

UC San Diego

UC San Diego Electronic Theses and Dissertations

Title

Domestic Dispatches: The Moral Imperative of Modernity, Writing, and the Evolving Role of Female Missionaries

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/0jt264k5>

Author

King, Emily Frances

Publication Date

2017

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

Domestic Dispatches: The Moral Imperative of Modernity, Writing, and the Evolving
Role of Female Missionaries

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree Master of Arts

in

Anthropology

by

Emily Frances King

Committee in Charge:

Professor Suzanne Brenner, Chair

Professor Joseph Hankins

Professor Saiba Varma

2017

The thesis of Emily Frances King is approved and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication on microfilm and electronically:

Chair

University of California, San Diego

2017

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my family.

Thank you for telling me family stories, and constantly finding new articles and photographs in old boxes that made this thesis longer than I anticipated.

Thank you for always making me laugh at horrible puns.

Thank you for your unwavering support and love.

This thesis wouldn't have been possible without you.

Table of Contents

Signature Page.....	iii
Dedication.....	iv
Table of Contents.....	v
List of Figures.....	vi
Acknowledgements.....	vii
Abstract of the Thesis.....	viii
I-Introduction.....	1
II-The Myth of Teleological Progress.....	6
III-Modernity as a Moral Imperative.....	9
IV-Converting to Modernity.....	18
V-Writing and Language and Production of Worlds.....	23
VI-Women Missionaries.....	28
VII-Mission Work as an Expansion of the Domestic Sphere.....	35
VIII-Writing Across the Distance.....	42
IX-Comparing <i>Types</i> of Writing.....	53
X-Change in the Metropole.....	57
XI-The Limits of Modernity.....	71
XII-Conclusion.....	74
Works Cited/Bibliography.....	76
<i>Primary Sources</i>	76
<i>Academic and Historical Sources</i>	74

List of Figures

Figure 1-Mary Sue Havens and author. FL 1996 on the occasion of Mary Sue's 100th birthday.....	1
Figure 2-Mary Sue Havens' graduation photo, approximately 1914.....	28
Figure 3-Virgil Havens' Appointment Letter 1924.....	59
Figure 4-Mary Sue Havens' Appointment letter 1924.....	60
Figure 5- The Oscar McDonald family. Probably taken around 1918 because of the two boys in uniform.....	

Acknowledgements

Thank you to my committee and their patience with me. Your feedback was crucial to this thesis coming together

Thank you to my writing cohort and their thoughts in class, via texts, and over tea. You made this thesis better with your observations.

Thank you to my friends who read my writing, support my ambitions, and who have put up with idiosyncratic texts from me in the middle of the night for years.

Thank you to my mother for letting me ramble on about my ideas whenever I called and for proofreading this thesis more times than I should have asked her to.

ABSTRACT OF THESIS

Domestic Dispatches: The Moral Imperative of Modernity, Writing, and the Evolving
Role of Female Missionaries

by

Emily Frances King

Masters of Arts in Anthropology

University of California, San Diego, 2017

Professor Suzanne Brenner, Chair

Starting in the mid nineteenth century, middle and lower class women in the West started to serve as missionaries in colonized areas of the world. Even more stayed in the metropole and served on mission boards that funded the missionaries in the field. What motivated these women and how was their gender a factor in the field? What were the long term effects of these missions on women and the colonized? This thesis looks at how the increased focus on development and modernity allowed women to extend the domestic sphere to include the moral imperative of colonization and mission work. This attempt to spread a western consciousness meant that women gained professional skills. I focus on the role of writing in this thesis. Women's writing collapsed the space between

the mission field and the metropole allowing for the disruptions of norms in the mission field to travel back to the metropole. I draw upon, academic sources, didactic protestant hagiography, mission magazines, and personal papers to make this argument

I- Introduction

When I was five years old, my family and I flew across the country to attend my great-grandmother's one-hundredth birthday party. While we were there I had tea with my great-grandmother and she told me stories and showed me photographs of animals she had taken when she lived in Africa. She let me try on an oversized pith helmet that looked like a prop left over from a movie, but that she had worn when she was a young woman. While I didn't know or understand it at the time, my great-grandmother was telling me stories about her years as a missionary, letting me try on the adventures she had lived so long ago when the pith helmet was new. These stories have always been in the background of my family. Mary Sue's life spanned a century and she saw the world change around her. She believed in the moral imperative that implicitly and explicitly accompanied Western modernity, the colonial project, and twentieth century Christianity until the day she died. I have always been fascinated by my great-grandparents and their stories and, as I grew older and started to read and study colonialism in various settings, increasingly troubled by my family's role in colonialism.



Figure 1-Mary Sue Havens and author. FL 1996 on the occasion of Mary Sue's 100th birthday

It would be hyperbolic to say that this thesis was born the day I had tea with Mary Sue. Nevertheless, this thesis is an exploration that the role of modernity and religion played in the lives of female missionaries. Starting in the nineteenth century, the Western world was gripped by a missionary fever. The mission project took on a moral role as missionaries worked to “develop” “backward” societies through religious conversions and conversions to the Western mode of understanding the world. Women were at the heart of this process. They were missionaries. They created sophisticated fundraising strategies. They generated copious quantities of high quality public relations material. They educated themselves and the denominations they worked within. They exercised increasingly professional skills and insights.

This thesis uses a variety of historical documents and academic sources to argue that the mission project was also an opportunity for women to develop skills and challenge gender norms, ultimately entering into their own “modern” era. Using anthropological theory as a guide, I look at the words the women themselves used, drawing on journals, didactic books, letters and missionary magazines, to show how the role of the female missionary grew and changed from the mid-nineteenth century to the early twentieth century. By expanding the role of caregivers and expanding the domestic sphere beyond the household, female missionaries went from simply accompanying their husbands to being professional missionaries working to modernize “the dark places” and remake the colonized in their own “modern” Western image.

By blending history and anthropology, I hope to explore how colonialism and modernity need to be understood in the contemporary twenty-first century context, without losing sight of the fact that historical voices need to be engaged with as well.

Without history, I worry that any anthropology I do will lack grounding, but history without anthropology would not support my broader goal of looking at religion and gender in the context of missionaries and the work they do. Historian Joan Jacobs Brumberg talks about an ethnography of missions and how ethnographies were taken up as expressions of mission work rather than the professional or scientific ethnographies anthropologists are more familiar with. The mission ethnography was produced in magazines and journals and was didactic (Brumberg 1982:349). What sets this genre apart are the specific vocabulary and stories that missionaries sent home to be read. I am trying to create my own ethnography of historical colonialism by looking at the ethnographies that were sent home in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It is not a typical ethnography; it is an ethnography of the past and present of Christian colonialism.

I am using anthropological theory to have a conversation with people in the past. My interlocutors are long dead, but in order to understand the role female missionaries played in Africa, I have to engage with them so I am turning to historical texts. I cannot ask the missionaries of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries about their experiences, but I can look at what they wrote and explore how that reveals something about colonialism and the moral imperative it operated under.

The women I am writing about are part of the bigger story of colonialism. Their actions show a larger pattern of teleological history and narratives of colonialism. To analyze these actions constructively, I will reinterpret colonialism. Like so many scholars have done before me, I will approach colonialism not just as a political or profit driven crusade. I recognize that politics and profit are an undeniable part of colonialism. However, constructing a model of colonialism that explores how colonialism affected the

very consciousness of people and the West's self-assigned imperative to bring backwards colonies into a modern era, a better understanding of the motives and meanings assigned by the evangelizers and the evangelized can be reached. This act was gendered, not just because women were missionaries, but because the mission project itself was gendered. The missions with their morality and the aspects of caretaking were deemed maternal, while the colonial governments were deemed paternal (Lutkehaus 1999:208). While there were countless male missionaries, since the project itself was connected to the maternal and female parts of colonialism, it meant that women were able to use this emphasis on moral imperatives and its implicitly gendered connotations to get their foot in the proverbial door. The emphasis on morality that missionaries stressed meant that the religious moral imperative that motivated missionaries means that they were seen as "...soft, in relation to the 'hard' economic and political interests of other agents of empire" (Huber and Lutkehaus 1999:12). Because they exist within colonialism, but outside of the political jockeying for land, resources and control, missionaries were associated with the maternal aspects of colonialism. They were particularly responsible for the moral aspects of colonialism and the ongoing project of colonizing minds as well as land.

This moral imperative opened the door for women missionaries to serve in the field as more than just wives and mothers. It meant that to fulfill their mission they needed to arrive with more than just bibles. They needed to show up to build schools, medical clinics, and implement new "modern" forms of agriculture. All of these actions were given evangelical context and meant that missionaries needed to acquire specific professional skills. This clearly benefited women, as it provided them a space to

challenge established gender roles. It should be noted that by women, I am really referring to a specific subsection of women. The women that I am concerned with in this thesis were overwhelmingly lower and middle class white women. While in my research I encountered exceptions to that description, the overwhelming majority of the women that I encountered in both academic and primary texts are a homogenous group. Female missionaries who wrote never stopped being concerned with the moral imperatives of Christianity and modernity. Their role changed as they wrote more and more professional articles in genres designed to inform the reader. The writing women did allow the distance between metropole and mission field to collapse, allowing for changes to travel from the mission fields to the metropole in addition to the more obvious changes made in the mission field

II- The Myth of Teleological Progress

Before I begin discussing the content of primary documents, I have to first consider the abstract role missionaries and the written word play in colonial rule and Western dominance. Ethnography serves a very specific purpose in the role of colonialism and the “West” (Trouillot 2003). The idea of a linear progression of history and society helped to create colonial structures through mutual recognition of the colonized and the colonizer and thus creates new understandings of human consciousness (Comaroff and Comaroff 1991), influences my analysis. This linear progression was a motivating factor; the colonial structures were there to make sure the “enlightened” Western groups could pull the “backwards” groups up the linear path of progress.

Texts written by colonial anthropologists, historians and missionaries take their place within the context of, and have been complicit in, the colonial project. The colonial project seeks to validate a teleological myth of progress by using writing to capture and define “the other” (Trouillot 2003). Trouillot and others explore this idea of how the myth of the colonial project casts “primitive” societies as living examples of society’s past. The desire to bring these so called “backwards” societies into the modern era defined mission work in the twentieth century, transforming modernity into a moral imperative. The colonial project is fueled by defining the colonizers in contrast to the colonized. The colonizers need “the other” to exist. Missionaries are no different. They need someone to convert and they do that by defining the other as needing salvation—on many levels.

Anthropology is a part of this colonial process and owes a debt to missionaries. Yet it is also at odds with the history of missionaries (Huber and Lutkehaus 1999:5-6). Early anthropological work was fueled by missionary and colonial writing more broadly, helping to establish anthropology as a discipline. Missionaries are also characters in many seminal ethnographies. In the beginning of *The Nuer*, Evans-Pritchard describes how much he is indebted to and how he visits the American mission station more than once. Having written that, he never discusses the role the American mission played in the Nuer's lives, despite mentioning that the mission has Nuer staff (Evans-Pritchard 1940:11-12). His exhaustive description of the Nuer and their political systems portrays them primarily as a bounded, timeless society cut off from 1930's modernity. This defining of a society as backwards is a key part of colonialism and the myth of linear modernization.

Trouillot traces the history of the emergence of the idea of a linear modernization in his book *Global Transformations*. He says,

The linear continuity that the Western universalism—the sense of a telos if not all the teleological variations that punctuate the literature from Condorcet to Engels—reflected and reinforced implicit and explicit persuasions of a growing general public within and outside the North Atlantic. During the last two centuries, it became obvious to increasing segments of otherwise diverse populations that history was going somewhere. With the certitude of a telos—or at the very least of a universal ‘meaning’ to history—came a particular twist on periodization: Chunks of chronology could be read backwards or in their contemporaneity as temporary moments of regress or more often, as indications of progress, not only was world history going somewhere, but one could tell how far it had gone and guess how much further it had to go (Trouillot 2003:13).

This notion of a linear history simultaneously defined, perpetuated and excused colonial practices. Anthropology helped perpetuate this part of colonial practice. It was the West's

purpose to document the colonized group's "savage" past and to rescue the "savages" from their style of backwards "savage" living and encourage them to move up the linear path of history to the goal of enlightenment, order and, eventually, Utopia. While I will go into more detail in the next section, it is not a huge leap to see how this parallels Christian mission work. There is a beginning point and an endpoint that defined and moved civilizations, cultures, and, in the context of the Christian conversion, the individual, forward. Thus, conversion of "savage societies" was necessary to perpetuate the myth of linear progression that fueled the colonial movement. Missionaries played an important part in this process. In the next section I explore how missionaries take up the project of modernity and use it to further their own project of salvation. This appears to be at odds with the Western ideal of modernity that has traditionally relied on the idea that to be modern is to be secular.

III-Modernity as a Moral Imperative

It would be easy to fall into the trap of assuming that missionaries were stereotypical, Bible-thumping, proselytizing men and women, focused solely on baptizing unsuspecting, indigenous people. While that image has its roots in truth, something else was happening too. Thanks to the general acceptance of teleological history and a Western notion of modernity as the ultimate goal of all civilizations, colonists and missionaries saw their work as a moral imperative connected with these notions of modernity and saving “backwards” civilizations from themselves. Jean and John Comaroff observe, “The evangelists, for example, had been exposed to conventions of African reportage well before they left Britain. Their writing became part of a long-established tale that post-enlightenment Europeans told each other about the march of civilization into the dark places on earth” (Comaroff and Comaroff 1991:37). When missionaries arrived in Africa they were already performing prescribed roles encountered before they left for the field. It was through the teleological history and conventions that they understood their role of jumpstarting the “backwards” peoples’ trajectory. This was an important task that was tied up in notions of modernity and its relationship to Christianity—an idea I will expand on in the next section. Missionaries saw it as their divine duty to bring an enlightenment-based modernity to the backwards, ahistorical groups of people in Africa. This was done through religion, but also education (Comaroff and Comaroff 1991:233) and, as I will explore later, through more “scientific” modes of being.

The Comaroffs draw on scholars such as Edward Said and Talal Asad, among others, to describe how this motivation and view of the colonial spaces was infantilizing, and created the paternal arm of colonialism taking the dark continent in hand and saving it from itself (Comaroff and Comaroff 1991:117). The colonizers were parental figures and the colonized were childlike, empty vessels to be filled. Once again the Comaroffs write:

The African interior presented itself to missionary consciousness as virgin ground to be broken, landscape to be invested with history...it required seizing the hearts and minds of its wild inhabitants, rousing them from a state of nature by cultivating their self-consciousness. Only then might they recognize their true reflection in the mirror, see themselves as wayward children of God, and will their own transformation. (Comaroff and Comaroff 1991:170)

This is obviously a problematic understanding of the colonized people. However, it is because of this perception—that missionaries saw the colonized people as children who hadn't reached their full potential and hadn't yet learned to be Western subjects—that women had a role to play in the mission project. Women were responsible for educating children to be good citizens of the world. This was a profoundly moral act for mothers and, as we shall see repeatedly, the understanding of non-Western children as needing to be educated and reformed meant that women could extend their maternal role outside the household. The Comaroffs have a nuanced argument about how this moral imperative motivated missionaries (and, in some ways, colonialism more broadly). In order to understand the religious motivations of Christianity, a whole new understanding of the self and self-consciousness were needed. The Western notion of the self and self-consciousness were brought along with the missionaries. The West and the Enlightenment, thanks to a Cartesian world view, created a specific understanding of

individuality and how that relates to consciousness. As I will explore in depth shortly, conversion wasn't a simple religious act. It involved learning to inhabit the world in a completely new way. However, to claim that this new understanding of creation of the self was simply imposed on the colonized by the colonizer and the colonial process only affected the colonized, would be oversimplifying the realities of the mission site.

The colonizers were affected and shaped by the people they colonized in profound ways. Colonialism was one sided but the colonized and the colonizer relied on the other to define themselves. In order to be colonialist, the colonizer, in order to fulfill the promise of modernity in "backwards" places, had to understand the world in the terms of colonialism and in the process created the idea of a colony. In describing the encounters between an indigenous group and the colonizers in South Africa, the Comaroffs write,

[for]the Tswana, to draw on the power of the mission to protect an endangered world; the missionary, to cast the native as a savage "other," whose difference was to be "converted" into the currency of the Christian commonwealth. To each, the other was indispensable in making real his own fantasy, though the European was to prove more capable of imposing his imperial designs on the reality they would come to share. For the conditions of struggle between colonizer and colonized were as unequal as their visions of history were distinct. Even so, the Britons and the blacks were to remain locked, for the rest of the century, in a mutually constraining embrace"(Comaroff and Comaroff 199:198).

This is a more interesting story to explore than simply painting colonial history in stark black and white. As the authors point out, it was not an equal exchange, but it was an exchange. At the risk of understatement, the Tswana and other native groups got the short end of the stick in this exchange of ideas. However, in the colonial context and, to be even more specific, the mission context, groups interacted. That interaction had consequences, and both sides were changed. Existence on the frontier, far from the

metropole, allowed for specific social norms to be challenged and re-made. The moral imperative manufactured by the West fueled and created new understandings of the world on both sides of the encounter.

Talal Asad critiques what the Comaroffs posit, pointing out that this creation and recognizing of the self that the Comaroffs are saying is happening in the colonial project can only happen in a specific set of Western epistemological structures (Asad 1996: 265). This seems obvious, but he is referring to the idea of conversion. He warns the reader to be careful not to make assumptions about what conversion means. It is a word with heavy connotations that are closely associated with the Judeo-Christian worldview. When we think about conversion and the role it plays in modernity, he argues that it is best to understand it as a tool to envision narratives which people are both interacting with and producing. By focusing on the narrative, we can move beyond associating the word with a purely religious setting (Asad 1996:265-6). I include this critique because I think it adds a layer of nuance to the idea of modernity and the creation of a new self-consciousness that the Comaroffs do not discuss as clearly or explicitly as Asad does. However, I think that the secular modernity that he discusses is inextricably caught up with Western religion, partly because Christianity is understood by missionaries to be a modern religion in contrast to the backwards, native, heathen beliefs.

Modernity and Christianity are thought of as two aspects of salvation that, while separate, are inextricably connected. The Comaroffs describe how this works in the minds of the colonizing missionaries. They write,

Once the divine light entered the world, it created the conditions for human beings to distinguish truth from falsity, and to recognize their own likeness in all its imperfection. In the “nocturnal regions” of heathenism,

however, no such differences could be recognized, for “man in his natural state was blind”. As bearers of the light, therefore, the Christians had to persuade those long accustomed to darkness to “open their eyes” and let brightness illumine their hearts. To the children of an evolutionary age, such images of enlightenment make cultural imperialism seem like a moral duty (Comaroff and Comaroff 1991:186).

Christian missionaries viewed the world in terms of progress. Progress would move the indigenous people they encountered from backwardness into modernity. Enlightenment, modernity, and the spreading of it to “savages”, into civilization is a divine duty. It is about bringing light into the darkness: an image that appears repeatedly in the primary documents discussed in the rest of the paper. Christianity in missionary minds was modern and was the only path that would lead to modernity and by extension, to an enlightened life. The West was Christian and the modernity they understood themselves to be exporting was a moral road from the darkness to the light, from barbarism to civilization.

This was an explicit exercise, which is never more clear than in the first sentence of my great-grandmother’s own masters thesis. The whole thesis strongly illustrates this point, but the first sentence is most direct and startling. She wrote, “The following treatise is both a study of the child life of the Bantu peoples of Africa as found in their native environment and also a study of the possibilities for the permanent establishment of a higher civilization for these peoples” (Havens 125:1). This is a thesis that was written about childhood among the Bantu people, the position of women in Bantu cultures and how to bring civilization to them. I have discussed at length the idea of modernity and civilization as a moral imperative for missionaries. However, this thesis and other articles that will be discussed shortly provide a link between the domestic

sphere and modernity. Mary Sue's thesis illustrates how a modern woman could—and should—extend her household beyond the four walls she was responsible for. By writing about the childhood of the Bantu peoples, Mary Sue stated her intentions of going out and bringing modernity to the women and children of the Bantu world. This can only be done with Western methods of child rearing and Western domesticity. It relies on a very narrow, Western, and specifically Christian, understanding of the world.

While I will reserve a deeper discussion of the magazine itself for later in this thesis, an article in *World Call*, a missionary magazine published by an ecumenical mission board, makes this connection between modernity and domesticity extremely clear. In the February 1920 edition of *World Call*, Mrs. W.A. Montgomery wrote an article titled, “The Mother Half of the World,” an article mostly for and about women. Mrs. Montgomery associates modernity with a specific mode of treating women. Mrs. Montgomery is concerned with the spiritual wellbeing of women and their access to divinity. She makes it clear that women have equal access to God and thus should be treated as equals to men in all ways. She argues that it is through this divinity that they are saved and why they should be treated with respect. This is a very common colonial discourse. Treating women poorly is something she associates with backward thought. She writes,

In one respect all the great non-Christian faiths of the world have failed. That failure they share with all other teachers of religion in every country and in every age, save one. All the great technic faiths of the world do not know how to admit the mother of men to the spiritual parliament of man, and they have never known how. There is just one Teacher who has looked at men and women with level eyes and summoned them all to stand with Him for the building of the Kingdom of God. It is not necessary to make any indictment. It is not necessary to give any specifications. The

history of that failure is written in every language and in every sacred book that man has written save one (Montgomery 17).

On the one hand, it is vaguely enlightened to see Christianity as a religion that sees women as equals and urges adherents and missionaries to seek ways to find equality for the genders. On the other, more important, hand, this is bigotry, given that it proceeds to eviscerate Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism as being unforgivingly sexist and backwards. Mrs. Montgomery understands herself as being a modern woman and engaging in a mission project with modern “civilized” goals. However, this understanding of the self has a darker side since it defines itself in opposition to “the other”. Only Christianity has the truth in the article and that is problematic. By claiming a monopoly on the truth and putting it into easily acquired language and easily recognized language meant that essentializing ideas regarding who has access to the truth becomes easier to do through writing.

Drawing on the historian Joan Jacobs Brumberg, this is an important thing to acknowledge when writing about female missionaries and the moral imperative of their equalizing campaign through writing and mission ethnologies. As Brumberg writes about the specific genre of this style of writing: “...in essence, the evangelical ethnology encouraged a notion of “characteristic atrocities” and, in the process, revitalized cultural stereotypes that were either dormant or had never really disappeared” (Brumberg 1982:349). Brumberg goes on to argue that it is these distinct differences between Christians and heathens that are articulated by casting one group as backwards. They were defining themselves in contrast to the other. In this case, it meant that authors such as Mrs. Montgomery were drawing on “formulaic vocabulary” (Brumberg 1982:349) to

make a statement not only about the sacred powers/role of women and children, but also about the role women were required to play in the Western middle class of which they were a part. It is clear that one aspect of that was social salvation and, according to Montgomery, there is only one way to do that.

Mrs. Montgomery writes, “There is not one faith under heaven in which there is any hope for the social salvation of this world except Jesus” (Montgomery 1920:18). Christianity is seen as the only path to salvation, but it is not through faith alone that people are saved. Social salvation is just as important to her as spiritual salvation. She invites the readers of the magazine to wonder, “What are you going to do for these other sisters of ours who need schools and hospitals and friends? Who need to give the training to them that they can take up the great work in their own land for the son of God who died for men and women and little children” (Montgomery 1920:18). It is their job as Christians: it is imperative to *their* salvation that they go out to work as missionaries or support the work financially. They go out to work for Jesus, but they go armed with modern ideas about schools, hospitals and women.

Montgomery goes so far as to point out, “Under the direction of foreign masters the native peoples are laboring at new tasks and learning very rapidly the essential fundamentals of modern methods. It is of paramount importance that they also be given teachers of high ideals and Christian principles” (Montgomery 1920:18). Salvation for missionaries and the colonized groups can only be accessed through modern methods of schools and medicine. The foreign masters (which is a telling phrase all on its own) provide this modern salvation that is rooted so deeply for them in Christian ideas of morality.

The next month in the March 1920 issue of *World Call*, an article goes on to stress the importance of Christianity as *the* driving moral force, in contrast to every other religion, that defines and fuels missionaries. It is through modern ideals of education that battles are won and lost. The article describes the Belgian Congo. “Less accessible to outside influences, Central Africa is the battle-ground which Islam has selected on which to contend with Christianity for the final control of this great continent. Ignorance is Islam’s greatest ally. The Christian missionary is everywhere known as the disinterested friend of enlightened progress. The Church must capitalize this asset immediately or the battle will be half lost before it has really begun” (Five Minutes in Our Foreign Fields-Belgian Congo 1920:15). It is this focus on Christianity as the only enlightened church and the necessary conversion to the Western religion that missionaries needed their interlocutors to convert to. This conversion to a new religion requires a conversion to a new way of thinking, a Western way of thinking. It is a conversion to a new consciousness

IV-Converting to Modernity

The significance of conversion to modernity needs to be explored more fully. To many people in the West, it feels intuitive that modernity is part of a rational worldview. It is based on secular understandings of science. It is something that Western humanity has actively chosen to pursue. Religion, on the other hand, is not rational. It is happening to the adherent through belief, conviction or external divinity. However, modernity is something that is hard to escape. When we grow up with a certain worldview that celebrates a Western, secular modernity, we have to step back and think about modernity and its origins. It is not inevitable or unavoidable. It defines the way we see the world and how we exist in it. Talal Asad describes this process,

There was a time when conversion did not need explaining. People converted because God had helped them to see the truth. (This is still good enough for the religious.) Nonreligious persons today often think of the shift into modern life in a similar way. They want to know what is involved in living a modern life, not why people are motivated to become modern. Like the truth, modernity seems to justify itself. Religious conversion is usually thought of as “irrational,” because it happens to people rather than being something that they choose to become after careful thought. And yet most individuals enter modernity rather as converts enter a new religion—as a consequence of forces beyond their control. Modernity, like the convert’s religion, *defines* new choices. It is rarely the result of an entirely “free choice.” And like converts to religion, it annihilates old possibilities and puts others in their place (Asad 1996:263)

The two types of conversion that Asad is concerned with here are important because while they feel disparate, they are more intertwined than we might initially expect, at least in the context of Christianity.

In a post-enlightenment society that relies on teleological history and taxonomy to define itself as modern, religion and magic are seen as backwards, while modern

understanding of science is, undeniably, the truth. As we shall see, and is widely argued by scholars, this is a flawed view, as many people of faith understand themselves to be modern and believe that the only way to be authentically modern relies on religious understandings of the world. Missionaries in the nineteenth and twentieth century saw themselves as an extension of this modernity. Being modern meant being Christian. They read scriptures and saw the modern world they inhabited in resignified understandings of biblical stories. There is a new sense of the self that the missionaries carry with them, tied up in these ideas of modernity, religion and capitalism.

Modernity is not always something we actively choose. In this sense, it *happens* to us much like religion can. This is what Asad means when he says we convert to modernity as a consequence of forces we cannot control. The conversion to modernity is the story of colonialism. As I will discuss in a later section describing a journey Mary Sue took, this is not always subtle.

Peter Van der Veer, an anthropologist, writes in the introduction to the edited volume *Conversion to Modernity* about how conversion in the colonial context is never just a simple religious conversion. Religious conversion, much like modernity, defines new ways of being. This echoes much of what the Comaroffs argue. Van de Veer draws on Max Weber to address this issue. He writes

The issue here as Max Weber (1954) realized, is the modern conception of the individual person, essential to both capitalism and Protestantism. Surely this modern conception had a much longer Christian ancestry, as Louis Dumont, among others, has argued, but it is under capitalism that the entrepreneurial bourgeois self with his urge for self-improvement becomes the bearer of modernity. Is it to this new personhood that Europe's Others have to be converted? I would argue that both Catholic and Protestant missions carry this new conception of the self, of bourgeois domesticity, of citizenship to the rest of this world (Van De Veer 9).

Thus, the individual is an idea that is carried to the “non-modern” world by the Western colonizers: the Catholic and Protestant missionaries. It is an attempt to bring new individuals into the church and into modernity since the individual is the primary unit of modernity. Since St Paul, Christian missions had been concerned with bringing individuals into the body of the church (Roberts 2009). Which itself leads to the question, what role does religion have in a supposedly modern era? If modernity is about being scientific and rational, that throws a wrench into modern plans to missionize the world, and, as I mentioned before, many religious groups understand themselves to be modern. How can this tension be resolved in the context of the Christian mission project? Was modernity ever as secular as it presented itself?

This conundrum needed to be explored and colonialism provided an opportunity to do so. As Van der Veer describes the situation,

The nineteenth century colony was an ideal arena for heated debates among the British about the location of religion in modernity and about experiments in secular education that could not yet take place in Britain. Conquest and conversion’s relationship to each other stood precariously in India, Britain’s largest colony. There was a fear in the East India company that direct interference with Indian religion could upset its expanding political dominance. At the same time, a clear need was felt to rule India through a class consisting of “brown gentlemen” to use an expression of Thomas Macaulay. Indian religions were seen as backward obstacles to progress” (3-4).

The experiments in education and the implicit discussions of modernity and its relationship to secularity and religion were possible since they were happening far, far away from the metropole. Frontier space allowed for a disruptions of norms. This is an idea that we will come back to later in the thesis. Ultimately conversions intertwined

with the political colony, but as I showed in my discussions of the Comaroffs' work, the idea of modernity as a moral imperative was not that simple.

So why look at the religious situation in the colonies? Why bring all of this up? I struggled with the idea of writing about colonizers and erasing the colonized. I worried that this paper would normalize or mitigate the devastating impact colonialism had on indigenous groups. A lot of horrible things were done in the name of religion and colonialism and were justified by the moral imperatives of modernity. However, by exploring the colonizers' actions and the changes they underwent, I think truths about the entire process can become a little clearer. By complicating ideas about conversion, modernity and religion by thinking of this in nonlinear ways, we can see how,

...this should lead us away from the commonsensical simplicities of theories of modernization and secularization in which modern Europe unilaterally modernizes its Others, whose role is limited to reaction, both in the sense of weak response and retrograde action. The immense creativity in colonial encounters, both on the part of the colonizers and the colonized, is often done little justice in accounts that rather stress failure rather than innovative practice. The colonial era makes new imaginations of community possible, and it is especially in the religious domain that these new imaginations take shape (Van der Veer 7).

These new communities and new potential spaces for imagination make colonialism possible, but they also allow for new narratives and conversations to emerge. The colonial landscape was destructive. Horrific atrocities occurred. So why does Van der Veer see this as a creative space? When things are destroyed, when disparate ways of being encounter each other, new ways of inhabiting and navigating the world had to emerge. In order to communicate, new forms of discourse had to emerge and be embraced by both the colonized and the colonizers. Colonialism changed the way the colonized and the colonizers placed themselves in the world. To draw on Van der Veer's

language, new spaces of imagination are possible and people can understand themselves in new ways. Colonial spaces allow for change to occur and language is one example of how these new spaces of imagination can be communicated and experienced.

Writing plays a key part in this and I will spend the rest of the paper discussing the power of writing and women's engagement with it both implicitly and explicitly. By working at this project of writing about and attempting to save (in all senses of the word) "savage" societies, a new geography is created. A new story is told, a story of control and power relations. Trouillot argues that "From the beginning the geography of the imagination went hand in hand with a geography of management that made possible—and in turn was refueled by the development of world capitalism and the growing power of North Atlantic states" (Trouillot 2003:2). This new geography made colonialism possible, but it also allowed for change to travel back to the metropole. In order to move forward I will need to discuss and explore how discourse is part of, and indeed is integral, to the creation of worlds and consciousness.

V-Writing and Language and Production of Worlds

How does language allow this creation? It becomes a question of how groups are portrayed and how they communicate. A lot of colonial writing tends to categorize and file groups and experiences into ahistorical boxes, which historian Eric Wolf cautions is dangerous. He says “Historians, economists, and political scientists take separate nations as their basic framework of inquiry...even anthropology once greatly concerned with how cultural traits diffused around the world divides its subject matter into distinctive cases.... Each society with its characteristic culture...” (Eric Wolf 1997:4). When anthropologists try to study what we assume is a distinct bounded culture, we lose a sense of spatial and temporal change that the society is concerned with. Erasure of history creates a new history and when the West is the group that is literally rewriting the history through ethnography, it becomes a history of the triumph of the more advanced—and thus virtuous—society. To quote Wolf, “History is thus converted into a tale about the furtherance of virtue, about how the virtuous win out over the bad guys” (Wolf 1997:5). We see the idea of the virtuous, enlightenment-inspired teleological sense of history asserting itself. Those of us born in the West do not immediately identify this potential danger, because, as Wolf puts it, “We have been taught, inside the classroom and outside of it, that there exists an entity called the West and that one can think of this West as a society and civilization independent of and in opposition to other societies and civilizations” (Wolf 1997:5). We have bought into this creation of “the West”, which is undeniably part of the colonial project and is not only about control and documentation.

It is about teaching us where we fall on the tautological scale of history by looking at where we are not.

Trouillot and Wolf's critiques, as well as the creation of consciousness discuss by the Comaroffs and Van der Veer, can be deepened by examining Mikhail Bakhtin, another linguist, who expands this critique of relying on ahistorical synchronic moments to understand how language or cultures function. Bakhtin argues that instead of relying on a universal pattern of speech we should instead look at "utterance". These are self-contained moments of interactions that can be as small as a word and as long as a novel. Utterances are historical and how we use them is rooted in history. So, when we deny a bounded group of people a history, their utterances suddenly become static and lose some of their meaning. The exchange between two individuals is absolutely essential for *communication*, not just language, to occur. He says,

Thus, the listener who understands passively, who is depicted as the speaker's partner in the schematic diagrams of general linguistics does not correspond to the real participant in speech communication. What is represented by the diagram is only an abstract aspect of the real total act of actively responsive understanding, the sort of understanding that evokes a response and one that the speaker anticipates. Such scientific abstraction is quite justified in itself, but under one condition that it is clearly recognized as merely an abstraction and is not represented as the real concrete whole of the phenomenon (Bakhtin 1990:69-70).

He is arguing that abstraction of language is not automatically a bad thing. It just needs to be understood in the context of where and how it is being used. If the speech participants are not on the same page, do not understand how utterances are being used, then the abstract structure is useless. Language becomes real when both participants understand the utterances being exchanged. This creates narratives that shape and produce "real" spaces. Thus a shared language and consciousness must develop for missionaries to

function. A shared understanding must develop and new understandings have to be created and that very act invokes change.

The narratives that are produced create understandings of places like Africa and other colonial spaces as timeless places. Historian Jeremy Presholdt writes,

Most mid- to late -nineteenth-century narratives of Africa shared at least one thread: that the entire continent was appallingly stunted in its evolutionary progress, that Africans were distanced from Europeans not only in space but, more importantly, in time. Temporality now seemed to set Africans apart from Westerners. Africans seemed to inhabit the evolutionary past of modernity. Hegel had once famously described the African continent as “no Historical part of the world,” but in the latter nineteenth century, the anthropologist Edward Tyler believed that barbarous tribes represented civilization’s past, stages through which moderns had successfully, in an evolutionary sense, passed (Presholdt 150).

Narratives of Africa created and shaped expectations and understandings of an entire continent. This is why looking at these narratives and utterances is so important. This thesis addresses one small part of that huge concept by examining missionary women and the writing they did. Examining their writing allows us to have a window into both what it meant to be a missionary in a colonized space and how that experience was used to engage the metropole reader and effect change in the metropole in addition to the mission field.

Women’s writing helped to collapse the differences between the mission station and the metropole. It helped missionaries engage in and spread the goal of a Christian empire. This space allowed for change and expansion to occur. Looking at writing the missionaries sent back, is particularly fitting when we think about the context of Christian missionaries. Much of the New Testament is composed of letters Paul wrote to fledgling early Christian congregations (Robert 2009). Christianity in its earliest iterations relied on

stories, letters, and writing to understand itself intellectually and to reach out to strangers across time and space. Because of this long relationship with the written word in Christianity, the letters and the stories produced by missionary women are a natural place to look when trying to understand gender and missionaries in the colonial context.

Women's writing affirmed the creation of individualism in the mission fields and had a wider impact on how the colonized were understood in the metropole. Drawing on Said and the Comaroffs, historian Elizabeth Prevost points out "From this perspective, Christianity cannot be treated as a benevolent attempt to spread the gospel but rather should be seen as part of a larger enlightenment project of constructing "Self" and "Other", or as a hegemonic dynamic of 'colonizing consciousness'" (Prevost 2010:6). Writing plays a key role in this creation of consciousness through colonization.

Colonialism is communicated to the metropole through utterance and writing, and this writing simultaneously narrates and creates the world around the missionaries. Prevost extends this to British women missionaries who worked in Madagascar. "Women missionaries located the spiritual and material redemption of Madagascar in Malagasy female agency, justifying their own integral function in the mission field through a discourse of female education as the primary means of advancing Christianity and improving the moral and physical condition of the Malagasy" (Prevost 2010:35). Prevost pulls together the ideas of modernity as a moral imperative that created a unique colonial consciousness for the female missionaries. Through new understandings of what it means to be female in Madagascar they were able to justify their own presence, actions, and authority as female missionaries. This occurs through ongoing discourses. The dialogue is both between the colonized and colonizer, but also between the mission field and the

metropole. As to why gender is a useful window into this, the authors Huber and Lutkehaus argue that it is impossible to separate imperial missions from gendered missions. They write,

Gender issues show no sign, of diminishing as topics of discussion and debate concerning the legacy of imperialism. In scholarly arenas as well as in political forums it has become increasingly clear that, whatever else it also may have been, the imperial mission was a gendered mission. This is not only because gender was a frequent idiom for relationships of power in the colonies, the imagery of empire often feminizing its subjects and creating of its agents' super men (Said 1978). Nor is it only because certain colonial politics specifically aim to control or change relationships between women and men (Stoler 1991). Rather, what gives the colonies special significance in the history and sociology of gender is that the extreme circumstances created by empire so often placed pressure on received understandings about differences between the sexes and their proper roles among colonized and colonizers alike (Huber and Lutkehaus 1999:1)

While this thesis will not be able to address every single part of this point, it is important to note that gender worked on several levels, from the abstract to the very concrete.

Gender is one way that the power relationships and consciousness are organized and that is never more true than in the mission field. It wasn't just about who could be teachers and who could be preachers. Gendered roles were at the core of the colonial experience.

As the above authors point out by referencing Edward Said, missions and colonialism could only be justified by infantilizing the colonized and making the colonizers maternal caretakers. When we look at gender and how it was expressed we can begin to see how this very gendered world manifested itself and how that changed over time. By examining the roles through writing, we can understand the change in consciousness among Western missionaries—both in the mission field and the metropole.

VI-Women Missionaries

The next few sections of this paper explore how mission work gave women new opportunities and how we can understand this by examining the writing that they produced in connection to the mission project. The level of missionary fever in the nineteenth century cannot be overstated. Missionaries were everywhere, in church, in the field, in literature and on the public speaking circuit. They were an undeniable part of the religious landscape in Western countries like the United Kingdom and the United States (Hill 1985). Becoming a missionary was a dream job that middle class and lower class women wanted. It gave them a ticket out of poverty and provided an opportunity for personal and professional development. Elizabeth Prevost writes,

From the 1860s to the 1930s, a number of young unmarried women...left the British Isles as part of a massive protestant campaign of female missionary expansion. The goals of the movement both defied and reproduced Victorian gender ideology; while it gave unmarried women an independent outlet for salaried, professional work, it also cast their mission field as a domestic sphere, exported patriarchal church institutions when marginalized women's formal religious authority, and projected a middle-class ideal of marriage and family life. (Prevost 2010:2)

As we shall see in a forthcoming section, women missionaries were possible because of specific gender norms regarding domesticity and women's roles regarding mothering. This resignification of accepted gender norms meant that women could escape from dreary lives.



Figure 2-Mary Sue Havens' graduation photo, approximately 1914

For example, my family firmly believes my great-grandmother and her sisters escaped a life of poverty through mission work. My great-grandmother, Mary Sue Havens (*nee* MacDonald) was born in 1896, and knew from an early age she was going to be a missionary. A lifelong member of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) denomination, she was one of six children and all three of the girls in the family “...gave themselves to Christian Service...” while their brothers did not (They Went to Africa 1948). Their brothers, none of whom became missionaries or worked with the church, were—to use the polite term—screw ups who never went anywhere, literally or figuratively, though some of this might be chalked up the disillusionment many young men of their generation faced after World War I. This commitment to missionary service shaped Mary Sue’s life. She paid for herself to go to college and chose to be educated as a teacher, because teachers were in demand in the mission field. She chose each of her classes by asking herself if it would be useful in the mission field (They went to Africa 1948). Family legend says she refused to marry my great-grandfather, Virgil Havens, unless he became a missionary with her. Eventually, the young couple was assigned to serve in the Belgian Congo. So, they went to Africa and served as a teacher and an

engineer respectively—and as evangelists for most of the late 1920s up until the mid 1930s. They traveled extensively for most of a decade before returning to the States because of health issues. They continued to be employed by and serve the church in various capacities stateside until Virgil died very suddenly in 1948. After Virgil died, Mary Sue taught in, and eventually ran, girl's schools. She worked in church bookstores after she retired from teaching and remained active in the church in both Indiana, Kentucky and Florida until the end of her life at the age of 102. None of this would have been possible for Mary Sue if she hadn't become a missionary. This ability to escape from a difficult family life meant that she and her sisters were given opportunities. She gained important skills that opened professional doors, to her giving her options when she needed them. This was because they were women and were thus seen as ideal missionaries; it reinforced colonial notions of progressive history. Women could come and “educate” and “mother” the infantilized colonized individuals.

This simultaneous reinforcement and disruption of gender norms had long term effects. The role of women missionaries affected not only the colonizing women themselves, but also the women who were colonized. Likewise, those women who remained in the metropole, but read the writings of women missionaries, were equally affected. There are a lot of seeming paradoxes in the story of women missionaries, but deeper explorations of the writing which women produced reveal that women were very conscious of what they were doing as they profoundly shaped missions in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

In her book, *Adam's Rib*, Lorraine Lollis tells the story of the founding of the Christian Women's Board of Mission (CWBM). In the nineteenth century, mission fever

gripped the Western World. Missionaries were everywhere, in stories, as traveling entertainment (aka desperate attempts at fundraising) and of course in the mission field (Hill 1986). Every denomination was sending missionaries overseas. The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) leadership (all men) declared their intent to organize a mission, collected some funds and then did not do anything. At all. For several decades. This frustrated several women in the church and eventually a woman named Charlotte Pearre woke up one morning and during her morning prayers heard God's voice telling her that she could, and probably should, just go ahead and set up a missionary branch of the church. So she did.

Pearre, along with many other women, collected money and organized themselves. They sent missionaries abroad, creating a thriving organization that as the decades wore on became more ecumenical and joined up with other women's mission boards. Women held positions of leadership for decades. In the early twentieth century, the men took over many of the lead positions. The organization founded, and eventually joined, many other mission boards to form a new organization. Christian Women's Mission Board (CWMB) was folded into that group, but not before inspiring generations of Disciple women to rethink their role in life. They pushed the boundaries of the accepted role of women in the Church. (Lollis 1970). We see their influence, not only in the mission field, but on the home front as well.

The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) was among the first American churches to ordain women. In 1888, Clara Hale Babcock, a Disciple from Illinois, was the first woman who was ordained as a minister. While not an anomaly, it was fairly early for women to be ordained and accepted by a mainline denomination at this point in

history. So what was the motivation? What changed? A church history written in the 1970s by two men has the following to say when it comes to *why*.

In the 1890's railroads began to offer reduced fares for ordained persons serving mission boards and the church. Disciples women were eager to use every opportunity to economize for the furtherance of their missionary program. Despite earlier conservatism regarding women in positions of leadership, at some time in this period the first woman Disciple was ordained. She was Clara Celestea Hale Babcock. Soon women were ordained in several regions, usually in order to take advantage of the railroad's generosity. Ordination of women as a theological issue was never discussed. By the first decade of the twentieth century a number of Disciples women had been ordained to Christian ministry and service (Tucker and Halister 1975:263).

Essentially, women broke through the ordination glass ceiling, not because of any profound theological or equal rights issue. It was a profoundly, almost laughably, practical reason: women were ordained in order to cut costs for traveling. As appealing and undeniable as this version is, there is an issue with this story. While at its core it is true that women were ordained partly as a cost saving measure, the above quote hides an important paradigm shift. In her dissertation about the history of Disciples women, Martha Ann Williams points out that the theological aspect *was* discussed in periodicals at great length and Babcock was not a missionary, she was a woman who felt the call to preach and served as a normal minister for her community. Williams says that denying this obfuscates the importance of what actually occurred. However, the high numbers of women ordained and their involvement in the mission movement make it hard to deny that there has to be a connection. Because of their position in the mission movement, women redefined what they were responsible for and that extended beyond mission work (Williams 1988).

Joan Jacobs Brumberg describes what happened when women took over the missionary fundraising of the time. She writes,

In the hands of women, the foreign-mission crusade took on new life and was transformed in a number of significant ways. At a very basic level, the post-Civil War women's mission crusade stopped making male missionaries the focus of their fund-raising efforts and began to generate funds for the specific support of women in the field. The Congregationalist women stated explicitly: 'The object of this Society is to engage the earnest, systematic cooperation of ... women... in sending out and supporting unmarried female missionaries and teachers to heathen women.' The women they chose to sponsor were largely unmarried or widowed, giving women without benefit of family support an opportunity to combine religious zeal with the means of making a living, if but for a few years (Brumberg 1982: 350).

As Brumberg points out, when women started to take control, missions became a social cause that focused on women. Women's mission boards decided to focus on women. Because of this focus on women, because it gave women new skills and a salary, they provided a new sense of agency for women who were otherwise marginalized in a world that largely denied them the chance to work or develop professional skills. This change towards missions being the domain of women happened across denominations. This seizure of power meant that missions provided many women with an important set of skills and a livelihood. In a topic like colonialism and imperialism that is already dealing with deep gendered entanglements, the fact that missions were driven in large part by women is not to be dismissed.

We have to further explore the story of how women in the US and the UK became the driving force behind the nineteenth century public's infatuation with the mission project. As noted, it is a story about women's rights, women's roles, Christian empire, modernity and colonialism. By examining and thinking about what was being written,

how it was being written and when it was being written, many of the abstract themes, like new forms of consciousness, conversion and the role of modernity being taken up by missionaries, come to life. We can see how they were performed by actual women. These texts, these utterances, did something almost magical. They collapsed the time and space between reader and writer, between the mission site and the metropole.

Historian Patricia Hill points out that texts were key in the missionary movements, “Movement leaders relied from the beginning on the printed word to stir the emotions of women and forge the bonds of sympathy that drew masses of middle-class women to the mission cause” (Hill 1985:5). The printed word was used in many ways when it came to mission work: missionaries wrote travel accounts, reports, home fiction, letters home, and poetry. Women were involved in this and seeing the different modes of writing women engaged with reveals how missions changed, but more specifically how women’s role in mission work changed.

The rest of this thesis will be concerned with examining primary texts. These texts range from letters to books to magazines. Through this examination, we will draw open the middle-class lace curtains to show how women in the mission field wrote and thought. We will shine light on how mission work created new opportunities for female Christian missionaries and how it was all tied up in the idea of an evolutionary understanding of modernity and history.

VII-Mission Work as an Expansion of the Domestic Sphere

Lady Missionaries in Foreign Lands by Mrs. E.R. Pitman is a book I found in the university library. Out of place among the academic books surrounding it, the book tells the stories of five women who served as missionaries alongside their husbands and children. It was published in 1890 and the frontispiece shows it was given as a Sunday school reward for “good conduct and regular attendance”. I first picked up the book on a whim while looking for something else and skimmed it. I checked it out thinking it might be useful. When I went back to do analysis of the stories and show how they supported my assertions about the domestic sphere, it became clear that I was not going to have to work hard because the book is overtly clear about its goals. It sets out to show how important female missionaries are and aims to teach the reader that women missionaries are simply performing in an extension of their “proper” place in the world. Women are domestic creatures, it teaches, and because mission work is about taking care of the less fortunate backwards people of the world, it falls within women’s purview.

The stories in *Lady Missionaries in Foreign Lands* are profoundly sad. Many of the women died in the mission field or lost children to illness or violence. The first biography, and the only one of a woman I had actually heard of before, chronicles the life of Mrs. Ann Judson. Ann Judson was one of the first female missionaries serving in the early nineteenth century with her husband in Burma. While in Burma, she dealt with illness, large scale violence, her husband being imprisoned, and she died relatively young. The realities of her situation and how it relates to women’s domestic roles are crystalized in a single moment that occurred while her husband was imprisoned. “[J]ust at

that juncture, as if to add woe upon woe, the little Burmese girls took the small-pox, and shortly afterwards the infant [the Judsons' daughter] sickened with it too, in spite of the fact that Mrs. Judson vaccinated it as she could, with an old darning needle" (Pitman 1890:57). While each missionary in the book had their fair share of trials and tribulations, this one image sticks out. A mother alone was tasked with taking care of not only her child, but many others. In the face of an epidemic, she uses the only tool she has available to her—a needle. It is so specific and it is so firmly rooted in the domestic sphere that one can hardly avoid the symbolism. When faced with a medical crisis, a mother has to fend for herself and child with what she has, a lowly darning needle, something so domestic it could not be more clear if the author had stuck the reader with a darning needle herself.

The mission project is full of these domestic moments. It was a movement that feels domestic in its specificities, even though it is international and worldly in scope. There are good reasons for this. It was a movement that was fueled by women and that had far reaching consequences when it came to issues of professionalization and redefining women's place in the world. In her book, *The World Their Household*, historian Patricia Hill describes the rise and fall of the mission movement in the US and the role women played within it. Hill presents the commonly accepted argument that mission movements gradually declined in the twentieth century after WWI due to increasing professionalization, growing secularity and the stunning hypocrisy of the Christian empire that WWI exposed (Hill 1985:2). Hill writes,

What is missing from this version of the story of American Protestantism's crusade to evangelize the world is any mention of the largest of the lay movements organized to support the missionary

enterprise, the women's foreign mission movement... Charles Forman [states] that "an improvement in the position of women was always first and foremost" among the "cultural advantages that, it was presumed Americans had to offer"; but such observations have not led historians to revise the histories to have included accounts of denominational women's societies and particular missionary heroines, but only one historian of missions has felt that women's societies merited treatment as an interdenominational phenomenon (Hill 1985:2).

It is easy to forget that women were some of the major organizers behind the large scale missionary movement in the US in the nineteenth century. They organized, funded and popularized missions as a crucial part of the Christian project (Hill 1985:2). It was ecumenical and it was widespread. It was a movement predicated on the idea that American (and British) women had something to offer the world. It meant that these women had to improve the lives of the people they saw as backwards and behind, but to achieve that they had to teach themselves new skills and how to organize a massive movement. This is an aspect of the movement that is often forgotten when we look at missions, because women are portrayed as wives, mothers, or spinsters left to take care of children with little more than a darning needle. The reality is that, over time, women who served as missionaries were increasingly more educated, trained and conscious of their mission. This was possible because they expanded and developed the role that had already been prescribed for them by society. They simply looked around the domestic sphere and made it bigger.

Hill describes how women were able to take on leadership roles in the missionary movement and even become missionaries themselves without explicitly aligning themselves with the feminist and women's rights movements. Hill looks at novels, letters and periodicals to trace how "The rhetoric of the movement reveals ideological changes

that, when translated into practice, contributed to the redefinition of ideal womanhood and the emergence of the New Woman of the 1890s” (Hill 1985:3). Women were able to exercise influence because they were painted as the moral guardians of themselves, their husbands, and children. This was an elastic role and allowed their sphere of influence to evolve and change. This helped women to redefine what women can or should be.

It wasn’t a huge leap of imagination for women to realize that this caretaking extended beyond their immediate household (Hill 1985:25-26). It was an appropriate cause for them to have.

Like other mass women’s movements of the nineteenth century that barely survived the First World War, the women’s foreign mission movement was rooted in the ideologies of domesticity that defined a “public” dimension of appropriate female influence in society. Victorian women were encouraged to exert themselves in moral and religious causes. In the Progressive era, women were applauded for involving themselves as “public housekeepers” in campaigns for civic reform... (Hill 1985:6-7).

The women who ran the mission movement were not women’s rights crusaders, in fact many vehemently separated themselves from that brand of activism (Hill 1985:35). This is a pattern that still holds true today among many conservative Christians.

One of these women, Catherine Beecher, wrote extensively on how women should be involved in the mission movement, making sure to set up gendered roles for each discrete gender. Women were expected to take part in public causes. One was not an ideal woman if she did not. The idea of a public housekeeper is apt. Hill titled her book *The World Their Household*, and I think more than anything that encapsulates how and why women were expected to espouse public causes. The world needed to be taken care of, nurtured and educated. A woman was expected to take care of her home, and to

nurture and educate her children, and this expansion of the domestic sphere meant that their activism was gendered and appropriate.

Hill's description of Breecher's plan points out that "Breecher's scheme assigns women a role that is socially and politically subordinate to man's but, in the final analysis, more critical" (Hill 1985:41). Women were needed because women understand the plight of women. They alone could be missionaries for women (Hill 1985:47). Their role was not as glamorous (women's work rarely is), but without women in the field the whole enterprise would have fallen apart. Mission work for women in the nineteenth century really was just part of their domestic duties.

Women's Work for Women [a book written by Breecher about women's place in the mission and the church] repeatedly reassures women that their homes are their first responsibility and that participation in the woman's foreign mission movement is entirely within the province of a Christian mother precisely because she is a mother and a Christian. The specter of neglected homes is banished and the taint of women's rights abjured" (Hill 52).

Women could reach other women (literally and figuratively) better than men. Victorian ideals made her uniquely suited for the role of missionary (Hill 1985:5) since they focused on women's femininity and inherent moral goodness. The world was her household and she needed to keep it in order.

Being a missionary, or being part of a missionary society, was part of what being a good, modern, Christian woman meant. Which brings us back to where we started this section: *Lady Missionaries in Foreign Lands*. On the one hand, I want to look at this book purely as a book—which will help set up other arguments in other sections—but I also want to look at the explicit way that this particular book exemplifies Hill's argument.

In many ways I wish I could present a thoughtful, nuanced analysis of *Lady Missionaries in Foreign Lands* to prove the points I am drawing from Hill's book. But I do not need to, because it is explicitly stated. In the preface the author states "...a recent number of the *Missionary Review of the World* speaks thus: --'God fitted woman constitutionally for a high service in the Gospel. Woman is pre-eminent above man in her sentimental emotional, and religious nature' so that she holds the very keys of the domestic sanctuary ..." (Pitman 1890:ix). Essentially, women's natures make them suited to carry out Christian mission work. This heads off the question of whether women should be missionaries given their domestic duties. The book is part of the didactic tradition of mission ethnology. It is telling women and girls *what they* should aspire to and *how* to aspire to it. It feeds on the idea of Victorian femininity and reinforces the importance of missionaries in general, but especially why women are particularly suited for mission work.

Pitman takes this idea even further. In fact, to be an enlightened modern woman, you must be Christian. Thus, spreading Christianity is a God-given mandate, a moral imperative. The author says,

'It is only in Christian lands that women occupy their proper place. In all other countries they are drudges, slaves, or victims' but equals or companions, *never!* Christianity in a large measure revokes the curse which the Fall imposed on women' and Christ made the sexes more equal by coming as a man and being born of a woman. He not only raised the standard of our common humanity by wearing our human nature, but He took the bitterness out of the woman's lot by honoring and adopting motherhood. From that time, all motherhood became brighter and holier, and all womanhood grander yet tenderer (Pitman 1890:vi).

According to the author, Christianity saved women from their subservient position in the world. Christ saved Christian women and, by extension, all women should work to

extend the same potential salvation to oppressed women in non-Christian contexts. What is remarkable about these two quotes from the introduction is how conscious they were of the resignification of the domestic sphere and the changing role they were playing while maintaining their separate sphere. This was a specifically modern expansion of the domain of women. It gave women a specific role in the mission field. They looked at the role society had given them and actively changed the extent of what that role was.

However, in some ways this depended on the subjugation of the very women they were fighting to help. The things they choose to focus on fit into a narrative of salvation that relied on ongoing understandings of the purpose of mission work and revealed more about the consciousness of the women writing about them than about the subjects themselves. Brumberg writes,

In the vast missionary literature of heathen female debasement, three general categories of reportage consistently emerge: intellectual deprivation, domestic oppression, and sexual degradation. In each category there were specific social practices upon which American Protestant women chose repeatedly to focus their attentions. Therefore, the assumption here is that these formulaic descriptions are less than random and that they reveal as much about the experiences and values of the ethnologists as about the society being studied (Brumberg 1982:356).

What is revealed through their writing is not just the scope of the cultures female missionaries wrote about and their readers were devouring. Instead, what their writing reveals in hindsight is what the Western women were concerned about, not only in the mission field, but in the metropole. Their writing revealed truths about their position in Western societies as much as the societies they ostensibly were writing about.

VIII-Writing Across the Distance

In this section I will discuss two types of writing in each sub-section before comparing them to explore how different genres of writing communicated different aspects of the mission experience. The motivation for writing changes what is emphasized, allowing us to see how women's roles were presented differently over time. What is clear is that the women took up Brumberg's idea of "formulaic vocabulary" (Brumberg 1982:349). I discussed that idea in terms of modernity but now it is time to connect the idea of modernity with women's writing and how that modernity is expressed. Because of this "formulaic vocabulary" I have decided against using certain private family letters out of respect for those family members who are still alive, instead choosing to focus on semi-private letters and published accounts starting with the magazine *World Call*. The letters I use were meant to be passed around among family and friends and were periodically read out loud at church functions. By comparing the types of writing we can see a pattern of writing that relies on different genres. By producing writing that fits within these genres different parts of the mission experience are highlighted for different audiences. By examining the differences we can see how writing became one indicator of the growing professionalization of female missionaries, providing them skills to seek out new opportunities when or if they returned from the mission field.

There are specific types of writing associated with missionaries and yet over time the types of writing that were produced changed in form. Historian Joan Jacobs

Brumberg describes the genres and the game changer in mission ethnography, which I previously discussed, that was the missionary magazine.

Before 1870 missionary literature had generally taken two forms: the pietistic memoir and biography of dead or returned missionaries and their wives or the ponderous anniversary sermon and annual report of the denominational board. The magazines that came after 1870, however, were part of a new "light infantry of missionary literature" which had a distinctly different tone. Underlying the new materials was the assumption that there was a body of knowledge, a "uniform study," to be learned and mastered by every foreign-missionary supporter. In addition to nonfiction reports and letters from the field, the missionary magazines for women featured stories, poems, and graphic visual materials, reflecting the evangelicals' flexibility and wide-ranging interests in adapting print media to their message (Brumberg 1982:351-352).

Mission magazines created a specific form of access for people in the metropole to the missionaries in the field. Brumberg describes the myriad of genres used to produce mission ethnographies. We have already seen the moralistic, almost hagiographic, pietistic memoir in Mrs. Pitman's book and the stories she told of the devout wives and mothers who mostly died in the mission field. What I turn to next is the mission magazine, specifically *World Call*.

Missionary magazines on their own can tell the story of the changes missions went through during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. When looked at as a form of communication rather than simple documentation it allows for a collapse of space and time. Historian Patricia Hill describes them: "Missionary magazines, conceived of as intimate visitors in the homes of all church women, communicating missionary intelligence as mother to daughter or sister to sister, became professional journals, aiding and supplementing the work of trained leaders" (150). While communication started off with more intimate details, it eventually became more professional. Magazines are a

chance for individual interaction with missionaries through the printed word. Even today, missionary magazines are still received by people despite the ease of digital communication.

World Call was the long running magazine produced by an ecumenical group of mission boards that reported on, discussed and documented all things missionary. Started in 1919 running through the 1960s, *World Call* was supposed to be a new magazine that continued where several other, more denomination-specific publications, such as *Missionary Tidings*, *American Home Missionary*, *Business in Christianity*, *The Christian Evangelist* among many others, left off. I was able to access every edition from 1920, and found additional articles written by and about Mary Sue and Virgil among family papers. The magazine exemplifies the idea of “writing across the distance.” Its mission statement is emblazoned at the beginning of each magazine, stating the magazine’s purpose: “To inform those who are interested: to interest those who ought to be informed” (January-December 3 1920). It was designed to be passed around whole congregations, bible studies and Sunday schools. My grandfather once told me it was a fixture of his church and childhood. Being that he was the son of ex-missionaries, he may have been biased, but it was a long running magazine that served several purposes.

The magazine is an odd conglomerate of things. There are feature articles that detail missionary efforts from around the world. There are poems, inspirational quotes and fictional stories. As you get further into each issue, it becomes something different. There are financial reports from the various mission boards mentioned in the footnote. An entire section discusses potential development strategies for women’s mission boards. There is something they call “program helps” which provide suggestions for Bible studies

and events run by Women's Missionary Societies and Circles. There are "fast facts for busy women"—short facts about the world and religious life. All of these provide guides for domesticity and women's potential roles in the 1920s modernity. Even further towards the end of each magazine, it essentially becomes a newsletter where missionaries describe recent events in what reads like 1920 Facebook status updates. Sometimes these updates were exciting, such as the time in January 1920 when three columns were used to describe how Dr. Mary Langdon was attacked by a tiger. (A follow up note in February made it clear she was fine and under the care of Dr. Mary McGavern.) More often these notes were small moments of missionaries expressing joy at the arrival of a new child, new converts, new missionaries or simply detailing travel arrangements.

The magazines definitely target women. I know men read them, but the newsy parts in the back and the directions for engaging with the material are explicitly geared towards women and their mission societies and boards. The question that arises, given the topic of this thesis, is whether women wrote these magazines and was writing these articles an example of their growing professionalization? The answer is that it is complicated.

I went through all twelve issues of *World Call* from 1920 and counted how many men were credited as authors and how many women. The numbers leaned heavily towards men, with 301 credited authors of articles, letters, quotes etc. Women, on the other hand, only were credited with 111. However, these numbers come with caveats. One, I may have missed some names, despite being very careful, but the type is small and at times blurry. Two, I also had to guess at some genders based on names, so I often guessed about gender neutral names or names that have flipped association (such as

Leslie) based on if the name was commonly held to be male or female based on the time period. Third, if the first and middle names were initials I defaulted that to the male column since women often used Mrs. or Miss in the front of their names. All of which is to say, I cannot be 100% positive of names. Fourth, these numbers reflect the number of articles written, not the number of authors. Many of the articles and columns had repeat authors, but, with one exception (shout out to Miss Hazel Green), the repeat authors were all men. Additionally, these numbers do not include the hundreds of notes, articles, columns and other writing that is uncredited. I think it is safe to assume the staff and editorial board wrote these articles and the staff and editorial board was split evenly by gender according to the editorial and staff listings at the front of each magazines. Despite the number disparity, this shows that women were actively writing and sending material from the mission field to be published for active readership at home. Further complicating the role of women in these magazines, I was also struck by the number of articles written by men about legendary women missionaries or teachers, such as the articles about Mrs. Mary F. Holbrook, and Mary Kingsbury (both profiled in June 1920). There were being held up as examples of ideal missionaries.

While these numbers appear to undermine my argument about women gaining increasing control over the mission movement and creating new opportunities for themselves through professionalization, I do not think it does. Women had a substantial presence when it came to writing about missions and they overlapped in subject matter while carving out their own subjects of expertise. Both men and women wrote about the history and cultures of mission sites. Both genders wrote profiles, editorials, and about medicine and history. Women were held up as examples as missionaries in their own

right. But women also wrote about childcare, education and the changing role of women in the field. It was still domestic but it was also designed to be didactic, professional, and to reach out to non-missionaries. These articles are extremely professional and imply that women both single and married had roles in the mission project beyond the domestic.

While this section has relied on numbers, thinking about why magazines like *World Call* existed in the first place and used this style of professional writing allows us to see how when women wrote—both articles and less formal writing—they collapsed the distance between the the individual reading and the individual experiencing the mission field. Both the colonized and colonizer are involved in this process which allowed for the disruption of gender roles that occurred in the mission field to also occur in the living rooms of women back in the metropole.

In 1926, Mary Sue and a fellow missionary, Miss Alumbaugh, loaded up beds, bedding, food, and my great aunt Eleanore, who was a toddler at the time, and set off to the back country. The story of their journey was published in 1927 by the missionary society. It was a pamphlet rather than a magazine article but it was meant to be distributed. This ‘diary’ illustrates not only many of the themes this thesis has been concerned with thus far, but also how a piece of writing can collapse the distance between the writer and the reader and how a disruption in gender norms occurred through familiar stories about conversion and modernity.

Mary Sue and Miss Alumbaugh went on this journey alone without Virgil or the other male missionary at Wema, the mission station Mary Sue, Virgil and their children lived at in the Belgian Congo. They were, however, accompanied by many African servants, who carried their baggage. The image of the two woman and a toddler,

accompanied by piles of baggage (Havens 1927:6), setting off to spread the word of Jesus, check on schools and dispense medical assistance, sticks in the mind of the reader. Mary Sue directly addresses the anticipated protests, saying of two women traveling alone with a toddler, “Yes, I am taking Eleanore Jean and Virgil is remaining in Wema [the mission station]. It seems that neither Mr. Johnston nor Mr. Havens can be spared from the complicity of station tasks at present... We Wema folks have other responsibilities than right here on the station” (Havens 1927:5). Mary Sue states that it is important that they go to the “...section of the field [that] is as wild and uncivilized as any section in Equatorial Africa. Frequent inter-tribal wars and cannibalism seems still to be in vogue” (Havens 1927:5). She and Miss Alumbaugh felt they had a duty to face this potentially terrifying wilderness, which meant that traditional gendered notions of who could travel safely alone had to be put aside. She writes, “Our visit will strengthen our evangelists and teacher boys and encourage them in their fight against heathenism out there at their difficult posts” (Havens 1927:5). The main purpose of the visit was to identify weak spots in the schools and clinics, but as she describes her triple purposes of holding services, looking at the schools, and giving Miss Alumbaugh (a nurse) a chance to hold clinics, it becomes clear that there is a bigger goal. Mary Sue writes, “...what an opportunity to bring a “gleam into the gloom” of this dark corner!” (Havens 1927:6). The missionary goal of enacting the moral imperative of bringing Christianity and modernity to the supposedly backwards civilizations stands out clearly. The two women and the baby are bringing the gospel, modern schooling, and modern medicine with them.

At one point in the journey, Mary Sue describes an interaction she had with a chief. The Chief was hesitant to allow his only son to leave to go to the mission school at Wema. He was afraid his son would leave and never come back. Rituals and traditions would die (Havens 1927:21). This was a real problem, as Mary Sue writes,

All [the chief's] hopes are centered in [the son] so that he may in time take his place as leader of the people of this section. Miss Alumbaugh says she feels very sorry for him. He seems very sincere. Too often it is true the better educated boys refuse to go back to their own villages. She felt that the old man's problem was a real one and told him that he must think of his boy's future—how much better he will be able to serve his people and to meet the oncoming of civilization if he is able to read and write and can better understand the white man (Havens 1927:21-22).

The chief is faced, literally in the case of two missionaries showing up on his doorstep, with the changes colonialism is bringing. He is dismayed by the loss of traditions, but is persuaded to send his son to the mission school since the oncoming of civilization is evident. This is almost too obvious to state, but this is the moral imperative of bringing civilization to the uncivilized and forcing them upwards along the teleological scale of history. Miss Alumbaugh convinces the man to send his son to the missionary school so that he can better understand the white man. He must learn a new sort of consciousness. This drama is being performed in real time and written about in Mary Sue's diary to affirm that the ultimate goal of mission work was successful.

Because "native" traditions were dying with the advancing Christian mindset, Mary Sue describes how two men resisted cutting their hair despite professing the urge to be baptized. Mary Sue associates the traditional hair style with backwardness and superstition. Eventually, they convinced the men to cut their traditional hair as part of their ceremonial conversion to Christianity (Havens 1927:28). It is tempting to read a lot

of symbolic significance into this event. Given that this was a letter to her family, and Mary Sue was very conscious of what she was writing and that it might be published, I think it is fair to read the metaphor. This is a moment where the rational modern Christian civilization forces two men to sever (quite literally) their ties to an unhealthy and superstitious way of life. It is a literal and metaphorical moment of conversion to modernity.

The images and stories in this short pamphlet rely on vivid writing that draws the reader into the story of two women and a toddler on a journey. It is an example of how writing can collapse time and space to connect the reader to an alien place. It creates an imagined community, to use Benedict Anderson's phrase (Anderson 1983). The writing allows readers and the writer to exist in common space. The only thing that breaks the spell is the racist and colonial arrogance that is shocking to the modern reader. There is a clear sense of this implicit in the text. There is a moment when Mary Sue describes how she was preparing communion for a Christian community. She had no wine, but as she prepared an orange-pineapple juice substitute, she thought, and then writes, "I prepared the wine, I could not but think of all you home folks communing in your churches. Our little group today in that rude mud hut of a church, joined you and many other Christians all over the world in one great communion service in the memory of the Lord Jesus" (Havens 1927:20). Not only does the writing implicitly collapse the mission field with the metropole, it is being explicitly done in the act of communion. Communion unites her with her family and community back home, but also with Christian communities around the world. While that is the point of communion in a literal religious sense, there is another role that communion is playing. Through the familiar ritual Mary Sue writes

about how in that moment time and space were collapsed and she was present with the people she loved and missed. The fact that this collapsing of distance between people and spaces is occurring through a ritual and that ritual is being performed by a woman is important. Prevost writes about how this was an experience that was not unique to Mary Sue when she writes about how two women who served as missionaries seventy-five years before Mary Sue,

...wrote of how a spiritual exchange occasioned a discovery of shared womanhood that was only possible in the mission field and both named the communion rail as a site where they experienced this commonality by participating in the Eucharist. This sacrament was central to both the ritual inclination of one missionary society and the evangelical bent of the other, but it also signified a feminized space of devotion in a mission community's structure by male clerical hierarchy. The ways these missionaries "encountered" religion and gender on the periphery were therefore formative to their representation of themselves as Christians and women. Yet in the course of their mission work, both these women would also face questions about what those categories constituted, articulating variously the confidence and the fragility of a mission project fraught with contradictions that undermined the vision of a multiracial community bound by gender and religion" (Prevost 2010:1).

The act of communion connected and collapsed the space, but it was noted and performed through writing. It creates a magical, liminal, moment for women to take control and feel part of something bigger. Communion is a moment that collapses time and space. By writing about it, the women are allowing the reader to experience the same sense of communion centuries later. It allowed the reader to experience the ways that a frontier mission challenged gender norms, and when missionaries found new ways to perform gender, they traveled back home with their writing. It helps to understand how these women took power.

Mary Sue's letters to friends and family, be they in unpublished forms or published, provide a window into the mission field. *World Call* provides a similar function. A letter from the June 1920 edition makes this clear. Kathryn Pierce from Visalia, CA wrote,

I am more and more deeply impressed with the superior quality of our new missionary magazine, WORLD CALL. I read it with the greatest interest and find it full of the living truth that I have longed for, and the news of the world that is the joy of my life. I do comparatively little for missions, but WORLD CALL gives me inspiration for the little I do, and I am using its information weekly in talks to our bible school. I am a sort of four-minute woman for missions, and certainly WORLD CALL is my great source of information...I should like to see good pictures of our heroes and heroines of the cross on the the inner side of the cover and then they would be large enough to make creditable posters and give out to young people a knowledge of our works and their work... (Pierce 1920:54)

Ms. Pierce feels a connection to the missionaries she reads about in the articles, reports, newsletters, etc. that can be found in *World Call*. She wants to encourage this through the images and stories that she encounters in the magazine in order to spread the word. It is because of writing that the distance between the mission field and the metropole is transcended and experiences can be shared.

IX-Comparing *Types of Writing*

In order to highlight just how important genre and purposeful writing was, I will compare the writing of a letter sent home by Mary Sue to her family recounting a long trip the entire family (Mary Sue, Virgil, and their daughters, Eleonore and Rosalind) took to the Ngome region to hold three “institutes” to an account of the same trip that was published in *World Call*, six months later. This allows us to have a deeper understanding of the differences between the two genres of writing and how the same trip can be told with different emphasis to communicate different things.

Throughout the letters that Mary Sue wrote home and the formal article she wrote, she describes holding “institutes” with Virgil. Mary Sue and Virgil, usually accompanied by a few other missionaries and their children, would travel from Wema. They would arrive at settlements and essentially check in with the people there. There was usually an evangelical message presented at a service or other gathering. Virgil would look over church records to learn about the number of attendees, money raised, etc. He might hold an agriculture workshop. Mary Sue would go to the school and test the pupils. They would interview new converts and perform large group baptisms when appropriate. This was relayed home both in letters and in articles and reports. There is a level of professionalism in the descriptions. They follow a pattern that quickly becomes familiar when reading mission ethnologies. The numbers and businesslike descriptions are usually wrapped up with a prayer or nod to the fact that “God is good” or “God is truly using us as tools of civilization and transformation”.

Mary Sue's letter home is long: twelve legal pad pages long to be exact. It is full of small details, of domestic matters. At the very end, there is a palpable homesickness that comes through the blurry type-written pages. The letter begins with a long description of packing and a discussion of the fact that everyone in the family was running a fever. At one point, Mary Sue doubts her mothering skills when she is confronted with the choice of staying at Wema or risking the health of her children. She writes,

That night I wrestled anew with our old problem. Common sense told me that I had better stay on the board and take my sick child to the doctor in Lotumbe, instead of going so far away from any other help should she grow worse. Still, the needs of the people come to be clearer than ever after visiting awhile with those who had come for us. This was clearly the greatest test of faith I have ever had. As soon as I was able to cast aside my fears and trust in God's care for us, we began to make plans that made the venture seem easier (Havens letter page 2).

There is no mention of this doubt and sickness at all in the *World Call* article. There are moments in the letter where it is businesslike and could be in the article in *World Call*.

An example of this is when Mary Sue discusses the challenges and structures of the schools she encounters (Havens 1933:3) and when she sums up the success of the entire journey by describes the entire journey in terms of numbers: numbers of students seen, numbers of baptisms and so on. (Havens 1933:10). There are other familiar moments. On page eight of the letter, she describes the process of Virgil trying to explain and implement a modern, Western style. It is once again the story I have encountered over and over again while reading colonial histories: the moral imperative of the advanced white men bringing modernity to the childlike Africans in order to fast track their evolution on the teleological line of history.

At the end of the letter she gets sentimental as she looks at the stars and compares what she sees to what she knows her family back home are seeing. This brings them together despite the distance. She writes, “Somehow I always feel much closer to you folks at home, while star gazing, than at any other time. To think that seven hours earlier by your time, some of you may be looking at the same stars” (Havens 1933:11). Ultimately, however, Mary Sue is too involved in her work as a missionary to leave her current situation and follows up her discussion of the stars with descriptions of singing. She finally ends the letter having come home to Wema. The letter swings between reporting the professional requirements of her calling, and the more intimate details of family and faith.

Contrasted with this letter home is the article in *World Call*. While it does not read like a soulless report, it has a different tone. It is shorter for one thing. While it is obviously the same account of a family going out on a long journey, the details are different. There is no mention of the illness that plagued the beginning of the journey. The letter is full of details of the two girls, their reaction to their surroundings and the reaction to them as they traveled. There is half a page about how they adopted a squirrel and Mary Sue worried for the animal’s safety given her daughters zealous affection for it (Havens 1933:7). The article, while it is accompanied by a photograph of my great-aunts, says nothing about them. There are no domestic details and nothing about a squirrel. The article focuses instead on the professional details of missionaries, the numbers of students they saw, the structure of the schools they visited, the numbers of people they baptized, development progress, fundraising efforts, and ends with a stirring evangelical message from Virgil (Havens 1934:26). There are no chatty details. In the article, Mary Sue makes

no mention of home. In an odd way, it feels less spiritual than the letter. There are no exaltations of personal faith or trials. The article is a report, designed to tell the story of what they are doing, not to tell a story about them. This makes sense given the context of the letter. The article was supposed to be read by people who didn't necessarily know the Havens family. It was for publication in a trade magazine designed to report on the business end of the mission field. That is why it chooses not to report not the close domestic details. This is in contrast to earlier letters home women like Ann Judson wrote home. This shift in tone depending on the genre of writing makes sense given the changing role women missionaries played by the early twentieth century as they shifted from purely domestic helpmeets to more professional individuals. Countless women were able to learn new skills that could help them move forward outside of the mission project as well.

X-Change in the Metropole

While it makes sense that communion and letters home can collapse the distance between the mission field and the metropole, the question arises as to whether new ideas can travel in this context. Can a new role for women be found in the metropole? It would be foolish to claim that all of feminism and women's progress has its roots in the mission field. It is simply not true. However, something important did happen in the mission field and the mission societies. The women in the mission field were forced out of their comfort zone and had to grapple with the disruptions of their understanding of the world.

Huber and Lutkehaus describe the process as,

...the same uncertainties, ambiguities, or points of tension that were so disruptive also offered opportunities for action and opened new vistas for reform...Colonial experience, it appears, not only made gender negotiable in many missionary organizations but, through them, contributed to the negotiation of gender in other institutions "abroad" and "at home". Exploring the dynamics of these negotiations...emphasizes the interconnections between colony and metropole (Huber and Lutkehaus 1999:24).

Being far away from the everyday social norms and gender roles, even though they made it possible for women to be missionaries in the first place, meant that they had to negotiate new realities that did not always match up with internalized understandings of the world. Living on the frontier forced them out of their ascribed roles.

Because the colonies were frontiers, they were far away from the ordered Victorian and Progressive Era norms and rules. Huber explains why that matters.

A "frontier" by definition is a place where things are out of place, where order is a goal to be achieved rather than an accomplishment to be maintained. Frontiers are quintessentially found in territory that is distant from the "centers" of an expanding civilization. But they need not be so far away. Frontier conditions also have a temporal dimension and can be

experienced at the beginning of virtually any human project, especially those that involve building new institutions...boundaries that appear clear in the conception can blur and detours can obscure the route” (Huber 1999:186).

Missionaries went to the colonies and mission fields to establish order and civilization. They often set out with clear understandings of what that looks like, what it means to be Western and civilized. They go with the goal of bringing the colonized groups up on the teleological scale. When they reach the frontier, this new order must be negotiated. New consciousness is created through discourse for both the colonized and colonizer. This rupture shapes the experience of everyone.

Once again I want to make it clear that colonialism and the reshaping of consciousness on the frontier is not an equal exchange. The missionary feminism and change that traveled back to the metropole relies on defining women’s new opportunities in contrast to the downtrodden female other. Historian Susan Thorne reminds us that,

The entire edifice of missionary “feminism”—the employment opportunities, the valorization of (British) women’s skills and virtues, the intentional and social space for self-assertion, collective action, and aggressive challenging of male prerogatives—rested on the existence of a degraded female Other in the colonies and at home. The missionary rationale for women’s escape from the separate sphere, in other words, actively depended on the subordination of their heathen sisters (Thorne 1999:60).

The whole point of the mission is to bring modernity, religious and otherwise, to the downtrodden men and women of the colonies. However, to do that assumes that the harbingers of change must be modern themselves. This forced the hand of Western societies. If they were going to go to Africa and other colonies to teach women to be modern, society had to allow women in the West to advance their causes. This seems like a good thing, however-the Western women’s progress is defined in opposition to the

downtrodden “sisters”. That casts the non-Western in a continual role of carefully crafted inferiority and subservience. It assumes the teleological understanding of history and Western modernity superiority. We see this in the ethnographic writing and the articles found in *World Call*.

An article in *World Call* titled “Woman’s Sphere is—The whole earth” published a few months after the 19th amendment was passed, proclaimed 1920 the year of the woman by the magazine. The article explores how “she was a subject, not a citizen [before this]” (Woman’s Sphere is—The whole earth 1920:3) and a discussion follows of the paying of a debt and how trial and suffering makes victory all the sweeter. The article ends with the sentiment that “[now that women can vote] They have the tools with which to strike off their own shackles” (Woman’s Sphere Is—The Whole Earth 1920:3). Armed with modern rights, education, suffrage and the will to fight, women in all contexts could change their destiny, remove the impediments that have kept them from being truly equal to men. It is a seductive promise that with contemporary hindsight we know has never been entirely fulfilled and has been actively rejected by many. Regardless, compare the woman who can shake off the shackles imprisoning her with the women who relied on the domestic sphere or with the women in Mrs. E.R. Pitman’s book. How did they get to such a different place? Or is it really so different?

The *World Call* article “The Woman Missionary of Yesterday and of Today” by Elsie McCormack from the April 1920 issue-discusses the dangers of sending off unqualified women for the mission field (McCormack 1920:36). The focus on correct education is stressed. After being told to study languages, one woman said, “I therefore majored in French and German, which I have not had occasion to use more than three or

four times. If someone had only told me to take up economics and sociology, my efficiency on the field would have been doubled” (McCormick 1920:36). Women not only planned on becoming educated to be better missionaries, they took up subjects that had practical value. This is important, because once they got to the field, women were presented with substandard living conditions, and had to engage in things like plumbing and construction that they had no familiarity with and were paid so little—even by missionary standards—they could not even afford a newspaper to stay connected to the metropole (McCormack 1920:36). The author bemoans the fact that women are often asked to do work they are not trained for since the “mission leaders sitting in a distant American office, are inclined to consider their workers mere pawns on a great chess board” (McCormack 1920:37). However, not all was lost and there were plans to encourage equality among women missionaries with better training, better pay for women in an attempt to have their salaries approach those of the male missionaries, limited terms, and seeing a doctor on a regular basis (McCormack 1920:37). This admittedly glacial change that we see is important. Women were seeking out education in order to be more professional, because without them, the work that could be done was limited. Because of the increased role women were tasked with in the mission field, it became clear they had the right to be treated with more equality to men—which is better than leaving a woman alone with a darning needle to face a hostile environment.

To illustrate this, examine figures 3 (page 55) and 4 (page 56). These are the letters that were sent to Virgil and Mary Sue from the Missionary Society to formally appoint them to their posts in the Belgian Congo. The first thing to think about is that

there are two different letters. Despite being a married couple, they were treated as individual missionaries. Contrast that with the Judsons, where Ann Judson went along

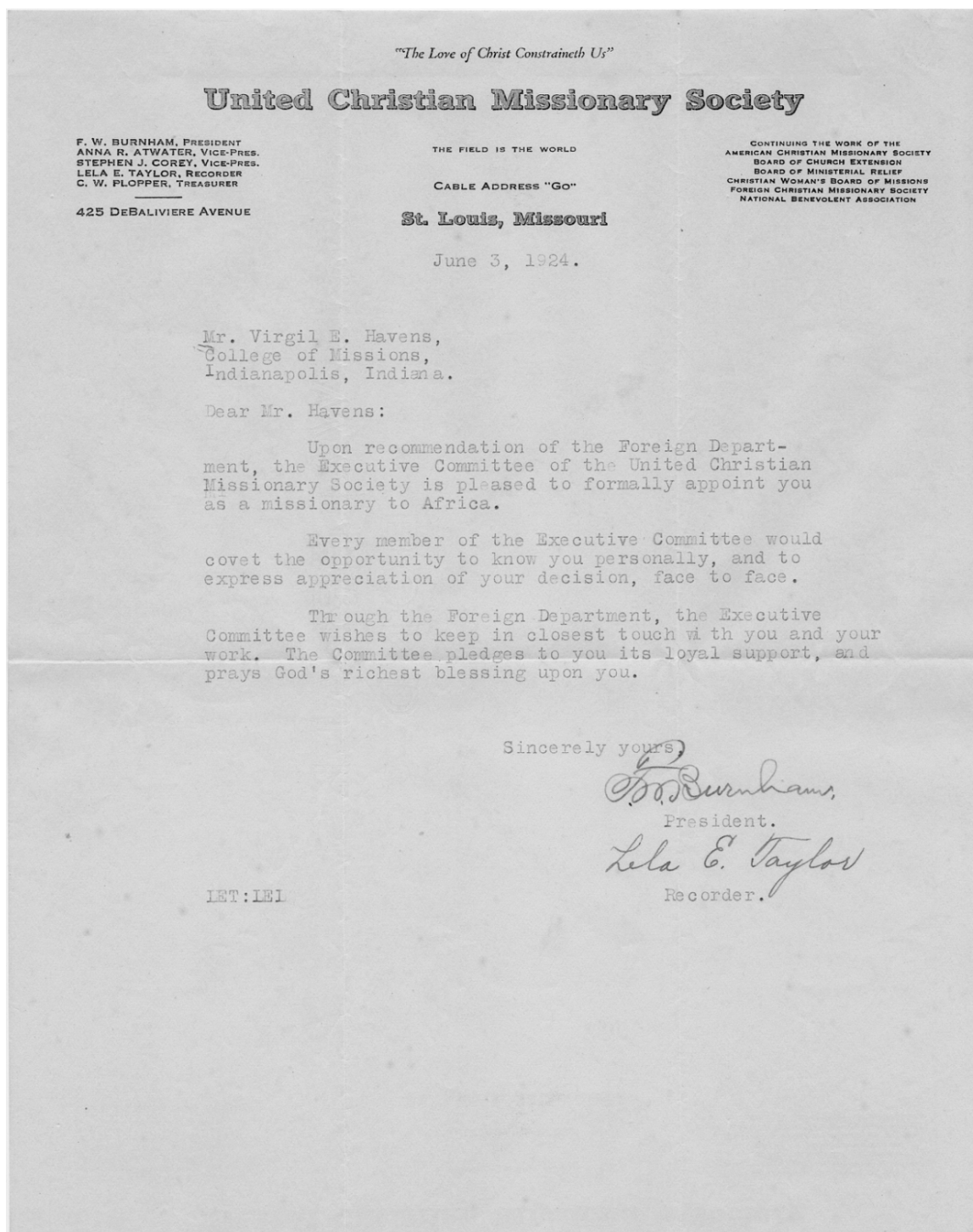


Figure 3-Virgil Havens' Appointment Letter 1924

"The Love of Christ Constraineth Us"

United Christian Missionary Society

F. W. BURNHAM, PRESIDENT
ANNA R. ATWATER, VICE-PRES.
STEPHEN J. COREY, VICE-PRES.
LELA E. TAYLOR, RECORDER
C. W. PLOPPER, TREASURER

425 DeBALIVIERE AVENUE

THE FIELD IS THE WORLD

CABLE ADDRESS "GO"

St. Louis, Missouri

CONTINUING THE WORK OF THE
AMERICAN CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY SOCIETY
BOARD OF CHURCH EXTENSION
BOARD OF MINISTERIAL RELIEF
CHRISTIAN WOMAN'S BOARD OF MISSIONS
FOREIGN CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY SOCIETY
NATIONAL BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION

June 3, 1924.

Mrs. Virgil Havens,
College of Missions,
Indianapolis, Indiana.

Dear Mrs. Havens:

Upon recommendation of the Foreign Department, the Executive Committee of the United Christian Missionary Society is pleased to formally appoint you as a missionary to Africa.

Every member of the Executive Committee would covet the opportunity to know you personally, and to express appreciation of your decision, face to face.

Through the Foreign Department, the Executive Committee wishes to keep in closest touch with you and your work. The Committee pledges you its loyal support, and prays God's richest blessing upon you.

Sincerely yours,

F. W. Burnham

President.

Lela E. Taylor

Secretary.

LET:LEL

Figure 4-Mary Sue Havens' Appointment letter 1924

with her husband as his wife, not as missionary in her own right. The second thing is that the content of the telegrams is worded exactly the same. Once again, Mary Sue and Virgil are treated as equals, at least in the wording used to address them. Specific roles are not assigned to either in their appointment letters and one is not explicitly accompanying the other. These letters were sent roughly five years after the McCormack article was published. The Missionary Societies had begun to sit up and take notice of the professional skills of women and how they needed to be treated with equal respect. In the post WWI era of missions, the focus on individual skills—Mary Sue’s teaching and Virgil’s practical engineering skills—reflect the changing requirements and preparations for missionaries.

The women were conscious that this change was happening. In some ways, better training and more responsibility were only possible because women in the mission field were confronted with the extreme complexities that occur on the frontier when disparate groups interact. Because women were seen as ideal missionaries who performed gendered roles in the mission field, their training and preparation was taken seriously. Elizabeth Prevost has this to say about women missionaries and the change they underwent:

This feminized discourse of religious authority was capable of interrogating not only prevailing norms of gender, but of Christianity and empire. The zealous women who left Britain to bring the light of Christ to the dark places of the earth understood their mission through an idiom of stark oppositions; native v. European, heathen v. Christian, savagery v. civilization, enslavement v. emancipation. Their work in the mission field quickly undermined these assumptions. British women experienced evangelization not as a triumphal march of the gospel but rather as a complex web of negotiations over political, religious, and medical authority. Moreover, missionaries’ acutely religious worldviews and their encounters with indigenous political, social, and cultural landscapes

offered new and competing frames of reference which complicated their sense of connection with “Greater Britain”. The mediums of ritual, prayer, scripture, education, medicine, marriage, and motherhood offered missionaries ways of constructing a shared sense of Christian womanhood that encompassed divergent cultural systems, even as they also revealed certain faulty lines in missionary women’s universalist ideals. Similarly, although missionary and humanitarian projects often worked to promote the empire at home, religious institutions also shaped imperial discourse by highlighting the economic and racialized inequalities of colonialism. Thus these selective and creative deployments of Christianity and gender had the potential to cut across as well as reproduce other normative categories of difference (Prevost 2010:2).

Women who left their normal environment encountered the weak points and fractures that were hidden by normalization. When outside their comfort zones, the black and white understandings of the world, the modern understanding of the world, tended to fall apart.



Figure 5- The Oscar McDonald family. Probably taken around 1918 because of the two boys in uniform.

To illustrate the true potential for transformation, I offer up Mary Sue as a concrete example. She was as the daughter of a man whose family had owned slaves. Born thirty years after the civil war ended, she nonetheless had internalized a deep racism. As a child when her father’s “nanny” came to visit her former charge, Mary Sue’s mother would not let the black woman in the house. Her father made all his children eat

dinner on the porch with his “nanny”. When Mary Sue was preparing for mission work, she desperately did not want to go to Africa as she “discovered to her deep sorrow that she cherished an aversion to the dark-hued race” (TWTA 57). In order to manipulate the system, she started to learn Chinese. When the mission board shut down operations in China, Mary Sue quickly switched to Hindi classes. As she started to pick up the language, the mission board realized that she was adept at languages and decided that between her teaching skills and Virgil’s engineering experience they needed to send her to Africa—since she could obviously pick up the language quickly.

While she was in the Congo, her deeply held overt prejudices withered and died. *They Went to Africa* oversimplifies it when they write, “Mrs. Havens struggled with her prejudices until they were entirely wiped away” (TWTA 27). It was not an overnight change, as her writing shows. I am not naïve enough to believe that my great-grandmother was colorblind or did not maintain some prejudices. However, something did change because of her experience in the mission field. Even if it was the bare minimum, her outlook on prejudice and race changed.

During World War Two while the rest of the country—including their church’s Sunday school—was engaged in teaching a propaganda-based hatred towards German and Japanese groups, Mary Sue and Virgil told my grandfather (who was about ten) that he should not hate Germans or Japanese people because they were different or “the enemy”. Just before individuals of Japanese descent were interned in concentration camps on the West Coast, Virgil got in his car one night and drove across the country to pick up a Japanese family who proceeded to share Mary Sue and Virgil’s house for the duration of the war.

In the 1960's when my grandfather became involved in the civil rights movement and community organizing, Mary Sue supported him in a variety of ways. She had to have been the only person in the entire city of Indianapolis to have a subscription to *El Malcriado* (the newspaper the UFW published throughout the 1960s). In the 1950s Mary Sue's middle daughter married a Jewish man, shocking most of the people in their social groups. Meanwhile, Mary Sue was okay with it. In the 1980s, while the rest of the church gossiped about my aunt who was a new single mom to a biracial child, my great-grandmother welcomed and loved my cousin. While that may seem like a small thing that should have happened no matter what, my aunt and cousin almost died during her labor because a doctor in Lexington, Kentucky did not want to operate on a single mom of a biracial child. This was still a time and place where many people were not okay with my cousin existing.

My entire family takes it for granted that without the exposure of the mission field in Africa none of this would have happened. Mary Sue would have continued to harbor explicitly racist worldviews and she would not have taught her children and grandchildren anything different. Rhonda Semple argues that this story and the following academic discussion is an overly romantic view of women's mission work (Semple 2003). While that warning is an important one, I believe that the rest of Semple's argument relies too heavily on a narrowly defined view of change, relies on comparing men and women, and fails to pick up on nuanced change that occurred within gender groups. Mary Sue's understanding of the world had to be reorganized because what she encountered on the frontier did not align with what she had been taught. Her reality and

understanding of the world and race were challenged when she went to Africa.

Rebuilding them forced her to change how she understood the world.

Women whose worlds fell down around them in the mission field had to rebuild them in ways that reflect what they understood as true, but also had to include the different modes of being that they encountered in the field. Like Van der Veer discusses earlier in this paper, encounters in the colonies meant that new understandings, new sites of imagination emerged. They were conscious of this reframing of colonialism, religion and gender norms. This is perhaps easier to see with historical hindsight, but women in missionary circles were aware of the complicated nature of what they were encountering. In the May 1920 edition of *World Call*, Miss Josepha Franklin wrote an article cautioning young missionaries to approach mission work with nuance and knowledge.

Some twenty-five or thirty years ago, before I came to India, I saw a picture which typified the then common idea of mission work in foreign fields. A white preacher in his long black coat and huge sun hat stood under a tree holding out the Bible to a crowd of naked black heathen. The heathen were reaching out their hands in joy and gratitude and trembling all over themselves in their eagerness to grasp the Book. I trust the present generation knows more about the manners, customs, religions and history of races and particularly more of human nature than the past generations did still a little information now and then as to what a foreign missionary is up against in non-Christian country will probably benefit all, even at the present time. Some other better informed may say you can find such conditions in your native town any day you look for them. This is also probably true, but all the more shame to you and your native town that you permit such conditions to exist (Franklin 1920:32).

A few things are happening in this quote. One, she suggests that faith alone is not enough to be an effective missionary. Knowledge and training are important. The women Prevost is concerned with, and the ones Franklin is writing to, are setting up new missionaries to not think in terms of black and white and to be ready to understand and co-opt indigenous

traditions through syncretism. She also brings home the fact that many of the issues missionaries face in the mission field affect people close to home in the metropole. It would be impossible to do this without a change in understanding about the world. It casts modern philanthropy in shades of grey that affect the metropole and the missions field. In a magazine that is the product of a century of women's work on mission boards and mission societies, it means that a profound change has occurred since Ann Judson went to Burma unprepared and was forced to vaccinate her children with the domestic tools she had on hand. This style of mission work created "...a feminized and hybridized discourse of spirituality [that] created new spaces for women to exercise authority and to forge common ground across distance and culture on several levels" (Prevost 2010:4). Prevost is arguing that women's involvement in the colonial missions created religious and professional authority in a way that was denied to them back home. The disruption in norms they experienced when they left the metropole allowed change to occur and it is through writing sent home that connections were created that shaped what was going on in the metropole (Prevost 2010:4-5). Prevost argues that this affected suffrage and feminist movements in Britain (Prevost 2010:225).

I hope I have shown the undeniable change in how women approached mission work and how they worked hard at creating new spaces for them to perform new roles, even if they are not roles contemporary feminists would approve of. Prevost writes, "The cases of mission Christianity examined here did not always transplant metropolitan norms of either gender or religious authority, nor did they predetermine an upper hand in transactions in the mission field. Instead, mission Christianity provided a context in which British women and gender norms were themselves "remade"" (Prevost 2010:7-

8). Christianity became a source of power for many of these women. As Prevost notes, one woman missionary "...modified older discourses of cultural and imperial feminism by arguing that missionaries were both the agents and models of a Christian democratic state, and that whole global enterprise of Christianity was at stake in women's enfranchisement" (Prevost 2010:233). Christianity became a source of power for women to enact change and develop new skills and roles.

As we saw earlier in this paper, many women saw Christianity as the only religion that created a space for women to be treated as equals. It was through Jesus and Jesus alone that women found liberation. As the cover of *World Call* wrote, "...women's emancipation began when the virgin of Galilee sang in holy Rhapsody 'My soul doth magnify the Lord' and woman's enfranchisement is not merely political justice to half of a great nation's citizenship; it is another long step in the irresistible forward march of [Jesus]." Women's rights, the magazine editors argued, were more than justice. It was divine justice. If women in the West and the non-West did not become enfranchised, then there was no way Christianity could move forward. In the minds of the women whose writing I have discussed thus far, female emancipation is part of creating a modern Christian empire. These women understand the world in terms of faith: to be modern is to be Christian. Freedom for women (and everyone else) can only be found through Christianity. Despite being part of colonialism, missionaries and their project to modernize were also at odds with colonialism and inspired change in that arena as well. Many historians think the missionary heyday ended with World War I but that simply isn't true. In the next section I will end this thesis by exploring how the potential

for change in individuals' lives promised by the mission project extended beyond just women.

XI-The Limits of Modernity

Many missionaries were uncomfortable with the political parts of colonialism. This manifested in abolition efforts and the violence colonialism carried with it. The irony of missionaries understanding themselves as anti-imperialist is almost paradoxical. As Huber and Lutkehaus note, “Through missionary efforts Christianity became a global religion and mission schools, health services, and other cultural technologies helped secure Western colonialism and in some cases transformed or even undermined colonialism’s effect” (Huber and Lutkehaus 1999:23). Even as Western modernity began to become part of the cultural empire of Christianity, it undermined the effect of political colonialism. The skills missionaries provided allowed colonized groups to rebel and dismantle political colonialism. As paradoxical as it seems, many missionaries were aware of the violent and exploitative nature of colonialism and that empire had catastrophic effects. Some fought the horrific fallout of colonialism. This is never more clear than in the nineteenth century in the Belgian Congo (Hoschchild 1998). Many missionaries saw the political attempts to claim and control other groups and their land as a complete failure of modernity. Prevost argues that “for many Anglican feminists, the empire had directly contributed to the shambles in which the world stood in 1919. The national competitiveness and the race for markets of the “new imperialism” had fueled the inter-European tension which culminated in the war and threatened to infect the terms of the Peace” (Prevost 2010:204). Empire and modernity had failed the world and resulted in a long, violent and catastrophic war. However, where many people lost hope completely, many missionaries started down a new path.

Missionaries had to change after World War I, given the undeniable failure of the West to live out the utopian ideals of teleological progress that had fueled the colonial project. One way they did this was to separate Christianity from political entities to create a new kind of global idea. Prevost writes, “missionaries and mission supporters were therefore not alone in their discomfort with imperialism, but they also advanced a uniquely Christian argument for why the empire in its current form was fundamentally at odds with a liberal, democratic global ideal. Thus at a time when Britain’s territorial empire was at its most widespread and imperial culture at home was arguably at its most pervasive, the missionary movement advanced a significantly counter-cultural position” (Prevost 2010:202). Essentially, they argued that Christianity was the only salvation to be found in the world. Christianity was needed to advance civilization and to be truly enlightened they “envisioned a world...in which the mission church could detach religious revelation from European civilization and hierarchal notions of progress. Rouse believed that reasserting the spiritual essence of Christianity would remove it from the material, cultural, and political hegemony of imperial institutions” (Prevost 2010:210). They saw Christianity as the purest form of imperialism. They thought that if Imperialism was disconnected from the earthly clutter of dingy politics and instead rooted in Christianity it would create a better world. This ideal of a Christian empire makes sense in many ways. Christianity is a religion that is malleable and travels. As Huber and Lutkehaus write,

Christian Churches have always been transnational institutions, the early embodiment of a message believed to have universal relevance. Even those Churches most committed to localism in their organization have ways of cooperating with similarity organized groups to join in common—often missionary—causes. Similarly, in the countries where missionaries

work, local converts become part of larger church politics (Huber and Lutkehaus 1999:321).

Christian missionaries provide the disruption needed for conversion. That conversion to the religion and also to Western modernity creates a transnational institution that encompasses all Christians even as the manifestation of that modernity and religion is unique to the local context. As bizarre and unlikely as this utopian vision is, it seemed possible for those who held it. After all, they had just seen the ways that missionary life had improved the lives and status of women around the globe. While with modern eyes and hindsight we can see how that change was still uneven, forced, and had truly horrific effects for the non-white men and women it involved we can still see how their writing and discourse provides a roadmap for us to understand how ideas from the mission field could travel from the liminal frontier to disrupt the norms in the metropole. Modernity traveled with Christianity and many of the Christian institutions have flourished in the postcolonial world (Huber and Lutkehaus 1999:21-23). Christianity flourishes—as does the urge to be modern.

XII-Conclusion

By looking at missionary women and their paths we can see how colonialism was a complicated process that affected all parties involved—albeit unequally. The desire to convert non-Western people(s) to the Western modernity that they themselves were in the midst of led missionaries to new understandings of themselves. The explicit motivation for these missionaries was to spread religion. However, for that to conversion to occur meant an implicit conversion to a Western consciousness, a conversion to a Western understanding of the self and the world. Colonial missionaries were in the business of converting people to modernity. This emphasis on modernity and the implied process of making people modern meant that there was an emphasis on personal, material, and spiritual development. This created a space for women, who had long been deemed the moral caretakers, to become professional missionaries in their own right. This focus on improvement meant that mission work was part of the domestic and feminine sphere as it focused on morality, not just the politics of colonialism. The moral component of mission work allowed women to expand their sphere of influence, opening opportunities for growth such as/by allowing women to engage in international travel and training. This included running mission organizations, fundraising, and going out into the mission field as single women.

Because mission work by definition happened in frontier spaces where both the colonized and the colonizer had their realities ruptured, change was able to occur. New forms of discourse were developed through various types of writing based on the spreading of new forms of shared consciousness that relied on modernity to flourish. By comparing

different genres of writing we can see how women purposefully used writing as a site of interaction between the metropole and the mission field to transport this frontier rupture home, allowing for change to occur. These genres vary widely, from letters to family and churches in the metropole to the more professional missionary magazines produced by mission boards. Female missionaries relied on these different genres to highlight different aspects of their lives. In public writing they emphasized more professional aspects of their lives and jobs. In personal letters sent home to family and friends more domestic details were discussed. There is a clear change in how women utilized their prescribed gender roles to expand their sphere of influence and to change the ways they were perceived. This allowed for profound change and breakdown of gender roles in an attempt to modernize how women were viewed. While mission work was not the only thing that changed women's roles there was an undeniable impact on many women's lives. Many missionaries, including prominent women, took up the idea that it was not the mission project that was at fault. Instead they pointed to the political failures of colonialism, arguing that the only truly modern imperialism would be a Christian empire that strove to make the world modern through the only avenue that worked. Conversion to Christianity in their eyes was the only way to make the world modern.

Works Cited/Bibliography

Primary Sources

Anonymous

1945. *They Went to Africa; Biographies of Missionaries of the Disciples of Christ*. Issued by the Missionary Education Department of The United Christian Missionary Society. Indianapolis Indiana. Print

Anonymous

1920. January through December. Pg. 3. *World Call*. Accessed pdf via <https://archive.org/details/worldcall02unse>

Anonymous

1920. "Five Minutes in Our Foreign Fields-Belgian Congo" pg 15. *World Call*. March. Accessed pdf via <https://archive.org/details/worldcall02unse>. Accessed 27 Dec. 2016.

Anonymous

1920. "Front Cover text".cover. *World Call*. December. Accessed pdf via <https://archive.org/details/worldcall02unse>. Accessed 27 Dec. 2016

Anonymous

1920. "Woman"s Sphere Is—The Whole Earth". Pg 3. *World Call* December. Accessed pdf via <https://archive.org/details/worldcall02unse> . Accessed 27 Dec. 2016

Franklin, Joesepha

1920. "calling Sinners to Repentance" *World Call*. Pg 32-33. May. Accessed pdf via <https://archive.org/details/worldcall02unse>. Accessed 27 Dec. 2016

Havens, Mary Sue

1925, June. "A Study of Bantu Childhood" (MA thesis. College of Missions).print

1927. *Mary Sue"s Diary*. Powell and White. print

1933. Personal Letter to friends and family. Issi District, Illambasa Belgian Congo, October 18-November 7. print

1934 "The Havens Family on Tour". Pg 26. *World Call*, May. Print

McCormack, Elsie

1920. "The Woman Missionary of Yesterday and of Today" *World Call*. April. Accessed pdf via <https://archive.org/details/worldcall02unse>. Accessed 27 Dec. 2016

Montgomery, W.A

1920. "The Mother Half of the World". *World Call*. February. Accessed pdf via <https://archive.org/details/worldcall02unse>. Accessed 27 Dec. 2016

Pierce, Katherine M

1920. "A Two-Edged Suggestion". *World Call*. June. Accessed pdf via <https://archive.org/details/worldcall02unse>. Accessed 27 Dec. 2016

Pitman, E. R.

1889. *Lady Missionaries in Many Lands*. London: Pickering & Inglis. Print.

Academic and Historical Sources

Anderson, Benedict, R, O'G

1983. *Imagined Communities: Reflection on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. 1983. London. Verso. Revised edition. 2006. print

Asad, Talal

1996. "Comments on Conversion". In, *Conversion to Modernities: the globalization of Christianity*. Edited by Peter Van der Veer. New York: Routledge. Print

Bakhtin, Mikhail

1990. The Problem of Speech Genres. In *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, eds. Austin: University of Texas Press. Web

Brumberg, Joan Jacobs.

"Zenanas and Girlless Villages: The Ethnology of American Evangelical Women, 1870â"1910." *The Journal of American History* 69.2 (1982): 347-78. *JSTOR*. Web. Accessed 27 Dec. 2016.

Comaroff, Jean, and John L. Comaroff.

1991. *Of Revelation and Revolution*. Chicago: U of Chicago. Print.

de Saussure, Ferdinand

1966. *Course in General Linguistics*. Charles Bally and Albert Sechehaye, eds. Chicago: Open Court. Web

Evans-Pritchard, E.E.

1940. *The Nuer: A description of the Modes of Livelihood and Political Institutions of a Neolithic People*. New York: Oxford UP. Print

Hill, Patricia Ruth.

1985. *The World Their Household: The American Woman's Foreign Mission Movement and Cultural Transformation, 1870-1920*. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan. Print.

Hochschild, Adam.

1998. *King Leopold's Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror, and Heroism in Colonial Africa*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. Print.

Huber, Mary Taylor, and Nancy Lutkehaus.

1999. "Introduction". *Gendered Missions: Women and Men in Missionary Discourse and Practice*. Editors Mary Taylor Huber and Nancy Lutkehaus. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan. Print.

Huber, Mary Tyler

1999. "The Dangers of Immorality Dignity and Disorder in Gender Relations in a Northern New Guinea Diocese". *Gendered Missions: Women and Men in Missionary Discourse and Practice*. Editors Mary Taylor Huber and Nancy Lutkehaus. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan. Print.

Lollis, Lorraine.

1970. *The Shape of Adam's Rib: A Lively History of Women's Work in the Christian Church*. St. Louis, MO: Bethany. Print.

Lutkehaus, Nancy

1999. "Missionary Maternalism: gendered Images in the Holy Spirit Sisters in Colonial New Guinea". *Gendered Missions: Women and Men in Missionary Discourse and Practice*. Editors Mary Taylor Huber and Nancy Lutkehaus. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan. Print.

"Notable People: All | Disciples of Christ Historical Society".

n.d. " *Notable People: All | Disciples of Christ Historical Society*. Disciples of Christ Historical Society. Web. Accessed 29 Dec. 2016.

Robert, Dana Lee.

2009. *Christian Mission: How Christianity Became a World Religion*. Chichester, U.K.: Wiley-Blackwell. Print.

Prestholdt, Jeremy.

2008. *Domesticating the World: African Consumerism and the Genealogies of Globalization*. Berkeley: U of California. Print.

Prevost, Elizabeth E.

2010. *The Communion of Women: Missions and Gender in Colonial Africa and the British Metropole*. Oxford: Oxford UP. Print.

Semple, Rhonda Anne.

2003. *Missionary Women: Gender, Professionalism, and the Victorian Idea of Christian Mission*. Rochester, NY: Boydell, 2003. Print.

Thorne, Susan,

Huber, Mary Tyler

1999. "Missionary-Imperial Feminism". *Gendered Missions: Women and Men in Missionary Discourse and Practice*. Editors Mary Taylor Huber and Nancy Lutkehaus. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan. Print.

Trouillot, Michel-Rolph

2003. *Global Transformations: Anthropology in the Modern World*. New York. Palgrave Macmillan. Print

Tucker, William Edward and Lester G. McCallister

1975. *Journey in Faith: A History of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)*. Saint Louis. Bethany. Print

Veer, Peter Van der.

1996. "Introduction". In, *Conversion to Modernities: the globalization of Christianity*. Edited by Peter Van der Veer. New York: Routledge. Print

Williams, Martha Ann,

"Shall the Sisters Speak?": Recovering women's story as empowerment for leadership in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)" (D. Min. diss., School of Theology at Claremont, 1988).

Wolf, Eric R.

1997. *Europe and the People without History: With a New Preface*. Berkeley. U of California. Print