

MISSIONARY WOMEN

**Gender, Professionalism and the
Victorian Idea of Christian Mission**

Rhonda Anne Semple

MISSIONARY WOMEN

This is the first comprehensive study of the role of gender in British Protestant missionary expansion into China and India during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Focusing on the experiences of wives and daughters, female missionaries, educators and medical staff associated with the London Missionary Society, the China Inland Mission and the various Scottish Presbyterian Mission Societies, this work compares and contrasts gender relations within different British Protestant missions in cross-cultural settings. Drawing on extensive published and archival materials, it examines how gender, race, class, nationality and theology shaped the polity of Protestant missions and Christian interaction with native peoples. Rather than providing a romantic portrayal of fulfilled professional freedom, this study argues that women's labour in Christian missions, as in the secular British Empire and domestic society, remained undervalued in terms of both remuneration and administrative advancement, until well into the twentieth century. Rich in detail and full of insights, this work not only presents the first comparative treatment of gender relations in British Christian missionary movements, but also contributes to an understanding of the importance of gender more broadly in the high imperial age.

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This work is lovingly dedicated to the ladies of much ability and intelligence of the last two generations of my own family.

Their lives of love and service, whether at home, in paid work, or in church life both formal and informal, served as quiet models for the present generation of this family.

MISSIONARY WOMEN
GENDER, PROFESSIONALISM AND
THE VICTORIAN IDEA
OF CHRISTIAN MISSION

Rhonda Anne Semple

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Abbreviations

AAS	Association of Asian Studies
ABCFM	American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions
ACA	Aberdeen City Archive
AML	Aberdeen Municipal Library
BCMS	Bible Churchmen's Missionary Society
BDC	Benares District Committee
BHM	<i>Bulletin of the History of Medicine</i>
BMS	Baptist Missionary Society
BRO	Berkshire Record Office
CCM	China Council Minutes, of the CIM
CIM	China Inland Mission
CM	<i>China's Millions</i>
CMS	Church Missionary Society
CofS	Church of Scotland
CP	China Papers, of the CIM (CIM/CP)
CP	<i>Candidates Papers of the Council for World Mission</i>
CWM	Council for World Mission
EHM	Eastern Himalayan Mission
EMMS	Edinburgh Medical Missionary Society
FCofS	Free Church of Scotland
FCofSFM	Free Church of Scotland Foreign Mission Committee
FECM	<i>Free East Church Magazine</i>
FMC	Foreign Mission Committee
FMI	<i>Female Missionary Intelligencer</i>
FS	<i>Feminist Studies</i>
GH	<i>Gender and History</i>
GLZMC	Glasgow Ladies Zenana Mission Committee
HFMR	<i>Home and Foreign Missionary Record</i> of the CofS
HJ	<i>Historical Journal</i>
IBMR	<i>International Bulletin of Missionary Research</i>
ICHR	<i>Indian Church History Review</i>
JBS	<i>Journal of British Studies</i>
JICH	<i>Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History</i>
JURCHS	<i>Journal of the United Reformed Church History Society</i>
LB	Letter book
LCM	London Council Minutes, of the CIM
LMS	London Missionary Society
LSMW	London School of Medicine for Women

ABBREVIATIONS

LZAEFI	Ladies Zenana Association for the Education of Females in India
LZMC	Ladies Zenana Mission Committee
MB	Minute book
NCC	North China Correspondence
NI(UP)C	North India (United Provinces) Correspondence
NI(UP)R	North Indian (United Provinces) Reports
NLS	National Library of Scotland
NMS	Norwegian Missionary Society
OMF	Overseas Missionary Fellowship
SCH	<i>Studies in Church History</i>
SCHS	<i>Records of the Scottish Church History Society</i>
SHR	<i>Scottish Historical Review</i>
SLAAFEI	Scottish Ladies Association for the Advancement of Female Education in India
SOAS	School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London
SPCK	Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge
SSPCK	Scottish Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge
SUM	Scottish Universities Mission
SVM	Student Volunteer Movement
UAA	University of Aberdeen Archives
UFCofS	United Free Church of Scotland
UPC	United Presbyterian Church
UPMR	<i>United Presbyterian Mission Record</i>
WAFEI	Women's Association for Female Education in India
WAFM	Women's Association for Foreign Missions
WPMC	Women's Foreign Mission Committee
WG	Women's Guild
WIHM	Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine
WMC	Women's Missionary College
WMM	<i>Women's Missionary Magazine</i>
WMMS	Women's Medical Missionary Society
WSIF	<i>Women's Studies International Forum</i>
WTI	Women's Training Institute
YMG	Young Men's Guild

Notes on citation style

The majority of the records of the CWM and CIM/OMF cited in this work are housed in the Archives at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London (SOAS). The few instances where material from Local Record Offices is cited are noted specifically, otherwise the archive is omitted from the footnote citation.

ABBREVIATIONS

A shorthand is used to cite the regularly used collections within these archives.

The CWM are referenced as numbered or lettered divisions Box/Folder/Jacket/Letter or candidate number, for each of which a digit alone is provided. Thus, an unnumbered LMS letter from the United Provinces, stored in Box 12, Folder 2, Jacket B at the CWM Archives at SOAS appears as: CWM NI(UP)C 12/2/B J. Hewlett to R. Wardlaw Thompson, 10 December 1884.

The CIM material is largely drawn from the London and China Councils. Each of these series is made up of numbered volumes. The London Council material is referenced as CIM/LCM 5. China Council minutes are referenced as China Papers: CIM/CP 75.

Most of the archival material referenced for the Presbyterian societies is housed in the National Library of Scotland (NLS). Where material from other sources is made reference to, the specific archive is noted. Otherwise, NLS is not cited regularly.

The NLS material is referenced in a numbered sequence prefixed by MS or MS.Dep. It is referenced using this number followed by the organisation that produced the given document, the title of the material and a folio number. A typical example is a letter written by the convenor of the FMC to a missionary: MS.7534 CofSFMCLB of the Convenor ff.132, J. McMurtrie to Wm. Hastie, 6 November 1879.

*‘Under the influence of wise and devoted
and spiritually minded colleagues’*

Go forth, go forth rejoicing,
And in the Master’s name,
To weary souls that perish,
Eternal life proclaim!
The crowning day is coming;
The end of toil and sin;
March on through grace determined
The world for Christ to win!¹

Writing to the Foreign Secretary of the London Missionary Society in 1884, John Hewlett, one of the senior male missionaries in the United Provinces of north India, described his female co-worker as ‘a lady of much ability and intelligence’. However, his assertion that she was sure to become a good missionary was qualified with the caveat ‘provided she is under the influence of wise and devoted and spiritually minded colleagues’.² In its entirety, this statement neatly encapsulates the experiences of British women who became professional missionaries in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Hewlett’s description of his colleague illustrates the ambiguities of her position. While he expressed an appreciation for her intelligence and ability, she remained for him a ‘lady’. On one hand, this was a compliment and denoted that she had developed qualities that might be considered valuable. On the other, the designation relegated her to a position subordinate to that of her male colleagues under whose guidance she was being counselled to remain. This is most clearly shown by the fact that it is the senior male who is discussing his junior female counterpart. This situation is repeated again and again in the mission record. The differences in gender, age, training, and experience being carefully negotiated by these two colleagues were not only replicated throughout British Protestant missions but throughout wider British society as well.

¹ ‘A New Year Rallying Song – The World for Christ’ by Fanny Crosby, *The Helping Hand* reproduced in *Women’s Missionary Magazine* of the Free Church of Scotland xi (1911), p. 20.

² CWM NI(UP)C 12/2/B J. Hewlett to R. Wardlaw Thompson, 10 December 1884.

This study examines the role gender played in the professional development of British Protestant missions between 1865, when Hudson Taylor began his recruitment of lay men and women to evangelise the interior of China, and 1910, when, at the Edinburgh Missionary Conference, guidelines for the recruitment and training of women candidates were presented to an international mission audience. It examines how gendered notions of women's roles in religion and society not only shaped the recruitment of female mission personnel but also contributed to the creation of a specific mission rhetoric, 'women's work for women'. Albeit indirectly, these in turn influenced the direction to which mission work turned in the twentieth century. Women played a central role in conflating the professional and the private in mission practice. Whereas women were initially constrained to such personal work in their homes, increasingly their 'at home' connections refocused mission practice on the social transformation of peoples' lives. This is true in education and, similarly, in the medical work that grew to so central a position in missions in the past two centuries. There too workers came to link closely the healing of bodies and souls.³ However, the importance played by gender in the mission project cannot be studied in isolation from the wider context of British social history. The men and women whose religious beliefs were put into action as members of or workers in missions were both constrained and empowered by their experiences in industrialising Great Britain. Furthermore, at home, the national culture, class, and theological background under which candidates were raised shaped both the candidates themselves and the mission societies to which they applied. This was further refined by contemporary notions of race and indigenous culture. Each field in which mission societies established themselves offered unique challenges to the planned approach; however, space does not permit the complete consideration of such issues.

To do justice both to broad and to specific considerations, this book examines a wide sample of individuals from several missions and follows their progress through the many stages of their associations with missions. Thus, as far as archival materials allow, it follows as many candidates as was possible through their application procedures. The personnel in the mainstream nonconformist London Missionary Society (LMS) are analysed alongside those of the Scottish Presbyterians (Church of Scotland (CofS) and Free Church of Scotland (FCofS)), and the non-denominational China Inland Mission (CIM) to establish an understanding of the unique national, social, and theological characteristics of each mission.⁴ It also examines carefully

³ Dana Robert, *American Women in Mission: A Social History of Their Thought and Practice* (Macon, Georgia, 1997). For a recent treatment of the twentieth century see Ruth Compton Brouwer, *Modern Women, Modernizing Men: The Changing Missions of Three Professional Women in Asia and Africa, 1902–1969* (Vancouver, 2002).

⁴ The London Missionary Society (founded 1795) evolved into the Congregational

the language employed by individuals making applications to the various societies and the way in which they described their faith and work in the mission endeavour. Such close attention to language has allowed religion to take its place in the social history of mission candidates and the evolving hierarchy of relations in mission societies. This approach offers an effective means of conceptualising the role of women and of making use of a historical record in which women's voices are often muted.

During the period 1865 to 1910, the number of women on the mission field grew exponentially, and lay workers, both male and female, came to outnumber the ordained clerics who had dominated missions throughout the nineteenth century. However, the male workers, and often those who were ordained, continued to dominate mission administration throughout this period, as is demonstrated by their strong presence in mission records. Nevertheless, in each of the LMS, Scots Presbyterian missions, and the CIM, it is possible to chart the influence that lay workers gradually brought to bear on their mission colleagues. Women in particular brought specific skills to missions – skills that have been overlooked in previous studies of the subject. They expanded the notion of what constituted valid mission labour and in so doing changed the concept of mission professionalism. Women's very emotive participation in British evangelical revivals, coupled with their successes in communicating with mission supporters, gradually influenced their male colleagues to consider as less marginal and more central to mission work and church work in general the type of activities women had previously engaged in on a volunteer basis.

A consideration of the concept of labour and its value is central to the arguments which follow. In part, the history of women in missions has been one of charting their entry into the paid mission workforce and of discovering how opportunities grew for their professional preparation to do so. However, this superficial consideration of women and women's work – an initial response from historians to the lack of writing about women – resulted at least in part from a paucity of sources relating to the subject. The inevitable result was to stop asking questions that could not be answered and instead to begin asking the questions that were appropriate to the available material. This led to a greater emphasis on social relationships and non-professional volunteer activities and to a move away from the sorts of activities

Council for World Mission in 1966, and then the Council for World Mission in 1977. The China Inland Mission (founded 1865) changed its name in 1951 after the mission pulled its personnel out of China and changed the focus of its work to include other parts of Asia. The Free Church of Scotland (FCofS) was the institution formed by Evangelicals who withdrew from the Established Church in 1843. In 1900, the Free Church joined with the United Presbyterian Church to form the United Free Church and, with the Church of Scotland in 1929, in the reunited Church of Scotland. For more detail see Nigel M. de S. Cameron, David F. Wright, David C. Lachman and Donald E. Meek, eds, *Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology* (Edinburgh, 1993), pp. 337–38.

traditionally considered as ‘professional’ (schooling and work experience). Another result was to place more weight on a wider range of professions. The first British women to train as doctors at the end of the nineteenth century are an important group, but a greater number of women joined the workforce in para-medical professions as health visitors, nurses, dispensers of medicines, and, on the mission field, as compounders. This widening of focus was undertaken in order to discover in greater detail how gender influenced the creation of missionaries and thus altered the direction of missions themselves. This research on relationships and what has traditionally been considered professionally marginal behaviour was, out of necessity, initially focused on women. It quickly became clear that an examination of male mission candidates and workers could be an instructive process as well. Prior to their employment by mission societies men were as involved in many of the same voluntary activities as were young women, yet even throughout the 1910s they consistently failed to refer to such activities as contributing to their religious and professional preparation. Participating in these activities nevertheless appeared to influence men’s work in the mission field and, in a few notable cases, became the central and successful focus of a changing mission methodology.

The study of Christian missions

This study contributes to several intertwining strands of historical investigation. Missions have been the subject of popular writing from their inception, as well as the societies that commissioned the first official mission histories.⁵ The writing of these continues to the present day: the most recent collection of edited work on the Church Mission Society was published in the early months of 2000,⁶ and plans are currently underway for a multi-volume history of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society. Missions have been the focus of academic study in various disciplines for decades, and mission history has benefited not only from the contributions made by anthropologists and sociologists but also from being examined from the perspectives of

⁵ R. Lovett, *History of the London Missionary Society, 1795–1895 With Portraits and Maps*, 2 vols (London, 1899); N. G. Guinness, *The Story of the China Inland Mission*, 2 vols (London, 1894); Norman Goodall, *A History of the London Missionary Society, 1895–1945* (London, 1954); Elizabeth G. K. Hewat, *Vision and Achievement 1796–1956: A History of the Churches United in the Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1960).

⁶ A. J. Broomhall, *Hudson Taylor and China’s Open Century*, 7 vols (London, 1984); Brian Stanley, *A History of the Baptist Missionary Society, 1792–1992* (Edinburgh, 1992); Bernard Thorogood, ed., *Gales of Change Responding to a Shifting Missionary Context: The Story of the London Missionary Society 1945–1977* (Geneva, 1994); Kevin Ward and Brian Stanley, eds, *The Church Mission Society and World Christianity, 1799–1999, Studies in the History of Christian Missions* (Richmond, 2000).

religious and literary studies. Focus has shifted from the study of the impact of Western religious institutions dominated by middle-class males to thematic studies that include the other players active in the mission field.⁷ The study of primary materials generated in missions has contributed to linguistic, cultural, and anthropological studies of the various countries in which Christian missionaries were active.⁸ Most recently, interest has shifted back to the Western countries in order to understand more clearly the social conditions and religious impulses that generated the Protestant mission movement. This is in part a shift back from, yet not away from, area studies of mission fields because, it is now understood, each cannot be disentangled from the other. The consideration of home and field as two interconnected parts reflects the growing interest in the history of missions and the role played by missions and missionaries in the British Empire.⁹ These underline the fact that colonial and mission activities were never aligned with one another in a straightforward manner.

The study of gender in missions is also part of the growing body of work that deals with the contribution women made to the Empire in general. This

⁷ Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity to the Nineteenth Century*, 6 vols (London, 1949); Stephen Neill, *A History of Christianity in India: The Beginning to A.D. 1707* (Cambridge, 1984); G. A. Oddie, *Social Protest in India: British Protestant Missionaries and Social Reforms 1850–1900* (New Delhi, 1979); Pat Barr, *To China With Love: The Lives and Times of Protestant Missionaries in China, 1860–1900* (Cambridge, Mass., 1972); Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution, Christianity, Colonialism and Consciousness in South Africa*, vol. 1 (Chicago, 1991) and *The Dialectics of Modernity on a South African Frontier*, vol. 2 (Chicago, 1997); Klaus Fiedler, *The Story of Faith Missions from Hudson Taylor to the Present Day Africa* (Oxford, 1994); Robert A. Bickers and Rosemary Seton, eds, *Missionary Encounters: Sources and Issues* (London, 1996); Andrew Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith* (New York, 1996).

⁸ Leslie A. Flemming, “New Roles For Old”: Presbyterian Women Missionaries and Women’s Education in North India, 1910–1903’, *ICHR* xx (1986) pp. 127–42; Daniel H. Bays, ed., *Christianity in China From the Eighteenth Century to the Present* (Stanford, 1996); Anthony Copley, *Religions in Conflict: Cultural Conflict and Conversion in Late Colonial India* (Delhi, 1997).

⁹ Brian Stanley, *The Bible and the Flag: Protestant Missions and British Imperialism in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Leicester, 1990); Susan Elizabeth Thorne, *Congregational Missions and the Making of an Imperial Culture in Nineteenth Century England* (Stanford, 1999); Andrew N. Porter, ‘Margery Perham, Christian Missions and Indirect Rule’, *JICH* xix (1991), pp. 83–99; Andrew N. Porter, ‘Religion and Empire: British Expansion in the Long Nineteenth-Century, 1780–1914’, *JICH* xx (1992); Andrew N. Porter, “Cultural Imperialism” and Protestant Missionary Enterprise, 1780–1914’, *JICH* xxv (3) (1997), pp. 367–91. Jeffrey L. Cox, *Imperial Fault Lines: Christianity and Colonial Power in India, 1818–1940* (Stanford, 2002). The Position Papers generated by the North Atlantic Missiology Project (NAMP)/Currents in World Christianity (CWC) are another important resource for literature on missions. Its series *Studies in the History of Christian Mission* (Curzon/Eerdmans) continues to be published.

research has focused attention on the personal and professional opportunities afforded to women as British influence spread across the globe.¹⁰ The rhetoric of women's work for women opened opportunities for Western females and highlighted the necessity for women's professional development. Advocates for women's increased role in missions argued that it was only distinctly feminine characteristics that could 'save the heathen', not only spiritually (evangelism) but also physically (social welfare). Reform campaigners gained public support for women's rights, specifically for widened access to further education and increased public roles, by promoting the idea that it was only Western women who could help their foreign counterparts. These secular campaigners underlined the specific needs of foreign women for their own interests.¹¹ However, recent research has also indicated that neither the number of British women working in the Empire nor the professional opportunities afforded to them by doing so should be overstated.¹² Friend's unpublished study of women's professional motivation and opportunity in late nineteenth-century Britain underlines how important it is for historians to keep religious belief in mind when considering why women entered professions and chose a career in missions. Rather than simply providing a romantic portrayal of fulfilled professional freedom, the history of professional bodies emphasises that women's labour in the Empire, and in missions in particular, remained undervalued in terms of both remuneration and administrative advancement until well into the twentieth century.

The records of mission societies are an invaluable resource for the study of the lives of their personnel, and any analysis of the class, nationality, and educational background of both male and female candidates now builds on past scholarship.¹³ However, a study of this sort offers an important

¹⁰ Helen Callaway, *Gender, Culture and Empire: European Women in Colonial Nigeria* (London, 1987); Margaret Stroebel, *European Women and the Second British Empire* (Bloomington, 1991); Vron Ware, *Beyond the Pale: White Women, Racism and History* (London, 1992); Timothy P. Foley, ed., *Gender and Colonialism* (Galway, 1995); Clare Midgley, ed., *Gender and Imperialism* (Manchester, 1998).

¹¹ Antoinette Burton, *Burdens of History: British Feminists, Indian Women and Imperial Culture, 1865–1915* (London, 1994).

¹² Elizabeth Friend, 'Professional Women and the British Empire, 1880–1940' (University of Lancaster dissertation, Lancaster, 1998).

¹³ C. P. Williams, 'The Recruitment and Training of Overseas Missionaries in England Between 1850 and 1900, with Special Reference to the Records of the CMS, WMMS, LMS and the CIM' (University of Bristol dissertation, Bristol, 1976); Sarah Potter, 'The Social Origins and Recruitment of English Protestant Missionaries in the Nineteenth Century' (University of London dissertation: London, 1976); Stuart F. Piggin, *Making Evangelical Missionaries 1789–1858: The Social Background, Motives and Training of British Missionaries to India*, (Abingdon, 1984); C. P. Williams, "'The Missing Link": The Recruitment of Women Missionaries in Some English Evangelical Missionary Societies in the Nineteenth Century', *Women and Missions Past and Present: Anthropological and Historical Perceptions*, eds Fiona Bowie, Deborah Kirkwood and Shirley Ardener (Oxford,

contribution to British social history in a number of areas. The data available on the group of individuals examined offers discrete insights into wider society; for example, in the Candidate Papers of the LMS. Beginning in the 1880s every candidate to the society was examined by a society doctor. Candidates to the Scottish societies and the CIM provided medical material to their prospective employers as well, albeit in a much less systematic fashion. These records provide a useful insight into the British population, differing from most medical records in that these candidates were selected for medical examination on criteria other than ill-health.

In some ways, of course, these missionary candidates represent only a small segment of the British population. The individuals with which this study is concerned are representative of a fairly narrow band of the population. They were some of the relatively few women in Britain who had access to further education at the end of the nineteenth century and who played an active volunteer role in churches and secular works of social outreach. Even the CIM limited its recruitment to the middling classes. Furthermore, the single most important distinguishing feature of this group is the evangelical commitment to spiritual and social uplift through mission work, and, as such, they should again be considered a select group. Nevertheless, their evangelical commitment was also present in that much wider body of mission supporters who 'made live' their faith in a less dramatic fashion. The records of mission societies contain valuable information about a wide range of individual religious beliefs difficult to ascertain elsewhere. Both in their applications and in later letters and reports, missionaries included descriptions of their spiritual state of mind and their religious response to their surroundings. A few earlier studies have looked at the ways in which middle-class women participated in Protestant church activities, and this study further explores their motives for becoming involved in such philanthropic work. However, analysis of men's volunteerism has been thin.¹⁴ Why has this been the case? If men were as involved as were women in evangelical volunteer activities, why was this never recorded either at the time or by later scholars as being important to their personal and professional development? The answers to these questions, which are also examined below, offer further insights into both the social and religious history of the period.

The aim of this work is to provide the most comprehensive study of British Protestant mission women to date. While there is a growing body of literature that maps the experience of North American women in several religious

1993), pp. 43–69; Rosemary Seton, "Open Doors for Female Labourers": Women Candidates of the London Missionary Society, 1875–1914', *Missionary Encounters*, pp. 50–69.

¹⁴ Andrew N. Porter, 'Cambridge, Keswick and Late Nineteenth Century Attitudes to Africa', *JICH* v (1976), pp. 5–34; Frank Prochaska, *Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth Century England* (Oxford, 1980); Sean Gill, *Women and the Church of England From the Eighteenth Century to the Present* (London, 1994).

societies,¹⁵ and women's work in missions has been featured in several collections of missionary studies,¹⁶ no one study has taken a comparative approach to the role women played in the development of British missions. It is possible to chart significant differences between mission societies in terms of both personnel and administration. This indicates how important it is to go beyond studies of particular societies and stations in order to draw meaningful conclusions about the influence that gender had on the mission movement in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The particular strength of this study is in its analysis of the language used by candidates to describe their religious beliefs and motivation. There are two major reasons for this. First, there exist very few sources for this type of writing about personal belief because ecclesiastical records are more likely to contain information on the administrative side of church life than on personal spirituality, and there is a paucity of private papers of women. Further, analysis of the use of language is an important tool, through which individuals are seen as interacting in, and against, the social and religious forces that shaped their lives. This approach is particularly valuable in ascertaining how gender was instrumental in shaping the different ways in which male and female missionaries approached and described their work and personal life. Nineteenth-century British men were taught to apply the straightforward language of business to various situations, while women's writings reflect the complicated connections that defined their private and professional lives. However, this study indicates how evangelical revivals, the rise of the social gospel, and the increased involvement of women in domestic church work and in the mission field influenced the professional approach of large institutionalised missions. My attention to language as a way of understanding structures is the unifying principle in what is a wide-ranging and diverse treatment of the subject.

¹⁵ Jane Hunter, *The Gospel of Gentility: American Women Missionaries in Turn-of-the-Century China* (New Haven, 1984); Patricia Hill, *The World Their Household: The American Women's Foreign Missions Movement and Cultural Transformation, 1870–1920* (Ann Arbor, 1985); Patricia Grimshaw, *Paths of Duty: American Missionary Wives in Nineteenth-Century Hawaii* (Honolulu, 1989); Ruth Compton Brouwer, *New Women for God: Canadian Presbyterian Women and Indian Missions, 1876–1914* (Toronto, 1990); Robert, *American Women*.

¹⁶ Bowie et al., *Women and Missions*; Bickers and Seton, *Missionary Encounters*; Mary Taylor Huber and Nancy C. Lutkehaus, eds, *Gendered Missions: Women and Men in Missionary Discourse and Practice* (Ann Arbor, 1999); Dana L. Robert, ed., *Gospel Bearers, Gender Barriers: Missionary Women in the Twentieth Century*, American Society of Missiology Series, No. 32 (Maryknoll, 2002).

Archival material

The main sources of research material to be treated thus are the mission records housed in the School of Oriental and African Studies, London (SOAS). Both the Council for World Missions (CWM) and the China Inland Mission (CIM) have deposited their archives at SOAS where detailed catalogues attest to the depth and breadth of material available for mission research. Papers of the Scottish Presbyterian Societies are deposited in the National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh. Further research was carried out in Edinburgh at St Colm's, in Aberdeen at the Municipal and University Archives, at the Berkshire Record Office in Reading, and in the Medical Archives at the Wellcome Institute in London. In these collections, I made extensive use of the available material on mission candidates and letters and reports from selected mission stations.

The LMS provides the bulk of the material for the part of my research dealing with candidates because the society kept detailed records on both successful and unsuccessful applicants. Of interest for this study, the LMS collected records on scholarly attainment, letters of reference, and medical data regarding the wives or fiancées of male candidates who were married or intended to marry on application. These are filed along with the male applicant's material.

Material on CIM candidates has been gleaned from a variety of sources. SOAS contains the series of reports of the meetings of the CIM Councils that administered the mission in London and Shanghai – the London Council Minutes (LCM) and the China Council Minutes (CCM). In the first three decades of the mission, the LCM describe the candidates, their letters of reference, council decisions regarding individual candidates' training, and their departure details. The actual supporting documentation was not retained during several moves. The LCM and CCM can, however, be supplemented by material from several other sources. There exists a Register of Missionaries, which was kept in China. Hudson Taylor's personal papers often refer to individual candidates; a complete run of the mission periodical, *China's Millions*, is available on reference at SOAS; and there are papers of a few individual missionaries in the archives. One source of frustration in dealing with the history of the CIM is the references to the field journals that the mission insisted its candidates and workers maintain. Access to these sorts of documents would obviously provide rich detail, both about the way station life was organised and about the spiritual life of individual members of the mission, but, sadly, they have not survived. The same is true of the station reports and letters among senior missionaries, district superintendents, and the China Council. Although the CIM was a younger and more loosely structured organisation than either the LMS or the Presbyterians, there existed an administrative structure in its sending countries and in China, and there were communication systems in place, which by the 1880s could have provided considerable detail about the mission had the letters and

reports been retained and deposited.¹⁷ There exists a vast library of mission literature inspired by CIM stories, but these must be accessed, with caution because 'the missionary letter reprinted and circulated . . . might be the product of several blue pens and publicity rewrites'.¹⁸

The Scottish Presbyterian missions offer specific challenges. The missions of the Church of Scotland reflect its convoluted history of splitting and then reforming with different branches of newly formed Presbyterian churches at various times during the second half of the nineteenth century. There simply were not enough women candidates nor female workers in India to chart any differences that may have existed among candidates to the Church of Scotland (CofS), the Free Church of Scotland (FCofS), and the United Free Church of Scotland (UFCofS) in a meaningful way. Similarly, the work of each of these Presbyterian mission committees has not been analysed on its own against the wider context of British missions. While such a comparison of these mission committees would make an interesting subject for a study limited to the Presbyterian missions, in this book the Scottish Presbyterian missions are treated as practically synonymous. A caveat to this is that several of the LMS workers discussed following were, in fact, Scottish. Difficulties at times arose, due to the very 'Scottish' qualities (educational attainment, theological rigour, and practicality) that made these individuals attractive to the mission. These are pointed out in the chapters following. The Presbyterian propensity to form a committee to deal with any given matter is apparent in the myriad of (often short-lived) subcommittees whose records have been deposited in the National Library of Scotland (NLS). Some minutes were more likely to have survived than others, and there exists a distinct gendered element to this reality. For example, minute books from one ladies' department contain a handwritten note tucked into the front, which explained how they came to be deposited in the National Library. The history of this minute book suggests yet another way in which women's records in particular have disappeared and suggests that there existed institutionalised diffidence towards women's committees in Scottish churches. The minute books were discovered in the home of a former secretary of the committee after her death and were returned to the Church of Scotland by a relative who felt they were of no interest to the family. Comparatively, the Foreign Mission Committee (FMC) of the Church of Scotland was directly responsible to its governing body, the General Assembly, and as such its paper appears to have been granted the respect due to ecclesiastical law documentation. It was on these formal documents that the authority of church government rested and an almost complete series of this committee's minute books has been preserved.

¹⁷ For more detail see Rosemary Seton, 'The China Inland Mission: An Archivist's View' Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the AAS, 11 March 2000, San Diego.

¹⁸ Bickers and Seton, *Missionary Encounters*, p. 4.

An additional challenge meted out to a student of Scottish Presbyterian missions has to do with the fact that a good deal of material was not deposited at all. Original incoming reports and letters for given mission stations have survived for only short periods of time. However, many of the letter books and minute books of various secretaries and convenors of the FMC are available. Of the material that has survived, the bulk has to do far less with candidates or personnel than with finances, buildings, and often the corporate life of the church. Because women were largely excluded from these areas of church life, their alternative activities have not been documented in as much detail in these official records. This is in itself indicative of what was important in the church and mission – who was powerful and in what manner.

Beginning in 1795, the London-based LMS Board of Directors managed affairs through a network of committees and letter writing that spanned the globe. Surviving documents record the domestic networks that managed recruitment, fund-raising, and the transmission of information about mission work and the vital reports and letters exchanged by the mission between London and each geographical field of labour. These record not only the administrative details regarding work but also more intimate details of the religious conviction behind a career, personal spiritual practices, and the joys and tragedies of family life in a foreign country. These records make it possible to follow selected candidates through their careers in specific mission stations. As with the material on candidates, the LMS records offer a much more complete picture of station life than either the Scottish Presbyterians or the CIM.

The one CIM station for which there is a fair amount of material is Chefoo, in Shandong Province on the northeast coast of China, where the mission established a school for the children of its missionaries. The school was first staffed in 1881 and represents the CIM's unique response to a need experienced by all Protestant missions: what to do with the offspring of mission parents? Chefoo was the most institutional of the stations established by the CIM, which in part accounts for the amount of material that has survived about this quite specific site of the mission's work. The school has also been the subject of systematic documentation by former students, mission members, and supporters who have been keen to keep alive this small yet influential part of the CIM movement. The school is important to this study of gendered relations in the missionary movement for another reason. While Hudson Taylor established the CIM with the idea that single women could work and live in the same manner as male workers (as travelling evangelists), the mission could not escape the gendered social expectations of Western and Chinese societies. The bias placed on women being teachers and the large amount of domestic work performed at Chefoo led to a greater demand for female workers in that part of the mission. This was also a result of its taking longer for women to be integrated in inland China for the various reasons to be discussed below. Part of the Chefoo archive at SOAS (London) consists of pictures that are evocative of a strongly Western middle-class spirit. They

stand out against the better known photos of CIM members in their non-Western attire.

While the mission archives contain a wealth of institutional material, the personal papers from which this study could undoubtedly have benefited are lacking. Further, while this is a study of British personnel, their work experience was in foreign countries, and the skills being developed were aimed at transmitting complex religious and cultural ideas across cultures. To some extent, this point is lost in the consideration of the Western side, and specifically, the Western mission side, of the discussion. The small amount of material on the actual communities at the mission interface is telling in itself. Very few missionaries really wrote about their relationships with the individuals who constituted their local congregation. For the Scottish missions in Darjeeling, Sikkim, and Bhutan, an earlier study focusing on the Nepali Diaspora provided additional insight into the local community that the Scots' mission work addressed. The CIM school at Chefoo was aimed at the children of Western expatriates. The school was rigidly segregated from the local Chinese community, a fact that is central to the story of the school and to explaining its role in wider CIM work. Finally, LMS work in the United Provinces represents an area where people demonstrated great 'ability and skill . . . in accepting, rejecting or transforming the goods and services offered. Indeed, the people selected what they wanted and went their own way when they did not agree with the advice tendered'.¹⁹ The LMS directors were well aware of the problems they faced in working with the religiously sophisticated citizens of Benares and Mirzapur but never managed to provide an attractive package that pleased mission supporters at home as well.

Conclusion

This book is structured around the individuals who implemented each society's policy between the 1860s and 1910. They were (mostly) formed in and then left the British Isles to practise their professions. So, too, this study focuses on the metropole and then shifts to other points in what was a connected imperial landscape. Initially a consideration is made of the candidates to each society. Because it was not possible to follow each of the great streams of candidates through their mission careers, the study looks in detail at the individuals in specific geographic areas. Particular issues are highlighted in each of these. This, in part, reflects the reality of source material but also reflects the suitability and/or relevance of certain subjects to one or another of the missions. Administrative policy is examined in terms of the religious and societal pressures that shaped candidates. This discussion of each mission's

¹⁹ Bowie *et al.*, *Women and Missions*, p. xix.