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America's Learning about Foreign Places through the Eyes of Missionaries: Writings in *The Friends' Missionary Advocate*, 1885–1933

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Abstract

Missionaries were among the travelers who supplied American adults and children with information about foreign places. Because they enjoyed a high status and respect with their home congregations and because they lived among peoples in foreign, often exotic, lands, missionaries and their writings enjoyed a wide and attentive audience. Materials in *The Friends' Missionary Advocate* between 1885 and 1933 report that information on foreign regions reached American audiences through presentations at monthly and quarterly meetings and at yearly conferences. Articles, letters, reports, maps, and pictures were also a medium for influencing Americans' impressions of the world.

Keywords

Missionaries, Quakers, world view, missionary writings, mission fields, images

Introduction

Americans, both children and adults, learn about different places from a variety of media. These include magazines, newspapers, radio, movies, television and today the World Wide Web. Before the widespread diffusion of the visual broadcast media, people relied on stories and illustrations in their schoolbooks, in popular magazines and newspapers, and first-hand contact with missionaries, travelers, traders, scholars, explorers, leaders of military campaigns and diplomats.

Missionaries were important sources of America's learning about foreign places during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Their accounts about distant, foreign and often 'exotic' places appeared not only in religious

magazines and newspapers, but in reports to supporters when they returned to the United States for extended visits or retirement. Missionaries through their stories both promoted and reinforced stereotypes of peoples, cultures and environments that found much appeal in a public fascinated with those whose cultural and religious practices were different from their own. In contributing to the remarkable nineteenth-century growth of Western knowledge of far places and to the development of a cosmopolitan world culture, the missionary movement played an important role. Indeed, an elevated curiosity about the outer world seems to have been a part of the enterprise from the start (Field 1974: 43). These religious emissaries wanted and needed to share with the 'at home' members of their religious, commercial, scholarly and political communities the lessons they observed and learned about cultures, economies and natural environments that were different from their home country. Their presentations were often sprinkled with stories of the daily life of children, schools, hospitals, women and men working in fields and the hardships of living in different cultures. Presentations also included photographs and lanternslides of the 'foreign cultures' and features of cultural and natural landscapes. Clothing, religious items, jewelry, musical instruments, toys and weapons were popular exhibit items. People trusted what missionaries described for the print media, what they said in public meetings, what they photographed for publication, and what they contributed as displays in museums. Maps were integrated in many of these presentations as they helped orient their audiences to where these places were with reference to the United States. In short, missionaries became gatekeepers of knowledge about places that were considered 'foreign' to many Americans.

The major objective of this paper is to examine the role and contents that one American missionary magazine conveyed about overseas or foreign activities between 1885 and 1933. *The Friends' Missionary Advocate* (hereafter *FMA*) is the major missionary journal of the Society of Friends (Quakers) in the United States. During this period the monthly journal included a variety of stories and illustrations about Friends' missionary activities in different regions and countries. The questions we seek to answer are three: (1) What role did the missionaries play as gatekeepers of information about foreign places during this period? (2) What was the content of articles in the journal about places where the Friends carried out active missionary activities? and (3) What were specific examples of 'learning' activities for children and adults about foreign places that appeared in this magazine? Answering these questions helps us understand the important role that missionaries played during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as sources of information not only for the American Friends, but for a wider public that included public

schools, businesses, colleges and universities and US foreign policy officials. The next section of this paper describes missionaries' gatekeeper role, followed by a discussion of missionary magazines. Then we focus on the specific example of Friends and *FMA*, followed by a conclusion where we summarize our findings and suggest questions for future study.

Missionaries as Information Gatekeepers of Foreign Areas

Contributions by Historians

Historians, geographers and anthropologists have studied the role of missionaries as gatekeepers of information about 'foreign' and 'distant' cultures and place. Much of the work by historians examines the role of religion in the development of Americans' perception of foreign areas and its influence on US foreign policy. Nnorom, for example, examines the role of churches in forming American foreign policy toward South Africa, concluding that 'in spite of the constitutional requirements of the separation of church and state... American churches have traditionally enjoyed an exceedingly stable and collaborative relationship with their government, especially in the foreign policy area' (1987: 38). Nolde's work on the churches and world peace points out, 'The missionary enterprise...while moving faith and fellowship to wider geographical areas, has reached beyond the limits of the Christian family in contributing to an international ethos' (1970: 10). Peter Johnson (1982) similarly describes the influence of missionary communications about the Middle East on Americans' perception of that region.

China has received particular attention. Harold Issacs' study of American views of China and India, based on extensive interviews with a sample of Americans, finds that they had many more images of the former than the latter. He also found that 'a great majority (138 out of 181) had never been to China, but almost all at one time or another had met someone who had' (Isaacs 1958: 148). Part of the reason is the role of missionaries as conveyors of information:

> This missionary [enterprise] and the men and women who took part in it placed a permanent and decisive impress on the emotional underpinning of American thinking about China... More than any other single thing, the American missionary effort in China is responsible for the unique place China occupies in the American cosmos, for the special claim it has on the American conscience (1958: 67-68).

Paul Varg's study of American perceptions of China examines the writings of missionaries-turned-scholars. He states, 'These spokesmen, who had dedicated their careers to China, never doubted her future importance. From their

point of view, the United States could not afford to ignore China, and their own humanitarian concerns made them imperialists of righteousness' (Varg 1968: 115). Reed describes the Open Door Policy as 'an essentially missionary idea' (1983: 199). Steven Mosher (1990) credits missionaries with the general attitude of benevolence toward China in the last half of the nineteenth century. And Neils points out that 'largely because they were generally admired by audiences back home, missionaries, in their letters to their families and to their mission boards, created images of China that were held by hundreds of thousands of Americans before World War II' (1990: 10). Bickers (1999) reports a similar phenomenon in Britain, viz., scholars favorably influenced the public's perception of China.

Contributions of Geographers

Geographers have also studied missions and missionary activities. An early effort by Hildegard Binder Johnson (1967) maps the missions of Africa south of the Sahara and discusses their locations relative to population densities, access to ports and land transportation, and territories of the various European colonial powers. She examines four missions in different locations: coastal West Africa, an overland route in South West Africa, a site in East Africa that formed a 'jumping-off' point for further exploration, and a location in what is now northeastern Tanzania where colonial rulers favored separate spheres for Catholics and Protestants (Johnson 1967: 183). Charles Good (1991) calls for more extensive research on medical missions in Africa. Roger Stump develops a model 'to synthesize the varied effects of religious broadcasting' (1991: 369), which he considers a modern way of spreading religious messages.

Aarne Koskinen in his study of Western European missionaries in the Pacific islands points out that the growth of democracy in Europe led to more influence of the public on state policy, which meant there were many opportunities for missionaries to influence public opinion. The publishing activities carried on by the missionary societies from the outset were of particularly great importance. Missionary reports were disseminated among the missions' supporters. Gradually individual missionaries also began to publish accounts of their own activities. They often made very popular reading because of their fascinating contents (Koskinen 1953: 199).

Pellervo Kokkonen describes the role of early missionary literature in popular perceptions of Africa among the Finns:

> Since very few, except those missionaries sharing the interests of the FMS [Finnish Missionary Society] could obtain direct experience of Africa, missionary literature managed to monopolize and manipulate the image of Africa for a long period of time in Finnish society....they...created and enforced a strong sense of cultural superiority in Finland and diminished the Ovambo people to the inferior role of greatful [*sic*] recipients of religion and civilization (Kokkonen 1999: 212).

Mandelbaum discusses the role of a Methodist missionaries' journal that described their work in Mozambique:

> The quantity of information about the Tshwa culture...really did not provide home readers with a good understanding of the circumstances of the Vatshwa and their culture. While it provided interesting and unusual glimpses of some practices and daily activities, Westerners received a fragmented and distorted view of the Tshwa culture (Mandelbaum 1989: 191).

Rakotonirina (2000) analyzes accounts of Malagasy persecutions, including letters, published books and journal articles by both Europeans and Malagasy Christians from 1837 (when the first Malagasy Christian was killed because of her faith) to 1937. In contrast to Malagasy writings, which came later, the European picture included 'derogatory and patronizing images of timeless, ignorant, immoral Malagasy culture and religion' (2000: 161). Europeans denied the existence of an independent Malagasy church as well as any efficient or honest government, thus promoting the continued need for Christian missions.

Travel Writers and Popular Culture

Missionary writing is part of a much larger body of literature produced by Western travelers (see McCarthy 1983; Pratt 1992). Pratt, in introducing her study of travel writing about Latin America that circulated in Europe, describes such writing as taking place in '"contact zones", social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination' (1992: 4). McCarthy (1983) includes missionary writings as helping to reveal an increasingly detailed picture in the West of the African continent, landscape and situation. As Bickers (1999) points out with respect to British in China, missionary writings and reports echoed a much larger body of material about 'foreign', 'exotic' regions of the world in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Missionaries wrote against the background of what the French philosopher Michel Foucault called the same 'discursive formation' (Hall 1997a), which constructed the concept of what is 'foreign' or 'other'.

Beliefs about salvation and the relationship between religion and 'progress' supported a 'regime of truth' (Foucault 1980) that held 'others' of the world, especially non-Christians, as being inferior and in need of education, medical services, poverty eradication and famine relief, and above all, conversion to

Christianity. Westerners had economic, political and military power to impose these ideas, what Foucault calls 'power/knowledge'. Foucault describes this 'power/knowledge' as spawning an enormous amount of published information. As Koskinen describes,

> The purpose of the accounts in the first place was to report, for the benefit of the friends of the mission at home, on the progress of work and to spur supporters on to assist missionary activities. Because of their interest, however, they were read by wider circles also (1953: 199).

Missions were also part of the much larger imperialist/colonialist project of Western Europe and America in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (MacKenzie 1986). Militaristic language described their enterprise: 'The language of war entered into hymns, tracts, and sermons' (1986: 5). Missionary writings became part of a larger body of imperial propaganda, which MacKenzie defines as 'the transmission of ideas and values from one person, or groups of persons, to another, with the specific intention of influencing the recipients' attitudes in such a way that the interests of its authors will be enhanced' (1984: 3).

Missionary writings and other presentations were representations of the 'other' (Hall 1997b). Similar to museum exhibitions, specific examples of crafts, artifacts and illustrations were chosen and combined to convey a particular impression of foreign cultures according to the particular general beliefs of the time about the way the world should operate. As Litchi explains:

> Exhibitions are discrete events which articulate objects, texts, visual representations, reconstructions and sounds to create an intricate and bounded representations system...producing meaning through the internal ordering and conjugation of the separate but related components of an exhibition (Lidchi 1997: 168).

In missionary exhibitions certain aspects of the 'other', especially non-Christian religions, were emphasized; other aspects would be glossed over or not mentioned at all. As critics of museums have argued, material for missionary presentations and writings was gathered 'as a result of unequal relationships of power' (Lidchi 1997: 167).

Missionary Writings

Finally, letters and photos from missionaries were sent to pastors of churches in the home countries (Olson 1988). Sometimes indigenous peoples in the various mission fields, if they were literate, might contribute letters or autobiographical accounts of their own conversion experiences; their photos might also be included. But the selection of whose words to include in any correspondence or presentation was the role of the 'gatekeeping' missionary.

This article details the gatekeeping role played by a missionary journal because these journals were an important part of Americans' learning about foreign places. McCarthy states in regard to American perceptions of Africa that 'Missionaries...captured a large share of the popular imagination of Americans by having their reports from the field regularly promulgated through ecclesiastical channels' (1983: 114). Major Protestant denominations along with Catholics considered the 'fields' of Africa, Asia and the Pacific Islands ripe for missionary activities. Protestants added Latin America to this list because they considered Catholicism a less desirable form of Christianity than Protestantism. As the Revd Dr A. McLean stated in regard to Cuba:

> Although Cuba has had a form of Christianity for four hundred years...it is a proper field for Christian missions... Churches abound and their bells are almost constantly ringing... Mass is said in every church several times every day of the year. Yet, with all this it is very apparent that the churches have done very little for the moral elevation and the spiritual well-being of the people (quoted in *FMA* 15.5 [May 1899]: 75).

Henry and Alma Cox wrote 15 years later:

> Ever since its [Cuba's] discovery it has been overshadowed by a terrible superstition, due largely to a decayed Roman religion and influenced by a dark paganism. Though it is a country in which hundreds of fine church edifices are found, yet it is an Island that knew little of the Gospel Message until some fourteen years ago when the Americans brought peace and new hope to an abused country (*FMA* 30.4 [April 1914]: 3).

Thousands of missionaries were trained in US Bible colleges and religious schools and volunteered or were sent to tropical and subtropical environments to convert souls to Christ. James Reed estimates that in the period 1911–1915, there were 300 missionaries on furlough at any one time, and they presented more than 30,000 addresses on China in the United States each year. 'The ramifications were incalculable' (1983: 25). Also they played important roles in the education of America's youth and adults about places that most Americans would never be able to visit. Some missionaries sent 'letters from the field' that were published in denominational magazines. Others would provide information on a less regular basis for religious newspapers as they sought support for specific programs, such as new hospitals, schools or agricultural tools.

Missionaries were likely to have more and more direct contacts with working people and be more familiar with their daily lives than were diplomats or entrepreneurs. Many missionaries were able to read, write and speak not only in English, but also in the languages of those they worked with daily. And they used these literary and observation skills to share with supporters and others

back home experiences about the cultures of those they worked with, including the descriptions of the physical and human landscapes (houses, fields, roads, modes of transport), religious practices (rituals, ceremonies and festivals), and indigenous belief systems. They also were able to share information with their 'home' groups about their own problems and successes (and failures) of working to enroll converts. Not all that they shared in words or in person was pleasant, as frequently their own lives were full of extreme hardship (illness, disease and despair) and their evangelistic successes were few. 'Missionary visitations usually made an indelible impression on public opinion in provincial communities otherwise starved for information' (Reed 1983: 25). Americans valued missionaries as sources of this information. Missionaries were held in positions of trust and in high esteem because of their religious commitment, dedication to improving the lot of humans, and formal educational training. 'Many came [to China] not as evangelists but rather as teachers, doctors, social workers' (Isaacs 1958: 147). They were often held in higher esteem than those embarking on commercial, military or political ventures.

The 'missionary evening' or Sunday service would often be a highlight on the home church's social calendar. Picnics, 'mission feasts' and lengthy religious services became part of these social, information-sharing and fund-raising opportunities. The 'home' tours or furloughs of missionaries, whether scheduled or unscheduled, would usually include 'propaganda tours' of missionaries (Koskinen 1953: 199): visits to churches or religious groups that financially supported the missionaries or were their home bases. The audience's interest in such presentations 'was immense. It might even be ranked as a new mass movement' (Koskinen 1953: 200). The invention of the 'magic lantern' (slide projector) greatly enhanced such meetings, as it was 'particularly well suited to travel and missionary subjects. Church hall presentations became the rage' (MacKenzie 1984: 32). In the early twentieth century:

> From pulpits all over the land the returning missionary told his story of the evils of heathenism. It was a picture of somber shadows but through it, like streaks of light, ran lines telling of a remarkable people [the Chinese] who, if converted to Christianity, might even surpass the Anglo-Saxons... The audience at home readily listened, contrasting what they heard about China with their own idealized picture of America (Varg 1968: 105-106).

Missionary Writings and Magazines

The missionary magazine or newspaper was one of several ways that missionaries conveyed stories and impressions about peoples with different histories

and cultures than those residing within the United States. Several hundred missionary journals have been published during the past two centuries, some by individual mission boards and some by other entities. Among the best known is *Missionary Herald*, which began publication in 1804 by the American Board of Foreign Missions in Boston and continued publication until 1934. *Missionary Review of the World*, which reported on the work of many different denominational missionary boards, appeared from 1888 to 1939. Journals published by individual denominations include the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church's *Voice of Missions* (1893–present), *The Foreign Missionary* (?–1841) by the Presbyterians, and *Into the World* (1983–present) by the Episcopalians. The China Inland Mission started *China's Millions* in 1875; in 1952 it became *The Millions* and continued until 1964. While most journals were published in Europe or the United States, some were published where missionaries served. *Congo Mission News* was published in Léopoldville, in what was then the Belgian Congo, from about 1945 until about 1952, and *Mission and Evangelism Newsletter*, which began in Singapore in 1979, is still published. Besides English, missionary journals appeared in French, German, Portuguese, Italian, Spanish, Dutch and Scandinavian languages.

The content of these monthly (or less frequent) magazines included stories about the experiences of new and seasoned missionaries, health and literacy campaigns, difficulties working with 'other' cultures with different religious histories and doctrines, photos or sketches of physical landscape features and the dress, hairstyles and appearances of indigenous cultures. Occasionally there were maps that helped orient the reader to where a denomination's missionary activities were being carried out. There were also occasional accounts of success, including the number of new converts, healings and cures, the successful introduction of new crops and agricultural technology, and the construction of new schools and hospitals. Missionary journals often had specific sections devoted to children's learning about distant places, missionaries on furlough, new arrivals, missionary offerings and their designated use, and other personal information (deaths, births, baptisms, marriages and retirements of missionaries).

The diffusion of cultural and environmental materials by various media was evident in denominational literature earmarked for educating not only children and those attending denominational religious instruction, but also leaders in business and government, colleges, universities, seminaries, legal and medical schools and scholarly organizations. Public schools credited the role of missionaries as supplements to the

> direct work of teaching history and geography... So much is due to the pioneer missionary for our knowledge today of the flora and fauna of many lands: so much also for scientific knowledge on other lines touching geology, ethnology, literature and comparative philology; whenever the opportunity occurs, and the teacher is on the alert can detect these quickly, a word may be dropped that will give credit to some missionary (*FMA* 12.10 [October 1896]: 152).

Their 'gatekeeping' role in American society was crucial in materials prepared for America's religious denominations, but also the content of history and geography materials in school textbooks. For example:

> China is one of the oldest of nations. The Chinese printed books and made gunpowder long before these inventions were known in Europe; yet they have made little progress, but live very much as their ancestors did thousands of years ago (Redway and Hinman 1897: 115).

A similar statement occurs in a contributed piece to *The Friends Missionary Advocate*:

> Historically speaking, the Chinese may say, 'Before Abraham was, I am'. They antedates [sic] Egypt, Assyria, Bablylon, Persia, Greece and Rome. They were familiar with the mariners compass, porcelain, and gunpowder hundreds of years in advance of other nations. They wore silk while the ancient Britons wore a savage dress. They manufactured paper 1,200 years in advance of Europe (*FMA* 15.10 [October 1899]: 151).

Hattie Linn Beele adds:

> One is at a loss to account for the slowness with which the Chinese adopt even our most common modern improvements. They are so full of superstition that they will not allow railways to be built, and they are only just beginning to admit the telegraph (*FMA* 1.9 [September 1885]: p. 131).

Missionaries by their residence, experiences and writings were often considered regional specialists, with knowledge useful to scholars and scholarly organizations, American businesses interested in commercial expansion overseas, and foreign policy decision-making bodies in the US government. For example, S. Wells Williams, W.A.P. Martin and Arthur Smith became highly respected scholars on China (Mosher 1990: 40-41). Maurice P. Price applied cross-cultural anthropological methods in a pioneering study of missions in China themselves:

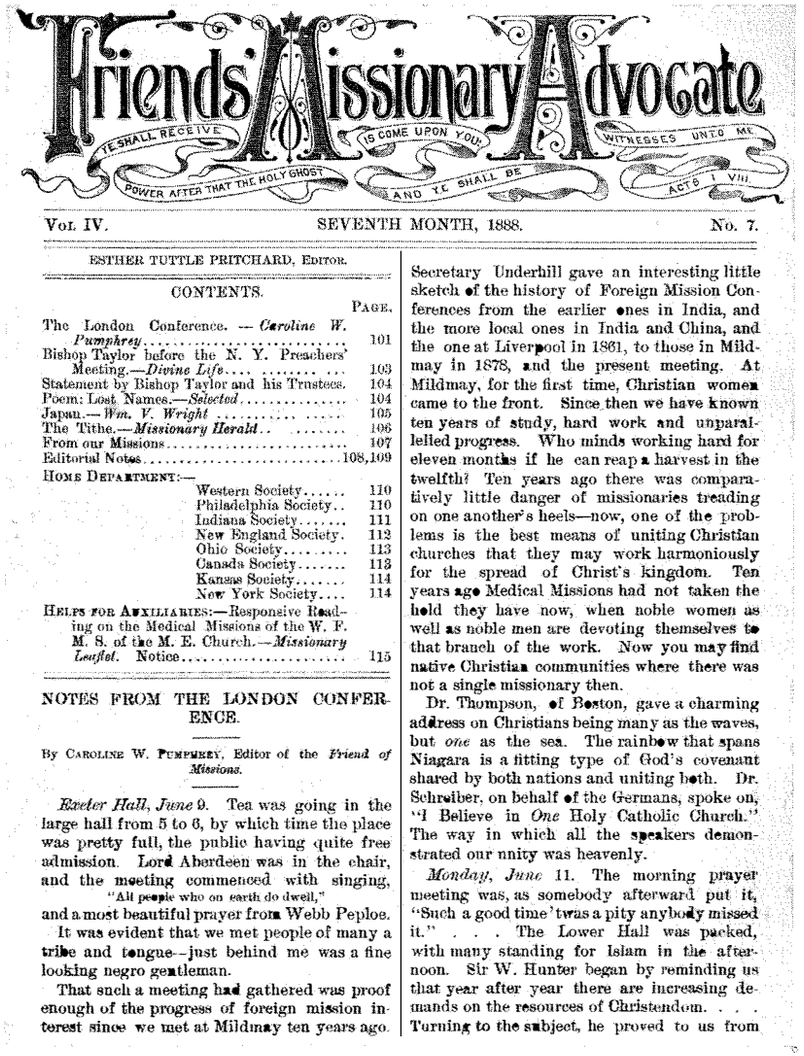
> From the theoretical point of view...the personnel of Protestant Christian propaganda, its churches, schools, hospitals, and printing presses, and all that goes on in connection with them, are an introduction into non-Christian countries of certain aspects of occidental civilization... (Price 1924: xix).

Missionary journals were also important sources of trusted information about political and environmental events, including the extent of famines, human tragedy caused by floods or widespread diseases, changes in political leadership, successes of health and literacy campaigns, and religious tolerance. Missionaries enjoyed successes in political lobbying, influencing a wider public by writing letters to major newspapers and magazines, and making personal appearances before religious or political organizations. With certain exceptions, 'Missionaries tended to avoid explicitly political questions. While it was true that a certain number could always be counted upon to sign petitions, write the President, or even lobby in Washington, it took an extraordinary event to bring them out of the religious woodwork' (Reed 1983: 96). Their strength lay in their influence on public opinion in general, which in a time of increasing democratic participation, impacted policy (Reed 1983).

Friends and *The Friends' Missionary Advocate*

The Society of Friends (Quakers) has always been a relatively small denomination with a long history of concern for equality of all and international peace and harmony (see, e.g., *Quaker Faith and Practice* 1995). Its interest in the material well-being of all persons was an important impetus for overseas mission efforts, beginning during the nineteenth century, in China, Japan, India, Cuba, Jamaica, Palestine and East Africa. In all these regions except China, where all Protestants have been organized into one 'post-denominational' body since 1950, Friends still have a recognizable presence.

The Friends' Missionary Advocate is a Quaker journal that began in 1885 and is still published as *The Advocate*. We surveyed all issues in the Quaker archives at Earlham College in Richmond, Indiana, from the beginning of publication until 1933, when the journal's focus shifted from missions to other issues, such as peace, race relations and spirituality. We noted the types of materials published, the geographic regions described, and the topics of discussion (Figure 1). Figure 2 shows by decade the number of items for foreign regions where Friends had missions and other foreign areas, as well as domestic or 'home' missions. In the journal's early years material was reproduced from other missionary publications, but as time went on and Quaker missions became established, the focus narrowed to the work of Friends and places where they served. Besides materials on missions, the magazine reported other activities for learning about missionary activities.



Friends' Missionary Advocate

YE SHALL RECEIVE POWER AFTER THAT THE HOLY GHOST IS COME UPON YOU AND YE SHALL BE WITNESSES UNTO ME ACTS I. VIII.

VOL IV. SEVENTH MONTH, 1888. No. 7.

ESTHER TUTTLE PRITCHARD, EDITOR.

CONTENTS.

NOTES FROM THE LONDON CONFERENCE.

BY CAROLINE W. PUMPHREY, Editor of the *Friend of Missions.*

Exeter Hall, June 9. Tea was going in the large hall from 5 to 6, by which time the place was pretty full, the public having quite free admission. Lord Aberdeen was in the chair, and the meeting commenced with singing,

"All people who on earth do dwell,"

and a most beautiful prayer from Webb Peploe.

It was evident that we met people of many a tribe and tongue—just behind me was a fine looking negro gentleman.

That such a meeting had gathered was proof enough of the progress of foreign mission interest since we met at Mildmay ten years ago. Secretary Underhill gave an interesting little sketch of the history of Foreign Mission Conferences from the earlier ones in India, and the more local ones in India and China, and the one at Liverpool in 1861, to those in Mildmay in 1878, and the present meeting. At Mildmay, for the first time, Christian women came to the front. Since then we have known ten years of study, hard work and unparalleled progress. Who minds working hard for eleven months if he can reap a harvest in the twelfth? Ten years ago there was comparatively little danger of missionaries treading on one another's heels—now, one of the problems is the best means of uniting Christian churches that they may work harmoniously for the spread of Christ's kingdom. Ten years ago Medical Missions had not taken the hold they have now, when noble women as well as noble men are devoting themselves to that branch of the work. Now you may find native Christian communities where there was not a single missionary then.

Dr. Thompson, of Boston, gave a charming address on Christians being many as the waves, but *one* as the sea. The rainbow that spans Niagara is a fitting type of God's covenant shared by both nations and uniting both. Dr. Schreiber, on behalf of the Germans, spoke on, "I Believe in *One* Holy Catholic Church." The way in which all the speakers demonstrated our unity was heavenly.

Monday, June 11. The morning prayer meeting was, as somebody afterward put it, "Such a good time 'twas a pity anybody missed it." . . . The Lower Hall was packed, with many standing for Islam in the afternoon. Sir W. Hunter began by reminding us that year after year there are increasing demands on the resources of Christendom. . . . Turning to the subject, he proved to us from

Figure 1. *Sample table of contents from an early issue of* FMA *July, 1888.* (The Friends Collection, Earlham College, Richmond, Indiana. Used with permission.)

Monthly, Quarterly and Yearly Meetings

Monthly and quarterly meetings for business and for missionary-supporting auxiliaries were highlights not only on the religious calendar, but also the social calendar of American Friends during the period under examination. They were also occasions to share information about concerns important to members of the local meeting, and to learn about the activities of missionaries

in various fields and forthcoming events. Often there were foreign mission study nights, which were devoted to different kinds of information sharing, including reading letters from missionaries, writing letters to those the local meeting supported, listening to children's stories provided by missionaries, singing, a lecture delivered by a missionary on furlough, and taking a collection in support of missionary activities. These offerings might be for generic activities in some foreign region or country or for a specific cause, as recommended by Friends' missionaries in a given country. Map lessons were often included in these monthly meetings. As was pointed out in an article on 'Way of Working', 'Good meetings in the missionary society just do not "just happen". They come only after careful preparation on the part of the leader who *must believe* in her subject' (*FMA* 33.9 [September 1917]: 270; emphasis original). The Friendsville Quarter of North Carolina Yearly Meeting reported:

> Our last meeting was opened by singing 'The Light of the World Is Jesus', and each member repeating a text on faith. After the business of the meeting was over, carefully prepared essays were read on the following subjects: 'Habits and Customs of the Hindoos', 'The Religion of the Hindoos', and 'The Government of India'. After listening to those the society decided to make some mission a special object of prayer during the month, and Rachel Metcalfe's home for girls was chosen for the month (*FMA* 3.4 [April 1887]: 62).

On many occasions food was served, and special prayers were offered for missionaries and their work. Some groups collected materials to send to missionaries, often for schools and hospitals; others made quilts, and still others prepared scrapbooks. Missionaries on furlough often had offerings taken to support their work, for example, for hospitals, schools or victims of famines and natural disasters.

The Friends' Missionary Advocate provides evidence of the various kinds of 'geographic learning' that occurred at these monthly meetings. Whether considered as formal or informal 'geography' lessons, a distinct focus of many meetings or bands (term used for groups of children) was to educate children and adults about the cultures, environments and religious beliefs of countries where the denomination sponsored missionaries. Uniform Lessons for children often had a strong geography content, in that they provided stories about a foreign country. For example, Indiana Yearly Meeting in December 1888 reported:

> The usual program is as follows: Meeting opened by song, a chapter read by those present (or rather a few verses). I usually led in prayer, the entire band standing with bowed head followed me sentence by sentence, thus all uniting in prayer. Roll called. Mission text read. Bible lesson given, giving object lessons. Collection. Treasurer's report. Minutes. Song (*FMA* 4.12 [December 1888]: 193).

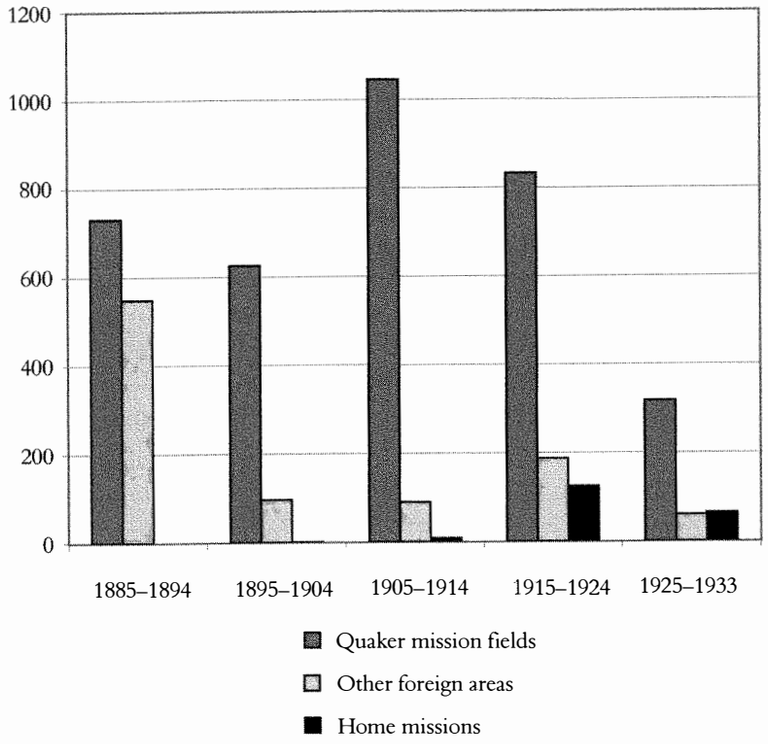


Figure 2. *Geographical areas, in terms of mission fields, covered in* FMA, *by decade. Source: Calculations by the authors.*

Those interested in this meeting plan could write to Emma Spencer in Highland, Ohio, for details. 'A Nice Way To Learn Geography' (*FMA* 1.5 [May 1885]: 90) uses the example of the zenana, a house opening to an inner courtyard and a means of secluding women in India, as an example of something to be learned from missionaries. In 1891 a feature 'For the Children' calls for a lesson on Palestine and Friends' missions in that country, and points out:

> The map of Palestine is so easily drawn even by a child, it is earnestly hoped that band leaders will, either with black board, or paper and crayon, make the children quite familiar with the outline, boundaries, and all the points of interest in that Holy Land so dear to every Christian heart (*FMA* 7.7 [July 1891]: 111).

The instructions continue with an outline of the lesson including:

> THE COUNTRY 1. Locate and bound. 2. Size. 3. Characteristics of the two principal rivers. 4. Mountain ranges. 5. Mountain peaks and some incident connected with them. 6. Climate. 7. Productions. 8. Soil. 9. Government and its effects on the people. 10. Principal cities and their present condition. 11. Animals. PEOPLE 1. Different races. 2. Languages. 3. Religions. 4. Homes. 5. Dress. 6. Condition of women and girls. 7. Intelligence... (*FMA* 7.7 [July 1891].111).

E.G. Stanley of Denison University wrote detailed directions for making large maps on muslin for such purposes (*FMA* 11.2 [February 1895]: 31).

Adults, too, had Uniform Lessons with a heavy geographical content. A series of lessons for an entire year would cover a major region or topic, such as China or India. Early issues provided the content for the outline, but later the auxiliaries used books, some of them by non-Friends, such as Arthur Smith's work on China. There was even the option of taking a final examination on China and Protestant missionaries and having it graded by Gilbert Bowles in Oskaloosa, Iowa (*FMA* 16.1 [January 1900]: 10).

Often letters from missionaries were read at monthly meetings. For example, Mary H. Thomas of Union Springs, New York, reported:

> Very interesting letters have been received from Joseph and Sarah Cosand of Tokio, Japan, and from Effie Williams of India, enclosing some account of Indoo's work written by her husband, Nathoo Lallo, who is a native Christian, and recorded missionary of the Society of Friends in Sohagpur, India... The graphic descriptions and many items of gospel news are deeply interesting and encouraging' (*FMA* 9.4 [April 1893]: 60).

Sermons were sometimes given. Indeed, T.C. Kenworthy advocated in 1906 that *all* sermons should be 'flavored with missionary truth' (*FMA* 22.9 [September 1906]: 133). There were reports of auxiliaries and Christian Endeavor programs, and sometimes people used lessons from *The Friends' Missionary Advocate*. They showed photos of missionary activities, schools and other programs. There were also Bible readings, map lessons, music (piano, solos, quartets), stereopticon slides, home talent plays and skits, singing of hymns, and reports of Sabbath School collections. Prayers for missions were also important, and Western Yearly Meeting offered suggestions for a mission-oriented prayer life (*FMA* 41.1 [January 1925]: 19).

At Iowa Yearly Meeting in May 1893, 'On Sabbath afternoon Hannah T. Pratt addressed a large company of children and young people on missionary work, showing them some idols and specimens from heathen countries. This was one long to be remembered by young and old' (*FMA* 9.5 [May 1893]: 77). The Ohio Auxiliary heard a memorable account of the Boxer uprising in China from a letter by Lenna Stanley in Shanghai:

> Two young men of the school near by that were met by the boxers, who said to them, 'you are foreign: we will kill you'. They replied, 'we are Chinamen, but worship Jesus', The boxers dragged them to a temple and said they were going to kill them. The boys asked to be taken outside, so they led them out and gave them a chance to say a few words before they began their dreadful work. Each boy told the angry crowed what he believed. After the first had given his testimony he was cut to pieces. The second, not shrinking at the sight, gave his also, and then had his hands and feet cut off, then disemboweled and so on until dead (*FMA* 17.12 [December 1901]: 30).

Popular missionary hymns among Iowa Yearly Meeting in 1927 included 'We've a Story To Tell to the Nations' and 'Let the Lower Lights Be Burning'. Another old missionary hymn had these words: 'If you cannot cross the ocean/ and the heathen land explore/You can find the heathen nearer/You can find them at your door.' New words were often written to familiar tunes, for example, 'The Jubilee Hymn' sung to the tune of the 'Battle Hymn of the Republic' (*FMA* 27.5 [May 1911]: 8) and 'Pray, Study, Give' to the tune 'National Anthem' (the tune of 'My Country 'Tis of Thee') by Annie D. Stephenson (*FMA* 14.1 [January 1898]: 1).

North Carolina Yearly Meeting in 1926 performed a play 'Sewing for the Heathen' and the Kansas Yearly Meeting in February 1927 had a pageant 'Missions in Moslem Lands'. At the August 1921 meeting of the Denver Women's Missionary Society, four girls presented the play, 'The girl had no time', 'which was well rendered and appreciated' (*FMA* 37.9 [September 1921]: 301). In 1925 two scripts were provided for such presentations on 'China's Real Revolution' (*FMA* 41.1 [January 1925]: 11-12 and 41.3 [March 1925]: 78-80). Plays, skits, stories and songs were an important part of geographic learning in yearly meetings.

Educational Efforts

Sometimes members of missionary auxiliaries wrote essays, for example, 'Women in India' or 'The Congo', for presentation. Papers were given at Ohio Yearly Meeting in 1892 on 'Women and the Gospel in Persia', at Iowa Yearly Meeting in 1892 on 'Rum Traffic in Africa', and at Western Yearly Meeting in 1893 on 'The Christian Endeavor in Missionary Work'. Indiana Yearly Meeting in October 1889 reported that it had papers (essays) produced on India, Madagascar, Syria, Mexico, Jamaica, Alaska, the Palestine mission, and on North American Indians. Western Yearly Meeting in April 1889 was devoted to David Livingstone, H.M. Stanley and the African slave trade. In June of the same year there was a report on the American Colonization Society. 'Voyages and Understanding' was a manual on world fellowship issued for

free by the Christian World Education Committee. A report in June 1927 on the midyear conference of Women's Missionary Union of North Carolina Friends Meeting in Asheboro reported:

> Ruben Payne's geography lesson and Helen T. Binford's 'quiz' served to inform and refresh our minds concerning Friends' missionary work and workers throughout the world. The reality of this worldwide network was further impressed upon us by the letters read, now and then, during the conference from Carrie Davis in Cuba, Alsina Andrews and Mrs. Swift in Jamaica, Mary Pickett and Rebecca Parker in Mexico, Alice W. Jones in Palestine, and also by remarks of delegates telling of intimate touches they had with workers in different parts of the foreign field. Mr. Payne stressed the fact that we have the privilege of partaking in a 'world job' and vividly pictured to us the number of missionaries going out from Richmond, Indiana, to the ends of the earth (*FMA* 43.6 [June 1927]: 183).

In addition: 'it might be well to point out the sections where Friends are responsible for the evangelization of these unreached peoples... The sun never sets on our denominational mission fields' (*FMA* 45.12 [December 1929]; 431).

As these examples illustrate, the topics of these educational efforts were worldwide in scope. These presentations were often combined with social activities.

Social Activities

Western Yearly Meeting in 1927 reported, 'After the social hour spent at the excellent luncheon, the afternoon session was opened by Anna Kitch taking her interested hearers "around the world in the pilgrimage of prayer", using a globe to point out the trail'. At Iowa Yearly Meeting in April 1927, 'the pageant showed the sin and degradation of Mohammedanism, in contrast to the light and joy of Christianity'. At the same meeting there were lessons on Muslim women, and 'roasted buffalo meat' was a feature of the meal at this meeting. White Lick Quarterly Meeting in Mooresville, Indiana:

> Observed Thanksgiving day in a very simple happy way... A dinner was provided by members of the auxiliary and enjoyed in a real Thanksgiving spirit. Before partaking of the meal our missionaries, those who represent us at the front, were remembered in prayer, and a blessing besought for them and for the enlargement of the heart of the church towards this all important work. After dinner the guests assembled in the parlor and listened to a paper read by Eliza C. Armstrong on 'The mission of women to the church as minister and missionary'. Each one present made an offering for the work and thus returned home with a feeling of closer affection for each other, and a deeper devotion to the work of the Lord (*FMA* 14.1 [January 1898]: 112).

Meals introduced foods from mission fields and also cemented social community bonds among groups of faithful mission supporters.

Financial Contributions

Monies were contributed from various sources. Some came from leaflets sold (2 cents each) or a 'dime collection card'. There were also penny collections and mite boxes, with contributions earmarked for domestic or foreign activities. Iowa Yearly Meeting collected money in 1926 for 'coolie work in Jamaica'. North Carolina Yearly Meeting the same year raised money by rummage sales, bazaars, entertainment, parcel post sales, sunshine funds and dues ($1.50 per year). At White Lick Auxiliary, Western Yearly Meeting, in February 1890 there was a Pie Sociable, where 'each woman and girl took a pie, the men and boys buying some for 10 cents'. A total of $5.75 went for work in Mexico. New England Yearly Meeting in 1893 made sun bonnets, sweeping caps and aprons to sell to summer residents as a fund raiser. In Greenfield, Indiana, the auxiliary held 'a sale of Christmas parcels, each member bringing one and buying another, no parcel to cost over fifty cents. Amount received from parcels $10' (*FMA* 41.1 [January 1925: 23).

North Carolina Yearly Meeting in March 1926 gave money for a portable organ for Cuban missionaries. New England Yearly Meeting in January 1927 reported 'We have recently sent Christmas boxes to Ram Mallah, Africa, Tennessee, and Oklahoma, containing clothing, patchwork, books, dolls, games, handkerchiefs, cards, and so forth, at an estimated value of $35.00'. Kansas Yearly Meeting in the same year reported: 'During the last year, our missionary society has made 18 dresses and the scraps left were cut into squares of 4 or 5 inches to send to African sewing classes' (*FMA* 43.11 [November 1927]: 361). These examples illustrate that financial and in-kind contributions were additional educational activities to convey information about overseas missions.

Missionary Readings

There were many short and long articles in *The Friends' Missionary Advocate* about missionary activities in China, Palestine, Mexico, East Africa, Cuba and Jamaica. Examples of titles are provided in the text box on p. 191. Many were written by missionaries from the field, others by those on furlough. These often contained detailed information on the cultures, families, religious heritages, foods, clothing and work. Descriptions of landscapes, which were often exotic compared to America, were included. The longer stories were often accompanied by photos and line drawings. Maps, often only showing major cities and rivers, were included as well to orient the reader to the site of

a mission or activity. Examples of the captions of photos are given in that box.

Especially during the early years of publication, when overseas areas were completely unfamiliar to most Americans and Friends' missions were just being established, general geographical accounts filled many pages of the magazines. Some of this material was taken from other missionary publications and described regions of the world where Friends never did establish missions, for example, the Pacific Islands. A lesson on Africa begins, 'The continent of Africa is 5,000 miles from north to south, and 4,500 miles from east to west. It has been parceled out among the nations so that now there are only two native states. One is Morocco on the northwest corner' (*FMA* 18.12 [December 1902]: 189). The article goes on to describe the colonial rulers of the African continent.

The site of a new mission, of course, was of particular interest and concern, as in the case of the Friends' Africa Industrial Mission, established in 1902:

> This part of the country appears fertile and well watered and is 4,000 feet above the sea level, but there is very little timber. Although we are almost on the equator, it is only 80° in our tents while we ate dinner at noon today (13 July). This seems almost impossible under this equatorial sun, which is indeed very piercing, but we have already found it quite comfortable in the shade, even at noon-day (*FMA* 18.10 [October 1902]: 149).

Much attention, of course, turned to the exotic of the foreign areas where missionaries went. The Great Wall of China is the subject of four separate articles; one, by the Revd J.H. Roberts and reprinted from *Missionary Herald*, is titled 'The Chinese Wall a Fact' (*FMA* 3.6 [June 1888]: 91).

Portrayals of the landscapes of everyday life emphasize the exotic and the different, as the example of Ujiji in East Africa shows (Figure 3). A three-part story for children in 1925 about Lucy's adventures in China describes coolies carrying the family's baggage to a summer vacation home in the mountains, sampans on the river and a typhoon.

In the early issues of the journal, maps were published that appeared in other missionary publications, but as Friends' missions got underway, the missionaries provided sketch maps of their location, as is shown in Figure 4, a map of East African missions. These maps were reused, appearing in annual reports each year until the end of our survey period.

Although the natural landscapes and exotic scenery were fascinating, the missionaries went to these places with an agenda to 'win the world for Christ'. That meant working with people, and the people were also considered exotic in appearance and customs. Categorizing the peoples of the world according to 'race' was part of the discourse of the late nineteenth and early twentieth

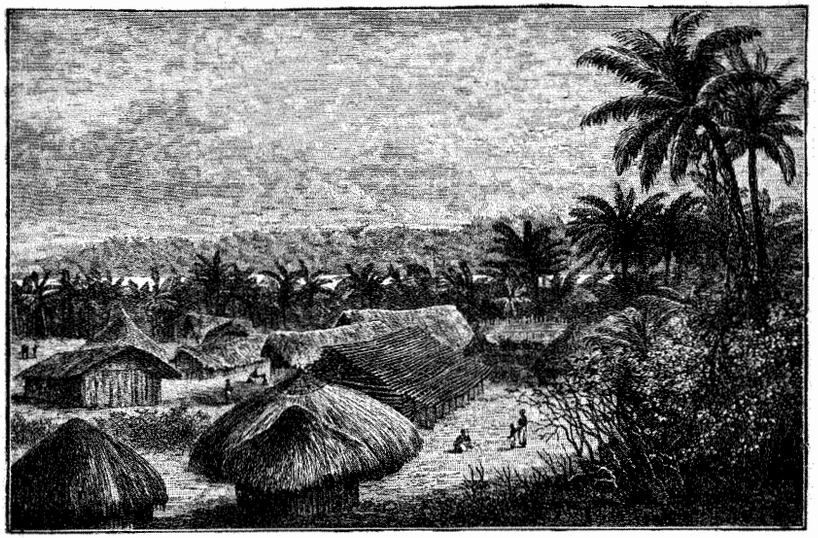


Figure 3. *Sketch of the village of Ujiji in East Africa. Emphasis is on the 'other': stereotypes of African houses, vegetation, and people. People are shown very small, and the work of creating the landscape is obscured, giving the impression that it has always been that way and this is the 'natural' order of things.* (FMA *1.8 [August 1885]: 128.* The Friends Collection, Earlham College, Richmond, Indiana. Used by permission).

centuries, and the Chinese, for example, were members of the 'Mongolian' race. They are 'well built and symmetrical: a brunette or sickly white; in the south swarthy but not black; black, coarse, glossy hair; beard black and thin; eyes black, invariably, and oblique; high cheek bones and round face; nose small' (*FMA* 15.10 [October 1899]: 151). What was termed people's 'character' also came in for scrutiny. The prospecting party that chose the site for the Friends' Africa Industrial Mission reported:

> The Kavirondo, every where we have met them, are very friendly, and in many places have asked us to build among them. The villagers are, many of them, quite large, and they are very numerous... The old chief of the section where we camped came to see us four times with head men of villages. He was very anxious to have us locate in his country. He brought us a chicken for dinner and a sheep and potatoes in the afternoon and, Monday morning, good sweet milk for breakfast (*FMA* 18.10 [October 1902]: 149).

Other aspects of the population in the mission field appalled the missionaries. The Chinese are described as 'a filthy race, and even the houses of the rich are dusty and untidy' (*FMA* 2.4 [April 1887]: 54). Many of the missionaries were women as were many of their supporters in the United States, and

treatment of women drew special attention. Footbinding, the subject of an article in 1885, came in for particular scorn: 'While the feet are being formed they are useless... When the feet are completely remodeled... the foot cannot be stood upon without its bandages, and can never be restored to its natural shape. It is a frightful and fetid thing' (*FMA* 1.3 [April 1885]: 48).

The most important characteristic of all the people of these lands was that they were not Protestant Christians. 'These teeming millions are in gross darkness, though Christ died for them', writes W.K. Summers from Africa (*FMA* 1.2 [February 1885]: 18). *The Friends' Missionary Advocate*, of course, had an agenda: 'Every article...will bear more or less directly upon the securing of experimental results in the most economic use of time and money' (*FMA* 1.1 [January 1885]: 10). Thus, the religious condition of the people of 'heathen' lands was a matter of prime concern. Religions in those regions were a regular topic:

> The religion of the north is Mohammedanism of a most fanatical type... Other parts of Africa are given over to idolatry, ancestor worship and demon worship.
>
> The reason God has allowed Africa to come under the sway of different powers, no doubt, is to bring them under the power of law, to teach them respect for life and property, and to make a kind of preparation for the gospel. Gospel missionaries are welcomed to all colonies except French, and particularly so in all of the English colonies, where the moral influence of missions is greatly appreciated (*FMA* 18.12 [December 1902]: 189).

In line with the belief that Christianity and 'progress' go hand in hand:

> God has been moving along other lines too in the matter. The great railroad from Cairo to the Cape is not yet an accomplished fact, but it has been carried far south along the Nile and has been reaching up to the Zambezi. In the meantime the British have opened a railroad from near Zanzibar to Lake Victoria Nyanza, enabling the missionary and trader and traveler to reach the very heart of Africa in a few days (*FMA* 13.12: 189).

It was believed that by adopting Protestant Christianity the peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin American could enjoy prosperity, good health and a better life. This objective was important in Western missionary efforts in the late nineteenth century.

Conclusion

Missionaries were among the few Americans who traveled to non-Western lands in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and they lived for long periods among the peoples of these regions. By necessity, they learned

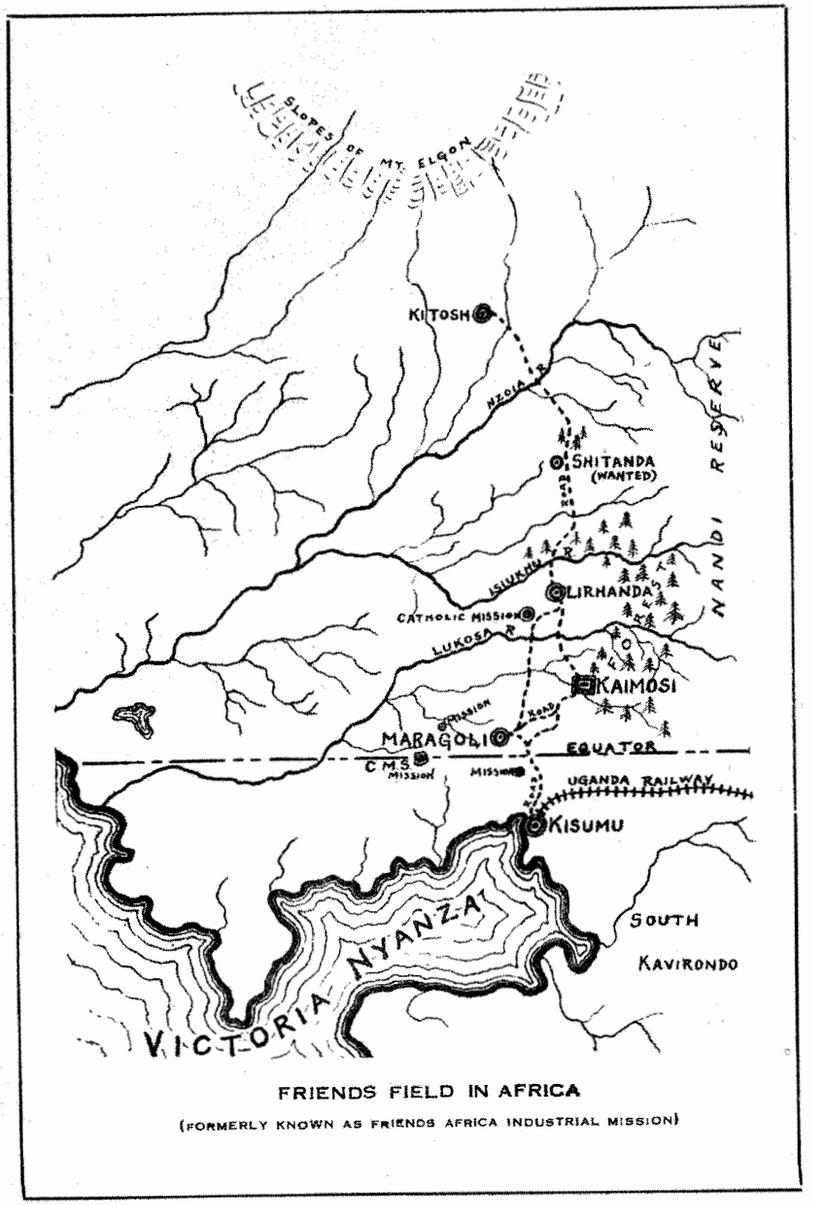


Figure 4. *Sketch map to show the location of the Friends' mission field in East Africa. This map was used repeatedly, especially in the issues that contained the annual reports from the various mission fields.* (The Friends Collection, Earlham College, Richmond, Indiana. Used by permission.)

the languages of the peoples with whom they worked and were able to communicate with them on a level that few scholars, traders, diplomats and military officers achieved. They became intimately acquainted with these peoples and cultures and used the print media, and later the radio, to educate Americans. This article is an initial examination of the importance of a missionary journal in educating a curious public about places and cultures distant from America but important to Americans' new commercial, geopolitical, as well as religious interests in foreign areas.

Missionaries, including those of the Society of Friends, came to these foreign areas with an agenda. While it was benevolent, it was also paternalistic; the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin American suffered from famines, ill health and poverty because they lacked Christianity. Once enlightened by the light of the Protestant Evangelical Gospel, their lives would improve, for they would also adopt Western knowledge, medicine and hygiene, goods and technology. Indeed, the mission effort, including that of the Society of Friends, established hospitals, schools, orphanages and training in trades.

To accomplish all these goals, missionaries needed continued financial and moral support from their home countries. They always needed more personnel—there were never enough hands for all that seemed to need attention—and they constantly needed money. The meetings, presentations, programs and publications, in the final analysis, were designed to provide this support. This underlying purpose colored the content of the presentations at quarterly and yearly meetings and written materials in *The Friends' Missionary Advocate*. A reading of missionary activities over almost half a century illustrates the importance of educating children and adults about places, cultures, environments and missionary efforts.

For these efforts to be successful, the public's curiosity first needed to be aroused. These 'foreign' lands were just beginning to be known to Americans, and much that the missionaries said or wrote was unfamiliar. Inventions like the 'magic lantern' (slide projector) and later on moving pictures helped engage people's attention. Artifacts, including clothing, religious items and crafts, were the objects of a great fascination and awe; some were later displayed in museums. Just about anything the missionaries could tell their audiences about cultures, customs and environments was eagerly absorbed. All these educational examples, in addition to securing cash donations, served two purposes: first, to educate Americans about foreign peoples and places, and second, to inform the public about successes and ongoing needs of missionary activities.

Missionaries and their supporters also needed to convince their audiences

back home that the work was important and to remind them constantly of the need for continued financial support, if not their actual participation. Published materials repeated over and over the 'benighted' condition of the 'heathen' and their capacity for improvement if they became Christian—as they would do if only they could hear the gospel from Evangelical Protestant Christians. Reports of success and letters from converts in the field encouraged supporters by demonstrating that the project was possible. With more personnel and more money, success was inevitably just around the corner. We also conclude that *The Friends' Missionary Advocate* was one important religious magazine that informed and educated the American public about foreign places, missionary accounts, reports at quarterly and yearly meetings, stories, children's stories, poetry, plays, and maps and pictures.

The Friends were only a small part of the total missionary activity during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The results of this investigation into the materials in the earliest years of *The Friends' Missionary Advocate* suggest other related topics that are worth investigating, in which one might use historical data, archives and more contemporary media to discuss how Americans learn about other cultures and places. We propose five. First is to compare the contents of missionary journals of other denominations, for example, Baptists, Lutherans, Catholics, Presbyterians and Methodists, all groups with global mission enterprises. Were the materials presented in these magazines about Africa, Asia and Latin America similar to those in *The Friends' Missionary Advocate*? Did these magazines express concerns about poverty, racism, colonialism, Western commercialism, diseases, women and children, or was the major concern the number of new converts? What was the power of the missionary magazine as opposed to missionaries themselves in educating the American public in the late 1800s and early 1900s?

Second, when missionary radio became popular, how important was it in informing supportive congregations about the life and people of distant lands? Where was missionary radio most successful and with what cultures?

Third, what information did American missionaries convey to the mission fields about America and American culture, politics, economy and religion? Correspondence and diaries they kept might provide insights into these questions.

Fourth, the questions about influences in national politics and with a wider American society call for more investigation. As was noted earlier in the article, historians have studied the role that religion and especially missionaries have played in US foreign policy. To complement these studies we need to investigate the roles missionaries played in the countries where they served. How influential were they in independence movements, democratization

efforts and efforts to bring these states into contemporary global and regional politics?

The fifth topic would consider the influence of television, videos, the World Wide Web and Internet as sources of information about foreign lands and missionary activities. Visual information, illustrations, exhibits, personal visits and photographs were important a century ago in the knowledge missionaries provided audiences long distances away about other places.

Today one can obtain information about mission fields near and far in regular reports through World Wide Web sites, various listservs and email. How have contemporary electronic communications changed what we know about missions and missionary activities? What new roles does the new 'electronic missionary' play? These questions are especially intriguing in the age of electronic visual learning. Contemporary with these electronic innovations, we observe the opening of mission fields in areas until recently off-limits to American groups, especially in Eastern Europe, Russia, China and Central Asia. The educational and learning opportunities for Americans to learn about the languages, cultures, economies and politics of these areas and for inhabitants in these regions to learn the same about America are worthy of our attention. Since these regions are also becoming increasingly important in US foreign policy, the role that religion, including American denominations and their missionaries, will play in educating the American public, and in fashioning economic, diplomatic, military and cultural agreements, is worth watching.[1]

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Table 1. *Sample Article Titles, The Friends' Missionary Advocate* (1885–1933)

'Turkey', by Mahalah Jay (January 1888)
'The Samoan Islands', compiled (August 1889)
'Are We Praying?' (May 1889)
'Annie R. Taylor's Trip into Thibet' (January 1894)
'Pray for F.A.I.M [Friends Africa Industrial Mission]' (November 1905)
'Training Native Workers' (April 1912)
'A By-Product of the War', by Eliza Armstrong Cox (November 1916)
Exact reproduction of the grass hut at Ilala where Livingstone died (August 1894)
Preparing coffee for market (Africa) (October 1894)
Making native tortillas (April 1896)
Patients waiting for treatment, China (September 1906)
Group of First-Day School children, Tokyo (February 1912)
Mexico: Children in mission school with native teacher, 'where the Gospel is sorely needed' (December 1916)
Inside a Cuban grocery store, Holguin (July–August 1920)
'She loves to read her Bible' (82-year-old Chinese Christian) (June 1930)

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