamentally imperial. Empire building, he argued, characterized Americans’ foreign policies from the outset and remained a constant doctrine of their political theory.<sup>38</sup>

Without a sovereign state having to declare itself an “empire” to qualify as imperialistic, former debates over whether Americans participated in empire gave way to narrower questions. Hegemonic systems of all sorts, not political economy alone, were observed to have carried out imperialist schemes. Invasiveness could take many subtle forms and combine into a critical momentum propelling a body politic to greater world influence, even superpower status. Seen in this light, imperialism could have manifested itself in the domains of discourse and religion. As

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36. Ann Laura Stoler, “Intimidations of Empire: Predicaments of the Tactile and Unseen,” Chapter 1 in *Haunted by Empire: Geographies of Intimacy in North American History*, edited by Ann Laura Stoler, 1–22 (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 10; cited in Emily Conroy-Krutz, “Empire and the Early Republic,” *H-Diplo*, no. 133 (September 10, 2015), <http://tiny.cc/E133>, p. 2.

37. Conroy-Krutz, “Empire and the Early Republic,” 4–11; Peter S. Onuf, *Jefferson’s Empire: The Language of American Nationhood* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2000); Gordon Wood, *Empire of Liberty: A History of the Early Republic, 1789–1815* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009); Nicholas Guyatt, “‘The Outskirts of Our Happiness’: Race and the Lure of Colonization in the Early Republic,” *Journal of American History* 95, no. 4 (March 2009): 986–1011; Julian Go, *Patterns of Empire: The British and American Empires, 1688 to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Eliga H. Gould, *Among the Powers of the Earth: The American Revolution and the Making of a New World Empire* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2012).

38. Richard H. Immerman, *Empire for Liberty: A History of American Imperialism from Benjamin Franklin to Paul Wolfowitz* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).



historians and religious studies scholars began to rethink categories of imperialism along these lines, they noticed sophisticated pathways to global hegemony previously glossed over. Paradoxes, even, were discovered. American popular culture tended to praise its foundations as resistant to monarchy and thus empire, claiming a kind of anti-imperialist ideology. Strangely, their sense of exceptionality, their ideal self patriotically held above all European powers, bred what William Appleman Williams called “imperial anticolonialism,” a prolonged attempt to overthrow imperial government while simultaneously taking imperialistic actions, such as drawing the borders and assuming control of Indian territory and waging wars to conquer large tracts of the unsettled continent.<sup>39</sup> Declaring themselves destined to liberate the world through democratic republicanism, and for many, destined also “to win the world for Christ” through foreign mission work, Americans sponsored trade and religious systems that established a firm hold on distant societies. The ironic slogan “empire of liberty” was intelligible to people describing themselves all the while as non-imperial, the very rallying point for ending empire in the world.<sup>40</sup>

Early Republic Americanists were not alone in seeking to fine-tune the categories of imperialism. British historians had long viewed Great Britain as a centralized metropolis managing satellite colonies, or miniature versions of the metropole, across the globe. The British Empire, in this conception, had maintained its global footprint and power through unilateral and dictatorial command flowing out from the metropolitan center to the colonial periphery. The “new imperial history” disputed this view, arguing for a more mutual balance of power across the whole network of colonies. Historians of this school contended that the metropole and colony reinforced each other, even constituted one another, with power flows moving between them.

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39. Conroy-Krutz, “Empire and the Early Republic,” 5–6; William Appleman Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy*, new ed. (New York: W. W. Norton, 1972), 19–57, esp. 46.

40. Hutchison, *Errand to the World*, 116–118; Wood, *Empire of Liberty*, 44–46, 357–359.

Given the early United States had remained entangled in British politics with conflicts continuing through the War of 1812, American historians began to consider the ramifications of the new imperial history on the Early Republic. Words like “expansion” and “Manifest Destiny” invoked in U.S. histories brought to mind the same processes inherent in British metropole-colony relations and could no longer substitute as euphemisms for “empire.”<sup>41</sup>

When applied to American religious history, the mutually reinforcing metropole and colony dynamic appears most vividly in the missionary enterprise. In the British historiographical context, the new imperial history noticed British missionary activities straight away, finding in missionary correspondence networks of enculturation and attempts to dominate racial vocabularies and standards of Englishness.<sup>42</sup> The ground remains fertile for applying the insights of the new imperial history to the American metropole.<sup>43</sup> Americanists contend such a metropole existed long before the Civil War, one constituted by its satellites, especially American enterprises abroad. Foreign missions, commerce, diplomacy, and cultural exports all reinforced a self-identity among Americans in the homeland as “world savers.”<sup>44</sup> Still, missionary participation in the fashioning of Americanness has received only recent attention.<sup>45</sup>

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41. Richard Price, “One Big Thing: Britain, Its Empire, and Their Imperial Culture,” *Journal of British Studies* 45, no. 3 (July 2006): 602–627; Emily Louise Conroy-Krutz, “The Conversion of the World in the Early Republic: Race, Gender, and Imperialism in the Early American Foreign Mission Movement” (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 2012), 22–23.

42. Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination, 1830–1867* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).

43. Tracy Neal Leavelle and Sylvester Johnson led a three-year seminar on religion and U.S. empire beginning in 2013. Panel presentations of the seminar group at the 2013–2015 annual meetings of the American Academy of Religion highlighted the nascent status of the topic in religious studies and the rich insights afforded by bringing religion to bear on U.S. imperialism. The seminar has sought to identify the role religion played in shaping the history of the United States as an imperial state and participants have argued missionaries played a pivotal part in this dynamic while also acknowledging the need for more research in this area.

44. Demos, *The Heathen School*, 58–59.

45. Emily Conroy-Krutz has led this effort with her dissertation (2012) and *Christian Imperialism* (2015).

## American Exceptionalism

The phrase “American exceptionalism” has come into vogue but remains a bit of an anachronism. Historians of the United States and American religion alike have made John Winthrop’s sermon, “A Modell of Christian Charity,” synonymous with American exceptionalism—so much so, the document has assumed canonical status: virtually every discussion of the topic cites Winthrop, often without question.<sup>46</sup> Godfrey Hodgson dismantled this narrative, showing how Winthrop did not deliver the sermon on American soil (or, as the story goes, barely offshore on the decks of the ship *Arbella* before disembarking), how he wrote it before departing England, and how its context places it in reference to commercial ventures in North America, not some kind of national promise or religious destiny.<sup>47</sup> Nevertheless, some narratives in need of revision die hard, and scholarship on American exceptionalism continues to project uniqueness or superiority onto the ideology of the first British colonists in North America. If these sojourners in the New World truly conceived of their mission as an exceptional one in world history, they certainly did not call it such. The term “American exceptionalism” owes itself to Josef Stalin who coined it in 1929 as an epithet to dismiss American communists from Soviet circles. Some have contended Alexis de Tocqueville preceded Stalin by formulating the concept almost a century earlier.<sup>48</sup> But Tocqueville did not directly invoke the phrase (some

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46. John Winthrop, “A Modell of X.<sup>tian</sup> [Christian] Charity” (1630), New York Heritage Digital Collections, <http://cdm16694.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p16124coll1/id/1952>. This is true of every secondary source cited here under the “American Exceptionalism” heading; without exception, these studies that comprise the major scholarly literature on the topic reference Winthrop and most posit without further analysis American exceptionalism originated with his sermon.

47. Godfrey Hodgson, *The Myth of American Exceptionalism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).

48. Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., *The Age of Jackson* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1945); Henry Steele Commager, *America in Perspective: The United States through Foreign Eyes* (New York: New American Library, 1947); Seymour Martin Lipset, *American Exceptionalism: A Double-Edged Sword* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1996), 18.

English translations of his work have mistakenly perpetuated it), and the fact remains current phraseology surrounding “American exceptionalism” more accurately traces its etymology to 1929.<sup>49</sup>

So the debate continues over how to measure the effects of American exceptionalism and whether historical precedents explain contemporary ideologies. Recent works emphasize departures from post–World War II ideas, some drawing out evidences for a turn in exceptionalist thinking after 9/11. Debates over how to conceptualize American exceptionalism continue among scholars and across disciplines. Recent years have seen questions of provenance resurface—the transmission history of exceptionalism evades tight categorization, leading some to conclude it only constitutes a variant of a prior British exceptionalism, while others see it as a product of industrialization.<sup>50</sup>

Other models abound. Thomas R. Hietala and David Wrobel framed exceptionalism within a broader cultural response to deeply seated fears of decline and encroachment by outside powers, what might be termed the defensiveness thesis.<sup>51</sup> Jack P. Greene and Seymour Martin Lipset approached the ideology from the outside, noticing how European immigrants celebrated

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49. Justin B. Litke, *Twilight of the Republic: Empire and Exceptionalism in the American Political Tradition* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2013), 10–12; Donald E. Pease, “Exceptionalism,” Chapter 28 in *Keywords for American Cultural Studies*, edited by Bruce Burgett and Glenn Hendler (New York: New York University Press, 2007), 108; Terrence McCoy, “How Josef Stalin Invented ‘American Exceptionalism,’” *The Atlantic* (March 15, 2012).

50. The best reviews of the current state of scholarship on American exceptionalism are Michael Kammen, “The Problem of American Exceptionalism: A Reconsideration,” *American Quarterly* 45, no. 1 (March 1993): 1–43; Pease, “Exceptionalism” (2007); Sylvia Söderlind, “The Shining of America,” Introduction in *American Exceptionalisms: From Winthrop to Winfrey*, edited by Sylvia Söderlind and James Taylor Carson (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2011); Justin B. Litke, “The Problem of American Exceptionalism,” Chapter 1 in *Twilight of the Republic* (2013). Works representing the provenance model are E. P. Thompson, “The Peculiarities of the English,” *The Socialist Register* 2 (1965): 311–362; Hodgson, *The Myth of American Exceptionalism* (2009); Brian T. Edwards and Dilip Parameshwar Gaonkar, eds., *Globalizing American Studies* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010); Go, *Patterns of Empire* (2011); Donald E. Pease, “Anglo-American Exceptionalisms,” *American Quarterly* 66, no. 1 (March 2014): 197–209.

51. Thomas R. Hietala, *Manifest Design: Anxious Aggrandizement in Late Jacksonian America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985); David M. Wrobel, *The End of American Exceptionalism: Frontier Anxiety from the Old West to the New Deal* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1993).

the economic opportunities in the United States and set apart the nation in their political and geographical thought. Kim Voss and Michael Kammen turned to labor movements, finding exceptionalism apparent in the differences of labor conditions between the United States and Europe. Amy Kaplan, Julian Go, and Ian Tyrrell discerned a fusion between exceptionalism and imperialism, the one giving Americans a way to distance themselves from the other. Timothy Roberts, Lindsay DiCuirci, and Donald E. Pease, like E. P. Thompson famously argued in 1965, have treated American exceptionalism within a multi-peculiarity framework, as one among a plurality of national exceptionalisms, and see promise in comparative approaches.<sup>52</sup> Comparison, in one case, broke apart the notion of a uniform “American exceptionalism”: comparative analysis of rhetoric in Sylvia Söderlind and James Taylor Carson’s edited volume, *American Exceptionalisms*, revealed a multiplicity of distinct exceptionalisms in American history.

Such diversity across analytical models presents a problem for further scholarship. As Justin B. Litke noted in 2013, little consensus exists on the nature and causes of American exceptionalism and much of the scholarship remains disconnected, its conclusions diverse and disintegrated. Litke found political theory the most promising way forward, asserting political action provides evidence of a developing historical consciousness in which Americans perceived themselves apart from the rest of the world. Their use of history gave Americans at first a claim

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52. Jack P. Greene, *The Intellectual Construction of America: Exceptionalism and Identity from 1492 to 1800* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993); Lipset, *American Exceptionalism* (1996); Kim Voss, *The Making of American Exceptionalism: The Knights of Labor and Class Formation in the Nineteenth Century* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993); Kammen, “The Problem of American Exceptionalism” (1993); Ian Tyrrell, “American Exceptionalism in an Age of International History,” *American Historical Review* 96, no. 4 (October 1991): 1031–1055, 1068–1072; Ian Tyrrell, “The Myth(s) That Will Not Die: American National Exceptionalism,” Chapter 3 in *National Myths: Constructed Pasts, Contested Presents*, edited by Gérard Bouchard, 46–64 (London: Routledge, 2013); Amy Kaplan, *The Anarchy of Empire in the Making of U.S. Culture* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2002); Timothy Roberts and Lindsay DiCuirci, eds., *American Exceptionalism*, 4 vols. (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2013); Pease, “Anglo-American Exceptionalisms”; Thompson, “The Peculiarities of the English.” Liah Greenfeld advanced this comparative approach in the realm of nationalism to form significant conclusions about the making of modernism. Historians following Greenfeld have noted exceptionalist development in the formation of national identities without always categorizing it as such; see Greenfeld, *Nationalism*.

of exceptionality made in the idiom of political and religious thought. Like contributors to Söderlind and Carson's *American Exceptionalisms*, Litke's analysis led to plurality: whether rhetorical, political, or religious, it would seem Americans continually constructed and drew upon several mythologies, rhetorics, and even historiographies to position themselves as centrally involved in the destiny of the world.<sup>53</sup> In 1993, after historians had begun a new international orientation to the idea of American exceptionalism, Michael Kammen wondered what they had discovered and concluded scholars were "obliged to acknowledge ... that each society or culture is exceptional in its own way(s)"; twenty years later, the scholarship prompts a reevaluation whether nations employ their "own ways" at all, given the complex plurality of exceptionalisms inherent in the American version alone.<sup>54</sup>

Far and away the predominant model for studying American exceptionalism has been religious ideology. Perry Miller, Alan Heimert, and Sacvan Bercovitch found unmistakable connections between Puritan typologies based on the Bible and later rationales exempting the United States from having imperial aspiration. The "errand into the wilderness," to which Puritan preachers insisted God had enlisted their parishioners, described the soul of the American people as much in the seventeenth century as in the twentieth.<sup>55</sup> Even after the conclusions advanced

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53. Litke, *Twilight of the Republic*, 5–6, 14–21.

54. Kammen, "The Problem of American Exceptionalism," 24. To be fair, Kammen recognized this plurality, even considering it the main takeaway of the literature: "What develops, then, from reading such studies end to end? Perhaps a realization that because of American heterogeneity we have not had a singular mode or pattern of exceptionalism. Rather, we have had a configuration of situations that are not static ... and consequently they reveal why it is both difficult and dangerous to conclude that the United States as a whole, over an extended period of time, is different from all other cultures with respect to some particular criterion" (ibid., 3).

55. Perry Miller, *The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1939); Perry Miller, *The New England Mind: From Colony to Province* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1953); Perry Miller, *Errand into the Wilderness* (New York: Harper and Row, 1956); Alan Heimert, *Religion and the American Mind: From the Great Awakening to the Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1966); Sacvan Bercovitch, *The Puritan Origins of the American Self* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975). The most recent continuation of this school arguing for American exceptionalism to be understood as originating with the Puritans is Deborah Madsen, *American Exceptionalism* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998).

by Miller's school came under scrutiny, historians of American religion maintained the "city on a hill" motif, not yet integrating sources supporting multiple exceptionalisms. Crediting Puritans with exporting exceptionalist logic to the New World, these scholars have effectively adopted the provenance model, tracing American exceptionalism inexorably through Winthrop's sermon.<sup>56</sup> But the ground has shifted, and just as non-state actors came to challenge colonial and missionary histories, missionaries present obstacles to the Puritan thesis. The covenant theology of Cotton Mather and Jonathan Edwards, while a compelling feature of the founding of New England colonies, seldom surfaces in nineteenth-century missionary writings. Exactly what the missionaries inherited from Puritan New England and what they invented for themselves awaits exploration.

The road ahead will take the plurality of exceptionalisms as a starting point, opening historical awareness to several mythologies and rhetorics inherent in constructions of exceptional identities. Future scholarship appears poised to consider transnational comparison and integrate the multiplicity model. To do so will require examining exceptionalist logic in process, logic at the moment it was created and reinforced.

The sense of exceptionalism arose from combinations of ideas, events, and experiences—what amounted to a superiority complex in the minds of the self-identified exceptional. This

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56. Martin E. Marty, *Pilgrims in Their Own Land: 500 Years of Religion in America* (New York: Penguin, 1984), 63, 338–341; Jon Butler, *Awash in a Sea of Faith: Christianizing the American People* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1990), 58–59; Laurie F. Maffly-Kipp, "Eastward Ho! American Religion from the Perspective of the Pacific Rim," Chapter 5 in *Retelling U.S. Religious History*, edited by Thomas A. Tweed (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 140–141; Michael Novak, "The Influence of Judaism and Christianity on the American Founding," Chapter 6 in *Religion and the New Republic: Faith in the Founding of America*, edited by James H. Hutson (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000), 161; Mark A. Noll, *America's God: From Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 39–40; Edwin S. Gaustad and Mark A. Noll, eds., *A Documentary History of Religion in America to 1877*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2003), 67–69; Sydney Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People*, 2nd ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 146–147; Jon Butler, Grant Wacker, and Randall Balmer, *Religion in American Life: A Short History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 48–49; Christopher H. Evans, *Histories of American Christianity: An Introduction* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2013), 21–22.

study uses the superiority complex as a window into *exceptionalization*, or the performance of exceptionality, in missionary encounters. Missionaries not only articulated their relation to the unexceptional other, but they assumed the role of the exceptionalist, the agent performing acts of world saving. Evidence drawn from missionary media supports and complicates what Amy Kaplan termed “manifest domesticity,” the enforcement of a domestic sphere to achieve essentially imperial ends. The rubric by which missionaries ultimately determined foreignness rested in how domesticated their proselytes appeared to them. The missionaries projected onto the world an image of themselves, and when they did not see it reflected back, they lingered, they kept working to “convert the heathen” from “superstition” to “religion.”<sup>57</sup>

### Methods and Outcomes

This project undertakes a synthesis of American missionary history, imperialism, and exceptionalism through a survey and analysis of the antebellum missionary magazines. My approach aims for the macrocosm, a layer of the missionary encounter usually bypassed in American missionary history. In the case of foreign missions, the magazines display the metropole-periphery dynamic, a flow outward from the sponsoring agencies and returning via correspondence from distant writers. The following chapters chart these flows with a plurality of exceptionalisms in mind, treating the instances in which missionaries fashioned a superior or sovereign relation to their foreign audiences as moments of exceptionalization.

Archivists and historians have not yet consolidated the missionary magazines published in the United States before the Civil War into a single bibliography, to say nothing of mining their

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57. Kaplan, *The Anarchy of Empire*, 48–50.



contents for patterns of exceptionalization. Chapter 1 offers a history of antebellum missionary periodicals and explores the impact of this literature on the nation. It cites archival research spelled out in Appendices A and B that identifies every expressly missionary periodical published in the United States before 1861, excluding only miscellaneous local bulletins, newsletters, and pamphlets.

The rest of the dissertation draws on the contents of the magazines, amounting to over five thousand separate issues and tens of millions of words. To discern trends, I built a database of word frequencies derived from the magazines' published indexes. Before building the master index, I tested the probability a published index may have reflected an inaccurate inventory of the corresponding issue's contents. Taking a random sample of issues, building a list of relevant keywords for each issue, and comparing the lists with the magazine editors' indexes revealed a strong correlation between the two, allowing me to track frequency patterns using the published indexes with statistical confidence. I set the frequency threshold at the seventy-fifth percentile, in other words, the top 25 percent of discussed topics in the magazines. The resulting database is topical, reflecting the *predominant* terms missionaries used and wrote about. Several data analyses stood out. The number of locations and peoples mentioned grew and diversified over time; there developed whole geographies and ethnologies, whole systems of conceiving of locations and distances across the globe and of conceiving of ethnic and national difference between peoples.

Common knowledge of world geography when the first American missionary periodical appeared in 1800 remained limited to what maritime surveyors had gathered from the continental coastlines. Like Jean Baptiste Bourguignon Anville's 1749 map of Africa (Figure 1), the contours of land masses were perceived with precision, yet the interiors of the continents

remained uncharted and mysterious. Some few travelers claimed to describe the remote regions of the interior, but cartographers and explorers alike had little incentive at the time to venture beyond mapping established colonial outposts and exchange routes.<sup>58</sup>

The desire to preach Christianity to the whole world and the zeal to carry out such ambition gave missionaries a sustained interest in identifying absent places and peoples. Sponsors at times sent agents on reconnaissance missions before selecting destinations for new ventures and assigned missionaries to report back on conditions in the field. Missionary correspondence quickly became the most common feature of the magazines and were generally placed in prominent positions in the layout. Reporters plotted geographic references unknown to their distant readers. Concerted and regular efforts to map the foreign world relied on two division patterns: ethnic dissimilarity and geographic distance.<sup>59</sup>

Although the word “ethnicity” to describe people of common descent or tradition would not surface until the twentieth century, missionaries adhered to the same concept when distinguishing between “nations” of people. The differences of language and tradition between “the Jewish nation” and “the Indian nations,” for example, divided the two into heterogeneous groups. For more than a century before the first foreign societies in the United States organized, Protestants had attempted to missionize among their Indian neighbors sporadically and with

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58. Susan Schulten, *Mapping the Nation: History and Cartography in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 3–4; Neil Safier, “The Confines of the Colony: Boundaries, Ethnographic Landscapes, and Imperial Cartography in Iberoamerica,” in *The Imperial Map: Cartography and the Mastery of Empire*, edited by James R. Akerman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 133–184.

59. William Brown, *The History of Missions; Or, of the Propagation of Christianity Among the Heathen, Since the Reformation*, First American ed., 2 vols. (Philadelphia: B. Coles, 1816); Chapin, *The Missionary Gazetteer* (1825); B. B. Edwards, *The Missionary Gazetteer* (Boston: William Hyde, 1832); American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, *Report of the Deputation to the India Missions Made to the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions at a Special Meeting, Held in Albany, N.Y., March 4, 1856* (Boston: T. R. Marvin, 1856); American Unitarian Association, *The Mission to India, Instituted by the American Unitarian Association, February 1855* (Boston: Office of Quarterly Journal, 1857).

mixed results. Beyond this core group, only Jews attracted serious attention, owing to intense theological debates over whether the Bible predicted the eventual conversion of the Jewish people. But with their sights directed toward more remote destinations, missionaries soon transitioned away from primarily targeting the ethnic foreigner for mission work and began to employ geographic metrics to gauge foreign difference.

Only a few foreign locations received sustained attention in the early magazines, and all were areas American merchants had already reached through commercial routes.<sup>60</sup> By the 1840s, mission stations began extending their networks further inward, and a decade later the missionaries' reports covered enough of the readership that home audiences could gain awareness of continental people on the level they had known of the port cities a half-century before. The societies measured success by the number of established churches in foreign lands and coordinated the foreign missions systematically. The locations where they invested the most and where they observed more native congregations received the greatest coverage in the magazines and reported statistics. Administrators keen on systematic approaches to missions granted priority to the stations that thrived and to the untapped areas of the world hinting at better prospects. Stations that survived dotted the missionaries' maps and discussions more than the remote outposts where conversions lagged, forming geographic corridors that did not immediately conform to topography or political boundaries. As the life cycles of the mission stations evolved, the contours of geographic references changed with them. Mappings originally resembling a vacant wilderness grew staggeringly elaborate, intricate, and diverse, too much for any single agency to cover in its strategies. The Protestant societies multiplied as a consequence of

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60. Michael Verney, "An Eye for Prices, an Eye for Souls: Americans in the Indian Subcontinent, 1784–1838," *Journal of the Early Republic* 33, no. 3 (Fall 2013): 397–431.

increased encounters with global complexity and their administrators came to embrace a greater degree of interdenominational cooperation in the latter half of the century.

Four discernible intervals of ethnic and geographical development in the missionaries' mappings of the foreign appear across the magazines when read as a whole.<sup>61</sup> Between 1800 and 1815, popular discussions of the foreign remained limited to Native Americans and Jews. Chapter 2 examines the basis for missionary interest in the two groups and how their articulations of what amounted to ethnic difference disposed missionaries and readers toward measuring receptivity along levels of civility. Around 1816 and 1817, societies formed in greater numbers, and the first round of foreign missionaries began reaching destinations in the Pacific, West Africa, and the Indian Peninsula. For the next seven years, talk of people living within the tropics would dominate foreign reports. When compared to Native Americans, about whom the home audiences had a more direct frame of reference, islanders, Africans, and "Hindoos" appeared even more alien. "Superstition" entered the missionary lexicon as code for non-Christian practices or rituals the missionaries abhorred. Chapter 3 notes the rise in the use of "superstition" and "heathen" to describe tropical peoples and dismiss their societies as having any religious or civic value. It was among this class of "heathen" that missionaries most aggressively sought to erase the cultures they encountered, a turn responsible for an exponential rise in public interest in foreign missions.<sup>62</sup>

American foreign missions realized their largest expansion of the antebellum period between

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61. Maps 1–4 plot the locations mentioned with greatest frequency in each of these intervals. Trends evident in these maps demonstrate the geographical foci at work in the predominant narratives about the foreign.

62. The Google Books 2012 corpora of over 5 million books (approximately 4% of all books ever published) reports a 956% increase over the decade between 1810 and 1820 in the use of the phrase "foreign missions" in American English; see Jean-Baptiste Michel, et al., "Quantitative Analysis of Culture Using Millions of Digitized Books," *Science* 331, no. 6014 (January 14, 2011): 176–182; [http://books.google.com/ngrams/graph?content=foreign+missions&case\\_insensitive=on&year\\_start=1800&year\\_end=2000](http://books.google.com/ngrams/graph?content=foreign+missions&case_insensitive=on&year_start=1800&year_end=2000).

1824 and 1839, a phenomenon prominently exhibited in the missionary magazines of the time. A steady trend of dividing the world into smaller sectors named not for the residents but after the cities characterizes the orientation of reports and articles published during this period. Any deeper interrogation missionaries devoted to new foreign fields adhered to port cities or maritime regions. Chapter 4 draws out the descriptions of the coastal foreigner and discusses how missionaries portrayed their proselytes as suffering under the thrall of a Catholicism mired in anti-Christian conspiracy. American missionaries benefited from following British colonial lines and found security in putting down roots in India, Ceylon, Burma, and China. Chapter 5 explores the missionaries' fixation on China and Burma (and to a lesser degree Ottoman Turkey) between 1840 and 1861. Stability at the mission stations afforded agencies the opportunity and the means for extending their presence deeper into the Middle East and Asia. Between 1852 and the Civil War, missionaries returned to seeking more exotic locations. They swapped their interest in the West Indies for Micronesia, established stations further north in India, and staffed Turkey with more agents than ever before. Missionary projections of conversion where the peoples already maintained a high degree of seemingly civilized structure became more extreme than first efforts abroad, grasping at apocalyptic prophecies to dismiss certain attainments of the Chinese and Turks rather than suffer a challenge to their sense of American superiority.

Despite their preoccupations for foreign environments, the missionaries could not avoid the shockwaves rising tensions over slavery were causing back in the homeland. Protestants had long tried to convert African Americans to Christianity and many even undertook missions to slave plantations in the style of evangelization they had used among Indians. Demands for the abolishment of slavery cornered the societies. They had to adopt an official stance on the issue or risk losing support of their donors. When the largest missionary society in the country, the

American Board, remained mute, other societies followed suit, but the activism of northern Congregationalists and southern Baptists was too much for them to contain and schisms flew. New periodicals appeared, some taking a hard line for and others against slavery unlike the content of earlier magazines. Underneath the swirling rhetoric about the relationships between slavery, the church, and the missions lay the landless, nameless, misrepresented American—upon whose shoulders so much of the greatness of America had been borne.<sup>63</sup> There, at the center of the debate, the most American of Africans embodied the faults in the missionaries' ethnocentrism. Chapter 6 highlights the contradictions that came to a head by 1861 and explores how the categories of foreign and domestic on which the missionaries had relied to justify their proselytism abroad and their identity as the converted became slippery when applied to African Americans in bondage. Many, especially abolitionist, missionaries fought to dismantle ethnocentric contradictions and thus elevate their enterprises to a benevolent ideal, but the rampant presence of racism engendered a worldview more superstitious in its hostility toward black Americans than the religious customs of faraway foreigners—so superstitious, the missionaries themselves could not see it as such.

The processes by which missionary writers and editors in these periods came to understand the foreign and their part in mapping and reaching the “heathen” expanded and diversified over time. Their energies throughout, however, emanated from a shared concern for seeing their religion spread and improve the world. Such a vision could not endure without a self-reinforcing identity continually prompting the missionaries toward their special status among the world's peoples. For better or worse, the outcomes and effects of their proselytism would demand

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63. Edward E. Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of Capitalism in America* (New York: Basic Books, 2014).

reflection, and as missionaries explained to themselves how well they were pursuing their commission, many incarnations of exceptionality would arise. A medium for moderating their collective engagement with the foreign, the magazine, would follow.

## Chapter 1

### The Missionary Press in the Antebellum United States

Reflecting on the early success of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, magazine editor and pastor Joseph Tracy found religious news absolutely crucial. Writing in 1839, he figured religion had lost ground to nationalism in the collective consciousness of early republicans, but thanks to the emergence of missionary societies in the 1810s, it began to rebound. Local societies “springing up in various parts of the land,” Tracy wrote in his history of the American Board, “made the conversion of the heathen a distinct object of their existence.” But this groundswell of public interest in missions brought new demands. The present “system of operations” could not maintain for long the exponential rise in personnel and activity without elaborate coordination, and it was Tracy’s conclusion a new “general diffusion of religious intelligence” through periodical literature had answered the problem. American Protestants had long followed news of European missions abroad, but now they celebrated their own participation in the grand scheme. Their impressive corpus of missionary magazines made them important “actors” no longer relegated to the silent periphery of the “western continent.”<sup>1</sup>

Tracy had assessed the impact of missionary news writing more accurately than he knew. He looked at the outcomes of a single albeit very influential society, the American Board, and discovered a link between their use of print media and their coordinated missions. But the missionary press sent reverberations through national society, rivaling every other category of newspaper in frequency and reach. Readers turned to religious journalism more than any

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1. Joseph Tracy, *History of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions: Compiled Chiefly from the Published and Unpublished Documents of the Board*, 2nd ed. (New York: M. W. Dodd, 1842), 22. Tracy dated his manuscript November 1, 1839 in the preface to the first edition.



other genre, and of religious titles, missionary publications commanded the largest audiences. The missionary press would continue to gain appeal after 1839 in ways Tracy could not have predicted.<sup>2</sup>

Before 1800 and the first issue of the *New-York Missionary Magazine*, the pamphlet had been the principal medium for delivering mission theology to broader audiences.<sup>3</sup> As early as 1671, sermons published as pamphlets circulated missiological themes throughout anglophone America, and missionary sermons continued as a staple of American literature into the 1820s and 1830s.<sup>4</sup> The swing in periodical publishing surpassed sermon pamphlets, going from only fourteen general religious journals printed in America before 1789 to nearly a hundred in the 1810s.<sup>5</sup> The totals reported by specifically missionary journals eclipsed the print runs of the missionary sermon and even Joseph Tracy's ambitious expectations. Missionary writing expanded into an eclectic variety of agency reports, news, travelogues, and conversion narratives. Homilies intended to persuade the audience into believing a particular missiology gave way to social interests. Theology fit in as a piece of the puzzle, and the greater endeavor presented several facets of culture and religion the biblically minded Christian must entertain. By the 1860s, the missionary press would report on Sabbath Schools, colonization societies, education, Bible distribution, and church building—far beyond the classic refrain in the sermon pamphlets, asked

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2. Frank Luther Mott, *A History of American Magazines*, 5 vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1930–1968), 1:131–139.

3. R. Pierce Beaver, ed., *Pioneers in Mission: The Early Missionary Ordination Sermons, Charges, and Instructions* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1966), 1–4.

4. Charles L. Chaney attempted a comprehensive bibliography of missionary sermons published in North America before 1830 and listed Samuel Danforth's 1671 sermon as the first (Chaney, *The Birth of Missions in America*, 307–329); Samuel Danforth, *A Brief Recognition of New-Englands Errand into the Wilderness; Made in the Audience of the General Assembly of the Massachusetts Colony, at Boston in N. E. on the 11th of the Third Moneth [sic], 1670. Being the Day of Election There* (Cambridge: S. G. and M. J., 1671).

5. Albaugh, *History and Annotated Bibliography*, xi–xiii.

famously by Solomon Stoddard in 1723, “Whether GOD is not Angry with the Country for not preaching the Gospel to the Heathen?”<sup>6</sup>

Missionary publishing began in imitation of European societies who reported their fundraising and field work to churchgoers. Though sponsored by denominational interests, the magazines adopted an interdenominational posture, collecting reports and attracting readers across the Protestant spectrum. Organizing boards soon discovered the legitimacy journals brought to their societies, recruiting editors as early as they recruited missionaries. Their periodicals regularly featured solicitations for donations, donors’ names, and at times contributed amounts. Editors spoke of donations as a measure of morality: low revenues suggested low commitment to the gospel cause, reflecting greater urgency in moving the faithful to action. Whether to spark this action or to sustain religious fervor, missionary correspondence appeared beside funding reports, often to confirm what readers expected of foreign missions, that there existed “heathens” in the world and that such people could be transformed through evangelization. Despite at times profound theological differences between societies, the magazines shared reports and lifted content from each other. In this, the missionary press proved itself a significant medium for drawing denominational evangelists together under a common missiological metric. The mental mappings between foreign and domestic remained uncontested and unchallenged, missionaries alone traversing the two in a holy calling to win the world for Christ.<sup>7</sup>

Missionaries kept other records—journals, letters, internal reports, ledgers, ship manifests,

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6. Solomon Stoddard, *Question Whether God Is Not Angry with the Country for Doing So Little towards the Conversion of the Indians? This Is Spoken to in the Following Discourse by the Reverend and Learned Mr. Solomon Stoddard of North-Hampton* (Boston: B. Green, 1723).

7. My database compiled from original research and indices published by the missionary periodicals returns frequency patterns used to establish these observations; see appendices A and B.

and later, photographs—yet it was the magazine where they engaged the public.<sup>8</sup> Many letters and journal entries incidentally ran as magazine articles later, and these did serve to influence readers' perceptions of missionary activity. Even so, many missionaries sent private correspondence knowing editors would consider their letters for publication. Journal writings like Baptist missionary Lovell Ingalls's July 1848 entries show an awareness on the part of the missionary the record would find a larger audience. "As I have noticed in my journal these interesting events," Ingalls wrote to the *Baptist Missionary Magazine*, "permit me to make a few extracts." By then, Ingalls had been forwarding journal extracts for publication for years.<sup>9</sup>

The sheer size of the missionary press in the United States before and after the Civil War has presented a challenge to archivists and historians, episodically attracting interest as important source material, but not yet studied as a whole.<sup>10</sup> The volume of periodicals published before 1861 alone exceeds some 60 million words, or seventy-five times the complete works of Shakespeare.<sup>11</sup> Archivists have yet to consolidate into a single bibliography the missionary titles published in the antebellum period, though Gaylord P. Albaugh's work on religious periodicals published in the United States between 1730 and 1830 offers an impressive survey of an even larger corpus.<sup>12</sup>

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8. The collections of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions is typical; see Mary Walker, "The Archives of the American Board for Foreign Missions," *Harvard Library Bulletin* 6, no. 1 (Winter 1952): 52–68; J. F. Coakley, processor, "American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions Archives, 1810–1961: Guide," Houghton Library, Harvard College Library, Harvard University, <http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:FHCL.Hough:h001467> (archived at <https://perma.cc/27A3-P3KX>).

9. Lovell Ingalls, "Journal of Mr. Ingalls," *Baptist Missionary Magazine* 29, no. 1 (January 1849): 1; Michael W. Charney, "The Journal of Lovell Ingalls, 1838–1839," *SOAS Bulletin of Burma Research* 3, no. 2 (Autumn 2005): 464–474.

10. Notable efforts to archive missionary magazines include the Missionary Periodicals Database, Yale University Library, <http://divdl.library.yale.edu/missionperiodicals>; Day Missions Collection, Yale University Library, <http://web.library.yale.edu/divinity/day-missions-digitization>; and HathiTrust Digital Library, <http://hathitrust.org>.

11. By the numbers, over 50 separate print runs of distinctly missionary periodicals totaled more than 5,000 issues with an average of 40–70 pages per issue, yielding the estimate of 60–70 million words of missionary journalism before 1861; tracking all missionary content in the broader popular literature would certainly push the rates of public discourse on mission higher.

12. Gaylord P. Albaugh, *History and Annotated Bibliography of American Religious Periodicals and Newspapers*

A history of the antebellum missionary press confirms Joseph Tracy's assessment in 1839, that missionary periodicals encouraged a public interest in religious action, directed attention to multid denominational efforts of evangelizing abroad, and served to maintain communication across a growing and dynamic network of sending agencies.

### First Periodicals

Nathan Strong, pastor of First Congregational Church in Hartford, Connecticut, read sermons about missions and was convinced American churches could raise their sights beyond preaching to the Indians. The British across the Atlantic and the Moravian Brethren in the West Indies and Greenland had taken cues from successful European merchants and formed committees to manage their missions. Impressed by the Moravians and the British, Strong lobbied in 1792 for the General Association of the Congregational Ministers of Connecticut to organize a missions committee of their own. It would take another few years for the board to incorporate a missionary society, but in that time, other like-minded clergymen in New England prevailed on their respective assemblies to direct greater attention to foreign missions.<sup>13</sup>

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*Established from 1730 to 1830*, 2 vols. (Worcester: American Antiquarian Society, 1994).

13. *Connecticut Evangelical Magazine* 1, no. 1 (July 1800), 13–14, 37–38, 40; P. Mark Fackler and Charles H. Lippy, eds., *Popular Religious Magazines of the United States* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1995), 68–69; Paul Jeffery Potash, “Welfare of the Regions Beyond,” *Vermont History* 46 (1978): 109–128. Moravian historians have debated the origins of the United Brethren Missionary Society. J. M. Levering presented 1787 as the founding date in “The First Moravian Missionary Society in America: A Paper Read Before the Moravian Historical Society, September 5, 1895,” *Transactions of the Moravian Historical Society* 5, no. 5 (1899): 311–355. Other contemporary Protestant societies generally recognized the “United Brethren Church” as having established its missionary society in 1853; see William Butler, *The Land of the Veda: Being Personal Reminiscences of India; Its People, Castes, Thugs, and Fakirs; Its Religions, Mythology, Principal Monuments, Palaces, and Mausoleums, Together with the Incidents of the Great Sepoy Rebellion, and Its Results to Christianity and Civilization* (New York: Carlton and Lanahan, 1872), Table IV, p. 531; see also D. K. [Daniel Kumler] Flickinger, *Our Missionary Work from 1853 to 1889* (Dayton: United Brethren Publishing House, 1889), ix–x.

American Protestants had sponsored missionary agencies before, dating back to the first days of the Massachusetts Bay, Connecticut, and Rhode Island colonies. The colonial charters had each set as “the principal aim” of the colony to civilize and convert the neighboring Indians, and the governors of Massachusetts Bay even conspicuously drew an Algonquian native in the center of their official seal in the attitude of lowering his weapons and calling out, “COME OVER AND HELP US.” Since the first religious society in North America secured royal support in 1649, the “society” entity had meant an organization legally incorporated by law, charter, or some form of recognition of the British state. The republicanism that had replaced the monarchy in the United States had encouraged a democratic order for mobilizing administrative bodies, but cosmopolitan Americans sought for official recognition when launching an enterprise just the same. Though voluntary, the missionary societies emerging in the 1790s still followed the protocols of the chartered colonies of the 1600s. Instead of a royal charter or investor agreement, pastors working to found a missionary society in America deferred to an official sponsor and circulated a constitution for governing the operations of the society before embarking on formal mission work.<sup>14</sup>

Strong’s lobbying paid off when the General Association of Connecticut dedicated funds for a new mission and trustees drafted a constitution to organize the Missionary Society of

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14. Charles L. Chaney, *The Birth of Missions in America* (Pasadena, Calif.: William Carey Library, 1976), 158–166. The colonial charter for Massachusetts Bay had identified Indian conversion as “the principall Ende” of the colony: that “our said People ... maie wynn and incite the Natives of Country, to the Knowledg [sic] and Obedience of the onlie true God and Savior of Mankinde, and the Christian Fayth”; The Charter of Massachusetts Bay, 1629 in Francis Newton Thorpe, comp. and ed., *The Federal and State Constitutions, Colonial Charters, and Other Organic Laws of the States, Territories, and Colonies Now and Heretofore Forming the United States of America* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1909). On the Indians’ conversion, the Connecticut Charter of 1662 quoted the Massachusetts Bay Charter almost verbatim. Rhode Island’s charter mentioned “the gaining over and conversion of the poor ignorant Indian natives” (Rhode Island Colonial Charter [1663], online at <http://livelyexperiment.org/read-the-charter> [archived at <http://perma.cc/78C2-U4KK>]).

Connecticut in 1798.<sup>15</sup> The society had been preceded by the New-York Missionary Society two years prior, and both societies quickly discovered the difficulty in coordinating missions, raising funds, and communicating across, as one trustee put it, “the immense territory” of the United States.<sup>16</sup> The organizing committee of the Connecticut society envied Europe’s wealth of religious publications and pined for the days before “the independence of the United States” when news buzzed from all parts of the Atlantic. “That so few attempts, of this kind, have been made in the American church,” the committee wrote in 1800, “hath arisen, neither from a deficiency of zeal and abilities, nor from a want of valuable matter in this country to form a monthly publication, which would be interesting to pious minds.”<sup>17</sup>

Board members of the New-York Missionary Society had agreed periodicals could enhance the mission cause and repurposed a failing journal, the *Theological Magazine*, for missionary reporting in January 1800, launching the *New-York Missionary Magazine and Repository of Religious Intelligence* under the capable editorship of Cornelius Davis, a book publisher and avid supporter of missions.<sup>18</sup> The magazine represented the first distinctly missionary periodical to be published in the United States, but did not hold a monopoly for long. By July, the Missionary Society of Connecticut brought their own *Connecticut Evangelical Magazine* to a much larger base of subscribers. The American missionary press had arrived.<sup>19</sup>

The two magazines served the interests of the Congregationalist and Presbyterian clergy

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15. Amy DeRogatis, *Moral Geography: Maps, Missionaries, and the American Frontier* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 35–36; Missionary Society of Connecticut, *The Constitution of the Missionary Society of Connecticut: With an Address from the Board of Trustees, to the People of the State, and a Narrative on the Subject of Missions* (Hartford: Hudson and Goodwin, 1800).

16. *New-York Missionary Magazine* 1, no. 1 (January 1800), 3.

17. *Connecticut Evangelical Magazine* 1, no. 1 (July 1800), 4–5.

18. *New-York Missionary Magazine* 1, no. 1 (January 1800), 4–9.

19. Mott, *A History of American Magazines*, 1:133–134.

in New England, and likely to Nathan Strong's chagrin, their editors mostly ran articles about the struggling Indian missions, long theological treatises on Calvinistic doctrine, and over a hundred biographical sketches of prominent clergy and their wives—hardly the flurry of foreign mission communiqué the activists had envisioned.<sup>20</sup> The picture would change in short order and dramatically, however: between 1810 and 1850, the proportion of American missionaries serving Indians would plummet from virtually all personnel to only ten percent. What began as a couple of small, regional missionary societies grew by mid-century into several national sending agencies, each circulating its own periodical to thousands of subscribers. According to one historian, in the six decades after 1810—the year when, what would become the nation's largest missionary agency in the nineteenth century, the American Board was founded—around two thousand Americans served overseas, eighty percent of whom were connected to one of five foreign mission boards: the American Board; the Southern Methodist board; and the northern branches of the Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians. For the fifty years after the *New-York Missionary Magazine* and *Connecticut Evangelical Magazine* first took subscriptions, the religious press would skyrocket with the missionary titles multiplying apace.<sup>21</sup>

### **The Popular Missionary Press**

Though some independent publishers launched mission-themed periodicals, the most widely read magazines had institutional backing. The Massachusetts Missionary Society sponsored their *Massachusetts Missionary Magazine* in May 1803 and later joined with other societies in

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20. Appendix B, items 1–2.

21. William R. Hutchison, *Errand to the World: American Protestant Thought and Foreign Missions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 43–44; Albaugh, *History and Annotated Bibliography*, xxiii–xxx.

Hampshire, Berkshire, Maine, and Rhode Island to fund *The Panoplist or Christian's Armory*. Despite commanding an impressive circulation of seven thousand in 1808, the Massachusetts society opted to merge the two magazines, reissuing them as *Panoplist & Missionary Magazine United* in June. The *Panoplist* became the *Panoplist & Missionary Herald* in 1818, and three years later came under the auspices of the American Board, who decided on a new title, *The Missionary Herald*. When the Presbyterian-affiliated United Foreign Missionary Society merged with the American Board in 1826, its six-volume periodical *American Missionary Register* ceased publication and its assets transferred to the *Herald*. With the American Board at the helm, the *Herald* would run longer than any other missionary magazine of the period, being finally absorbed by the *Congregational Connecticut and Advance* in 1951. Its circulation would grow from fourteen thousand in 1822 to over thirty thousand in 1869, arguably becoming the most prominent missionary magazine of the century.<sup>22</sup>

While the *Massachusetts Missionary Magazine* evolved into the *Missionary Herald*, the Baptists in New England founded a missionary society and ventured a magazine of their own, the *Massachusetts Baptist Missionary Magazine*. The journal would struggle for years, its usually steady circulation around four thousand owing more to subsidized copies than paid subscriptions. The society's president and magazine editor Thomas Baldwin sought greater financial backing and in 1812 chanced lifting his magazine's fortunes by courting controversy. Three of the American Board's first five missionaries, all prominent Congregationalists—Adoniram and Ann Judson and Luther Rice—had switched to Baptist affiliation while en route to India. This shocked their sponsors who revoked funds, and Rice consequently returned

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22. Albaugh, *History and Annotated Bibliography*, 620; Appendix B, item 3. The *Christian Advocate* and *Zion's Herald* each posted higher circulation rates, though in addition to missionary reporting, served general religious articles and successfully garnered wider subscriber bases.



to the United States seeking donors. Baldwin seized the situation and pushed for a general Baptist convention to pool its satellite conventions' resources to keep the Judsons and Rice from abandoning their mission. Delegates from several state conventions voted to support the Burman mission and three years later, the General Convention endorsed Baldwin's newly titled *American Baptist Magazine and Missionary Intelligencer*. Circulation jumped immediately to ten thousand and less than two years later, the magazine made its first profits from subscriptions, which it forwarded to the missionary cause.<sup>23</sup>

Some committee members of the Baptist Board of Foreign Missions felt the terms of subscription limited the reach of the *American Baptist Magazine* enough to warrant an additional publication. In February 1818, the Baptist Board began releasing *The Latter Day Luminary* in five issues per year. Circulation remained high, around ten thousand by 1819, but dropped considerably when the Board of Managers of the General Convention assumed ownership in 1822. For the next three years, the *Luminary* would struggle to exceed a thousand subscribers. The Board of Managers terminated the magazine in 1825, the same year Thomas Baldwin unexpectedly died and left the *American Baptist Magazine* without an editor. They failed to secure funding for Baldwin's replacement and, as part of their strategy to keep the magazine afloat, trimmed content only to missionary news. These changes were reflected in the titular and editorial adjustments made between 1836 and 1861 by the journal's new sponsor, the American Baptist Missionary Union. The slavery question that would fracture the Baptist communion drove some to break from the American Baptists in 1845 and form the Foreign Mission Board of

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23. Rodger M. Payne, "Baptist Missionary Magazine," in Fackler and Lippy, eds., *Popular Religious Magazines*, 68–73;

Francis Wayland, *A Memoir of the Life and Labors of the Rev. Adoniram Judson, D. D.*, 2 vols. (Boston: Phillips, Sampson, and Co., 1853), 1:93–127; see also Joan Jacobs Brumberg, *Mission for Life: The Judson Family and American Evangelical Culture* (New York: New York University Press, 1984).

the Southern Baptist Convention. Two periodicals appear to have been sponsored by the Foreign Mission Board before the Civil War: *The Commission* and *Home and Foreign Journal*. In addition to these magazines, only the sparsely read *Macedonian* served Baptists in the 1840s and 1850s. Baptist readers likely valued the news coming out of *The Missionary Herald* as much, perhaps more, than the *Baptist Missionary Magazine*, given how editors struggled well into the 1870s to attract more readers.<sup>24</sup>

Like their churches during the Second Great Awakening, the Methodists eclipsed their Congregationalist and Baptist counterparts in missionary publishing. Their *Christian Advocate* and *Zion's Herald* quickly became the most popular weeklies in the country, and both served as the principal organs of missionary reporting for the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Boston Wesleyan Association, respectively. When *Zion's Herald* appeared, its first editorial set a main agenda to advocate “religion and moral subjects” and relay missionary intelligence of all denominations.<sup>25</sup> The *Christian Advocate* likewise collected missionary correspondence, though its visionary editor, Nathan Bangs, conceived of the paper more as a tabloid than a special interest magazine. The paper’s miscellaneous content appealed to Methodists from New England and the frontier settlements alike. Bangs tried a gutsy distribution model for the time—he provided complimentary copies to every Methodist preacher who supplied a verified address. The gamble paid off, exceeding even Bangs’s audacious calculations. Demand for his magazine swelled

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24. Payne, “Baptist Missionary Magazine,” 68–73; Albaugh, *History and Annotated Bibliography*, 548–550; Appendix B, items 4 and 6. The *Macedonian* operated at a loss until the American Baptist Missionary Union and American Baptist Home Mission Society partnered to relaunch it as *The Macedonian and Record* in 1867; see “American Baptist Missionary Union: Fifty-first Annual Report,” *The Missionary Magazine* 45, no. 7 (July 1865), 200; “American Baptist Missionary Union: Fifty-fifth Annual Report,” *The Missionary Magazine* 49, no. 7 (July 1869), 212.

25. Edward D. Jervy, “*Zion's Herald*: The Independent Voice of American Methodism,” *Methodist History* 25, no. 2 (January 1987), 91; “Statement,” *Zion's Herald* (January 9, 1823), 1–2; Robert H. Krapohl, “Christian Advocate,” in Fackler and Lippy, eds., *Popular Religious Magazines*, 101–109.

so quickly, he was obliged to reprint older issues for ardent subscribers. By 1827, circulation surpassed twenty thousand, a first for the American press at large.<sup>26</sup>

The Methodist editorial board wished to ride the momentum further and merged the *Advocate* with *Zion's Herald*, becoming the short-lived *Christian Advocate and Journal and Zion's Herald*. New England Methodists resisted the merger and eventually won enough support to establish the independent Boston Wesleyan Association, who absorbed the *New England Christian Herald* into *Zion's Herald*. Bangs returned to editing the *Advocate*, now under its former title *Christian Advocate and Journal*. While its sister newspaper maintained a respectable circulation around sixteen thousand, the *Advocate* shattered records, rising above a hundred thousand subscribers in the 1840s. Both journals lasted into the Civil War and increasingly chronicled the sectarianism arising over the slavery debate.<sup>27</sup>

The 1830s witnessed a storm of anti-slavery sentiment in the popular press, especially among abolitionist Methodists. Benjamin Kingsbury Jr., editor of *Zion's Herald* in 1835, could not countenance the anti-abolitionist articles appearing in the *Christian Advocate and Journal* with the morals of Methodism and pledged to keep his paper fully neutral on the slave question. His successor, William Brown, dove into the escalating furor after the Georgia Conference passed a resolution denying slavery was a "moral evil" when he declared the right of the New England Conference to hold the line against slavery and called out the *Advocate* for keeping silent. Discontented patrons canceled their subscriptions en masse. When Abel Stevens served as editor in 1840, he assured readers the *Herald* would not advertise abolitionism, but soon hedged on

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26. Krapohl, "Christian Advocate," 102; James P. Pilkington, "Methodist Publishing in Historical Perspective, 1865–1939," in *The History of American Methodism*, edited by Emory S. Bucke, 3 vols. (New York: Abingdon Press, 1964), 3:191; Appendix B, item 10.

27. Krapohl, "Christian Advocate," 101–102; Jervey, "*Zion's Herald*," 91–92.

his vow, publishing scathing editorials calling on the Methodist Episcopal Church to repent of obfuscating on the slave question. The Church would split into northern and southern wings in 1845, cementing the *Herald* as a northern paper. The *Advocate* attempted its strategy of neutrality by further generalizing its articles, eventually reporting almost exclusively on the “Progress of the War” once the Civil War erupted.<sup>28</sup>

While the Methodist press held foreign missions to a somewhat peripheral concern, the peripheries of the Presbyterian Church in the United States took a more active role in advancing the missionary cause. Presbyterians in North America had taken collections for Indian missions as early as 1763 and had teamed with Congregationalists in forming a number of interdenominational societies in the 1790s. In 1802, two actions solidified Presbyterian engagement in missions: the Synod of Pittsburgh instituted the Western Missionary Society, and the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church formed the Standing Committee on Missions. For the next decade, both bodies coordinated the funding and missionary recruitments across the presbyteries and made overtures to European missionary societies for greater collaboration in foreign fields. Their system was impressive by any measure: missionary appointments steadily increased, reaching over fifty in one year from the Standing Committee alone.<sup>29</sup>

Scattered societies and mission boards made for rough business, though, and beginning in 1816, Presbyterian agencies looked to consolidate their auxiliaries. The General Assembly motioned for the Standing Committee to become a more permanent Board of Missions representing the interests of the Presbyterian Church, and though the presbyteries’ societies

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28. Krapohl, “Christian Advocate,” 103–104; Jervey, “*Zion’s Herald*,” 100–102.

29. Joseph Tracy, *History of the Board of Foreign Missions of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, and of Its Missions*, in *History of American Missions to the Heathen, From Their Commencement to the Present Time*, edited by Joseph Tracy (Worcester: Spooner and Howland, 1840), 710–712.

would remain local and somewhat autonomous, the newly created Board would oversee their funding and missionary appointments. In 1817, the General Assembly cooperated with the Dutch Reformed and Associate Reformed Churches to organize the United Foreign Missionary Society with the objective of sending missionaries immediately to Indian settlements and Latin America and eventually to “other portions of the heathen and anti-Christian world.” By 1820, the Presbyterian mission network was vast and busy. It faced the same difficulties of correlating disparate business similar to what prompted the American Board and the Missionary Society of Connecticut to utilize print media. Soon, distinctly Presbyterian mission periodicals would enter the market.<sup>30</sup>

The first was the *American Missionary Register* headed up by the United Foreign Missionary Society in July 1820. Concerned the society duplicated much of the work overseen by the Board of Missions, the General Assembly dissolved it in 1826 and transferred its operations to the American Board, including its monthly *Register*. The seven-volume irregular magazine, *The Missionary*, published by the Presbytery of Georgia, had shut down the same year, leaving a lacuna where there had been at least some measure of Presbyterian missionary media. Not long after the *Register* merged with the *Missionary Herald*, the Board of Missions decided on a new magazine, the *Missionary Reporter*, which they intended as a modest outlet for notifying patrons of missionary activities. The *Reporter* lasted only a while, closing in August 1832 to a circulation around 7,500. During this time, Presbyterians were torn over whether denominational as opposed to independent agencies afforded an advantage to their foreign mission strategies. In the latter 1820s, the General Assembly backed mostly the work of the American Board rather than

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30. Tracy, ed., *History of American Missions*, 137–142; Ashbel Green, *A Historical Sketch of Compendious View of Domestic and Foreign Missions in the Presbyterian Church of the United States of America: Prepared at the Request of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church* (Philadelphia: William S. Martien, 1838), 55–59.

devote resources toward starting new agencies. The Western Missionary Society felt the financial pinch and folded in 1828, leaving whatever remained of its Indian missions to the care of the Board of Missions. Watching the denominational agencies cave to growing interdenominational trends, the Synod of Pittsburgh, which had originally incorporated the Western Missionary Society, motioned a second time to organize a society. The new Western Foreign Missionary Society published an official magazine at its inception, the *Foreign Missionary Chronicle*, which would run for almost nine years.<sup>31</sup>

Between 1833 and 1835, several presbyteries and synods from Kentucky to Alabama joined with the Western Foreign Missionary Society along with seventy-five local voluntary auxiliaries. The correspondingly rapid influx of financial donations, which surpassed the starting balance more than tenfold, outpaced the mission activities of the Board of Missions. A convention in 1835 issued a complaint against the General Assembly, claiming dissensions among many Presbyterians were evidence of God's chastisement for doing "so little—comparatively nothing" in the foreign mission arena. The General Assembly soon passed a resolution in agreement of the convention's statement and worked with the society to merge their operations and appoint a new Board of Foreign Missions. On June 7, the Board of Foreign Missions assumed leadership of the society's five missions and twenty-five missionaries, consolidated the various treasuries, and resolved the brief dispute over foreign mission strategies—the Presbyterians would sponsor a denominational society after all.<sup>32</sup> The Board of Foreign Missions continued its monthly *Foreign Missionary Chronicle* through December 1841, then appointed new editors and split

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31. Frederick J. Heuser Jr., "Presbyterians in Mission: An Historic Overview," in *Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.: Board of Foreign Missions Correspondence and Reports, 1833–1911: Guide to the Scholarly Resources Microfilm Edition* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Historical Society; Woodbridge, Conn.: Gale Cengage, 1996), 1–3; Appendix B, items 3, 12, 14.

32. Tracy, *History of the Board of Foreign Missions*, 710–712.

the magazine the following month into *The Missionary Chronicle* and *The Foreign Missionary*.<sup>33</sup> With the *Foreign Missionary* tailoring its reporting specifically to foreign mission interests, the *Chronicle* increasingly served articles on behalf of the boards over home missions, education, and publications. In January 1850, the General Assembly decided to make the arrangement more explicit and reissued the *Chronicle* for more general-purpose reporting as *The Home and Foreign Record*. The magazine maintained a higher circulation, near twenty thousand, well into the 1860s.<sup>34</sup>

### Smaller and Specialized Audiences

Beyond the Presbyterian, Congregationalist, Baptist, and Methodist presses, the several other missionary magazines published before 1861 reached narrower audiences, some denominationally oriented and others more independent. Only Moravians, Episcopalians, and Lutherans released denominational missionary magazines of this class, each with a circulation comparatively low and probably no more than ten thousand. American evangelicals had admired how actively Moravians had engaged in missionary evangelism, and many subscribed to their *United Brethren's Missionary Intelligencer and Religious Miscellany* during its twenty-six-year run. The quarterly, the first official periodical published by the American Moravian church, portrayed

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33. John Cameron Lowrie worked with his father Walter Lowrie, secretary on the Executive Committee of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions, on overseeing these changes and edited the *Foreign Missionary Chronicle*, *Foreign Missionary*, and *Home and Foreign Record* through the transition; see Charles Kendall Adams and Rossiter Johnson, eds., *Universal Cyclopædia and Atlas*, rev. and enlarged ed., 12 vols. (New York: D. Appleton, 1903), 7:342; John Cameron Lowrie, *Memoirs of the Hon. Walter Lowrie Edited by His Son* (New York: Baker and Taylor, 1896), 109–125.

34. “To the Readers of the Missionary Chronicle,” *The Foreign Missionary Chronicle* 8 (New York: 1840), iv; “Our Circulation—To Pastors and Sessions,” *Home and Foreign Record* 7, no. 1 (January 1856), 31; “Our Circulation,” *Home and Foreign Record* 8, no. 1 (January 1857), 31; Appendix B, items 14 and 16.

Moravian missionaries as indefatigable disciples, venturing into foreign communities and devoting themselves to pious living and patient evangelism as the means for drawing converts. The magazine's circulation remains unknown, but a successor publication, *The Missionary Telescope*, which appeared in 1858 as the monthly organ of the United Brethren Missionary Society opened to a circulation over five thousand and reached six thousand by 1861.<sup>35</sup>

Episcopalians had long nurtured missionary undertakings and were among the first American Protestants to enlist wide support for missions. Before the American Revolution, their British Atlantic organization, The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, sent Anglican clergymen and religious literature to colonies where the Church of England lacked a strong legal presence. The original charter restricted the society's activities to the British colonies, and when the United States secured independence, the SPG closed most of its operations in North America. But the transition toward an Episcopalian church structure after the Revolution left Anglicans grappling for an American identity and revived widespread interest in missions. A general convention in 1820 inaugurated the Episcopal Society<sup>36</sup> as the official missionary arm of the Episcopal Church and established a board of missions to oversee its efforts in expanding diocesan reach further west. The emergence of a main missionary journal, *Spirit of Missions*, in 1836 captured the growing Episcopalian interest in foreign engagement. The magazine would serve as the principal repository for Episcopalian missionary news well into the twentieth

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35. H. A. Thompson, *Our Bishops: A Sketch of the Origin and Growth of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ as Shown in the Lives of Its Distinguished Leaders*, rev. ed. (Dayton: United Brethren Publishing House, 1904), 613; Flickinger, *Our Missionary Work*, 63.

36. The full name of the society as constituted in 1820 was "The Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America"; see *The Washington Theological Repertory* 3, no. 12 (July 1822): 368–370; Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America, "Constitution of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America, as Established in 1820, and Since Amended at Various Times," in *The Journal of the Bishops Clergy and Laity Assembled in General Convention in the City of San Francisco on the First Wednesday in October A. D. 1901: With Appendices* (n.p.: Printed for the Convention, 1902), 562–564.



century.<sup>37</sup>

Lutheran missionaries arrived comparatively late to the scene, launching the *Missionary* in 1848 to sparse subscriptions. The weekly lingered for over a decade, however, and eventually came under the control of the General Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in North America. In 1860, the General Council attempted the first Lutheran mission in Africa, founding a school for boys in Liberia and a year later merged its *Lutheran and Home Journal* with the *Missionary* to become *The Lutheran and Missionary*, ostensibly as part of a broadening strategy to participate more directly in foreign missions. The magazine would run well into the twentieth century, chronicling the steady rise of American Lutherans' missionary involvement.<sup>38</sup>

Only a couple of strictly non-denominational papers emerged in the antebellum period, the *Chinese Repository* edited by famed American Board missionary Elijah Coleman Bridgman and the lesser-known *Madras Christian Instructor and Missionary Record* published by the American Mission Press overseas in India. Both papers targeted missionaries more than general readers or even domestic audiences. The *Chinese Repository* especially aimed for scholarly rigor in its repertoire. Bridgman began with a more proselytistic outlook, hoping to document the first missionary efforts in China, but quickly expanded the focus of the magazine to include the language, culture, and history of the Chinese. The monthly ran for almost twenty years to an extremely niche audience in China and the United States, but was regarded by some as the most valuable missionary periodical of its time. Its articles drew attention to the scarcity of scholarly knowledge about China and helped to invigorate studies in Mandarin and Cantonese beyond the

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37. William L. Sachs, "Spirit of Missions," in Fackler and Lipsey, eds., *Popular Religious Magazines*, 452–457.

38. W. H. Bruce Carney, *History of the Alleghany Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Pennsylvania: Together with a Topical Handbook of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, Its Ancestry, Origin and Development*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Lutheran Publication Society, 1918), 136; Appendix B, items 21–22.

circles of missionary and clerical readers.<sup>39</sup>

With the rise of a national spirit after the War of 1812, many missionaries insisted foreign work alone did not exhaust the biblical commission to preach the gospel. The North American frontier and increasing urbanization beckoned evangelizers to stave off backsliding in the churches. A few voluntary societies originally founded to support education and Bible distribution collaborated in 1822 to form the United Domestic Missionary Society, which by 1826 merged with the newly formed American Home Missionary Society and adopted the goal to consolidate the many small and financially meager domestic societies. In 1828, the American Home Missionary Society released *The Home Missionary and American Pastor's Journal* to a circulation over five thousand. The monthly served the society until 1830 when the Congregational Home Missionary Society assumed sponsorship of the magazine. The *Home Missionary* documented mostly missionary activities in the American West, devoting considerable space to Indian missions, and in the 1840s, the growing American populations in California and Oregon occasioned by the Gold Rush. American missionary reporting would focus most often on foreign correspondence, but as Protestant clergy dedicated greater attention to the emerging category of domestic missions, the *Home Missionary* would become the leading home missions journal.<sup>40</sup>

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39. The *Chinese Repository* had the distinction of being the only missionary magazine of the period produced abroad and circulated in the domestic United States. "No other periodical anywhere," wrote historian Peter Ward Fay, "not even Slade's weekly *Canton Register* or its rival the *Canton Press*, gave so complete a picture of what was taking place not just on the fringes of the Middle Kingdom but deep inside it"; this and circulation figures appear in Peter Ward Fay, *The Opium War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 83. Some archivists consider the *Repository* the most popular magazine among the missionaries themselves; see Michael Poon, "A Note on The Chinese Repository, Twenty Volumes, Canton, 1832–1851," Centre for the Study of Christianity in Asia, <https://web.archive.org/web/20080820101716/http://ttc.edu.sg/csca/epub/guides/cr.html>.

40. Arthur Judson Brown, *One Hundred Years: A History of the Foreign Missionary Work of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., With Some Accounts of Countries, Peoples and the Policies and Problems of Modern Missions* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1936), 6, 14–15, 20–22; David G. Horvath, "American Home Missionary Society Records, 1816–1907," American Home Missionary Society Records, Amistad Research Center, Tulane University.

The missionary societies, which by most measures had succeeded in galvanizing support across the country and drawing converts abroad, were not immune to stages of fracturing in the 1840s. Tensions over the issue of slavery led to many prominent missionaries splitting from their respective societies and joining to form the American Missionary Association. The new organization—deciding on a national focus in its name, thinking itself free of northern and sectional biases despite its overt sympathies with abolitionism—guaranteed the prolonged missionary debate over slavery would continue when its first business was to come to the legal defense of former slaves who had mutineered the schooner *La Amistad* in 1839. Their legal victory in the *Amistad* case and role in sending the mutineers as missionaries to West Africa in 1842 ensured their official magazine, *The American Missionary*, would be associated with the abolitionist cause in the minds of most readers.<sup>41</sup> Regardless of its political leanings, the paper commanded a sizable audience, reaching over 19,000 readers in 1855 and around 32,000 fourteen years later.<sup>42</sup>

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41. Joe M. Richardson, *Christian Reconstruction: The American Missionary Association and Southern Blacks, 1861–1890* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1986), vii. The Amistad Committee provided legal support for the forty-two Africans charged with mutiny and eventually sent missionaries to accompany the acquitted on their return voyage to Africa. The missionaries were transferred to the Union Missionary Society when starting a mission at Kaw Mendi, West Africa. Together with the Committee for West Indian Missions and the Western Evangelical Missionary Society, the Union Missionary Society formed the American Missionary Association with an overt abolitionist agenda; see Richardson, *Christian Reconstruction*, 263fn1; Howard Jones, *Mutiny on the Amistad: The Saga of a Slave Revolt and Its Impact on American Abolition, Law, and Diplomacy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 205, 255fn26–27. Three dissertations detail the beginnings of the AMA and its connection with the Amistad case: Clifton H. Johnson, “The American Missionary Association, 1846–1861: A Study of Christian Abolitionism” (Ph.D. diss., University of North Carolina, 1958); Clara M. De Boer, “The Role of Afro-Americans in the Origins and Work of the American Missionary Association, 1839–1877” (Ph.D. diss., Rutgers University, 1973); Maxine D. Jones, “‘A Glorious Work’: The American Missionary Association and Black North Carolinians, 1863–1880” (Ph.D. diss., Florida State University, 1982).

42. Lewis Tappan, *History of the American Missionary Association: Its Constitution and Principles, etc. etc.* (New York: n.p., 1855), 48; George P. Rowell, *Geo. P. Rowell & Co’s American Newspaper Directory, Containing Accurate Lists of All the Newspapers and Periodicals Published in the United States and Territories, and the Dominion of Canada and British Colonies of North America; Together with A Description of the Towns and Cities in Which They Are Published* (New York: George P. Rowell, 1869), 75.

### A National Medium

Nathan Strong might have applauded what the missionary press had become by the 1850s for its scope and content. The foreign correspondence alone proved more than a single reader could reasonably digest when taking the major papers into account. So eager for a national press rivaling the European papers, Strong might have celebrated the nationally titled “*American Missionary Magazine*.” And yet, it was precisely this periodical most closely embodying his vision that made copious use of its national identifier to reject the denominational societies. As the array of missionary titles matured, it gave tacit recognition the missionary press commanded a national audience while also serving increasingly varied interests and even dividing readerships, eventually, along sectional lines. Taken together, this body of American discourse reflects the protean atmosphere Joseph Tracy and other observers felt represented the United States and its culture.



## Chapter 2

### “Jew and Heathen”: Ethnic Foreigners, 1800–1815

Prolific editor Harvey Newcomb believed “unevangelized multitudes” emigrating to the United States posed an urgent demand for local ministry. “Not only the papists in Europe,” he wrote in his 1854 *Cyclopedia of Missions*, “but even the heathen from Asia, are coming to our shores; and if we do not wish to see the pagoda as well as the cathedral established among us, we must meet the case by the most vigorous application of the means of grace to our whole population.”<sup>1</sup> His volume set out to chronicle how Christianity (particularly Protestant versions) had expanded across the globe, yet he feared the sending nation itself could falter without *home* missions. This domestic enterprise had helped revive Christian faith in the home country before. Newcomb thought 1695 a banner year, the moment when the Commonwealth of Massachusetts had answered applications for funds from several destitute churches and thus staved off widespread backsliding throughout the colonies. He listed several organizations that had continued this legacy into the 1850s under the heading “home missions.” What set them apart from their “foreign” counterparts was the local focus—a basic geographical assumption about *where* mission happened.<sup>2</sup>

What had become a common distinction between home and foreign missions by 1854 took time to develop, a fact overlooked in encyclopedias like Newcomb’s and later mission histories.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Harvey Newcomb, *A Cyclopedia of Missions; Containing a Comprehensive View of Missionary Operations Throughout the World; With Geographical Descriptions, and Accounts of the Social, Moral, and Religious Condition of the People* (New York: Charles Scribner, 1854), 465.

2. Newcomb, *Cyclopedia of Missions*, 465–474.

3. Edwin Munsell Bliss, ed., *The Encyclopaedia of Missions: Descriptive, Historical, Biographical, Statistical*, 2 vols. (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1891), 1:437, 2:434–447; Henry Otis Dwight, H. Allen Tupper Jr., and Edwin Munsell Bliss, eds., *The Encyclopedia of Missions: Descriptive, Historical, Biographical, Statistical*, 2nd ed. (New

The home and foreign duality was projected onto the past, reaching as far back as the first missionary societies in the United States. Even while acknowledging how a foreign mindset emerged after the American Revolution, some historians still interpreted missionary activities as corresponding to a home missions movement. A “new kind of mission arose alongside the mission to the Indians,” R. Pierce Beaver observed. By the 1820s, he argued, a couple dozen societies had come to consider lapsed Christians part of their “objects of mission,” a category already including Native Americans and “the heathen to the ends of the earth.” Beaver and others located the impetus for home missions in pre-revolutionary revivalism.<sup>4</sup>

Revivalism did contribute to a growing interest in missions, however, the first North American missionaries did not talk of home-versus-foreign fields. For Protestant clergy before the American Revolution, “mission” meant propagating the gospel—“propagate” was the preferred term for describing what missionaries were supposed to do; “evangelize” would come to replace it in the 1800s—and the targets for missionary work were those apparently without the gospel.<sup>5</sup> They considered Native Americans as heathen as faraway peoples, casting their mental mappings

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York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1904), 302–311; Charles L. Chaney, *The Birth of Missions in America* (Pasadena, Calif.: William Carey Library, 1976), 115–128; Charles W. Forman, “A History of Foreign Mission Theory in America,” Chapter 5 in *American Missions in Bicentennial Perspective*, edited by R. Pierce Beaver, 69–140 (South Pasadena, Calif.: William Carey Library, 1977, 74–77; R. Pierce Beaver, “The Churches and the Indians: Consequences of 350 Years of Missions,” Chapter 11 in Beaver, ed., *American Missions in Bicentennial Perspective*, 290–293; Brian Russell Franklin, “America’s Missions: The Home Missions Movement and the Story of the Early Republic” (Ph.D. diss., Texas A&M University, 2012), esp. 20–62, 133–144.

4. Beaver, “The Churches and the Indians,” 290. Beaver agreed with Newcomb, Bliss, and other mission historians who cited the Great Awakening as the key innovation in missions that introduced a “home missions” mindset. Colin Brummitt Goodykoontz, *Home Missions on the American Frontier: With Particular Reference to the American Home Missionary Society* (Caldwell, Id.: Caxton, 1939) saw frontier settlement as the main factor. Franklin, “America’s Missions,” provides the first survey of the broader American home missions movement in the Early Republic. He develops a thorough account of early American societies on the basis of Beaver’s and Goodykoontz’s narratives without questioning the home/foreign scheme.

5. Compare the collection of eighteenth-century missionary sermons in R. Pierce Beaver, ed., *Pioneers in Mission: The Early Missionary Ordination Sermons, Charges, and Instructions* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1966) and nineteenth-century sermons listed in Chaney, *Birth of Missions in America*, bibliography; both offer comprehensive lists of missionary sermon literature, the most popular venue for theological consideration of missions before the advent of missionary periodicals.

of the missionary mandate along what amounted to ethnic lines.<sup>6</sup> By definition, missionaries were “sent,” and the clergymen and directors who dispatched them emphasized the *whom* over the *where* in figuring how to send them.<sup>7</sup> The methods of pre-revolutionary missionaries portrayed this basic missiology. John Eliot and David Brainerd gained notoriety for preaching in Indian villages and visiting Indian homes to try to build their proselytes’ fluency in the gospel. Whether sermonizing on the Bible or making day trips to nearby Indian communities, missionaries like Eliot and Brainerd spoke of all forms of propagating the gospel as relating to Christian mission. The idea of a “home” or “domestic mission” remained absent in their vocabulary.<sup>8</sup>

Without noting how Americans came to view mission with “home” and “foreign” orientations, historians have confused how the missionary societies themselves developed. Some

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6. By “ethnic lines,” I mean what Joyce E. Chaplin described as a “racial idiom,” a way English colonists between 1585 and 1660 renegotiated their relationship to Native Americans. “By applying discourse on nature to native American attrition and English vigor, colonists defined a new idiom, one which argued that the significant human variation in North America was not due to external environment but instead lay deeper within the bodies of its European and Indian peoples.” (Chaplin, *Subject Matter: Technology, the Body, and Science on the Anglo-American Frontier, 1500–1676* [Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001], 158, 160.) She contends the English before the Roanoke expedition approached Native Americans from a position of anxiety more than cultural superiority. Assumptions of traits shared by the English and the Indians gave way to a new idiom in which the English recognized certain essential differences. By the 1670s, they would feel entitled to reside in North America, finding in the epidemical diseases afflicting the Indian populations evidence of an English biological superiority. Concepts of “race” and “ethnicity” certainly did not go by such terms at the time, but it is clear eighteenth-century English missionaries continued in this racial idiom and granted themselves a privileged status relative to their Indian proselytes. (Chaplin, *Subject Matter*, 8–14.)

7. For instance, see E. [Ebenezer] Pemberton, *A Sermon Preach’d in New-Ark, June 12, 1744, at the Ordination of Mr. David Brainerd, A Missionary among the Indians Upon the Borders of the Provinces of New-York, New-Jersey, and Pennsylvania* (Boston: Rogers and Fowle, 1744), 10, 16; Beaver, *Pioneers in Mission*, 20–23. Missionary sermons characteristically defined “missionary” in this way, both practically and theologically.

8. James Axtell, *The Invasion Within: The Contest of Cultures in Colonial North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 222–223, also esp. chap. 9; Massachusetts Historical Society, *Society for Propagating the Gospel Among the Indians and Others in North America, 1752–1948: Guide to the Collection* (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 2008), <http://www.masshist.org/collection-guides/view/fa0301>. The phrases “home missions” and “domestic missions” do not appear in missionary sermons published in North America before 1790; see Readex, Early American Imprints, Series I: Evans; ProQuest, American Periodicals Series Online. The Society for Propagating the Gospel Among the Indians and Others in North America (SPGNA), cited by Newcomb and others after him as the first home mission society in America saw itself engaged in the same cause as its “foreign brethren”: “Brief Account of the Society for Propagating the Gospel,” *Massachusetts Missionary Magazine* 3, no. 10 (March 1806), 396.



of the original societies appear in histories of both home and foreign missions. Between early efforts to “propagate the gospel” and a well-established home missions movement by the 1850s (when Newcomb published his encyclopedia), a distinction arose separating the global mission effort from the domestic enterprise. New perspectives dividing missions into home and foreign initiatives further solidified and strengthened a gap between the foreign and the domestic, inspiring the notion of a distinctly foreign approach to mission.<sup>9</sup>

The first missionary magazines in America coincided with the emerging divisions between home and foreign missions. Predominant discussions about the foreign in issues published through 1815 reflect a transition from the earlier colonial missiology (centered on ethnic differences between the senders and receivers in the missionary encounter) toward the later foreign/domestic duality. Several factors contributed to this transition. Mission organizers at the time took cues from British agencies in setting up voluntary societies (as opposed to endowed associations), which produced an institutional layout in America geared for democratic change and businesslike assessment of missionary effectiveness. Later, when national societies perceived Indian missions had thwarted expectations, they reallocated efforts toward the more promising foreign fields, leaving local agencies to handle domestic concerns. Evangelism to Indian communities pivoted away from preaching, drawing on more educational tactics. Soon, Indian schools would come under the aegis of revival, and “home missions” would employ different methods than the foreign societies.

Before magazine editors could run reports from abroad, “foreign missions” remained

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9. Chaney, *Birth of Missions in America*, advances a similar argument, except holding to the permanence of the home missions throughout the colonial period, a point this chapter directly challenges. Chaney credited a post-revolutionary revival and the “evangelical impulse” carried over from earlier Puritanism for the rise of a global outlook in American mission. (Chaney, *Birth of Missions in America*, chap. 2, 97–98.)

predominantly and geographically abstract, allowing the ethnically oriented missiology from the colonial era to persist in missionary literature. Two precedents from missions before the 1790s provided the working scheme for distinguishing between the converted and unconverted. The first was biblical: editors commonly placed highest priority on the word of the Bible and consequently projected biblical history and prophecy onto the world. It was the Bible that said all people descended from either Jew, Gentile, or Christian populations, and on a basic level the unconverted represented the non-Christians in that triad. The second was social precedent: for over 150 years, mission had entailed ministering to the non-Christians the churchmen knew, and being in North America, this meant the Indians in their vicinity. The magazines exhibit a generic, obscure sense of distant peoples beyond Jews and Native Americans, only incidentally mentioning them before 1815. The New Testament “heathen” and Old Testament “Gentile” functioned coterminously. The unconverted largely applied to “Jew and heathen”—the former Jewish nation then living in the Diaspora and the nearby Indian nations. The picture would grow more kaleidoscopic after 1815 and into the 1820s as missionaries ventured further abroad, complicating this starting worldview with detailed accounts of the peoples of the Pacific, Africa, and Asia.<sup>10</sup>

### **Tragedy and Redemption of the Jewish People**

An epitaph made a vivid appearance in the *Connecticut Evangelical Magazine* fifty years

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10. Because so many of the magazines ran articles without attribution, I have had to search for authorship, sometimes without success. As a convention for this and later chapters, I credit the periodical’s editors for anonymous pieces, though it is fair to assume some (perhaps many) articles were first composed by another unnamed author. Many freelance correspondents submitted items for publication anonymously, some only giving their initials. In cases where correspondents were credited by only initials or a pseudonym, I maintain the signature where it suits the narrative, otherwise crediting the editors for the publication.

after the death of its subject: “Here lie buried the remains of / Rabbi Judah Monis, M. A. / Late Hebrew instructor / At Harvard College in Cambridge ... He was by birth and religion a Jew, / But embraced the Christian faith; / And was publickly baptized / At Cambridge, A. D. 1722.”<sup>11</sup> Judah Monis had indeed become a Christian, but not without controversy. Already the first Jewish person to receive a college degree in the American colonies, he accepted a faculty position at Harvard College in 1722, becoming the first Jewish instructor of Hebrew at the college level in North America. Due to a policy requiring all faculty members to profess the Christian faith and Monis’s subsequently rapid conversion to Christianity, many Jews and Christians voiced skepticism of his authenticity. For years Christians spread rumors Monis had secretly worshiped on the Jewish Sabbath instead of Sunday. Despite writing three books in defense of his conversion, Monis failed to convince a significant number of his contemporaries, and he passed away nearly forty years later still surrounded in dispute. His epitaph offered a final argument, a sentiment criticized at his death but celebrated in the missionary press:

A native branch of Jacob see,  
Which once from off its olive broke,  
Regrafted in the living tree,  
Of the reviving sap partook.  
From teeming Zion’s fertile womb,  
As dewy drops in early morn,  
Or rising bodies from the tomb,  
At once be Israel’s nation born.<sup>12</sup>

Etched into the tombstone of this converted Jew and distilled into a simple memorial appeared all the elements of the typical missionary theories about the Jewish people. Monis, in death, represented a microcosm of the Jewish conversion: the inevitable, biblically predicted

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11. “Thoughts on the Future Glory of the Jewish Nation,” *Connecticut Evangelical Magazine* 1, nos. 3–5 (September–November 1800): 91–94, 125–127, 161–165.

12. Michael Hoberman, *New Israel/New England: Jews and Puritans in Early America* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2011), 86–111; “Future Glory of the Jewish Nation,” 93–94.

“regrafting” of the ancient people of God into the Christian lineage; the accumulating conversions of individual Jews to one day culminate in a momentous repentance as grand as the Resurrection; the “ingathering” of scattered Israel, returning to Zion’s fertile womb, the land of promise. The editor of the *Connecticut Evangelical Magazine* selected such a memorial to legitimize the argument that the Jewish nation stood distinct from American Protestants and waited for their covenantal cousins, the missionaries, to initiate their return to the fold.

Missionaries on both sides of the Atlantic made preparations to proselytize among the Jews long before the first American missionaries were dispatched in 1816. The Jewish Naturalization Act of 1753 had guaranteed Jews in Britain the same legal status as other non-Anglican subjects, and yet, by restricting the Jews’ right to vote, Parliament incentivized converting to the Church of England. The small demographic of mostly middle-class Jews kept to their religious ways, and when the French Revolution of 1789 convinced evangelical millenarians the fall of the papacy (“the anti-Christ” in their minds) was at hand, some London boards began to call for a concerted mission to the Jewish people.<sup>13</sup> A party committed to giving the Jews first priority in mission work attempted an independent society for Jewish evangelization in 1796, but others keen on spreading Christianity further abroad edged out the society before it could form. Not until 1809 would the idea materialize into a sponsored agency. After a Jewish immigrant, Joseph Samuel Christian Frederick Frey, adopted Christianity and served the London Missionary Society after 1801, he eventually resigned and incorporated the London Society for the Promotion of Christianity Amongst the Jews. News of the “London Jews’ Society,” as it was called, reached

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13. Todd M. Endelman, *The Jews of Britain, 1656 to 2000*, Jewish Communities in the Modern World, edited by David Sorkin (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 68–69; W. T. Gidney, *The History of the London Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews, From 1809 to 1908* (London: London Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews, 1908), 29–30. Though the act was repealed the following year, “Jewish legal status remained unchanged until the next century.” (Endelman, *The Jews of Britain*, 76.)

American audiences, but not after years of speculation in the religious press about an imminent Jewish conversion.<sup>14</sup>

Like the British, the first candidates for Jewish evangelization in the United States were immigrants, and again like their British counterparts, American missionaries strained local Jewish-Christian relations by mid-century in their quest to realize the Jewish conversion. The tension remained so pronounced into the twentieth century, some scholars came to discount the original rationales that had motivated early missions to American Jewish communities. “In the late 1870s, only one mission labored among the Jews in America,” writes Yaakov Ariel. “By the 1910s, dozens had sprung up, employing hundreds of missionaries in a wide and aggressive movement of evangelism directed specifically at Jews.”<sup>15</sup> Like Ariel, others have taken the early twentieth century missions as the beginning of Americans’ coordinated evangelism to the Jews, practically dismissing the intellectual development in American societies and their close reflection of British agencies before the Civil War.<sup>16</sup> “Unlike in Britain,” continues Ariel,

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14. R. H. Martin, “United Conversionist Activities Among the Jews in Great Britain 1795–1815: Pan-Evangelicalism and the London Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews,” *Church History: Studies in Christianity and Culture* 46, no. 4 (December 1977): 437–452; Robert Michael Smith, “The London Jews’ Society and Patterns of Jewish Conversion in England, 1801–1859,” *Jewish Social Studies* 43, no. 3/4 (Summer-Autumn 1981), 275–276; Karl Pruter, *Jewish Christians in the United States: A Bibliography* (New York: Garland, 1987), 27–28. The *London Evangelical Magazine* took subscriptions in the United States and published several biographical articles on Frey before and after his conversion and reports of Frey’s ministry to British Jews; the *New-York Missionary Magazine* republished most of these articles, alerting American audiences to the ongoing debate over whether and how to prioritize Jews for evangelism. See “A Short Account of Mr. Frey, a Converted Jew, and a Preacher of the Gospel to the Jews,” *Evangelical Magazine* 14, no. 1 (January 1806): 3–7.

15. Yaakov S. Ariel, *Evangelizing the Chosen People: Missions to the Jews in America, 1880–2000* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 3. Ariel observed “virtually no academic books have been published on the history of missions to the Jews in America. Most works on the subject have been hagiographic accounts by members of the missionary community, or antagonistic Jewish ones that vehemently attacked the missions’ work. Neither genre does justice to the complex history of the movement.” (*Ibid.*, 2.) His work represented in 2000 a first attempt to survey the history of missions to American Jews and since has been regarded as the definitive scholarly work on the subject.

16. See, for example, Max Eisen, “Christian Missions to the Jews in North America and Great Britain,” *Jewish Social Studies* 10 (1948): 31–72; Mel Scult, *Millennial Expectations and Jewish Liberties* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1978); Jonathan D. Sarna, “The American Jewish Response to Nineteenth-Century Christian Missions,” *Journal of American History* 68 (1981): 35–51; David Eichhorn, *Evangelizing the American Jew* (New York: Jonathan David,

“where there was an ardent interest in the early and middle decades of the nineteenth century in converting the Jews, American Protestants lacked the necessary motivation, namely, an intensive messianic, premillennialist hope that viewed the Jews as the chosen people and emphasized the role of the Jews in God’s plans for the End Times.”<sup>17</sup>

Like the Monis inscription, however, such a messianic, premillennialist conception did grace the missionary press, and in abundance, too. The combined effect of missionary writing on the Jewish people and the frequent references to their role in the unfolding drama suggested for lay audiences the foreign resided not at great distances only, but was in their midst. They mingled daily with potential converts, a class of society not only demanding by their connection to sacred history to be proselytized, but crucial for the fulfillment of biblical prophecy and ultimate success. Far from being neglected, the Jews, both in America and abroad, factored centrally in the missionary calculus of the magazine editors.

The magazines before 1815 sustained this outlook, rivaling only discussions about the Indians in frequency and detail. Editors lifted accounts from British papers and ran theological treatises of their own collectively resembling a classic tragedy, like the fall of Rome or the decline of the Pharaohs. Together, their literature suggests the biblical precedent of earlier colonial

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1978); Jeremy Cohen, *The Friars and the Jews* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982); John S. Conway, “Protestant Missions to the Jews, 1810–1980: Ecclesiastical Imperialism or Theological Aberration?” *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 1 (1986): 127–146; Jonathan D. Sarna, “The Impact of Nineteenth-Century Christian Missionaries on American Jews,” in *Jewish Apostasy in the Modern World*, edited by Todd Endelman (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1987); Daniel J. Evesritt, “Jewish-Christian Missions to Jews, 1820–1935” (Ph.D. diss., Drew University, 1988); James Warnock, “To the Jew First: The Evangelical Mission to Jewish Immigrants, 1885–1915” (Ph.D. diss., University of Washington, 1989); Gershon Greenberg, *The Holy Land in American Religious Thought, 1620–1948* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1994).

17. Ariel, *Evangelizing the Chosen People*, 9–10. Ruth Kark argued Christian concepts of cultural supremacy expressed in missionary attempts to convert Jews (and others) is better explained with a view to the relationship between belief systems and place. The Jews offer an important counterpoint to traditional narratives for their diasporic representation. Jewish-missionary interactions remain relatively sparse in missionary historiography, Kark’s and Ariel’s work notwithstanding. Ruth Kark, “The Impact of Early Missionary Enterprises on Landscape and Identity Formation in Palestine, 1820–1914,” *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 15, no. 2 (2004): 209–235.

missiology continued, and the primarily ethnic formulation of foreignness was constructed on the idioms of racial and messianic millenarianism.

Christians since Elizabethan times had made tragic writing about the Jews standard fare. Every trope in Christopher Marlowe's famous *The Jew of Malta* (1589) appeared in the missionary magazines, coupled with a millenarian idiom connecting present conditions with certain biblical symbols. Like Marlowe, the editors played off the biblical template for interpreting the history and present state of the Jewish people, and their predominant narratives placed the Jews in the thick of cosmic events. Given this orientation, editors of the *Assembly's Missionary Magazine* as well as the *Panoplist and Missionary Magazine United* felt compelled to locate the Jewish people in time and space before pretending to missionary engagement with the foreign world. Both magazines reprinted one of the *Christian Observer's* longest serial articles on the life of St. Stephen for its detailed "introductory view of the first promulgation of Christianity."<sup>18</sup> But before giving any biographical detail, the writer (probably Josiah Pratt who would rise to prominence in the Church Missionary Society) felt it necessary to connect Stephen's preaching in the first era of Christian expansion to the present mission. The whole setting was Jewish: everything about Stephen's call to preach, the whole reason for seeking the conversion of the Jews, had to do with the Jews' epic fall from once "primitive purity and simplicity" to then total profligacy and gross ignorance. The Jews on their own could not return to their former glory as the chosen people of

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18. The serial ran the entire first year of the publication as a introductory history to the Church of England under the title, "A Series of the Lives of the Apostles, Fathers, Reformers, Divines, &c." Other editors borrowed extensively from this article, though none ever mentioned its author; see *The Quarterly Theological Magazine, and Religious Repository* 1, no. 1 (January 1813): 112–119; Eleazar Lord, *A Compendious History of the Principal Protestant Missions to the Heathen, Selected and Compiled from the Best Authorities*, 2 vols. (Boston: Samuel T. Armstrong, 1813), 1:13–60. The article was probably written by the paper's first editor, Josiah Pratt, who left after the first three issues and later headed up England's Church Missionary Society. The *Observer* began as a publication of the influential and evangelical Clapham Sect, a group between the 1790s and 1830s that championed missionary work in Africa and the abolition of slavery. Stephen Tomkins, *The Clapham Sect: How Wilberforce's Circle Transformed Britain* (Oxford: Lion Hudson, 2010), 183.

God—at present, the Jews remained at their “lowest state of degradation” and in need of divine intervention.<sup>19</sup>

The Jewish tragedy began in ancient history. For evangelical readers, the Bible after Jeremiah’s lamentations portrayed the Jews as a people on a course spiraling out of control, being increasingly absorbed into worldly society and losing their privileged status before God. The pivotal moment in their collapse arrived with the crucifixion of Jesus. “The wrath is come upon the Jews to the uttermost, for killing the Lord Jesus,” a writer going by the pseudonym Benevolus declared in 1800. Benevolus invoked the most common invective lobbed at the Jews by Christians: the association of the Jewish people with the worst possible crime—deicide, the slaying of God. Justice demanded an ultimate punishment, something Benevolus believed had been playing out over the centuries of Jewish history since the death of Christ.<sup>20</sup> The Jews’ fall from divine privilege had taken immediate effect after the Crucifixion. They became prime antagonists to the nascent Christian community and soon thereafter witnessed the destruction of their temple at Jerusalem and lost their homeland to invaders. Signs abounded of prolonged decay from ancient greatness.

None were more impressive to Unitarian editors than the racial degeneration reportedly happening in Jewish communities in India. Prospects for American missionaries had opened in Asia following commercial gains by the British East India Company. Investors in the United States circulated reports of new markets in India and societies eager to dispatch missionaries to the continent collected travelogues of English ministers publishing in European newspapers.<sup>21</sup>

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19. “Life of St. Stephen, The First Martyr,” *The Assembly’s Missionary Magazine; or Evangelical Intelligencer* 1, no. 11 (November 1805): 505–510; “Life of St. Stephen, the First Martyr,” *The Panoplist, and Missionary Magazine United* 1, no. 11 (April 1809), 489–490; reprinted from *The Christian Observer* 1, nos. 1–2 (January–February 1802): 1–6, 80–83.

20. “Future Glory of the Jewish Nation,” 165.

21. Michael Verney, “An Eye for Prices, an Eye for Souls: Americans in the Indian Subcontinent, 1784–1838,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 33, no. 3 (Fall 2013), 398–409.



A correspondent in 1812 forwarded to *The Panoplist* anecdotes from Claudius Buchanan's 1805 memoirs highlighting the spread of Christianity among Syrian Christians and Jews in India.<sup>22</sup> Buchanan's disdain for Hindu society bled into the American inventory of Asian missions—regardless of boasting a long history of Christianity stretching back to St. Thomas, the purported apostle to India, and “public worship” using the “same language ... spoken by [Jesus] in the streets of Jerusalem,” the “manners of the people” depended on racial pedigree. To Buchanan's and the correspondent's surprise, small towns of Jews suffered the persecution of barbaric, dark-skinned Hindus, and yet some Jews kept up Bible reading, a tradition the writers admired. Lest the scene betray a hope for the Jewish people, the account paused to stress the plight of the black-skinned Jews.<sup>23</sup>

Buchanan described a settlement called “Jews' Town” where whites still read from the Hebrew Bible and other Hebrew literature. Living a mile away, a community of black Jews had forsaken any shred of ancient promise and the hot Indian sun singed their skin as a consequence. He believed the black Jews had departed so far from the Jewish religion that they had become “hardly distinguishable from the Hindoos.” Race had explained how some averted barbarism: the white Jews preserved scripture-reading in their culture while the black Jews descended further into savagery. The tale departed little from common tropes of white superiority in English colonial reporting. But neither the white nor black Jews could escape recurring harassment. After a thousand years of living as refugees in India, Buchanan reported an Indian king “came upon

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22. “Evangelical Exertions in Asia, No. II,” *The Panoplist, and Missionary Magazine United* 4, no. 12 (May 1812): 543–554. Going by the signature “W.,” the correspondent appraised the missionary “theater” in Asia and concluded the work of the English had lagged. A “company of merchants [East India Company] make bad missionaries,” he wrote, claiming all prior hope of English missionary success had been disappointing. (Ibid., 553.) For Buchanan's memoirs, see Claudius Buchanan, *Memoir of the Expediency of an Ecclesiastical Establishment for British India; Both as the Means of Perpetuating the Christian Religion among Our Own Countrymen; And as a Foundation for the Ultimate Civilization of the Natives* (London: T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1805).

23. “Evangelical Exertions in Asia,” 545, 553.

them with a great army, slew a part, carried a part into captivity, and drove the rest,” which were “reduced to a state of ruin resembling the desolation of Jerusalem.” No matter what customs they courageously preserved, there would be no refuge for the Jewish people.<sup>24</sup>

While the town of black Jews languished in India, confirming Buchanan’s racial biases, editors tended to use the image of the displaced Jew to evoke pity. The biblical basis for directing missions among the Jews, whether in America or abroad, relied on the fact of the Diaspora. It was the trope of the diasporic nation—the people without a homeland contending against outside enculturation—that informed the terminology for explaining why Jews factored into Christian mission. Henri Grégoire’s *Essay on the Physical, Moral, and Political Reformation of the Jews*, first translated into English in 1791, juxtaposed Jewish custom with the customs of surrounding and encroaching neighbors, and this device characterized the diasporic nation trope in missionary reporting. Unitarian editors more open to cultural diversity than the average missionary quoted Grégoire at length, selecting instances where Jews were found among the Chinese and the Muslims. A colony of seven Jewish families who had moved to China under the Han Dynasty “never mixed with their neighbors,” one clipping asserted. They abstained from ingesting blood and strictly observed the Sabbath. Surrounded by the vastness of the Chinese land and population, the small community endured, holding fast to tradition and observing religious feasts and reading the Hebrew Bible “with a veil over their faces, in remembrance of Moses.”<sup>25</sup>

Others found proof of Jewish sympathies with heathenism going back to the New Testament era, believing their present dispersion was an inevitable outcome of earlier religious error.

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24. “Evangelical Exertions in Asia,” 545–546; Buchanan, *Memoir*, 117–118.

25. “The Jews,” *The Panoplist, and Missionary Magazine United* 3, no. 2 (July 1810), 74–75; Henri Grégoire, *An Essay on the Physical, Moral, and Political Reformation of the Jews: A Work Crowned by the Royal Society of Arts and Sciences at Metz* (London: C. Forster, [1791]).

Sectarianism broke apart the Jews before any outside invading force threatened the religion, British editor Josiah Pratt maintained. “The whole body of the nation had lost the true sense of their own scriptures” and “misunderstood the character of the expected Messiah,” not out of willful ignorance or unskilled interpretation of prophecy, but because “oriental philosophy had infected their religious opinions.”<sup>26</sup> Orientalism—what Edward Said, Meyda Yeğenoğlu, and other postcolonial scholars have associated with a widespread European fetish for the Middle East and Asia—had already graced British literature, religious tracts, and theater.<sup>27</sup> The exotic qualities British writers associated with the Orient served as a foil for their concerns of social refinement and sovereignty. By the 1790s, military interventions in the Middle East and growing economic dominance strengthened orientalist assumptions. A sudden panorama fad in London, with halls exhibiting 360-degree displays of Near Eastern scenery, revived interest in the East and sent the British literati abuzz with talk of “thieving” and “monstrous Turks.”<sup>28</sup> Seldom did European religious identity factor into orientalist discourse without Judaism being cited, an effect owed to at least two aspects of Christian thinking. By positioning the “Orient” in a subordinate and exotic relationship to the “Occident,” European commentators had to call on features readers would find alien. To introduce such unknown territory, they would employ familiar vocabulary: the common sense of biblical history where most readers had gained an awareness of “the Levant” in the first place. Running orientalist talk against the biblical reference point meant Jews would naturally fill

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26. “Life of St. Stephen” [*Panoplist*], 490.

27. Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Random House, 1978); Meyda Yeğenoğlu, *Colonial Fantasies: Towards a Feminist Reading of Orientalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Philip C. Almond, *The British Discovery of Buddhism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007). For important critiques of Said’s argument, see Ibn Warraq, *Defending the West: A Critique of Edward Said’s Orientalism* (New York: Prometheus Books, 2007).

28. Edward Ziter, *The Orient on the Victorian Stage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 24–26; Sophia Rose Arjana, *Muslims in the Western Imagination* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 104–131.

in the gaps, taking the middle ground between the far exotic other and the unquestioned self.<sup>29</sup>

Placing Jewish decline within an orientalist vocabulary suited missionaries steeped in British Israelism. For one strategy, it offered a geographical argument readers would find presently compelling: so-called oriental regimes like the Ottoman Turks inhabited the Jewish homeland, fulfilling biblical predictions of Jerusalem's invasion. For another, it helped explain the erosion of Israelite customs, allowing missionaries to claim a Jewish pedigree for peoples otherwise far removed from Jewish religion and culture. Whereas some British writers inherited a medieval outlook equating Islam with Judaism, in effect collapsing Judaism into orientalism, American editors selected pieces reflecting a clear divide between the two religions. The one would influence and even corrupt the other, but a total loss of Judaism would undermine the drama American missionaries relied on to forecast their ultimate triumph.<sup>30</sup>

The theme of inconsolable regret—the pathos of loss—permeates the diaspora trope. Clergy, especially those trained in Calvinistic theology, used regret motifs to lengthen the distance the Jews had fallen and heighten the drama of their need for redemption. Like the oracles of Greek tragedy, the biblical prophets served as regular prognosticators of ill omens to the Israelite

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29. Tudor Parfitt, “The Use of the Jew in Colonial Discourse,” Chapter 3 in *Orientalism and the Jews*, edited by Ivan Davidson Kalmar and Derek J. Penslar, 51–67 (Waltham, Mass.: Brandeis University Press; Hanover: University Press of New England, 2005), 51–56. These same effects of Jews surfacing alongside Near Eastern peoples in orientalist discourse can be seen beyond British literature. Jeffrey S. Librett argued an abiding German use of Jewish identity in strengthened the case of oriental exoticism in *Orientalism and the Figure of the Jew* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2015). Roman Catholicism, unlike British Protestantism and by extension American Protestant missionaries, constructed orientalist discourse around more imperial categories, leaving out much reference to Judaism. Ângela Barreto Xavier and Ines G. Županov argue Catholic orientalism, though also cosmopolitan, pivoted on what amounted to imperial competition and modern statecraft. As a result, biblical references were superseded by “imperial mapping,” or classical literature and art that had substantiated monarchical, as opposed to religious, claims of sovereignty. (Ângela Barreto Xavier and Ines G. Županov, *Catholic Orientalism: Portuguese Empire, Indian Knowledge (16th–18th Centuries)* [New York: Oxford University Press, 2015], xxii–xxxiv, 36–37.)

30. On the medieval outlook, see Ivan Davidson Kalmar, “Jesus Did Not Wear a Turban: Orientalism, the Jews, and Christian Art,” Chapter 1 in Kalmar and Penslar, eds., *Orientalism and the Jews*, 7–10; Suzanne Conklin Akbari, “Placing the Jews in Late Medieval English Literature,” Chapter 2 in Kalmar and Penslar, eds., *Orientalism and the Jews*, 32–33.

and Jewish peoples. If only they had listened, cried an exasperated Benevolus. The Jews had a multitude of chances and squandered them, incurring so much needless suffering. “Their case is without parallel in the history of mankind,” Benevolus continued, with so massive and vivid a collapse yet compelling “proof of the truth and inspiration of the Bible.” Christians canvassing the earth for proselytes continually judged the small pockets of Jews they discovered abroad as evidence the prophets stood vindicated.<sup>31</sup>

Benevolus and popular writers like him found a missionary mandate deep in the biblical history of the Jews. For these writers, the Jewish tale was no fable, no narrative for urging readers away from bad behavior, nor an allegory for what would follow backsliding Christians should they refuse to repent. What happened to the Jews relied on the same timeline of events attending the day of glory Christians so earnestly sought. References to the Gentiles took on meaning in the Christianized landscape; the Christians’ “heathen” was the Jews’ “Gentile.” In this light, the Gentiles as mentioned in the Bible compounded the plight of the Jews as perceived by the missionaries. “After the return of the Jews ... they are *no more* to be a prey to the Heathen, or the Gentile nations—they are not to bear the shame of the Heathen *any more*.” Benevolus tapped into the same Bible verses over and over again to explain this Gentile-induced shame: Jews in the time of Ezra experienced heathen persecution; Ezekiel predicted heathen invasions would overrun the Jews as a dark cloud blocks out the light; Zechariah, Hoshea, and especially Isaiah each warned of the corrupting influence of seemingly accommodating invaders. So long as Jews survived, the biblical narrative suggested, there would be Gentiles pressing on them from all sides.<sup>32</sup>

The “times of the Gentiles” elicited a strong millenarian consciousness, thanks to its reference

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31. “Future Glory of the Jewish Nation,” 126.

32. “Future Glory of the Jewish Nation,” 162; italics in original.

to sacred chronology. Anglo-American thinkers had few alternatives beyond millenarianism for conceiving of their relation to the past and the future, as ancient strains of apocalypticism had saturated Christian thought from the beginning. But Protestant theologians from the sixteenth century on began to interpret biblical events with an increasingly exoteric hermeneutic, a method taking signs of Christ's eventual thousand-year reign on earth as obvious and accessible. The apocalypse literature of the Bible (Daniel and Revelation) teemed with esoteric symbolism all the same, so the challenge soon became how to reconcile the events they considered obviously biblical with all other variables. This synchronic interest meant joining the present and near future to foreseeable milestones in the timeline leading to the Millennium. Grounded so fundamentally in their making sense of current events, the millenarian idiom would encompass more than Bible study—it would answer for descendants of Puritan New England and even Anglican Virginia concerns as disparate as how to colonize and whether God existed.<sup>33</sup>

With the stage for mission itself being thoroughly millenarian, allusions in the Bible to

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33. Ernest Lee Tuveson in *Redeemer Nation: The Idea of America's Millennial Role* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968) insisted the millenarian subcultures in America were divided by premillennial and postmillennial logics. His significant contributions have assured religious historians of a continued framework of explaining American millenarian thought in eschatological terms, in other words, relative to the theorists' conception of how the world was supposed to end. Others like James West Davidson and Donald Burke show how not all millenarianism turned on eschatology; see James West Davidson, *The Logic of Millennial Thought: Eighteenth-Century New England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978); Donald Burke, "New England New Jerusalem: The Millenarian Dimension of Transatlantic Migration: A Study in the Theology of History" (Ph.D. diss., Wayne State University, 2006). I would argue the context for the early missionary magazines' treatment of the Jewish conversion is more of the synchronic than eschatological consciousness. Nevertheless, the content of the missionary editors fits Tuveson's and Yaakov Ariel's "premillennialism" category.

For histories of American millenarianism, see also Ernest Robert Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism: British and American Millenarianism, 1800–1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970); Avihu Zakai, *Exile and Kingdom: History and Apocalypse in the Puritan Migration to America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992). For the utility of the millenarian idiom in answering widely different concerns in colonial America, see Leonard I. Sweet, "Millennialism in America: Recent Studies," *Theological Studies* 40, no. 3 (September 1979): 510–531; Beth Quitslund, "The Virginia Company, 1606–1624: Anglicanism's Millennial Adventure," in *Anglo-American Millennialism, from Milton to the Millerites*, edited by Richard Connors and Andrew Colin, 43–113 (Boston: E. J. Brill, 2004). For how Puritans in New England fashioned a millenarian interpretation of the Bible out of their primitivist theology, see Theodore Dwight Bozeman, *To Live Ancient Lives: The Primitivist Dimension in Puritanism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988).

cosmically significant epochs held interpretive value. Missionary writers intrigued by the final epoch, the “latter days,” believed they could identify a sequence of dispensations and extend the New Testament to the work of missions. This being the case, a dramatic event—Armageddon—attracted much speculation. If the great armies of Gog and Magog, combatants in this supreme, world-ending conflict, were supposed to represent contemporary state powers, then the Jews in the latter days would experience an assault unlike anything in their history. Totally surrounded with nowhere to flee, the Jews, the dispensationalists predicted, would find their only escape through God’s sudden intervention. Jesus would save them, and the Jews would finally recognize their Messiah.<sup>34</sup>

The signs did not prove so exoteric, however, though writers in the *New-York Missionary Magazine* and *Connecticut Evangelical Magazine* thought the prophecies plain to the faithful reader. When trying to divine what the symbols represented, writers tended to descend into confusing predictions. The basic blueprint associated Gog with the ancestral line of Japheth, and since most American readers adhered to a mythic view of racial lineage mapping the family of Noah onto large continental families, the modern Ottomans became prime candidates.<sup>35</sup> Maybe Gog referred to the ancient Scythians, Benevolus wondered.<sup>36</sup> But “the name of Gog” sounded

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34. “Future Glory of the Jewish Nation,” 162–163; “An Attempt to Establish the Literal Sense of the Prediction Relating to the Army and Destruction of Gog, Recorded in the Thirty-Eighth and Thirty-Ninth Chapters of Ezekiel,” *Connecticut Evangelical Magazine* 1, no. 8 (February 1801): 291–294.

35. Attempts to map the “generations of the sons of Noah” as referenced in Genesis 10 date back to Flavius Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, yet underwent a revival with the rise of premillennial interest in the antebellum period. Virtually all concentrated efforts to connect the sons of Noah to present nations traced the lineage of Ham to African peoples so as to explain the origins of the black race. The most common racial theory associated Shem with India and China, Ham with Egypt and Africa, and Japheth with Greece and Europe. For histories of American theologies of racial descent from Noah see David M. Goldenberg, *The Curse of Ham: Race and Slavery in Early Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003); Sylvester A. Johnson, *The Myth of Ham in Nineteenth-Century American Christianity: Race, Heathens, and the People of God* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004); Colin Kidd, *The Forging of Races: Race and Scripture in the Protestant Atlantic World, 1600–2000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

36. This reference to the Scythians likely betrays the writer’s reliance on John Pinkerton’s theory of European

Ottoman, therefore “in this prediction, [Gog] represents the Ottoman power with its connections of allied and conquered nations.” Theories could run wild, which was not out of bounds for most editors. “The period between the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple,” one formulation went, “in the reign of Zedekiah, and the return of the Jews under Cyrus, was but about fifty years”; “since the Roman conquest, more than 1700 years have elapsed”; therefore, modern observers should look for an army, perhaps originating in Turkey or even with the papacy, to attack the “desolate mountains of Israel.” As convoluted as the logic might run, missionaries and readers alike arrived at the conclusion these signs portended a restoration of Jews and scattered Israelites to their former glory. The tragedy would turn to redemption.<sup>37</sup>

Writers like Pratt determined the Jews had exhibited nothing of themselves to merit redemption, but they could not deny how the Bible emphasized Jewish exceptionalism. The extremes prompted a new rationale for why God would care so much about a disgraced people: he had selected this “remarkably obstinate and rebellious” people to “illustrate the freedom of his acting and its independence of any merit in the creature.” In other words, God did not want anyone to think they achieved conversion of the Jews on their own ability, or so the missionaries believed—he would prove his disciples’ credulity. Any action on their part to participate with God would have to begin with a recognition they could only follow his preordained design for the

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racial origins. Pinkerton’s *Dissertation on the Origin and Progress of the Scythians or Goths* informed many English treatises on Old Testament genealogies since its publication in 1787; he borrowed extensively from an earlier medieval association of Gog with Scythia. (Arjana, *Muslims in the Western Imagination*, 72, 133.) See John Pinkerton, *A Dissertation on the Origin and Progress of the Scythians or Goths: Being an Introduction to the Ancient and Modern History of Europe* (London: John Nichols, 1787); Ivo Budil, “John Pinkerton and His Vision of Ancient Scythians: ‘Si les Aryens n’ existaient pas, il faudrait les inventer,’” *Acta* 1, no. 10 (June 2010): 15–42; James William Johnson, “The Scythian: His Rise and Fall,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 20, no. 2 (April 1959): 250–257.

37. “Future Glory of the Jewish Nation,” 162; similar speculations appear in “An Attempt to Establish the Literal Sense,” 291–292.



Jewish people.<sup>38</sup>

Conceding to God the role in initiating the transformation, editors could not doubt the inevitability of the Jewish conversion. By virtue of his messiahship, Jesus stood to inherit the world and all its peoples. They anticipated a day when Christ would appear and claim that inheritance. “It is the irreversible decree of God the Father,” a secretary of the New-York Missionary Society prayed, “to give to his Son, the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession.”<sup>39</sup> This line, perhaps the most common sentiment of published prayers among American Protestants, placed all peoples, though staggered by differing levels of disobedience and ignorance of the gospel, on the same trajectory toward conversion. Their object was to facilitate bringing forward the day of conversion, and given the Jews’ background as the original covenant people of God, missionaries like George Burder reasoned the Jews ought to arrive faster than the more “benighted” peoples of the world. “How many profess an earnest and laudable desire for the conversion of the Heathen?” Burder asked in 1806. “But the calling of the Jews will, according to the unerring decision of the sacred scriptures, contribute in the highest degree to this desired issue.” Converted Jews would assist the Christians in reaching the Gentile nations and in bringing them to Christian devotion.<sup>40</sup>

Certain heathen peoples might resist conversion longer than others, but on the question of the Jewish conversion, the scriptures soundly affirmed they would recognize their missteps and seek God’s saving grace. One could not peruse the Bible without finding an abundance of prophecies proclaiming this “happy event.” John 19:37 enjoyed broad coverage in the magazines,

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38. “Life of St. Stephen, the First Martyr” [*Panoplist*], 493.

39. John M. Mason, Report, *New-York Missionary Magazine* 1, no. 1 (July 1800): 10–12.

40. [George Burder], “Address to Christians Respecting the Jews,” *Panoplist and Missionary Magazine United* 4 [1], no. 3 (August 1808), 123; originally published in *Evangelical Magazine* 14, no. 1 (January 1806): 24–25.

cited often for evoking feelings of excitement at the thought of the whole Jewish nation turning to Christ in a single instant: “They shall look on him whom they have pierced.” This moment sounded better than raw vengeance; it would combine pure vindication, their Lord revealing himself and achieving victory on the world stage, and what evangelicals themselves cherished as their own converting experience. Theologians had postulated one could come to remorse out of shame or compulsion when the threat of punishment drove the person to do right by God. Evangelicals especially thought this kind of penitence flat and not nearly so captivating as “godly sorrow,” a kind of soul-wrenching, genuine desire to give oneself over to God’s judgment and never sin again.<sup>41</sup>

This mode of repentance saturated Great Awakening sermons half a century earlier and was resuscitated in the revivals of the early 1800s. Ministers insisting on conscience-driven remorse moved away from preaching a generic confession of sin as the pathway to forgiveness and pressed audiences to confront their sinful nature, give themselves to the harrowing tribunal of God, and wait for the rapturous encounter of God’s grace. Revival references to sin and forgiveness appeared in predictions of the Jewish conversion, except the “godly sorrow” of the Jews would be compounded beyond anything the Christian knew. The Jews’ contrition would involve a

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41. Debates over proper repentance surfaced in the first Protestant movements; what Philipp Jakob Spener developed as a theology of “interior religion,” or what he called the “*pia desideria*” is likely the first Protestant conception of a Jewish conversion predicated on a “godly sorrow” realization of guilt. (W. R. Ward, *Early Evangelicalism: A Global Intellectual History, 1670–1789* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006], 31–33.) For the development of evangelical conversion narratives in England, which were exported to America via revivalists George Whitefield and others, see D. Bruce Hindmarsh, *The Evangelical Conversion Narrative: Spiritual Autobiography in Early Modern England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005). For the conversion discourses of the revivalists, see Richard Carwardine, *Transatlantic Revivalism: Popular Evangelicalism in Britain and America, 1790–1865* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1978); Susan O’Brien, “A Transatlantic Community of Saints: The Great Awakening and the First Evangelical Network, 1735–1755,” *American Historical Review* 91, no. 4 (October 1986): 811–832; W. R. Ward, *The Protestant Evangelical Awakening* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Catherine Brekus, *Strangers and Pilgrims: Female Preaching in America, 1740–1845* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998); Thomas S. Kidd, *The Great Awakening: The Roots of Evangelical Christianity in Colonial America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007).

profound realization of their culpability in the death of their Messiah. “The sorrow which the Jews are represented as feeling when they look upon the Messiah whom they had pierced is *godly sorrow*,” one theologian reasoned, “and consequently involves in its nature evangelical repentance.” True conversion, the kind the prophecies foretold, could come in no other way than in the combination of pressures evangelical preachers utilized to popular effect at home in America. Proper preaching of orthodox doctrines could prick the heart of the stubborn Jew. “The peculiar doctrines of the gospel,” the Reverend Giles Cowles urged the missionaries to the Jews, “such as the entire depravity of the natural heart, regeneration by the efficacious influences of the holy spirit, justification by faith alone, God’s sovereignty and universal government, or his decrees and election—these doctrines, which are so crossing to the depraved feelings of the natural heart ... appear to be fully and cordially embraced by those who are hopefully renewed.”<sup>42</sup>

When missionaries engaged Jewish audiences, they would hammer away at this set of evangelical doctrines, hoping to instill belief but often not realizing how in turn they drove a wedge between themselves and their proselytes by doggedly insisting on a narrow pathway to conversion. One commentator learned from “an intelligent Jew” how his experience with missionaries resembled being accosted more than joining in civil conversation. “After he had gone into considerable detail” of the sufferings of his people, the Jewish man scoffed at Christians’ supposed benevolence. “If you who call yourselves Christians have the benevolence which your Messiah professed, do not torture us with courts of Inquisition, nor wound us by contemptuous behavior.” This was no hyperbole. Both he and the missionary knew a wave of immigration occasioned by Spanish and Portuguese inquisitions facilitated them meeting each other.<sup>43</sup> The

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42. “Future Glory of the Jewish Nation,” 91–94, 125–127, 161–165; Giles H. Cowles, “From the Rev. Giles H. Cowles of New-Cambridge in the Town of Bristol,” *Connecticut Evangelical Magazine* 1, no. 2 (August 1800), 58–63.

43. Endelman, *The Jews of Britain*, 16–33.

missionary asked how Christians should approach Jews. The man suggested if they desired to convert a single Jew, they should begin by treating Jews as “fellow-men, and fellow citizens.” Curiously, if anyone could get through, it would not be European Christians. “You Americans have opened a door for such friendly intercourse between Jews and Gentiles as had not been known since our captivity,” he went on. “We hope that your example may influence other nations to alter their conduct toward us.” With time, maybe “the God of Abraham” might open the eyes of the Jews and “incline [them] to embrace Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah.”<sup>44</sup>

The whole Jewish awakening still required a spark, some kind of intervening event, to initiate the recognition of guilt. Writers like Benevolus thoroughly anticipated being the agents of that pivotal moment, emissaries of God sent to alert the Jews to their culpability in Christ’s death. They did not quite know, however, how to deliver on a grand scale. Ever turning to the scriptures for precedent, they identified only one event resembling anything in history like a national-level conversion of the Jews: the day of Pentecost, when thousands of ancient Jews witnessed a spiritual deluge of miraculous tongue-speaking and joined with the Christians. Even so, Pentecost had not induced godly sorrow; the Jews found motivation to convert out of awe for the supernatural. Total numbers remained low, anyhow, compared to the sizable conversion the missionaries anticipated. “Several thousand of the Jews were converted to the faith of the gospel in the Apostolic age,” went one estimate, “and a few individuals have been converted since, but the body of the nation have for many hundred years been given up to hardness of heart and blindness of mind.” The faithful awaited a more glorious spectacle than this, so glorious, in fact, it would match the Resurrection in intensity. “The removal of the blindness of the Jews and their return to the church will be

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44. “Future Glory of the Jewish Nation,” 164–165; “Mission to the Jews,” *Panoplist and Missionary Magazine United* 6 [3], no. 9 (February 1811): 426.

a wonderful event,” wrote an optimistic Benevolus. “*What shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead?* Their recovery will resemble a resurrection from the grave.” Coming from Christians, such expectations could not have rendered an event more momentous.<sup>45</sup>

Once writers considered the interpersonal ramifications of their millenarian expectations, the work on the level of the mundane and less romantic sphere of human-to-human interaction, they would recycle old stereotypes. The Jews lived near ports and in great trading centers, some believed, with the intent to secure money and temporary property eventually to remove “themselves and their property to Palestine, with the greatest convenience, and on the shortest notice.” The Jewish financial industry could potentially eclipse some empires, “as [the Jews] are very numerous, they will bring immense wealth, much more, probably, than could be collected in the richest empire upon earth.” The Jews would need the riches of a grand empire to tempt scheming Palestinians, once again employing Orientalist logic to set up the setbacks facing the Jewish people. Gentiles appeared in the Bible with ulterior motives, always conniving against the people of God. But this would only serve to prove God’s wisdom in blessing the Jews with a facility for amassing personal wealth. “It is not difficult to conceive,” Benevolus postulated, “that among the ambitious schemes of the Gentile nations, it may be for the selfish interest of some one, or more, to deliver Palestine into [the Jews’] hands; and that on their entrance a numerous army may be assembled to pillage and subjugate them.” Such would be the typical strategy, like the times of the Babylonian and Assyrian invasions of ancient Israel. The Jews would unknowingly get the better of their aggressors this time, however, since Christ’s coming loomed on the horizon.<sup>46</sup>

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45. “Future Glory of the Jewish Nation,” 161–162.

46. “An Attempt to Establish the Literal Sense,” 291–294; “Future Glory of the Jewish Nation,” 164.

While the focus hardly deviated from messianic-millenarian forecasting, missionary periodicals did keep track when someone publicly renounced Judaism and received Christian baptism. A Prussian Jew's conversion story in 1803 typifies the classic conversion narratives in the American magazines of the period. Solomon Joseph entertained repeated entreaties of his Christian wife and acquiesced after hearing a sermon on Hebrews 13. Pastor Charles Dewhirst's words elicited suspicions in Joseph's mind about his religion of origin. Feeling distinct impressions to pray that "God Almighty would lead him into what was truth," Joseph asked to hear more from the minister about Bible accounts of Jewish conversions. Dewhirst supplied the baptism of Lydia in Acts, and Joseph was convinced. He asked to be baptized, to which Dewhirst required he renounce the faith of his fathers and publicly acknowledge himself a sinner "according to the law of Moses," then profess "Jesus of Nazareth was the Son of God." Complying to Dewhirst's satisfaction, the reverend performed a two-hour baptismal service and local church members welcomed Joseph into full communion.<sup>47</sup>

This single conversion story encapsulated all the elements of missionaries' expectations of Jewish conversions: missionary interactions had been the catalyst for the candidate to re-examine his religion; a capable and experienced minister had provided sustained study of scripture; the candidate had mindfully assented to distinctive doctrines of Protestantism and had encountered God's divine judgment; the candidate had recognized Jewish waywardness and had renounced the religion; godly sorrow had attended the candidate's acceptance of Jesus as Messiah. Conversion stories like Joseph's reinforced for the missionaries and readers they anticipated accurately what God had planned for the Jewish people.

For all the talk about converting Jews, nothing by way of formal efforts to evangelize among

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47. "The Conversion of a Jew," *New-York Missionary Magazine* 4, no. 8 (August 1803): 314–315.

Jews materialized before 1816. Joseph S. C. F. Frey had succeeded in launching the London Jews' Society and had spent most of his time raising funds, but his connection to the society would end abruptly when allegations of philandering surfaced. Fearing Frey's scandalous reputation could tarnish their enterprise and hoping to disassociate quietly from him, the society paid for Frey's passage to New York City. Missionary magazines in the United States had followed Frey's work in London, and when he arrived in September 1816, he caused an immediate sensation. The former Jew who not only affirmed but preached Christianity now pledged to move American agencies into action. The American papers either missed or ignored Frey's former scandal, promoting to some acclaim his acumen in all things Jewish. A Dutch Reformed organization seized the opportunity and called a meeting of all Christians to consider whether to commence a mission to American Jews. Attendees, including Frey, selected a committee to draft a constitution for a new society. On December 30, the committee's draft was adopted and the American Society for Evangelizing the Jews was formally organized, representing the first missionary society in the United States dedicated to converting American Jews. Thinking Frey a "modern Elijah," leaders of the society appointed him their first and only missionary agent. Meanwhile in Boston, Hannah Adams, an admirer of Frey's London mission, convinced fellow Episcopalians to start a branch of the London Jews' Society in Boston. Their Female Society of Boston and Vicinity for Promoting Christianity amongst the Jews joined with the American Society in publicizing the new effort, and branches in Massachusetts, New York, and Maine began collecting donations for schooling Jewish children in the Christian gospel.<sup>48</sup>

Controversy over technicalities in the societies' bylaws lasted into 1820, and despite reorganizing and amending prior constitutions, they soon declined in funds and effectiveness.

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48. Eichhorn, *Evangelizing the American Jew*, 28–34.

The newly incorporated American Society for Meliorating the Condition of the Jews dispatched Joseph Frey to tour several states and raise support for a venture to establish a colony for Jewish immigrants. On paper, the tour seemed quite a success, with Frey recruiting affluent supporters including even future U.S. president John Quincy Adams and returning with several thousand dollars in donations. But, everywhere he preached, critics blasted the mission, arguing it violated religious freedom and contradicted the Bible. Rumors stretched the argument to full-blown conspiracy, alleging the society really contrived to make Presbyterianism the state religion. Plans for the Jewish colony evaporated when donors backed out one by one. For the next fifteen years, efforts deteriorated, amounting to what historian David Eichhorn called “puny and feeble” Jewish missions.<sup>49</sup>

Articles dedicated to the topic of the Jewish conversion dropped with the short-lived Jewish missionary societies. Donors particularly grew disillusioned with Frey and other missionary agents precisely when reports of British missions abroad made their way through the religious press. The tide of missionary articles on foreign destinations swelled by the mid-1810s as a chorus of sermonizers endorsed greater concentration of resources for foreign missions. Frey’s critics won the rhetorical debate, and the Jewish conversion became relegated to the one thing they had agreed on all along: it would happen in the Millennial day with the miraculous advent of the Messiah.

### **Heathen in the North American Wilderness**

For different reasons but with a similar outcome, the missions to the Indians—the only

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49. Eichhorn, *Evangelizing the American Jew*, 48–74.



other major focus of the first missionary magazines—commanded wide attention for their greater number and age. Indians, too, would fall into the class of the “unevangelized” after years of rampant speculation over their Israelite roots and eventual conversion. Accounts of Jewish conversions collectively advanced a straightforward journey for proselytes: the Jew converted by renouncing their religion of origin and affirming Christianity. For Indians who did just that, societies continued to send proselytizers their way, with plans still to convert them. The schematic plotting the conversion of the Indians deviated from ingrained expectations about the Jews—in practice, the Indians had more to prove before missionaries accepted them as Christian peers.<sup>50</sup>

What separated Jews and Indians on the score of conversion? In the case of Judaism, missionary writers continually adhered to the premise the religion in fact constituted a religion. They never referred to Jews as “heathen,” granting Judaism a more elevated ethnic standing. Indians, however, were rather constantly judged against perceived heathenish proclivities; they wished to be heathen if left to themselves and would need constant supervision for Christian faith to take hold. Prognoses of Indian conversion tended to lock Indian candidates for baptism in a bind: should they accept Christianity, they would invite the scrutiny of their ministers, but until they totally embraced the gospel, they would confirm their ministers’ suspicions. Displaying traits of Anglo-American living persuaded mission boards their efforts had translated into Indian

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50. A case from the 1820s illustrates this gap. David Brown, Cherokee convert and student at Andover Theological Seminary, embarked on a speaking tour under the sponsorship of the relatively new American Board. His objective involved promoting the missionary cause, especially to Native Americans, and went so far as to seek “converts” to defending Indian rights. Even dressing the part of the white American and looking scholarly did not automatically guarantee a receptive audience; Brown had to negotiate his upbringing as “one of the sons of the forest” who once “traversed the western wilds in pursuit of an Osage scalp” with his claim to Christian identity. Enthusiastic audiences supported his call to send missionaries to his Cherokee relatives—even after Brown made a convincing presentation the Cherokees had embraced Christianity to a large degree. (Joel W. Martin, “Crisscrossing Projects of Sovereignty and Conversion: Cherokee Christians and New England Missionaries during the 1820s,” in *Native Americans, Christianity, and the Reshaping of the American Religious Landscape*, edited by Joel W. Martin and Mark A. Nicholas [Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010], 67–89.)

conversions. This logic worked on the Jews as well, except Jewish candidates in most cases already exhibited cultural similarity; black Jews in India, for instance, ranked with Native Americans in their degree of heathenism.<sup>51</sup>

The “Jew” and “heathen” anthropology mattered for early American missions, as it identified for the missionaries where to preach. The biblical precedent for following through on mission objectives defined Jewish outreach; however, Indians only factored into the biblical landscape via the “heathen” category. Writers sympathetic to theories originating in Britain about Israelite descendants made invisible by the dispersion of the Lost Ten Tribes thought “believing blood” predisposed Native Americans to the Christian gospel. A fringe idea—that Indians shared an Israelite heritage with the Jews—would inform the sustained discussions of Indians as missionary targets only infrequently.<sup>52</sup> Tropes of “uncivilized natives” far more often flecked the magazines with proto-romantic images of childish Indians sure to relapse into savagery without constant missionary intervention. Foreign missionaries would remain steadfast in their assessment

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51. “Conversion” remained almost wholly a Eurocentric and Anglo-American-serving device from at least the early seventeenth century through the 1810s. Neal Salisbury, for instance, showed how the concept broke down in practice during the Powhatan uprising against the English in 1622, the First Indian War (King Philip’s War) of the 1670s, and the Pueblo Revolt of 1680, as “Christian Indians could act in support of non-Christian Indians against Christian Europeans.” (Salisbury, “Embracing Ambiguity: Native Peoples and Christianity in Seventeenth-Century North America,” *Ethnohistory* 50, no. 2 [Spring 2003]: 247–259.) Others have corroborated and complicated Salisbury’s assessment, especially when taking the Native Americans’ perspectives into account; see Daniel K. Richter, “Some of Them ... Would Always Have a Minister with Them’: Mohawk Protestantism, 1683–1719,” *American Indian Quarterly* 16, no. 4 (Fall 1992): 471–484; Michael D. McNally, “The Practice of Native American Christianity,” *Church History* 69, no. 4 (December 2000): 834–859; David J. Silverman, *Faith and Boundaries: Colonists, Christianity, and Community among the Wampanoag Indians of Martha’s Vineyard, 1600–1871* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

52. Prominent American Indian convert Elias Boudinot subscribed to James Adair’s hypothesis that Native Americans retained the sacred Hebrew name for God, “Yo-he-wah,” proving, they believed, a link between the Indians and ancient Israelites; similar theories of Indian origins gained moderate attention in the United States during this period, but not so much in the missionary magazines. See Kidd, *The Forging of Races*, 204–209; James Adair, *The History of the American Indians; Particularly Those Nations Adjoining to the Missis[s]ippi, East and West Florida, Georgia, South and North Carolina and Virginia: Containing an Account of Their Origin, Language, Manners, Religious and Civil Customs, Laws, Form of Government, Punishments, Conduct in War and Domestic Life, Their Habits, Diet, Agriculture, Manufactures, Diseases and Method of Cure, and Other Particulars, Sufficient to Render It a Complete Indian System* (London: Edward and Charles Dilly, 1775), 47.

of Indian nature, preferring to refocus their energies on alternative fields and fashion a new relationship—a domestic enterprise based on transforming the “Indian character”—rather than consider “Native Christians,” as they called them, their peers.

Early nineteenth-century missionaries pigeonholed themselves by their expectations and proselytizing narratives. Behind their assessments, they projected a superiority complex, a body of thought and speech holding themselves to a paternalistic ministry toward “heathen” subordinates. Many Indian communities exhibited precisely what the Eliots of the 1600s and the Brainerds of the 1700s had desired, and yet some missionaries as early as 1812 felt to run up the white flag on Indian missions.<sup>53</sup> Eleazer Williams, a Canadian missionary who had spent years among the Oneida, asked directors of the American Board to continue funding Indian missions despite the society’s own missionaries growing “discouraged” and thinking “Indians ... can neither be civilized nor christianized.” The declining proportion of missionaries to the Indians and the perceived failures of the missions indicated for some administrators they ought to leave that field wholly to local agencies and divert their attention to missions off the American continent. As the American Board gathered support into the 1820s, it allowed its Indian missions to diminish without ever calling the commission to preach among Native Americans fulfilled or considering the Indians a converted people. The emerging home mission societies would double down on aggressive tactics in the wake of the redistribution of missionary resources. Boarding schools designed to assimilate Indians into white society would appear a few decades later on the model begun by the first societies, some eventually so punitive students would have their Indian culture beat out of them.<sup>54</sup>

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53. Linford D. Fisher, *The Indian Great Awakening: Religion and the Shaping of Native Cultures in Early America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 84–106.

54. Eleazer Williams, extracts of letters, in “On Missions to the Indians,” *Panoplist and Missionary Magazine*

The Indians' pathway to conversion, like the Jews, was based on ethnic characteristics well set in the minds of mission administrators early on. Writers fit their feedback into a narrative construct of Indian inferiority for the first decade of missionary reporting. Rather than rely on direct experience to discover native sensibilities or approach Indian missions with a flexible mentality, they employed armchair reporting, setting their expectations with information gleaned from travelogues and histories by famous European explorers. "It is a matter of vast importance," wrote the editor of the *Panoplist and Missionary Magazine* in 1812, "that the Missionary should be well acquainted with the Indian in temper and character. I would commend to your attention the following books, wherein you may gain much knowledge and information of the customs and manners of our red brethren." The editor then listed works by American traveler Jonathan Carver, historians Cadwallader Colden and James Adair, and Jesuit missionaries and memoirists Jacques Marquette and Louis Hennepin. These works could acquaint the missionary with Indian "customs, manners, habits, and dispositions" and allow him to adapt "to such degree as to give them no occasion to say, 'The Englishman despises the way of the Indians.'"<sup>55</sup>

Mission boards worked to systematize the conversion of the Indians and sought reliable measures to gauge success. Moravians caught attention for their long attempts to learn Indian languages without interpreters. David Bacon of the Missionary Society of Connecticut heard of Moravian outposts among the Delawares and visited the community in 1800, meeting with Nanga, an interpreter and "the principal Chief" who had met with the United States Congress the

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8, no. 1 (June 1812), 21. Corporal punishment became more widely used in Indian boarding schools in the early 1900s, but still violent means of expunging Indian culture from student habits and behavior were utilized in the first schools of the nineteenth century; see Robert A. Trennert, "Corporal Punishment and the Politics of Indian Reform," *History of Education Quarterly* 29, no. 4 (Winter 1989): 595–617; Michael C. Coleman, *American Indian Children at School, 1850–1930* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1995); David Wallace Adams, *Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience, 1875–1928* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1995).

55. "On Missions to the Indians," *Panoplist and Missionary Magazine* 8, no. 1 (June 1812): 21–22.

year before. Since the congressional meeting, Nanga desired to hire a schoolmaster for helping his people become “sober, industrious and happy, like the white people,” and discovered Bernardus Harfon, a twenty-six-year-old Moravian who had already taught Indians and had begun to acquire proficiency in their language. Bacon reported how Harfon was the ideal missionary to the Indians. “He speaks their language about as well as they do themselves.—And I am persuaded that he is the best interpreter that can be found.” The Moravian approach would mean longer stints in the communities, mastering Indian languages, and building and staffing permanent schools. As the trustees of the Connecticut society considered a plan of action, they took seriously Bacon’s recommendations and implemented Moravian methods into their own missions.<sup>56</sup>

Armed with third-party reports and a strategy to educate the Indians, editors laid out the plan, all outcomes of which hinged on a ubiquitous construct of Indianness: these people were *wild*. As Indian missions played out in the pages of the magazines, multiple evidences were marshaled to explain the Indians’ inherently savage character. Indian territories, the setting itself of the missionary encounter, exuded wilderness, and wilderness societies suffered without law or culture. The major evidences made Indians out to be unintelligent, prone to drunkenness, and even when being industrious were irresponsible and allowed women too much autonomy.<sup>57</sup>

In the year of its founding, the New-York Missionary Society contemplated financing missions to Africa. It already had sponsored missions to nearby Native Americans and prospects there appeared bright: many Indians received missionaries rather graciously and when they

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56. David Bacon, “Extract of a Letter from Mr. David Bacon, Missionary to the Indians, to One of the Trustees of the Missionary Society of Connecticut,” *Connecticut Evangelical Magazine* 1, no. 6 (December 1800): 234–238.

57. Robert F. Berkhofer Jr., *The White Man’s Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978), 13–15, 39–40; Harry Liebersohn, *Aristocratic Encounters: European Travelers and North American Indians* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 45–60; C. L. Higham, *Noble, Wretched, and Redeemable: Protestant Missionaries to the United States and Canada, 1820–1900* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press; Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2000), 32–36, 46–50.

did not entertain the Christian gospel, they often expressed interest in educating their people in literacy. Diverting resources to Africa ran the risk of stunting the progress the missionaries were finding with the Indians. The society's magazine published a detailed dialogue between fictitious debaters: one Americanus, who represented the argument in favor of the Indian effort; Africanus, who represented the argument for sending missionaries to Africa; and Benevolus (not the Jewish conversion theorist mentioned previously), who more or less moderated the discussion and entered common doctrinal arguments. Africanus lamented how little Africa appeared in American societies' mission strategies. For him, the level of heathenism in Africa exceeded that of the Indians, hence more attention ought to have gone toward African missions. The Americans, he claimed, were "under great obligations, and special, cogent motives, to do all in their power to spread the knowledge of Christianity among [the African people], as the best, and only hopeful way, to promote their happiness in this life, and their eternal salvation." Americanus pushed back, not wishing to slacken the pace among Native Americans. "And would you have the missionary societies, and all the people, now relinquish the plan of sending the gospel" to the Indians "who border upon us, and turn all their attention and zeal to christianize the Negroes in Africa? This appears to me a whimsical scheme."<sup>58</sup>

Africanus labored to convince Americanus throughout the dialogue, an indication the writer himself likely struggled to persuade other supporters of missions to consider opening more distant fields. Their own sense of living in a continental wilderness gave weight to their Indian missions—so much remained before they could feel satisfied the Indians had converted in full. Whether in New York City or Connecticut, the editors viewed all of North America as

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58. "A Dialogue between Africanus, Americanus, and Benevolus, on Sending Missionaries to Carry the Gospel to the Heathen in Africa," *New-York Missionary Magazine* 2, no. 1 (March 1801): 25–34.

wilderness, and the native inhabitants still commanded first priority in their mission enterprise.

Dwelling in the wilderness, as they understood it, factored into God's master plan for the last days. Their presence as a people governed by biblical morality would cause the barren waste to "blossom like the rose," yet the atmosphere in the wilderness stifled civilizational development. Inhabitants were reduced to a subsistence economy inherently fostering competition for survival. Editors maintained in their publications a common expectation the Indians would have to fight one another for land and food, portraying the Native world as a place shrouded in darkness and destitution. Native communities resembled nothing like a civilized society to Anglo-American sensibilities, but they did conform to common languages and traditions—basically, they were bound by ethnic ties. Though they lived on the doorstep of American cities and settlements, their ethnic dissimilarity from Christians relegated Indians to foreigner status.<sup>59</sup>

The land, therefore, teemed with "tribes of savages" for observers like the English evangelical Thomas Haweis. The celebrated pastor published *A Concise View of the Present State of the Evangelical Religion throughout the World* in three volumes, selections of which American missionary editors ran in their magazines. Broadly regarded as an authority on global Christianity, Haweis intended his global survey of religion for evangelical students seeking out those areas of the world with a low Christian density. He reviewed each European state in full and took them for empires with colonial channels stretching over all the earth, but reduced whole continents like Asia and Africa to single categories. This reductive view fit his and the editors' geography: Switzerland and Russia were civilized nations; Asia and Africa were vast wildernesses. Though Europeans had colonized North America more than two centuries before,

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59. "The Constitution of the Missionary Society of Connecticut: With an Address from the Board of Trustees to the People of the State; and a Narrative on the Subject of Missions," *New-York Missionary Magazine* 1, no. 3 (June 1800), 178.

the land remained vast and untamed, and in Haweis's scheme, this meant it represented a field of missionary work more than an established colonial state. "The United States of America have long presented a widely extended field," he observed. "Within their limits are many tribes of savages, who are still enveloped in the grossest darkness with regard to religion." Haweis overlooked the dozens of Indian settlements already affiliated with Christianity and supporting churches of their own. For Haweis, Native America was one and the same as Africa and Asia, wide open expanses hosting ruthless wanderers.<sup>60</sup>

History confirmed the geography missionary writers cast onto the world. As they peered back into the past, they realized Indians had consistently resisted European civilizing projects. Some writers thought this meant Indians by default lived without law, a people lacking the ability to govern themselves. The exemplary missionaries they celebrated tended to be those who worked to install English styles of governance and domesticity in addition to instilling the fear of God in their proselytes. No one exhibited these missionary skills better than John Eliot, the famed "apostle of the North American Indians" who had raised up more than a dozen "praying towns" among Algonquian-speaking natives in the 1640s and 1650s.<sup>61</sup> For editors of the *Connecticut Evangelical Magazine* in 1803, Eliot's work, both among the Indians and in his writings, held canonical status in Protestant mission literature.<sup>62</sup>

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60. Thomas Haweis, "A Concise View of the Present State of the Evangelical Religion throughout the World," *New-York Missionary Magazine* 1, nos. 4–5 (July–September 1800): 316–320, 441–449.

61. Clergymen in the 1820s popularized Eliot's sobriquet "apostle of the Indians," which persisted in hagiographical literature for another 150 years. Jonathan Homer apparently coined "apostolic Eliot" in his *Description and History of Newton, in the County of Middlesex* (Boston: Samuel Hall, 1798), 5–6. Martin Moore picked up this title in his popular biography *Memoirs of the Life and Character of Rev. John Eliot, Apostle of the N. A. Indians* (Boston: T. Bedlington, 1822), esp. 12.

62. "Attempts to Christianize the Indians in New-England, &c.," *Connecticut Evangelical Magazine* 4, no. 1 (July 1803), 7–11; William R. Hutchison, *Errand to the World: American Protestant Thought and Foreign Missions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 27–29.



Eliot's Puritan contemporaries ministered among the Massachusetts with the hope of inspiring in their hearers the guilty conscience of the condemned sinner, and some, like David Brainerd and Thomas Mayhew, had performed more satisfactorily to this end than Eliot. But none so deliberately employed systems of government in his missionary work as Eliot, who set down in 1659 his mission strategy and political philosophy in what would represent America's first homegrown political treatise, *The Christian Commonwealth*.<sup>63</sup> Eliot's view of government and the Indians' apparent lack of it imposed an outlook that doomed the Indians to Anglo-American judgments of indolence and incivility. He first noticed how the Indians "were not prepossessed with any form of government" and thus required instruction "into such a form, as ... written in the word of God, that so they might be a people, in all things, ruled by the Lord."<sup>64</sup> Indian economic stability totally passed Eliot's awareness, and subsequently, his nineteenth-century admirers. A crucial first step in the Indians' conversion entailed adopting a covenant of governance in which Christ dispensed ultimate judgment and defined their moral system. "We and our forefathers have, a long time, been lost in our sins," the Indians swore at Eliot's insistence, "but now the mercy of the Lord beginneth to find us out again: Therefore, the grace of Christ helping us, we do give ourselves and our children unto God to be his people; he shall rule us in all our affairs. The Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver; the Lord is our king ... and the wisdom [he] has taught us in his book shall guide us." From top to bottom, the Indian way of life demanded reformation, foremost being the imposition of lawfulness based on the Bible. Only

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63. The full work was published in London as John Eliot, *The Christian Commonwealth: or, The Civil Policy of the Rising Kingdom of Jesus Christ* (London: Livewell Chapman, 1659) and held sway in the political thought of American colonists well into the 1700s. The English government banned the book on account of its preface, which had called Christ the rightful heir to the crown and proposed a more perfect government as found in the time of Moses.

64. "Attempts to Christianize the Indians," 10; original citation set in italics.

by counteracting their perceived lawlessness did Indians find acceptance as fellow Christians for Eliot and his successors.<sup>65</sup>

The *New-York Missionary Magazine* and *Connecticut Evangelical Magazine* devoted the bulk of their contents to Indian missions, particularly the drive to nurture Anglo-American legalism in Indian communities. Some clerical correspondents thought past episodes of intercolonial conflict between Europeans in North America and competition for Indian alliances induced the “numerous savage tribes ... to think of an alliance and confederacy for their mutual defense and safety.” They sought evidence that showed nations like the Narragansett only joined Indian confederacies and entertained missionaries to hoodwink others into believing they were friendly to the English. Suspecting sinister motives, these writers believed the Indians plotted in secret against their benefactors, hoping to unite through subterfuge all tribes into a “general confederacy to extirpate the English.” Those missionaries so convinced of Native American duplicity would demand a plethora of outward confessions of faith and signs of total adaptation to the Anglo-American way of life before trusting Indian conversions to be real.<sup>66</sup>

Most missionary writers dwelled less on possible insurrection and more often on stereotyped behaviors they found repulsive or begging for intervention. They almost universally regarded Indians as uneducated, even childishly ignorant, and naturally prone to drunkenness. Baptist missionary Elkanah Holmes wrote in 1800 to John M. Mason, one of the pioneers of the American missionary clergy and secretary of the New-York Missionary Society, and reiterated what Mason had supposed missionaries would find among the “Pagan” Indians. “The Senecas are great Pagans [who] are very incontinent—Many of them are great drunkards—But, as I

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65. “Attempts to Christianize the Indians,” 11.

66. “Attempts to Christianize the Indians,” 7; Axtell, *The Invasion Within*, 138–139, 161, 220.

expect to procure a more full account of their ways and customs, by a certain person that has lived above twenty years among them, I omit saying any more for the present.” The *New-York Missionary Magazine* featured Holmes’s admittedly rushed appraisal of Indian culture in a series of correspondence depicting Indians as idle drunks.<sup>67</sup> Among the prominent features in the series included what became an important tract in the early temperance movement in the United States, Hannah More’s *Parley the Porter: An Allegory*. In More’s tale, the keeper of a castle gate failed to protect his master’s fortress from robbers after entertaining a cunning gentleman’s offer of liquor and drinking to intoxication. Temperance advocates later warned alcohol could impair society as it had More’s flawed protagonist and open the door to temptation and enemy intrusion. America had to steel itself against seemingly mild indulgences or risk imploding.<sup>68</sup>

The tract’s influence blinded later observers to the fact *Parley the Porter* began in America as a missionary tract; its appearance in the *New-York Missionary Magazine* appears to be the first printing of the story in America and served as an allegory, at least for the editors of the periodical, of Native American weakness. Widespread abuse of alcohol had left Indians vulnerable to invasions of temptation and sin that so apparently wreaked havoc on their communities. The editors considered supposed Indian indolence and lawlessness direct consequences of the Indian proclivity for liquor. Cure their alcoholism, and one could likely cure all of their other social ills.<sup>69</sup>

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67. Elkanah Holmes, “To Rev. J. M. Mason,” October 29, 1800 in *New-York Missionary Magazine* 2, no. 1 (March 1801), 64–67. John M. Mason articulated his views of Indian missions in his sermon, *Hope for the Heathen: A Sermon, Preached in the Old Presbyterian Church, before the New-York Missionary Society, At their Annual Meeting, November 7, 1797* (New York: T. & J. Swords, 1797).

68. [Hannah More], “Parley the Porter: An Allegory,” *New-York Missionary Magazine* 1, no. 3 (May 1800): 205–217. As the temperance movement gained energy in later decades, the missionary magazines would frequently feature treatises on the immorality of alcohol consumption; see esp. the Baptist magazines (Appendix B, items 4.1–4.8) and the Methodist magazines (Appendix B, items 10.1–10.7).

69. Jon Miller identified *Cheap Repository Tracts* as the first appearance of *Parley the Porter* in America, however, the appearance of the allegory in the *New-York Missionary Magazine* predates this publication by three years; see Hannah More, “Parley the Porter (c. 1796),” edited by Jon Miller, *The Akron Heron: Materials in American Literature from Jon Miller at The University of Akron* 1 (2006), <http://jonmiller.org/PDF/AH01ParleythePorter.pdf>;

The first societies prepared their agents to encounter unintelligent people when commissioning missionaries. Directors of the New-York Missionary Society published official instructions in the inaugural issue of their magazine. The piety of the individual missionary was paramount—"Without it, the finest genius, the highest literary requirements, and the greatest eloquence will be unavailing." Beyond this, only formalities remained, like maintaining a respectable "outward deportment," administering Christian ordinances, and establishing schools for children. They desired data on the feasibility of further Indian missions, and requested the missionaries make a priority of observing "the language and customs of the Indians, and on the prospects of making settlements, and extending the gospel among them." Nearly every issue thereafter reported the outcomes of this directive. Missionaries from the field exhibited more confirmation bias than objective investigation and tailored their dispatches to the directors' expectations.<sup>70</sup>

Together, the society directors and agents infantilized the Indians rather constantly, speaking of the "untutored Indian" as having a short attention span and baby-like vocabulary. "This will demand of you much condescension, patience, and forbearance," the directors envisioned. "You must become children to adapt yourselves to childish understandings, and patience must have her perfect work, in bearing with ignorance, petulance, and slowness of apprehension." When the Indians were not interrupting their teachers, the missionaries could expect they would manifest little skill in interpreting the English language, and should leave "written discourses" for later. Above all, the directors insisted, the ministers should stay away from "strong liquors": "It is well known how fond the Indians are of rum.... Should they see you indulge in the use, it will whet

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[Hannah More], *Cheap Repository Tracts: Entertaining, Moral, and Religious*, 3 vols. (Boston: n.p., 1803).

70. Directors of the New-York Missionary Society, "Instructions from the Directors of the New-York Missionary Society, to the Missionaries among the Indians," *New-York Missionary Magazine* 1, no. 1 (July 1800): 15–25.

their desires, and they will plead your example.”<sup>71</sup>

Indians sounded uneducated, inattentive, and childish to missionaries, even when they impressed their visitors by their hospitality and generosity. When natives spoke in reports and letters, missionary reporters consistently laced their speech in caricature. Elkanah Holmes’s travels among Seneca and Tuscarora communities in upstate New York conjured feelings of pity for these “poor creatures ... perishing in want of knowledge,” despite his hosts’ “kind and friendly” manner, “more so,” Holmes wrote, “than I could expect from such real Pagans.” Holmes secured permission from Tuscarora leaders to build a school and send for more missionaries. He included in his request to the directors of the New-York Missionary Society a diplomatic overture of the “Sachems and Chiefs of the Tuscarora nation” that betrays exaggerations in intonation and syntax:

Fathers and brothers, we should be very glad to have our father Holmes live among us, or some other good man you would send to teach us the meaning of the beloved speech in the good book called the Bible; for we are in darkness; we are very ignorant—we poor.... Fathers and brothers hearken—we cry to you from the wilderness—our hearts ache while we speak to your ears ... we pray you not to be discouraged—don’t stop—think poor Indians must die as well as white men.

The arrangement was unmistakably paternalistic: in sensing the Tuscaroras’ need for the Christian gospel, Holmes could not help but see himself in a fatherly role, ministering to pitiable children without “friends to help [them] know the will of the Good Spirit.”<sup>72</sup>

Editors seldom corrected Indian dialogue when quoting unconverted Indians and often perpetuated stereotypical speech patterns making native peoples sound childish—however, like

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71. Directors of the New-York Missionary Society, “Instructions,” 18–19.

72. Elkanah Holmes, “Letter from the Rev. Mr. Holmes, Employed by the New-York Missionary Society, as a Missionary to the Seneca and Tuscarora Tribes of Indians, in the State of New-York,” *New-York Missionary Magazine* 2, no. 1 (March 1801), 59–60; “Address of the Tuscarora Chiefs, to the Directors of the New-York Missionary Society,” *New-York Missionary Magazine* 2, no. 1 (March 1801): 61–63.

the “transcribed” confession of Samuel Ponampam, an Algonquian of Natick, Massachusetts, they could go to pains to emend the speech of noteworthy converts. Ponampam, one of Eliot’s celebrated converts, offered a public confession editors of the *Connecticut Evangelical Magazine* found compelling enough to include in their history of New England missions a century and a half later. He had expressed an initial reticence to praying to the Christian god, thinking “if I did pray, the sachems would be angry, because they did not say, pray to God, and therefore I did not yet pray.” But the troubling news of a possible hell after death stimulated him to accept his own sinfulness and beg God for mercy. The devil might have snatched him, but with God’s grace, he hoped to demonstrate by his love of the English language and marrying monogamously he was a true believer. Ponampam’s confession satisfied all indicators of an authentic conversion for Eliot and his successors. The editors added a caveat with their republication of the confession, though. “It must be remembered, that these Indians could neither write nor read—that they pronounced these confessions before a large assembly of English, and were often interrupted by the writers, which is a sufficient apology for their want of method and expression.” In other words, they could not deny Eliot and others had altered Ponampam’s wording. They justified such editorial license as appropriate for conveying the spirit of the confession, not realizing their revisions exposed an underlying preoccupation with how much the Indians were taking on the appearance of English and American society. The converted Indian should experience greater fluency in the English language, so thought ministers intent on finding visible markers of missionary success.<sup>73</sup>

As mission boards collected reports, they looked first to signs of industriousness, which

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73. “Attempts to Christianize the Indians,” 11–13; Kristina Bross, “Temptation in the Wilderness: Ponampam’s Confession,” in *Early Native Literacies in New England: A Documentary and Critical Anthology*, edited by Kristina Bross and Hilary E. Wyss (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2008), 108–118; Charles L. Cohen, “Conversion among Puritans and Amerindians: A Theological and Cultural Perspective,” in *Puritanism: Transatlantic Perspectives on a Seventeenth-Century Anglo-American Faith*, edited by Francis J. Bremer (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1993), 244–249.

missionaries in the field felt required to address. The Tuscaroras impressed Elkanah Holmes not for their receptivity, as important as that was for his prospects among them, but for their work ethic. “They are, perhaps, more industrious than any Indian tribe in these parts,” he reported to the New-York Missionary Society, “many of the men in the field (as well as the women) by planting, hoeing, and harvesting their corn ... which (I am informed) is not the custom of the Senecas or any of the western tribes, for among them the women do all the work in the field.” Holmes referenced a trope about Indian women that had circulated since first contact, what later went under the sexually charged name “squaw drudgery.” Many European men understood work arrangements between Indian women and men to amount to exploitation of women while the men lazed about, and later missionary writers worried the women enjoyed more autonomy as a result. The parity between male and female industriousness Holmes perceived in the Tuscarora farming culture confirmed his preference for male dominance. Weighed against the working habits of Indian men and women against the supposition of “squaw drudgery” told Holmes and the magazine editors this case showed evidence of Christianity taking hold; a righteous society held men accountable to their duties.<sup>74</sup>

But this observation fell in line with a confirmation bias as old as John Eliot’s praying towns—the Senecas were in the thick of a revitalization movement led by the famed Senecan and Iroquoian prophet Sganyodaiyo (“Handsome Lake” in English), and resisted Protestant civilizing projects with missionaries of their own who promoted their indigenous religion to other tribes. When faced with similar Indian communities who exhibited differing levels of receptivity to his preaching, Holmes resorted to traits of Anglo-American domesticity—like men

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74. Holmes, “Letter from the Rev. Mr. Holmes,” 59–60; David D. Smits, “The ‘Squaw Drudge’: A Prime Index of Savagism,” *Ethnohistory* 29, no. 4 (Autumn 1982): 281–306.

and women tending the fields and raising children together—to ascertain where he had found authentic converts. His peers did the same in their interpretation of history. Eliot’s converts “upon renouncing their old religion, and receiving Christianity, appeared desirous of a more fixed residence together, and of conforming, in a considerable degree, to the English mode of living,” they wrote over a century after the fact.<sup>75</sup>

Especially when Indians surprised reporters with their accommodations did the domesticity metric serve to keep Indians in the class of the unconverted. David Bacon had embarked on his early mission to the Delawares expecting to “have to lie upon the ground” out in the open far from “civilized people,” “in a dreary wilderness,” “with nothing better than an Indian hut, for a house, and a blanket for a bed.” His proselytes shocked him, giving him “as good a bed, and as good board as I should have had, if I had remained in Connecticut.” The Moravians there had done so well in their ministry, Bacon could converse with Delaware strangers and be received cordially, in good English taste. “When I arrived ... the old Sachem ... appeared very friendly.... They then shook hands with me, very affectionately wished me the blessing of the great Spirit, and retired to their council-house.” He reported nothing but excellent prospects going forward. And yet, the surprise of the Indians’ “civilized intercourse” and appetizing food did not displace Bacon’s assumption the Delawares and Senecas still required significant missionary exertion. He would continue to work with the trustees of the Missionary Society of Connecticut to build a broad coalition of evangelizers to continue work among the Delaware. The field was still open in New York Indian country, regardless of first-rate Moravian missionaries residing there and ample signs of Anglo-American enculturation. More work remained in educating the Indians in religion

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75. Matthew Dennis, *Seneca Possessed: Indians, Witchcraft, and Power in the Early American Republic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 65–80; “Attempts to Christianize the Indians,” 10.



and the English language before Bacon and his sponsoring society could accept the community as becoming self-sustaining enough to no longer warrant missionary evangelism.<sup>76</sup>

### Mobilizing “Home” Societies

News spread of British missions during the first decade of the nineteenth century, firing up students at Andover and Yale to campaign for foreign missions. The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions grew out of this early student activism, and by 1810, it set a committee on the task of determining an ideal foreign destination for its first missionaries. This organization, long held by historians and missiologists to represent the first major enterprise of the American foreign missions movement, initially collapsed terms—the first committee report announced the resolution to establish missions in the Burman empire *and* among the Kahnawake Indians. Though it bore “foreign missions” in its title, the American Board still conceived of its mission as mostly proselytizing among Native Americans in the homeland. After the first of the Board’s missionaries to India switched affiliation to the Baptists en route, the bulk of American Board personnel would remain in the Indian missions. The foreign resided nearby, in the North American “wilderness.”<sup>77</sup>

At the outset, the American Board, like so many of the regional societies in the United States, recognized they lagged behind the British. “The Christians of Great Britain are, indeed, ardently engaged in the glorious work of evangelizing the nations,” the first annual report

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76. Bacon, “Extract of a Letter,” 236; “Religious Intelligence: Missionaries,” *Connecticut Evangelical Magazine* 1, no. 7 (January 1801), 280.

77. American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, “Address to the Christian Public,” in *First Ten Annual Reports of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, With Other Documents of the Board*, 25–26 (Boston: Crocker and Brewster, 1834).

admitted. They were to join in a cause already led by British Protestants, and given their mutual heritage, collaboration was feasible, despite recurring political tensions between their respective governments. Watching with interest in the activities of the British societies, magazine editors learned of a Scottish movement emerging from the venerable Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge. Unlike the States where a clearer distinction existed between pastors and missionaries, ministers in England took up itinerancies to propagate the gospel in addition to traditional pastoral work. By 1797, a group of preachers proposed a new association for “entering the same great field” as the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge and the Anglican Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, but with sending the gospel to “their neighbours around them” as the objective. The organizers imagined the work of “propagating the gospel” in terms of teaching prayer, distributing tracts, and holding Sabbath schools, the same tactics they saw in the missions abroad. Their newly incorporated Society for Propagating the Gospel at Home appeared so radical to some that the charter members had to convince them their design had not been to form a new sect.<sup>78</sup>

Agents of the American Society for Promoting the Gospel among the Indians and Others in North America kept a correspondence with the Society for Propagating the Gospel at Home and soon advertised “home missions” as a core component of their mission. The first references in the magazines to a distinctly “home mission” organization pointed to the American Society, and as regional societies revised their long-term strategies, American boards would consolidate and forward funds to emerging national associations. With the end of the War of 1812, the American Board ventured further abroad while the American Society assumed the mantle of “domestic

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78. American Board, “Address to the Christian Public,” 25; “Preface,” *The Missionary Magazine* [London] 38 (July 15, 1799), ii–iii, 313.

mission” work.<sup>79</sup> The scale seemed appropriate—faraway fields were booming as the British colonized more lands and Native Americans were slow to convert. Fundraisers found added utility in tagging campaigns as either “home” or “foreign” enterprises. The switch gave audiences a more concrete separation between themselves and the foreign. Missionary magazines reflected immediately the new foreign outlook, running more pieces on mission efforts beyond the North American continent with far greater frequency and detail. “Ameliorating the condition of the Jews” and ministering to Indians lost their foreign connotations in missionary discourse, moving instead toward the realm of the domestic, an undertaking to be realized at home.<sup>80</sup>

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79. Colin Brummitt Goodykoontz attributed the greater home missions involvement after the War of 1812 to “a general movement to substitute national for local societies” and relied on Frederick Jackson Turner’s frontier thesis to argue the shift stemmed from greater interest in the American frontiers. He argued the unique challenges of frontier evangelism prompted home missions boards to reorganize into more effective systems. Nevertheless, Goodykoontz admitted the periodization he prescribed to these developments was “arbitrary.” (Goodykoontz, *Home Missions on the American Frontier*, 115–116.)

80. Carol Devens, “‘If We Get the Girls, We Get the Race’: Missionary Education of Native American Girls,” *Journal of World History* 3, no. 2 (1992), 220–221; “Brief Account of the SPG,” 396; Peter Thacher, “A Brief History of the Society for Propagating the Gospel,” in *The Society for Propagating the Gospel among the Indians and Others in North America*, 23–43 (n.p.: University Press, 1887), 23–25; Peter Thacher, “Historical Skeetch [sic] of the Institution, Design, &c. of the Society for Propagating the Gospel among the Indians and Others in North America,” in *The Society for Propagating the Gospel among the Indians and Others in North America*, 3–22.

### Chapter 3

#### “Satan’s Seat”: Tropical Foreigners, 1816–1823

Nothing could have prepared the Reverend Daniel Tyerman fully for what he would encounter during his tour of the London Missionary Society’s southern outposts. The English minister wrote home in 1821 saying he had found “Satan’s seat” in the Pacific island of Tahiti. “If ever that awful being were allowed an incarnation, it was here,” he feared. The horrors he had seen convinced him no people on earth abetted evil as completely as the Tahitians. “I saw one woman the other day,” he exclaimed, “who had destroyed eight of her own offspring; I have heard of another who killed nine, another 17, another twenty!!!” Tyerman surely did not think these women bore so many pregnancies to full term; he likely heard accounts of serial abortions, no less shocking to his moral sensibilities than if born infants had been murdered. Anyone possessed of a revulsion toward her own offspring could hardly count as a human being, but lest the reader think this was all, Tyerman hastened to say even among those survivors of such rampant infanticide, horrible thievery and unrestrained passion “were indulged in the utmost possible extent.”<sup>1</sup>

Zechariah Lewis, editor of the *American Missionary Register*, reprinted Tyerman’s letter, which had run in the *London Missionary Chronicle* previously, not simply for inducing shock and awe in readers’ minds. Tyerman bore dramatic, seemingly unfathomable news: even the realm of Satan was being converted into a godly paradise. Through missionary influence, islanders had begun to observe the Sabbath so broadly chapels overflowed with parishioners on Sundays. The

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1. Daniel Tyerman, “Letter from the Rev. D. Tyerman to a Lady in England, dated Taheite, November 24, 1821,” *American Missionary Register* 4, no. 1 (January 1823): 26–27.

converts joined in congregational singing, in catechizing children and adults alike, and in daily prayer and Bible reading. “No public immorality or indecency is seen,” Tyerman continued. “All drunkenness and profane swearing are unknown here. All their former sports and amusements are completely put down. Their morais [sacred enclosures of a distinctly Polynesian design] are almost all demolished, and many of them completely obliterated.” What looked at first glance like an impossible field for missionary work had transformed into a “complete” and “universal triumph ... over heathenism, cruelty, superstition, and ignorance.”<sup>2</sup> In the decade before Tyerman’s report, London Missionary Society (LMS) agents had allied with the most powerful ruler in the Tahitian aristocracy, Pōmare II, and persuaded the king to enact a civil code outlawing dancing, chanting, nudity, tattoos, and customary flower dresses. It was this adoption of English legalism and its effect on suppressing native customs that signaled for the editor of the *American Missionary Register* a permanent change had taken hold.<sup>3</sup>

Tyerman, like many of his American missionary contemporaries between 1816 and 1823, perceived success in diachronic terms, as before-and-after portraits of heathenish godlessness and rehabilitation to Christian piety. Missionary discussions of the foreign in this period centered on visible traits in the proselytes marking them as among the unconverted. When those traits turned and receiving peoples appeared more genteel and pious, the correspondence exulted in victory. And yet, moments of exceptionalization like Tyerman’s letter give evidence of something far more complicated than a crowd of spectators cheering for the home team. Here was an English minister appearing without further qualification in a Presbyterian magazine extolling the dominion of British law over an island dynasty in the same year Americans would celebrate

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2. Tyerman, “Letter,” 27.

3. J. Logan Aikman, *Cyclopaedia of Christian Missions: Their Rise, Progress, and Present Position* (London: Richard Griffin, 1860), 59.

international respectability afforded by Monroe Doctrine diplomacy. With the doctrine, the United States government declared further European colonization of the American hemisphere a threat to the country.<sup>4</sup> Once put to effect, support for the policy translated into popular resistance to imperialism that ought to have made American missionaries reticent to collaborate with projects (like the LMS) sponsored by the British empire. However, the missionary press by 1823 would carry regular reports from this and other British societies, and always in sympathetic terms.<sup>5</sup> The diachronic assessment of missionary effectiveness was consistently and unmistakably refracted through the activities of the British.

On one level, editors found no contradiction in advertising British missions. Under the virtues of converting the unevangelized and their shared charge with the British in spreading Christianity, American missionaries could countenance their interest in overtly imperial schemes and join in a kind of Christian imperialism. Seeing the heathen world transformed would justify following the lead of the British societies, especially for those Americans critical of European monarchies.<sup>6</sup> Other changes brought on by the War of 1812 introduced a new nationalism, what Kariann Akemi Yokota described as an “interstitial identity” borne by a “people in the throes of unbecoming” British.<sup>7</sup> Defeating the British a second time induced optimism for republican government, but a long bout of inferiority anxiety lingered.<sup>8</sup> Since the revolution, social elites

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4. Daniel Walker Howe, *What Hath God Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815–1848* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 111–115.

5. Andrew Porter, *Religion Versus Empire? British Protestant Missionaries and Overseas Expansion, 1700–1914* (New York: Manchester University Press, 2004), 70; Andrew Porter, “Religion, Missionary Enthusiasm, and Empire,” Chapter 11 in *The Oxford History of the British Empire: The Nineteenth Century*, edited by Andrew Porter, 222–246. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 227–231.

6. Emily Conroy-Krutz, *Christian Imperialism: Converting the World in the Early American Republic* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015), 5–6.

7. Kariann Akemi Yokota, *Unbecoming British: How Revolutionary America Became a Postcolonial Nation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 236.

8. Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, *This Violent Empire: The Birth of an American National Identity* (Chapel Hill:

continually measured their experiment in government against the former mother country and Anglophilia dominated the bourgeois culture.<sup>9</sup> Winning the approval of the British would grant American culture respectability, so many Americans sought to emulate British high society while at the same time seeking to become independent of British commerce and politics.<sup>10</sup> Rather pervasive mood swings across the country made any prevailing nationalism tangled and complex, resembling more a constellation of competing ideologies and imagined futures than a uniform patriotism.

Though the greater American populace exhibited signs of separation anxiety in the years after the revolution, and though a Christian imperialism lay behind collaborations with British societies, the predominant discussions of the foreign in this period displayed little ambivalence: the American people were poised to surpass the British in converting the world to Christ. Even while they ran British reports with greatest frequency and granted the British agencies a priority that would seem to reduce the perceived relevance of the American enterprise, editors tended to avoid nostalgia for monarchy, to criticize British imperialism, and to assert the divinely ordained mission of the American people in saving the world. The British may have had a twenty-year lead on the American societies and more than twice the personnel abroad, but several mutually reinforcing processes apparent in editorial decisions of this period indicate an American assertiveness.<sup>11</sup>

A review published in the *Panoplist and Missionary Herald* was typical. Noah Webster

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University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 17–18.

9. Yokota, *Unbecoming British*, 240; Elisa Tamarkin, *Anglophilia: Deference, Devotion, and Antebellum America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), xxv–xxvii.

10. Yokota, *Unbecoming British*, 236–240.

11. William R. Hutchison, *Errand to the World: American Protestant Thought and Foreign Missions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 45–46; Porter, *Religion Versus Empire*, 56.

had spoken before an agricultural society on the role of husbandry in improving the world's economy, and in this, he believed, Americans had no rival. Independence opened channels for the American farmer to bring a superior system to the global masses. And still, their homegrown ingenuity suffered from a fascination of British luxuries. The "United States might support a population, surpassing the numbers of the best regulated states in Europe" and yet squander time and money chasing after British respect. "What is the loss of time, and the expense of money, in these diversions?" Webster wondered. "Sufficient perhaps every year to convert a wilderness into a garden, or to christianize a whole empire of pagans!" Americans had all they needed to save the world; they had the means and the population to sustain a missionary movement beyond even the British who rather clearly were succeeding in taking Christianity far and wide. The magazines served British missionary accounts as propaganda to audiences editors judged ready but only beginning to take up the foreign missions enterprise.<sup>12</sup>

Using mainly British sources to galvanize support meant a rise in the use of "superstition" to describe foreign difference. In other venues, American Protestants had Paineite rationalists to contend with, intellectuals who challenged the utility of religion in effecting a new and ideal government. Debates dating to the 1790s sought to redefine "religion" as indeed a cure to cultural sickness, bringing along concepts of inferior or "false" religion to bear on criticisms that the religious suffered from irrational thinking.<sup>13</sup> Appeals to the "superstitions" of the heathen in the missionary magazines did little in the way of engaging freethinkers or antimission rationalists,

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12. "Review of Mr. Webster's Address," *The Panoplist and Missionary Herald* 14, no. 12 (December 1818): 542–546; Noah Webster, *An Address, Delivered Before the Hampshire, Franklin and Hampden Agricultural Society, at Their Annual Meeting in Northampton, Oct. 14, 1818* (Northampton: Thomas W. Shepard, 1818), 7, 28.

13. Amanda Porterfield, *Conceived in Doubt: Religion and Politics in the New American Nation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 114–115; Eric Foner, *Tom Paine and Revolutionary America*, updated ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 263–270.



but rather implied an exceptionalism that was itself liminal—an assertiveness worked out in tension with the British metropole and the exotic foreigner living in “superstition.” The exotic traits of the foreign noted by British missionaries and reported by American editors established American parity with British culture and delivered a position of superiority, ironically, via the ethic of deference. The assumed virtue of deference graced Anglo-American discourse with an air of nobility and modesty, and to defer to the British while asserting an American ideal both resolved a desire for respectability and a discrepancy of opposing empire in principle while joining with empire in practice. The rustic American improving the wilderness with humbler tools of enculturation could win the world’s esteem.<sup>14</sup>

The years between 1816 and 1823 witnessed the first era of global expansion of the American Protestant missions. Americans initially tried to combine resources with British societies, and in some settings they did collaborate on one level or another. This alliance with British missions disposed the sending agencies in the United States to selecting destinations along colonial lines, which limited their missionary traffic to areas of the world accessible by maritime routes. Though some travelers had spoken here and there in the magazines of virtually every nation on the globe, the dominant discussion patterns in the popular missionary press centered on three theaters of engagement with the foreign: Africa and the slave trade, the Pacific islands (especially Tahiti), and India. In all three, “superstition” replaced “religion” to denote wide difference between the home

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14. Deference factored into cosmopolitan debates over American genteel society well into the 1840s and 1850s. Horace Bushnell, the celebrated theologian from Connecticut, famously lambasted his fellow countrymen for pursuing European fashions without exhibiting finer taste. Good manners and taste did more than promote intersocial savvy among the upper classes; they were for Bushnell, in the words of Daniel Walker Howe, “indices of the progress of society.” (Howe, *Making the American Self: Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln* [Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997], 182.) See Horace Bushnell, “Taste and Fashion,” *The New Englander* 1, no. 2 (April 1843): 153–168; also Richard L. Bushman, *The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992) for a history of American gentility and an exploration of competing fashions in the early nineteenth century.

audience and the field.<sup>15</sup>

Beyond the “superstition” label, missionaries invoked different terms depending on the foreigner and played to different strategies. West Africans were set apart for their poverty, rather consistently called “poor” unlike references to other traits when speaking of peoples in India and the Pacific. Editors associated Africans with “darkness,” even imagining them in a separate racial class than dark-skinned “Hindoos” and islanders. The plan called for direct colonization: good Christians must intervene and model a strong work ethic if the “poor” Africans were to be saved.<sup>16</sup> Islanders, too, lived in “darkness,” but for different reasons. Tales of cannibalism shocked missionaries and readers, and islander “idolatry” suggested a kind of feral heathenism unlike anything they had experienced elsewhere.<sup>17</sup> The strategy here would involve reforming families through uncompromising education. Women especially would be called upon to teach proselytes in manners and religious routines. India could not pass as easily for an uncivilized nation: the British colonial government there resembled what American audiences knew firsthand. The magazines emphasized the lack of British control when describing Indian difference. Erasing supposed heathen culture, though advocated by British writers, in effect legitimized American society.<sup>18</sup> Frontiersmen had tamed swaths of North American wilderness and could do the same in other inhospitable territories.

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15. Conroy-Krutz, *Christian Imperialism*, 51–59. Some American/British collaborations predated American societies, but sporadically and in small numbers; see Edward E. Andrews, *Native Apostles: Black and Indian Missionaries in the British Atlantic World* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2013), 2–4; Jeffrey Cox, *The British Missionary Enterprise since 1700* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 22–49.

16. Efforts on the part of British and American missionaries to colonize the African west and southwest were long-lasting and complex, beyond the scope of this chapter; for a detailed history of what I refer to as “direct colonization” during this period, see Elizabeth Elbourne, *Blood Ground: Colonialism, Missions, and the Contest for Christianity in the Cape Colony and Britain, 1799–1853* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2002).

17. Gananath Obeyesekere, *Cannibal Talk: The Man-Eating Myth and Human Sacrifice in the South Seas* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 111–116, 184–186, 252–254.

18. Though using different sources, Michael J. Altman arrives at a similar conclusion: erasure of Hindu religious culture as well as a downplaying of British colonial government in India “suited the desires and aims of some Americans,” particularly the missionary writers. (Altman, “Imagining Hindus: India and Religion in Nineteenth Century America” [Ph.D. diss., Emory University, 2013], 8–10.)

### “Poor” West Africans

Editors George Camp, Talcott Camp, and Ira Merrell looked to spark interest in West African missions by publishing “Converted Negro” narratives in the *Panoplist and Missionary Magazine*.<sup>19</sup> By this time in 1817, a minority of slaves attended Protestant churches and preaching in slave communities had only begun to pick up. Conversion narratives had circulated before, but usually in the context of starting a local congregation or extending revivals to the large slave population in North America.<sup>20</sup> The *Panoplist* series would use local reports with overseas missions in mind, recycling an idea prominent clergymen in the 1770s had contemplated. Taking cues (though bristling at doctrinal differences) from Moravians who had already founded settlements in South Africa, Samuel Hopkins and Ezra Stiles lobbied for sending freed slaves as missionaries. Now nearly fifty years later with nothing to show of those first efforts, the *Panoplist* would offer vivid accounts showing how African Americans could embrace Christianity and help the missions as translators.<sup>21</sup>

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19. Gaylord P. Albaugh, *History and Annotated Bibliography of American Religious Periodicals and Newspapers Established from 1730 to 1830*, 2 vols. (Worcester: American Antiquarian Society, 1994), 721.

20. Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The “Invisible Institution” in the Antebellum South*, updated ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 152–160; Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Pantheon, 1972), 185–186.

21. Samuel Hopkins and Ezra Stiles were motivated to send freed slaves as missionaries to Africa out of concern denominational clergymen “whether Congregational, Presbyterian or &c” would “spread Delusion” by adhering to “erroneous and corrupt” doctrines; they endeavored to sponsor two men, John Quamine and Bristol Yamma, hoping to increase the number eventually beyond thirty or forty “well instructed Negroes” as native preachers. (Ezra Stiles, *The Literary Diary of Ezra Stiles, D.D., LL.D. President of Yale College*, edited by Franklin Bowditch Dexter, 3 vols. [New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1901], 1:363–366; Samuel Hopkins and Edwards Amasa Park, *The Works of Samuel Hopkins, D. D., First Pastor of the Church in Great Barrington, Mass., Afterwards Pastor of the First Congregational Church in Newport, R. I., with a Memoir of His Life and Character*, 3 vols. [Boston: Doctrinal Tract and Book Society, 1854], 1:129, 131–132.) Their two circular letters of 1773 and 1776 were written to marshal support for their African mission but failed to attract any donations or institutional backing; see Andrews, *Native Apostles*, 188–202; William Dillon Pierson, *Black Yankees: The Development of an Afro-American Subculture in Eighteenth-Century New England* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988), 58. Andrews argues the idea of freed slaves returning to Africa as missionaries originated not with Hopkins and Stiles, but with Quamine and Yamma. (Andrews, *Native Apostles*, 188–189.)

The second story in the series cited an “aged clergyman in Virginia” who the editors assured gave an accurate memoir of a slave conversion some forty years prior.<sup>22</sup> William Smith, a preacher to slave communities in the American South, had felt driven to start a congregation of “negroes in the neighbourhood, many of whom were serious professors of Christianity” out of pity for “the poor slaves.” An unnamed visitor attended Smith’s church one Sunday after walking over ten miles and told Smith he had no inclinations toward worshiping any god before being taken as a slave. Now in North America, the visitor had learned working on the Sabbath amounted to sin, but he worked anyway, “for myself,” he said. Once while “working in my patch,” he recounted, “there was something in my heart, like some body catching me by the clothes, and pulling me back, and saying, ‘You must not work to-day.’” The tale grew more surprising. He later dreamed of coming to a fork in a road during a long journey and noticed a person in the distance beckoning him to take one path. The next Sabbath, he went for a stroll and happened on the same road he had dreamed about. Following it, he arrived at Smith’s meetinghouse and recognized the preacher at once. The reporter attested the man “knew the captain by size, his clothes, his features and complexion; and knew him to be the man who was to give him directions for his long journey.”<sup>23</sup>

Of course, the “long journey” signified returning to Africa, and Smith seized the serendipitous moment to prepare the visitor in both receiving baptism and future missionary service. What followed perpetuated what Hopkins and Stiles anticipated when they called for African American candidates—the reporter took the slave’s lack of education and fluency in the English language for an inherent deficiency in black Africans. Smith, he said, “labored, by every

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22. “The Converted Algerine,” *The Panoplist, and Missionary Magazine* 12, no. 12 (December 1816), 545; “The Converted Negro,” *The Panoplist, and Missionary Magazine* 13, no. 1 (January 1817): 15–17.

23. “The Converted Negro,” 15–16.

easy method of communication in his power, to explain to the negro's untutored mind the Gospel plan of Salvation. But the poor negro was so unacquainted with the English tongue ... that he could not understand his instructor." Later observers would detect the systemic limitations maintained by chattel slavery that would complicate the visitor's ability to understand Smith's instruction.<sup>24</sup> For the reporter, however, religion explained the situation. Mental distress after "groaning under a body of sin" and "the sentence of death in [the visitor's] breast" made the conversion process slow and tedious, even testing the endurance of the minister. Once the visitor came to appreciate the "doctrines of redemption" and humbled himself low in "self-abasement" did he begin to comprehend. "The poor, lately miserable, but now happy man" submitted to baptism weeks later, then disappeared.<sup>25</sup>

The editors could sense readers' skepticism of the remarkable details. They endorsed the series admitting the converts may have been guilty of hypocrisy, inventing their dreams "in order to procure favor with Christians," but at least one "negro convert" removed suspicion by returning from Africa. An ensuing analysis ran for several pages, and among the pertinent "reflections," the editors insisted the conversions showed enough evidence of God's election among even the most "barbarous, benighted fellow creatures" to compel the honest Christian to action. In responding to hypothetical objections, the editors worked out questions of authenticity by appealing to the converts' behaviors, never once considering William Smith's or the Virginian clergyman's own biases. All Africans were collapsed into the same condition, whether enslaved in America or living in heathenism, revealing a perception of the "negro" foreigner that diverged

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24. David Brion Davis, *Inhuman Bondage: The Rise and Fall of Slavery in the New World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 132–140; Edward E. Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of Capitalism in America* (New York: Basic Books, 2014), 147–153.

25. "The Converted Negro," 16–17.

from other foreigners in their midst, like Jews and Native Americans. The “poor negro” learned slowly even when graced by enlightenment brought on by the process of conversion. The potential for transforming African peoples was more immediate and present: editors in the *Panoplist* and other magazines gauged mission to Africans not by projecting biblical history and prophecy onto the landscape, but by evidence of individual election. Even when such evidence abounded, the expectation still kept Africans trapped in poverty. After genuine conversion, the African Christian would then “resign all hopes of temporal honor and happiness, and voluntarily devote himself to a life of poverty and exile.”<sup>26</sup>

Ignorance and poverty went together in the recruiting rhetoric of the magazines. “Poor” often suggested intellectual deficit, particularly when used by editors to guilt readers into donating to the cause. A trope of the American South surfaced in the *American Baptist Magazine* and *Missionary Intelligencer*, the infantile character “Sambo” who begged whites for help.<sup>27</sup> This story told of an “ignorant negro” who came to a minister “with a melancholy and dejected look.” “Sambo” asked the minister to rebaptize his master, confusing the minister who wondered what possibly could have prompted a slave to consider such a thing. “O, my massa been one good massa when you baptize afore,” Sambo replied, “but now he forget all his religion, and scold, and vex, and whip poor negro!” By inverting the roles of slave and master and subordinating the master’s faithfulness below the slave’s, the story pushed the rhetoric to a dramatic extreme: the master was losing his Christianity and becoming worse than a godless slave. “The *lives* of professors are books,” the editor declared, “which the most ignorant, and the most depraved, can

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26. “Remarks on the Preceding Narratives,” *The Panoplist, and Missionary Magazine* 13, no. 1 (January 1817): 17–22.

27. Luther W. Spoehr, “Sambo and the Heathen Chinese: Californians’ Racial Stereotypes in the Late 1870s,” *Pacific Historical Review* 42, no. 2 (May 1973), 194.

read and understand!” Sambo was central to the editor’s hyperbole—lukewarm Christians risked reverting to behavior as immoral as the typical slave by living too comfortably in the company of fellow believers. Bystanders could not shirk their Christian duties and go unnoticed.<sup>28</sup>

Displaying an awareness of Christian doctrine and even a desire for salvation in Sambo’s case left the editor unmoved. Sambo remained more helpless than before, still totally dependent on the piety of his master for any connection to God. Noble desires could not ameliorate his condition. The narrative positioned the minister as crucial to providing relief to Sambo and other slaves whose Christian masters had failed to catechize them. Published as it was in a Baptist missionary magazine implied more than a local concern of reviving lapsed Christians. The whole anthropology at work reflected a relationship between black Africans calling for intervention and white Americans. Missionary editors allowed the narrative and its commentary to imply a threat—leaving Africa to itself would inevitably result in the spread of darkness.

The accounts arriving from the African continent exuded a colonial confidence in this direct intervention strategy and rang of assumptions that Africans could not maintain civility on their own. Mission strategies set in the contexts of the American slave trade, even for British agents, adhered to racial hierarchies where blacks occupied the lowest rank. Dutch colonists had preceded American and LMS missionaries, and their settlement at Bethelsdorp soon became the most cited outpost in Africa. Khoekhoe, Khoisan, and San peoples in the vicinity knew their Dutch neighbors for decades before the LMS arrived, yet reports identified them all as either “Hottentots” or “Bushmen,” the names used by the Dutch to distinguish the Khoekhoe from the San.<sup>29</sup> American students at Andover thought Bethelsdorp an ideal location for launching

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28. “Anecdote of an American Negro Slave,” *American Baptist Magazine and Missionary Intelligencer* 1, no. 1 (January 1817): 20.

29. Elbourne, *Blood Ground*, 74–76.

a mission outpost and petitioned the LMS to join in starting a cooperative colony there. The directors of the LMS dismissed the proposals, but not without pledging moral support and forwarding reports from the field to aid the Americans' efforts abroad.<sup>30</sup> Magazine editors watched with keen interest as the London missionaries opened Bethelsdorp and its surroundings to British missions. Together, the regular reports of the growing settlement perpetuated prior images of "poor Hottentots" dwelling without the Christian gospel in a land, in the words of Thomas Haweis, "dark as her sooty inhabitants."<sup>31</sup>

Khoekhoe receptivity persuaded Nathan Whiting, editor of the *Religious Intelligencer*, Dutch colonialism had prepared African natives for the most direct preaching of the LMS missionaries. His paper was designed to carry more correspondence—"intelligence" as it was then described—and Whiting kept pace with continual reports of Khoekhoe outreach. By 1816, the *Intelligencer* covered a slew of Khoekhoe conversions, describing natives who had given their own sermons, urged their non-Christian peers to embrace the religion of white Europeans, and motivated each other to find deliverance in the grace of God. A native preacher used Daniel 6 to describe himself and his family as "murderers" turning to light and praying for the Khoekhoe nation. A Khoekhoe girl, on hearing the sermon, declared "Christ was too strong for her" and professed faith in him. Another announced miraculous healing from a venomous snake and scorpion bite. Jan-Tzatzoe, son of a Khoisan chief, received a missionary's Bible in view of hundreds of fellow proselytes. Within the year, over two hundred Khoekhoe followed missionaries to the brook on the outskirts of Bethelsdorp to be baptized (see Figure 2). Proof of the need for rigorous colonialism abounded.

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30. Conroy-Krutz, *Christian Imperialism*, 52.

31. J. Kofi Agbeti, *West African Church History: Christian Missions and Church Foundations, 1482–1919* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1986), 116–117; Thomas Haweis, "A Concise View of the Present State of the Evangelical Religion throughout the World," *New-York Missionary Magazine* 1, no. 6 (November–December 1800), 448.



When the newly baptized Khoekhoe managed to avoid terrible opposition from the San who did not entertain LMS or Dutch missionaries, they had to contend with kidnappers who illicitly trafficked in the slave trade. Left to themselves, the Khoekhoe could not hope to withstand both. They needed British colonial government to secure their slow advance toward becoming a civilized people.<sup>32</sup>

Missionaries in the field especially clamored for the attention of colonial powers. Evan Evans pitched Bethelsdorp as an ideal investment for both the British and American governments. In May following Whiting's reports, Evans wrote "the most despised and neglected nation in the whole world" begged in vain for more missionaries. That any "should be found possessing so much love for such poor, black, and miserable beings, as to leave their native country ... to come and live in such a wilderness, in order to be the means of saving [the Khoekhoe] from everlasting perdition" astonished one Khoekhoe woman. She had no means of repaying the missionaries for their service, and Evans appealed to her poverty in calling for more attention to Africa. British agencies should have discovered the potential of Bethelsdorp more readily, he believed. Evans grasped at anything that might encourage readers to desert British comforts for southern Africa. "I cannot omit mentioning the Hottentots' singing," he wrote. "I should almost think it worth while to come from England to Africa to hear it. Their voices are nearly, if not fully, as delightful as any musical instrument I ever heard. To hear them singing when alone in the fields in the mornings and evenings, is in the highest degree pleasant." Such praise would have convinced missionaries a century before their evangelism had succeeded, however, the "pleasant" attributes of the Khoekhoe here only enhanced their vulnerability. Evans had to make the Khoekhoe

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32. "South Africa: Bethelsdorp," *The Religious Intelligencer* 2, no. 30 (December 20, 1817): 467.

culturally palatable to audiences otherwise intimidated by imagined savagery.<sup>33</sup>

Continued efforts among the Khoekhoe in southern Africa to communities further north in Sierra Leone brought encouraging reports of missionary efforts and colonial expansion. Evangelism coupled with colonial government had the best chance of realizing the transformation missionaries had anticipated for so long. One account in the *London Missionary Chronicle* and republished in the *Religious Intelligencer* described a Botswanan family of a local king, Mateebe, who had listened to missionary sermons through a Dutch interpreter. Their teachers thought them “noisy and quarrelsome” at first, but after several appointments, the proselytes gave attention without uttering “a syllable” or “attempt[ing] to contradict.” Other missionaries wrote to each other relaying the same news: on arrival, the receiving peoples behaved like rambunctious toddlers, but after constant attention and regular schooling, they could adopt a softer comportment and elevated intellect. “The seed you sowed in my country when you was here,” a native African said to a newcomer missionary, “is ripe, and you must come to gather it in.” The ministry therefore called for printing presses to provide the means of bringing the word of God to Africans. LMS agents began work on a Botswanan dictionary in earnest.<sup>34</sup>

Audiences figured in most areas missionaries should follow colonial expansion, not the other way around. When the reports fueled interest among the LMS and American societies, early plans directed agents to areas on the western coast already colonized by the British. Because Americans continued to search for effective measures to reach the continent, their magazines

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33. “Extracts of a Letter from Mr. Evan Evans, Dated Bethelsdorp, May 29th, 1817,” *The Religious Intelligencer* 2, no. 33 (January 10, 1818): 518.

34. “Extract of a Letter from a Missionary at Makoon’s Krall, Near Lattakoo, Dated May 23, 1817, to Rev. J. Campbell,” *The Religious Intelligencer* 2, no. 47 (April 18, 1818): 744.

dedicated whole series to early expeditions to the African interior. Led by William Gray and Duncan Dochart of the Royal African Corps, an entourage of nearly a hundred military personnel and British civilians ventured deeper into the continent in 1818. Society directors planned to dispatch missionaries behind the expedition and collected digests of expeditionary reports for the magazines. They were surprised to learn Major Gray turned back after going as far as Senegal. The “unfavorable disposition” of the “Negro Kingdom of Bondou” and the company’s “want of merchandize” dashed Gray’s hopes of advancing further.<sup>35</sup> The interior would pose challenges not yet faced by missionaries following colonial lines where they had counted on European settlements giving predictable settings for evangelism. The image here appeared obscure and remote, often described in the magazines as “dark,” “benighted,” and “black.” They feared the violence described in accounts of native African retribution killings and figured their arrival could ignite animosity among indigenous groups who had never set eyes on Europeans. Such a hostile environment persuaded missionary-minded Americans to partner with civic entities and more well-established British societies before setting out on their own.<sup>36</sup>

Accordingly, American missionaries applauded the founding of the American Colonization Society that same year and lent support from the outset. Congregationalist editors in New England believed the Society’s plans to establish a colony of freed slaves went a step further than Hopkins’s vision of voluntary societies enlisting former slaves in missionary service. When

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35. “Expedition into the Interior of Africa,” *The Religious Intelligencer* 4, no. 15 (September 11, 1819): 227; Robert Jameson, James Wilson, and Hugh Murray, *Narrative of Discovery and Adventure in Africa, From the Earliest Ages to the Present Time: With Illustrations of the Geology, Mineralogy, and Zoology* (New York: J. & J. Harper, 1831); William Gray and Duncan Dochart, *Travels in Western Africa, In the Years 1818, 19, 20, and 21, From the River Gambia, through Wooll, Bondoo, Galam, Kasson, and Foolidoo, to the River Niger* (London: n.p., 1825); Bruce L. Mouser, ed., *The Forgotten Peddie/Campbell Expedition into Fuuta Jaloo, West Africa, 1815–17* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2007), 5–28; Bruce L. Mouser, “Forgotten Expedition into Guinea, West Africa, 1815–1817: An Editor’s Comments,” *History in Africa* 35 (2008): 481–489.

36. “Grand Bassa, in Western Africa,” *American Missionary Register* 2, no. 12 (December 1822), 237–240.

Bushrod Washington, president of the Society, sent word to the Duke of Gloucester announcing the inauguration of the American counterpart to the British African Institution, the *Panoplist and Missionary Herald* began a series of reports detailing the campaign to institute the colony of Liberia in northwestern Africa. Washington himself proposed missionary aims to theirs and the British colonization effort, stating the “common aim of meliorating the condition of the race of Africa” would require “benevolent and enlightened efforts” to introduce “Christianity and civilization” to the African continent. The bulk of reporting of Africa in the missionary press thereafter centered on the progress of the American Colonization Society, the African Institution, and collaborations with the (Baptist) Church Missionary Society and (Anglican) London Missionary Society. Missionary pleas for greater concentration of colonial resources on the civilizing project of missions had garnered political relevance. It would take another two decades of sending freed black Americans to the Pepper Coast before the settlers adopted a constitution to establish the Republic of Liberia, but Americans still managed to found a colony in Bassa with the help of the Church Missionary Society in a little under two years. Collaborating in government enterprises before launching into classical mission work became the norm for Africa and would influence American approaches to mission in Asia in the 1830s.<sup>37</sup>

Missionary writers preferred colonization to the slave trade, finding the basic template of occupying land, employing colonial government to achieve social order, and sponsoring schools for reforming individual native Africans a justifiable evangelization strategy. They knew how entangled the Caribbean plantations and the SPG had become. Philip Quaque, the first African to receive ordination in the Church of England, served in Cape Coast (what is now Ghana) to

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37. Bushrod Washington, “To His Royal Highness the Duke of Gloucester, Patron and President of the African Institution,” *The Panoplist, and Missionary Herald* 14, no. 3 (March 1818): 116–117; “Grand Bassa,” 237–238.

much fanfare in the American missionary press. His mission between 1766 and 1816 attracted criticism from British missionaries for adapting too much to the local culture, but Americans particularly noted the role of the slave trade in opposing Quaque's work. Even worse than traders and governors refusing to entertain the "Negro Priest" was the sin of slavery itself, a behavior against "Light & Conscience," which Quaque was told disqualified worshipers from receiving the Eucharist.<sup>38</sup> Zechariah Lewis, former tutor of the George Washington family and editor of the *American Missionary Register*, agreed, arguing the work of the American Colonization Society and African Institution served better to reform Africans than bondage. In six months between 1820 and 1821 over 38,000 Africans had been taken from Sierra Leone alone, a figure that shocked directors of the African Institution and Lewis alike. "Slave vessels" swarmed the coastline between Senegal and Benguela, running a "detestable traffic" that would require a mighty force to bring down. Readers should join the "great cause" of ending the slave trade, if for no other reason than to help the colonization societies, who it was expected, would pave the way for the missionaries.<sup>39</sup>

The trade, not slavery in general, troubled Lewis and other magazine editors. Public pressure on Parliament through 1807 had led to the British abolition of the transatlantic trade, and the United States followed suit in 1808 by outlawing the further importation of slaves. Life in Sierra Leone after Britain sent regulators to prohibit passage of slave ships had seemed to American editors to restore "a comparative state of tranquility and happiness" between indigenous Africans. But the decade after the new regulations saw an uptick in illicit trafficking as traders crammed

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38. Travis Glasson, *Mastering Christianity: Missionary Anglicanism and Slavery in the Atlantic World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 182, 184–190.

39. Sixteenth Report of the African Institution, in *American Missionary Register* 3, no. 11 (November 1822): 165–174; Joseph M. Wilson, *The Presbyterian Historical Almanac, and Annual Remembrance of the Church, for 1863*, vol. 5 (Philadelphia: Joseph M. Wilson, 1863), 186–187.

their ships beyond standard capacity and took up full-blown piracy to evade officials. A stronger trade system meant for Lewis only greater obstacles to the conversion of native Africans, suggesting the African Institution and American Colonization Society needed even more assistance in reuniting dispossessed Africans with their ancestral home. With the “detestable traffic” as the prime enemy, editors would celebrate the relatively tame option of civilizing through colonial intervention.<sup>40</sup>

### Islander “Idolatry”

While missionary venues opened in West Africa, reports from the Pacific Islands shifted strategies. Writers and editors took the islands for uncivilized quarters just the same, but invoked “idolatry” far more often than they had when speaking of African peoples. It went without mention idolatry must be eradicated; just how to put down an indigenous custom frustrated various associations differently. The London Missionary Society who had dispatched agents to the Sandwich Islands and Tahiti in the 1790s informed most American assessments of island missions. Its approach had drawn from diplomacy and the rule of law to effect societal reforms—in other words, they thought to apply force to phase out Tahitian and Hawaiian religion. American Baptists planning missions to the islands agreed with an LMS tactic of discrediting the utility of islander sacrificial offerings. Their magazines would circulate LMS stories of reforms and education, insisting women retained their social rank by teaching proper decorum and

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40. Sixteenth Report, *American Missionary Register*, 165–169. Seymour Drescher noted how the slave trade increased after the passage of abolition laws in 1807, which correlated with American slavers’ illicit tactics, outlined in Drescher, *Econocide: British Slavery in the Era of Abolition*, 2nd ed. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010); Drescher, *Abolition: A History of Slavery and Antislavery* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Davis, *Inhuman Bondage*.

household order. Already a larger mission agency than the Baptists, the American Board found Tahiti particularly inhospitable to missionaries, publishing early anecdotes of first contact in the islands with skeptical commentary. Missionaries would need to broaden their strategies beyond the powers of the British colonial government if they were to transform such bloodthirsty “idolaters” into pious Christians.<sup>41</sup>

American Baptists paid special attention to the activities of the London Missionary Society in the 1810s and 1820s and ran regular correspondence in their *American Baptist Magazine and Missionary Intelligencer*. An anonymous letter from a missionary in Tahiti portrayed the islanders there as in the middle of a reformation: “Much readiness is manifested by the people in general to assemble to hear the Word of God.” New places of worship opened, crowds attended church services, and the Pōmare government was encouraging its subjects to embrace the Christian faith. Women could be seen in the pews sporting the English fashions. The writer thought the transformation dramatic—only a few years before, so he or she heard, public meetings had exhibited “the most superstitious and idolatrous rites and human sacrifices.” In a few short months, they would start sending native missionaries from the island. Something remarkable was happening, and it had all started with the ending of idol worship. The case was not a hard sell, apparently. All the missionaries had to do was call attention to “how trifling the offerings, they were now called to make to the true God were, in comparison with those they once offered to their idols”; put crudely, it was a bargain to be a Christian.<sup>42</sup>

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41. Constance Frederica Gordon Cumming, *Fire Fountains: The Kingdom of Hawaii, Its Volcanoes, and the History of Its Missions*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1883), 2:78–114; Jennifer Thigpen, *Island Queens and Mission Wives: How Gender and Empire Remade Hawai‘i’s Pacific World* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 38–45; Conroy-Krutz, *Christian Imperialism*, 120–129.

42. “Extract of a Letter from the Missionaries at Eimeo, Dated 30th May, 1818,” *American Baptist Magazine and Missionary Intelligencer* 2, no. 10 (July 1, 1820): 369.

Events of 1818 gave the London missionaries in Tahiti more reason to be excited: a local congregation had swelled enough to start an auxiliary missionary society from the islands themselves. This development carried tremendous symbolic importance for the missionaries and their readers. British explorers had reached islands in the southern Pacific in the early 1700s and circulated tales of barbarous islanders far and wide. By the time Americans read reports of missionaries in Tahiti, stories of human sacrifice, large and strange idols, and even cannibalism had become common tropes. Just a few years prior, LMS agents thought the Tahitians unteachable heathens, but now enough native ministers could mobilize into an effective missionary organization. Addressing the newly elected board and the society's first annual meeting, the auxiliary's president Mahine, himself the leader of the Huahine community, reminded them how not long before they had given "unprofitable service" to "false gods." He insisted their first item of business going forward involve eradicating "idolatry" in every form. Mahine did not intend "unprofitable" to mean soteriologically invalid, the way Christians often used the term. Missionaries had suggested and Mahine concurred that blessings owed from sacrificial offerings to islander deities had failed to materialize. Mahine's fellow board members felt to switch their devotions without much evidence of indoctrination by the missionaries.<sup>43</sup>

Initially and more comprehensively, Christian preachers repudiated island religion, collapsing every detail of islanders' material religion into the general category of "idolatry" and using Bible passages to present only the option of rejecting all former idols and confessing Christ as God. No matter how hospitably certain groups received the preachers, they could not get past the surface-level appearance of islander religion and struggled to locate a channel of religious

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43. "Society Islands: London Missionary Society," *American Missionary Register* 1, no. 3 (September 1820): 109; *Missionary Records: Tahiti and Society Islands* (London: Religious Tract Society, [1840]), 245–248.



connection. In other fields, especially later among Nestorian Turks and Chinese merchants, the LMS and American missionaries could find more common ground from which to engage in evangelism, but here, they identified idolatry in their hosts and sought to erase it. The wholesale repudiation of islander religion did not induce much change in affiliation. More targeted skepticism couched in islander beliefs caught the proselytes' attention. Though some reporters thought distributing Bibles purged the idolatry impulse from their hosts, in fact islander talk of failed offerings like Mahine's address, appeared more often in accounts of conversions and native preaching.

This approach gained momentum across the London Missionary Society. In its annual circular in 1820, directors urged missionaries to repudiate islander figurines and statues by appealing to their wasted offerings. The Khoekhoe in southern Africa had done that much, and missions already felt the effects. The Society also placed top priority on reaching out to political leaders and missionaries would need to assess each island's governing structure and find the ruler first before launching into public preaching or church building. King Pōmare's receptivity and eventual baptism gave ample proof that the whole society could turn rapidly at the conversion of a figurehead. At the same moment their king became a Christian, Tahitians were found to be praying, "Jehovah! Thou art the true God—there is none else. Thou alone art our hiding-place. Thou alone has sent us teachers ... that we may know the sin of our hearts ... and that we may also know the will of God. Bless our teachers—let them not die soon, nor be sick with disease." Comforting words for missionaries who arrived with images of superstitious blood rites in their heads.<sup>44</sup>

Pōmare's baptism had caused a sensation that several magazines in the United States picked

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44. "General State of the Mission," *American Missionary Register* 1, no. 3 (September 1820): 103–109.

up. In little time, with seemingly little resources, intrepid Christians had converted a pagan king and brought a whole nation to Christ in a single move. Nowhere was Pōmare made to appear like a calculating political tactician, embracing Christianity in a diplomatic move to enhance his international prestige. His conversion had been stylistically evangelical, having all the key elements of an authentic change of heart. Pōmare had expressed a desire to the missionaries to put away every sin and dedicate himself to the blood of Christ. “As it appeared to be the voice of the nation, and particularly of the most pious Chiefs, and as his conduct has been so constant in teaching and promoting Religion, we resolved to baptize him,” reported the missionaries. This was no spurious decision—all the protocols of properly attending to a baptism and receiving a new member to the church had been met. Four to five thousand gathered for the baptismal service, and heard sermons on the Great Commission to preach the gospel to all nations. After a hymn and prayer, the missionaries surrounded the king and poured water on his head, “baptizing him in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.” Pōmare impressed the ministers after the meeting ended, shaking hands “affectionately” and retiring in a reverent demeanor to his camp.<sup>45</sup>

Other Baptists found visible signs of conversion in Tahiti. William Pascoe Crook wrote in 1818 to William Milne, an early missionary to China, how dramatically the island had changed in the short years after missionary contact. The new missionaries were close to setting up a press, reading had become regular, theft was practically eradicated, family prayer attended in every

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45. “Society Islands: London Missionary Society,” 109; “London Missionary Society,” *The Panoplist, and Missionary Herald* 14, no. 6 (June 1818): 278–279; “Extract of a Letter from Pomare, King of Tahiti, to the Missionaries,” *The Panoplist, and Missionary Herald* 14, no. 6 (June 1818): 280; “South Sea Islands: Extracts from the 25th Report of the London Missionary Society,” *The Religious Intelligencer* 4, no. 21 (October 23, 1819): 321–323; “South Sea Islands: Mission at Otaheite,” *The Religious Intelligencer* 4, no. 26 (November 27, 1819): 401–404; Samuel Marsden, “Letter from the Rev. Samuel Marsden, of New Holland, Dated June 8, 1819,” *The Panoplist, and Missionary Herald* 16, no. 1 (January 1820): 40–41; “Baptism of the King,” *The Missionary Herald* 17, no. 1 (January 1821): 28–29; “Mission to the Society Islands,” *The Missionary Herald* 17, no. 10 (October 1821): 328–330; “Heathen Superstitions,” *The Missionary Herald* 17, no. 5 (May 1821): 138; “Visit to the King,” *The Missionary Herald* 18, no. 7 (July 1822): 206–207; “Tahiti,” *The Missionary Herald* 18, no. 10 (October 1822): 330–331.

house, and women were “restored to their rank in society.” “The whole of this group of islands is now professedly Christian, and if we are to judge of their conduct by that of nominal Christians in general, they have vastly the advantage,” Crook believed. “These poor people look up to the missionaries as their oracle in all their troubles of body and mind, civil and religious.” Americans were finally joining them in the islands, and Crook predicted they and the growing number of native missionaries would soon take the Bible to Marquesas.<sup>46</sup>

The American Board offered more skeptical assessments of Tahitian conversion. By 1823, its editors ran a feature, “Superstitions of Tahiti,” in the *Missionary Herald* that compared the latest reports from Daniel Tyerman with John Jefferson’s first account of arriving in Tahiti. Jefferson had lived nearly a year and a half on the island and wrote home in 1798 about the sacrificial ceremonies he encountered immediately on arrival. The Tahitians had erected large stone pavements where they brought offerings of food, flowers, animals, and to Jefferson’s total astonishment, humans. He observed a procession come to the pavement and club a human victim in the head. The principal priest took the eyes of the unconscious victim and placed them in the mouth of the king, who opened “his mouth as if to receive and eat them.” Then, taking the dead body and dropping it into a large pit, the priests ended the ceremony and covered the pit with stones. Counting the pits surrounding the pavement, Jefferson estimated “many hundreds of men and women” had been sacrificed “by the abominable superstition of these idolaters.”<sup>47</sup>

Jefferson barely got over the shock when he realized a more terrifying reality was entirely plausible: he was the visitor, the pagan to their religion, and if they could perform this rite with one of their own, he could find himself kneeling on that same pavement. “The flesh quaked for

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46. W. P. Crook, Letter to W. Milne, 9 July 1818 in “South-Sea Islands,” *The American Baptist Magazine and Missionary Intelligencer* 2, no. 7 (January 1, 1820): 257–258.

47. “Superstitions of Tahiti,” *The Missionary Herald* 19, no. 4 (April 1823): 134–135.

fear,” he admitted, “but I committed our cause to Christ.” Rather than proceed with evidence of a converted Tahiti, the editors of the *Herald* directed readers to the lack of change over the past fifteen years. Not much differed between Tyerman’s recent news and Jefferson’s account of Tahitian idolatry. In Tyerman’s visits, the people were still “universally thieves, lewd beyond description, enslaved to the grossest superstitions, and always ready to murder any one, at the slightest intimation from their chiefs; and that the strangling of new-born infants was the crime of every day, perpetuated by almost every mother, without shame and without remorse.” Where the Baptists exulted in missionary success, the interdenominational American Board waxed paranoid.<sup>48</sup>

### **“Hindoo Superstition”**

Gordon Hall, one of the first American missionaries to India and among the most popular in the United States, thought home supporters ought to temper their excitement. The *Religious Intelligencer* ran his 1817 letter to Bennet Tyler, which praised Americans for supplying a few missionaries. But “the result of their exertions” in reality was far more meager than many would have imagined: about one missionary to twenty million people in India alone. Hall chuckled at evangelicals’ expectations. “Because this has been done, half Christendom are on tip toe listening and expecting soon to hear of the conversion of all Asia!” That said, Hall still wanted to send word back home of their progress. The periodicals especially gave “the most ample accounts” of the challenges and successes Asia posed for missions.<sup>49</sup>

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48. “Superstitions of Tahiti,” 135.

49. Gordon Hall, Letter to Bennet Tyler, 9 July 1817 in *The Religious Intelligencer* 2, no. 28 (December 6, 1817): 440. Hall appeared in popular histories of the American Board, usually honored for his pioneering work in Bombay; see

True in part to Hall's assertion, American audiences did react to missionary reports of "superstition" in India, sometimes with enough outcry to pressure the British colonial government to act against perceived ills. Between 1816 and 1823, missionary writers introduced rituals, particularly of Indian communities along the Ganges River, resembling nothing like readers had ever seen. Hardly any context graced the accounts, leading to extravagant tales of the grotesque and the abhorrent. Within a decade, India became the most-discussed foreign field, dominating the missionary press and fashioning an image of the "heathen" world with a new paradox: a kind of "civilized" yet untamed foreigner. Without question, narratives about India, especially "Hindoos," played to the exotic and barbaric traits missionaries perceived in their potential proselytes. Conflicts with British institutions separated American missionaries from their British counterparts more than in Africa and the Pacific, leading to independent enterprises in Asia in later decades. Initially, LMS and American Board missionaries could agree on an evangelization strategy of erasure: the "Hindoos" practiced what they regarded as violent traditions deserving of vigorous resistance by the state and education in Anglo-American thought and domesticity.<sup>50</sup>

British missionaries near Saugor were among the first to raise alarm against Ganges River traditions. Ultimately due to a misreading of Brahmanic teachings, some river peoples had believed throwing infants into the waters to drown transported the child to a heavenly realm

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Joseph Tracy, *History of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions: Compiled Chiefly from the Published and Unpublished Documents of the Board*, 2nd ed. (New York: M. W. Dodd, 1842); Horatio Bardwell, *Memoir of Rev. Gordon Hall, A.M.: One of the First Missionaries of the Amer. Board of Comm. for For. Missions, at Bombay* (New York: J. Leavitt, 1834); 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: American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, 1910); James L. Hill, *The Immortal Seven: Judson and His Associates: Dr. and Mrs. Adoniram Judson, Samuel Newell, Harriet Newell, Gordon Hall, Samuel Nott, Luther Rice* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1913).

50. Conroy-Krutz, *Christian Imperialism*, 60–73, 76–91.

and afforded good fortune for the parents.<sup>51</sup> After witnessing mothers casting their own babies into the river and seeing the victims ravaged by sharks and crocodiles, LMS missionaries and the East India Company petitioned the British governor, Arthur Wellesley, to take coercive action. In 1802, Wellesley passed a law prohibiting any form of human sacrifice, but as late as 1811, Americans new to India lamented the law had not been followed. By the 1830s, Brahmin leaders had prevailed on rural practitioners who evaded the law and had succeeded in ending the Saugorian ritual of infant drowning, yet editors continued into the 1830s to circulate images of Indian mothers offering their children to a devouring goddess (see Figure 3).<sup>52</sup>

Images of infant sacrifice corroborated earlier speculation about the heathen world and bolstered an emerging religious category projected by British census directors and Protestant missionaries: Hinduism.<sup>53</sup> Whiting, editor of the *Religious Intelligencer*, kept one of the most detailed and sensational representations in American missionary literature of Hinduism as a

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51. Nancy Gardner Cassels, *Social Legislation of the East India Company: Public Justice Versus Public Instruction* (New Delhi: Sage, 2010), 86–88.

52. “The Following Account of the Cruel and Superstitious Practices of the Hindoos,” *The Panoplist and Missionary Magazine United* 3 [6], no. 9 (February 1811): 427–428; “Extracts, or So Much of the Correspondence of the Governor General in Council of Bengal, with the Court of Directors of the East India Company, as Relates to the Abolition of the Practice of Sacrificing Children at Saugor and Other Places,” in *Papers Relating to East India Affairs* ([London]: House of Commons, 1813), 426–428.

53. Brian K. Pennington explores the question of when “Hinduism” became associated with Hindu religions of India and argues at bottom the term arose from British colonial influences; see Pennington, *Was Hinduism Invented? Britons, Indians, and the Colonial Construction of Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005). Will Sweetman insists “Hinduism” remains a construct, but with utility for scholarship. “There is therefore no final answer to the question: Is Hinduism a religion or not? ‘Hinduism’ has no ontological status, it is not an entity. It is rather a tool of analysis. The question ought therefore to be: How far is it profitable to analyse Hinduism as a religion? There can be no doubt that at time Vaiṣṇavism, Śaivism and Śāktism, or ritual, politics and soteriology will be more profitable concepts for analysis. But we should never forget that these also are abstractions, and that they are first of all our abstractions (even if they are also shared by Hindus)... The idea that some abstractions ‘distort’ the reality of Hindu religious belief and practice and others do not is an illusion.” (Will Sweetman, *Mapping Hinduism: “Hinduism” and the Study of Indian Religions, 1600–1776* [Wiesbaden: Verlag der Franckeschen Stiftungen zu Halle, 2003], 51.) Michael J. Altman contends Americans by this time in the 1810s did not yet have a concept of “Hinduism,” but did refer to “Hindoos” and “Hindostan” in their accounts of indigenous religions of India. Altman favors “Hindu religions” to refer to “the religious texts, practices, and cultures of India that Americans referenced, alluded to, represented, imagined, and described,” a convention I follow here and in what follows. (Altman, “Imagining Hindus,” 8–10.)

complete religion—and, like other writers of the time, effectively collapsed the diverse range of Indian customs, images, fashions, rituals, and language under a single “Hindoo” heading. Oscillating between pure polemics and encyclopedia summary of “the Hindoos,” Whiting sketched what he could gather from incoming letters and reports. His 1817 “Account of the Hindoos” appeared in other periodicals and ran in three installments, covering the origins and history of Indian peoples and portrayed Indian religions as sharing character, society, mythology, and religious beliefs. In his preface, he acknowledged how many regarded India to be a civilized country:

The Hindoos are said to be highly civilized. But civilization is a vague term. In its popular sense, it implies gentleness and urbanity in opposition to ferocity and brutality; and some knowledge of the arts in distinction from that state of ignorance, which knows nothing, but to supply the mere calls of nature. In this sense the Hindoos are civilized; and, if you please, highly civilized. They are certainly mild and inoffensive; and, though ignorant of most useful arts, are not destitute of the more elegant.<sup>54</sup>

Whiting had to admit the meaning of “civilized society” as understood by most American readers applied to India, but clearly American ideals stood at odds with what he knew of “Hindoo” religion. He reconciled this incongruity by emphasizing a different aspect of “civilization,” the rule of civil law and “a general knowledge of such arts and sciences as meliorate the condition of mankind, refine his manners, and ennoble and adorn his character.” He called this aspect “philosophical civilization,” and when used to measure the “civilization of the Hindoos” revealed a “sickly sensibility,” unchaste and indelicate.<sup>55</sup>

Something noble about the “vast numbers of sacred books” in India, what amounted to collections of ancient writings known as Śāstra literature and the Vedas, appealed to Whiting,

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54. Nathan Whiting, “Account of the Hindoos,” *The Religious Intelligencer* 2, nos. 17–19 (September 20–October 4, 1817): 257, 273, 289; reprinted in *Connecticut Courant* (September 30, 1817), 1; *Christian Messenger* 1, no. 22 (October 4, 1817), 346.

55. Whiting, “Account of the Hindoos,” 257.

however the contents “not of divine origin” resembled a “mass of extravagant fiction [and] peurile [sic] detail.”<sup>56</sup> The collective mythology of the Vedas describing the principal deities “*Brahma*, *Vishnou*, and *Sivd*” offered “fables ... too ridiculous even for the nursery.” When the people read deeply from their own “bible,” they could only find a recurring doctrine of “gloomy fatalism” in which every person’s “destiny is fixed at his birth, and it is vain to struggle to alter his condition.” Indian religious philosophy lacked sophistication, and Whiting dismissed it with little argument. The “practical part of the religion,” what Whiting associated with “prayers, ablutions, fastings, and a great variety of unmeaning and often cruel ceremonies,” commanded greater attention if not for its complex variety, then for its threat to Christianization.<sup>57</sup>

The rest of the article detailed fasting customs, use of cow dung as charm and medicine, bamboo torture, ascetic feats, female infanticide, and festivals. Each description consciously sensationalized the practice or ritual, framing it in terms abhorrent to home audiences. Of fasting, for instance, Whiting drew attention to adherents ingesting cow excrement and not their more common use of abstaining from food to acquire spiritual strength, an idea of fasting more or less consistent with biblical accounts. He depicted bamboo piercings only as tortures without fashionable taste. Ascetic practices like clenching one’s fists hard enough to dig long fingernails deep through flesh to the bone or staring at the sun until blind were showcased as examples of imbecility and lacked any religious context in which ascetics found meaning in their feats of willpower. Even the language remained morally deficient: “Active benevolence is scarcely known among them,” Whiting wrote; “for gratitude, they are said to have no name!”<sup>58</sup>

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56. Whiting, “Account of the Hindoos,” 273.

57. Whiting, “Account of the Hindoos,” 257–258, 260–261.

58. Whiting, “Account of the Hindoos,” 273–275.



All these behaviors sickened Whiting, who, by the end of the article, railed on the “cruel superstition” with force. “If Satan reigns in the hearts of any people uncontrolled, it is in these,” he concluded. The non-philosophically civilized people at the beginning of the piece were by the end adulterers, cannibals, and thieves. Hearsay and speculation propelled his final invectives and images of India—“Bramins themselves ... says Mr. Forbes ... eat flesh, and one tribe at least, eat human flesh!” Human bodies floating downriver were snatched by “epicurian cannibals” and the brains judged “the most delicate morsel of their unsocial banquet!” Prostitution attended their worship. Still, some in the public press had praised “Hindoo respectability.” Whiting scoffed. The “morality of the Hindoos has been the subject of the highest encomiums, and triumphantly compared with that of Christians. The morality of the Hindoos! We might as soon look for piety in Pandemonium. The truth is, their morality is rotten at the core.” The task would challenge the evangelists, but they must not shirk their mission—“How are they to be saved from present but especially from eternal misery?” Whiting posed. “The answer is plain—Christianize them!”<sup>59</sup>

What Whiting had not anticipated by missionaries like Adoniram and Ann Judson and Gordon Hall already in the Indian subcontinent knew well was the process of “christianization” did not necessarily follow classic techniques. Printing Bibles, preaching Christianity, building schools and churches—these may translate into a higher number of people professing Christian beliefs but did not guarantee idol crafting, or Viṣṇu festivals, or pilgrimages to the Ganges would disappear. Directors of the missionary societies, particularly the heads of the American Board, recognized the overlap between “christianization” and “civilization,” and implemented tactics to realize a more complete cultural transformation away from what they encountered on arrival. What felt foreign, in large measure, deserved to go; in its place, many of the missionaries would

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59. Whiting, “Account of the Hindoos,” 290–291.

strive to install the familiar, those modes of daily life resembling the home environment they had left behind.<sup>60</sup>

Two rituals popular in India at the time, *caṛak pūjā* and *satī*, ignited British and American scorn and propelled fundraisers for sending agents to the emerging Bombay mission. Each appeared regularly in the magazines, highlighted as the most vexing of Indian culture and deserving of legal prosecution. Reports commonly portrayed them as evidence of a breakdown in the Indians' ability to govern themselves, suggesting sometimes overtly how American society, with its democratic order, was superior.

Gordon Hall first alerted American audiences to *caṛak pūjā*, part of the *Gājān* festival in Bengal and the *Durga pūjā* festival in Kolkata he called "swinging."<sup>61</sup> His drawing titled "Heathen Superstition" in both the *American Baptist Magazine and Missionary Intelligencer* and *Religious Intelligencer* (Figures 4–5) depicted a woman fastened to a revolving pole by hooks in her back. A man opposite the woman swung both in a circle, and while flying through the air, the woman, with an infant wrapped to her upper body, cast flowers to the ground. The whole scene sickened Hall, whose accompanying letter described the ritual as nothing but self-inflicted torture

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60. Hutchison, *Errand to the World*, 64–77; Eleanor Jackson, "From Krishna Pal to Lal Behari Dey: Indian Builders of the Church in Bengal, 1800–1894," in *Converting Colonialism: Visions and Realities in Mission History, 1706–1914*, edited by Dana L. Robert, 166–205 (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2008), 177–179; Dana L. Robert, "The 'Christian Home' as a Cornerstone of Anglo-American Missionary Thought and Practice," in Robert, ed., *Converting Colonialism*, 147–150; Conroy-Krutz, *Christian Imperialism*, 78–81.

61. The definitive study on *caṛak pūjā* remains Geoffrey A. Oddie, *Popular Religion, Elites and Reform: Hook-Swinging and Its Prohibition in Colonial India, 1800–1894* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1995). *Caṛak pūjā* is referenced variously in scholarly literature on Hindu religions as "charak," "charak festival," and "charak gājan," and rarely as "chadak pūjā"; see, for example, Pradyot Kumar Maity, *Human Fertility Cults and Rituals of Bengal: A Comparative Study* (New Delhi: Abhinav Publications, 1989); June McDaniel, *Offering Flowers, Feeding Skulls: Popular Goddess Worship in West Bengal* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004); Ralph W. Nicholas, *Rites of Spring: Gājan in Village Bengal* (New Delhi: Chronicle Books, 2008); Francesco Brighenti, "Hindu Devotional Ordeals and Their Shamanic Parallels," *Electronic Journal of Vedic Studies* 19, no. 4 (2012): 103–175; Daniel E. White, *From Little London to Little Bengal: Religion, Print, and Modernity in Early British India, 1793–1835* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013). I favor the transliteration scheme used by Brighenti for its precision and current use among scholars of Indo-Aryan and Dravidian languages.

intended to secure blessings of some “Hindoo deity.”<sup>62</sup>

Some crucial details went missing in Hall’s picture, probably because he did not inquire beyond observing the ritual from a distance. For one, the participant in *caṛak pūjā* would acquire piercings in the back muscles before fastening the hooks through a specialized *piṭhphōṛā* operation allowing minimal loss of blood, and some participants would tether themselves with rope around the chest and shoulders instead.<sup>63</sup> In its religious context, the *pūjā* meant giving thanks to Viṣṇu or Śiva after receiving a blessing, not submitting to torture in order to secure Viṣṇu’s grace. Hall thought the woman had sworn a vow at the doors of a temple that if she were blessed with a child, she would offer herself to the torturous *pūjā*, but even his drawing showed no blood on her body or signs of distress in her countenance. Onlookers gathered below to collect her tossed flowers, and in later accounts of the ritual, the swinging gave diversion to participants and the whole *pūjā* brought communities together into a festival, minimizing the self-torturous aspects of the ceremony.<sup>64</sup>

When Hall and his associate Samuel Newell learned the War of 1812 had ended, they circulated journal entries to their countrymen hoping to capitalize on the new peace. The *Panoplist and Missionary Magazine* carried their journal extracts for several issues. Between translating the Bible and procuring supplies for a printing press, the Bombay missionaries observed local festivals, one of which included a *caṛak pūjā* during the week of Mahadave

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62. Gordon Hall, “Heathen Superstition,” *American Baptist Magazine and Missionary Intelligencer* 1, no. 5 (September 1817): 188–189; reprinted in *The Religious Intelligencer* 2, no. 21 (October 18, 1817): 321–323; Jane Derges, *Ritual and Recovery in Post-Conflict Sri Lanka* (London: Routledge, 2013), 164–165.

63. Brighenti, “Hindu Devotional Ordeals,” 111–112; Oddie, *Popular Religion*, 15–41; Ram Comul Sén, “A Short Account of the Charak Pūja Ceremonies, and Description of the Implements Used,” *The Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* 2, no. 4 (December 1833): 609–613.

64. Hall, “Heathen Superstition,” 188–189; William Wilson Hunter, *The Indian Empire: Its People, History, and Products*, 2nd ed. (London: Trübner, 1886), 213–214; Derges, *Ritual and Recovery in Post-Conflict Sri Lanka*, 164–165.

celebrations. Immediately before the *pūjā*, a company of revelers, Hall and Newell said, held a feast and looked on as an old man slaughtered a goat by biting its throat and drinking its blood. “While doing this,” they wrote, “the clang of music, the yell of the people, the crowding, howling and pushing around him, exhibited a scene as horrid and devilish, it almost seemed, as the devil himself could desire.” Once the procession brought a person to the swing, the crowd cheered as the “poor frantic creature was drawn up to the height of about twenty feet.” Hall on this occasion had observed the revelry *caṛak pūjā* was intended to inspire, but he interpreted the scene opposite how participants themselves understood the festival. The deity Mahadave, they believed, had defeated a notorious demon, which they had cause to celebrate, yet Hall and Newell only saw demonic influences at work: “Here the Christian may behold something of the degraded, deplorable, perishing condition of the heathen. How hard their bondage to Satan! How wretched their present condition!” Unlike Whiting, they spurned any notion of civilized Indians, whether philosophical or otherwise. The lack of colonial intervention suggested also how the more pious Americans must be counted on to make progress in India.<sup>65</sup>

British colonial governors never completely outlawed the *pūjā* (a law eventually prohibited suspending the full weight of the person by hooks in the back). But the other prominent ritual given broad reporting in the magazines endured in spite of vigorous campaigns to eradicate it, a ritual the missionaries found more appalling than *caṛak pūjā* or even infant drowning. As early as 400 C.E., Vedic texts began to popularize the idea of *sahamaraṇa*, an act of self-immolation by a widow desiring a high degree of sanctity. The widowed woman, or *satī*, would throw herself on the funeral pyre of her deceased husband and by her death guarantee herself sainthood and,

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65. Gordon Hall and Samuel Newell, “Journal of the Bombay Mission,” *The Panoplist and Missionary Magazine* 13, no. 12 (December 1817), 559–560.

according to some Vedic writers, a place with her husband in heaven for 35 million years.<sup>66</sup> By the late 1700s, the *sahamaraṇa* practice reached “epidemic” proportions, and when East India Company magistrates, judges, and missionaries debated how to stamp it out, the “deed became confused with the doer” and Europeans started referring to the ritual as “suttee” and “sati.”<sup>67</sup> The Wellesley legislation of 1802 that had effectively ended infant drowning near Saugor Island included prohibitions against *satī*, yet the popularity of the ritual extended beyond Saugor and occurred with enough regularity that enforcing the law presented a challenge. The *Latter Day Luminary* reported 1,528 widows died as *satī* or were buried alive between 1815 and 1817. Meanwhile, *satī* women stunned missionaries who saw their rite as the surest sign Christian government and morality was urgently needed.<sup>68</sup>

A letter by Mrs. S. T. Newton of Pittsfield, Massachusetts gained notoriety on both sides of the Atlantic in 1818 for describing a *satī* ceremony she had witnessed. Newton opened her letter horrified by the “dreadful sacrifice” and thanked God she “was born in a Christian land, and instructed in the Christian religion.” The day following the *satī*, she felt sick, and taking up the pen to cope with her uneasiness, confessed she could not come to terms with what she had seen. “It seems like a horrible dream,” she said. Her ensuing narrative gave a more objective

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66. Cassels, *Social Legislation of the East India Company*, 89–91; Joerg Fisch, *Burning Women: A Global History of Widow-Sacrifice from Ancient Times to the Present*, translated by Rekha Kamath Rajan (London: Seagull Books, 2005), 302–305; Catherine Weinberger-Thomas, *Ashes of Immortality: Widow-Burning in India*, translated by Jeffrey Mehlman and David Gordon White (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 20–21. The most detailed study of *satī*, extending beyond India to include a global history of widow-sacrifice is Fisch, *Burning Women*. Lata Mani and Pompa Banerjee interrogate the systems by which the voices of individual *satī* women were marginalized and silenced; see Lata Mani, *Contentious Traditions: The Debate on Sati in Colonial India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); Pompa Banerjee, *Burning Women: Widows, Witches, and Early Modern European Travelers in India* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).

67. Ashis Nandy, “Sati as Profit versus Sati as a Spectacle,” in *Sati, the Blessing and the Curse: The Burning of Wives in India*, edited by John Stratton Hawley (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 137; Weinberger-Thomas, *Ashes of Immortality*, 21.

68. Cassels, *Social Legislation of the East India Company*, 89–91; Fisch, *Burning Women*, 428–432; “Dreadful Immolation,” *The Latter Day Luminary* 3, no. 12 (December 1822): 377.

tone, reporting how the widow of a man who had died of rabies announced she would perform *sahamaraṇa* and become a *satī*. Her community reacted with celebration, preparing the large pile of bamboo, firewood, flax, and a highly flammable variety of resin. The *satī*'s three children would be left to the care of her mother, the eldest of whom (only seven years old) had the responsibility of lighting the fire. During the preparation, the *satī* "sat perfectly unmoved ... apparently at prayer, and counting a string of beads which she held in her hand." At this moment, with all the signs of a *satī* ritual in the works, government officials tried to break up the ceremony, only to be thwarted by the crowd. The government was "not strong enough to resort to violent measures," Newton observed, "to prevent this abominable custom. Nothing but our religion can abolish it."<sup>69</sup>

A few hours later, the corpse of the deceased husband was lain on the pile, the widow walked in a procession to the river, and bathed. After prayer and reciting words from the *Śāstra*, the *satī* presented gifts to friends then walked to the pile, "bent with lowly reverence over the feet of her husband," and threw herself onto the pile in a kind of ecstasy, "of a religious nature [or] affection for the dead," Newton could not tell. The child took a torch to the resin, and the multitude let out a cry, "but not a groan was heard from the pile." Newton had witnessed a voluntary act of such "fortitude and magnanimity, such resolution, devoted affection, religious zeal, and mad delusion, combined," she had "not conceived of, and ... hope never to witness again." Hundreds watched the *satī* expire in flames, some "ready to tear the bramins to pieces," others struck by the heroism of the woman. For her part, Newton was "absolutely stupefied with pity and horror ... awe-

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69. Newton's June 18, 1817 letter to her "dearest friends" appeared as "Self-Immolation" in *The Christian Herald* 5, no. 1 (April 4, 1818): 14–16; "Self-Immolation," *Literary Panorama, and National Register* (December 1818): 1527–1529; "Triumphs of Priestcraft," *The Monthly Magazine, or, British Register* [London] 46, no. 317 (October 1, 1818): 234–235; and translated into Italian for publication as "Lettera del sig. S. T. Newton, americano, residente in Calicutta, diretta a' suoi amici a Pittsfield (Massachusetts, Stati Uniti di America) nella quale si descrive il sacrificio di una donna indiana sopra il funereo rogo del suo marito," *Il Raccoglitore Ossia Archivj* 2, pp. 68–72.

struck, but feel no inclination to worship. I thank God, we are not Hindoos.”<sup>70</sup>

Some American observers of *satī* were less passive. John Peter, an Armenian missionary for the Baptist Missionary Society, wrote in January 1818 about interceding in a *satī* ceremony.<sup>71</sup> A party gathered at the home of Moongee, widowed at fifty years of age, playing music while the *satī* dressed herself in flowers and beads. Peter attempted various tactics to dissuade Moongee and expose the illegitimacy of the ritual by first testing her spiritual prowess as a *satī* and having her predict what he held closed in his hand. When she guessed incorrectly, she replied she was still unclean, and that the fire of *sahamaraṇa* would soon purify her. Peter appealed to the New Testament, quoting a passage in Acts about the “unpardonable sin,” and warning Moongee how the God she would meet if she went through with her plan would send her to “unquenchable fire.” “Do thyself no harm,” Peter exhorted repeatedly, but Moongee ignored him. She continued to give out flowers and began ecstatically singing. As she and her retinue processed to the funeral pyre, Peter followed, again calling to her, “Do thyself no harm,” and waiting for the local magistrate to take action. “More than a thousand surrounded her” at this point; the magistrate and anyone else, including Moongee’s children, who objected to the ceremony were powerless to stop it. “Tremble for yourself,” Peter entreated as twenty men carried her to the pile, “think what you are doing; repent; I am a servant of the true God.... God forbids you through my lips. [Believe] Jesus Christ is the only Saviour.” Moongee threw sacrificial gifts of rice, sugar, plantains, and milk into the fire now consuming her husband’s body. “She was like one intoxicated,” Peter lamented. Turning away from her son and the missionary pleading at the base of the burning

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70. Newton, “Self-Immolation,” *The Christian Herald*, 14–16.

71. John Peter, christened in the Armenian Church as Kreeeshno Paul before joining the Baptist Missionary Society, had already prepared the Orissa New Testament and preached in Bengal by the time of this account. (Francis Augustus Cox, *History of the Baptist Missionary Society, From 1792 to 1842*, 2 vols. [London: T. Ward and G. and J. Dyer, 1842], 1:182–183, 202, 314.)

stack, she cast herself into the fire, and a guru assistant threw combustibles on her, igniting the blaze to such ferocity the heat pushed back the crowd. To Peter's astonishment, "the crowd, nearly five thousand, were laughing" at the spectacle, "and seemed as happy as though they had gained the greatest prize, in seeing this self murder." He felt as though in the presence of the son of perdition, and exclaimed, "O Lord, when shall thy gospel enter the hearts of these wretched creatures, that they may be saved from thy wrath!"<sup>72</sup>

Readers like the missionaries thought the magistrates inept. The law clearly prohibited *satī*, and still two decades later, reports made it appear the rate of *satī* deaths was increasing. The trouble lay in competing laws and the spectacle each *satī* ceremony caused in local communities.<sup>73</sup> Lord Cornwallis's Code protected the East India Company's British subjects the "free exercise of their religion," which complicated legislation aimed at prohibiting *satī*. Magistrates would have insisted on stopping the practice were it not for the voluntary nature of the victim giving herself over to the flames. The ceremony appeared to fulfill a religious need, and the majority of *satī* women, like Moongee, resisted attempts to interrupt them. But rising pressure from public campaigns by members of the East India Company and missionaries encouraged some magistrates to penalize *satī* observances.<sup>74</sup> In 1815, orders were issued to the police *darogahs* to require *satī* mothers arrange for the transfer of responsibility of their infant children and file a "Form of Engagement" with the colonial government. The same orders also protected the widow from incurring degradation should she withdraw at the last minute.<sup>75</sup>

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72. John Peter, Letter (January 17, 1818), in "Burning a Widow in Hindostan," *The Religious Intelligencer* 2, no. 35 (January 24, 1818): 548–550.

73. Fisch, *Burning Widows*, 380–399.

74. Fisch, *Burning Widows*, 403–411.

75. Cassels, *Social Legislation of the East India Company*, 103–105.



Surprisingly, *satī* deaths doubled in the few years after the police orders, coinciding with the first arrivals of American missionaries in India. The earliest ground-level reports in the American press about the Hindu people directed special attention to *satī* and characterized much of the drama the missionaries expressed in their writing. Missionaries faced a challenge, even a contradiction, in their response to the ceremony. Those like Newton who believed only the Christian religion could curtail the Hindu religious practice of *satī* found themselves increasingly entreating the British government to punish the *satī* before her final act and the surrounding community for assisting in her death. Others like John Peter tried repeatedly and emphatically to preach against *satī* and dissuade local participants through conversion techniques, which in the long run had no discernible effect on *satī* rates. When Governor General William Bentinck added Regulation XVII to the Bengal Code in December 1829, missionaries cheered—assisting a *satī* was now equivalent to culpable homicide punishable by imprisonment without bail. More importantly, the new laws worked. Though it would take another twenty years before the princely states in India followed suit, the number of *satī* cases brought before the colonial courts dropped considerably and immediately. Missionaries were pleased their campaign for stricter laws prevailed, though they would continue to circulate tales and images of widow-burning well into the 1840s (see Figure 6).<sup>76</sup>

Much of editors' revulsion at Hindu religions stemmed from their antipathy for what they regarded as ignorance, a condition by their estimation near the lowest of social vices. *Carak pūjā* and *satī* represented outgrowths of idolatrous "stupidity" saturating Indian culture. It stood to reason education could correct the deficiencies caused by ignorant worship. Among the earliest reports to the secretary (the organization's equivalent of president or chairperson) of the

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76. Cassels, *Social Legislation of the East India Company*, 105.

American Board included a long-term plan for the conversion of “Hindoos.” Hall, Newell, and Horatio Bardwell outlined in 1817 the mission methods they had employed over the previous year, foremost involving efforts to raise a school staffed with “native” teachers. They hoped through enough concerted education, Hindu religions would give way, but even educated Indians spoke English inadequately to support a curriculum and fell short in basic arithmetic, reading, orthography, geography, astronomy, and history—all subjects taught in American schools—and even with some instruction, the missionaries reported “they learn nothing at all.” To date, they had found only a “Jew to teach this school, because no Hindoo of cast would teach the outcasts,” but they anticipated to soon gain several converts through the influence of many active boys attending the school. Their best efforts left the missionaries confounded: despite working sensibly to destabilize old traditions, their proselytes still cleaved “to their idols.” To spend their lives “among these heathen,” they wondered, “and never see any of them converted ... *would* be discouraging.”<sup>77</sup>

Three years later and after successfully founding a school in Bombay, the missionaries reported continued setbacks. For one, the dreaded cholera had broken out, a sure sign God was displeased with India spurning the Christian gospel. “Truly the Lord has a controversy with this people,” despite the epidemic subsiding in recent months. The schools required more funding to stave off natives flying to their idols at the first sign of disaster. Illiteracy prevented their students from ready access to the word of God. The American missionary, tract, and education societies still increasing in number held a unique position relative to the British—they already had attacked illiteracy in the United States and succeeded to some degree. The Bombay missionaries

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77. Gordon Hall, Samuel Newell, and Horatio Bardwell, “Letter from the Missionaries at Bombay, to the Corresponding Secretary,” *The Panoplist, and Missionary Herald* 14, no. 5 (May 1818): 227–229; [Hall, Newell, and Bardwell], “Native Schools at Bombay,” *The Panoplist, and Missionary Herald* 14, no. 12 (December 1818): 558–562.

hoped for greater collaboration with the other benevolent societies in the years ahead.<sup>78</sup>

The main advisory and administrative body of the American Board, the Prudential Committee, compiled their annual assessment of foreign mission operations for 1821, and in line with the word of their agents in India, placed education at the front of their evangelization strategy. They recognized the more permanent transformations in India would only come after generational turnover, and chose to focus most of their energy on finding a way to educate children in reading, arithmetic, and Christian doctrine as quickly as possible. The committee had every confidence by means of education and a larger network of mission schools “heathen prejudices are destroyed, the minds of the young are enlightened,” and the children would begin to attract their parents and relatives to Christian living. At present, they had seven schools in Bombay, and another fourteen in other parts of the country, with an average number of students around fifty. Consequently, the American Board could boast schooling more than a thousand children a day, most at the direction and tutelage of the American missionaries. Still, getting children to attend regularly proved difficult, especially in indigent communities. But if they could be the means of merely nurturing the receptivity of the rising generation, they would consider their strategy fruitful. The end of superstition, as they saw it, hinged on the growth and effectiveness of the schools, and for the next decade, the board poured funds and recruits into education programs abroad.<sup>79</sup>

Not all missionaries looked to the schools for serving the needs of education. Levi Spaulding thought the problem of malnourished children and motherly neglect so severe, he urged sponsors

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78. Gordon Hall, Samuel Newell, Horatio Bardwell, John Nichols, and Allen Graves, “Mission at Bombay,” *The Missionary Herald* 17, no. 5 (May 1821): 143–147.

79. American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, “Report of the Prudential Committee,” *The Missionary Herald* 17, nos. 11–12 (November–December 1821): 353–355, 374–376.

to direct resources toward reforming the “Hindoo” home. Spaulding’s wife Mary once paid a visit to a neighbor whose child suffered with cholera and was shocked to find the six-year-old alone, crying without any response from his mother. Mary failed to persuade the mother to take notice of the child, and left convinced she, like the heathen at large, was without natural affection. Even those women who did not neglect their children needed domestic education. “Could the female youth in a Christian land, see these children,” wrote Levi in 1821, “they would more than ever, prize their own privileges.” Mary held classes at home with neighbors, teaching young women to sew and comport themselves with dignified manners. Just healing the plight of female ignorance, thought the Spauldings, would do enough for eradicating the social ills of India and Ceylon. The more these women could become like those in Christian lands, the more they would conquer “cruel superstitions” keeping women in “perpetual ignorance.”<sup>80</sup>

At least one missionary felt their early efforts to curb superstition in India had worked. Charlotte White, the first woman missionary for the American Baptist Board of Foreign Missions, had married the English missionary Joshua Rowe shortly after her arrival in India in 1816 and assumed direction of a large school where Rowe served until his death in 1823. The school at Alabahad, she reported not long before returning to the United States, prospered: boys and girls commuted over four miles to attend and yet filled the school. The surrounding country was improving, too. A proclamation from the chief magistrate declared assisting infant drownings would carry the penalty of murder, and many other attempts by regular civilians to quell immolation festivals had occurred recently. The editor of the *Religious Intelligencer*, Nathan Whiting, who had just a couple of years before railed cynically against the ability of native Hindus to eradicate *satī*, published White’s letter under the heading, “DECLINE OF SUPERSTITION.”<sup>81</sup>

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80. Levi Spaulding, “Mission in Ceylon,” *The Missionary Herald* 18, no. 12 (December 1822): 383–385.

81. Charlotte White Rowe, “Decline of Superstition,” *The Religious Intelligencer* 7, no. 50 (May 10, 1823): 794; William H. Brackney, “Charlotte Hazen Atlee White,” in *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions*, edited by

### Religiously Superior

Missionary magazines had circulated for over a decade, yet editors continued to plead for donations. They employed British accounts as propaganda intended to foster domestic support for local agencies. As propaganda from more distant fields, foreign reports departed sharply from earlier efforts of evangelizing among Native Americans and Jews—new multifaceted schemes would supersede missionaries’ prior synchronic, millenarian expectations. Whereas talk of a massive conversion of peoples prior to a world-ending millennial event characterized the extended discussions of the foreign in the first issues, magazines after the War of 1812 offered assessments more grounded in present missions and a diversifying taxonomy of foreign difference. Taking the gospel to the Pacific introduced wholly dissimilar environments and challenges than editors had imagined previously. The before-and-after metric worked for figuring where to expand missions, and the presentist feel to this kind of appraisal marked a chronological change in the thinking of missionary writers. Prognostication was for inchoate enterprises; evidence served active associations.

The data expanded the missionaries’ matrices beyond categories of ethnic foreignness. Reports rendered with greater detail and in greater quantities provided new terms for missions advocacy: the agencies needed supporters who could empathize with the challenges brought about in the encounters with African poverty, islander idolatry, and Brahmanic Hindu practices. British and American uses of “superstition” to tag all of the new and foreign features of non-Christian peoples implied a negotiation of religion itself. Missionary writers constructed a concept of superstition in distinction to its binary twin, “religion,” projected it onto the world,

and in effect subordinated their new audiences under what was by a fair estimation a fractured and factional Protestantism. At the same time, they variously supported and resisted British missions, intimating an American assertiveness and superiority.

In between the diachronic transformations stood the writer himself—almost always a male Protestant missionary working steadily toward the conversion of the heathen. To demonstrate movement on the part of the heathen proselyte, from prior superstition to religious civility, did more than prove a superior gospel had taken hold or the Christian church had expanded. Such ultimately elevated the missionary and his supportive reader to a status above the religion/superstition dichotomy. These actors with their interventionist strategies assumed a sovereign posture, one held beyond question even while aggressive measures sought to eradicate superstition. Expanding their mission reach, however, would soon present populations too large and too entwined in colonial commerce to fit within tidy categories. Editors and mission boards would get their wish, and with the rising tide of missionary activity in bustling port cities across the globe would come another change in strategy and identity.



## Chapter 4

### “Within the Kingdom of the Beast”: Coastal Foreigners, 1824–1839

Traces of a distinctly “American” exceptional identity percolated through the missionary magazines from the start, but intensified measurably in the 1830s. Most profoundly, a rationale beyond mere discrete observations of foreigners—the beginnings of an ideology taking logical, even theoretical shape—materialized in the burgeoning foreign missionary literature. In addition to versions of a Christian exceptionalism and a Protestant exceptionalism (and even an evangelical exceptionalism), *America* emerged as a category under which missionaries would understand their uniqueness and their privilege in the world. Writers in this period at once reflected and created an exceptionalism: the reflective “material” was itself half-silvered, letting through the sheen of the superior self a background of something foreign and subordinate. One could not proffer a mark, a subject worthy of the transformative powers one exercised as a missionary, without at the same time setting the terms of the exceptional balance. Accounts would overtly attach “America” and “Americans” to the scales. What motivated this move?

The missionaries had for themselves a thriving enterprise, however modest individual mission outposts appeared. Collectively, the American foreign missions represented a force for change in the world, and it felt to editors and missionary writers they had accomplished something new and enduring; hence the continual mentions of present expansion and growing list of destinations in the magazines. They had to remind their readers what they were about, what mission meant, and they had to interpret the results to show whether the missionaries whom they sponsored furthered that mission. Whatever the outcome, the editors would not capitulate easily—these represented the class of the most-committed, the vociferous defenders



of the mission. Perhaps by the combined results converging around the mean, the increase in mission fields guaranteed reporters would have to employ ever more elaborate apologetics to maintain their expectation the mission would conclude in a triumph for Christ. The observable characteristics apparent in the receiving culture and the impulse to reveal whatever adversary stalled those features from improving framed their apologia. American identity became a serviceable device to explain how to subdue their adversaries as well as a serviceable rule for measuring cultural change.

Catholicism represented the primary antagonist in this new scheme of adversaries. Between 1824 and 1839, missionary writing routinely played to fears of conspiracy among the “papists” and “Romish priests.” As port cities invited access to ever greater numbers of people, the expanding market for proselytes brought missionaries into contact with already Catholicized areas, only feeding their penchant for speculation. The Catholic foe, they would reinforce to themselves, had warped Christian instruction and allowed prior heathenism to endure. What Catholic missionaries had considered adaptive the reporters thought a deliberate capitulation. Such a Catholicism could engender traits far worse than “godless heathenism”—the powerful association of Antichrist with the papacy introduced a subversive gravitas to their difficulties. The “heathen” may have tested the missionaries’ resolve with their foreign traditions, but Catholic leaders employed a deliberate agenda to corrupt Christianity itself. Whether in Cuba, Palestine, or China, areas opened in this period by increasing numbers of American missionaries, or even in Buddhist regions of Burma, Catholics became the foil for intercultural frictions. As the vocabulary for describing foreigners broadened with the multiplying of missionary periodicals, anti-Catholic sentiment already germinating in other rhetorics became a crucial element in defining the foreign.

Meanwhile, a strictly American orientation to the missionaries' sense of exceptional identity began to appear—not only implied, but invoked to lay out the advantages afforded to non-European Christians the writers considered free from state and colonial entanglements. This period experienced the start of a “far more comfortable missionary establishment” as fields opened and expanded in Syria, Turkey, the West Indies, Burma, China, and Micronesia.<sup>1</sup> In turn, as Ussama Makdisi has observed, a more gradual and long-term system developed, and missionaries made overtures to an American as opposed to English method. The “apotheosis of American exceptionalism” in the Syrian mission, argues Makdisi, “thus marked the moment in mission history when American nationalism, racialism, and evangelism fused together in a manner that obviated any further discussion of American shortcomings, and escalated criticisms of those un-American places in the world yet to be saved by American missionaries.”<sup>2</sup> Centers of gravity shifted, the reports from which bear out Makdisi's argument, and not in the Middle East alone: Chinese and Micronesian outposts particularly inspired predictions of American success over European and even British agencies.

The home and the field became the sites of conflict where missionaries could exercise American advantages. Women missionaries alerted readers to encroaching influences keeping female proselytes ignorant and undomesticated, and soon interceding with uniquely American customs offered a promising antidote to Catholic and heathenish traditions. Where powerful commercial and state entities had colonized and outpaced the missionaries, they could counter with agricultural acumen known nowhere in Europe. The opium trade pushing China and Britain ever closer to war exploited an agricultural deficiency affecting all but the United States.

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1. Ussama Makdisi, *Artillery of Heaven: American Missionaries and the Failed Conversion of the Middle East* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008), 142.

2. Makdisi, *Artillery of Heaven*, 156, 178.

In these domains, American superiority became visible and measurable. Anti-Catholicism, gender, and agriculture assisted missionaries in reconciling deep challenges facing their ambitious and now global enterprise.

### **Port-City Environments**

The chance for anti-Catholic, pro-American, and domestic motifs to grow in frequency owed itself to the dramatic expansion of American Protestant mission networks in the 1820s and 1830s and the subsequent demand for mission-themed periodicals. New missions had scarcely opened for the number of magazine titles in circulation to jump. European colonization continued apace, carving pathways deeper into the continental interiors and strengthening transoceanic traffic. Earlier, a select few societies had coordinated mission on a national scale, with many dozens of local organizations trying to emulate them, but all efforts showed more promise than activity on the ground. Committees tasked with locating opportune fields researched destinations using published travelogues and reports from merchants and mainly British and Dutch missionaries. Detailed information dated back only a couple of decades at best, leaving many unsure of the precise risks in sending agents abroad. The magazines served better than any other medium the growing correspondence from Americans just starting to report from foreign fields. Between 1824 and 1839, the rate of discussing the foreign would nearly surpass ten times what had appeared in the period between 1800 and 1820. This change in predominant discussions of the foreign corresponded with the increase in active missionaries and the broader range of distinct locales from which they reported. Between the American Board, the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and the American Baptist Board of Foreign Missions, the number

of missionaries surpassed two hundred by 1839.<sup>3</sup>

Missionaries followed maritime routes in their planning and execution owing to the considerable cuts in travel times as water transportation improved. Ports became the first locations to receive extensive coverage in the magazines, and the trait endemic to these centers would color depictions of foreignness and evangelistic opportunity. Ships had reached the antipodes, finally circumnavigating the globe, and when agencies sought the furthest destinations—the most foreign and remote by their estimation—they automatically fixated on points of access running through the port cities in the commercialized areas of the world. Agents dispatched in the 1830s would increasingly enter lands with less indigeneity than before, areas heavily colonized and urban holding mixed populations.<sup>4</sup>

Institutions and bureaucracies ordered the cities' discernible governing powers.<sup>5</sup> Even the non-Christian traditions came closer to the missionaries' prevailing definition of "religion" as opposed to "superstition." As a consequence, more sophisticated philosophical rebuttals of Protestant thought awaited the newcomers. Committees at home knew the great Asian continent presented a world teeming with evangelistic possibility, and they already had contact with

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3. American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, *Report of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions: Presented at the Thirtieth Annual Meeting, Held in the City of Troy, New-York, Sept. 11, 12, & 13, 1839* (Boston: Crocker and Brewster, 1839), 45; Methodist Episcopal Church, *Twentieth Annual Report of the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church* (New York: Conference Office, 1839), 19; "Annual Meeting of the Board," *The Baptist Missionary Magazine* 19, no. 6 (June 1839), 150; Wade Crawford Barclay, *History of Methodist Missions*, 6 vols. (New York: Board of Missions and Church Extension of the Methodist Church, 1949), 1:276–279.

4. Samuel Spring and Samuel Worcester, *Report of the Prudential Committee in First Ten Annual Reports of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, With Other Documents of the Board* (Boston: Crocker and Brewster, 1834), 23–24.

5. K. N. Chaudhuri, *Trade and Civilisation in the Indian Ocean: An Economic History from the Rise of Islam to 1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 11–30; M. N. Pearson, "Brokers in Western Indian Port Cities: Their Role in Servicing Foreign Merchants," *Modern Asian Studies* 22, no. 3 (1988), 458–471; Carola Hein, "Port Cities," Chapter 43 in *The Oxford Handbook of Cities in World History*, edited by Peter Clark, 809–826 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 810–811.

Africans and Pacific islanders; the port cities, on the other hand, brought Christian-influenced areas into focus.<sup>6</sup> European Protestants had considered Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, and Muslim strongholds in the Middle East—especially the places bordering the Mediterranean, what they sometimes called generically “Palestine” and often “the Levant”—prime destinations despite moderate numbers of professing Christians living there. American sponsors targeted the Levant as a gateway into the “Mohammedan” realm, and by 1824, began receiving letters from their own missionaries dispatched to Turkey. The organized and older Christian presence meant agents walked into Catholicized areas compelling them to reckon with competing Christianities and powerful clergy outside their own affiliated churches.<sup>7</sup>

### Anti-Catholicism

Many Americans feared conspiracy long before Isaac Bird and his wife of one month, Ann, set out for Malta in 1822 on a mission for the American Board.<sup>8</sup> During his first tour of Syria, Bird wrote home somewhat distressed over the local competition for proselytes. The missionaries contended “within the kingdom of the Beast,” he said, against naysayers who would deprive local children from receiving a Protestant education. Roman Catholic and Greek

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6. Emily Conroy-Krutz, *Christian Imperialism: Converting the World in the Early American Republic* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015), 181–186.

7. Eleanor H. Tejerian and Reeve Spector Simon, *Conflict, Conquest, and Conversion: Two Thousand Years of Christian Missions in the Middle East* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 81–82; Daniel H. Bays and James H. Grayson, “Christianity in East Asia: China, Korea and Japan,” Chapter 30 in *World Christianities, c. 1815–c. 1914*, edited by Sheridan Gilley and Brian Stanley, 493–512, *The Cambridge History of Christianity* 8 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 493–496.

8. *Obituary Record of Graduates of Yale College Deceased during the Academical Year Ending in June, 1876, Including the Record of a Few Who Died a Short Time Previous, Hitherto Unreported* (New Haven: Yale College, 1876), 207.

Orthodox priests, ready as ever to counter Bird's preaching, stood between his companions and the heathen he assumed he would meet on arrival. First efforts to sponsor a local school stalled after an Orthodox patriarch in Damascus (Bird called Roman and Greek Christianities both "Catholic") shut down a Protestant circular and dissuaded parents from entertaining missionary schoolteachers. Not one to capitulate, Bird told readers they yet had reason for optimism. The hostility may have reached levels reminiscent of "probably, the Reformation," but the ground was shifting under the Catholics' feet. "There is heard a hollow rumbling sound at present," he affirmed, "which seems to indicate the approach of a volcanic eruption." Their arrival had announced the first tremors of the kingdom's inevitable collapse.<sup>9</sup> Fears like Bird's of hidden corruption thwarting the advance of religion would swell for the next couple of decades, bringing new crusades against Native Americans, Freemasonry, and slave uprisings just as foreign missionary activity expanded more than four fold. Missionary reports often advanced and confirmed the home audience's suspicions.<sup>10</sup>

Few images so adorned the early American intellectual tradition as the "Beast" metaphor.<sup>11</sup> Prominent thinkers regularly sought after the cryptic symbolism in the Book of Revelation, drawing links between the esoteric and present circumstances. European Reformers in the sixteenth century especially leveraged the rhetorical force of calling their chief rival, the Pope, the Antichrist. Notable Puritan preachers Increase Mather, John Cotton, and others continued

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9. Isaac Bird, Letter (January 11, 1825) in "Palestine Mission," *The Religious Intelligencer* 10, no. 17 (September 24, 1825): 257–258.

10. David Brion Davis, ed., *The Fear of Conspiracy: Images of Un-American Subversion from the Revolution to the Present* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1971), xx–xxiv; Francis D. Cogliano, *No King, No Popery: Anti-Catholicism in Revolutionary New England* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1995), 7–8; Robert Alan Goldberg, *Enemies Within: The Culture of Conspiracy in Modern America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 6–11.

11. Thomas More Brown, "The Image of the Beast: Anti-Papal Rhetoric in Colonial America," Chapter 1 in *Conspiracy: The Fear of Subversion in American History*, edited by Richard O. Curry and Thomas M. Brown, 1–20 (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1972), 1–2.

the association, understanding the dragon sprouting seven heads and its beastly emissaries to represent the Devil and his surrogate kingdoms on earth. Virginians spoke of England's victory over the Spanish Armada in 1588 as the turn when the Antichrist's influence was supposed to decline, yet New England Puritans heavily critical of the Church of England saw little difference between the ceremonies and vestments of the Roman and Anglican churches. Regardless of regional nuances, the English colonies in America were awash in a general anti-Catholic sentiment by the time of the Revolution: patriotic pamphlets alone carried so-called exposés of Catholic subversion lurking in the colonial missions of the Jesuits, the French and Indian Wars, the Glorious Revolution, the Stamp Act of 1765, the Quebec Act of 1774, the Bavarian Illuminati, and on, and on.<sup>12</sup> No less than Thomas Jefferson granted the "kingdom of the Beast" philosophical esteem when he argued the Catholic church had made an institution out of medieval superstition.<sup>13</sup>

Anti-Catholic sentiment gained a level of "textual ubiquity" according to Elizabeth Fenton, such that missionaries in the 1830s could publish without any qualification references to the "whore of Babylon" and the "kingdom of the Beast" in their descriptions of newly encountered foreigners.<sup>14</sup> Scholars have long looked to the antebellum surge of Catholic immigrants and the concurrent opening of religious variety in the United States for sources of rising anti-Catholicism, or what Jenny Franchot more carefully termed "Protestantism's Romanism."<sup>15</sup> Other studies have

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12. Owen Stanwood, "The Protestant Moment: Antipopery, the Revolution of 1688–1689, and the Making of an Anglo-American Empire," *Journal of British Studies* 46, no. 3 (July 2007): 481–508; Brown, "The Image of the Beast," 5–20; Cogliano, *No King, No Popery*, 5–18.

13. Elizabeth Fenton, *Religious Liberties: Anti-Catholicism and Liberal Democracy in Nineteenth-Century U.S. Literature and Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 21–30.

14. Fenton, *Religious Liberties*, 10.

15. Jenny Franchot, *Roads to Rome: The Antebellum Protestant Encounter with Catholicism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), xxi. See, for example, Sydney Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People*, 2nd ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 559; Franchot, *Roads to Rome*, xix; David F. Holland, *Sacred Borders:*

expanded the set of influences beyond immigration to include features as disparate as tourism, scriptural canonization, frontier anxiety, and democratization.<sup>16</sup> By every measurement, anti-Catholicism appears to have proliferated beyond Revolutionary-era levels, becoming something of a cultural trait of the non-Catholic, Anglo-American population.

Missionary writing caught the wave early on, disseminating constructs of the foreign with anti-Catholic bite more predominantly in the years between 1824 and 1839 than before. This turn was significant: it surfaced in the missionary press before cultural swings beginning in the 1840s, suggesting missionaries owed their concerns to movements other than the nativism, tourism, and immigration of the 1840s, '50s, and '60s. The event of implying an exceptional identity—particularly in how missionaries fashioned the “foreign” using terminology grounded in concepts of the “heathen”—would now incorporate another distinct and robust discourse, a discourse of a Christianized yet unwelcome phenomenon that was Catholicism.

Their new stations invited American missionaries to discover a different competition for converts, a field presenting proselytes whom other Christians had already proselytized before the Americans arrived. The inescapable impact challengers made spurred new evaluations pulling from the clash of nations, races, and gospels. The fusion of nationalism, racialism, and evangelism worked for missionary writers judging themselves equal to their mandate in the face of several adversarial forces. Competitors and their schemes explained the hidden threats reporters suspected could subvert plans to save the world.

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*Continuing Revelation and Canonical Restraint in Early America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 89–90; Daniel Murphy, *A History of Irish Emigrant and Missionary Education* (Portland: Four Courts Press, 2000), 206–224.

16. Jenny Franchot, “‘The Moral Map of the World’: American Tourists and Underground Rome,” Chapter 2 in *Roads to Rome*, 16–34; David F. Holland, “Prophets, Presidents, and Papists,” Chapter 4 in *Sacred Borders*, 89–127; Fenton, *Religious Liberties*.



A Christian presence had remained in the West Indies since first contact by European explorers, and as early efforts to preach among Native Americans took off, some eager evangelists looked to the islands as prime mission fields though the slave trade in the region slowed initial attempts. The Moravian Brethren launched a ministry there lasting into the 1800s and carried a reputation as more or less the elder Protestants to work the area, though the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts had long worked in tandem with colonial authorities to proselytize among indigenous and slave populations alike.<sup>17</sup> As a mission field mentioned in the missionary press, the West Indies rivaled Burma and China in frequency. Everything had become fully Catholicized—at least, that was how missionary writers overwhelmingly portrayed the West Indies. The peoples of Cuba and Haiti especially, the corruption of policy, even the daily farming routines spoke to an omnipresent Catholic stronghold.<sup>18</sup>

Jeremiah Evarts, editor of the *Missionary Herald*, thought Cuba and neighboring islands rather “promising” as a “field for evangelical labors” and ran a series penned by an anonymous traveler who had visited the interior and had grown “conversant with planters and rural scenery.”<sup>19</sup> Five classes of people comprised Cuban society according to the traveler: hospitable

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17. “Guiana and West Indies,” *The Missionary Herald* 24, no. 2 (February 1828): 40; “Antigua,” *The United Brethren’s Missionary Intelligencer, and Religious Miscellany* 4, no. 2 (Second Quarter 1831): 53–55; J. Klingenberg, Letter (January 20, 1831) in “West Indies.—Danish Islands,” *The United Brethren’s Missionary Intelligencer, and Religious Miscellany* 4, no. 4 (Fourth Quarter 1831): 164–165; “British West Indies.—Jamaica,” *The United Brethren’s Missionary Intelligencer, and Religious Miscellany* 4, no. 10 (Second Quarter 1833): 433–440; Travis Glasson, *Mastering Christianity: Missionary Anglicanism and Slavery in the Atlantic World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 141–170; Jon F. Sensbach, *Rebecca’s Revival: Creating Black Christianity in the Atlantic World* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2005), 46–59.

18. The source most representative of this is “Remarks on the Island of Cuba,” a serial article running in the *Missionary Herald* in 1824 and attributed to an unnamed “gentleman” containing an editorial introduction by Jeremiah Evarts: *The Missionary Herald* 20, nos. 9–11 (September–November 1824): 286–290, 319–322, 363–365. See also “Persecution of Wesleyan Methodists,” *The Missionary Herald* 20, no. 10 (October 1824): 327–329.

19. “Remarks on the Island of Cuba,” 286. The annual report to the American Board, the sponsor of the *Missionary Herald*, identified Evarts as the editor of the magazine; see American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, *Report of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions; Compiled from Documents Laid before the Board, at the Fifteenth Annual Meeting, Which Was Held in Hartford, (Con.) Sept. 15, 16, and 17, 1824* (Boston: Crocker and Brewster, 1824), 15.

Spaniards, illiterate Creoles, “free colored people,” “slaves,” and foreign visitors.<sup>20</sup> While he respected the manners and “general character” of the Spanish population and thought Cuba rather tame in the treatment of slaves, he could not countenance the harm brought by Catholic influences. “The Catholic religion is the only one tolerated,” he lamented, fearing such a policy held by the “constitutional government” would mean any Protestant worship could be punishable by law. He had to admit the colonial government’s own distribution network for the Bible was impressive by Protestant standards, but readers would err if they thought the “influence of the Scriptures” could account for Cuba’s greater “intercourse with the world” at the time. “It cannot be said, however, that morals have improved,” he concluded. Striking an impartial tone, the traveler confessed to harboring a kind of tourist’s bias: “a traveller ... passing as it were over the surface of society, is more likely to see the vices, than the virtues of the community.” “At the same time,” he went on, “the moral and religious character of a people is not to be passed in silence.” He would venture a critique anyhow.<sup>21</sup>

Evidence of vice abounded “when compared with [the standard of moral character] in New England,” most especially in the “ease with which absolution is obtained,” the lack of public preaching, the “disregard of the Sabbath,” and the “loose character of the clergy, as a body.” The traveler here betrayed a strong evangelical hermeneutic, discounting the confession of sin without the all-important forsaking of sin. He cited a litany of slights for each of these vices, but rejected most forcefully the Catholic clergy who seemed to exert their power with abandon. A “respectable Catholic” once said how they as Catholics regarded Sunday “as a day for enjoying one’s self”—enough to prove the clergy were “exceedingly corrupt” and “pernicious.” Protestantism had the

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20. “Remarks on the Island of Cuba,” 321, 363–364.

21. “Remarks of the Island of Cuba,” 364–365.

obligation to win the West Indies from the Catholics, a task requiring no less than a complete education in the “character and circumstances” of the Cuban Spaniards. No less than “six empires, *all holding the Catholic Faith*,” to say nothing of the islands of the West Indies, were “growing up in the same hemisphere with ourselves!”<sup>22</sup>

Evarts employed the “sketches” on the West Indies hoping to draw attention to the plight of the Catholicized Creole whom the anonymous traveler placed in the thick of clerical corruptions. The narrative fell in lockstep with the American tourist perceptions of ancient Roman imperial decline, except it originated not in travels to Europe and visits among the catacombs of Catholic cathedrals, but from what amounted to a nearby retreat where the traveler “gentleman” could recuperate from ill health—and years before travel literature about the Old World would circulate in the United States.<sup>23</sup> The same tropes graced the *Missionary Herald* that would appear in tourist accounts of Roman ruins: the signs of a deliberately amoral clergy in the supposed passivity of the Mass, in empty cathedrals waiting to topple, and in traits of occupying a middle road between “savagery” and “civilization.”<sup>24</sup> The traveler had found the Havana cathedral more interesting than any other edifice on the island, adorned with simplicity and “few images” (and most importantly holding the ashes of Columbus), and yet guarded by a bishop who encroached on its parishioners’ faith.<sup>25</sup>

Evarts was careful to temper the traveler’s optimism about Haiti perhaps being more inviting to Protestant evangelism than Cuba. Next to the serial article, he published a report

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22. “Remarks on the Island of Cuba,” 365; italics in original.

23. Franchot argues how the “aesthetic attractions of Catholic Europe” added fuel to the American Protestant struggle over “internal dissension and Catholic immigration.” She offers ample sources in support of this view, all published after 1830: Franchot, *Roads to Rome*, 16–34.

24. Franchot, *Roads to Rome*, 19–20.

25. “Remarks on the Island of Cuba,” 322.

of Haitian persecution against Wesleyan Methodists. Mob violence had amassed “unchecked” against English missionaries stationed at Port-au-Prince, perpetuated by “persons calling themselves ‘respectable,’” but thoroughly “brutal” and “ignorant” in actuality. Haitian convert and missionary assistant Charles Pressoir wrote to the Wesleyan Missionary Society how some divine intervention spared him from serious injury after “a great emissary of Satan” accompanied by many angry townspeople stormed a Methodist meetinghouse and beat him and his fellow worshipers “with all the fury of Antichrist.” Those who tried to escape were “stoned, beaten, torn, outraged, and brought back to the house.” “It appeared as if Satan was unchained,” Pressoir continued, “and had come forth to make war against those whom the truth of the Gospel had made free, and to crush those who had believed the testimony of the Son of God.” Rioters tore down the meetinghouse and harassed its members, though Pressoir did not report anyone killed in the attack. The Wesleyan Missionary Society petitioned the magistrate and Haiti’s president Jean-Pierre Boyer for protection and was met eventually with a proclamation forbidding “throwing stones at the Methodists,” but “the people did not cease to ill treat us,” Pressoir said. What had incited the mob and encouraged government officials’ apathy in the first place was “popish rancor” eager to force the Methodists to profess faith in “Almighty God, the Virgin Mary.”<sup>26</sup> Avarice ran deep where the magistrates professed Catholicism.

Writers tended to conflate the Spanish-controlled Lesser Antilles with the West Indies, eliding the British influence throughout the colonial Caribbean. In effect, Catholicism appeared more geographically formidable. As reports from Syria began to arrive, Evarts continued to emphasize the Catholic presence in his selections. He cited William Jowett’s *Christian Researches*

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26. “Persecution of Wesleyan Methodists,” 327–329; Effie Lee Newsome, “Early Figures in Haitian Methodism,” *Phylon: The Atlanta University Review of Race and Culture* 5, no. 1 (First Quarter 1994), 52–58.

in *Syria and the Holy Land*, itself an early travelogue of the region in English, to note the principal denominations missionaries would encounter in the Palestine Mission, listing Jews, Christians, Greek Orthodox, Armenian Christians, Syriac Christians, Nestorians, Copts, Roman Catholics, Syrian Catholics, Frank Catholics, and Protestants.<sup>27</sup> Cognizant of the concentrated diversity of Christianity in the greater “Holy Land,” Evarts nevertheless attributed the diffusion of “pure Christianity” to the shared “Darkness and discord” originating in the missionary work of medieval friars. The “Papal system” touched all but the Jews and Protestants, with the Nestorians more successfully avoiding “superstition” than the rest on account of their pedigree: they descended from Monophysites and not the Roman bishops and thus forestalled being “infected” by a “multitude of superstitious opinions and practices.”<sup>28</sup>

The relatively nascent group of American Board missionaries—Isaac Bird, Ann Bird, William Goodell, and Abigail Goodell—had reason to feel intimidated. When they were not outnumbered by British agents representing the Church Missionary Society and London Jews’ Society, they had to dodge civil unrest occasioned by the Greek War of Independence that had broken out in 1821. On the advice of Pliny Fisk, their counterpart in Egypt, the Birds and Goodells opted to launch their mission from a base in Beirut. After a Greek fleet attacked the city in 1826, local Muslims

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27. G. S. P. Freeman-Grenville, *Historical Atlas of the Middle East* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1993), 106; “Religious Denominations in Syria and the Holy Land,” *The Missionary Herald* 22, nos. 3–4 (March–April 1826): 92–93, 126–127; William Jowett, *Christian Researches in Syria and the Holy Land, in MDCCCXXIII, and MDCCCXXIV: In Furtherance of the Objects of the Church Missionary Society* (London: L. B. Seeley and Son and J. Hatchard and Son, 1825), 5–6.

28. “Religious Denominations in Syria,” 126. Evarts attributed the description of the Nestorians to a “quotation made by [Jowett] from the letters of the Jesuit missionaries,” without citing the source. Either Jowett or Evarts ultimately drew from Charles Buck’s entry on Nestorians from the 1824 Philadelphia edition of his *Theological Dictionary*, as it seems unlikely Catholic Jesuits in the Mediterranean would be sympathetic to Buck’s overt anti-Catholic language. (Charles Buck, *A Theological Dictionary, Containing Definitions of All Religious Terms; A Comprehensive View of Every Article in the System of Divinity; An Impartial Account of All the Principal Denominations Which Have Subsisted in the Religious World, From the Birth of Christ to the Present Day: Together with an Accurate Statement of the Most Remarkable Transactions and Events Recorded in Ecclesiastical History* [Philadelphia: William W. Woodward, 1824], 408.)

retaliated against Christians, forcing the missionaries to close their young school. The next few years continued in turmoil, with Christians at one time coming under accusations of treason. The British consul abandoned Beirut in 1828, compelling the missionaries to flee to Malta. Other American Board stations in Smyrna and later in Jerusalem declined as military campaigns spread throughout the region.<sup>29</sup>

Prospects had appeared promising initially, notwithstanding their late entry to the region trailing the well-entrenched Catholics. News from Fisk, Bird, and Goodell reached the *Missionary Herald* in 1826, pointing out the absence of any Protestants and the overwhelming burden hovering over the group. Had they “been acquainted with every strong hold, and assailable point, in the ancient and mighty kingdom, which Satan has established in those parts,” the first of several reports began, “still, in so short a time, it would not be right to expect strong manifestations of influence upon the people.” Where “Christian institutions have retained their purity,” readers might expect to see faster progress. An “influence” urged the American churches onward despite the dearth of travel references written with missionary work in mind—a duty called to “hasten the battle of the great day, when the Beast and the False Prophet, united in counsel and interest and hostile effort, shall be overthrown, and their kingdom subverted.”<sup>30</sup>

Islam lurked in the shadows—European cartographers had yet to produce any details of the pilgrimage roads crossing Arabia, leaving the peninsula with a blank center—and yet, its alliance with the papacy gave Islam its daunting character.<sup>31</sup> The editor could place his hopes in the word

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29. Tejerian and Simon, *Conflict, Conquest, and Conversion*, 82–84.

30. “Reasonable Expectations in Relation to the Palestine Mission,” *The Missionary Herald* 22, no. 7 (July 1826): 212–214.

31. Jean Baptiste Bourguignon D’Anville, *A New Map of Arabia Divided into Its Several Regions and Districts from Monsr. D. Anville Geographer to the Most Christian King with Additions and Improvements from Mr. Niebuhr* (London: Laurie and Whittle, 1794).

of the Bible no matter what would come of the Palestine mission: whether confronting “the Beast” and “the False Prophet,” or worse, the true emissaries of Christendom could rely on the promise all enemy kingdoms would collapse eventually. The Americans knew tenacity and resolve before and they could prove these attributes again. Such expectations were “reasonable” to anyone versed in a correct view of God’s word. Islam and Muhammad would factor into other reports from the Mediterranean and parts of Africa, but not with the level of frequency as Catholicism—and often their supposed opposition to the Americans’ mission was understood in relation to the Catholic presence abroad. The “Mahommedan” realm, in the end, enjoyed a kind of diplomatic rapprochement with the Vatican.<sup>32</sup>

### **Catholic Buddhism in Burma and China**

While editors held out for future progress in the West Indies and Palestine, they dedicated ample space in the magazines to the enormous promise offered by Burma and China. American missionaries had prepared for years to enter these lands on appraisals from tourists, merchants, and European sending agencies, and confidence soared as a group of five missionaries and their wives sailed for India in 1812.<sup>33</sup> The Judsons’ and Luther Rice’s early switch in affiliation from the American Board to the Baptists inspired Thomas Baldwin, editor of the *American Baptist*

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32. “Reasonable Expectations,” 213–214.

33. See Figure 7 for an early projection of China; before its publication in 1827, the picture of Chinese territory had resembled vast tracts of open land and many identified but unsurveyed cities. Adoniram Judson headed the mission; he was joined by his wife, Ann, Gordon Hall, Samuel and Harriet Newell, Samuel and Roxana Nott, and Luther Rice. See American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, *Report of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions; Compiled from Documents Laid before the Board, at the Third Annual Meeting, Which Was Held at Hartford, September 16, 1812* (Boston: Samuel T. Armstrong, 1812), 11; Joseph Tracy, *History of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions: Compiled Chiefly from the Published and Unpublished Documents of the Board*, 2nd ed. (New York: M. W. Dodd, 1842), 33–34.

*Magazine and Missionary Intelligencer*, to rally the general Baptist convention around the Burman mission. Other denominational and ecumenical magazines reprinted the Judsons' regular letters and diary extracts despite their primarily Baptist sponsorship, bringing the mission into broad circulation through the 1830s. Stories of intrepid efforts to settle in Burma, learn languages, and carry Bible translations to distinguished leaders made Adoniram Judson particularly famous. Hailed as "the American teacher" and the first to visit some seventeen million potential converts with the gospel, Judson won editors' praise for tenaciously seeking audiences with the Burman emperor and enduring a prison sentence during the first Anglo-Burmese War.<sup>34</sup> "Future historians of that land," Congregationalist deacon Nathan Whiting of the *Religious Intelligencer* surmised, "will record the name of JUDSON, as the most distinguished benefactor of that hitherto ill-fated country."<sup>35</sup> By 1839, after some twenty-six years among the Karens of Burma, Judson and his companions would report five permanent stations staffed by thirty-five missionaries and assistants, and over sixty native assistants. Nearly a thousand baptized congregants attended Sabbath services at one of nineteen churches that year alone.<sup>36</sup>

Seven commentators delivered the majority of correspondence about the Burman mission in the 1820s and '30s—the Judsons, George Dana Boardman Sr., Sarah Hall Boardman, Francis Mason, Eugenio Kincaid, and Elisha Litchfield Abbott—and thanks to the sustained numerical growth of the Burman congregations, editors continued to showcase their reports well into the

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34. "Burman Mission," *The American Baptist Magazine, and Missionary Intelligencer* 3, no. 1 (January 1, 1821): 26–32; "Mission to Burmah," *American Missionary Register* 1, no. 8 (February 1821): 314–321; "A Letter of Thanks from a Converted Burman," *The American Baptist Magazine, and Missionary Intelligencer* 3, no. 5 (May 1821): 103–105; "Burman Mission," *The American Baptist Magazine, and Missionary Intelligencer* 4, no. 96 (November 1, 1824): 456–458; "The Emperor of Burmah," *The Religious Intelligencer* 11, no. 3 (January 20, 1827): 530.

35. "Mission to the Burman Empire," *The Religious Intelligencer* 8, no. 20 (October 18, 1823): 314. On Whiting's status as a deacon, see S. R. Brown, Letter (January 27, 1879), in "Origin of a Well Known Hymn," *The Friend* 4, no. 28 (April 1, 1879), 34.

36. "Annual Meeting of the Board," *The Baptist Missionary Magazine* 19, no. 6 (June 1839), 134–143.



1840s.<sup>37</sup> As famously as these missionaries forged ahead, their own initial accounts painted a rather dire assessment. When first presented in the Burmese royal court, the Judsons faced a ruler indifferent to their entreaties to read the Bible. Adoniram had hoped the emperor would at least promote the missionaries' preaching, but he and his party were dismissed as abruptly as they had entered. Burma, it seemed, fostered a persecuting spirit toward reading anything but imperial propaganda.<sup>38</sup> The first Baptists to Burma anticipated Burman receptivity based on aspects of bordering India, but the war between the Burmans and English in 1824 through 1826 disrupted much chance of the missionaries reaching their loftier goals, like instituting schools and reforming the populace through evangelization. The stability brought by British victory afforded the missionaries with opportunities for incorporating industry and commerce into their outreach. Printing presses and boating upstream became key parts of Baptist strategies to press further inland; the supplies making such endeavors possible relied on English merchants continuing trade and shipping with Burman runners. Spencer H. Cone, chairman of the Baptist Foreign Missions Board, could report in 1829 their overall effort had taken root. Burma boasted contiguous, populated towns with advanced comforts, literate men, and a growing number of native Christians. On the whole, the signs pointed to missionary success. Unflagging

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37. Ann Judson and George Boardman both passed away during their first missionary tour; Boardman's widow Sarah later married Adoniram Judson. Adoniram served three tours in Burma (1813–1824, 1826–1845, and 1846–1849); Ann served one (1813–1826); Boardman Sr. served one (1827–1831); Sarah Hall Boardman Judson served one (1827–1845); Mason served one (1830–1852); Kincaid served two (1830–1842, 1849–1866); and Abbott served two (1836–1845, 1847–1852). (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], 63–64; C. H. Carpenter, *Self-Support, Illustrated in the History of the Bassein Karen Mission from 1840 to 1880* [Boston: Rand, Avery, and Co., 1883], 8–247; G. Winfred Hervey, *The Story of Baptist Missions in Foreign Lands, From the Time of Carey to the Present Date* [St. Louis: Chancy R. Barns, 1884], 423–429; William H. Brackney, "Eugenio Kincaid," in *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions*, edited by Gerald H. Anderson [Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1998], 365.)

38. "Burman Mission," *American Baptist Magazine*, 26–32; "Mission to Burmah," *American Missionary Register*, 314–321.

determination could win over scores of interested Karens despite the daunting environment.<sup>39</sup>

The prominent missionary writers in Burma combated the “Buddhism” prevalent in the region using literacy.<sup>40</sup> Francis Mason noticed a link between his proselytes who could read and the number of Buddhist renunciants. Grounded so heavily on the textual authority of the Bible, Mason glossed over the oral landscape Karen and other Burman listeners inhabited. The religion of “Gaudama” (Siddhartha Gautama) incubated illiteracy, and by extension resistance to evangelism, by its emphasis on vacuous thinking. Mason grew exasperated with one man over “one of the plainest historical facts connected with his religion,” that Gautama “was a black Hindoo.” Even realities as obvious as racial difference eluded the Buddhist. Mason and his companions could admit at times to a kind of Buddhist skill in conversation; they hardly struggled to engage others, finding discussions so plentiful “a fair specimen” could easily “fill a volume.” Where their Buddhist interlocutors returned reasoned argument in favor of Christianity with direct rebuttals, Mason and other missionaries dismissed any philosophical elegance, employing racial discourse to exit the debate.<sup>41</sup>

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39. Spencer H. Cone, “Burman Mission: Report,” *The American Baptist Magazine* 9, no. 6 (June 1829): 206–207.

40. The American missionaries followed the categories set by Victorian-era writers when referring to the religions descending from Siddhartha Gautama, most prominently, the use of “Buddhism” as a catch-all for non-Christian, non-Hindoo religiosity discovered among the Karens of Burma. The diversity of Buddhist traditions then in practice demands more specific and sensitive terminology; however, because the missionaries failed in most cases to differentiate between *vehicles* (e.g., Mahayana, Theravada, and Vajrayana Buddhisms) and other variations of Burman Buddhism, I am left with generic references fraught with colonialist subjectivities. The sources’ frequent use of “Buddhism” and “Gaudama,” suggest the American missionaries participated in what Philip Almond has argued amounted to a branch of Orientalist discourse treating practitioners of Siddhartha Gautama’s teachings as a collective, essentialized object: “Buddhism, by 1860, had come to exist, not in the Orient, but in the Oriental libraries and institutes of the West, in its texts and manuscripts, at the desks of the We[s]tern savants who interpreted it. It had become a textual object, defined, classified, and interpreted through its own textuality. By the middle of the century, the Buddhism that existed ‘out there’ was beginning to be judged by a West that *alone* knew what Buddhism was, is, and ought to be. The essence of Buddhism came to be seen as expressed not ‘out there’ in the Orient, but in the West through the West’s control of Buddhism’s own textual past.” (Philip C. Almond, *The British Discovery of Buddhism* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007], 13; italics in original.)

41. Francis Mason, Journal (January 11, 1834) in “Burmah, Tavoy: Mr. Mason’s Journal,” *The American Baptist Magazine* 14, no. 11 (November 1834): 433–437; Eugenio Kincaid, Journal (1833) in “Burman Mission: Mr. Kincaid’s Journal,” *The Religious Intelligencer* 18, no. 43 (March 22, 1834): 671–672; George Dana Boardman

Eugenio Kincaid's expedition seven hundred miles up the Irrawaddy in 1834 confirmed the power of reading for the likes of Francis Mason and Adoniram Judson. His account portrayed a dark, frightening jungle far removed from the suburbs of the Burman ports, a world scarcely amenable to Bible preaching. Yet Kincaid's encounters surprised himself and his associates for introducing a confluence they did not predict: here were seemingly primitive people living off the land and supposedly ignorant of the wider world, and they displayed a facility for reading tracts and listened intently to missionary sermons. "It seems as if Satan is asleep," wrote Kincaid in his journal, "none dispute—all are eager to hear." Crowds surrounding Kincaid's riverboat grew so heavy, he had to turn some away to keep from capsizing. As he cruised further upstream and happened upon miles of ruins, Kincaid figured the idolatry he had planned to confront in such uncolonized country must have been dying a slow death.<sup>42</sup> He and his associates reacted to the receptivity of rural Burmans with more tracts, so many they ran their presses dry. Distributing hundreds of tracts daily, often adding hundreds of books as well, the missionaries mounted an aggressive rejoinder to illiteracy. They could have hundreds, even thousands of proselytes profess belief in Christianity, but until the pagodas turned to ruins and native assistants espoused the habits of their missionary superiors, the Baptist missionaries would continue to advertise the urgency for more American workers.<sup>43</sup>

While American Baptist missionaries' tours in Burma approached their third decade, the first American Protestant missionaries entered China. Headed by Elijah Coleman Bridgman

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Sr., Journal (August 26, 1828), in "Mission of the American Baptist Board of Foreign Missions, in Burmah," *The Missionary Herald* 25, no. 12 (December 1829): 395.

42. Kincaid, "Burman Mission," *Religious Intelligencer*, 671–672.

43. Mason, "Burmah, Tavoy," *American Baptist Magazine*, 433–434; Kincaid, "Burman Mission," *Religious Intelligencer*, 671–672. The 1839 annual report tallied over 15 million pages printed by the Baptist presses in Burma for 1836 and over 17 million in 1837. ("Annual Meeting of the Board," *The Baptist Missionary Magazine*, 136–138.)

of the American Board, this vanguard group identified the same traits as Mason, Kincaid, and Judson in their Buddhist hosts. Bridgman would launch soon after his arrival what amounted to the first serious journal of Sinology, the *Chinese Repository*, a periodical extolled by some later scholars for opening a field of study at a time of rampant Western prejudice.<sup>44</sup> Its second volume included a piece by one “Philosinensis,” likely Charles Gutzlaff, covering the opening of the Zhoushan islands near Ningbo southeast of Shanghai.<sup>45</sup> Putuoshan (or Putuo Island) drew pilgrims since the Ming Dynasty in the late 1300s for its temples and many monasteries.<sup>46</sup> Gutzlaff immediately discounted the grandeur of the pilgrimage sites, attributing their skilled architecture, like Mason in Burma, to the adverse effect of Buddhism on the minds of believers. What followed endeavored to explain the unique quality of Chinese “Buddhism” and how

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44. David B. Honey, *Incense at the Altar: Pioneering Sinologists and the Development of Classical Chinese Philology* (New Haven: American Oriental Society, 2001), 248; Michael C. Lazich, “American Missionaries and the Opium Trade in Nineteenth-Century China,” *Journal of World History* 17, no. 2 (June 2006), 199fn4; Michael C. Lazich, “Seeking Souls through the Eyes of the Blind: The Birth of the Medical Missionary Society in Nineteenth-Century China,” Chapter 2 in *Healing Bodies, Saving Souls: Medical Missions in Asia and Africa*, edited by David Hardiman, 59–86, The Wellcome Series in the History of Medicine, edited by V. Nutton, M. Neve, and R. Cooter (New York: Editions Rodopi, 2006), 61; Daniel H. Bays, *A New History of Christianity in China* (Malden, Mass.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 46. Elizabeth Malcolm correctly detected the subjectivities and biases of the missionary writers and magazine contributors, pointing out how the magazine’s “propaganda was perhaps more subtle than that contained in Christian works produced for Chinese consumption, nevertheless the fact that the *Repository* was published by Western missionaries, contributed to by merchants and missionaries, and financed by a deeply religious merchant, made certain prejudices and misinterpretations almost inevitable.” (Elizabeth L. Malcolm, “The *Chinese Repository* and Western Literature on China 1800 to 1850,” *Modern Asian Studies* 7, no. 2 [1973], 167.)

45. His given name was Karl Friedrich August Gützlaff, but he referred to himself in English as Charles Gutzlaff (Alvyn Austin, *China’s Millions: The China Inland Mission and Late Qing Society, 1832–1905* [Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2007], 50). A pioneering and at times controversial missionary who founded the Chinese Union in the 1840s, Gutzlaff took the pseudonym “Philo-Sinensis” in his *Notices on Chinese Grammar: Orthography and Etymology*, translated by Walter Henry Medhurst (Batavia: Mission Press, 1842) and wrote for the *Chinese Repository* in several other articles under his English name. Because Walter Henry Medhurst translated Gutzlaff’s *Notices*, some scholars have thought Medhurst to have written as “Philo-Sinensis,” though it appears Medhurst nor the other American and English writers in the *Chinese Repository* ever took this pseudonym elsewhere. The language in “Remarks on Buddhism” cited below resembles Gutzlaff’s other writings enough for me to attribute this essay (cautiously) to Gutzlaff. For Gutzlaff’s connection to the “Philosinensis” of the *Chinese Repository*, see Toshikazu S. Foley, *Biblical Translation in Chinese and Greek: Verbal Aspect in Theory and Practice* (Boston: Brill, 2009), 20fn66.

46. Louise Tythacott, *The Lives of Chinese Objects: Buddhism, Imperialism and Display* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2011), 43–44.

missionary societies ought to “triumph over this preposterous superstition.”<sup>47</sup>

The heart of the challenge lay in withstanding the cultural degeneracy Buddhism caused. Gutzlaff’s concerns echoed what had passed for the root of social decline in the missionary press before. In this case, he searched for the facets of Buddhism posing peculiar deterrents to Christianity not resolvable by common evangelism. “Besides,” Gutzlaff conceded, “the Chinese are too rational to believe implicitly all the absurd Budhistic fables.” This people deviated from the “heathen” type fixed to the “uncivilized” and “native” demographic—something outside the spectrum between civilized and uncivilized cultures must have been brought to bear on this brand of unevangelized foreigner. Gutzlaff summoned a ready and compelling reason: Catholicism.<sup>48</sup>

Several coincidences peppered Gutzlaff’s case—praying “by means of a rosary” and Chinese “adoration of *teenhow*” the “queen of heaven” and “*shingmoo*” the “holy mother” sounded too similar to Catholic adoration of Mary to ignore, and the placement of a Napoleon sculpture in a Buddhist temple made as “conspicuous an object of worship as the virgin,” for instance—but the logic rested on a tangled historical argument. Nestorians had taken Christianity furthest east centuries before, but the competing influence of “Siamese and Cambojan priesthoods” entering China from southwestern Asia merged the two *demonologies*, resulting in many *Buddhist* priests adopting the “faith and ceremonies” of an “amalgamated” Christianity strikingly similar to Roman Catholicism. The “national apathy towards everything concerning religion” and the Chinese being “entirely engrossed with the things of this life” had everything to do with the presence of Catholicism most exemplified in the many Buddhist monasteries so clearly

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47. [Charles Gutzlaff], “Remarks on Buddhism; Together with Brief Notices of the Island of Poo-to, and of the Numerous Priests Who Inhabit It,” *The Chinese Repository* 2, no. 5 (September 1833): 214–225.

48. Gutzlaff, “Remarks on Buddhism,” 216–218.

resembling those of the “papal clergy.” Once he made the connection, the effect seemed obvious and Catholic priests bore the blame for China’s “stupidity.”<sup>49</sup>

Few could outrank Gutzlaff in the American and English correspondence on the China missions; one included William Milne, the second missionary (after the well-known Robert Morrison) enlisted to serve in China by the London Missionary Society. Editor of two magazines, the *Indo-Chinese Gleaner* and the *Cha shisu meiyue tongji zhuan* [Chinese Monthly Magazine], Milne wrote *Zhang Yuan liang you xiang lun* [Conversations between the two friends Zhang and Yuan] in 1819, a novel that would command the highest circulation of any Chinese Christian tract in the nineteenth century.<sup>50</sup> By 1820 when Milne published a “miscellany” of memoirs about the first decade of Protestant work in the “Ultra Ganges Missions,” he had already experienced Catholic resistance, being expelled from Macau by a Portuguese governor at the insistence of Catholic clergymen afraid his presence would “prove detrimental to the interests of the Church of Rome.”<sup>51</sup> His prolific career before his death in 1822 supplied eager readers in the United States and Britain with authoritative data on Chinese language and customs. As the American Board prepared to send its first agents to China, it republished the bulk of Milne’s history, *Retrospect of the First Ten Years*, in a running segment on miscellaneous details on China. Like Gutzlaff, Milne

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49. Gutzlaff, “Remarks on Buddhism,” 217–218.

50. Daniel H. Bays, “William Milne,” in Anderson, ed., *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions*, 462; Jessie Gregory Lutz, *Opening China: Karl F. A. Gutzlaff and Sino-Western Relations, 1827–1852* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2008), 172; Patrick Hanan, *Chinese Fiction of the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 60–61; William Milne, 張遠兩友相論 [*Zhang Yuan liang you xiang lun*] (Singapore: American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, 1836).

51. William Milne, *A Retrospect of the First Ten Years of the Protestant Mission to China, (Now, in Connection with the Malay, Denominated, the Ultra-Ganges Missions.)* (Malacca: Anglo-Chinese Press, 1820), 103–105; Robert Morrison, *Memoirs of the Rev. William Milne, D.D. Late Missionary to China, and Principal of the Anglo-Chinese College: Compiled from Documents Written by the Deceased: To Which Are Added Occasional Remarks* (Malacca: Mission Press, 1824), v.

identified Chinese corruptions with Catholicism.<sup>52</sup>

Milne spoke more broadly of China, inferring from his local experiences in Macau and Malacca about the whole of Chinese society. His research into Chinese languages persuaded him Confucianism mixed with Nestorian Christianity had rendered the Chinese susceptible to Catholic dogma. This blending of religious and civic “despotism” plagued the law, arts, and sciences of the nation with “many defects,” culminating by 1816 in a people drooping in a “retrograde state.” “The obstinate refusal of the Chinese to improve,” Milne deduced, “is to be viewed rather as arising from the effect of principle (perhaps I should say prejudice,) and the restraints of arbitrary power, than from the want of genius.” Milne considered non-Christian religions in relation to Chinese history, and also viewed their syncretism with Catholicism suspiciously, but furnished more detail in expounding on the “pagan systems of China” and their fundamental Catholicity. Tracing the transmission of “the Romish church” from popes Nicholas IV and Clement V to the missionary tours of Matthew (Matteo) Ricci and multitudes of Jesuits, Dominicans, Franciscans, and Capuchins, Milne followed with an analysis of the traits of Catholicism evident in Chinese “paganism.” The range was wide. Rituals characteristic of Rome “lost nothing” in their transportation to the East; “fictions” and “legends ... together with imported relations of miracles and wonders, wrought at the shrines of the saints, at the tombs of martyrs, or in the caves of hermits”; the “sign of the cross”; the “burning of wax candles”; the “powerful aids ... afforded by the virgin-goddess to females”; feminine styles of prayer—all Chinese variants of which derived from “the fathers of the Latin church.” With Milne’s extensive review of the Chinese condition in hand, the editor of the magazine made a final pitch to the

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52. “Miscellanies: China,” *The Missionary Herald* 24, no. 10 (October 1828): 326–330. Milne likely directly influenced Gutzlaff’s assessments of Putuoshan given evidence Gutzlaff relied on Milne’s novels and memoirs when writing his own missionary fiction; see Lutz, *Opening China*, 172–173.



reader: Americans had the advantage over the British in preaching the gospel to the Chinese.

The very “finger of Providence” pointed Americans to China because the British could not write as freely under colonial policy and the Chinese regarded the English “with livelier jealousy than they do Americans.”<sup>53</sup>

As Americans did arrive and claim their advantage, they struck a more collaborative rapport with the British missionaries on the ground, focusing their combined energies on studying China and its neighbors in East Asia. Elijah Bridgman, head representative of the American Board there, tended to agree with Gutzlaff and Milne on the evidences of Catholic saturation in the region. Though his cherished *Chinese Repository* held an audience among Westerners residing in the port cities, its contents reached home audiences indirectly.<sup>54</sup> Presbyterians hoping to expand their more denominationally oriented foreign missions, drew on Bridgman’s accounts in their propaganda. An important article published a year before Bridgman succeeded in securing a press for printing the *Repository* exemplified what the Presbyterian Board of Missions was anticipating as it prepared to follow the American Board into China with missionaries of its own. Bridgman hardly had time to process the Chinese surroundings before joining in worship with Robert Morrison’s home congregation of British and American Protestants residing in Macau. Commiserating with the other missionaries gave Bridgman the sense the Macanese indeed acquired their “exhibitions and revelry” from the colonial Portuguese. The scenery deceived visitors thinking the land boasted over a dozen chapels: “In the midst of idol temples, and of

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53. “Miscellanies: China,” 327–330. Nearly a decade after Milne’s review appeared in the American missionary press, the themes still circulated. Clarendon F. Muzzy’s letters offer corroborating examples of Milne’s and Gutzlaff’s general portraits of Chinese capitulation to Catholicism; see, for instance, Muzzy, Letter (April 10, 1838), in “Letter from Mr. Muzzy, Dated April 10, 1838,” *The Missionary Herald* 35, no. 4 (April 1839): 138–139.

54. For example, see “Mission of the Rhenish Missionary Society in Borneo,” *The Missionary Herald* 33, no. 4 (April 1837): 165–167.



idols without number, he hears the sound of the church-going bell, and sees among two or three hundred houses, in the European style,” but on closer examination, “the stranger finds very little to distinguish the first from the other days of the week.”<sup>55</sup>

As in the accounts of Cuba, Palestine, and Putuo Island, the apparent laxity of Sabbath worship disqualified the dominant Catholic element from representing authentic Christianity—and in virtually all cases, confirmed for the missionary writers the ulterior agenda the “papal clergy” followed. The markers most commonly associated with the successes of the American Protestants’ civilizing mission—visible cues like European-style houses, churches complete with Sunday bell-ringing, wide literacy, conversational skill, even public gatherings of “all classes of people” from “well clad gentlemen” to “priests, young men, boys and girls, riding in state” and “musicians” and other artists “too numerous to mention”—such markers undermined the whole premise of the mission.<sup>56</sup> These “heathen” had shown an aptitude for Christianity, and the field abroad exhibited conditions reminiscent of the open sectarian market back home in America. The Catholic presence afforded an immediate escape from the dissonant reality. They could hold their commission intact even so, repositioning the “heathen” demand for evangelical intervention to a more dramatic contest over souls against a heathenism infiltrated by a false and villainous faux-Christianity. The stakes grew ever higher as the missionaries pressed further abroad.

Even those Protestants outside the growing evangelical mainstream in the United States prominently circulated anti-Catholic sentiments in their foreign missions literature. Arriving behind the Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Baptists, Methodists, and Moravians in sponsoring a strictly American base of foreign-bound missionaries—likely due to the command of the

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55. Elijah Coleman Bridgman, Journal (August 2, 1831), in “Extracts from the Journal of Mr. Bridgman,” *The Missionary Reporter* 3, no. 1 (September 1, 1831): 3–4.

56. Bridgman, “Extracts,” 4.

London Missionary Society—the Episcopal Society caught the 1830s groundswell of interest in China.<sup>57</sup> The Society restarted its minor periodicals, pushing its campaign for sending its own missionary agents to China in the pages of the *Spirit of Missions*, and true to form, invoked the “Romanism in China” as a prime factor in the urgent need for action. Calling on its English associate, William Henry Medhurst, the editor of the magazine ran several extracts from Medhurst’s reference on China, a volume valued for its comprehensiveness in documenting Chinese history and society. The extracts indicate the American Episcopalian missionaries consumed the publications of the London Missionary Society about as much as the London missionaries: Medhurst’s work, published by a London printer, made its way to the *Spirit of Missions* via one or both of two British periodicals in the time it took for the issues to reach North America.<sup>58</sup>

Protestant missionaries had labored in China for more than a decade, and their experience taught Medhurst where the barrier to further evangelism lay. Their adversaries were the “Romish Missionaries,” those in close contact with the savvy and the means to block evangelical inroads with the Chinese. Medhurst could detect a stratagem behind Catholic missions exposing their mortal corruption: by their willingness to adapt (“a spirit of time-serving compliance with the prejudices of the heathen”), numerical supremacy, vast wealth, “patronage of christian kings,” ostentatious devotions, and “high scientific attainments,” all these combined to empower the

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57. Formally incorporated as the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America; I favor abbreviating this organization as “Episcopal Society.” Its first periodical, the *Missionary Paper*, appeared in 1830, but appears to have maintained only a small footprint in the larger missionary press. Not until the *Spirit of Missions* launched in 1836 did the Episcopal Church in America offer any kind of broad periodical devoted to the subject of foreign missions (see Appendix B).

58. William Henry Medhurst, “Romanism in China,” *Spirit of Missions* 4, no. 1 (January 1839): 21–23; published originally as Medhurst, *China: Its State and Prospects, with Special Reference to the Spread of the Gospel: Containing Allusions to the Antiquity, Extent, Population, Civilization, Literature, and Religion of the Chinese* (London: John Snow, 1838) and later reprinted as Article 8, *The Monthly Review* [London] 2, no. 3 (July 1838): 401–417; *Museum of Foreign Literature, Science and Art* 34, no. 2 (October 1838): 177–185.

Catholic “empire.” Proof abounded in the industrious manner the Catholic missionaries lured converts, their efficient conspiracy in absorbing “heathen” customs to attract parishioners:

The modern Missionaries in admitting members, merely require an outward profession, without insisting on a change of heart or scarcely a reformation of life. The Scriptures are not placed in the hands of the people; religious services are conducted in a language which the generality do not understand; ceremonies are frequent and public preaching rare; while from the laxity of morals, too common in their communities, we much fear, that the catholic converts of the present day, are very little better than the surrounding heathen.

The way forward required evangelical missionaries learn a crucial lesson: they were battling the “interference of a foreign potentate with the authority of the emperor.” They could not fall into the trap of mustering whatever political power might effect a short victory. “Instead of beginning from the top of society,” Medhurst appealed, “we propose commencing from the bottom, and aim to influence, first the extremities and then the heart of the empire.” Catholicism evoked the “kingdom of the Beast” image, the power of the papacy to manipulate world powers to achieve its own aggrandizement and luxury.<sup>59</sup>

In past descriptions of the foreign, the indigenous frame always kept the scope within local influence; the perception left writers and editors with little more than tribal governments, nothing on the order of a nation-state, to say nothing of an empire. But the presence of Catholicism conjured the maximum, an empire of empires, a centralized controlling arch-rival poised to resist the evangelicals’ advances. The missionaries were the immigrants in their case, and their anti-Catholicism arose not from fears of encroaching rivals, but rather out of a pressing dissonance. The very things the missionary magazines had advertised as necessary for the conversion of the heathen had preceded the missionaries themselves, and in China, by centuries. The competition over the very definition of mission prompted the automatic and seemingly

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59. Medhurst, “Romanism in China,” 22–23.

visceral response—this was no heathen world to transform, this was the realm of Satan. Few at home would argue; they already harbored an anti-Catholic mood without having to come face to face with “Romish missionaries.”

### Gender and American Prestige

Among the first to apply American identity to evaluating the mission field, Ann Hasseltine Judson published a “tale of wo” addressed to women back home. Nationality governed her essay, though the concern centered on taking action to alleviate women’s suffering in Bengal, India, and Burma. She had already undertaken a history (making Judson the first historian of Baptist missions) and her accounts of first efforts in Burma had appeared in the *American Baptist Magazine*, helping to secure a reputation by 1823 as the most renowned and prolific woman missionary on both sides of the Atlantic. Her address would command a level of authority, particularly for women readers eager to assist female benevolent societies just then beginning to spring up throughout the homeland.<sup>60</sup>

From the title, an “Address to Females in America,” to the rhetorical devices intended to “excite” her audience to “stronger exertion,” Judson’s appeal hinged on a juxtaposition between the United States and the East. The status of women settled the score and worked to her strategy, which aimed to squeeze sympathy out of the American audience. Judson admitted as much, openly presenting a shocking portrait of feminine depravity. “Shew us the situation of our tawny sisters,” she could hear her readers thinking, “and though the disgusting picture break our hearts, it will fill us with gratitude to Him who has made us to differ.” The article alternated between two

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60. Robert, “Influence of American Missionary Women,” 63–64.

classes of Asian women, one kept in seclusion by domineering men and the other, though granted some latitude inside and outside the home, toiling under the infantilizing effects of “the tyrannic rod” of their husbands. Burman women aligned with the latter and thus held an “equality with ourselves,” the American woman, in the “domestic concerns” of their households. The sad condition of Indian and Bengalese women made evident the “malignant passions” and “mental torpor” suffocating female liberty. Women there seemed “odious” and deformed, drastically different from the Burmans who, though living out a “peculiar misfortune” for being female, exhibited natural inquisitiveness and physical strength. Judson offered Burman women as proof American influence brought “cultivation and refinement” out of abused wives, and could do the same in Bengal where the situation looked grave. In both places, women languished without American intervention. “Shall we sit down in indolence and ease,” Judson finally admonished, “indulge in all the luxuries with which we are surrounded, and which our country so bountifully affords, and leave beings like these, flesh and blood, intellect and feeling like ourselves, and of *our own sex*, to perish, to sink into eternal misery? No!” With their advantages as Americans, they had to “meliorate the situation” and “save females in the Eastern world,” or invalidate their own missionary work to date.<sup>61</sup>

In its historical context, Judson’s appeal effectively relegated British agents for refining Asian culture below Americans. In 1823, Americans made up the principal agents in only a couple of fields: North American communities of Native Americans (and then, a few still received more British than American missionaries) and Burma; everywhere else, Americans followed behind other European societies. In the realm of foreign missions, Burma caught

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61. Ann H. Judson, “Address to Females in America, Relative to the Situation of Heathen Females in the East,” *The American Baptist Magazine, and Missionary Intelligencer* 4, no. 1 (January 1, 1823): 18–20; italics in original.

attention as the arena where Americans carried out evangelism rather exclusively, and Judson knew this. She positioned her appeal as a conversation among Americans about Asia, and made the “daily walk and conversation” of Asian women the formula for scoring American and European influences. Because the Burman women answered societal injustices with dignity and showed receptivity to reading, deep conversation, feminine education in manners and sacred books, and the persuasions of the Holy Spirit, they comparatively outpaced their Bengalese and Indian sisters. The “countries” shared traits, bolstering Judson’s claim Burma presented a more promising mission than the European stations already thriving in other parts of Asia. The “female” assignation remained constant across the cultures—Judson did not question the biological continuity between women in America and women in the East, calling them all “sisters.” The deficit the “tawdry sisters” fought to overcome rested with their respective countries: it was in being Indian, Bengalese, Burman, or American that separated the “deformed” from the “cultivated.” This was a contest of countries as much as religions, and by implication, Burma’s proximity to the American ideal meant Americans were winning. Judson aimed to convert Burma into an extension of American domestic culture; gendered discourse advanced such a cause better than Bible and school statistics.<sup>62</sup>

For male missionaries, visible gendered divisions spelled proper social order just the same. They devoted little attention to women as a class of missionary who could direct the outcomes of the mission, but perpetuated the same discourse that divided the domain of the home from the domain of the state. Judson found evidence in the female experience within the domain of the home to insist the various states stood apart; other missionary writers would find evidence of difficult groundwork in the domain of the state. Gender could point to deficiencies in either.

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62. Judson, “Address to Females in America,” 20.

Likewise, missionaries thought reforming women could improve diplomatic relations as well as the home, opening doors to wider transformations of cultures. The state remained wholly the province of men, so the woman's influence ran indirectly to actual statecraft. Missionaries could sometimes take offense at the accusation of feminine leadership, holding fast to the gendered social order in all environments. A debate between a Turkish official and an English missionary would run in the *Missionary Herald* for its utility in teaching readers about the various competitors for Jewish converts in and around Constantinople. The discussion would devolve into jockeying for diplomatic cachet, ending after the official said European priests were "far more effeminate" than the stereotypical Sultan idling his life away on a divan and the missionary rebutting with a disquisition on religious liberty and, strangely, mathematic conic sections. The side manifesting masculine "pomp" claimed the rhetorical victory and won the endorsement of the magazine's editor.<sup>63</sup> The *Chinese Repository* upheld this perspective with a story about the "humane feelings of kind-hearted women." Though elevating the "humanity of womankind," the article distinguished the act of governing as a masculine authority. The fact some women had at times prevailed on obstinate rulers only sanctioned women's subordinate role in the fate of nations. Their tender entreaties could work as a last resort, like Pilate's wife who beseeched her husband to deliver Jesus from execution.<sup>64</sup>

More commonly, editors published correspondence gauging the level of cultural transformation by women's appearance or positing a strategy of reforming women to shape culture. As the domain of the state and the "intercourse" of countries came to bear more concretely on the measure of missionary activity, women and gender became a pivotal

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63. "Constantinople: Jewish Converts to Christianity," *The Missionary Herald* 23, no. 9 (September 1827): 282–286.

64. "The Humanity of Womankind," *The Chinese Repository* 2, no. 4 (August 1833): 161–163.

hermeneutic in judging American advantage. Francis Mason found missional value in American medicine, which he considered to have derived from the reasonableness afforded by superior rates of literacy in the United States. Women, the final frontier in the spread of adult literacy, demonstrated a people's aptitude for reason, and ultimately its receptivity to pure theology. Mason wrote out the dialogue of a conversation he had had with a Karen woman—his simple questions about “Gaudama” were met with terse shrugs. “Why, what advantage do you expect to derive from worshipping him?” he asked. “I don't know,” she replied. She finally admitted, “I do not understand religion. I am a woman. If my husband were here, he would know.” Mason gave the conversation “as a specimen of the unreasonable people” he met in Burma. The women needed books, he concluded, and his own reasoning assured him the Karen leaders would come around once women removed Buddhist idols and promoted Christian education in their homes. Conversely, women in the United States read widely, entertained reasonable thoughts, and generally kept their homes in order.<sup>65</sup> Joseph Tracy and William Goodell followed the same expectations, blaming “noisy half naked children” and “dirty people” to mothers lacking in ladylike manners. They reiterated the same solution: more tracts for women would translate into a change in comportment and domestic order. To educate the women in domestic science, a science perfected in American households, remained the final leg of the missionaries' strategic course. They mentioned no objective beyond the conversion of the home, though their sociopolitical commentary never seemed to end.<sup>66</sup>

Gender and domestic metrics solidified the surfacing sense of American superiority. The

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65. Francis Mason, Journal (January 11–December 19, 1834), in “Mr. Mason's Journal,” *The American Baptist Magazine* 14, no. 11 (November 1834): 433–437.

66. Joseph Tracy, Journal (August 1834), in “Journal of Mr. Tracy During the Month of August, 1834,” *The Missionary Herald* 31, no. 5 (May 1835): 180–183; William Goodell, “Turkey: Journal of Mr. Goodell on a Visit to Trebizond,” *The Missionary Herald* 35, no. 5 (May 1839): 171–175.



realm of culture that had inspired comparisons to the British and the role of the industrious American woman gave proof broad strategies and the work of institutions were translating into changes in the daily lives of proselytized people. News of foreign women and their apparent lack of ladylike comportment joined the unfolding anti-Catholic and pro-American discourses, casting the criteria for missionary setback and success within a rubric of domesticity. A key indicator of positive American influence became the home environment—particularly the home environment regulated by a woman figure who could exhibit traits of a cultured and industrious missionary wife.<sup>67</sup> Celebrated heroines like Harriet Atwood Newell and Ann Judson, who left with their husbands on a mission to Burma in their young adulthood and died overseas, became American icons in the 1820s and 1830s and the models of women missionaries for the next century.<sup>68</sup> Their writings, especially Judson's, appeared in magazines alongside men's correspondence and offered perspectives preachers (who were almost exclusively men) associated with cultural work. The women took up dimensions closer to the mundane, to the daily living of the hosts—education, medicine, social reform—in large measure because the missionary men

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67. Shih-Wen Sue Chen, "Paradoxical Performances: Cruel Constraints and Christian Emancipation in 19–20th-Century Missionary Representations of Chinese Women and Girls," Chapter 13 in *Divine Domesticities: Christian Paradoxes in Asia and the Pacific*, edited by Hyaewool Choi and Margaret Jolly, 347–366 (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 2014), 353–364; Paul William Harris, *Nothing But Christ: Rufus Anderson and the Ideology of Protestant Foreign Missions* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 6. The magazines of this period support Barbara Reeves-Ellington's observation that "American discourse of domesticity emerged from an early nineteenth-century view that progress in any given society was associated with the status and education of women." (Barbara Reeves-Ellington, "Embracing Domesticity: Women, Mission, and Nation Building in Ottoman Europe, 1832–1872," in *Competing Kingdoms: Women, Mission, Nation, and the American Protestant Empire, 1812–1960*, edited by Barbara Reeves-Ellington, Kathryn Kish Sklar, and Connie A. Shemo, 269–292 [Durham: Duke University Press, 2010], 270.)

68. Dana L. Robert, *American Women in Mission: A Social History of Their Thought and Practice* (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1997), 34–46; Mary Kupiec Cayton, "Canonizing Harriet Newell: Women, the Evangelical Press, and the Foreign Mission Movement in New England, 1800–1840," in Reeves-Ellington, et al., eds., *Competing Kingdoms*, 79–88; R. Pierce Beaver, *All Loves Excelling: American Protestant Women in World Mission* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1968), 55–57. Beaver points out the missionary wives took a subordinate role to their husbands even when being celebrated for their intrepid service to the cause; nevertheless, their names and reputations lasted for decades beyond women societies alone and inspired several memoirs by generally male-centric writers. The most widely circulated memoir of Newell went through fifty editions between 1814 and 1840 and donations to women's benevolent societies skyrocketed. (Cayton, "Canonizing Harriet Newell," 85.)

assumed the role of administering the missions, seeing their duties descending from institutional goals and directed toward refining the power structures of the receiving society.<sup>69</sup>

Women's assessments of the female "other" elevated the mundane in the perceptions of home agencies to indicate whether the broad schemes undertaken across the missions—like Bible distribution, tract-writing, preaching, and recruitment of native assistants—were translating into effective culture-wide conversion. The number of Bibles in circulation may have persuaded boards back home missionaries had attended to the serious business of spreading the word of God to an unevangelized populace, but the routinized reading of scripture that happened in the proselytes' domiciles gave the evidence of the word sinking in. It was the principal observers of the domestic sphere, the missionary wives, who, outnumbering their male counterparts in the missions, spoke to the transformations of receiving people's daily lifestyles. Magazines ran women's reports with higher frequency in the 1830s, bringing articulations of the undomesticated foreigner closer to the predominant themes in the magazines.<sup>70</sup>

Reporters weighing the missions' progress also surveyed the interplay and commercial dominance of sovereign nations, periodically arriving at an overtly American exceptionalist outlook. Agriculture and religion increasingly informed such appraisals. The traveler to Cuba whose essays ran in the *Missionary Herald* advanced the most rigorous defense of American supremacy in agriculture to appear in the magazines, taking inventory of the topography, soil quality, acreage, livestock, crop production, and commercial traffic of the island to prove the

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69. Reeves-Ellington, et al., eds., *Competing Kingdoms*, 3–4; Harris, *Nothing But Christ*, 6.

70. Cayton, "Canonizing Harriet Newell," 87; Marilyn J. Westerkamp, *Women and Religion in Early America, 1600–1850: The Puritan and Evangelical Traditions* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 142. Women readers increased with the editorial decision by the American Board to absorb the periodical *Light and Life of Women* into the *Missionary Herald* in 1823; see D. J. Kotzé, ed., *Letters of the American Missionaries, 1835–1838* (Cape Town: Van Riebeeck Society, 1950), 6.

United States exceeded all European powers combined in profiting from Caribbean trade. He credited the massive profit margins to American industry: it was the American merchant who drove the spike in Cuban production, and it was the American who had the foresight to notice the riches Cuba offered. All this correlated with mission: the future of Cuban conversions revolved around the robustness of the evangelical campaign, and the Americans on account of their agricultural acuity and subsequent commercial advantages could respond best to the missionary front.<sup>71</sup>

### A Religiously Superior America

Even where agriculture and gender buttressed arguments, religion delivered the strongest rationale for avowing Americans' prestige in the world, particularly in how Catholicism and the missionaries' religion clashed over converts. Agricultural prowess notwithstanding, Americans had yet to face the dominant Catholic clergy in Cuba, and their interactions with Catholicism would indicate whatever headway they made, so the correspondent writing to the *Missionary Herald* believed. Editors looked forward to the overthrow of the Beast and extrapolated an American moment in their interpretations of biblical prophecy. Though Christians of all stripes had ministered in Palestine, for instance, the land still cried out for revival, and who better than Americans expert in renewing lapsed Christians through evangelical outreach to relaunch such a revival? Their status as the only truly *evangelical* nation uncorrupted by Catholicism destined American missionaries to hasten the last battle against the Beast.<sup>72</sup> Further afield in China,

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71. "Remarks on the Island of Cuba," 286–290, 319–322.

72. "Reasonable Expectations," 212–214.

the Catholic incursion began to retreat once Americans arrived, argued Evarts of the *Herald*. Americans could reach Chinese people “sunk” in the Catholic and Confucian “superstitions” thanks to their commercial freedom; British missionaries conversely operated under legal strictures imposed by the crown and upheld by the East India Company and had less support in carrying out the mission.<sup>73</sup> The very aptitude for calling down the Holy Spirit disposed Americans to special benefits. In an environment where natives depended on cheating and stealing to survive, the conscience-cutting power of the Holy Spirit was crucial, and no one knew better than evangelists trained in American revivalism how to solicit such divine power.<sup>74</sup>

Tensions over the opium trade in China escalated in the 1830s, and missionaries took notice. As with other social ills, opium consumption concerned missionaries who saw it as a barrier to their evangelism. The Medical Missionary Society, a new venture in China using medical treatment as an evangelistic method, broadcasted the “deleterious effects” of opium, and when David Washington Cincinnatus Olyphant offered £100 in prize money for an essay showing the moral effects of the trade, the topic took center stage in magazine articles on China.<sup>75</sup> Efforts to curb opium use would continue in the medical mission, but permanent change could only come through the propagation of the gospel. Episcopal missionary Henry Lockwood agreed with Charles William King’s essays in the *Chinese Repository* that the “Church in America ought now to have a large body of young men in the field” to combat opium with Bible translations and

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73. “Miscellanies: China,” 326–330.

74. Tracy, “Journal of Mr. Tracy,” 180–183.

75. Henry Lockwood, Letter (August 13, 1838), in *Spirit of Missions* 4, no. 4 (March 1839): 83–87; “Premium for on [an] Essay on the Opium Trade, Showing Its Effects on the Commercial, Political, and Moral Interests of the Nations and Individuals Connected Therewith, and Pointing Out the Course They Ought to Pursue in Regard to It,” *The Chinese Repository* 5, no. 9 (January 1837): 413–418; Elijah Coleman Bridgman and S. Wells Williams, eds., *General Index of Subjects Contained in the Twenty Volumes of the Chinese Repository: With an Arranged List of the Articles* (Tokyo: Maruzen, [1851]), xxx; Lazich, “Seeking Souls,” 73–80.

tract publishing in Mandarin. The British missionaries fell victim to a conflict of interest, their sponsoring government trafficking in opium too deeply for them to avoid entanglements with the trade. Americans already adroitly sending physicians as missionaries together with their strong evangelical background and lack of governmental fetter could do what no other European agency could. Chinese authorities had less of a reason to spurn American missionaries in the bargain. Of course, even if British missionaries could somehow break from their sponsors enough to have an influence, the Protestants would still have Catholics to reckon with. Some missionaries figured the opium crisis had arisen from Catholic corruptions in the first place.<sup>76</sup>

By the end of the decade, rationales derived from anti-Catholicism, gender, agriculture, and diplomacy to posit an American exceptionalism came together into a coherent argument sustained most thoroughly in the *Chinese Repository* and reprinted in two later volumes on Micronesia and China. Written by an anonymous “correspondent,” the essay on “American influence on the destinies of Ultra-Malayan Asia,” integrated these earlier themes into a bold claim, that America assumed a singular role in converting the world, a fact evidenced in the inevitable conversion of the most remote people on earth, the Malays.<sup>77</sup> The correspondent premised his argument on the observation that Christians in America “agreed on ... their duty” and “the means of discharging it.” With coherence and ample activity, the American missionaries

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76. Lockwood, Letter, *Spirit of Missions*, 87; *Memorials of Protestant Missionaries to the Chinese: Giving a List of Their Publications, and Obituary Notices of the Deceased* (Shanghai [Shanghae]: American Presbyterian Mission Press, 1867), 88; Charles William King, *Opium Crisis: A Letter Addressed to Charles Elliot, Esq., Chief Superintendent of the British Trade with China* (London: Edward Suter, 1839); G. Tradescant Lay, “Extract from a Letter of Mr. Lay to the Church Missionary Society,” *Spirit of Missions* 4, no. 12 (December 1839): 402–404.

77. “American Influence on the Destinies of Ultra-Malayan Asia,” *The Chinese Repository* 7, no. 2 (June 1838): 61–89; cited in George Hughes, *Amoy and the Surrounding Districts: Compiled from Chinese and Other Records* (Hong Kong: De Souza, 1872), 107–109 and Eli French, *The Claims of Japan and Malaysia upon Christendom, Exhibited in Notes of Voyages Made in 1837, from Canton, in the Ship Morrison and Brig Himmaleh, under Direction of the Owners*, 2 vols. (New York: E. French, 1839), 2:xv. I assume here a man wrote the article, given its publication in the *Repository* and the pattern of Elijah Bridgman’s editorial decisions.

could out-supply relatively weak Europeans who had been receiving economic assistance from England and the United States. He waxed rather confident, pronouncing the “Christians of the United States” fully capable to fulfill their unique commission: “they will not disappoint the hopes reposed in them; they will not shrink from their duty to the East.”<sup>78</sup>

Time had shown repeatedly how Christianity itself was “not a colonial engine,” and since all European states competed to annex colonies across the globe, only the United States could claim a Christian purity in evangelizing. Slavery, of course, nagged at any such triumphalism. The correspondent shot back at hypothetical critics, alleging slavery and its evils would soon “disappear from American soil” given Americans already spoke of slavery in the past tense (a strange claim considering the rising turmoil in the country that would soon thereafter intensify into war). The national character of the Americans, one innately benevolent, would eventually and soon overcome any traces of slavery, and then their mission movement would reach a full unhindered pace, so much that Britain would cede its mission in India to the American agencies. Nowhere did the task of saving the world appear more daunting than in China and Malaysia, the last outposts of the Far East to receive evangelical missionaries. Here, as in the rest of the world for the conscientious observer, European aggression both undermined the mission and disqualified European missionaries. Colonialism introduced systems of oppression keeping the nation-states of Europe locked in a continual competition for land and trade. Their lust for industry and departure from agrarian simplicity led them to invade rather than persuade, and the consequences began to surface, especially in the Chinese reticence to trust Europeans. At the fundamental level of society, Americans understood how to turn “their own houses into benevolent institutions,” and could thwart not only the “detestable” opium traffic, but also

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78. “American Influence,” 63–64.

intemperance and the distribution of distilled liquors.<sup>79</sup>

A more ominous cloud hovered over China and Malaysia, a force more corrupting than the aggression of European colonists: every year “Romish missionaries” entered “into the heart of the [Chinese] empire.” The crux of all that stood in the way of Americans realizing their destiny came down to Catholicism. The “religious instincts” of the Chinese people had been manipulated by a steady host of Catholic missionaries working incessantly to siphon off “the power of Christianity.” The centuries of Catholic conversion at the accomplishments of “Ricci, Valegnani, Verbiest, Gerbillion, and others” left China in a state of immorality and strung to alliances with unholy partisans. The Americans, being divorced from Rome in both religious adherence and political independence, had to redeem *Christianity* itself in addition to redeeming heathen peoples. “To redeem Christianity from the opprobrium and the interdicts under which it lies in these great states, is the proper department of the American missionary,” concluded the correspondent. The British, presumably happy to fight against the Catholic church, could not fulfill the commission; the “habits, manners, and modes of thinking, of the residents in Eastern Asia” so clearly in need of reform, “are not American” but “moulded on the English model.” Hence, “American youth” with skills in commerce, husbandry, medicine, and artisanship “must come to the east, self-moved, self-directed, self-sustained.” The rest of the Protestant world counted on them—“the representatives of their country’s enterprise, must bring with them the representatives of her benevolence, taken from the same homes and firesides, and circles of relatives and friends. The positive means of blessing Eastern Asia will then, WITH THE DIVINE BLESSING, be complete.”<sup>80</sup>

The societies had solicited donations for decades on the promise of mass conversions. At

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79. “American Influence,” 63–85.

80. “American Influence,” 75–79.

present, dozens reported back telling of a subversive Catholicism hindering their progress yet promoting new strategies to keep faith in their commission. Accounts like Isaac Bird's and Ann Judson's spread an apologetic for setbacks in the field hitherto used sparsely. Whereas "ignorance" or "idolatry" had accounted for obstacles in Africa, the Pacific, and India, Catholic presence now explained slow starts in the West Indies, Palestine, China, and Malaysia. Conspiracy filled in the missing background, providing writers and editors with an escape clause to their prior predictions: readers already accepted anti-Catholic lore about secret resistance to American religion and would find no surprise in missionaries confronting Catholic antagonism on the battlefield. American readers encountered a steady anti-Catholic discourse devoid of immigration scares and Roman ruins.

The United States had governed on the international stage enough to solidify a national place in the geopolitical vocabulary. When considering the balance of colonial powers in China or elsewhere, writers and editors could invoke "America" as a player in the scene, associating the missionary agents with the country and running the dynamics back on their defenses of mission. Where the United States held an advantage in a political or commercial deal, the American missionaries could claim an advantage for themselves in their evangelism, and vice versa. Encroaching powers, whether from an opaque Roman Catholic empire or a traditional European state, could more easily be identified and classified using nationalistic terminology. Proselytizers had always seen themselves in a higher position relative to the proselytized; competitors and even adversaries now entered the relationship, broadening the network of actors and compelling the writers to map the world, and the foreign, in finer strokes. Missionaries began to notice the utility of nationality as opposed to denominational affiliation: "America" covered more cross sections than alternative concepts.



With stations firmly planted in the port cities and sending agencies' first iterations maturing into more elaborate plans, the trajectory for the 1840s and 1850s would point toward the world's largest populations. Statistics intimated hundreds of millions of Chinese, in particular, lived under a "heathen" regime. As markets flourished in China and missionaries secured support from the Burman ruling class, discussions of the two countries upstaged the rest. But the lands of China and Burma hosted vestiges of noble empires evoking a rejoinder to the "Christianize versus civilize" dichotomy so often thrust on the foreign world—that civilizations, even cultured and grandiloquent ones, abounded beyond the shores of North America. As with the "kingdom of the Beast," the opening of missions in the Burman and Chinese interiors cued the tremors of the old empires' fall.

## Chapter 5

### “This Also Shall Pass Away”: Civilized Foreigners, 1840–1861

The Quṭb Mīnār in Delhi arrested the attention of nineteenth-century European travelers for its intricate ornamentation and imposing design. Perhaps originally intended as a funerary monument, the cylindrical tower nonetheless announced Islam had commanded a part of India—even claiming a particular victory over Ganges River religions in the minds of later restoration architects—and not just for awhile, but for more than five centuries.<sup>1</sup> Reporters had taken the scattered remains of India’s ancient peoples for ruins, the bones of past civilizations. As with Eugenio Kincaid boating up the Irrawaddy, they could demote the timeworn architecture to merely a backdrop of the dilapidated society evident all around.<sup>2</sup>

Not so with the Quṭb Mīnār—here stood clear evidence of masterful engineering and artistry, “one of the noblest works of the kind,” John Lowrie wrote, with “few equals.” As editor of the Presbyterian-sponsored *Foreign Missionary*, Lowrie had received many accounts of the tower from missionaries in the field, all asserting it represented the tallest freestanding minaret in the world. An engraving illustrated the relative majesty of the structure, depicting it overshadowing a mahout and elephant in the foreground (see Figure 8). All this impressed Lowrie, but he would venture a final word: for all its height, geometric sophistication, and history, the minaret would inevitably collapse. “This also shall pass away,” he declared, a promise punctuated by its sudden

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1. Fanny Parkes, *Wanderings of a Pilgrim, In Search of the Picturesque, During Four-and-twenty Years in the East; with Revelations of Life in the Zenāna*, 2 vols. (London: Pelham Richardson, 1850), 2:202–205; Elizabeth Schotten Merklinger, *Sultanate Architecture of Pre-Mughal India* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 2005), 20–22.

2. See chap. 4; also Eugenio Kincaid, “Burman Mission: Mr. Kincaid’s Journal,” *The Religious Intelligencer* 18, no. 43 (March 22, 1834): 671–672.

and apothegmatic appearance in Lowrie's report.<sup>3</sup>

The maxim resembled a saying of Jesus, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matthew 24:35), but actually had come down through Jewish folklore and English poets.<sup>4</sup> Lowrie made an Orientalist signal, even building an irony out of the dictum. Readers would likely have heard the rest of the story, how a Sultan sought advice from Solomon (or, in some variations, a Persian sage) on balancing prosperity with adversity. "This too shall pass" evoked myths of the ancient mystic dispensing timeless wisdom. But Lowrie turned the supposed Oriental origins of the phrase on itself—the civilization behind sage wisdom and architectural wonders like the Quṭb Mīnār remained temporal and prone to decay. Only the

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3. "Kutub Minar, Delhi," *The Foreign Missionary* 12, no. 12 (May 1854): 276–277.

4. The Persian Sufi poet Farīd-al-Dīn Aṭṭār (ca. 1145–1221) is credited with the earliest version of the saying, later quoted in the poetry of Ḥafīz (ca. 1320–1389): "But this too shall pass" (Matthew Rohrer, "Translations from Ḥafīz," *American Poetry Review* 41, no. 6 [November/December 2012]: 23–25). Folklorists have identified it as a common motif before the nineteenth century; see S. Thompson, *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature: A Classification of Narrative Elements in Folktales, Ballads, Myths, Fables, Medieval Romances, Exempla, Fabliaux, Jest-Books, and Local Legends*, rev. and enlarged ed. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1955–1958), U262; Dan Ben-Amos, ed., *Folktales of the Jews*, translated by Leonard J. Schramm and Jacqueline Teitlebaum, 3 vols. (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2006), 1:328–333. Several sources may have been responsible for popularizing the saying in antebellum American culture. Benjamin Davis Winslow wrote a poem, "This Too Shall Pass" in 1815, which George Washington Doane quoted in Winslow's funeral sermon and published in 1839. The poem later appeared in a collection of poems for mourners and in a biography on Winslow. (George Washington Doane, *Looking Unto Jesus: A Sermon, Preached in St. Mary's Church, Burlington, on the Sunday before Advent, MDCCCXXXIX, Being the Next After the Decease of the Rev. Benjamin Davis Winslow, Assistant to the Rector* [Burlington: J. L. Powell, 1839], 23–24; *The True Catholic Churchman, In His Life, and In His Death: The Sermons and Poetical Remains of the Rev. Benjamin Davis Winslow, A.M., Assistant to the Rector of St. Mary's Church, Burlington, New Jersey* [Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1842], 3–50; R. C. Trench, *Sacred Poems for Mourners* [London: Francis and John Rivington, 1846], 209–210.) No less than Walter Scott spoke of the maxim in an 1813 letter to Lord Byron, which appeared in *Memoirs of the Life of Sir Walter Scott*, a biography printed in several editions on both sides of the Atlantic; this may have inspired Abraham Lincoln's famous use of the saying that would further circulate it beyond Jewish American communities. See J. G. Lockhart, *Memoirs of the Life of Sir Walter Scott, Bart*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Carey, Lea, and Blanchard, 1837), 1:465–466; Gary Phillip Zola, ed., *We Called Him Rabbi Abraham: Lincoln and American Jewry, A Documentary History* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2014), 359–360. Some have mistaken Lincoln's speech for the source of "This too shall pass" in the American vernacular; other publications predating the speech include Henry Coleman, "The Permanency of the Gospel," *The Liberal Preacher: A Monthly Publication of Sermons by Living Ministers* 3, no. 1 (1830): 1–9; "Literary Review," *The Christian Remembrancer: A Quarterly Review* 22, no. 8 (August 1840), 471–472; "This Also Shall Pass Away," *The Young Churchman's Miscellany* 1, no. 2 (February 1846): 57; James Miller, *Medical Missions: An Address to Students Introductory to a Course of Lectures on This Subject Undertaken by Members of the Edinburgh Medical Missionary Society* (Edinburgh: Sutherland and Knox, 1849), 20.

moral order founded on a particular understanding of Jesus's teachings would endure all things.<sup>5</sup>

Historians have long interpreted sources contemporary to Lowrie's report within the civilization idiom. Sermons, essays, plans, maps, and reports of the period mention "civilization" and "civilizing" so frequently, it has become something of a truism that American Protestant missionaries understood the world as a spectrum between savagery and civilized society.<sup>6</sup> Two scholars, R. Pierce Beaver and William R. Hutchison, pioneered the idea for missiologists and historians. Both studied the intellectual history of the American Protestant missions, Beaver tending toward the sermons and agencies' records and Hutchison toward mission theorists (thinkers dedicated to systematically building a whole concept of mission). Civilization so saturated the discourse, Beaver and Hutchison treated it as a fundamental element of missionaries' rationales and language.<sup>7</sup>

Even as the array of analytical approaches has widened—to include explorations into nineteenth-century missionaries' effect on empire, democracy, commerce, nationalism, and more—the civilization hermeneutic has prevailed.<sup>8</sup> After Hutchison argued the missionary ideologies developed through competing interests in nation-building, scholars followed with

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5. Walter Scott, George Washington Doane, and Abraham Lincoln each repeated the tale of the Sultan seeking wisdom when drawing on the merits of "This too shall pass"; Doane's version seems to borrow directly from Scott's letter: "An Eastern sage being requested by his sovereign, to furnish a motto for a signet ring, which would be suitable alike for prosperity and adversity, wrote these words—'THIS ALSO SHALL PASS AWAY.'" (Doane, *Looking Unto Jesus*, 23–24; compare with Scott, "To the Right Hon. Lord Byron" (November 6, 1813), in Lockhart, *Memoirs*, 1:465–466.)

6. Ryan Dunch, "Beyond Cultural Imperialism: Cultural Theory, Christian Missions, and Global Modernity," *History and Theory* 41, no. 3 (October 2002): 301–325.

7. R. Pierce Beaver, ed., *Pioneers in Mission: The Early Missionary Ordination Sermons, Charges, and Instructions* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1966); R. Pierce Beaver, "The Churches and the Indians: Consequences of 350 Years of Missions," Chapter 11 in *American Missions in Bicentennial Perspective*, edited by R. Pierce Beaver, 275–331 (South Pasadena, Calif.: William Carey Library, 1977); William R. Hutchison, *Errand to the World: American Protestant Thought and Foreign Missions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).

8. See the introduction herein for a discussion of this historiography as a whole and citations to the pertinent studies following Hutchison's noteworthy argument. In what follows, I have selected those studies I find relevant to the historiography on the 1840s and 1850s American missions.

similar questions. Paul William Harris countered elements of Hutchison's conclusion, preferring to review whatever "variety of resources" missionaries "offered indigenous peoples" over however missionaries may have tried to "transform others into carbon copies of themselves." Programs veered from a strict civilizing mission, Harris maintains, for want of meeting the subsistence needs of converts; evangelizers had volunteered an ideology without effecting immediate change.<sup>9</sup> Still, the argument rests on changing conceptions of receiving peoples' level of civility.

The shifting resourcefulness of mission directors aside, activism and adaptation characterized missionary behavior for scholars first looking to the proselytized in the encounter. Michael C. Lazich notes how U.S. diplomats and Chinese government officials capitalized on American missionaries' savvy for Chinese language and culture in brokering deals before the outbreak of the Opium War, rendering the missionaries largely responsible for a "crucial turning point in Sino-Western relations."<sup>10</sup> A colloquium of scholars tempered the notion of missionaries' full-blown complicity in international conflict, however, looking to women missionaries and missionary wives for how, among other things, statecraft and mission affected each other. In their view, American women's missionary work could not be condensed to commercial or foreign policy acumen, but "both fed and undermined empires, national states, and the free rein of capitalist markets." These actors represented adapters navigating fluid, contested spaces; political change demanded they continually adjust their programs.<sup>11</sup>

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9. Paul William Harris, *Nothing But Christ: Rufus Anderson and the Ideology of Protestant Foreign Missions* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 8–9.

10. Michael C. Lazich, "American Missionaries and the Opium Trade in Nineteenth-Century China," *Journal of World History* 17, no. 2 (June 2006), 223.

11. Barbara Reeves-Ellington, "Embracing Domesticity: Women, Mission, and Nation Building in Ottoman Europe, 1832–1872," in *Competing Kingdoms: Women, Mission, Nation, and the American Protestant Empire, 1812–1960*, edited by Barbara Reeves-Ellington, Kathryn Kish Sklar, and Connie A. Shemo, 269–292 (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 270–272; Mary A. Renda, "Doing Everything: Religion, Race, and Empire in the U.S. Protestant Women's Missionary Enterprise, 1812–1960," in Reeves-Ellington, et al., eds., *Competing Kingdoms*, 369.

For political scientist Robert D. Woodberry, missionaries surpassed adapting to political exigencies—they shaped policy itself on a tremendous scale, even becoming the key variable in the spread of democracy throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. They disrupted elite power, he affirms, on account of their mission to evangelize the masses, and stimulated democratic awareness, making them classic democrats.<sup>12</sup> Jay Riley Case also argues against associating American missionaries with statism by illustrating how Burman “native assistants” translated Christianity for local communities more effectively than the missionaries themselves; one can hardly consider the missionaries, therefore, excellent imperialists.<sup>13</sup> Within a precise definition, however, missionaries certainly engaged in imperialism, writes Emily Conroy-Krutz: imperialists, yes—purveyors or executors of empire, no. The flexibility afforded by the term “imperialism” over “empire” allows Conroy-Krutz to demonstrate how missionaries reinforced assertive ideologies and presumed “their right to come into foreign spaces and transform them.”<sup>14</sup> Still others, drawing from the same body of sources, believe the missionaries epitomize

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12. Robert D. Woodberry, “The Missionary Roots of Liberal Democracy,” *American Political Science Review* 106, no. 2 (May 2012): 244–274. Pulling data from across the globe, Woodberry contends “conversionary Protestants” constitute this key variable in world democratization. José Pedro Zúquete would venture further than Woodberry; he argues the politics of missionary movements cohere into a form of *political religion*. “Missionary politics should be understood as a form of political religion carried out by a *chosen people* who, in time of self-perceived deep-rooted *crisis*, sees itself as a *moral community* led by a *missionary charismatic* leader undertaking a *collective mission of salvation*. Driven by *apocalyptic* and *millenarian* dynamics, the community manifests its solidarity and belief in the mission by constant *ritualization*. In the process, the members of the community celebrate themselves as a *sacred collective*, as representatives of a *sacred nation* and heirs to a *sacred history* involved in an apocalyptic showdown with the *evil* and *conspiratorial* forces of a *new world order*.” (José Pedro Zúquete, *Missionary Politics in Contemporary Europe* [Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2007], 28; italics in original.) Granted, Zúquete touches on nineteenth-century missions and mostly examines early twenty-first-century European movements to build a sociological theory, nevertheless, his work deserves historical consideration in light of Woodberry’s and others’ arguments about American missionaries’ involvement in foreign policymaking. In keeping with the scope of this dissertation, I will limit myself to Zúquete’s observation of mission movements reinforcing the identity of a moral community, even offering here corroborating evidence of this aspect of Zúquete’s theory.

13. Jay Riley Case, *An Unpredictable Gospel: American Evangelicals and World Christianity, 1812–1920* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 7–9.

14. Emily Conroy-Krutz, *Christian Imperialism: Converting the World in the Early American Republic* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015), 6–18. Conroy-Krutz charts how the missionaries sought the ideal of a Christian empire, a godly kingdom superseding all earthly institutions, thus placing them in opposition to empires on the

“internationalism” and “expansionism.”<sup>15</sup>

Whether imperialists, internationalists, democratizers, anti-colonialists, adapters, activists, expansionists, or resourceful humanitarians—the missionaries of this body of historiography remain fundamentally oriented around civilizing work and a civilizing ideology. William Hutchison’s thesis, whether directly or marginally, typifies the scholarly angle on the American missions of the 1840s and 1850s: the *modus operandi* governing missionary programs historians have excavated pivots on ideas about civilizations. “Central to Christian imperialism,” insists Emily Conroy-Krutz, “was the concept of civilization, which missionaries understood to embody important components of a truly Christian culture.”<sup>16</sup> Hutchison and his interlocutors share in concentrating on the American Board for figuring what American missionaries on the whole thought about their encounters. Mission theorists and directors certainly interrogated the merits of civilizing potential converts, but across the full corpus of missionary magazines, especially beyond the American Board’s issues alone, theoretical writings came far behind reports from the field in both emphasis and frequency.

Missionaries themselves did not face civilization in the abstract as did the theorists; they confronted the reality of existing and even ancient societies far outside the convenient labels attached to “heathenism.” John Lowrie’s sententious prediction of Islam’s failure took the

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ground.

15. Mark R. Amstutz asserted, “To a significant degree, missionaries were the first American internationalists. Even before entrepreneurs began to establish overseas business interests, missionaries were deeply involved in the task of world evangelization, believing that all peoples should have the opportunity to hear the gospel message of salvation in Christ.” (Mark R. Amstutz, *Evangelicals and American Foreign Policy* [New York: Oxford University Press, 2014], 66–67.) Of course, missionary entanglements in commerce complicate this bifurcation between mission and business, a fact explored in detail in Andrew Preston, *Sword of the Spirit, Shield of Faith: Religion in American War and Diplomacy* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2012), esp. 130–134, 137–140, 162–163. Amy S. Greenberg argued the highly masculinized environment of the 1840s and 1850s disposed missionaries of the time to constant expansion operations abroad; see Greenberg, *Manifest Manhood and the Antebellum American Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 255, 260–261.

16. Conroy-Krutz, *Christian Imperialism*, 14.

civility of the Islamic people of India seriously. Something deeper than formulaically mapping the world by traits and degrees of civilization informed Lowrie's and others' conceptions of the mission they had undertaken. Civilization, it would turn out, would belong to secondary, almost background, relevance in the magazines' major discussions of the foreign in this period.<sup>17</sup>

Four decades after Americans began publishing missionary periodicals, every continent and virtually every colonial outpost had been covered.<sup>18</sup> Editors began dedicating space to correspondence from the missions appearing to thrive, and numerical figures often told the story of growth and stability. Native assistants indicated not only whether the gospel had taken hold, but also the level of local support. Where the missionaries managed large numbers of native assistants, they expected they could build a permanent station from which to press their Christian influence beyond the port cities further inland.<sup>19</sup> Burma and Turkey topped the list for their aggregate number of stations and native assistants between 1840 and 1861. However, China appeared more regularly in the magazines for its higher level of commercial and political activity.

Across these three regions, reports present a pattern—writers commented on the relative *morality* of the foreigners. Their consciousness had grown truly global: they had come to communicate across vast distances and learn of diverse environments. The thrust of missionary

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17. The civilization hermeneutic may well dominate historiography on the nineteenth century at large. Jürgen Osterhammel considers it the Western world's ground zero and the most common idiom for framing the world in the nineteenth century. (Jürgen Osterhammel, *The Transformation of the World: A Global History of the Nineteenth Century*, translated by Patrick Camiller [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014], 86fn46, 87.)

18. One could argue most colonial outposts had received coverage before 1820; see, for example, "Survey of the Protestant Missionary Stations throughout the World, in Their Geographical Order," *The Panoplist, and Missionary Herald* 15, no. 6 (June 1819): 265–274; abridged and reprinted from *The Missionary Register* [London] 7, no. 1 (January 1819): 1–52 (not to be confused with the *American Missionary Register*, which began publication in 1820).

19. An important example is Joseph Getchell Binney's April 1848 letter explaining the vital role native assistants played in sustaining schools and churches, especially in jungle areas where the missionaries risked more than assistants in traveling into the harsher climate. The number of native assistants had by this time become a staple in annual reports to the American Baptist Board of Foreign Missions and American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. See Joseph Getchell Binney, Letter (April 18, 1848), in "Maulmain (Karen) Mission: Letter of Mr. Binney," *The Baptist Missionary Magazine* 28, no. 12 (December 1848): 444–452.



reports in the 1840s and '50s exhibits a running projection of a uniform moral geography.

Missionaries came into contact with governments, commercial interests, and potential proselytes, and continually weighed their encounters with each against a moral standard they assumed of themselves—not as Christians or Protestants alone, but increasingly as Americans.

It may seem from some isolated cases missionaries confronted the dissonance of sharing a religious identity with peoples they regarded as “uncivilized.” Jay Riley Case believes American evangelicals particularly had to “reconsider their assumptions about the superiority of American, white, or civilized identities” in the face of Burman native assistants outpacing the missionaries in perceived effectiveness.<sup>20</sup> The most important medium for missionary communication before the Civil War, the missionary press, suggests otherwise—even in Burma, but also in China and Turkey, reporters regularly ascribed “civilized” status to the local proselytes and government even while calling them “immoral” in the extreme. When talking of “civilization,” they mentioned surface-level traits that rather corroborated prior formulae of what constituted a civilized society. The missionaries never relinquished their position of superiority, leaving another category to determine the presence and durability of missionary churches abroad. At bottom, it was a moralism—the moral order of the American people—that separated the missionaries from everyone else. Moreover, they looked for evidence of a reflexive ethic—not merely behaving according to a moral code, but knowing and appreciating the virtues one adopted—in judging their mission subjects. Foreigners could be every bit as civilized as the American people back home, but their collective moralism told a different story. It has been in conflating the missionaries’ moralistic consciousness with their civilizational discourses that historians have overplayed the role civilizing strategies took in motivating the missionaries’ actions.

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20. Case, *An Unpredictable Gospel*, 9.

Editors could still impose a civilization spectrum on the world, notwithstanding the stronger, guiding moral consciousness encompassing their reports. Prior efforts to mobilize into societies and carry religion far and wide had grown out of supposing the foreign world lacked social order and cultivated barbarism.<sup>21</sup> Particularly when determining the status of the mission abroad, writers posited potential outcomes based on the moral development of the local societies before them. It followed that a moral society should supersede “civilization,” an ideal above the basic social order staving off lawlessness and vice. Negotiations of present moralism became the common feature of predominant discussions of the foreign in the period between 1840 and 1861. Civility, even circumspect civility, could abound in many environments, and writers would adopt a rationale holding to this fact, but also judging the moral bearings of foreign peoples inferior to their own philosophically robust system of ethics. This period also witnessed an increase in missionary interest and involvement in state relations. Whether the consequence of the intercourse between civilized nations or the effect of proselytism, morality was ultimately proven by the moral household resembling the American home taking root among the proselytized. The association of America with exceptional identity most consistently appeared when joined with talk of the moral separation between the missionaries and the foreign.

Across the periodicals and in both denominational and interdenominational settings, the Chinese mission in particular gained different classifications: these foreigners did not exude savagery and indigeneity like Native Americans, Africans, islanders, or “Hindoos.” Mission speculation and commerce had gotten the missionaries to China, and international transactions and war leveled the field, casting China, Britain, and other European states in a perceived contest of resources. This catalyzed the missionaries’ reducing the civilization idiom in this context,

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21. See chaps. 1–2.

leaving their moral judgments intact if not fortified by the political turbulence. Editors and writers grouped Chinese identity apart from themselves by moral differences and the reflexive moralism or lack thereof. Theorists in America could continue projecting a civilization spectrum onto the world and employ a civilization idiom to craft mission strategies, but the press most often favored a moralist discourse. As state actors increasingly interacted with missionaries, a diplomatic dimension further broadened the premise of missionary work abroad. World saving would entail supporting statecraft with moralizing evangelism and vice versa. Home life best exemplified whether the effort translated into effective change.

### **Inferior Moralism**

China attracted all of the major sending agencies in the 1840s, bringing the largest, the American Board, into collaboration with denominational boards sponsoring Baptist, Methodist, Episcopalian, and Presbyterian missions. In terms of breadth of coverage and frequency of activity, China surpassed all other sites. Elijah Coleman Bridgman and David Abeel, both stationed in Macau and Hong Kong, were prodigious in their correspondence with editors and supplied the bulk of commentary for home audiences on the Chinese missions. Bridgman worked with British missionaries in circulating Bibles and tracts, and elevated the reputation of his American counterparts in British magazines through his news reporting and regular essays on the Chinese language and Chinese culture. The First Opium War reached its peak intensity in 1840 and 1841, causing Bridgman, Abeel, and their cohorts to address the politics of the opium trade at length. They did not question the status of the war's belligerents—each side engaged in warfare as a sovereign nation-state and deployed a military worthy of the name. The war, the

trade, and other facets of Chinese culture brought reactions to the ever-important quandary of whether the Americans were succeeding in converting the “heathen” of China.<sup>22</sup>

The situation seemed to place Chinese missions on hold. On the word of Bridgman, Abeel, and the British missionaries, editors expected the British would defeat the Chinese and assume more direct control of the port cities. Any outcome favoring the British would invariably throw wide China’s doors. In the meantime, prudent sponsors should prepare. The magazines amassed reports and accounts to shed light on the waiting nation. More impressed than intimidated by China’s population, economy, and government, the editors portrayed China as a highly civilized and certainly foreign society. The *Baptist Missionary Magazine* campaigned against the opium trade not just for its adverse effects on British and American commerce, but also for its pollution of Chinese “moral constitution.” That the Chinese and Indian governments would permit opium trafficking did not surprise anyone with integrity and honor. But British indulgence in the trade? This had descended into something unconscionable. “Who would suppose that Britain would so far forget her high and honorable character,” Abeel asked, “as to allow vessels to be equipped in her chief ports as regular traders in a contraband material?” One would normally expect barbarism from “barbarous tribes” and civility from “civilized nations,” but this conflict had turned matters upside down. American missionaries had to “elevate Christianity and European policy” to win over “the disciples of Confucius,” who would respect the end of smuggling even if they remained a “vast empire” lacking in morality. The American missionary had been “called upon to witness a kind of national and commercial *immorality* unprecedented in the annals of civilized governments.” The “noble and generous character” of the British had fallen; the

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22. Alwyn Austin, *China’s Millions: The China Inland Mission and Late Qing Society, 1832–1905* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2007), 48–50; Peter Ward Fay, *The Opium War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 136, chaps. 15–21.

Americans' sister country had interfered with the "religious prejudices of the heathen people" and by promoting the poison of opium, wreaked havoc on Christianity's prospects in China. What stood in the way of the "whole coast of China ... becoming a scene of ruthless piracy" when Britain could not be counted on to uphold virtue on behalf of the Chinese? Abeel insinuated only those fifty to sixty men and women laboring for the "Christianization of the Chinese."<sup>23</sup>

Bridgman concurred, adding to the pressure already besetting the three stations responsible for no less than a hundred thousand Chinese. The American Protestants in and around Hong Kong needed to act immediately: "Six separate sites for building have already been secured on Hongkong by the papal missionaries, and their buildings are going up rapidly."<sup>24</sup> To date, the people of the United States had neglected China. Bridgman worried an incursion of Catholics and the nefarious opium trade would continue to narrow opportunities for Americans to apply their unique advantages in evangelization to the Chinese field. The "wide empire" required more than "offering up our daily prayers and contributing generously of our substance," more even than sending ministers provisioned with Bibles and tracts. "Do Christians at home understand the difference?" Bridgman wondered. China maintained no "economy of grace," no "happy villages" so characteristic of the United States. In the United States, "all are nominally Christians, already instructed in the principles of our holy religion, and multitudes are distinguished for their pious and godly lives; while in China there is nothing of this; but idolatry, superstition, ignorance, and all ungodliness and iniquity, every where characterize the people." Bridgman sensed the "heathen" concept still applied to China despite abundant attestation of Chinese

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23. David Abeel, "British India, Opium and China," *The Baptist Missionary Magazine* 20, no. 11 (November 1840): 270–275; italics in original.

24. Elijah Coleman Bridgman, Letter (March 26, 1842), in "Letter from Mr. Bridgman, at Macao, 26th March, 1842," *The Missionary Herald* 38, no. 10 (October 1842): 392–393.

civilization. The conflation of uncivilized society with the qualities of heathenism so common in missionary literature broke down in this instance. Still, the moral divide was apparent and compelling. Bridgman thought no amount of appealing to the “seventeen millions” of Americans too overbearing.<sup>25</sup>

Bridgman kept to Macau while Abeel took short excursions to islands and peninsulas around Hong Kong. During a trip to Cheung Chau Island in 1843, Abeel and his companion Walter M. Lowrie, met the disdain of the British plenipotentiary Henry Pottinger who lodged a complaint against the missionaries with the Chinese authorities. The two fought back, claiming their rights to travel as American citizens, a fact earning praise from fellow countrymen after their reports circulated at home.<sup>26</sup> Though they journeyed to an island across the Hong Kong harbor, Abeel and Lowrie orchestrated the mission as a reconnaissance venture for staging later initiatives in the Chinese interior. They figured the ports in Macau and Hong Kong (to which they had been limited thus far) had enough of a British and American footprint as to give less indication of the state of the Chinese people further inland. Cheung Chau presented a scenario quite closer to the continental Chinese, whom the missionaries identified collectively as “Mandarins.” Expecting a culture markedly dissimilar from the enterprising Macanese, Abeel and Lowrie were surprised to discover waiting “gentlemen” and a “respectable” audience.<sup>27</sup> The scene itself made for a “magnificent prospect”: “The city lay reposing beneath us. The roofs of its compacted houses were alone visible, interspersed with innumerable trees, with here and there a portion of the wall, and

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25. Elijah Coleman Bridgman, Letter (June 24, 1842), in “Letter from Mr. Bridgman, Macao, 24th June, 1842,” *The Missionary Herald* 39, no. 2 (February 1843): 54–57.

26. John Cameron Lowrie, *Memoirs of the Rev. Walter M. Lowrie, Missionary to China* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1854), 165–166.

27. David Abeel, Journal (April 26, 1843–October 25, 1843), in “China: Journal of Mr. Abeel,” *The Missionary Herald* 40, no. 6 (June 1844): 193–198; Lowrie, *Memoirs* [1854], 183–195.

part of a small stream or canal.... Towns, villages, and hamlets were visible in every direction; those too far to be distinguished being indicated by groves or clumps of luxuriant trees.”<sup>28</sup>

Abeel and Lowrie reacted differently to some of the subtleties of Mandarin culture (Lowrie disliked the “dirty,” “narrow,” and “crowded” streets while Abeel enjoyed the “verdant grounds”).<sup>29</sup> Both, however, based missionary success on whether they could win the rapport of the Chinese government and whether they could instill a superior moral conscience in their audience. To carve out a permanent Christian presence meant interacting and negotiating with the imperial government. But if Cheung Chau were any indication of the villages in the continent, many if not most areas appeared amenable—the American missionary “might visit villages almost without number, and of all sizes, with little or no molestation from Government.” Never did they suggest to editors back home their mission entailed bringing civilization to the Mandarins or Macanese.<sup>30</sup>

The American and British missionaries capitalized on new channels opened by the Treaty of Nanking that brought a formal end to the First Opium War in 1842. Charles Gutzlaff enlisted evangelists to go beyond the treaty ports and return to missionary fundamentals: bear the word of the gospel one house and one person at a time.<sup>31</sup> Bridgman and Abeel modeled for American readers an ecumenical attitude, drawing British support for publishing and translation projects. Abeel downplayed the frictions even he at times found impossible to avoid. The sometimes “arrogant” British did unite with their Christian brothers in such a way local Chinese could not

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28. Abeel, “China: Journal of Mr. Abeel,” 197.

29. Lowrie, *Memoirs* [1854], 178; Abeel, “China: Journal of Mr. Abeel,” 197.

30. Abeel, “China: Journal of Mr. Abeel,” 198. Carl T. Smith contends the planning and activities of the Protestant missions to China in the 1840s made civilizing a core strategy of a primarily Christendom model, again relying on the civilization idiom to interpret missionary discussions of moral inferiority; see Smith, *Chinese Christians: Elites, Middlemen, and the Church in Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2005), 8–10.

31. Austin, *China's Millions*, 51–52.

help but notice. “It must teach him an important lesson,” Abeel reported to cautious editors, “and produce a favorable impression on his mind, to see men of different nations, coming forth on the same benevolent errand, and laboring like brethren together.”<sup>32</sup> Evangelizers hoped to present a united front; in Gutzlaff’s case, he would name his flagship agency the “Chinese Union,” and staff it with mostly converted Chinese preachers.<sup>33</sup> First returns (over 260 converts in the Chinese Union’s first year, double the prior number of all Protestants in China) exceeded initial expectations, and magazines promoted a renewed optimism despite daunting odds. It seemed, to the missionaries at least, the receiving culture respected international and interdenominational cooperation.<sup>34</sup>

By 1845, Abeel could celebrate how commercial cities had sufficiently opened China for missionary activity, how crowds joyfully received the Americans’ books and tracts, and how he and his counterparts could move freely throughout the country without hearing cries of “foreign demon” as before. And yet, he actively relegated even the receptive, converted Chinese to a lesser status than himself. Whatever theology he espoused of the transformative power of Christianity, Abeel assumed a sovereign relation over the Chinese in his actions. The village temple near Amoy (or Xiamen) could command his admiration for its intricate gardens and ornate design, but always there lurked in its heart hideous forms. Living under a cultural regime of sin left the noble temple builders poor and ignorant. “Oh, that those who do know, would come and enlighten,” Abeel cried. Such a situation had to be remedied with religious instruction in pious behavior and

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32. David Abeel, “Journal of Mr. Abeel,” *The Missionary Herald* 41, no. 6 (June 1845): 183–187.

33. The Chinese Union would dissolve after the death of Charles Gutzlaff in 1851, but paved the way for the influential China Inland Mission headed by Hudson Taylor who patterned his own work after Gutzlaff’s (Austin, *China’s Millions*, 53).

34. Austin, *China’s Millions*, 52; Abeel, “Journal of Mr. Abeel,” 183–184.



motivations, not through restructuring Chinese civilization.<sup>35</sup>

Editors serving denominational boards picked up on the American Board missionaries' rubric for assessing the Chinese field. Thomas E. Bond, editor of the *Christian Advocate and Journal*, ran regular essays advertising the Methodists' lag in reaching China and sketching the possible pathways for a permanent Methodist mission there.<sup>36</sup> Two letters written shortly after the end of the Opium War, one by an unnamed "friend of missions" and another by prominent Methodist theologian Thomas O. Summers, implored readers to boost the paltry funds given to the China mission and lift the United States above the reputation of the European agencies. This field posed a peculiar confluence of language and philosophy; the dismissive tactic to curb idolatry among Pacific islanders of pointing out how oblations failed could not be expected to work for an audience where more than half of the male population could read and write. Sound moral reasoning about sin and guilt would open the eyes of "pagan idolaters." Summers hoped "the light of inspiration and love of the Spirit" would wash over the "celestial empire" independently of European influences in a baptism initiated by righteous motivation within the Chinese people themselves. Missionaries skilled in philosophy could encourage such motivation, and Americans stood on the "same footing as those of the most favored nations" in this respect.<sup>37</sup>

More than literacy and philosophy elevated China in the minds of William Milne and other Baptist writers. Milne corrected the mistaken stereotype of disgusting Chinese cuisine—to the contrary, he contended in the *Baptist Missionary Magazine*, the Chinese showed discerning

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35. Abeel, "Journal of Mr. Abeel," 185.

36. Wade Crawford Barclay, *History of Methodist Missions*, 6 vols. (New York: Board of Missions and Church Extension of the Methodist Church, 1949), 3:365–369. Bond served as editor from 1840 to 1848, and not without controversy; see Frank Luther Mott, *A History of American Magazines*, 5 vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1930–1968), 2:66fn89.

37. "China," *Christian Advocate and Journal* 18, no. 2 (August 23, 1843): 5; Thomas O. Summers, Letter to the Rev. John Dempster, in "Mission to China," *Christian Advocate and Journal* 18, no. 2 (August 23, 1843): 5.

taste in their preparation of cakes, wine, duck, pork, and soup. The range of ingredients met the European standard and certainly did not include dog meat, worms, and vermin—"A prejudice without foundation!" Milne exclaimed—foods attributed to China by travelers exaggerating their exploits abroad. Milne even came to admire what at first glance seemed foul: many women sold their milk; not so much for profit, but "for the sake of nourishing babes or superannuated old people." Technology impressed Milne, as well. He saw lumberyards and the beginnings of European-style ice houses. In these areas, the gospel caught hold rather smoothly. Because the Chinese already spoke the language of civilized "economy," they already grasped the connection between themselves and the gospel preachers. It remained to fill in the gaps in their "confused system of religion" with the Christian "rule of conduct," which Milne believed had induced any realization of their moral ineptitude.<sup>38</sup>

Milne had checked popular assumptions of Chinese primitivism and presented a China quite startling for readers accustomed to images of subservient, plebeian Asians. Common pro-mission articles had tussled with misconceptions before, usually pointing out traits showing the foreign culture to possess precursors of civilization. The correction here worked the other way. Milne had encountered a civilized China replete with European modes of living, but the case had to be maintained that the people lacked something the missionaries could supply. Morality followed automatically—so much so, it imbued Milne's idiom far more than civilization. The moral ineptitude he assumed of the Chinese people explained and justified missionary intervention.

The idiom pervaded other reports, working out appraisals of missions denominationally separate from the Baptist agencies. Episcopalians, thus far rather behind the American Board

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38. William Milne, "Notice of a Seven Months' Residence in the City of Ningpo, (China.)," *The Baptist Missionary Magazine* 25, no. 5 (May 1845): 110–111.

and the Baptists in reaching the East and more centralized in their organization and outlook, accepted the terms of Milne's and other Baptists' reports, basing their mission logic on the same moral divide. Editors of the *Spirit of Missions* relied on Episcopalianism's most forceful defender of missions, Bishop William J. Boone, for information on the China mission.<sup>39</sup> Boone's endorsement of George Smith, agent for the Church Missionary Society, carried such authority, the journal made Smith's accounts its definitive report on China. A January 1845 review of Christian missions attempted a "diligent investigation" into Chinese receptivity by outlining observations taken from missionaries on the ground and forecasting prospects. Smith supposed three forces determined barriers to entry: the Portuguese government in colonial Macau, the British government in Hong Kong, and the Chinese government in the other port cities and continental interior. A religious rival, the "Popish priesthood," had already connected with the three governments, exacerbating the Protestants' access to potential converts and complicating their previously dependable strategy of circulating Bibles and tracts. The Opium War and the Nanking Treaty altered the balance of powers enough to create a timely opening for the American missions. British rule had softened Chinese aggression toward sister states, Smith believed, and despite speculation at home that China remained closed to evangelical missions, this new tolerance signified the land was already open. "The climate is superior," Smith affirmed, "the people are more civilized, the native rulers court the acquaintance of Missionaries, British intercourse is more desired."<sup>40</sup>

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39. Boone gave an influential sermon on the lack of Episcopal attention directed at China in 1837, *Address in Behalf of the China Mission, by the Rev. William J. Boone, M.D., Missionary of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States of America to China* (New York: Foreign Committee of the Board of Foreign Missions, 1837), and departed for China as a missionary in July that year; in 1844, he was consecrated a bishop and soon settled in Shanghai, working there until his death in 1864. (Daniel H. Bays, "William Jones Boone, Sr.," in *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions*, edited by Gerald H. Anderson [Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1998], 77.)

40. George Smith (1815–1871), "General Aspect of Missions in China," *The Spirit of Missions* 11, no. 3 (March 1846): 86–92.

The British preceded the Americans and arguably led the mission, yet Smith maintained it was the Americans who had the advantage: God used the British empire to open an “effectual door,” but the “free and unrestrained intercourse” between the United States and China softened Chinese attitudes toward American foreigners. The war forced local authorities to bargain with the British government, and the constant oscillation of policies disqualified the British from sustaining a consistent relationship. Ultimately, the Chinese suffered “flagrant immoralities of the system” and called out for “moral aid” even if they did so unconsciously. China “has been shorn of the talismanic lock of her fancied superiority.” Britain helped some, but it would be “by the moral weight of both hemispheres” the proclamation of God’s message and mercy would finally cure the Chinese people of their heathenism. Smith looked to the “domeciled” and “splendid villas” for corroboration the “Redeemer’s kingdom” had begun to overcome “Chinese exclusiveness and superstition.”<sup>41</sup>

Smith concerned himself with the landscape and proselytizing demands before him, and detected in the receiving audience a web of competing interests. Powerful empires contended over the unbounded richness China offered, making for a modern contest of nations. On the temporal side, entanglements in trade (especially the nasty opium epidemic) perpetuated an imbalance and incentivized exerting colonial and political control. But the missionaries sided with the heavenly kingdom of God, and strikingly for Smith, neutrality disposed the United States to best furthering that kingdom’s expansion. It was precisely the relatively even standing the Chinese retained in their exchanges with European states that sidelined concerns of civilization in Smith’s projections.

Calvinist concerns espoused by Augustus Ward Loomis, Presbyterian missionary for the

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41. Smith, “General Aspects of Missions,” 88–91.

American Board in the late 1840s, shot through his views of his first encounter. Attuned to the depravities of human societies (Loomis wrote at length on the perfection of holiness, building a theology around the inherent profanity of human nature), he spotted “immoralities” with precision.<sup>42</sup> On arrival, the idolatry he witnessed bowled him over: Buddhist altars, shrines, temples, and pagodas permeated the countryside, even where inhabitants had long abandoned a place to ruin. They were “*wholly given*” over to idol worship, presenting the missionaries with a formidable course ahead. Loomis got down to basics. To missionize Buddhists, he would first identify obstacles to their embracing Christianity and then respond to each obstacle with a universal principle derived from scripture. A close reading of Buddhism invited comparisons with Loomis’s sense of himself and what he represented as a missionary. Interestingly, Loomis treated Buddhism as having philosophical esteem, a belief system deserving of theological interrogation. Why the people of Ningbo venerated ancestors, prepared for “transmigration” (reincarnation) instead of afterlife, and sought to “annihilate” their selfhood through contemplation mattered beyond the seemingly obvious influence of Satan and their “heathen” pedigree. Relentless indoctrination in “demonology” and ancestor worship instilled a deviance manifesting itself in the ubiquitous pagoda and fascination for animal behaviors. Reform would not come by targeting social structures, but by sensitizing people to greater moral awareness.<sup>43</sup>

The various teams of missionaries from Methodists to Episcopalians might have disagreed over the finer points of Christian instruction, but on the situation in China and what it necessitated, they responded in kind: the morality inculcated by Protestant American society

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42. Augustus Ward Loomis, *The Profits of Godliness: By the Author of “Scenes in Chusan,” “Learn to Say No,” &c., &c.* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1859).

43. Augustus Ward Loomis, “The Religions of China, by the Rev. A. W. Loomis,” *The Home and Foreign Record* 3, no. 7 (July 1852): 212–214; italics in original.

had to take root among the Chinese. Grave for some and serious for all, the work to prepare and transport moralism encompassed countless data, ranging from mastering diffuse dialects and designing curricula to ingratiating potentially antagonistic officials and winning over sponsors. The American Board expended the most energy to amassing intelligence and supplying donors and recruits with timely information in its annual reports and the *Missionary Herald*. Having waited through the First Opium War to expand its China mission, the Board seized on the Nanking Treaty to put into action plans years in the making. The lower cost of living and relative accessibility of the language made Fuzhou a strong candidate for launching into the Fujian province halfway between Hong Kong and Shanghai.<sup>44</sup>

Stephen Johnson, founding missionary of the Fuzhou station, provided precious facts the American Board eagerly awaited. To no one's surprise, the worst of his survey was the continued use of opium. Only five years after the treaty, and around half the male population remained "more or less enslaved" to the narcotic, he reported. But Johnson could find no better prospects outside Fuzhou. Local teachers helped him learn the dialect and the people generally could read and write. Many "eminent scholars" distinguished Fuzhou with a "reputation in a literary point of view," and the city's steady economy left smaller municipalities for politicians to deal with. All the same, Johnson found reason for missionary urgency. The people were "wholly ignorant of the purifying, ennobling and soul-saving truths of the gospel" and had been demoralized by the opium trade. "Nothing apparently but the triumph of the gospel over sin in its various forms," he concluded, "can save this people and the rest of China from temporal and eternal ruin."<sup>45</sup>

Johnson, like many of his contemporaries, implied a Christian moral system when referring

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44. Stephen Johnson, "Letters from Mr. Johnson," *The Missionary Herald* 43, no. 10 (October 1847): 356–357; Barclay, *History of Methodist Missions*, 3:368.

45. Johnson, "Letters from Mr. Johnson," 357.

generically to “the gospel,” but in this instance pivoted strongly from the prior generic use of “ignorance.” In other fields, particularly West Africa, the Pacific, and Native America, “heathen ignorance” often constituted an attribute of the receiving culture’s incapacity to discern superstition from sound doctrine. To be ignorant in this sense was to be in a constant state of mental torpor.<sup>46</sup> Johnson detected a moral deficiency, but thought the people of Fuzhou intellectually capable of acquiring moral aptitude. These potential proselytes sinned without knowing it, probably because they had adhered to an inferior philosophy. John Van Nest Talmage writing from Amoy the following year supported this assessment, having witnessed converts admit their former “folly and wickedness” when alerted to the “truth of Christianity,” a religion they soon regarded to be “the only genuine religion on earth.” The key in switching from “idolatry” to “belief”—assenting to the idea of a heavenly afterlife predicated on one’s present conduct. “They are like a large class of people in Christian communities,” Talmage reported to the *Missionary Herald*, “expecting, probably, to obtain admittance to heaven, as a reward for their morality and their attendance on the preaching of the Word.” The Amoy native assistants proved Johnson’s assumptions: once preachers disentangled the “evils of a heathen education” from the individual’s “every thought,” the proselyte’s mind revealed a faculty for deep thought, even “the study of systematic theology.” Talmage trusted native assistants could sustain churches themselves, effectively throwing weight behind a new theory championed by the American Board’s director, Rufus Anderson, that self-perpetuating churches abroad afforded the ideal program for advancing foreign missions.<sup>47</sup>

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46. See chaps. 2–3.

47. John Van Nest Talmage, Letter (June 9, 1848), in “Letter from Mr. Talmage, June 9, 1848,” *The Missionary Herald* 44, no. 11 (November 1848): 378–381. Anderson would synthesize his “Three Self” theory of missions in 1869 with his *Foreign Missions: Their Relations and Claims* (New York: Charles Scribner, 1869), but advanced the model as early as the 1840s. Henry Venn and Francis Wayland spoke of self-sustaining churches around the same

First reporters led by Elijah Bridgman and David Abeel set the tone for appraisals of China, and their shared interest (one could argue even fascination) of the nation's language and traditions graduated their surveys to the level of theory. Bridgman especially strove to systematically consolidate his studies into a journal though not as widely read as the *Missionary Herald* inspired intellectuals to build a school of thought on the topic of China. Taken together, the missionary press contributed more to the emergence of Sinology than entrepreneurs, diplomats, and scholars proper. Bridgman and his peers realized a niche and promoted their findings precisely when battle lines were materializing and attracting notice among Americans an ocean away.<sup>48</sup>

### Foreign Relations

The missionaries braved ever more hostile conditions to preach the gospel, so it seemed. At the outset, missions had begun with hierarchies in mind. Proselytizers decades before had targeted Native American tribal leaders under the anticipation conversions would flow from the top down. Diplomatic overtures, therefore, arose rather constantly in missionary planning and encounters. The program originally called for appeasing authorities, gaining their esteem, then carrying out the rest of the proselytizing strategy. As missions expanded into new frontiers, the top-down tactic appeared to work. Adoniram Judson and companions would open Burma

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time as Anderson. See Hutchison, *Errand to the World*, 78–82; Harris, *Nothing But Christ*, 3–4; Rufus Anderson, *The Theory of Missions to the Heathen: A Sermon at the Ordination of Mr. Edward Webb, as a Missionary to the Heathen* (Boston: Crocker and Brewster, 1845); Anderson, *Foreign Missions*.

48. “Journal of Occurrences: Political Phenomena; Attack on the Hellas; Lord Churchill’s Death; Attempt to Burn the Fleet at Capsuy Moon; Arrival of Steamer Madagascar and Wellesley, 74, With Transports; Queen’s Speech on Chinese Affairs; Notices of Blockade; Notice to the Chinese; Smuggler Seized; Admiral Elliot Leaves for Teentsin; Russian Mission to Peking; Russian Expedition against Khiva; Tea in Asám,” *The Chinese Repository* 9, no. 2 (June 1840): 106–112.



by first gaining an audience with Bagdiyaw, the Konbaung king. When Bagdiyaw spurned the Bible, Judson thought their prospects immediately dashed. Seeking formal audiences with government authorities placed the missionaries in the thick of conflict. Escalations between colonial governments in the 1840s led to wars into the 1850s. The Taiping Rebellion in China with its subsequent overthrow of the Qing Dynasty, the Second Anglo-Burmese War in 1852, and the Crimean War in Ottoman Turkey kept the three countries at the forefront of reporting. Diplomacy had fast become an essential skill of the foreign-bound missionary, not a tactic incidental to frontier settlement.<sup>49</sup>

Thus emerged a greater emphasis on nation-state relations in the missionary press in the 1840s and 1850s. When positioned in the mix of nation-states interacting in the interests of government, American missions were increasingly distinguished by their ties to the United States, and given the relative conflicts embroiling the European nations, American writers would conceive of their advantages in a zero-sum calculus. Because Britain lost credibility for its insatiable appetite opium profits, it made sense American expatriates were left to address the moral rift. The same pattern surfaced in missionary reports on Burma and Turkey, adding to the identification of America with superior standing in the mission field.<sup>50</sup>

The scale had grown considerably as missions extended into territories governed by dynasties and colonial powers. Among the more isolated domains of disparate indigenous communities,

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49. Adoniram Judson, "Burman Mission: Extracts from Mr. Judson's Journal," *The American Baptist Magazine and Missionary Intelligencer* 3, no. 1 (January 1, 1821): 26–32.

50. Harry G. Gelber explored the confluence of British missions and the Opium War, arguing the war set in motion the terms of British and Chinese relations all the way to the Chinese Revolution of 1911. In addition, he contends the war stimulated a "painful transition" of China from an antiquated empire to a modern nation-state (Gelber, *Opium, Soldiers and Evangelicals: England's 1840–42 War with China, and Its Aftermath* [New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004], ix–x). The missionary press rather generally treated China as a peer nation-state to Europe and the United States, though some evangelical writers at times emphasized the dynastic history of the Qing government.

missionaries limited their scope to the authorities immediately before them. They speculated abundantly about the communities they had not entered yet saw those venues as separate versions of the same indigenous setting. Working in Macau, Rangoon, and Constantinople exposed the missionaries to officials overseeing larger, sometimes immense, provinces and often with militaries under their command. Wars not only introduced a measure of social disturbance, but also destabilized the missionaries' relations with their liaisons. A swing in government control or policy could jeopardize the missionaries' own safety. After diplomatic relations between Britain and Burma dissolved and a Burmese army crossed into British-Indian territory, officials in Ava suspected Adoniram Judson and Jonathan Price guilty of spying for the British. Months of harsh imprisonment led nearly to Judson's death, but the situation reversed toward the end of the Anglo-Burmese War when the same Ava government solicited Judson's help as an interpreter during peace negotiations.<sup>51</sup> With such erratic fluctuations at play, American missionaries had good reason to identify and keep abreast of governmental affairs.

By 1840, the mood in the magazines intimated impending conflict in the major fields. The Burman throne looked poised for a coup and the opium trade was mounting a showdown between British and Chinese armies.<sup>52</sup> Prior projections had the missionaries expanding the stations' network by this time, but the real possibility of a diplomatic crash loomed enough for missionaries to weigh the benefits of consulting directly with British and Chinese officials. They hardly realized in adopting a diplomatic strategy, they had granted these foreign societies cachet on par with their home country. Samuel Wells Williams could knock the imperial commissioner

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51. Maung Htin Aung, *The Stricken Peacock: Anglo-Burmese Relations, 1752–1948* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1965), 30–31; Maung Htin Aung, *A History of Burma* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967), 210–220; John F. Cady, *The United States and Burma* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1976), 62–63.

52. Oliver B. Pollak, *Empires in Collision: Anglo-Burmese Relations in the Mid-Nineteenth Century* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1979), 24–26; Gelber, *Opium, Soldiers and Evangelicals*, 28–39.

at Macau for being “excessively annoying” and legitimize Chinese powers at the same time. His report of August 1839 depicted a thoroughly intricate situation, with Chinese, British, and Portuguese officials trying to maneuver around each other in securing their respective territorial advantages. Every subtlety of the exchange had swift impact on the mission. Williams understood the United States could intervene at any moment throwing the mission into doubt. Even so, the work to spread Christianity superseded their advantageous alliances with diplomats. “We may,” he resolved, “here see another instance of the evil effects of our present relations with this people, and if nothing more than the righting of them ensues, it will be a great point gained.” Should the circumstances sour, their political business would still have made a worthy effort to “rouse [China] from her fancied goodness and security.”<sup>53</sup>

Government officials could do worse than annoy, requiring some missionaries to take stock of precarious relationships stretching far beyond their immediate circle. Elisha Litchfield Abbott in Burma and Jehu Lewis Shuck in China both sensed the ramifications of failed interactions with their respective governors. A wrong move with a hostile aristocrat could aggravate dealings with European and American powers. Abbott boasted nearly a thousand native assistants canvassed the onerous jungles of Burma and attracted conversions among the Karen elite, but competition in and around Rangoon threatened the growing Christian community. The “several villages” of “decidedly Christian” people faced multiplying antagonism from their own countrymen, no less. “In fact,” he wrote, “the Karen converts fear their own countrymen, who are enemies to the gospel, more than Burman officers.” Nothing more could be done “under the present government,” Abbott surmised. He would leave traditional evangelism to the native

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53. Samuel Wells Williams, Letter (August 29, 1839), in “Letter from Mr. Williams, Dated at Macao, Aug. 29th, 1839,” *The Missionary Herald* 36, no. 4 (April 1840): 115–116.

assistants and undertake to “effect more good than injury” by dealing with “jealous Burman officers” at Rangoon.<sup>54</sup> Shuck likewise tussled with truculent officials at Chusan to the point of total exasperation. “I deprecate war in all its forms,” he announced, “but the Chinese *government* is hostile, essentially and practically hostile, to the great God and to the cause of his Son.” British raids against the Chinese in the first stages of the Opium War seemed justified by the numerical imbalance alone: the day before, Chinese losses and wounded surpassed three hundred while not a single British soldier was killed. The mission had a novel opportunity to leverage the fallout of the war—many thousands in Chusan alone had become “accessible to the Christian missionary.” They confronted another obstacle, but one they had seen before: the “absolute control” of Catholics and Mandarins. Hence, Shuck anticipated yet greater engagement in diplomatic channels.<sup>55</sup>

The Opium War outranked all other correspondence relating to international diplomacy through the 1840s and 1850s, with the uprisings in Burma and the Second Anglo-Burmese War coming second. The Crimean War in the Middle East struck writers as a futile exercise on the part of the Ottomans in resisting the protection of the Russian czars. Conflicts around the Mediterranean invariably arose from religious tensions between “Nestorians” whom the missionaries said had defected from Christianity and joined with the Catholics, Protestants whom the missionaries represented and defended regardless of denominational affiliation, and the Catholics.<sup>56</sup> Russian Orthodoxy entered the fray not as often as a religious party, but under

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54. Elisha Litchfield Abbot, Letter (December 26, 1839), in “Extract from a Letter of Mr. Abbott, Dated Maulmain, Dec. 26, 1839,” *The Baptist Missionary Magazine* 20, no. 9 (September 1840): 216–218.

55. Jehu Lewis Shuck, Letter (August 20, 1840), in “Extracts from a Letter of Mr. Shuck, Dated Macao, Aug. 20, 1840,” *The Baptist Missionary Magazine* 21, no. 4 (April 1841): 91–92; italics in original.

56. Eleanor H. Tejerian and Reeve Spector Simon, *Conflict, Conquest, and Conversion: Two Thousand Years of Christian Missions in the Middle East* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 99–113.

the auspices of the Russian Empire, complicating claims of territory and privilege. Ottomans and Russians fought over land and resources; Nestorians and Catholics allied with political powers to maintain their abundant monopoly of churches in the region; and Protestant missionaries struggled to open new stations with native assistants prone to disaffiliating when diplomacy failed.<sup>57</sup> In each of these grand conflicts, the United States dodged the missionaries' criticism and barely factored into their forecasts. Though American merchants colluded with the British East India Company and the United States navy prepared to deploy ships to aid the British as early as 1834, reports failed to mention the United States as a co-belligerent.<sup>58</sup> Excluding their homeland from the political intrigues leading to wars in effect elevated the United States above the collision of nations. Some missionaries would consider the United States outright privileged, selected by God with the greatest duty of all.<sup>59</sup>

Setbacks, whether numerous or marginal, tended to inform assessments coming out of the Burman, Chinese, and Mediterranean missions, but clear successes forced missionaries like Adoniram Judson, Justus H. Vinton, Francis Mason, and Lovell Ingalls to analyze the political climate just the same. In Burma where Judson and companions enjoyed regular growth in the number of professing Christians and native assistants, and where the British held Burman kings and princes in check, they nevertheless heard of resistance and worried local insurrections could promote nationwide persecution against Christians. The very infrastructure enabling their

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57. Austin H. Wright, "Recent Intelligence: Nestorians," *The Missionary Herald* 4, no. 8 (August 1853): 249–253; Justin Perkins, *The Beloved Physician: A Sermon Occasioned by the Death of the Rev. Austin H. Wright, M.D.* (New York: Edward O. Jenkins, 1865), 24–34; "The Russian Church and the Protectorate in Turkey," *Christian Advocate and Journal* 29, no. 15 (April 13, 1854): 58; "Protestant Missions in Turkey," *Christian Advocate and Journal* 29, no. 43 (October 26, 1854): 172; Samuel A. Rhea, Letter (July 16, 1855), in "Gawar: Letter from Mr. Rhea, July 16, 1855," *The Missionary Herald* 51, no. 12 (December 1855): 360–361.

58. Gelber, *Opium, Soldiers and Evangelicals*, 16–17, 65–66.

59. Justus H. Vinton, Journal (November 5, 1842–January 12, 1843), in "Extracts from the Journal of Mr. Vinton," *The Baptist Missionary Magazine* 24, no. 5 (May 1844): 105–108.

ability to transmit the gospel across dense jungle and violent opposition struggled to prevent malicious authoritarians from exercising terror. The vice-governor of Maulmain disgusted Judson, who described him as “the most ferocious, blood-thirsty monster I have ever known in Burmah.” Rumor had it screams of tortured criminals resounded from his courtyard day and night. “He is, however,” Judson admitted, “only acting on the orders which are understood to be in force all over the country, proscriptive of the Christian religion.” Judson felt to suspend public meetings until the higher authorities could replace the vice-governor.<sup>60</sup> Vinton held up the American-sponsored stations for the strength of their converts. Several revolts left Rangoon in ashes, Burman neighbors harassed formerly Buddhist converts, and Roman Catholics proselytized aggressively to dissuade converts from their Protestant affiliation, and yet the young congregations stayed true to the faith. Vinton stressed the stations’ need for more American agents given their singular mandate to claim Burma for Christ.<sup>61</sup> For Jonathan Wade, no one knew farming as well as Americans, and the native Burman population had shown such aptitude for learning, he predicted they would revolutionize Tavoy’s agrarian economy. All of this innate American ingenuity coupled with expanding mission networks seemed to garner the attention of potentially oppressive regimes. Otherwise religious journalism began to appropriate and contend with civic affairs, and by the late 1850s, essays positing foreign relation strategies became commonplace.<sup>62</sup>

Volatile government notwithstanding, the Burman field exuded success. Schools proliferated, native assistants multiplied, requests for books and Bibles poured in—and yet, in the very

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60. Adoniram Judson, Letter (May 20, 1847), in “Burmah: Letter of Mr. Judson,” *The Baptist Missionary Magazine* 27, no. 12 (December 1847): 422–424.

61. Vinton, “Extracts,” 105–108.

62. Jonathan Wade, Letter (October 19, 1840), in “Extracts from a Letter of Mr. Wade, Dated Tavoy, Oct. 19, 1840,” *The Baptist Missionary Magazine* 21, no. 5 (May 1841): 125–127.

same breath, missionaries bemoaned the continual need for *more* missionaries, donations, and cooperation from sponsoring governments.<sup>63</sup> It followed the mission would be accomplished with the complete conversion of the host society, in this case, the country named Burma set apart by territorial boundaries recognized by the world of nations. In theory, conversion resulted from the profession and fruits of faith, but in practice, missionaries looked beyond affiliation. Francis Mason put it succinctly in a report on Karen conversions:

A few years ago, the heads of the family in whose house we spent the Sabbath, were regarded as hopeless drunkards, and when I went that way they would scarcely give me a patient hearing. Three or four years ago they promised me to abandon their wicked practices and they have, I believe, been faithful to their promise. Though neither of them has been baptized, yet they both give increasing evidence of conversion.<sup>64</sup>

Baptism—for this Baptist missionary—did not constitute conversion. A proselytized family went from the class of “hopeless drunkards” and impatient hosts to the class of the converted *without* baptism. The evidence Mason offered indicating conversion all tied to the domestic sphere. The home, a space associated with a lack of decorum and the company of drunkenness, provided the criteria for judging conversion, which Mason then projected onto the rest of the neighborhood and the whole of Burma. Their “active labors among the Karens” resulted in the very streets resembling Boston and Philadelphia.<sup>65</sup> Traits of domesticity so characterized Mason’s judgment, he would even exhibit cognitive dissonance over watching native Burmans behave in a civilized demeanor. Upon hearing the “sweet voice of one of the women singing her babe to sleep,” he wondered whether “these precious souls, after all” would “make their bed in hell” and expressed sadness at the “flood of evil influences” sure to beset these Christian neophytes. Other

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63. Lovell Ingalls, Letter (February 17, 1841), in “Extracts from a Letter of Mr. Ingalls, Dated Mergui, Feb. 17, 1841,” *The Baptist Missionary Magazine* 21, no. 11 (November 1841): 325–327.

64. Francis Mason, Letter (November 5, 1839), in “Extract from a Letter of Mr. Mason, Dated Tavoy, Nov. 5, 1839,” *The Baptist Missionary Magazine* 20, no. 9 (September 1840): 213–216.

65. Mason, “Extract from a Letter,” 216.

reports followed Mason's reactions. Edwin Buxton Bullard would meet curious Pgwo Burmans eager to touch white foreigners who lived in modest homes and, not coincidentally, displayed a strong facility for learning.<sup>66</sup> The editor of the *Baptist Missionary Magazine* would describe Arracan, a widely anticipated destination, as a disappointment on the grounds that people lived in squalor, men beat their wives, wives screamed at their husbands—despite the municipality's unfettered trade, uniform taxes, and low crime rates.<sup>67</sup> The civic forces sustained and infiltrated the homes of Mason's hosts, giving incentive for Mason and others to measure strategy against civic affairs. Ground-level transformations seen in the Tavoy family and the mother's lullaby intersected with top-level order and conflict. Policy could destabilize communities and frustrate long-term action.<sup>68</sup>

The predominant narratives between 1840 and the American Civil War granted the peoples of Burma and China, and to a lesser extent, Turkey—even the “monsters” and “persecutors” in government—the standing of the civilized, treating them as worthy combatants capable of sweeping territorial expansion, political intrigue, and commercial monopoly. The particular crises arising primarily from the Chinese-British opium trade, Burman uprisings, and Crimean conflicts disposed missionary reporters to entertain foreign affairs, which took for granted related interactions occupied the level of civilizations. Continual assessment of mission outcomes relied on the moral basis already attached to Christian proselytism, this time as a way of justifying missionary intervention and preserving their identity as superior agents tending to the salvation of the world. Verbose debates over the degree of civilization within receiving societies fell behind

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66. Edwin Buxton Bullard, Letter (March 6, 1845), in “Extracts from a Letter of Mr. Bullard,” *The Baptist Missionary Magazine* 25, no. 12 (December 1845): 311–315.

67. “Notes on Arracan,” *The Baptist Missionary Magazine* 27, no. 12 (December 1847): 407–415.

68. Francis Mason, Journal (December 10, 1842–March 19, 1843), in “Karens: Extracts from the Journal of Mr. Mason,” *The Baptist Missionary Magazine* 23, no. 12 (December 1843): 297–300.



riveting reports by Bridgman, Abeel, Judson, and Mason detailing the perils braved by American missionaries in newly opened fields during times of political unrest. As they ascertained the effect of their moralizing influence, they defaulted to traits of domesticated families to demonstrate whether a permanent morality had taken hold.

In the cases of Burma, China, and Turkey, rising conflict and war introduced conceptualizations of the foreign that privileged the missionaries' American identity. More frequent mention of the unique position of the United States in intergovernmental affairs and how this afforded the missionaries greater accessibility to local officials and greater mobility in reaching unevangelized peoples ran in tandem with upheaval in the homeland. Precisely when predominant themes centered on civilized peoples and their moral inferiority, intense discord arose between the sponsoring agencies themselves. The topic of slavery would soon eclipse mission itself in the American religious periodicals, testifying to the crisis eventuating into a war far more devastating to the missionaries' interests than the foreign wars they could expeditiously disavow. All they had proposed that had qualified their exceptional mandate and relationship with the foreign world would come under fire. How the missionaries negotiated the sin of slavery for home audiences would reveal a contradiction only the most circumspect of writers suspected plagued their mission all along. Perhaps ironically, the central figure of the Civil War himself would invoke Lowrie's observation of the *Quṭb Minār* on the eve of war. Looking out on the American farmer's way of life and praising the moral excellence of cultivating the "physical world, beneath and around us," Abraham Lincoln felt consoled by the thought "this, too, shall pass away." "And yet," he said, "let us hope it is not *quite* true." Such ambivalence would epitomize the one constant in missionary discourse of the foreign: the slave trade.<sup>69</sup>

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69. Abraham Lincoln, Address before the Wisconsin State Agricultural Society, Milwaukee, Wisconsin (September 30, 1859), in *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, edited by Roy P. Basler, 8 vols. (Springfield, Ill.: Abraham Lincoln Association; New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1953), 3:482; italics in original.

## Chapter 6

### “Restoring Them to the Soil of Africa”: American Africans

Except for the abolitionist periodicals, the missionary press assumed a subdued tone in the weeks after Confederates seized Fort Sumter in April 1861. The Southern Baptist *Commission* hardly exulted in the recent convention in Richmond. The “Union ... since the days of our revolutionary sires,” editors reported, “is virtually dissolved. War has begun.”<sup>1</sup> Methodists espousing an antislavery vision agreed. Edward Thomson, editor of the *Christian Advocate and Journal*, lamented this new revolution. The day after the Commonwealth of Virginia had joined the Confederacy, Thomson announced, “Civil war between the states has commenced. God grant it may soon terminate!”<sup>2</sup> Congregationalists already leading the call for domestic missions found their suspicions confirmed. Their *Home Missionary* magazine surmised they and their countrymen had now embarked on “unknown seas” with this war. “Experience furnishes Americans no chart for times like these,” a fundraising report stressed.<sup>3</sup> Episcopalian missionaries watched years of work crumble before their eyes. Parishes springing up in Kansas, Iowa, and Missouri suddenly stalled. “There were few parishes that had a more cheering future six months ago than ours,” William N. Irish wrote to the *Spirit of Missions*, “and I suppose our record will be but the echo of sorrow, which you will now hear from every missionary station in the land.” His colleague in Iowa thought the “gloomy prospects” even frightening: “All eyes are turned tremingly [*sic*] toward the dark cloud of war which is rising and spreading, and,

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1. “The Convention,” *The Commission* 5, no. 11 (May 1861): 348–349.

2. Edward Thomson, “Editorial Notes,” *Christian Advocate and Journal* 36, no. 16 (April 18, 1861): 125.

3. “Thirty Fifth Report,” *The Home Missionary* 34, no. 3 (July 1861): 51–72.

like a funeral pall, threatening to envelop the whole land in darkness and gloom.”<sup>4</sup> The largest missionary agency in North America eventually acknowledged the war in November, forwarding resolutions adopted by the Executive Committee of the American Board to the *Missionary Herald* for publication. The first announced the society’s endorsement of the “National Government in its struggle with a rebellion which threatens its very existence” and “imperils the success of this missionary Board.”<sup>5</sup> Just as the committee had feared, the more protracted the war became, the more sectional divisions ripped through the once “missionary monopoly” in America.<sup>6</sup> Issues of disunion and slavery driving the national rupture confronted missionaries attuned to ecumenical collaboration and agitated their efforts to maintain a concerted mission amid denominational, and now sectional, variance.<sup>7</sup>

A half-century before the war, the foreign missions enterprise reflected more consensus than crisis on the slavery question. When the Act Prohibiting Importation of Slaves went into effect in 1808, the missionary press had expended such energy in alerting readers to the pressing demands of evangelizing the world that it barely took notice. On political grounds, the slave trade had already found repudiation in all of the states; as Winthrop Jordan observed, every state issued bans on slave importation between 1774 and 1794, and nowhere else in policy debates on slavery did anything so resemble national consensus as the 1807 congressional ban.<sup>8</sup> Missionaries could level moral arguments against the slave trade in the following decades without much resistance.

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4. W. N. Irish, Report on St. Charles, Missouri, *The Spirit of Missions* 26, no. 8 (August 1861): 236; H. A. Welton, Report on Iowa, *The Spirit of Missions* 26, no. 8 (August 1861): 276–277.

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

6. Josiah Brewer, “Prospectus,” *The Union Missionary Herald* 1, no. 1 (January 1842): 1–4.

7. The missionary periodicals with a decidedly abolitionist outlook in 1861 included the *American Missionary* and *Zion’s Herald and Wesleyan Journal* (see Appendix B); others vacillated in their antislavery or proslavery stance.

8. Winthrop D. Jordan, *White over Black: American Attitudes toward the Negro, 1550–1812*, 2nd ed. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1968), 373.

After all, they tended to look the other way in matters of *domestic* slave trading like everybody else. Fine distinctions between the various economies of slavery, particularly the diverse modes of slave labor throughout the Caribbean and South America, would not appear in the magazines until after abolitionism gained prominence in the 1840s and 1850s. In most of the antebellum articles touching slavery, the writers and editors followed a moderate path by opposing the slave trade and advocating the return of African slaves to their homeland as missionaries. This stance would not satisfy later abolitionists who called for the total abandonment of slavery in all of its forms. Moderate antislavery apparent in the magazines would come into question enough for coalitions of readers to begin demanding an outright disavowal of agencies' association with slaveholding members.<sup>9</sup>

Several dimensions of American life descended into crisis as the country moved closer to civil war. Religion, long held by missionary writers to arbitrate ethics for society at large, failed to unify Protestant Americans who could not reconcile their views of a biblical precedent (or lack thereof) for slavery. But their theological crisis seemed to deter only slightly missionary participation.<sup>10</sup> Missions proceeded to recruit people across the pro- and antislavery spectrum even as territorial disputes in Congress weakened national political parties and denominational

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9. Hugh Davis, "Leonard Bacon, the Congregational Church, and Slavery, 1845–1861," in *Religion and the Antebellum Debate over Slavery*, edited by John R. McKivigan and Mitchell Snay, 221–245 (Athens, Ga.: University of Georgia Press, 1998), 227–228; Joe M. Richardson, *Christian Reconstruction: The American Missionary Association and Southern Blacks, 1861–1890* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1986), vii–viii; Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *Lewis Tappan and the Evangelical War against Slavery* (Cleveland: Press of Case Western Reserve University, 1969), 109, 313–322.

10. George C. Rable, *God's Almost Chosen Peoples: A Religious History of the American Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 50; David Torbett, *Theology and Slavery: Charles Hodge and Horace Bushnell* (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 2006), 47–54; Mark A. Noll, *The Civil War as a Theological Crisis* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 1–6, 31–45; E. Brooks Holifield, *Theology in America: Christian Thought from the Age of the Puritans to the Civil War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), chap. 25; Davis, "Leonard Bacon," 221–245; John R. McKivigan, "The Northern Churches and the Moral Problem of Slavery," in *The Meaning of Slavery in the North*, edited by David Roediger and Martin H. Blatt, 77–94 (New York: Garland, 1998), 77–90.

boards split. To what extent, then, did the shift from a common rejection of the slave trade to a divided foreign missions enterprise demonstrate a *missiological* crisis?

Missiology (meaning here the systematic conceptualization of mission that informed excursions abroad) was indeed challenged by American slaveholding. To posit a commission to preach the deliverance from sin through adherence to the Christian gospel while also associating a people complicit in systems of human bondage with the commissioned presented a contradiction. In practice, the contradiction became further pronounced as many writers solicited support for missions by presenting a foreign world abounding in vice. The liminal act they assumed for themselves of translating “heathen” cultures for home audiences and positioning themselves and their countrymen in a world-saving capacity made bondage an obvious hypocrisy. In 1801, the *New-York Missionary Magazine* ran an extended argument over the merits of sending American missionaries to Africa; in 1861, abolitionist editorials vindicated earlier predictions. Between these publications, missionaries would venture commentaries revealing an intellectual dissonance.<sup>11</sup>

Mission could (and did) proceed in the presence of slavery. It could garner support among donors both offended by and supportive of slavery, and maintain a collective, ecumenical base of activity spanning the nation. Erskine Clarke narrates a vivid instance of missionaries from South Carolina who advocated slave manumission and even freed their slaves, only later to side with the Confederacy over the right of southerners to maintain their way of life. That one could simultaneously leave for Africa on a mission assignment and hold conflicted views

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11. “A Dialogue between Africanus, Americanus, and Benevolus, on Sending Missionaries to Carry the Gospel to the Heathen in Africa,” *The New-York Missionary Magazine, and Repository of Religious Intelligence* 2, no. 1 (March 1801): 25–34; “Welcome to the Abolition Camp,” *Christian Advocate and Journal* 36, no. 46 (November 14, 1861): 365.

over slavery indicates the durability of Protestant missiological thought in these decades.<sup>12</sup> The institutions, however, broke apart once sectional crisis overcame the agencies' stock of sponsors. Congregationalists and Methodists felt the tensions on their bottom line as growing numbers of antislavery and abolitionist members applied pressure on their respective mission boards to leverage the national and interdenominational mission enterprise to oppose slavery. Concerns of potential schisms held back the American Board and Methodist papers in the 1830s and 1840s, which vacillated between silence and delaying action to preserve their stream of support. Others separated entirely, forming the American Missionary Association (AMA) in outright protest against the mission establishment. Still others by the 1840s and 1850s promoted missions on the domestic front to counter slave institutions directly. The American Home Missionary Society gave voice to the hope a national revival could kindle a moral awakening to the evils of slavery and motivate slavers toward wholesale manumission. The conceptions of the foreign and the vocabularies of exceptionality saturating the missionary press in the decades before 1861 came to a pause while Americans contended with themselves. A clear emphasis on denominational and sectional division in the mission agencies and plans for recovery replaced theoretical talk about the "heathen" in frequency in the 1860s.<sup>13</sup>

In their predominant rationales attempting to clear the dissonance, missionary writers between 1800 and 1861 either imagined a class of Americanized Africans or a race of "Negroes," and tended to avoid representations of slaves as fully American or domestic. The enslaved in America, numbering more than twelve percent of the population in the 1860 census and

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12. Erskine Clarke, *By the Rivers of Water: A Nineteenth-Century Atlantic Odyssey* (New York: Basic Books, 2013).

13. John R. McKivigan, *The War against Proslavery Religion: Abolitionism and the Northern Churches, 1830–1865* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984), 82–92, 112–119; Davis, "Leonard Bacon," 236–239; "Remarks," *Connecticut Evangelical Magazine; and Religious Intelligencer* 5, no. 11 (November 1812): 429–30.

responsible for the majority of production in the country's exports, occupied the class of foreigner with Native Americans and the rest of the "heathen" world. They were tagged with categories of "runaways," "slaves," victims befitting the Macedonian Cry—"Come over and help us!"—and the ubiquitous term "Negro." Yet African Americans remained proximate, requiring no overseas travel to reach them, and in many cases had already received proper churching from masters and itinerant ministers. Missionaries, along with many other Americans, denied blacks Americanness until blacks were seen as returned to their native continent and doing missionary work in Africa. When granted humanity, slaves continued to be functionally foreign; it fell to missionaries to save the slave just the same. Ultimately, the imagined class of Americanized African symbolized both the remedy for slaveholding atrocities and the fragility of Americans' exceptionalism.<sup>14</sup>

Discussion in the missionary press of black Americans, enslaved African Americans, foreign slaves, and Africa in general remained largely concerned with the slave trade and colonization schemes through the mid-1820s, then increasingly grew abolitionist into the 1840s and 1850s. Often left to the periphery were the people themselves, both the slaves and the slaveholders.<sup>15</sup> This departed sharply from the foreigner discourse constantly interrogating the wider "heathen" world at the time. In those contexts, missionaries did the opposite, defining and delimiting foreign difference with individual and cultural depictions aplenty. Antislavery discourse, the

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14. David Eltis and David Richardson, eds., *Atlas of the Transatlantic Slave Trade* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 23; Edward E. Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of Capitalism in America* (New York: Basic Books, 2014), 81–85, 113–129, 317–318.

15. Given the design of this project, particularly in how it tracks predominant narratives in the corpus of missionary magazines across time and space, this will mean I comment here on the white, principally northern, missionary writers and not the effectively marginalized and invisible African American slaves. Recovering and presenting slaves' voices in the ongoing development of foreign missions and American exceptionalism remains a crucial study, though Travis Glasson has already provided an important start; see Glasson, *Mastering Christianity: Missionary Anglicanism and Slavery in the Atlantic World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012). Clarke, *By the Rivers of Water* offers an essential exploration of the southern voice in the foreign mission scheme before and during the Civil War.

predominant mode of missionary writing about slaves, nevertheless projected and implied features that effectively constructed the African American foreigner.

### Trade and Colony

The first mention of slavery in the missionary press appeared in 1801 with a discussion in the *New-York Missionary Magazine* on whether and how to missionize Africa. The dialogue between three hypothetical interlocutors (“Africanus,” “Americanus,” and “Benevolus”) had cited the present missions to Native Americans as reason to proceed with caution before heading into West African fields. The thrust of the debate, however, concerned the number of slaves in North America and how evangelism represented a possible counteraction to the transatlantic slave trade. Africanus especially emphasized the inherent immorality of enslavement—“The injury is great, and heavy as the mountains,” he exclaimed—a sin so encompassing, only a total atonement could repair its effects on the American people. The way to repentance was obvious: “we have a rich treasure we can send them,” Africanus declared to Americanus’s chagrin, “with a little cost and pains, which will do more towards compensating them for the injuries we have done them, than if we could give them mountains of silver and gold.” Americanus countered, “You talk as if all the people of this nation were concerned in the slave-trade. I think this to be an injurious misrepresentation, contrary to fact.” Only a few had an “active hand” in the slave trade, he affirmed, and the majority of Americans could agree on the reasonableness of sending slaves back to their home country rather than invite controversy by granting them citizenship and freedom in the United States.<sup>16</sup>

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16. “A Dialogue,” 29–31; see chap. 2 for an analysis of this source on its relationship with early determinations of



Africanus's reply rang with a rhetoric quite prescient for 1801: very few families could say "either by themselves or their ancestors" they had no complicity in slavery; in the least, all enjoyed "the fruits of [the slaves'] toil and servitude," and therefore "implicitly approved of it, and acquiesced in it all." American collective guilt by association—this argument served later abolitionists cognizant of rhetorical strategies combatting widespread political recalcitrance. Whoever authored this dialogue followed a different concern, though, one predicated on the merits of mission itself. During this early phase of American foreign missions, the case for sending missionaries at all met skepticism from churchgoers anxious to revitalize local congregations, and in some instances, from even antission adversaries. Mission itself needed justifying, and the strongest defenses had appealed to benevolence, a virtue not lost on the anonymous author who characterized it with "Benevolus." To consider where to prioritize Africa elicited recognition that Africans, in the homeland no less, had already met with American malevolence. Africanus and Benevolus agreed the British had begun to eradicate the incompatibility of gospel and bondage with a promising plan. The American missionaries ought to procure a vessel for transporting those slaves showing moral rectitude back to Africa. If the restored Africans could preach to their native cousins, all the better.<sup>17</sup>

Such copious awareness of missionaries' culpability would remain uncommon until after the 1830s. More often, writers minimized the problem either by dissociating themselves from slavery or by criticizing the slave *trade* (as opposed to domestic slavery). Nathan Strong reserved condemning those readers who would sympathize with slavery. His 1812 editorial took aim at an old apologia—that slavery was neither contrary to the laws of God nor prevalent in the northern

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Native American receptivity to missionary preaching.

17. "A Dialogue," 29–31.

United States anyway—with the same argument as Africanus. Those with “just sentiments” could not deny that enslavement found no part in “God’s moral government; however, neither could they deny the American nation had not yet incurred God’s wrath. “Our parents sinned in ignorance,” Strong claimed, “and we are not guilty of the deed.” Individual Americans probably escaped God’s judgment, but a national sin compelled them to make national reparations. “Doth not common sense,” he continued, “and the principles of common justice teach us, there is an obligation on American Christians, to adopt the most effectual means for transmitting the gospel of Christ into the dark, interior regions of Africa?” Ultimate responsibility rested with politicians whose duty involved “retrieving their country from a perilous situation.”<sup>18</sup>

The “common sense” to which Strong appealed followed a line of reasoning born of an expectation that preaching spurred moral development. The premise was the sending nation possessed enlightened ideals capable of sustaining a liberal society. For such a nation to divest itself of slavery by enlightening the enslaved and restoring them to their original setting at once ended the wrongdoing and improved the conditions for the aggrieved. Thus, mission offered the best course for acquitting the American people of their moral debts.

This logic, distilled in a single clipping republished in the *Religious Intelligencer* in 1819, surpassed all others in reconciling slavery and foreign missions. The anonymous report praised U.S. President James Monroe for sending agents with the Society for the Colonization of Africans to oversee the return of slaves to the western coast of Africa. By “restoring them to the soil of Africa,” the reporter concluded, “we more than repair the injuries that we have done to the sable

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18. “Remarks,” *Connecticut Evangelical Magazine; and Religious Intelligencer* 5, no. 11 (November 1812): 429–430; likely authored by Nathan Strong or Thomas Robbins, the men who served as the paper’s editor at the time. (Gaylord P. Albaugh, *History and Annotated Bibliography of American Religious Periodicals and Newspapers Established from 1730 to 1830*, 2 vols. [Worcester: American Antiquarian Society, 1994], 1:295.)

race; we plant the standard of our Redeemer on the shores of Africa; her sable sons were torn from thence, enveloped in all the darkness of ignorance; they are returned with minds radiant with the beams of intelligence.” This “colonization” of Africa on behalf of returning slaves did more than reverse the kidnapping that had displaced the native Africans in the first place—the Americans effectively transformed the African expatriates into agricultural savants, commercial entrepreneurs, poets, orators, and statesmen. The logic here presumed a reparation in which the kidnappers left Africa better than how they had found it. Writers like this reporter believed their solution to slavery unassailable. “In some distant day,” the reporter anticipated, “our posterity will point with an honest enthusiasm to this spectacle, and say, thus have Americans repaired the injuries they have done to the children of Africa.”<sup>19</sup>

The reform-and-repatriate logic had not arrived by missiology or theology alone. Several political and commercial influences preceded missionary attention of slave manumission strategies beginning in Britain and Virginia. Free labor proponents in British Parliament confronted the trend of the slave trade toward oligarchical operations and campaigned for further restrictions in the 1780s and 1790s. In broadening their arguments to appeal to more diverse constituencies, the free-labor groups of the 1780s attracted antislavery and abolitionist politicians, who crafted a rhetoric around the British government’s interests in protecting commerce. Together, the hazards of potential slave rebellions, intercolonial warfare, lost revenues from piracy and unregulated trade, and disease outbreaks from diffuse trafficking prompted proposals seeking both to improve the livelihoods of colonial subjects and consolidate control over the slave trade.<sup>20</sup>

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19. “Colonization Society,” *The Religious Intelligencer* 4, no. 28 (December 11, 1819): 447–448.

20. Robin Blackburn, *The Overthrow of Colonial Slavery, 1776–1848* (New York: Verso, 1988), 295–297, 302–307.

The Sierra Leone Company began as a typical colonial venture: its founders thought to secure official support, draw business investments to a new colony in Africa, and then staff the colony with subjects and expand the empire. For its antislavery supporters, the venture carried the bonus of routing freed blacks from Caribbean plantations and indigent blacks living in urban squalor to an already familiar environment (so they supposed; generations of slaves brought up away from Africa would find their ancestral land new and different). Virginians afraid of slave insurrections took notice of the experiment in Sierra Leone and resolved in secret to pursue a similar plan. President Thomas Jefferson and Virginia Governor James Monroe approached company leaders about sending African Americans to the upstart colony, but learned financial troubles there portended a government takeover.<sup>21</sup> British abolitionists redoubled their efforts after the company languished, building support around a broader coalition of aristocrats and sponsors. The African Institution absorbed the Sierra Leone Company and became the new face of repatriation schemes.<sup>22</sup>

The Church Missionary Society cooperated with the African Institution from the start, particularly with an eye to taking over the schools in Sierra Leone as part of its evangelism program. American missionaries already following the British societies' activities learned of the African Institution just as Charles Fenton Mercer and associates founded the American Colonization Society (ACS). Mercer had discovered Jefferson's intentions to assist the Sierra Leone Company after an inebriated colleague from the Virginia House of Delegates blurted out the old

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21. Douglas R. Egerton, "‘Its Origin Is Not a Little Curious’: A New Look at the American Colonization Society," *Journal of the Early Republic* 5, no. 4 (Winter 1985): 463–480.

22. Maeve Ryan, "‘A Most Promising Field for Future Usefulness’: The Church Missionary Society and the Liberated Africans of Sierra Leone," Chapter 2 in *A Global History of Anti-slavery Politics in the Nineteenth Century*, edited by William Mulligan and Maurice Bric, 37–58 (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 38–44; Lamont D. Thomas, *Rise to Be a People: A Biography of Paul Cuffe* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 32–33.

secret. Though his rationale mirrored missionary arguments, his primary concerns were similar to those of British colonials uneasy over the threat of slave uprisings. Jefferson himself, the main inspiration for Mercer's campaign, had sought for a policy upholding Virginian slaveholders, not correcting a moral wrong as did missionaries harboring misgivings over loose connections to homeland slavery.<sup>23</sup>

Once the ACS, African Institution, and Church Missionary Society began to report conditions in Sierra Leone, American missionaries observed with curiosity. Regular surveys of the state of Protestant missions in the world listed the ACS and African Institution alongside prominent societies, taking their data as indicative of missional progress. The *Panoplist and Missionary Herald* reprinted summaries from the London-based *Missionary Register*, which often praised the colonization efforts of the African Institution. "Our main concern," an 1819 report detailed, "was with Christians themselves—to stimulate labor; to encourage hope, and strengthen faith." The colonization societies brought "benevolent men" to Africa who chipped away at the "obstacles which impede or retard the progress of truth and love on the earth."<sup>24</sup> The claim of benevolence saturated colonization reports and bolstered American esteem during a period of nascent foreign mission collaboration.<sup>25</sup> For some, founding a free colony in Africa resembled the statecraft regimes that had given prestige to European powers. The ACS not only indicated the spread of religiosity in a continent long labeled "benighted" and "dark," but also conferred on Americans a degree of parity with their British associates. They had an enviable constitutional

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23. Egerton, "Its Origin Is Not a Little Curious," 463–468; P. J. Staudenraus, *The African Colonization Movement, 1816–1865* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961), 31–32.

24. "Survey of the Protestant Missionary Stations throughout the World, in Their Geographical Order," *The Panoplist, and Missionary Herald* 15, no. 6 (June 1819): 265–274.

25. Beverly C. Tomek, *Colonization and Its Discontents: Emancipation, Emigration, and Antislavery in Antebellum Pennsylvania* (New York: New York University Press, 2011), 49–54.

government, but could do more than the British to “deliver Africa from [the] dreadful scourge” of slavery on account of its strong navy providing asylum to former slaves returning to Africa.<sup>26</sup>

American editors could betray some pride at noticing London papers complimenting the American efforts. One article recommended the reader “peruse” with “peculiar interest” this report from the London *Missionary Register* of 1821: “The [Church Missionary] Society will greatly rejoice that American Christians have gained a footing [in Bassa]; and that its own previous researches and labours have led, in any measure, to the attainment of their object.” The new Bassa community was expected to unite American and English exertions to “diffuse the light of the Gospel” on the shores of West Africa. It was the Americans who had negotiated a bargain price for acreage, earning the admiration of the Baptist directors in London.<sup>27</sup>

The commercial incentives attracting colonization merged with classic evangelical aims. Where directors of the ACS saw industrial improvement, missionary writers celebrated the individual reform converting proselytes into upstanding Christians. Groups representing varied objectives invoked the same logic and appropriated antislavery to serve their subjective interests.<sup>28</sup> The framework preserved the subordinated status of the African slave—even when declaring a commitment to realizing a free African society, missionaries and colonization agents alike assumed a superior relation to the people they claimed to liberate. Thoroughly steeped in the repatriation logic, Thomas Fowell Buxton famously explained the significance of the colonization “experiment” in 1834: “All depends upon this experiment in our colonies. Fail this experiment, and fail their hopes! Succeed this experiment, and they become free!” In Brazil and

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26. “New-Haven Auxiliary Colonization Society,” *The Religious Intelligencer* 4, no. 22 (October 30, 1819): 348–351.

27. “Grand Bassa, in Western Africa: American Colonization Society,” *American Missionary Review* 2, no. 12 (December 1821): 237–238.

28. Tomek, *Colonization and Its Discontents*, 8–10, 42, 46–49; Staudenraus, *African Colonization Movement*, 12–22, 254–257.

Cuba, the slave trade “devoured” the enslaved, but, concerning America—“free, enlightened, liberal, glorious America!”—a countermeasure to the trade had accelerated past even European antislavery. It was the United States leading the way in spreading “so much liberty,” a freedom “any American would die for” and stood the envy of the nations. Buxton hoped colonization would succeed as the effectual means for diminishing the slave trade and predicted the blessings Americans bequeathed on arrival in African colonies would stretch “beyond the sphere of British benevolence.”<sup>29</sup>

As the ACS inched closer to settling a permanent colony in West Africa, the political tenor of its enterprise intensified. Henry Clay, a charter member of the ACS and its president from 1836 to 1849, and Mathew Carey, a prominent immigrant and publisher in Pennsylvania, penned essays supporting colonization as a nationalistic program. Both worried the present racial diversity kept the American nation from adopting a separate identity from indigenous, African, and European roots. Worse still, for Carey, class divisions provoked rebellion, and policies complicating the naturalization procedures for immigrants only perpetuated lesser status for a growing segment of the country.<sup>30</sup> Their commentaries led the political colonization movement in the 1820s, especially once Carey joined Clay in fully endorsing the ACS. The program seemed to offer more than curbing slavery and fostering a national spirit; colonization could potentially cure intemperance, prisoner mistreatment, poverty, and illiteracy. Advocates increasingly defended humanitarian facets of reform and relocation as responses to frictions endemic to a multiracial society. Assimilation remained the solution—in an ideal America, the racial, educational, and other social divisions would give way to a homogenous culture. Separating subcultural groups,

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29. Thomas Fowell Buxton, Speech (May 5, 1834), in “Anniversary of the Wesleyan-Methodist Missionary Society,” *The Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine* 57, no. 6 (June 1834): 462–477.

30. Tomek, *Colonization and Its Discontents*, 69–70; Staudenraus, *African Colonization Movement*, 186–187.

especially free blacks, was thought to reduce strain on the whole and encourage each group's unique pace in developing into a free and productive society.<sup>31</sup>

Missionaries eschewed strong political motives when noting the potential outcomes of colonization, dedicating most of their discussions to the moral imperative to limit the slave trade. After ACS settlers procured Cape Mesurado and renamed the thirty-mile territory "Liberia" in homage to liberty, editors read the opening differently than their peers printing the official serial of the ACS, the *African Repository*.<sup>32</sup> ACS sponsors largely celebrated this new avenue for redirecting free blacks away from southern states, but even correspondence derived from the *Repository* emphasized the new republican brotherhood between Liberia and the United States. An 1826 report in the *Religious Intelligencer* promised American emigrants a kind reception. The "peaceful, healthful, prosperous community" led by "patriotic Legislators" at Monrovia had greeted emigrants from Boston as "*brothers and sisters*" and assured them of "liberal and fair dealings," even "wealth" in time. This, and the fact schools and the rice, coffee, and ivory trade were blossoming, convinced the reporter the surest method of reducing slavery had proven itself. God himself blessed the colony: "the seal of performance of the promises, and of reality to the hopes of the friends of colonization" spoke to the "people of this enlightened country, with an emphasis, which ... will not be lost on the patriot and statesman." Directing the "good" of the American people to Liberia represented "the means of averting calamity from our land, of securing happiness of a large portion of our fellow creatures, of freeing our political institutions

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31. Tomek, *Colonization and Its Discontents*, 78–92. Carey responded to virtually every criticism of the colonization movement, favoring national unity to partisan, sectional, and religious loyalties. Nationalism colored his activism more than humanitarian or polemical concerns in contrast to his contemporaries who held up colonization as a means to combat the slave trade.

32. Ironically, ACS agents coerced the indigenous occupants of Cape Mesurado with guns while simultaneously declaring to the natives' leaders they came in peace; see Staudenraus, *African Colonization Movement*, 63–65. The name "Liberia" took the Latin *liber* as its root, the same root as *liberty*.



from their only blemish, and thus constituting our nation the fairest, as it is the freest on the globe.”<sup>33</sup>

Editors’ optimism coincided with the initial success of the 1807 and 1808 bans on slave importation, and may have owed more to the American and British naval enforcers than colonial prospects and ACS reports. Slave traders learned to circumvent U.S. and British fleets by using vessels of other countries. Traffic surpassed pre-ban levels by the 1820s, with Spanish, Portuguese, and French traders running slave importation through South America and Cuba instead of the Gulf Coast and the Carolinas.<sup>34</sup> Editors and reporters held out hope the African Institution and ACS could continue to reverse the flow of traffic from Africa through sponsored emigration. The *American Missionary Register* noted how the African Institution reached out to American colonizationists in 1825, looking to combine efforts in more aggressively prosecuting slave ships. Putting down the trade “would be impossible ... as long as it was not permitted to molest the ships, except when the Slaves were actually found on board.” Amending laws to include any ship known to have trafficked in slaves should grant even the colonization agencies authority to commandeer trader vessels. The Institution accordingly adopted resolutions denouncing the entire slave trade as “piracy,” and as such, subject to inspection by any colonizationist agent. Technicalities had crept in, thwarting the main intent of African colonization. So long as the trade persisted, their loftier aims of transforming West Africa into a haven for free blacks would have to wait.<sup>35</sup>

The final paeans to colonization societies graced the missionary press in the early 1830s. An

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33. “The African Colony,” *The Religious Intelligencer* 10, no. 51 (May 20, 1826): 811–812; italics in original.

34. Eltis and Richardson, eds., *Atlas of the Transatlantic Slave Trade*, 278.

35. “The African Institution,” *American Missionary Register* 6, no. 9 (September 1825): 262–263.

editorial in the Methodist *Christian Advocate and Journal and Zion's Herald* (a magazine soon divided in large part due to disagreements over slavery) reiterated unambiguously the paper's support for colonization despite the resurgent slave trade. It reviewed the history of actions taken by British Parliament and U.S. Congress in 1807 and 1808, and the subsequent legal strategy of treating the trade itself as piracy. "It is not conducted so openly as it was," the editor observed, "but it is done as efficiently, and, owing to the restrictions put upon it, with more cruelty than ever." The laws had incentivized more extreme methods of smuggling slaves, requiring ever more careful enforcement. "How then is a stop to be put to this horrid traffic? Answer: By planting colonies at suitable distances along the coast. Nothing else, so far as appears at present, can effectually prevent it." British Sierra Leone and American Liberia, the editors maintained, had proven to suppress both slave uprisings abroad and trafficking in Africa through a reliable system difficult for traders to exploit. The editorial became a solicitation for donations by the end, delivering a punchline centered on the humane transportation of Africans to and throughout their homeland. Donors could rest assured their contributions fought the slave trade directly. "Is not this an object of sufficient importance to call forth liberal contributions from every man who loves his fellow men? Has not Africa bled long enough?"<sup>36</sup> Poignant promotions like this could not sustain the prior vision of colonization. The "horrors" of the trade supplanted colonization designs in the magazines, further driving a moral rhetoric susceptible to sectional debate.<sup>37</sup>

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36. "American Colonization Society," *Christian Advocate and Journal, and Zion's Herald* 6, no. 48 (July 27, 1832): 189. Missionaries were attentive to the early resurgence of the post-ban slave trade, reporting on ship manifests proving the continued traffic in slaves; for instance, see "Sixteenth Report: Further Increase of the Slave Trade," *American Missionary Review* 3, no. 11 (November 1822): 165–174.

37. See, for instance, J. B. Russwurm's 1830 report from Liberia praising the efforts of the ACS: "Ah! it is so pleasing to behold men who formerly groaned under oppression, walking in all the dignity of human nature, feeling and acting like men who had some great interest at stake; but still more pleasant to behold them assembled in the house of worship ... I cannot describe what were my first sensations upon landing. The town contains double the number of houses one would expect; and I am informed of Caldwell and Millsbury, that each contains nearly as many. The colonists here at Monrovia appear to be getting ahead fast." (J. B. Russwurm, Letter [November 18,

Expanding slave markets and multiplying ocean lanes troubled colonizationist missionaries who searched for reasons why their expectations had failed. Causes outside the missions and colonization societies held their logic together, notwithstanding their own admissions colonization had not slowed the trade. It was the inability of powerful governments to intervene that explained everything. Enforcement lapsed because insufficient agitation from the public gave governments a pass. Most missionary editors held out on the logic even if they abandoned the plan, finding they could appeal to readers' pathos more effectively than intellectually defend a complicated enterprise. Blaming a lack of political willpower and dramatizing the injustices of the slave trade replaced reports on the ACS and African Institution after 1830. The magazines had long published accounts of the Middle Passage and its atrocities, but rather than merely denounce the trade, they repurposed such stories to call out government inaction and endorse a rising abolitionist outlook.<sup>38</sup>

Nathan Bangs concluded colonization represented the collusion of commercial and political interests, rendering it incapable of responding to slavery. The General Court of Massachusetts had the obligation to block the sale of "negroes" and restore them "at the public charge to their native country, with a letter expressing ... indignation," but because of the "overpowering influence of the English government, who found their profits in prosecuting the African slave-trade," the Court's "extreme repugnance was very much weakened." The same, he contended, could be said of Rhode Island, New York, and Pennsylvania, all northern states supposedly averse to slavery.

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1829], in "American Colonization Society: Results of the Society's Labors in Liberia," *The Missionary Herald* 26, no. 6 [June 1830]: 187–188.)

38. The *Religious Intelligencer* criticized the American people for their disinclination to abolish the "odious traffic." Slave dealers were "naturally callous" and even disgraced the most "unenlightened savage." Its 1825 report tracked slave vessels and blamed their escape from British and U.S. authorities on a lack of political will. ("Western Africa: Aggravated Cruelty of the Slave Trade," *The Religious Intelligencer* 10, no. 13 (August 27, 1825): 195–197.) This style of reporting remained the trend into the 1830s.

The English had tainted American institutions of liberty, and ever since, their model could not be trusted to “extirpate” slavery. A profound conflict of interest ensured government sponsorships in colonization would fall to the capital gains slavery inherently perpetuated. At present, missionaries would have to expect change to come by way of the states and not federally backed programs to colonize Africa.<sup>39</sup>

Missions had interrupted the collusion, however. Bangs asserted the trend pointed in the direction of reparations. As England had brought slavery to the United States and stifled American liberty, so too had England led the way in ending the slave trade. In the English setting, the benevolent societies pushing for Christian justice in all of Britain’s domains made the difference. Without the missionary cause motivating them to action, the colonial slaveholders would have faced no challenge to their enterprise. Only unvarnished humanity, the kind inculcated by Christianity properly propagated, could rise above the allure of mammon. The United States enjoyed a privileged society: there, the people wielded supreme power, and the people, revivals had shown, had the capacity for “tender” and “scrupulous” conscience. The states—the only American entities politically relevant in any discussion of emancipation or repatriation—might “be moved by the voice of the people” who, “rising in their majesty, and coming forward under the influence of Christian justice and the sympathies of humanity ... shall lead [the slave states] to proclaim emancipation to their slaves, on the principles of justice and humanity.”<sup>40</sup>

In directing their appeals to the people, Bangs and others intended to move readers to action, but the populace proved already too divisive to ever “rise up” and unilaterally abolish

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39. Nathan Bangs, “On Slavery: Chapter III,” *Christian Advocate and Journal* 23, no. 47 (November 22, 1848): 188.

40. Nathan Bangs, “On Slavery: Chapter V,” *Christian Advocate and Journal* 23, no. 49 (December 6, 1848): 196.

slavery. Editors could pound the pulpit using mission as the vanguard for change, they could proffer anecdote upon anecdote of foreign heathenism surrendering to the gospel, and proslavery readers would only retrench further. By the 1850s, the campaign to end the slave trade, which had enjoyed rather broad support in the magazines, had splintered. Subscribers took action against antislavery editorials, in some cases forming committees to denounce the sponsoring organization. Addressing their letter to the “*Northern*” *Christian Advocate*, the Board of Managers of the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church declared a previous editorial “injurious to the missionary cause” for inciting controversy over slavery. Prudence would dictate writing articles for all subscribers, including the churches in the South. The Board tried to level blame on both sides: the Northern churches had unfairly objected to “slaveholding churches,” an offensive title for their fellow Methodists, and the Southern churches had refused to coalesce around some effort to achieve a “peaceful emancipation of the slaves.” Other magazines and missionary boards took up the Methodist Board’s avoidance strategy. They attested to the incompatibility of slavery and mission, but ultimately failed to unite mission supporters in opposition to the trade, in colonization advocacy, or in “peaceful emancipation.” Even with editorial staffs sympathetic to abolitionism, the Methodist Board and American Board dodged clear openings to question the morality of slave institutions. The trade had shown such resilience to concerted campaigns, the best the missionaries knew, that inaction and resignation remained the only viable methods for preserving foreign mission’s national relevance.<sup>41</sup>

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41. J. P. Durbin, T. Carlton, and F. Hall, “Methodist Missionary Society and Slavery,” *Christian Advocate and Journal* 29, no. 27 (July 6, 1854): 106.

## Home Missions

Direct assault on the slave trade, though preeminently common in the magazines through the 1840s, did not characterize all predominant depictions of slavery in the missionary magazines. Home missions, the counterpart to the foreign missions movement, developed into the missionaries' most aggressive intervention among slaveholders and their sympathizers. When colonization declined as a popular argument against the slave trade, home missions filled the space. Proponents of home missions had distinguished originally the ongoing undertaking among Native Americans and Jews nearby from the missions abroad, and the increasing appeal of "benevolent" work invited collaborations between domestic missionaries and humanitarian missions. Sabbath schools, Bible printing, temperance societies, and revivalism soon came under the auspices of home mission strategies, and the methods at work to Christianize the "heathen" found application in the unchurched frontiers of the country.<sup>42</sup> Antislavery evangelicals noticed in the home missions system a ready mechanism for addressing the immoralities of domestic slavery; it made sense for workers endeavoring to educate and instill pious living in their frontier proselytes to direct their skills where slavery persisted. Positive results would come in two forms: the slaves, regarded as already inheriting heathenism from their ancestors, would convert the same as if they had heard the gospel in their native land; and the slaveholders would be persuaded in the immorality of keeping humans in bondage. Reports from these domestic mission fields replaced correspondence from the ACS and African Institution in frequency and coverage in the 1840s, and even whole periodicals dedicated to home missions emerged, rivaling the *Missionary*

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42. Brian Russell Franklin, "America's Missions: The Home Missions Movement and the Story of the Early Republic" (Ph.D. diss., Texas A&M University, 2012), 20–22, 30–51.

*Herald* and other popular foreign missions publications in circulation. When applied to the home environment, slavery quickly became the target of missionary planning and the theological justification for proselytizing among self-professing Christians.<sup>43</sup>

A stringent debate between editors and subscribers of the *Panoplist and Missionary Herald* not only manifested the potential discord within the American foreign missions movement, but also illustrated the impetus for directing missionary resources back onto themselves. Ardent sponsors of missions—members of the American Board—took issue with an article published in 1820 condemning abuses against free blacks and slaves. The editors published their complaints interspersed with point-by-point rebuttals. A “correspondent” and “clergyman” from Virginia regarded the previous article as an attack on his home state and the southern states generally, and “gentlemen” from South Carolina candidly rejected the paper’s posture toward the South. The editors had thought the article beyond reproach, presenting facts obvious to anyone familiar with American society. But the critics took offense at the “northern brethren” forgetting the luminous aspects of slavery. For one, black churches signified domestic evangelization had led to many “heathen Negroes” converting, an impossibility were it not for slaveholders facilitating the slaves’ contact with Christianity. The editors’ counterpoint tried to straddle the disagreement. Though slavery represented “a monstrous abuse,” they agreed “sable brethren becoming pious” justified the means of contact—to a degree. Any hard edge in the article had only betrayed a desire to collaborate in elevating the whole country, not an attempt at revenge.<sup>44</sup> Mission advocates in the North and South could concur on focusing resources toward establishing black churches. Rather

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43. Seymour Drescher, *Abolition: A History of Slavery and Antislavery* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 253–254; Appendix B, items 3 and 11.

44. “On the Condition of the Blacks in this Country,” *The Panoplist, and Missionary Herald* 16, no. 11 (November 1820): 481–494.

than letting a stringent debate endanger Southern support, directors and editors like those of the American Board retreated in their antislavery stance, preferring instead to take what amounted to a neutral bearing in affirming home missions.<sup>45</sup>

Dramatic examples of slaveholder “conversions” bolstered the gradualist philosophy of ending slavery by steady and soft reform. David Minge’s manumission of 88 slaves in 1825 surprised editors skeptical Virginia could ever reverse itself. Minge had gone beyond all expectation—“The case we believe is without parallel,” the editors declared. Manumission had happened before, and could occur regularly enough in some quarters, but this slaveholder conveyed his inherited slaves to Haiti and supplied them with provisions and money to guarantee a middle-class living. The *Religious Intelligencer* implied public charities and moral institutions inspired this grand act of philanthropy. Minge “assigned no other motive for having freed his slaves, and for his subsequent acts of generosity towards them, than that he conceived it would be doing a service to his country, to send them out of it.” Colonizationist editors of the same magazine could overlook the blatant disapproval of assimilation where slaveholders voluntarily disclaimed their right of property over slaves. Home missions might coax slaveholders to think like Minge: they could be “rich enough without them.”<sup>46</sup>

If slaveholders still worried about profit margins and slave labor, missionizing the homeland provided residual benefits. John Collis, a missionary for the Moravian Brethren, had worked in the West Indies for all of 1834 and reported promising results from proselytizing among British plantations. On “empty Sunday” occurring every-other week, slaves turned out for church,

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45. Charles F. Irons, *The Origins of Proslavery Christianity: White and Black Evangelicals in Colonial and Antebellum Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 139–140, 190–193; Davis, “Leonard Bacon,” 228–229; Wyatt-Brown, *Lewis Tappan*, 318–322.

46. “Emancipation,” *The Religious Intelligencer* 10, no. 10 (August 6, 1825): 153.



filling the seats. “At an early hour ... long before the time of worship,” Collis continued, “our pasture roads presented the appearance of two continuous streams rolling into and augmenting the solid mass of human beings crowding our yard and premises. The church could not contain one-half, probably not one-third of the multitude.” Most importantly for strict slaveholders, the large congregation “promised good conduct on their part in their new civil condition.” Collis could satisfy demand on the part of the slaves who wanted to learn to read while also selling slaveholders on the mission for engendering a reliable social order in the slave population. Missionaries liked to think their approaches liberated converts, that their instruction edified proselytes toward a moral life; they hardly winced at the fact their system could grease the engine of slavery by assisting the controls used to prevent uprisings.<sup>47</sup>

Congregationalists had witnessed revivalism and frontier settlement diminish their numbers and embarked on a frontier revival of their own at a time when Americans began to conceive of a “destiny” to occupy the rest of the continent.<sup>48</sup> Home missions took on meaning as a means to fulfilling a covenant Americans had inherited by virtue of their original settlement in the New World. The American Home Missionary Society circulated *Our Country* in 1842 with the hope of galvanizing support for missions in the American West. Josiah Strong later revised the handbook to enormous acclaim. His 1885 volume of the same title sold more than 175,000 copies in English alone, securing his place in history as among the leaders behind “manifest destiny” and American exceptionalist thought. But Strong perpetuated the main ideology of the Society’s first

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47. John Collis, Letter (December 31, 1834), in “Extract of a Letter from Brother John Collis,” *The United Brethren’s Missionary Intelligencer, and Religious Miscellany* 5, no. 10 (2nd Quarter, 1836): 461–463. Moravian missionaries particularly responded to demand for literacy education and eagerly reported large congregations throughout Caribbean and South American plantations; see “Surinam: Report of Brother Treu’s Visit to the Plantation in the Upper District of the Nickerie, in the Year 1837,” *The United Brethren’s Missionary Intelligencer, and Religious Miscellany* 7, no. 3 (3rd Quarter, 1840): 112–117.

48. James R. Rohrer, *Keepers of the Covenant: Frontier Missions and the Decline of Congregationalism, 1774–1818* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 4–8, 11.

edition, which itself presented a plan to evangelize lapsed Christians moving west where churches would be scarce and to stave off the spread of slavery.<sup>49</sup>

Directors of the Society, like many members of Congress, anticipated territorial disputes over any opening of land, particularly disputes over legal protections for slavery. *Our Country* listed the deficiencies in Americans' ability to resist slavery and plant churches in new territories. "Our countrymen are outstripped by none in commercial adventure," it affirmed, "and in scattering abroad the elements of evil[.]" Who but Americans could boast of mooring their ships to the south pole and charting undiscovered regions? And yet, who else outperformed Americans in distributing rum and supplying slave ships to the whole coast of Africa? "Let the energies of this nation, then, be speedily and thoroughly evangelized," the manifesto continued. "A people whose language contains so much of the science and literature of the world—whose commerce spreads her sail on every sea, and drops her anchor on every strand—whose Christianity is comparatively fresh from the fountain, and unmixed with the traditions, and unfettered by the establishments of men—such a people" stood responsible for "a large share of the instrumentality of converting the world." The tract would sound like propaganda for *foreign* missions, but it acknowledged the sin of slavery as preventing the full effect of any American-sponsored proselytizing endeavor. This set the onus on home missions to first prepare the sending nation to fulfill its destiny, which entailed removing slavery. The unique advantages possessed by the American people could not presently realize their potential.<sup>50</sup>

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49. Wendy J. Deichmann Edwards, "Forging an Ideology for American Missions: Josiah Strong and Manifest Destiny," Chapter 7 in *North American Foreign Missions, 1810–1914: Theology, Theory, and Policy*, edited by Wilbert R. Shenk, 163–191 (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2004), 163–164; Josiah Strong, *Our Country: Its Possible Future and Its Present Crisis* (New York: American Home Missionary Society, 1885); American Home Missionary Society, *Our Country; Its Capabilities, Its Perils, and Its Hope* (New York: Executive Committee of the American Home Missionary Society, 1842).

50. American Home Missionary Society, *Our Country*, 12.

The magazines promulgated this assessment when justifying home missions in the 1840s. Is not America as much a mission as China or Africa? one Episcopalian correspondent asked after describing the increasing congregations of colored communicants in South Carolina. Those willing to serve as missionaries in the homeland “will here have ample scope, their time will be fully occupied, and their hearts rejoiced ... with almost immediate and abundant success,” the correspondent attested. And not just success in catechizing slaves: the man reported witnessing the consciences of slaveholders awakened “by direct and powerful appeals” to “the great doctrines of the Gospel.” Gradual emancipation should follow gradual instruction—so long as the instruction came from pure doctrine.<sup>51</sup> In the same year, Methodists reported greater numbers of black churchgoers in slaveholding states. Between eighty and ninety missionaries ministered to over 160,000 “colored communicants” in 1845 alone.<sup>52</sup>

When viewed in light of missionary work, plantation evangelism aligned with antislavery strategies.<sup>53</sup> Proslavery missionaries and sponsors would notice the connection and soon posit alternative objectives and methods. The churches home missionaries started and supervised brought competing ideologies into communion. Missionaries may have persuaded converts and parishioners to embrace church and gospel, but the tensions followed just the same. Some believed the lack of renouncing slavery indicated a worse sin. Christians with eyes opened to gospel truth yet persisting in wickedness fared below the ignorant heathen. Abolitionist writers

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51. “Negroes,” *Spirit of Missions* 10, no. 4 (April 1845): 105–107.

52. “Religious Instruction of Slaves: The Methodist Episcopal Church,” *Christian Advocate and Journal* 20, no. 7 (September 24, 1845): 27.

53. Most references in the magazines to evangelizing among black or enslaved Americans assumed the context of large communities; however, most slavers in the United States claimed ownership over fewer than five slaves. See Lincoln Mullen, “A Better Map of Slavery in 1860” (March 25, 2014), <http://lincolnmullen.com/blog/a-better-map-of-slavery-in-1860> (archived at <https://perma.cc/5J89-XNL4>); also Lincoln Austin Mullen, “The Varieties of Religious Conversion: The Origins of Religious Choice in the United States” (Ph.D. diss., Brandeis University, 2014).

revolted at the thought. “Think of the dumbness of those that minister at the altar,” an *American Missionary* article exclaimed, “in view of the great national iniquity, and then consider the effects of *such an example* upon other nations, Christian and Heathen!” Under present conditions, one would expect “the converted heathen will send missionaries to the United States,” a likelihood utterly horrifying to the magazine’s evangelical correspondent.<sup>54</sup>

Domestic missionaries eventually conceded defeat, if not in carrying out their commission, at least in reversing American slavery. After “Seceders” left the communion of the Presbyterian Church and founded the United Presbyterian Church of North America in 1858, the *Home Missionary* ran a letter of a southerner calling the split “the very best thing that could have occurred for the anti-slavery cause” for forcing every minister to take a position for or against slavery. What amounted to an “absurd apostasy” for the magazine’s northern editors did away with years of obfuscating in the missionary cause. The correspondent pled for patience: slavery had grown in North America for over two centuries; it would not end in a generation.<sup>55</sup>

As rivalry escalated between proslavery and antislavery missionaries and denominational boards broke affiliation to form separate agencies, gradualism won out over abolitionism in the more popular magazines. In the very issue the *Christian Advocate and Journal* announced the outbreak of conflict between Confederate and Union soldiers, James Home Lightbourn penned a disquisition on whether the Bible forbade slaveholding. He concluded the New Testament would have to nullify with prohibitory language the precedent of slavery set in the Old Testament, which it did not do, hence the Bible effected no doctrine or ethical standard to settle the matter. But Lightbourn considered slavery an evil “incident to our fallen humanity” deserving of home

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54. “Power of American Example,” *The American Missionary* 6, no. 12 (October 1852): 93–94.

55. “Letter from the South,” *The Home Missionary* 30, no. 11 (November 1858): 184–185.

missionary intervention. Abolitionism roughened the problem, posed too radical action, and agitated Christian brotherhood. A steady approach reminiscent of the work foreign missionaries performed abroad would more properly urge all Americans away from “thralldom.” “For this victory,” Lightbourn contended, “Christianity is already on her march; encumber her not with false legislation, nor burden her with sympathies that have no charity.”<sup>56</sup> Home missionaries, in the first place, had grounded their outlook in continuous evangelism on the domestic front. Putting their schemes to the service of antislavery activism, the evangelizers promoted a moderate response in league with gradualism and its assimilation philosophy.

Southerner missionaries displayed an ambivalence between their benevolent aspirations and their commitment to tradition.<sup>57</sup> For them, domestic missions answered a different, more supercilious malady: greed. Abolitionists eager to pin avarice on slaveholder ambitions employed the same word, but the object of greed differed sharply. It was the government, the seat of ultimate power, that knew no limit and would purloin from the people every freedom unless checked by force. God “perplexes the counsels of those who sit at the helm of state,” an editorial in the Southern Baptist *Missionary Magazine* proclaimed, “and by turning the wisdom of the wise into foolishness ... and shaking the pillars which support national constitutions and federal compacts, He asserts his authority upon the footstool as the King of kings.” The voice of Providence “would arrest men in their frenzied rush after other gods,” with war and pestilence if necessary. The editor (whose essay ran originally in the *Home and Foreign Record*) identified the first battles of the Civil War with a tithe of the faithful southerners dedicated toward the

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56. J. H. Lightbourn, “Does the Bible Forbid Slaveholding?” *Christian Advocate and Journal* 36, no. 16 (April 18, 1861): 122.

57. Michael Tadman, “Internal Slave Trades,” Chapter 28 in *The Oxford Handbook of Slavery in the Americas*, edited by Robert L. Paquette and Mark M. Smith, 625–642 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 627.

“good of the country” and the purging of mammon from the United States government. Home missions joined this tithing with a spiritual reformation. Nations would notice the United States become again a “delightful land” in both governance and demeanor after the missionaries realized their commission at home.<sup>58</sup> Both North and South, pro- and antislavery constituencies within the national mission movement wanted to keep cohesion, even when applauding secessionist rhetoric at times; the paradox of slavery and freedom embedded in their logic found expression in missionary appeals to carry on. Signs could trumpet the mission’s uncertain future and combative membership, and yet writers would assert an exceptional identity as a people providentially destined to liberate the world with the gospel.<sup>59</sup> The war and its antecedent controversies forged a new assimilation strategy out of home mission motives. Invectives against the slave trade and apologia for assimilation through colonization retreated to the background.

### **“Our Own Highly Favored and Guilty Country”**

For some, the American missions movement by 1846 could not in good conscience purport to represent a benevolent vocation. “We have been accustomed to regard Christianity as established in this entire country,” J. H. Payne and companions said to a convention of abolitionists breaking from the American Board. “But what fearful crimes, public as well as private, do we here witness!” Lawless slavery was made worse by religious Americans defending “the atrocity” and “erecting a caste, as satanic in character as the castes of India” between free-colored people and whites. The long collusion between “Church and State” in propping up the

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58. “The Voice of God in National Chastisements,” *The Missionary Magazine* 41, no. 6 (June 1861): 176–177.

59. Edmund S. Morgan, “Slavery and Freedom: The American Paradox,” *Journal of American History* 59, no. 1 (June 1972): 5–29.

slave system disqualified the American church from fellowshiping the heathen world. “Already painful delinquency in certain quarters” in condemning slaveholders rendered theirs a “*popular brother-hating Christianity*” that boasted of purity, yet allowed sin. Converts “in heathen lands” showed greater fortitude in trampling down “the cord of caste,” but the enlightened missionaries themselves could not seem to overcome the obvious contradiction of disciplining “the intemperate” while befriending the very embodiment of caste, the slaveholder. Payne’s impassioned address called for a vote to dissociate from the American Board and transfer resources of the Union Missionary Society, West India Committee, and Western Evangelical Missionary Society to the newly established American Missionary Association. Executives joined in stating their combined objective: “Beginning at our own highly favored and guilty country,” they would together “preach the gospel to the poor, assist feeble churches, sustain missionary operations amongst the free colored population, and preach deliverance to the crushed and stricken slave.”<sup>60</sup>

Highly favored *and* guilty—on the face of it, the abolitionist polemic reduced a core tenet of their missiology to a contradiction. The sending country endowed with the commission to preach a higher morality, a country divinely selected to promulgate its privilege among the heathen, bore guilt before God. These missionary writers understood the tenuous bearing the missions had taken, and unlike the antislavery moderates and proslavery apologists, were willing to implicate missions when reproving accessories to slavery. Missionary propaganda had sensationalized

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60. J. H. Payne, James W. C. Pennington, and John H. Byrd, “Address, of the Second Convention for Bible Missions,” *The American Missionary* 1, no. 1 (October 1846): 2–5, italics in original; Report of the Second Convention, *The American Missionary*, 1, no. 1 (October 1846): 5–6; Convention for Bible Missions, *The Proceedings of the Convention for Bible Missions, Held in Syracuse, February 18th and 19th, 1846* (Syracuse: Kinney, Marsh, and Barns, 1846), 1–24; Convention for Bible Missions, *Proceedings of the Second Convention for Bible Missions, Held in Albany September Second and Third, MDCCCXLVI: With the Address of the Executive Committee, of the American Missionary Association, &c. &c. &c.* (New York: J. H. Tobitt, 1846), 3, 6–14, 16.

the exotic characteristics of the foreign with such regularity, the mission culture expressed in the magazines exuded drama. Antebellum abolitionists raised alarm as broadly as they could, supposing the mere awareness of violent realities occasioned by slavery would offend a majority of Americans and sway opinion. The tactics used by the average missionary writer and abolitionist were identical by the 1840s and 1850s, granting the abolitionist missionary a ready and cosmically charged argot. As the country could not endure without eradicating slavery, so went mission. The abolitionist missionary press tended not to question America's "highly favored" status, leaving it to prominent black abolitionists like Frederick Douglass and David Walker to deliver the strongest censure of the nation and its churches. Targeting the guilt mollified the contradiction—the harder the missionaries attacked slavery, the more righteously indignant they felt and consequently more assured of themselves.<sup>61</sup> Temerity in opposing slavery carried implications of a superiority complex in jeopardy.

During this period, the current of abolitionism swelled to the point of denominational fracture and came to dominate the missionary press. The emergence of the AMA coincided with other offshoots and schisms: the Baptist Foreign Missionary Board refused to appoint slaveholders as missionaries in 1844, leading to the Southern Baptist Convention the following year splitting from the main; as well in 1844, the Methodist General Conference divided in two with the Methodist Episcopal Church–South forming its own separate conference; Presbyterians were already locked in a heated dispute between Old School and New School assemblies, eventually breaking apart in 1861.<sup>62</sup> Editorial boards likewise tussled over the rhetorical stance

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61. Peter P. Hinks, *To Awaken My Afflicted Brethren: David Walker and the Problem of Antebellum Slave Resistance* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997), 91–115, 228–234; Rable, *God's Almost Chosen Peoples*, 195–196.

62. Rable, *God's Almost Chosen Peoples*, 22–24, 292.



their respective magazines would adopt. The Methodist *Zion's Herald* broke from the *Christian Advocate* to publish abolitionist articles, making it among the most popular abolitionist serials in the country, outperforming William Lloyd Garrison's *Liberator* by well over fifteen thousand subscribers.<sup>63</sup> The *American Missionary* also maintained a higher circulation than the *Liberator*, reaching more than nineteen thousand in the 1850s and over thirty thousand in the 1860s. The market for missionary reporting from an abolitionist perspective rivaled the rest of the foreign missions subscriber base.<sup>64</sup>

Missionaries who did not fancy themselves abolitionists provided material for ardent antislavery activists, even as early as the 1820s. They concentrated on the slave trade, but could not help but dramatize the plight of individual slaves. A report tracking French vessels found the atrocities of the middle passage too rampant to ignore. The crew of the *Perle* dined on meat and fish, it maintained, while "poor negroes ... were fed with the pot liquor and entrails," food so nauseating they rejected it despite impending starvation. The anonymous writer saw enslaved men caress nursing infants with "tears in [their] eyes," apparently out of heartache for themselves having left Africa as babies. Facts like these commanded abhorrence and righteous intercession. "Can it be true that such horrible wickedness is yet sanctioned by a people calling themselves Christians?" Racism lay at the heart of this kind of treatment of dispossessed Africans. A year later another writer, assured of the civilizational superiority of the American people, impugned American hubris. Newspapers uniformly ridiculed a recently recaptured runaway slave, but had the runaway "been a Greek, dispensing death among the unfeeling Turks, instead of a

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63. See chap. 1; Appendix B, items 10.1–10.7; Edward D. Jervy, "Zion's Herald: The Independent Voice of American Methodism," *Methodist History* 25, no. 2 (January 1987), 91; Rodger Streitmatter, *Voices of Revolution: The Dissident Press in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 25.

64. Appendix B, item 16.3.

‘desperado,’” the papers would have hailed him a hero. “Had he been a white American in our Revolution, displaying as much determination to throw off the British yoke, would he not have been called a patriot?” the writer argued.<sup>65</sup>

The rhetorical question summoned a pivotal piece of American nationalism: the revolutionary spirit founded on liberality that had battled tyranny and inaugurated an era of freedom. Slaveholders and antislavery critics turned runaway slaves into a site of polarizing discourses, the one disparaging them as notorious criminals and the other celebrating their freedom-seeking bravery. When connected so conspicuously to the image of the runaway slave, freedom provoked proslavery justifications dismissing nationalism, an effect historians have noticed in the rise in disunion narratives.<sup>66</sup> Antislavery missionaries responded with a more universal premise proslavery debaters were fond of using: justice itself. The *Religious Intelligencer* quoted at length from the New England Anti-Slavery Society’s 1833 report to bend the proslavery argument against itself. Should it be proven slaveholders had held other humans in bondage unjustly, the entire stack of proslavery rationalizations would collapse, leaving no alternative but to disobey God or let the slaves go free. Not just abolition, but *immediate* abolition required slaveholders to release all title of property over slaves, since all could agree God had never relinquished his own claim of ownership over all people. As to whether American systems of slavery had exercised bondage unjustly, the report insisted slaves had been punished without trial, a fact beyond dispute. Therefore, the society called for immediate abolition and renounced the slaveholders as savages, even heathens. Religion must overtake heathenism in all the

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65. “Providential Emancipation of Five Slaves,” *The Religious Intelligencer* 10, no. 4 (April 29, 1826): 759–760; “Slavery,” *The Religious Intelligencer* 12, no. 12 (August 18, 1827): 189.

66. Maurie D. McInnis, *Slaves Waiting for Sale: Abolitionist Art and the American Slave Trade* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 148–150.

world, not only abroad. The presence of two million slaves in a Christian land manifested the unconscionable and cruel argumentation of the proslavery movement.<sup>67</sup>

Isolated scandals stimulated antislavery debate in the magazines, but one event catalyzed a sustained missionary subculture of its own. In July 1839, a mutiny on the ship *La Amistad* resulted in a protracted legal spectacle involving the United States, Spain, and Britain.<sup>68</sup> Congregationalists from New York had formed a missionary society representing abolitionism and leaped at the case, thinking it a favorable scenario for broadcasting the injustices surrounding enforcement of fugitive slave laws and slave trade jurisdictions. The trial indeed arrested the nation, receiving wide coverage in the popular press. For the missionaries sponsoring the legal defense, the case illustrated the reliability of their missiological worldview. When surrounded by Christian charity and biblical instruction, even rebellious Africans took to evangelical piety—introduce freedom into their lives, and they would naturally feel the missionary impulse. The *Amistad* captives did not disappoint. Magazines reported their unsolicited conversions and expressed desires to return to Africa to preach religion to their native families. After the Supreme Court ruled in favor of the captives, the Union Missionary Society began preparing a mission to the captives' homeland. Within months, some embarked on the mission to the applause of abolitionist missionaries across the country.<sup>69</sup>

The Union Missionary Society had railed against colonization for securing the favors of the sending nation at the expense of receiving peoples. Enlisting freed slaves in starting a mission in

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67. "New England Anti-Slavery Society," *The Religious Intelligencer* 17, no. 39 (February 23, 1833): 617–618.

68. Howard Jones, *Mutiny on the Amistad: The Saga of a Slave Revolt and Its Impact on American Abolition, Law, and Diplomacy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 22–26, 47–62; Iyunolu Folayan Osagie, *The Amistad Revolt: Memory, Slavery, and the Politics of Identity in the United States and Sierra Leone* (Athens, Ga.: University of Georgia Press, 2000), 4–18; Marcus Rediker, *The Amistad Rebellion: An Atlantic Odyssey of Slavery and Freedom* (New York: Viking, 2012), 71–121.

69. Osagie, *The Amistad Revolt*, 54–68; Richardson, *Christian Reconstruction*, 263fn1.

Africa would have seemed quintessentially colonizationist, but the society missed the connection. This represented a historic moment attesting to the nation's ability to protect freedom and for religion to win out. Abolitionist missionaries were anxious to capitalize on the court ruling and demonstrate the viability of their crusade. Working under the framework of benevolent societies prevented the Union missionaries from equivocating in their own official resolutions precisely because they understood colonization as an extension of political and military forces.<sup>70</sup> The time came to drop their original sectional inclination and take advantage of the changing environment. The society would embrace North and South, all friends of missions, all those possessing an evangelical mind, and communicate this new purview with a new title: it would henceforth continue as the American Missionary Association.<sup>71</sup>

For its first decade, the AMA intensified both its abolitionist and nationalist emphases. The effort to unify the mission movement behind domestic reform and foreign evangelism only met resistance. Northern mission boards kept their distance and southerners balked at the aggressiveness of their "northern brethren." The friction fueled AMA leaders, especially famous abolitionist and *American Missionary* editor Lewis Tappan, inspiring them to retrench further in their position. Addressing the American Home Missionary Society, John P. Gulliver drew on a basic aspect of foreign missions to counter proslavery adversaries. The *American Missionary* interpreted Gulliver's speech as a lucid defense of American greatness in spite of slavery. "Christianity, he said, *alone can make the nations free*." The world implored Christians to set an example. Imperfect as it was, the United States presented the greatest example of freedom, therefore, it fell to this country to "be the agent." Notwithstanding the looming possibility of a

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70. "Union Missionary Society: Preparatory Convention," *The Union Missionary Herald* 1, no. 1 (January 1842): 4–21.

71. "Constitution of the American Missionary Association," *The American Missionary* 1, no. 1 (October 1846): 1.

civil war, the United States “was doing ... more to change the political condition of man than all the armies and navies—than all the diplomacy and kingcraft of the world.” Should the states do battle “on our own soil,” the war would have global repercussions: the world’s freedom rested in Americans’ disavowal of slavery and their renewed commitment to evangelizing the world. Slavery rendered the missionaries impious—to rise up to their national and Christian duty, the “southern brethren” would eventually be compelled to renounce slaveholding and embrace a liberal missionary spirit.<sup>72</sup>

While Tappan agreed with Gulliver’s assessment, he departed in conclusion. At bottom, slavery did undermine missionary motives completely, and the present fact of slavery jeopardized the entire enterprise. “Is the gospel a remedy for slavery?” Tappan posed. His question haunted virtually every previous antislavery editor and writer, even if they did not speak to it. The debate itself betrayed an incompatibility that was only paradoxical to those trying to uphold the magnanimity of their foreign missions apparatus—abolitionists like Tappan recognized the country could not be both “highly favored” and “guilty.” To the question, Tappan gave a surprising response: “we answer, unhesitatingly, not such a gospel as is preached to them.” What passed for *the gospel* “enjoined upon the [slave] passive obedience” and inculcated “upon the [master] the right and duty of holding their fellow-men in bondage.” Even the gospel preached “in the free States” was “quite inadequate to put an end to slavery.” This gospel, what Tappan associated with the abolitionist and antislavery literature in circulation, kept itself too marginal, speaking in a religious echo chamber and not reaching business, policy, and law. “The truth is,” he concluded with words that surely shocked the average evangelical reader, “Christianity, as promulgated by the great mass of the preachers and professors at this day, even in the free States,

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72. “Power of American Example,” *The American Missionary* 6, no. 12 (October 1852): 93–94, italics in original.

is not a remedy for slavery.” Only a “gospel of freedom” preached by missionaries, especially those of the AMA, “fearlessly and persistently” could qualify as truly Christian. Unlike Tappan, the magazines at large did not follow the antislavery premise to its missionary conclusion; the implications were too radical and easy to relegate to “abolitionist invectives.”<sup>73</sup>

### A Plurality of Exceptionalisms

Missionary writers seldom afforded slaves equal nationality with themselves, and then, only the most virulently abolitionist of them. Early and consistently, the slave embedded in tirades against the slave trade was reduced to a simple identifier: “Negro.” Representations of the Negro surfaced in explicit and implicit ways contesting the nationalism and exceptionalism reserved for the missionary. As missionary periodicals diverged on the slavery issue and self-identities assumed in their pages grew increasingly plural, racial superiority relative to the Negro remained constant, with whiteness tied to a core religion taken to be shared by North and South. The major magazines avoided rejecting the slaveholding communions, preferring instead to spar with their “southern brethren,” and even abolitionist papers strove to unify and strengthen the Christian presence and missionary enterprise. Whether for or against colonization, or combating or ignoring the slave trade, or predicting or downplaying national disunion, the representation of the Negro in the missionary magazines flowed from apprehension. The Negro body instilled fear—in some cases, fear of uprising, and in others, fear of one’s own failures.

The fugitive slave evoked unease for placing nearby the justifiably vengeful victim.<sup>74</sup> The

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73. Lewis Tappan, “Th[e] Gospel as a Remedy for Slavery,” *The American Missionary* 6, no. 12 (October 1852): 94.

74. The runaway slave image became so widespread in American media, standard type specimens catalogued the icon alongside common pictographs like soldiers, pointing-hand ornaments, and coats of arms; all major

antislavery *Religious Intelligencer* intoned the same images as slaveholder accounts of slave rebellions in reporting the unnerving story of Joseph Frothingham. In April 1833, a young white man from New York was reported missing. Within moments, accusations flew and a black man supposedly came forward to confess bloody murder. The “colored man” said he disposed Frothingham’s body from a bridge over the Mohawk River near Utica, and upon inspecting the bridge, blood was discovered. The report mentioned the man’s alleged motives: he had confessed to the crime to take revenge on a tavern keeper who, he said, had employed him. A jury convened to try the case and nearly entered a guilty verdict and a death sentence when Frothingham’s parents announced they had received a letter from their son dated after the disappearance owing to travel problems. The editor warned hasty decisions to implicate slaves carried grave consequences. An innocent man nearly hanged on nothing more than a forced confession at the insistence of a frantic community. For all the judicial danger forewarned by this piece, the editor still validated the runaway Negro narrative. Revenge had proved more imagined than real, but the man actually maligned by the rush to indict remained nameless and reduced to the trope of the plotting slave.<sup>75</sup>

Real revolts only exacerbated the stereotype, further projecting the runaway slave bearing a vendetta onto the black American population. The ringleaders corroborated assumptions slaves were inherently fanatical and waited to strike when given the chance.<sup>76</sup> Moravian missionaries

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newspapers purchased stock pictographs that included the runaway slave. The fugitive slave image was contested, depending on the audience, either disparaged or celebrated. Depictions were shared, though: the runaway wore tattered clothes, carried a bundle on a stick, and held a running pose. See Marcus Wood, *Blind Memory: Visual Representations of Slavery in England and America, 1780–1865* (New York: Manchester University Press, 2000), 80–94.

75. “Joseph Frothingham,” *The Religious Intelligencer* 18, no. 11 (August 10, 1833): 172–174; O’Byran, *A Narrative of Travels in the United States*, 228–230.

76. David Brion Davis, *Inhuman Bondage: The Rise and Fall of Slavery in the New World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 170–174.

normally inclined to tolerate slave religion hastened to alert others to the menace of plantation revolts and in 1840 presented Colin of Coronie as the prime example. Called by followers “Tata” (father) and “Gado” (God), Colin abstained from speaking for over two years then startled fellow slaves with prophecies of overtaking the whole Coronie plantation district by force. Even from Burnside tipped off his master of the conspiracy, leading to Colin’s sudden arrest and imprisonment.<sup>77</sup> The Moravians’ report described Colin’s secret meetings as prophetic gatherings exciting followers in a false hope that Colin as the reincarnated Son of God had come to free his countrymen from the yoke of slavery. The “nocturnal orgies” hidden from white overlords gave license to Negro behavior—what they did beyond the view of their masters led to a lust for retribution, all the more reason for the missionaries to double their efforts in preaching reverential conduct.<sup>78</sup>

Like the United States print culture generally, the missionary magazines most often imagined the Negro with description and not graphics. As Marcus Wood observed of slave representations in the popular American press, “no body of focused, high quality graphics by outstanding visual artists anchored in the subtle analysis of the political architectures, or the social intimacies, generated under the slavery systems in the United States” appeared prior to the Civil War. The “vast majority of prints” reproducing graphic portrayals of black Americans ran in Northern publications and indicated “the biases and obsessions of the North, treating the black body according to a set of rather brutal and coarse codes.” Both graphic and textual descriptions presented the Negro body as variously “physically comic and grotesque,” “sexually

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77. J. Voorhoeve and H. C. van Renselaar, “Messianism and Nationalism in Surinam,” *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 118, no. 2 (1962): 193–216.

78. “Surinam: Report of Brother Treu’s Visit,” 112–117.



libidinous,” and “ideologically passive.”<sup>79</sup> These functions attended missionary images, though more implicitly. The theological challenge raised by slavery imperiled the mission, and the enslaved body punished with toil and abuse yet conspiring to get even at once invited proselytism and piqued indignation. Africans abroad served better as “poor Negroes” lacking in education and religion; editors and writers scarcely expressed grievances at how colonial governments or outsiders treated natives.

Contrasting and sometimes competing representations of slaves suggest the implied self doing the representing shifted across time and venue. The bulk of missionary reporting on the slave trade and slaves themselves reflected antislavery and abolitionist perspectives. Abolitionists especially realized visuals and rich descriptions disturbed the status quo and periodically won sympathy, eventually arriving at the dramatic force of slave auctions for stimulating umbrage at families being broken apart. Proslavery opponents could accuse them of exaggerating accounts of physical tortures, but no one could deny the immediacy and prevalence of auctions.<sup>80</sup> Social commentators unwilling to sanction kidnapping people into slavery thought nothing of “capturing” a slave in portraiture, an irony explored by Agnes Lugo-Ortiz and Angela Rosenthal.<sup>81</sup> To employ a trained and reputable artist for translating the likeness and body of a sitting Negro subject to a reproducible form communicated the expressions and privileges of the artist. Even when taking a political stand and exercising the radical potential of art to render *Amistad* mutineer Cinqué a Christ figure, Nathaniel Jocelyn could not avoid conveying his own prejudice. Blackness was so crucial to the figure, Jocelyn had to invent chemical combinations to

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79. Marcus Wood, *Black Milk: Imagining Slavery in the Visual Cultures of Brazil and America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 73.

80. McInnis, *Slaves Waiting for Sale*, 42–43.

81. Agnes Lugo-Ortiz and Angela Rosenthal, eds., *Slave Portraiture in the Atlantic World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 19.

preserve the Creole tones in paint so as to give subtle whiteness to the figure, otherwise the racial correspondence between Cinqué and Jesus could be lost.<sup>82</sup> Missionaries conceived of themselves as trained and reputable agents of morality, people tasked with and capable of transforming any and all cultural difference into predictable and mature qualities. Their appropriations of racial difference, subordination in both agency (as slaves) and abuse (as victims of slavery), and licentious proclivities described missionary anxiety as much as conditions at home and abroad.

Writers and editors returned to the basis for mission when confronted with challenges to their expectations or theology. First and foremost, slavery undermined the moral basis for incontrovertible reasons: it disqualified Americans from assuming a liberal morality. The cultural basis came under fire as well. Missionaries could justify swift and uncompromising intervention in India where caste sustained repression of lower classes and empowered the ruling elite; but slavery checked their cultural authority, bringing caste structures to the country calling itself “free.” The Bible was supposed to ground society in piety, bringing a biblical basis to mission. But the purveyors of the Bible encountered polarized contests at home over biblical endorsement of slavery. Often, mission was understood to follow a religious mandate. Where ignorance and superstition, the markers of irreligion, reigned, there the missionaries would instill religiosity. Rumors of slave uprisings, fears of racial “amalgamation,” and willful ignorance of the black experience in America relied on superstitious and unsubstantiated hearsay as much as the supposed uneducated “heathen” relied on folklore. Finally, the national basis for mission collapsed under the weight of slavery. Those who advocated for American missions as a means for spreading democracy and domesticity witnessed their homeland fall into disunion, lose national

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82. Toby Maria Chieffo-Reidway, “Cinqué: A Heroic Portrait for the Abolitionist Cause,” Chapter 13 in Lugo-Ortiz and Rosenthal, eds., *Slave Portraiture in the Atlantic World*, 375–403.

coherence amid sectional conflict and warfare, and spread new regional and sectional identities resistant to the country of the United States. In these various moments of exceptionalizing their relationship to Africa, slaves, slaveholders, the slave trade, and colonization, the missionaries installed a plurality of foreigners, and by consequence, a plurality of exceptionalisms.

## Conclusion

### Fashioning American Exceptionalisms

The September 1841 issue of the *Home Missionary* opened with a diagram illustrating the relative size of the United States. Rectangles, each labeled with projected ratios, presented the country as the largest, literally numbered “1” in proportion to “Europe, exclusive of Russia,” “China Proper,” “Hindoostan,” and individual European states (see Figure 9). Like more elaborate cartography, the simplistic map *projected* boundaries, area, and dimensionality onto domains. That the editor chose to represent the United States—an entity granted sovereignty as a nation-state with jurisdictions, treaty zones, and borders—with a slightly oblong rectangle denotes a different conceptual frame than if he had chosen a square, oval, or composite shape. Square acreage distinguished one *country* (not “land,” “nation,” “people,” or “race”) from another. The negative space between shapes altered the overall gestalt, elevating the United States and Europe (minus Russia) above the rest of the figures. The left-to-right, top-to-bottom diagonal flow of the illustration placed the United States first and Switzerland (given a ratio of a hundredth) last. In the ensuing article, the implications of the schematic were made explicit: “the territory of the United States is *sixteen times* as large as England, Scotland, and Ireland”; equally important, China and “Hindoostan” each measured half as large and Africa and South America were left out entirely. At a glance, the comparison of nations asserted what surveyors of the time would likely have disputed: the United States represented the single largest country on earth.<sup>1</sup>

The diagram put forward an alternative view of nationality. Elsewhere in 1841, imperialism

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1. “The United States Compared with Other Countries,” *The Home Missionary* 14, no. 5 (September 1841): 97–99; italics in original.

stretched the territorial claims of European states. The colonial maps of the British Empire, for instance, projected surface areas of colonies across Africa, the Caribbean, North America, and the Middle East with far more expanse than “one tenth” of the United States territories before the war with Mexico.<sup>2</sup> Here, the editor dismissed colonies and measured only the territory associated with the mother country itself, but included Indian territory west of the Mississippi in calculating the relative area of the United States. Manipulations of scale and definition occurred in the subsequent article as well. In explaining the greatness of the United States, the editor distorted the mental map, privileging certain aspects of the country’s relation to the world in trying to propose a missionary agenda.<sup>3</sup>

Territorial size mattered for the agrarian context surrounding the editor’s projection. Foremost on the list of national advantages, the editor mentioned agricultural capacity: “It is generally admitted, that the agricultural capabilities of the United States are not surpassed, by those of any portion of the globe of equal extent.” The editor did not have to spell out the rest of the argument. Economic power correlated with arable land; the more land a country could control, the greater its commercial prospects and international influence. Coupled with “civilization and Christianity,” the resources and culture available to Americans outclassed all other countries. The editor associated American society with territorial claims on land while the Europeans, Chinese, and “Hindoos” he discounted tended to define nationality by

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2. Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707–1837* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992); Peter Barber, “Mapmaking in England, ca. 1470–1650,” Chapter 54 in *Cartography in the European Renaissance*, edited by David Woodward, vol. 3, part 2 of *The History of Cartography*, edited by J. B. Harley and David Woodward (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 1589–1669; Robert C. D. Baldwin, “Colonial Cartography under the Tudor and Early Stuart Monarchies, ca. 1480–ca. 1640,” Chapter 59 in Woodward, ed., *Cartography in the European Renaissance, 1754–1780*.

3. “The United States Compared with Other Countries,” 98; italics in original.

shared language, race, or heritage.<sup>4</sup> The missionary consequences were vital: coming from such circumstances positioned Americans far ahead of their Christian contemporaries in ministering to the world. “History shows,” the editor affirmed, “that wealth, power, science, literature, all follow in the train of numbers, general intelligence and freedom.” Given their enormous potential, Americans had a responsibility to plant “those institutions which are indispensable for perpetuating the prosperity of our country.... The work of the present generation cannot be handed over to the next.”<sup>5</sup>

This single source offers, among other analyses, a synthesis of American missionary history, American imperialism, and American exceptionalism. In this moment of negotiating American uniqueness and superiority, the editor extended features of the American metropole (its agricultural and territorial domination) into foreign environments and displayed a construction of the foreign in figuring how to answer his countrymen’s commission. Despite presenting a strong example of missionary, imperialistic, and exceptionalistic logics coming together, the article gives little, if anything, of what has passed for classical imperialist and exceptionalist traits. Scholars tend to collate other sources sounding Puritan, or engendering the American civil religion, or betraying Cold War anxiety when analyzing American exceptionalism. And yet, a commentator conspicuously framing the United States for a wide audience in terms clearly fashioning an exceptional identity gives no indication of deriving a rhetoric or mythos from Plymouth Rock, or the *Arbella*, or *libertas*. Other intersections giving rise to ideas of

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4. Suisheng Zhao, *A Nation-State by Construction: Dynamics of Modern Chinese Nationalism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004); Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870–1914* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1976); George L. Mosse, *The Nationalization of the Masses: Political Symbolism and Mass Movements in Germany from the Napoleonic Wars through the Third Reich* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991); Carter Vaughn Findlay, *Turkey, Islam, Nationalism, and Modernity: A History, 1789–2007* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010); David A. Bell, *The Cult of the Nation in France: Inventing Nationalism, 1680–1800* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001).

5. “The United States Compared with Other Countries,” 99.

exceptionalism, other outgrowths of imperialistic networks, and other broad effects of mission, when entertained and integrated into the panorama that is American religious history, amplify the set of circumstances related to American missions, imperialism, and exceptionalism. “Civil religion,” “empire,” “colonialism,” and other headings apply, but do not exhaust the historian’s and religious studies scholar’s framework.<sup>6</sup>

From the outset, missionaries in the United States placed themselves at the intersections of self and other. With the first issue of the *New-York Missionary Magazine*, they did so deliberately, constructing categories of “heathen” allowing the flow of evangelism to move from themselves and their context outward to unknown people. Their discourses of the foreign at times resemble mythmaking observed in other periods and places in American history. Whether agricultural prowess, religious duty, or enterprising intuition, data for substantiating foreign missions could match traditional sources of American exceptionalism. But more often, almost entirely, missionary writers and editors began their work articulating foreign difference in a mundane and trivial idiom taking Protestant Christianity for granted. From the vantage point of the predominant discussions across the entire missionary press, it would seem American exceptionalism at the start remained incidental, and only by the 1840s took on more overt expressions.

Exceptionalism as a process, however, surfaced constantly in the very least because missionaries predicated their identity and activity on their being *heathen* in the world. As such, the *missionary* could not exist without a superiority complex informing their self-concept.

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6. See esp. John D. Wilsey, *American Exceptionalism and Civil Religion: Reassessing the History of an Idea* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2015); Timothy Roberts and Lindsay DiCuirici, eds., *American Exceptionalism*, 4 vols. (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2013); Ian Tyrrell, “The Myth(s) That Will Not Die: American National Exceptionalism,” Chapter 3 in *National Myths: Constructed Pasts, Contested Presents*, edited by Gérard Bouchard, 46–64 (London: Routledge, 2013).

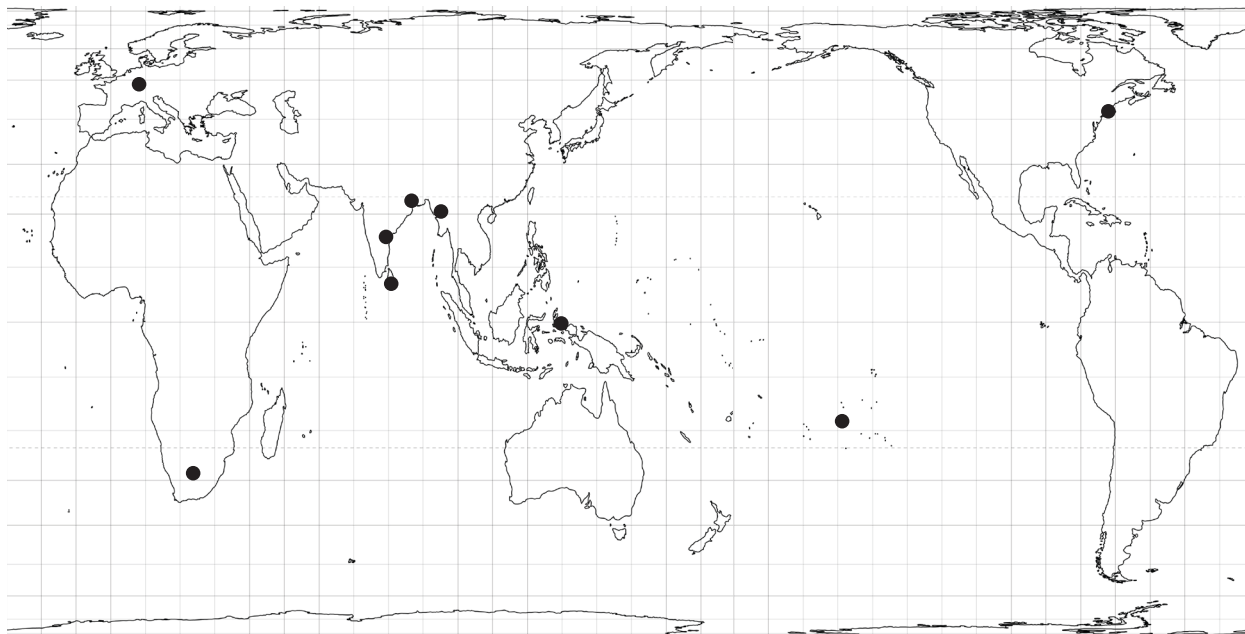
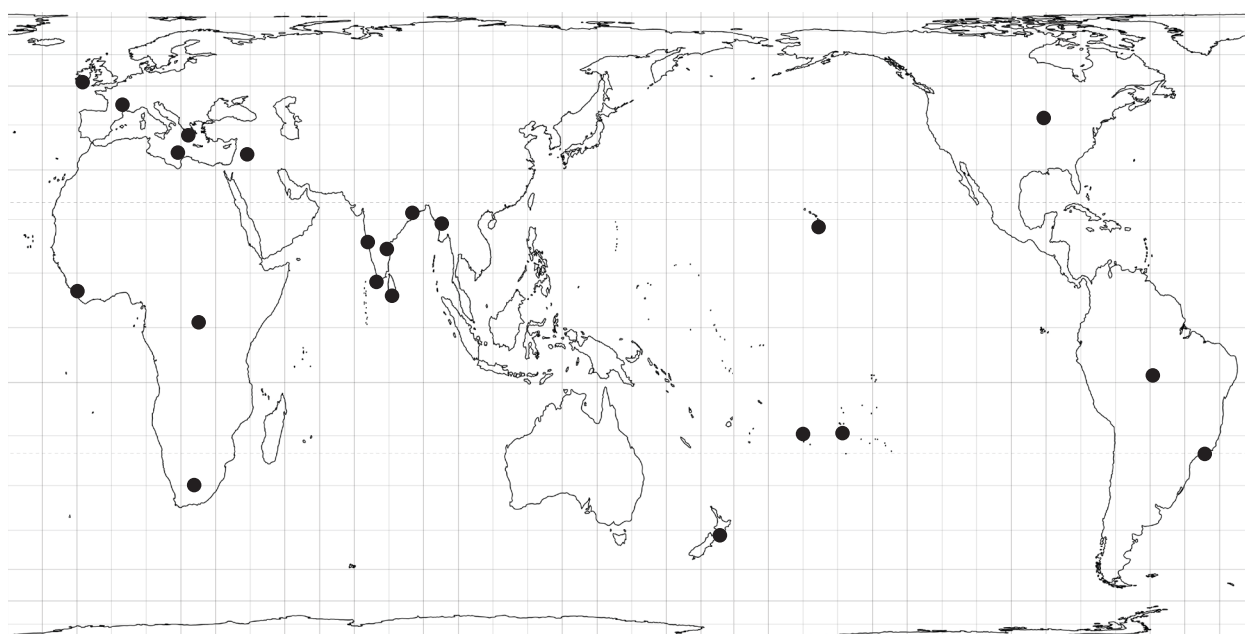
Moments of installing, enforcing, and reinforcing that complex emerged from issue to issue and report to report. If Winthrop had initiated a culture founded on covenant theology, a sense of chosenness, that gave impetus to American exceptional identity, the missionaries in the thick of delimiting the globe in the interest of recruiting volunteers and building confidence in the mission did not seem to care. And if they did profess such an exceptionalism, they did not register the idea with much frequency. The running fashioning of their superiority complex in the magazines posited several classes and categories of “heathen,” changing notions of civilization and religion, and adapting receptivities among proselytes. Rubrics for judging classifications of “heathen” grew to accommodate a widening range of foreigners, yet missionary identity—the agent of spreading salvation—was retained. Only when factionalism disrupted the organizations and media the missionaries managed did the persistence of a strong missionary identity give way. A plurality of missionary types joined the plurality of “heathen” types during the Civil War era, further complicating the foreign missions movement for the next century.

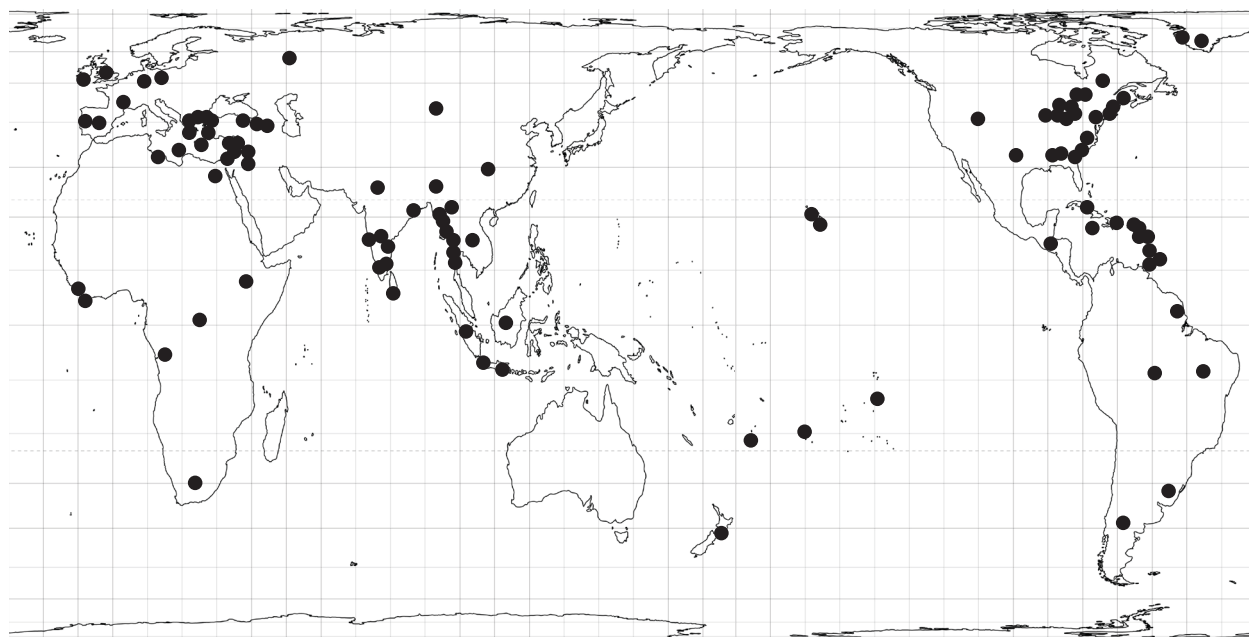
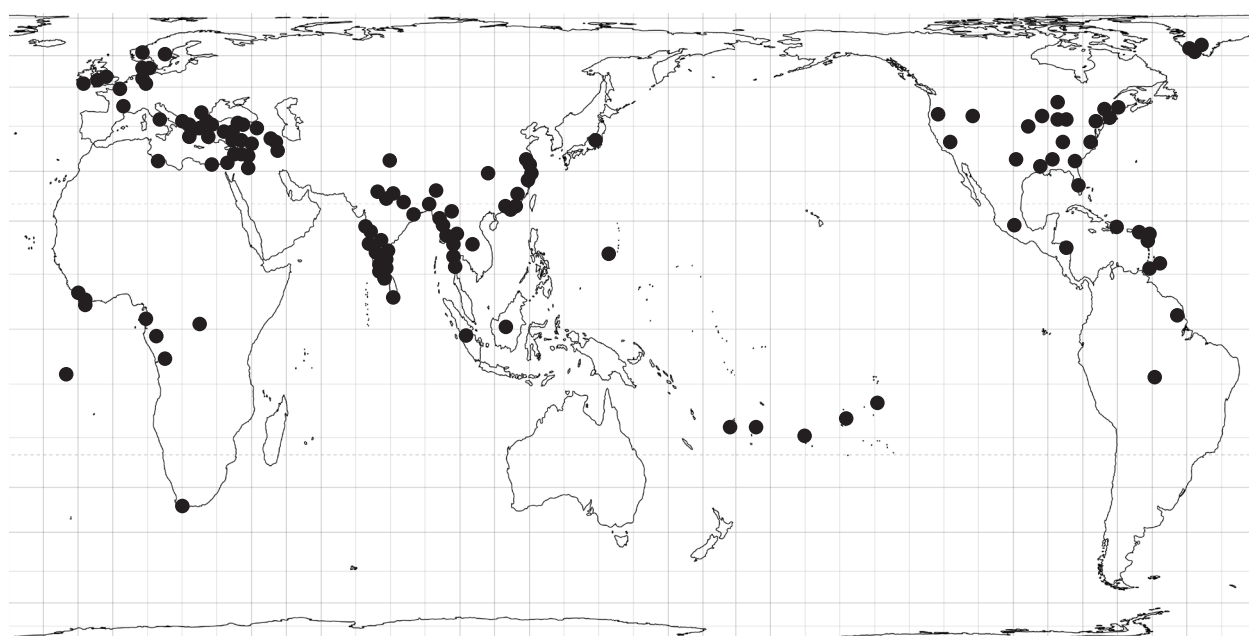
As the mission enterprise gained traction in the early 1800s, foreign mission advocates stood ready to track “superstition” and alert supporters to the presence of the unevangelized. The word *superstition* followed discussions of the foreign rampantly, always in the generic sense of irrational beliefs in supernatural things deemed credulous. On arrival, missionaries could feel frustrated and complain of proselytes refusing to believe Christian doctrine. The duplicity inherent in their constructions of foreignness—“heathen” proselytes showing both credulity in their superstitious traditions and incredulity in their reactions to preaching—reveals a missionary discourse struggling to sort out foreign difference in light of religious conviction. Whether adjusting tepid results among Native Americans and Jews, or factoring degrees of conversion among islanders and West Africans, or appropriating native assistants in Burman



church planting, or crafting diplomatic strategies among the Chinese—writers and editors perpetuated a willingness to believe in heathen inferiority no matter the situation. Their own superstitions of the heathen furnished a ready apologetic: when the heathen bore traits of the uncivilized, the American missionaries presented themselves as civilized; when the heathen bore traits of the civilized, the missionaries put forward their moral superiority and uniqueness; when Americans themselves bore traits of immorality in upholding systems of slavery, the missionaries emphasized their superior intellect and the means of repairing injuries to the dispossessed of Africa via colonization and education.

The Civil War occasioned a crisis of missionary exceptionality. The foreign missions endured, but without the unified benevolent front they had once enjoyed. Abolitionists were especially convinced slavery had disqualified the privileged sending nation from claiming an undefiled Christian identity, fitting their own prior association of “heathenism” with “lacking Christianity.” Its status as a Christian nation in question, the United States was even called directly “heathenish” by abolitionist missionaries yearning to throw off slavery for good. At this extreme, evangelical missionaries could not agree on their own liminality. Some boundaries separating the sender and the receiver shot through sectional differences between North and South; others through moral and immoral, and still others through civilization and barbarism. Moment to moment, the early American foreign missions movement fashioned exceptionalisms. The grand unifying force they had intended of mission never materialized to their satisfaction—their refusal to quit, born of faith in their unique calling, never wavered either.

**Map 1****Predominant Locations, 1800–1815****Map 2****Predominant Locations, 1816–1823**

**Map 3****Predominant Locations, 1824–1839****Map 4****Predominant Locations, 1840–1861**

## Figures

Figure 1. Jean Baptiste Bourguignon D'Anville, "Afrique" (Paris: J. B. B. D'Anville, 1749), composite map in Tooley, *A Collector's Guide to the Maps of the African Continent and Southern Africa*, 3–4; image no. 2603010 in the David Rumsey Collection. Note the virtually empty interior and the detailed and precisely plotted coasts of the continent.





Figure 2. "Bethelsdorp," in Campbell, *Travels in South Africa* (1815).

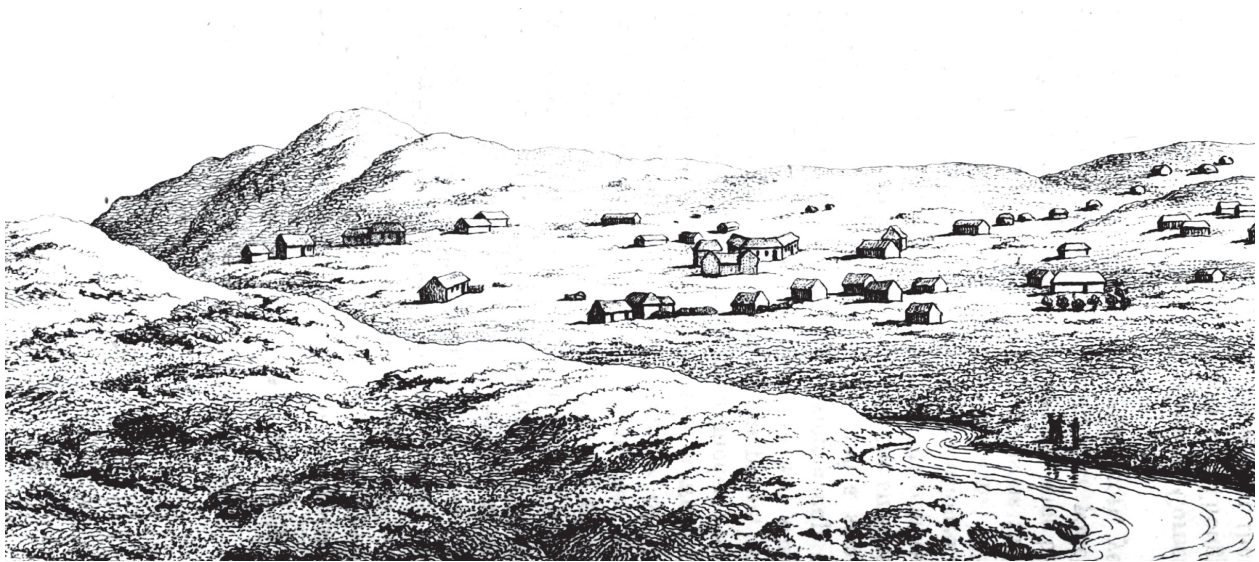
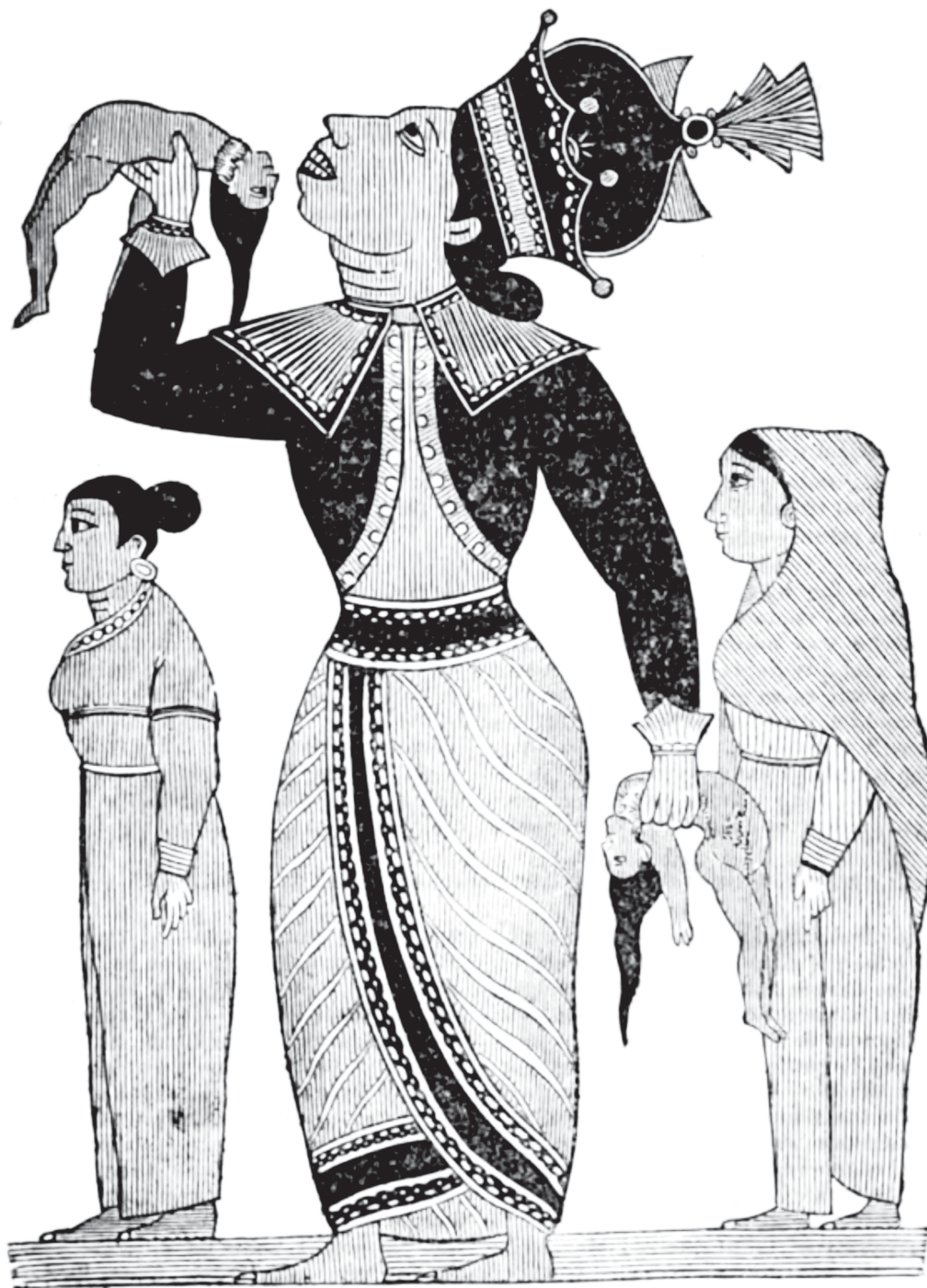
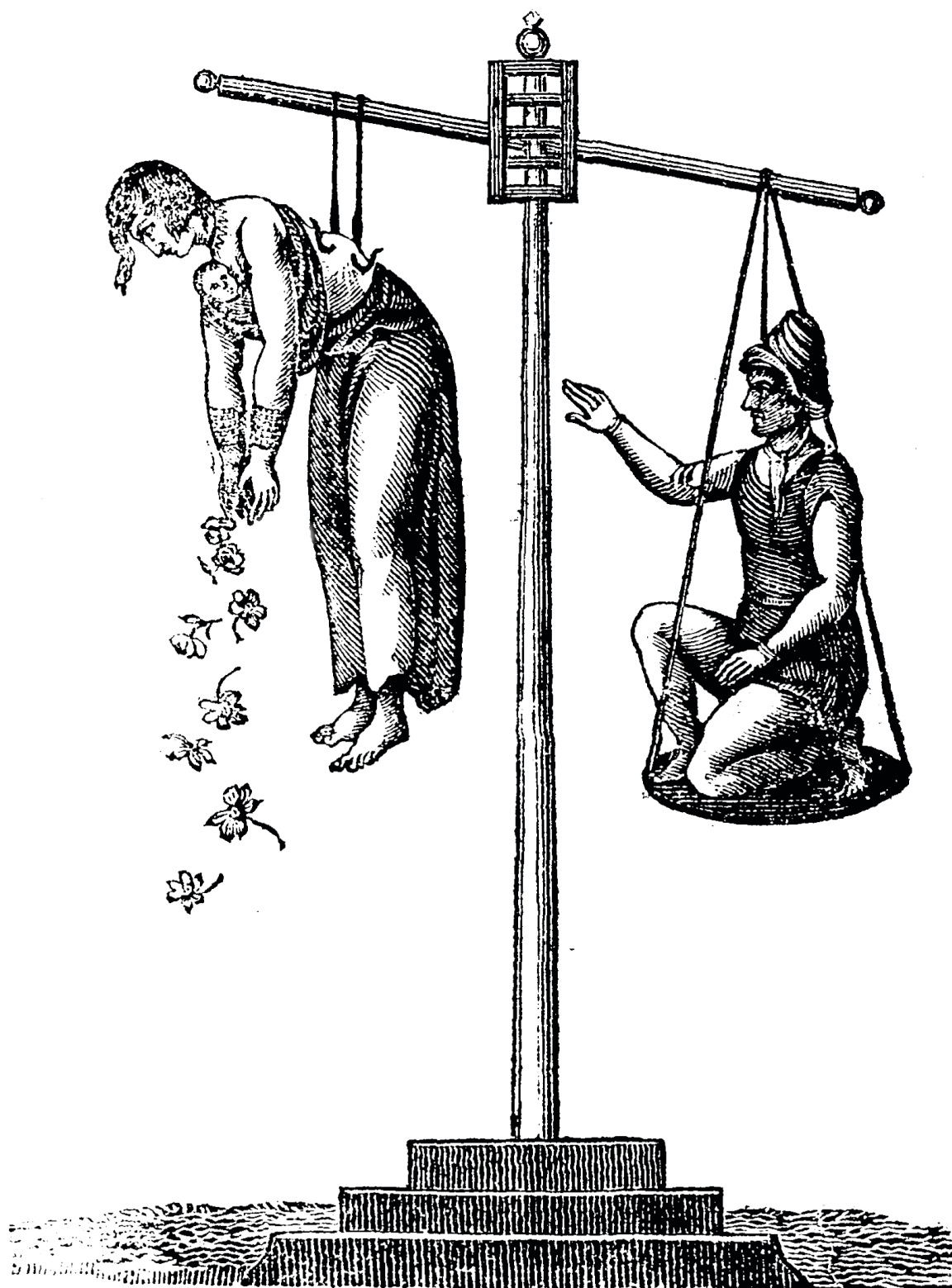


Figure 3. "A Heathen Goddess Devouring Children Offered by Their Mothers," *Monthly Paper of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions* 15 (September 1833), 57.



**A HEATHEN GODDESS DEVOURING CHILDREN OFFERED BY  
THEIR MOTHERS.**

Figures 4–5. Gordon Hall, “Heathen Superstition,” *The Religious Intelligencer* 2, no. 21 (October 18, 1817), 321; *American Baptist Magazine and Missionary Intelligencer* 1, no. 5 (September 1817), 188.





## HEATHEN SUPERSTITION.

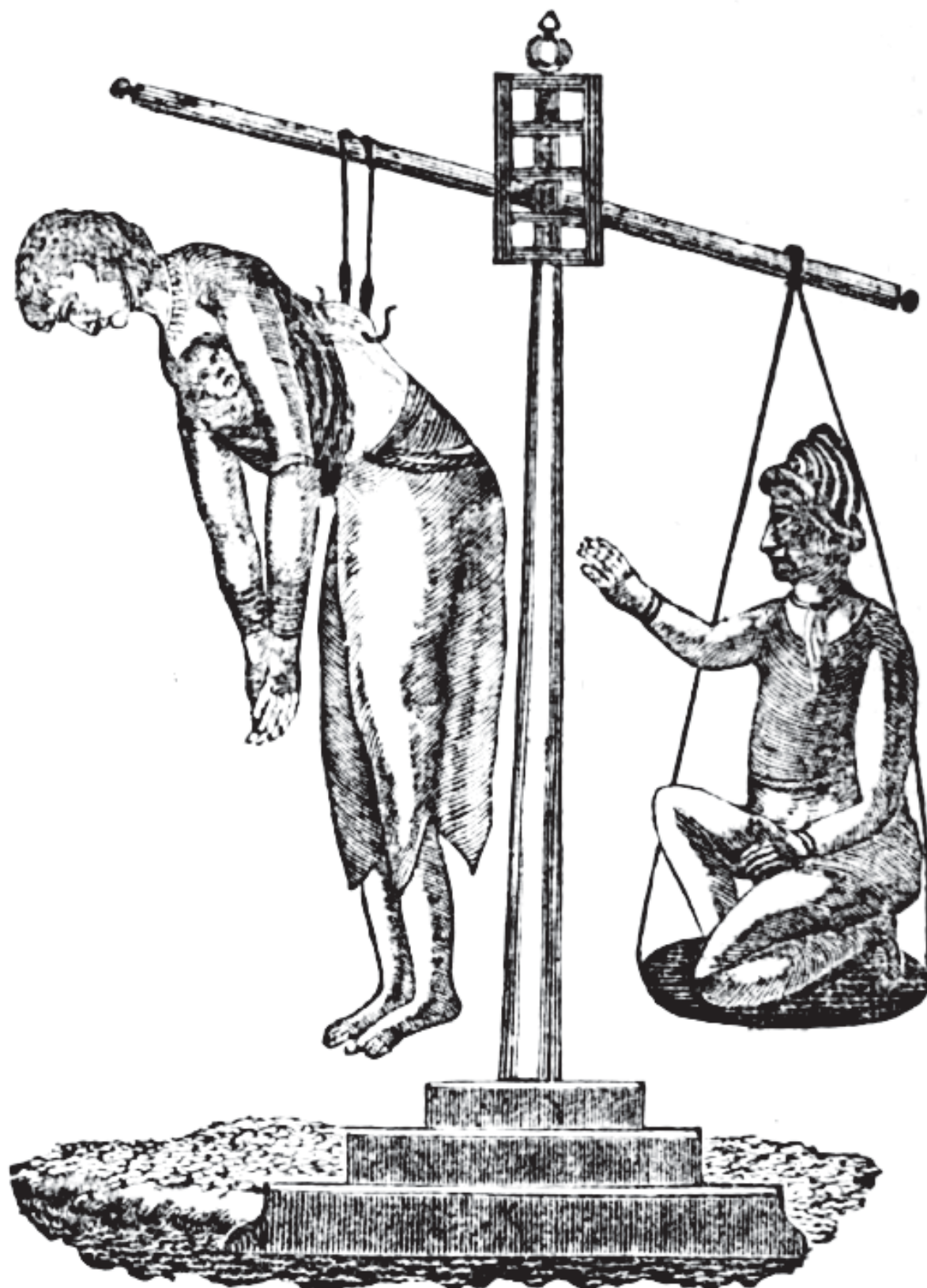




Figure 6. "Burning of Widows—British Influence," *The Missionary Herald* 40, no. 4 (April 1844), 125.





Figure 7. Philippe Vandermaelen, "Partie de la Chine: Asie no. 48" in *Atlas Universel de Géographie, Physique, Politique, Stastitique, et Mineralogique*, 6 vols. (Bruxelles: H. Ode, 1827); image no. 2212080 in the David Rumsey Collection.

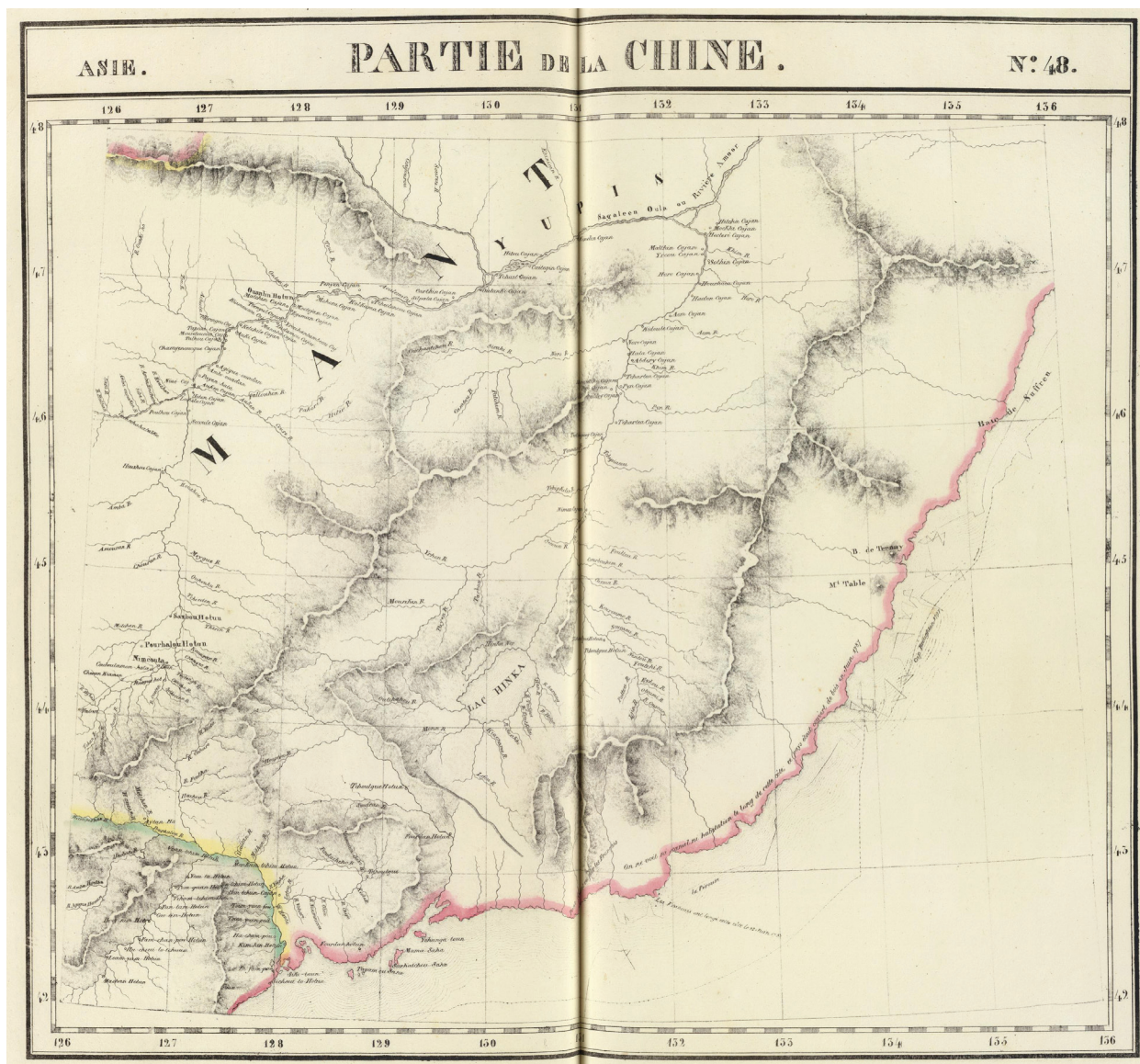
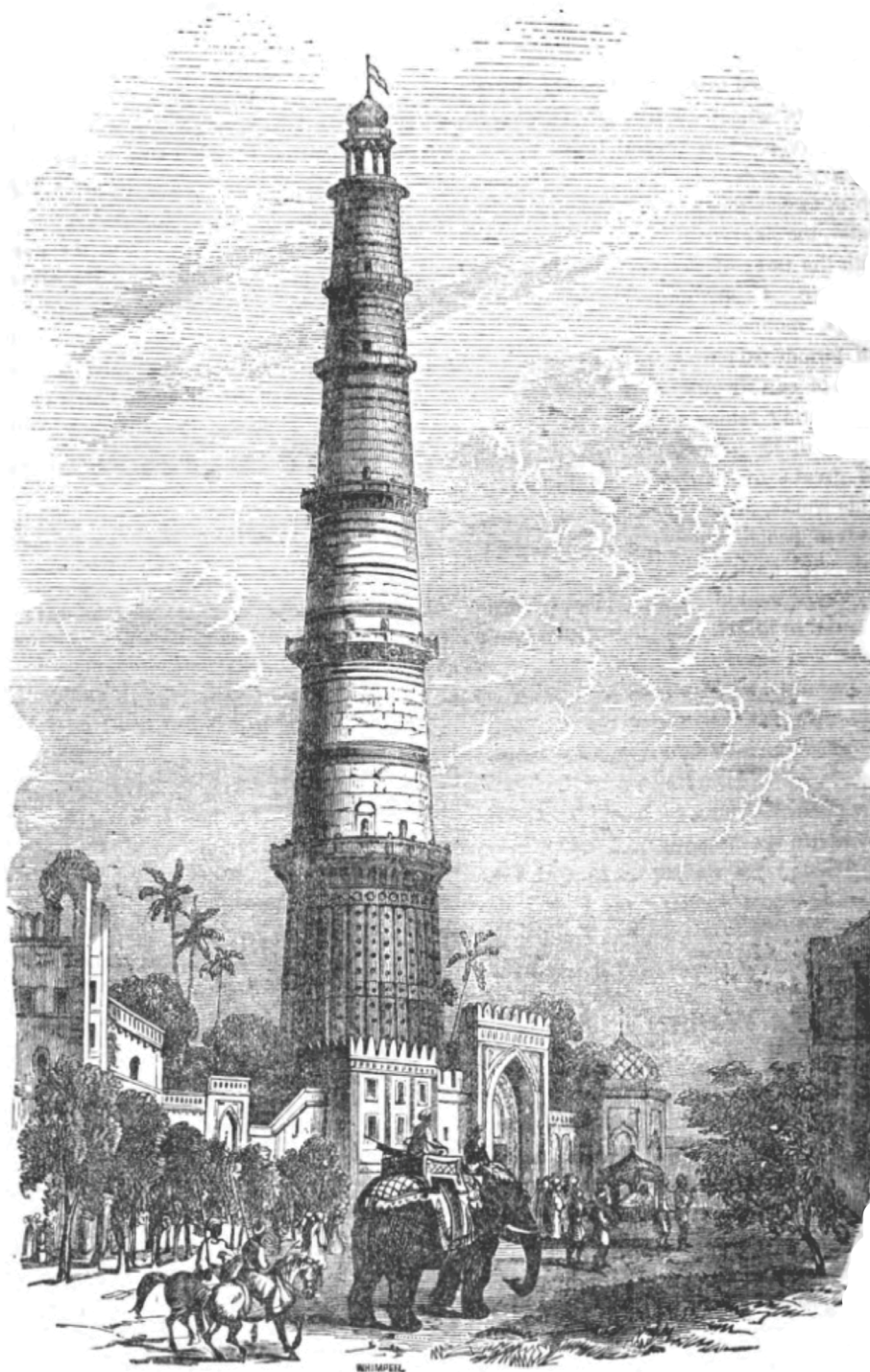




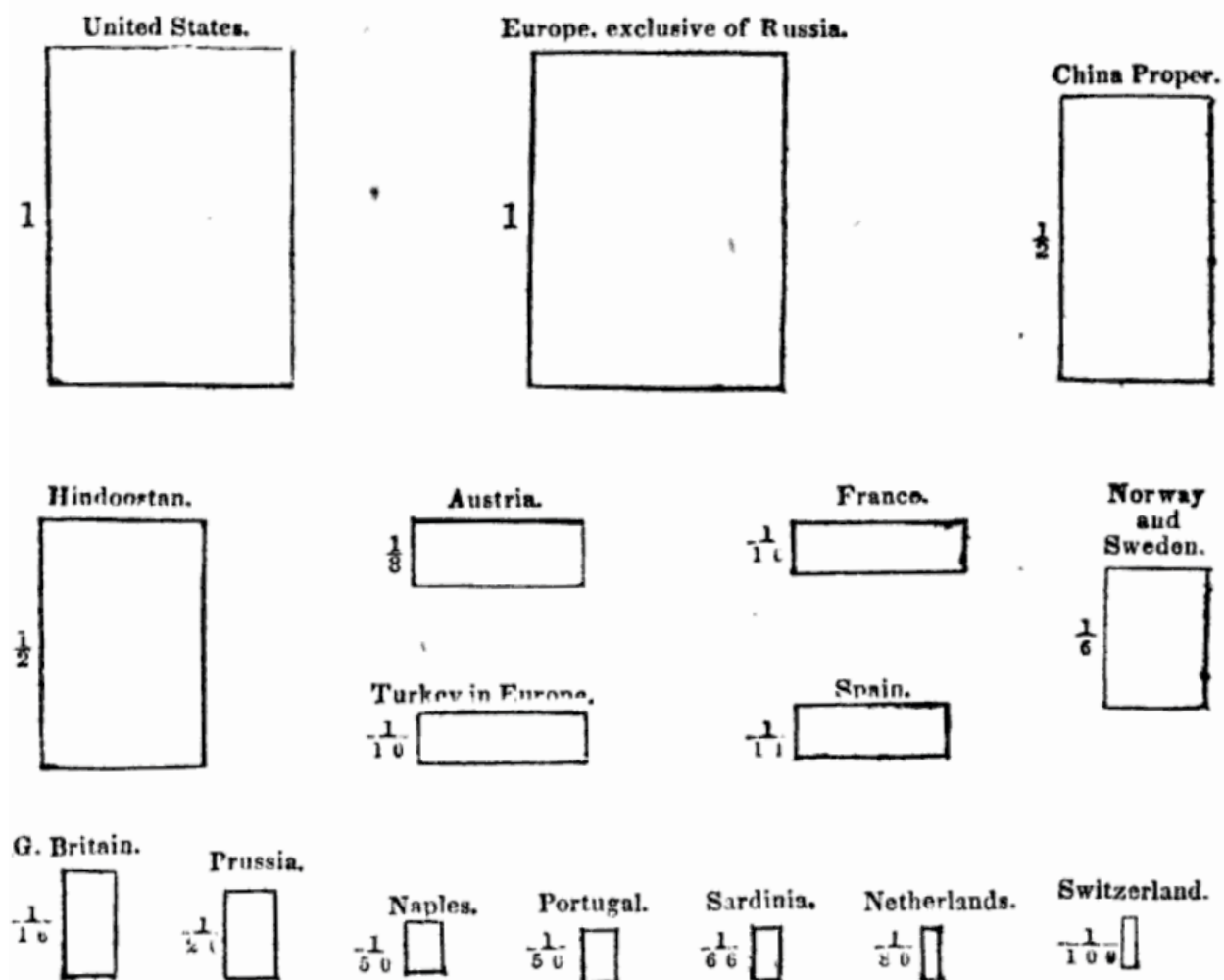
Figure 8. "Kutab Minar, Delhi," *The Foreign Missionary* 12, no. 12 (May 1854), 276; published also in *The Missionary Herald* [London], no. 128 (January 1850), 1. Signed "Whimper," the image was likely the work of Josiah Wood Whymper, an English wood engraver who provided drawings for prominent missionary David Livingstone in 1858. The change in spelling may have occurred in reproduction.



**KUTAB MINAR, DELHI.**

Figure 9. "The United States Compared with Other Countries," *The Home Missionary, and Pastor's Journal* 14, no. 5 (September 1841), 97. The caption reads: "THE diagrams which are given above, are intended to represent the proportional areas of the countries, whose names are appended to them. The figures prefixed, express this proportion in numbers. Thus, the area of the United States, being reckoned as 1, the area of Hindoostan is expressed by  $\frac{1}{2}$ , and that of France by  $\frac{1}{10}$ ; which means that Hindoostan is but half, and France a tenth as large as the United States."

## THE UNITED STATES COMPARED WITH OTHER COUNTRIES.

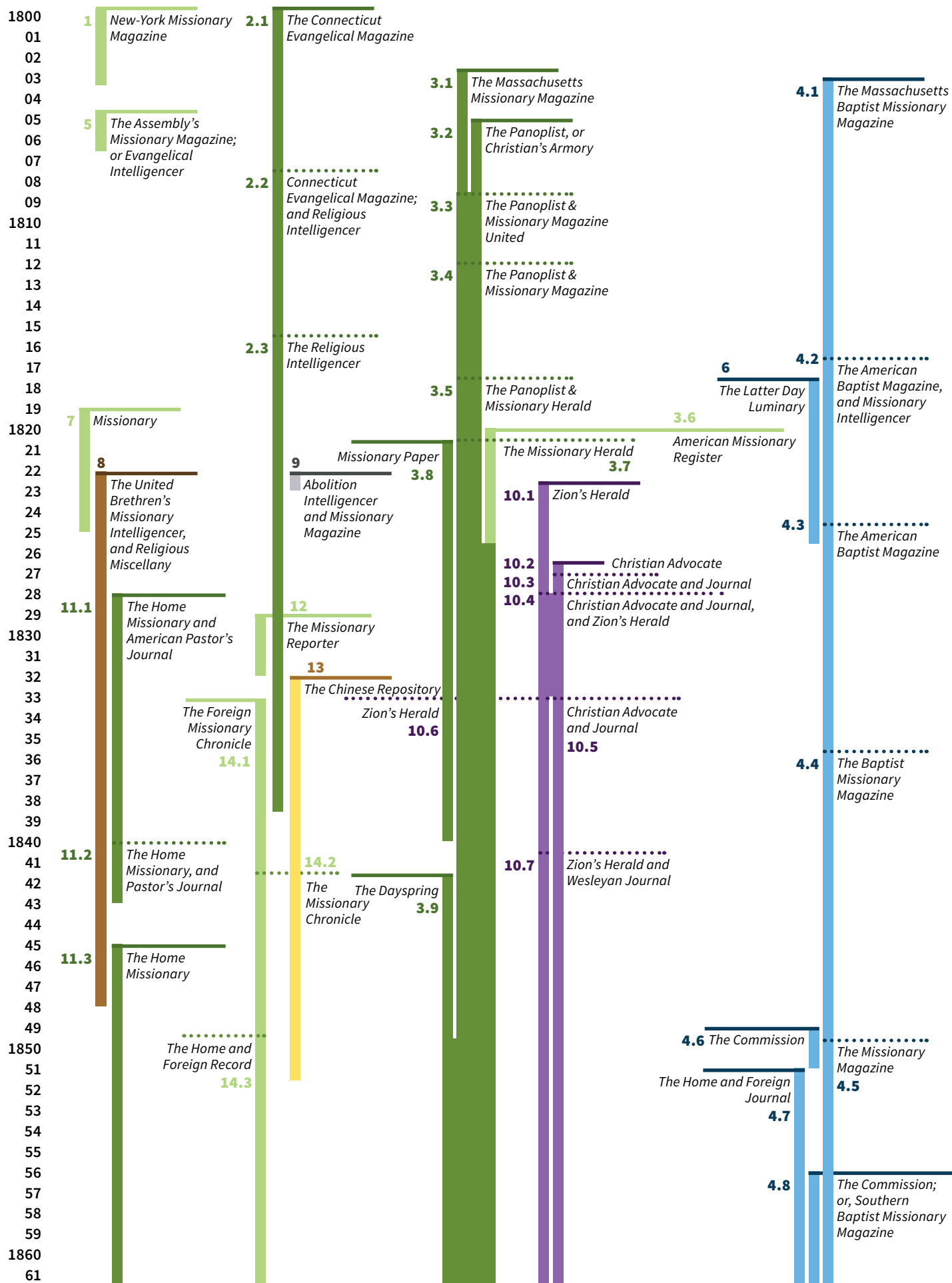


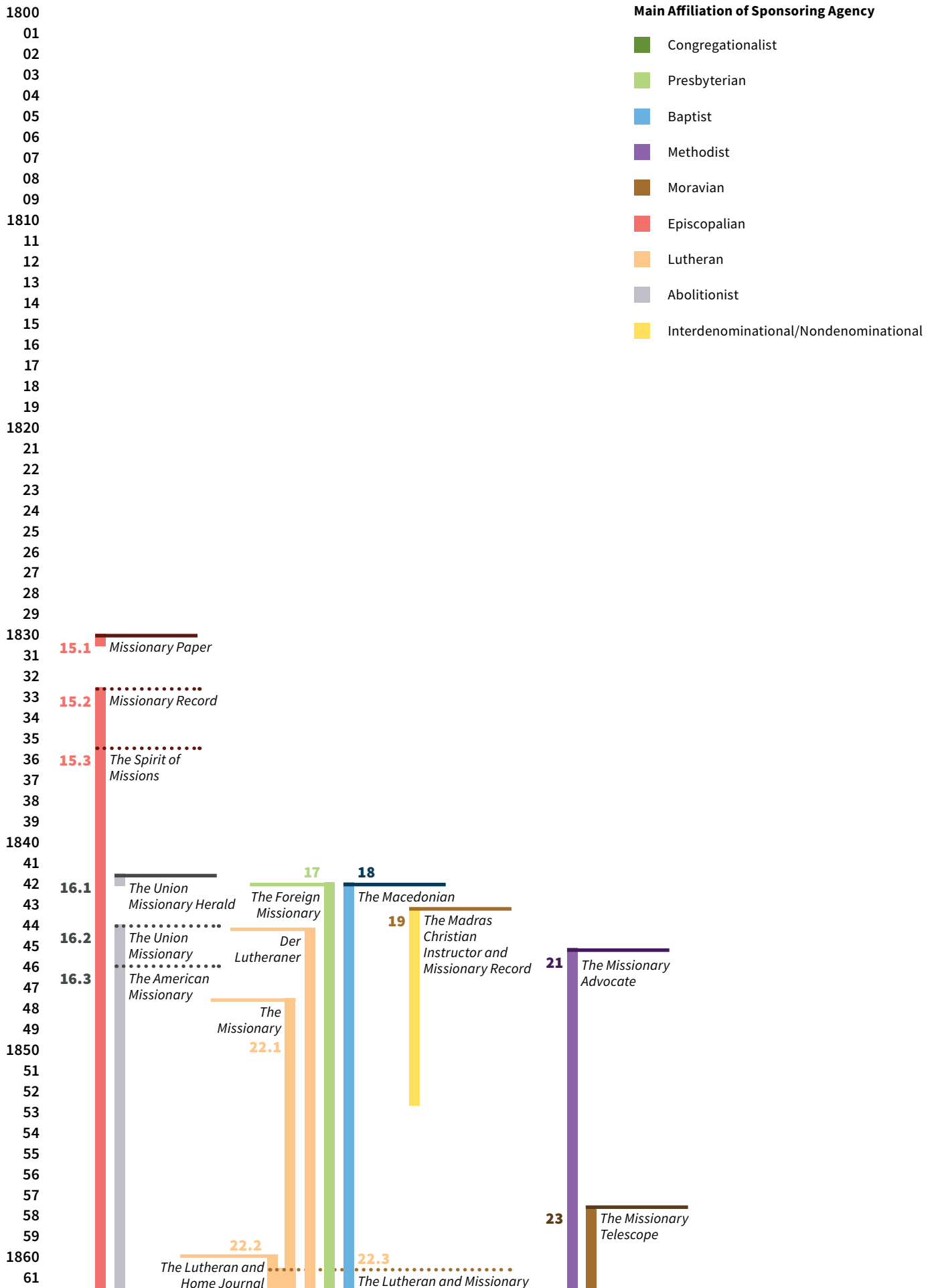


## **Appendix A**

### **Relationships of Missionary Periodicals Published in the United States, 1800–1861**

Diagrams (opposite) represent the publication timelines through December 1861, along with mergers and titular changes. Colors correspond to the predominant affiliation of the periodical's sponsoring agency and do not reflect all denominational collaborations of the sponsors or readers taking place during the respective print run. Index numbers next to titles match the item numbers in Appendix B. Solid lines denote a new series; dotted lines mark mergers and title changes of periodicals in the same series.







## Appendix B

### Missionary Magazines<sup>1</sup>

- 1     ***The New-York Missionary Magazine, and Repository of Religious Intelligence***  
       4 vols.; bimonthly, Jan. 1800–Dec. 1801; monthly, Jan. 1802–Dec. 1803  
       SPONSOR       New-York Missionary Society  
       CIRCULATION 2,449 in 1800
  
- 2.1   ***The Connecticut Evangelical Magazine***  
       7 vols.; monthly, Jul. 1800–Jun. 1807  
       SPONSOR       Missionary Society of Connecticut  
       CIRCULATION 4,000 in 1801–1803; 3,000 in 1804–1807
  
- 2.2   ***Connecticut Evangelical Magazine; and Religious Intelligencer***  
       8 vols.; monthly, Jan. 1808–Dec. 1815  
       PREDECESSOR *Connecticut Evangelical Magazine*  
       SPONSOR       Missionary Society of Connecticut  
       CIRCULATION 3,700 in 1808–1815
  
- 2.3   ***The Religious Intelligencer***  
       22 vols.; weekly, 1 Jun. 1816–31 May 1838  
       PREDECESSOR *Connecticut Evangelical Magazine, and Religious Intelligencer*  
       SPONSOR       Nathan Whiting  
       CIRCULATION 2,000 in 1816; 4,700 in 1823
  
- 3.1   ***The Massachusetts Missionary Magazine***  
       5 vols; monthly, May 1803–May 1808  
       SPONSOR       Massachusetts Missionary Society
  
- 3.2   ***The Panoplist, or Christian's Armory***  
       3 vols.; monthly, Jun. 1805–May 1808  
       SPONSORS      Association of Friends to Evangelical Truth  
                       Massachusetts Missionary Society  
                       Hampshire Missionary Society  
                       Berkshire Missionary Society  
                       Maine Missionary Society  
                       Rhode Island Missionary Society

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1. Print run and sponsoring data are taken from the issues themselves. Unless otherwise noted, circulation rates and issue frequency are derived from extant issues and the following archival resources: Mott, *A History of American Magazines*; Albaugh, *History and Annotated Bibliography*; Fackler and Lippy, eds., *Popular Religious Magazines of the United States*; Gregory, ed., *Union List of Serials*; Rowell, *American Newspaper Directory*; Beach, ed., *Foreign Missions Year Book of North America*; Lewis, *A Register of Editors*; Library of Congress, *Chronicling America*, <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov>.

CIRCULATION 7,000 in 1808

### 3.3 *The Panoplist & Missionary Magazine United*

4 vols.; monthly, Jun. 1808–May 1812

PREDECESSORS *The Panoplist, or Christian's Armory*  
*Massachusetts Missionary Magazine*

SPONSOR Association of Friends to Evangelical Truth

CIRCULATION 7,000 in 1808

### 3.4 *The Panoplist & Missionary Magazine*

6 vols.; monthly, Jun. 1812–May 1813; biweekly, Jun. 1813–Dec. 1813; monthly, Jan. 1814–Dec. 1817

PREDECESSOR *The Panoplist & Missionary Magazine United*

SPONSOR [Association of Friends to Evangelical Truth]

### 3.5 *The Panoplist & Missionary Herald*

3 vols.; monthly, Jan. 1818–Dec. 1820

PREDECESSOR *The Panoplist & Missionary Magazine*

SPONSOR [Association of Friends to Evangelical Truth]

### 3.6 *American Missionary Register*

6 vols.; monthly, Jul. 1820–Dec. 1825

SPONSOR United Foreign Missionary Society

SUCCESSOR *The Missionary Herald*

CIRCULATION 800 in 1822; 2,000 in 1823

### 3.7 *The Missionary Herald*

40 vols.; monthly, Jan. 1821–Dec. 1861

PREDECESSOR *The Panoplist & Missionary Herald*

MERGER *American Missionary Register*

SPONSOR American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions

CIRCULATION 14,000 in 1822–1824; 13,000 in 1826; 22,000<sup>2</sup> in 1840; 23,000<sup>3</sup> in 1841; 30,000 in 1869

### 3.8 *Missionary Paper*

39 issues; irregular, Jan. 1821–Jan. 1831, 1831–1840?

SPONSOR American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions

### 3.9 *The Dayspring*

8 vols.; monthly, Jan. 1842–Dec. 1849

AUXILIARY *The Missionary Herald*<sup>4</sup>

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2. The 1841 annual report of the American Board noted no more than 22,000 copies of the *Missionary Herald* had ever been put into circulation in a single year (American Board, *Thirty-second Annual Report*, 39).

3. American Board, *Thirty-third Annual Report*, 89.

4. A committee proposed *The Dayspring* as an “experiment” in delivering content of *The Missionary Herald* in the

MERGER *The Missionary Herald*<sup>5</sup>  
 SPONSOR American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions  
 CIRCULATION 65,000<sup>6</sup> in 1841; over 40,000<sup>7</sup> in 1849

#### 4.1 *The Massachusetts Baptist Missionary Magazine*

4 vols.; semiannually, triannually, and quarterly in triennial volumes; Sep. 1803–Dec. 1816  
 SPONSOR Baptist Missionary Society of Massachusetts  
 CIRCULATION 4,000 in 1816

#### 4.2 *The American Baptist Magazine, and Missionary Intelligencer*

4 vols.; bimonthly in biennial volumes; Jan. 1817–Nov. 1824  
 PREDECESSOR *The Massachusetts Baptist Missionary Magazine*  
 SPONSOR Baptist Missionary Society of Massachusetts  
 CIRCULATION 10,000 in 1821

#### 4.3 *The American Baptist Magazine*

11 vols.; monthly, Jan. 1825–Dec. 1835  
 PREDECESSOR *The American Baptist Magazine, and Missionary Intelligencer*  
 SPONSORS Baptist Missionary Society of Massachusetts (1825–1826)  
 Board of Managers of the Baptist General Convention (1827–1835)

#### 4.4 *The Baptist Missionary Magazine*

14 vols.; monthly, Jan. 1836–Dec. 1849  
 PREDECESSOR *The American Baptist Magazine*  
 SPONSORS Board of Managers of the Baptist General Convention (1836–1845)  
 Executive Committee of the American Baptist Missionary Union (1846–1849)

#### 4.5 *The Missionary Magazine*

12 vols.; monthly, Jan. 1850–Dec. 1861  
 PREDECESSOR *Baptist Missionary Magazine*  
 SPONSOR Executive Committee of the American Baptist Missionary Union  
 CIRCULATION 5,000 in 1858; 8,000 in 1871

#### 4.6 *The Commission*

3 vols. [not all extant]; monthly, Jan. 1849–Jun. 1851  
 PREDECESSOR *The Missionary Magazine*

penny-paper format to a larger audience; initial figures sought after a hundred thousand copies by the end of the year (American Board, *Thirty-second Annual Report*, 41–42).

5. The Publications Committee of the American Board proposed in 1849 to reformat the *Dayspring* into a small pamphlet to be titled *Journal of Missions*, but the following year decided to devote a section of the *Missionary Herald* to satisfy their intended design (American Board, *Report* [1849], 91; American Board, *Report* [1850], 62–63).

6. American Board, *Thirty-third Annual Report*, 89.

7. American Board, *Annual Report*, 90–91.

SPONSOR Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention

**4.7 *The Home and Foreign Journal***

11 vols.; monthly, Jul. 1851–Sep. 1861

PREDECESSOR *The Missionary Magazine*

SPONSOR Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention

**4.8 *The Commission; or, Southern Baptist Missionary Magazine***

6 vols.; monthly, Jul. 1856–Sep. 1861

PREDECESSOR *The Commission*

SPONSOR Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention

CIRCULATION 7,000 in 1850

**5 *The Assembly's Missionary Magazine; or Evangelical Intelligencer***

2 vols.; monthly, Jan. 1805–Dec. 1806

PREDECESSOR *Evangelical Intelligencer*

SPONSOR General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church USA

**6 *The Latter Day Luminary***

6 vols.; pentannually, Feb. 1818–Nov. 1821; monthly, Jan. 1822–Dec. 1825

SPONSORS Committee of the Baptist Board of Foreign Missions for the United States (1818–1821)

Committee of the Board of Managers of the General Convention of the Baptist Denomination in the United States (1822–1825)

CIRCULATION 10,000 in 1819; 946 in 1823; 1,100 in 1824; 750 in 1825

**7 *Missionary***

7 vols.; weekly, irregular, [May] 1819–10 Oct. 1825

SPONSOR Presbytery of Georgia

**8 *The United Brethren's Missionary Intelligencer, and Religious Miscellany*<sup>8</sup>**

9 vols.; quarterly, Jan. 1822–[Sep.] 1848

SPONSOR Protestant Episcopal Church of the United Brethren

**9 *Abolition Intelligencer and Missionary Magazine***

1 vol.; monthly, May 1822–Apr. 1823

SPONSOR Kentucky Abolition Society

CIRCULATION Less than 500 in 1823<sup>9</sup>

**10.1 *Zion's Herald* [first series]**

6 vols.; weekly, 9 Jan. 1823–27 Aug. 1828

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8. When including the longer subtitle, the full published title ran as *The United Brethren's Missionary Intelligencer, and Religious Miscellany; Containing the Most Recent Accounts Relating to the United Brethren's Missions among the Heathen; With Other Interesting Communications from the Records of that Church*.

9. Asa E. Martin, "Pioneer Anti-Slavery Press," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 2, no. 4 (March 1916), 525–526.

SPONSOR New-England Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church  
 SUCCESSOR *Christian Advocate and Journal, and Zion's Herald*  
 CIRCULATION 2,500 in 1824

### 10.2 *Christian Advocate*<sup>10</sup>

1 vol.; weekly, 9 Sep. 1826–10 Mar. 1827  
 SPONSOR Book Concern, Methodist Episcopal Church  
 CIRCULATION 5,000 in 1826

### 10.3 *Christian Advocate and Journal* [first series]

1 vol.; weekly, 17 Mar. 1827–29 Aug. 1828  
 PREDECESSOR *Christian Advocate*  
 MERGER *Wesleyan Journal* (Charleston, South Carolina)  
 SPONSOR Book Concern, Methodist Episcopal Church  
 CIRCULATION 28,000 in 1828

### 10.4 *Christian Advocate and Journal, and Zion's Herald*

5 vols.; weekly, 5 Sep. 1828–23 Aug. 1833  
 PREDECESSOR *Christian Advocate and Journal*  
 MERGER *Zion's Herald*  
 SPONSOR Book Concern, Methodist Episcopal Church  
 CIRCULATION Higher than 28,000 in 1828

### 10.5 *Christian Advocate and Journal* [second series]

33 vols.; weekly, 30 Aug. 1833–Dec. 1861  
 PREDECESSOR *Christian Advocate and Journal, and Zion's Herald*  
 SPONSOR Book Concern, Methodist Episcopal Church  
 CIRCULATION 30,000 in 1869

### 10.6 *Zion's Herald* [second series]

8 vols.; weekly, 4 Sep. 1833–13 Jan. 1841  
 PREDECESSOR *Christian Advocate and Journal, and Zion's Herald*  
 MERGER *New England Christian Herald*  
 SPONSOR Boston Wesleyan Association  
 CIRCULATION 4,000 in the 1830s<sup>11</sup>

### 10.7 *Zion's Herald and Wesleyan Journal*

21 vols.; weekly, 20 Jan. 1841–27 Nov. 1861  
 PREDECESSOR *Zion's Herald*  
 MERGER *Maine Wesleyan Journal*  
 SPONSOR Boston Wesleyan Association  
 CIRCULATION 16,000 in 1869

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10. Not to be confused with the Presbyterian-sponsored *The Christian Advocate* edited by Ashabel Green and published in Philadelphia after 1823.

11. Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism*, 165fn33.

**11.1 *The Home Missionary and American Pastor's Journal***

12 vols.; monthly, May 1828–Apr. 1840

SPONSORS American Home Missionary Society (1828–1830)  
Congregational Home Missionary Society (1830–1840)

CIRCULATION 5,000 in 1828–1830

**11.2 *The Home Missionary, and Pastor's Journal***

3 vols.; monthly, May 1840–Apr. 1843

PREDECESSOR *The Home Missionary and American Pastor's Journal*

SPONSOR Congregational Home Missionary Society

**11.3 *The Home Missionary***

18 vols.; monthly, May 1845–Apr. 1861

PREDECESSOR *The Home Missionary, and Pastor's Journal*

SPONSOR Congregational Home Missionary Society

CIRCULATION Lower than 5,000 in 1869

**12 *The Missionary Reporter*<sup>12</sup>**

3 vols.; monthly, Sep. 1829–Aug. 1832

SPONSOR Board of Missions, General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church  
USA

CIRCULATION 7,500 in 1830

**13 *The Chinese Repository***

20 vols.; monthly, May 1832–Dec. 1851

SPONSOR Elijah Coleman Bridgman, American Board of Commissioners for  
Foreign Missions

CIRCULATION Higher than 200 in China, higher than 150 in the United States

**14.1 *The Foreign Missionary Chronicle***

9 vols.; monthly, Apr. 1833–Dec. 1841

SPONSOR Western Foreign Missionary Society

CIRCULATION 5,000 in 1840

**14.2 *The Missionary Chronicle***

8 vols.; monthly, Jan. 1842–Dec. 1849

PREDECESSOR *Foreign Missionary Chronicle*SUCCESSOR *The Home and Foreign Record*SPONSOR Board of Foreign Missions, General Assembly of the Presbyterian  
Church USA**14.3 *The Home and Foreign Record***

12 vols.; monthly, Jan. 1850–Dec. 1861

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12. The full title ran as *The Missionary Reporter, and Education Register, of the Missionary and Education Boards, of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, in the United States.*

SPONSOR Board of Missions, Education, Foreign Missions, and Publication,  
Presbyterian Church USA  
CIRCULATION 17,000 in 1856; 19,000 in 1857; 16,500 in 1869

**15.1 *Missionary Paper of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America***

1 vol.; irregular?, Mar. 1830–Sep. 1830<sup>13</sup>

SUCCESSOR *Missionary Record of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society*  
SPONSOR Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Protestant  
Episcopal Church in the United States of America

**15.2 *Missionary Record of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society, of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America***

3 vols.; monthly, Jan. 1833–Dec. 1835

PREDECESSOR *Missionary Paper of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society*  
SUCCESSOR *The Spirit of Missions*  
SPONSOR Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Protestant  
Episcopal Church in the United States of America

**15.3 *The Spirit of Missions***

26 vols.; monthly, Jan. 1836–Dec. 1861

PREDECESSOR *Missionary Record of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society*  
SPONSOR Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Protestant  
Episcopal Church in the United States of America

**16.1 *The Union Missionary Herald***

1 vol.; monthly, Jan. 1842–Aug. 1842<sup>14</sup>

SUCCESSOR *The Union Missionary*  
SPONSOR Josiah Brewer; Union Missionary Society

**16.2 *The Union Missionary***

3 vols.; monthly, May 1844–Sep. 1846

PREDECESSOR *The Union Missionary Herald*  
SUCCESSOR *The American Missionary*  
SPONSOR Union Missionary Society

**16.3 *The American Missionary*<sup>15</sup>**

15 vols.; monthly, Oct. 1846–Oct. 1856 (first series); Jan. 1857–Dec. 1861 (second

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13. Only nos. 6–8 are extant.

14. Issue nos. 7–8 for July and August 1842 were combined into a single issue, probably just before printing: “Owing in part to the failure of a considerable number of our subscribers, in one of the great manufacturing cities and to other urgent causes, this number is issued for *July and August*.” (Italics in original; *Union Missionary Herald* 1, no. 7/8 [July–August 1842], 96.)

15. Some issues were published bearing the titles *American Missionary* and *The American Missionary (Magazine)*.



series)<sup>16</sup>

PREDECESSOR *The Union Missionary*

SPONSOR American Missionary Association

CIRCULATION 19,000 in 1855; 32,000 in 1869<sup>17</sup>

**17 *The Foreign Missionary***

14 vols.; monthly, May 1842–Dec. 1861

SPONSOR Board of Foreign Missions, General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church USA

CIRCULATION Probably lower than 5,000 in 1869

**18 *The Macedonian***

18 vols.; monthly, Nov. 1842–Dec. 1861

SUCCESSOR *The Macedonian and Record*

SPONSOR American Baptist Missionary Union

CIRCULATION 3,000 in 1865<sup>18</sup>

**19 *The Madras Christian Instructor and Missionary Record***

10 vols.; monthly, Jun. 1843–Dec. [1852]

SPONSOR American Mission Press

**20 *Der Lutheraner***

18 vols.; biweekly, 1 Sep. 1844–11 Dec. 1861

SPONSORS Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm Walther (1844–1847)  
Missouri Synod (1847–1861)

**21 *The Missionary Advocate***

17 vols.; monthly, Apr. 1845–Dec. 1861

SPONSOR Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church

**22.1 *The Missionary***

6 vols.; [weekly], Jan. 1848–24 Oct. 1861

SUCCESSOR *The Lutheran and Missionary*

**22.2 *The Lutheran and Home Journal***

2 vols; [weekly], 6 Jul. 1860–11 Oct. 1861

SUCCESSOR *The Lutheran and Missionary*

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16. Volume 1 skipped November 1846, issuing December 1846 as no. 2 and continuing the series numbering every month thereafter. The second series begun in January 1857 restarted with vol. 1.

17. Lewis Tappan, *History of the American Missionary Association: Its Constitution and Principles, etc. etc.* (New York: n.p., 1855), 48.

18. American Baptist Missionary Union: Fifty-First Annual Report,” *The Missionary Magazine* 45, no. 7 (July 1865), 200; “American Baptist Missionary Union: Fifty-Fifth Annual Report,” *The Missionary Magazine* 49, no. 7 (July 1869), 212.



SPONSOR        General Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in North America

**22.3 *The Lutheran and Missionary***

1 vol.; [weekly], 31 Oct. 1861–[Dec. 1861]

PREDECESSORS *The Missionary*  
*The Lutheran and Home Journal*

**23 *The Missionary Telescope***

4 vols; monthly, Jan. 1858–Nov. 1861

SPONSOR        Home, Frontier, and Foreign Missionary Society of the United Brethren in Christ

CIRCULATION   6,000 in 1861<sup>19</sup>

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19. H. A. Thompson, *Our Bishops: A Sketch of the Origin and Growth of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ as Shown in the Lives of Its Distinguished Leaders*, rev. ed. (Dayton, Ohio: United Brethren Publishing House, 1904), 613.

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