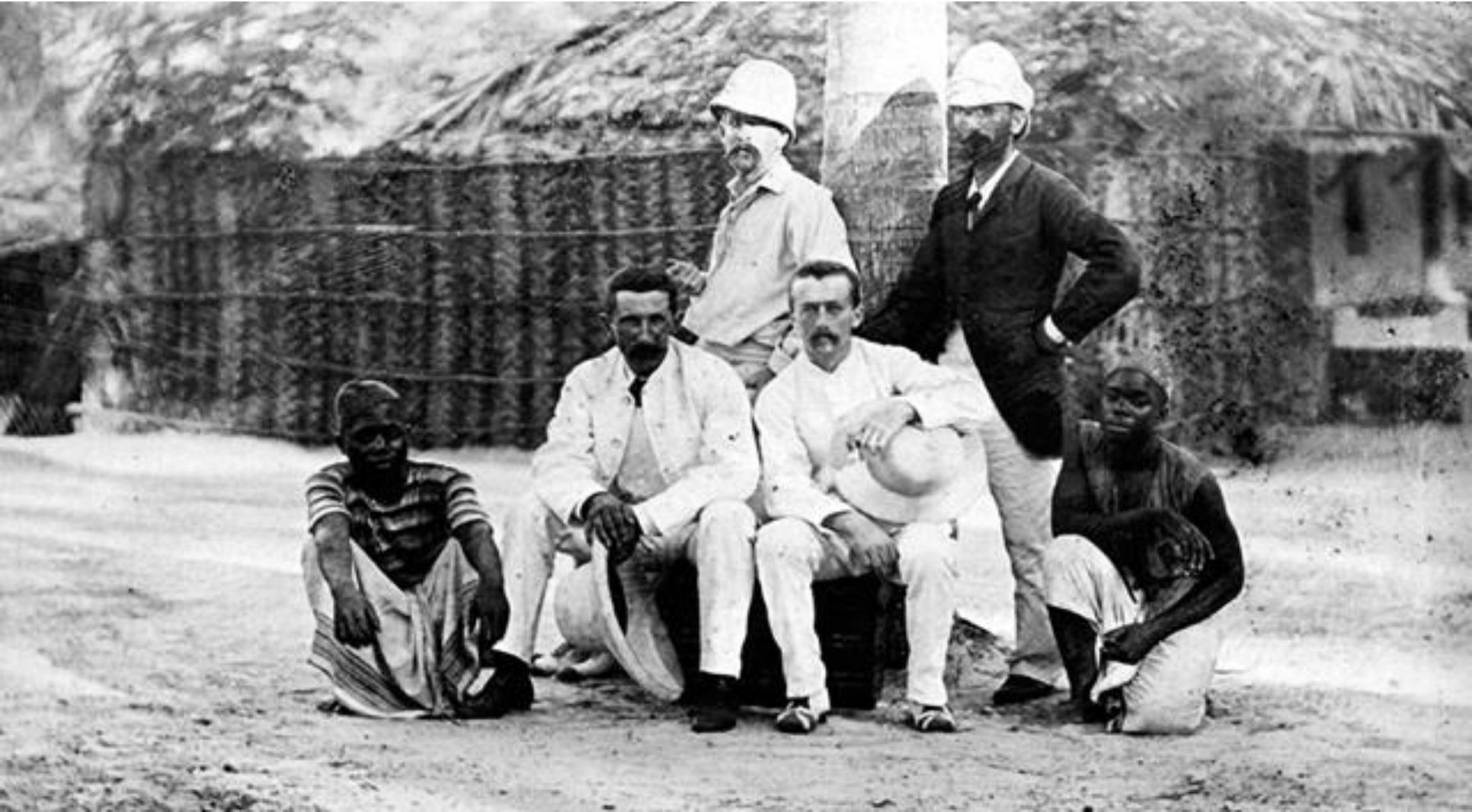


Turning Points: God's Faithfulness in Christian History

Christianity, Missions, Global Evangelism & para-churches



Summary of Turning Points

- ❖ **History** very important for Christianity: **God created time & space**, sent prophets to give hope for a future; Christ came in time (at the right time). *History is God's stage of redemption.*
 - ❖ **God's Word revealed in Bible**, w/ *ministry of Holy Spirit*, always there.
 - ❖ Theological expression occurs when Church is presented w/new challenges!
 - ❖ Our Reformed/ Presbyterian tradition has clear roots in 2,000 years of Christian expression (contrast to many other American Evangelical traditions—ecclesiology, sacraments, liturgy).
- A. **Early Church** struggled to articulate what it believed, rooted in OT & prophecy, Jesus's ministry, & revelation to Apostles (NT). They needed creedal/theological to put together essence of scripture & understand how Christ fulfilled Law of Moses.

Summary of Turning Points

The Kingdom of God vs. kingdoms of this world

Under great persecution God's power manifest through human suffering yet great spiritual victory. Great lesson in how to understand God's kingdom had already begun, but not yet fully present.

Jesus commanded “*render unto Caesar those things that belong to Caesar, but render unto God those things that belong to God.*”

Christians needed to learn to be “*salt*” & “*light.*”

Since Christians believe (1) **humans reflect God's image (*imago dei*)** and (2) **common grace**, it is possible to accept and transform human knowledge (Greco-Roman philosophy and science) & culture as a useful way to understand God's providence & design of the world. St. Augustine & early church embraced some philosophy.

Summary of Turning Points

B. Medieval Church became **CHRISTENDOM**: large institution concerned w/ political & economic power as well as religious service.

Paralleled experience Israel (OT) = cyclical pattern: obeyed & disobeyed God's commandments & direction. God's faithfulness patient w/ human failures & preserved & raised up devote persons to carry the torch of Gospel.

By 1,000 AD loss of ancient wisdom & knowledge (Latin: *Scientia*) reduced opportunities for ordinary believers to know God & Self. God was judge in distant heaven, w/ need for earthly mediators.

1300 political crises, "Great Schism," divided Latin Christendom

Summary of Turning Points

By 1400 AD movements emerged w/ quest to **know God better & experience His grace first hand**. New methods to study of Bible opened up avenues for understanding & devotion. Jesus's humanity returned as a reality, making it possible to identify more closely.

By 1500 reform of Church underway.

Martin Luther & Jean Calvin were **Christian Humanists**= used new methods to uncover meaning of texts in their original languages (Hebrew, Greek, Aramaic, Latin), translated scripture into languages of day (German, French, etc.) so all could understand.

Both depended on earlier theological understandings & scholars for their interpretations, and thus **REFORMED** the Church, not departed or left.

Yet, a unified Latin church no longer possible. Conflicts surrounding religion & politics only increased.

NEW BOOK

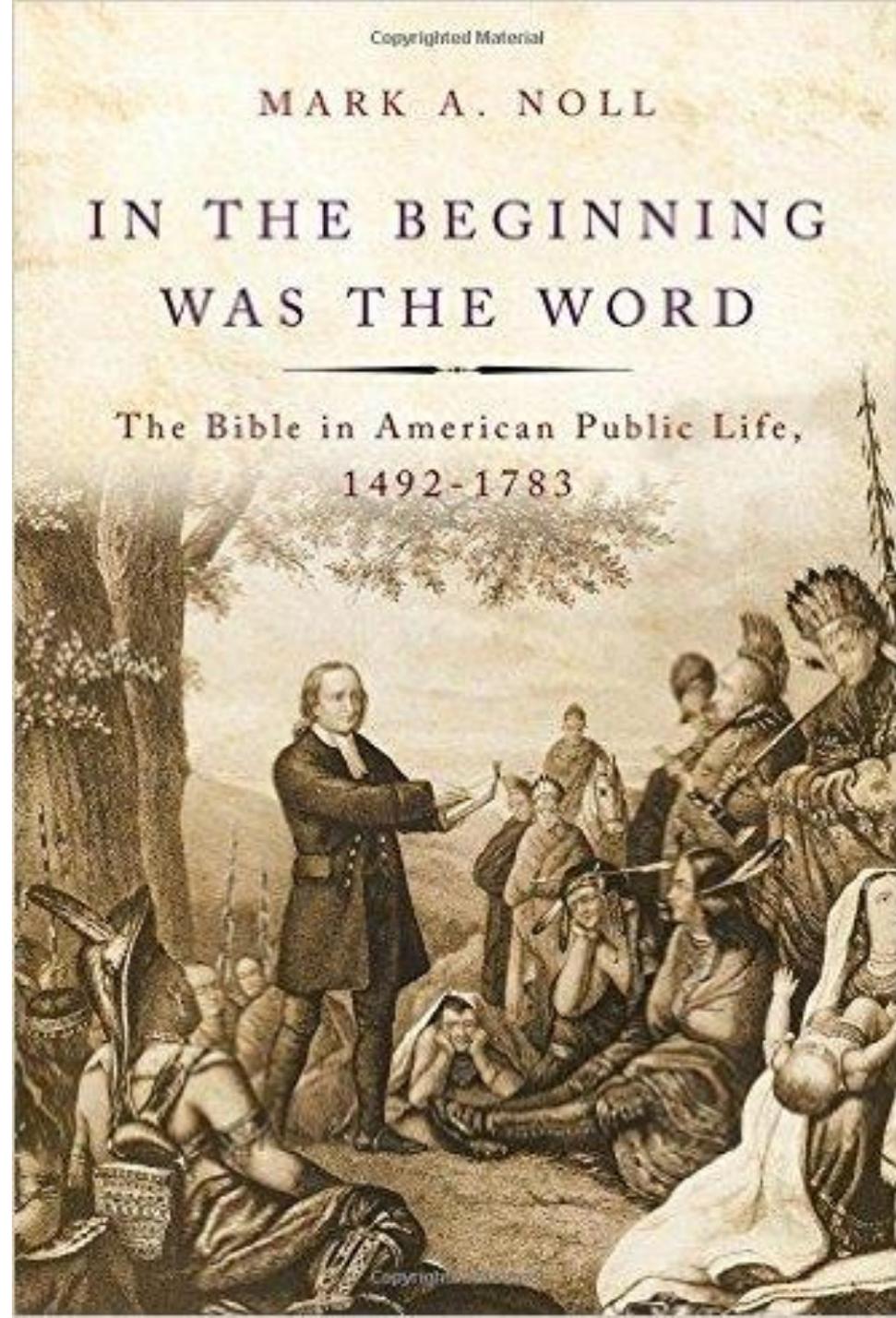
Mark A. Noll,

*In the Beginning was the Word:
The Bible in American Public
Life, 1492-1783.*

Oxford UP, **2015**.

448 pp.

Francis A. McAnaney Professor
of History at the University of
Notre Dame



New Challenges 1880-1930

Prior to 19th c. central teaching in Church=

Transcendence of God= God independent of material universe,
not part of laws of nature,

19th c. rise Immanence of God= His spirit is fully present in nature
and world. God is still a person, however, in contrast to pantheism
in which God is not a person & present in all.

Immanence fit well with Deism.

Implications: see God in many structures of the world.

Social Gospel= social care becomes God's ministry.

New Challenges 1880-1930

1. *Gospel to All peoples...* Or first to West? “Westernized Christianity”?
 - A. **Colonization/ de-colonization** & missions; volatile mix.
 - B. Christianity & **American Culture**; are they compatible? Does Christianity speak to & work within many other cultures?

2. Birth of “**para-church**” organizations: youth missions & fellowship, specialized missions (medical, economic, sports, scouts, etc.)

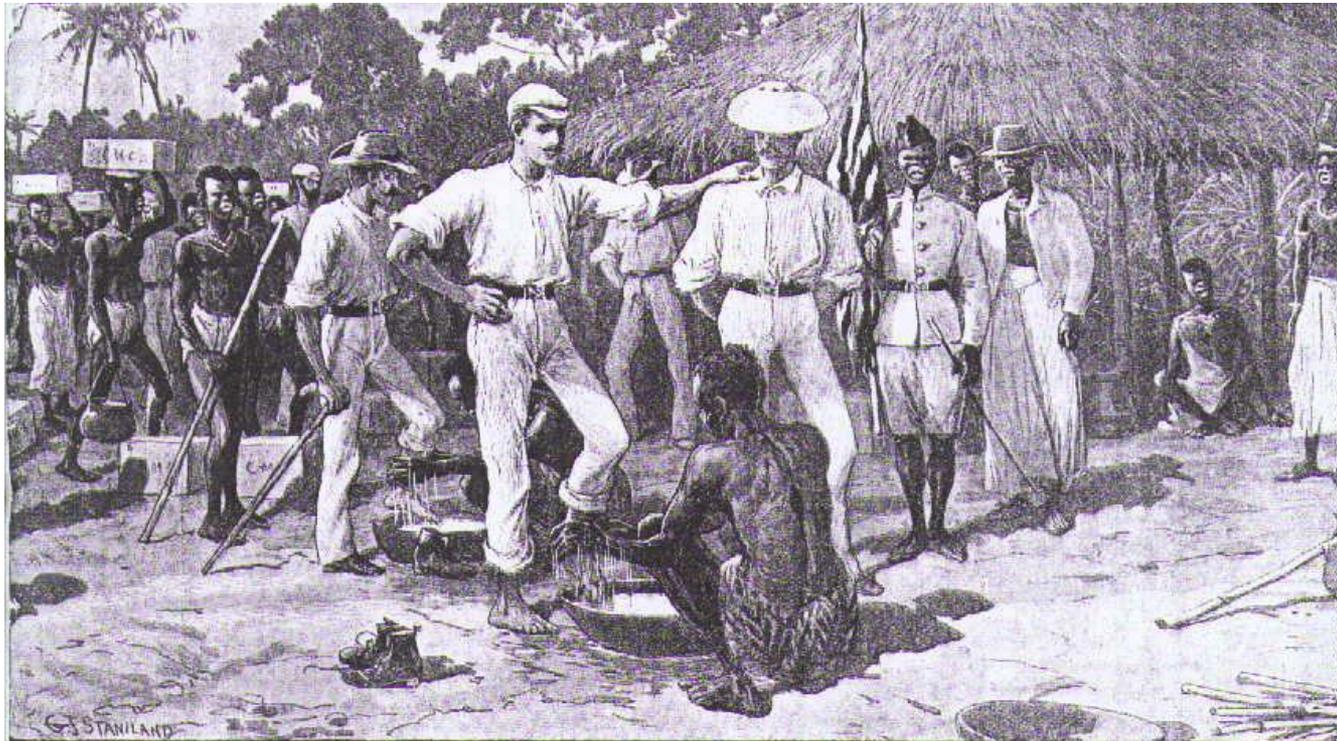
Ecumenical activity: when & how is cooperation w/ other Christian organizations (w/ variety of doctrinal differences) warranted?

3. Christianity and: modern **science, political** theory, **economic** theory?
Many more studies for these.....

Evangelism & Civilization

Problem: Western superiority, progress, & Gospel

1. From birth of “foreign missions” (Columbus 16th c. “God & Gold”) Christian missions connected w/ political-economic expansion & colonization. Difficult to disconnect!
2. **Christianity** exported to “developing world” **via Western culture** (churches, chapels, clothing, practice needed to look like the West). Very little “contextualization.”



Before entering Gwain town a swampy path, of about 500 yards in length, had to be covered, at the end of which the officers of the expedition were met by some Benin chiefs at a small but small compound. Here all the Englishmen had to go through the custom of "feet washing," which is a sort of white man for Benin. This ceremony the chiefs performed in native earthenware bowls.

A WHITE MAN'S PASSPORT FOR BENIN: THE "FEET-WASHING" CEREMONY

Missions in Colonized Lands

Early Problems:

Often evangelism too connected w/ cultural dominance & in alliance w/ economic or political interests of European states.

“When the Missionaries arrived, the Africans had the land and the Missionaries had the Bible. They taught how to pray with our eyes closed. When we opened them, they had the land and we had the Bible.”

- Jomo Kenyatta (1st President of Kenya)



Historians Debate on Missions 19th & early 20th c.

Daniel H. Bays (History Dept. & Asian Studies Program, Calvin College)

Acceptance of Christian & Western until 1960s:

Dominant interpretation 19th /early 20th c. American expansionism (home/abroad) = in addition to Gospel, religious element reinforced & manifested “national mission” of expansion & transfer overseas of American civilization—democracy and individual rights, the individual conscience, voluntary associations, social and economic free enterprise. It all looked fairly benign.

Example: Kenneth Scott Latourette, in particular sections on U.S. missions in *The Great Century, 1800-1914*, Vols. 4-6, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity* (7 Vols., 1938-1946); R. Pierce Beaver, "Missionary Motivation through Three Centuries," in Jerald C. Brauer, ed., *Reinterpretation in American Church History* (1968).

Historians Debate on Missions 19th & early 20th c.

Daniel H. Bays

Dramatic change late 1960s & 1970s.

Aftermath civil rights movement & disillusionment w/ Vietnam War, scholars took **jaundiced look** at religious expansionism, seeing it as part of **cultural aggression** against Native Americans, paternalism towards African Americans, too connected w/ military, economic imperialism.

Charges of **cultural imperialism** against missionaries were common.

Ex: Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., "The Missionary Enterprise and Theories of Imperialism," in John K. Fairbank, ed., *The Missionary Enterprise in China and America* (1974); William R. Hutchison, "A Moral Equivalent for Imperialism," chapter four of his superb study, *Errand to the World: American Protestant Thought and Foreign Missions* (1987).

Historians Debate on Missions 19th & early 20th c.

Daniel H. Bays

1980s to present

mission studies benefits from scholars participating in renaissance of historical studies of American evangelicalism, & rethinking of world missionary movement & American role in it.

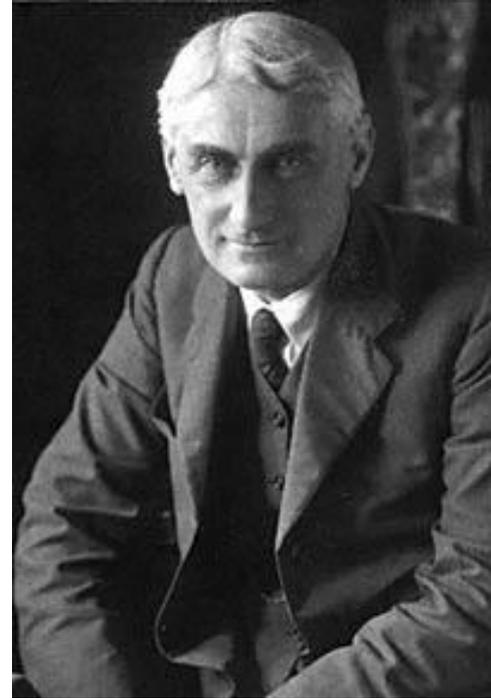
POINT: some missionaries ***did* resist urge to export American civilization & allowed Gospel & Holy Spirit** to find appropriate aspect of a culture to speak to people → especially practices.

Example: now know that late 19th c., long before anyone worried about wickedness of imperialism, new evangelical faith missions were dissenting from dominant mainline mission orthodoxy of civilization accompanying the gospel and doing much less in the way educational and medical work, focusing on the religious message of Christianity.

Roland Allen, Missionary Methods

Example=

Roland Allen (1868-1947): late 19thc./early 20thc.
Anglican priest-missionary to China. NEW: argued Chinese churches should be self-supporting, self-propagating, self-governing, & adapted to local conditions, not imitations of Western Christianity.



Allen's Mission strategy for indigenous Churches was based on Saint Paul's missionary methods. He believed the church is a local entity, & there must be a trust in the work of the Holy Spirit to direct converts & churches to grow within a culture in a way God intended.

Birth of “contextualization.”

Contextualization

Ed Stetzer, *Christianity Today*

“Contextualization involves an attempt to present the **Gospel in a culturally relevant way.**”

“What this means is that ‘culture’ itself is not evil, but a composite of good and evil (as understood biblically) values and vocations, customs and creations, beliefs and behaviors that characterize a particular people in a particular place. Unfortunately, not all evangelicals understand culture in this manner. Some evangelicals mistakenly believe that Scripture’s warnings against the world, the kosmos, are warnings against culture itself. However, this is not the case. **All people are fashioned in the image of God and are recipients of common grace.** This means that we should expect to find some positive features present in every culture, even non-Christian cultures. At the same time, every person has sinned, and we should expect to find some negative features present in every culture. Instead of shunning culture completely, we should instead engage culture with care and discernment.”

www.christianitytoday.com/edstetzer/2014/october/what-is-contextualization.html#_ftn4

Roland Allen, Missionary Methods

The Issue of Devolution

Understood *spontaneous expansion* Allen primarily saw local church being indigenous. He wrote: ‘this is what I understand by an indigenous Church: I understand a Church which possesses as inherent in itself everything which is essential to the existence of a Church, and is able to multiply itself without any necessary reference to any external authority’.

1. **Prioritize Evangelism**

Though Allen noted there were many activities (e.g., medical & educational work) to which the missionary could devote his or her life, nevertheless, he saw **evangelism as the priority**. Allen was supportive of other missionary practices, but other missionary practices were not to be divorced from, or dominate over, evangelism.

See: J. D. Payne (Southern Baptist Theol. Seminary, Louisville)

http://archive.churchsociety.org/churchman/documents/Cman_117_4_Payne.pdf

Roland Allen, Missionary Methods

2. Practice an Apostolic Approach

Just as Apostolic teams entered into an area, evangelized & congregationalized some of the people, then moved on to repeat the process, Allen believed that missionaries should retire from their fields to begin their work anew in another location.

Also, since the Apostle did not abandon the new congregations but **returned to visit, wrote letters**, and sent others to them, contemporary missionaries were not to practice abandonment.

See: J. D. Payne (Southern Baptist Theol. Seminary, Louisville)

http://archive.churchsociety.org/churchman/documents/Cman_117_4_Payne.pdf

Native Americans & Christianity

1845: American policy **Manifest Destiny** believed (white) Americans destined by divine providence to expand national dominion by whatever means necessary.

1924: American Indians US citizens. 1928, Lewis Merriam completed study of Indian Affairs, documenting failure of federal Indian policy.

1934: Indian Reorganization Act (IRA) passed, ended practice of allotment, protecting land base of tribes. IRA encouraged tribes to adopt constitutional style of govt. & supported return of Indian culture & heritage. Missions feared return to traditional ways subverted assimilation ethic.

1935: **National Fellowship of Indian Workers** founded Madison, Wisconsin, by Protestant Churches w/ missions: brought together Christian workers & federal govt. employees for mutual solutions to Indian issues.

Emphasis: fellowship to prompt church workers & federal employees to meet & develop acquaintances & friendships.

Presbyterian Church provided limited travel grants so Indian families could participate in ecumenical conference.

www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/nativeamerican/mission-ministry/

First Indian Presbyterian Church in America, 1871

1st Indian Presbyterian Church in America, est. Christmas Day 1871. McBeth sisters= missionary teachers to Nez Perce Indians.

Sue McBeth arrived Idaho, 1873, focusing on theological training of young Nez Perce men. Scholar/ linguist, she collected & organized lengthy Nez Perce/English dictionary. Kate arrived 1879 as teacher to Nez Perce women. They remained rest of their lives.

Kate Christine McBeth 1833-1915/ Susan Law McBeth 1830-1893



first Indian Presbyterian Church in America, 1871

1879 Reports of Commissioner Affairs and Indian Agent Reports:

“Churches: The membership of the two churches here – one located at Lapwai, having 100; one at Kamiah, 203 – is a total of 303. The missionary work is under the direction of Rev. Mr. Deffenbaugh, an appointee of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions, assisted by Rev. Robert Williams, a full-blood Nez Percé, who is an ordained minister by and belonging to the Presbytery of Idaho.

http://idaho.idgenweb.org/Church/first_indian_presbyterian_church.htm

Ecumenical cooperation in Missions

American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) one of 1st American Christian missionary organizations, created 1810 by graduates Williams College; became largest & most important American missionary organizations.

Late 19th c.:

Native preachers & other indigenous people assisted Board missionaries in **Bible translation** efforts. Translating Scriptures into a mother tongue reflected a sensitivity to culture & desire to work w/i host society.

Bible translation est. among ancient Christian churches, such as Armenians & Assyrian [Nestorian] church; cultures w/ written language & written religious heritage, such as *Marathi*; & creating written languages in cultures w/o them, such as among animistic people in Hawaii.

American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions meeting, 1901



Women & Missions

Striking feature American foreign missionary force 19th & early 20th c. **women = 60%**. Some missionary wives (who played active roles), but many **single** women missionaries. Women found more challenging & satisfying vocations (medical, higher education) on foreign mission field than they could at home. (otherwise nurse or elementary teacher)

Missionary Emily Hartwell of Women's Board of Missions with Chinese students, Foochow Mission, China, 1902.



Ecumenism & Para-churches

19th c. rapid growth Free churches & Protestant denominations created many small groups who realized the “mission field” was enormous.

Gathering in unified groups became great tendency in late 19th & early 20th c. [birth of military alliances led to WWI, & League of Nations tried to solve it]

Shared mission work became more common: urban rescue missions, foreign mission work, youth & university student missions.



"The Evangelization of the World in this Generation."

Christian-civic confidence in dramatic growth **Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions** (SVM)= American organization.

1886 evangelist Dwight L. Moody founder, w/ John R. Mott Director.

SVM appealed to America's best and brightest to enter foreign mission field. 13,000 young Americans, most college graduates, sailed abroad as missionaries. Many affiliated w/ YMCA or YWCA, but staffed dozens of different mission agencies. Evangelical Bible conference of an invited group of college YMCA leaders, from which grew **Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions, 1886.**

By 1920 total 8,742 SVM recruits had served.

Daniel H. Bays

<http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/tserve/nineteen/nkeyinfo/fmmovementc.htm>



1910 Edinburgh Missionary Conference

14-23 June 1910: w/ growth of many Protestant denominations, leaders realized that an ecumenical approach necessary; alliances= new wisdom in 1900. e.g. 1920 League of Nations



1910 Edinburgh Missionary Conference

1,200 representatives from large European & North American mission organizations met. They commissioned reports to study missions:

- ❖ Carrying Gospel to all Non-Christian World (15 June)
- ❖ The Church in Mission Field (16 June)
- ❖ Education in Relation to Christianization of National Life (17 June)
- ❖ Missionary Message in Relation to Non-Christian World (18 June)
- ❖ Missions and Governments (20 June)
- ❖ The Preparation of Missionaries (22 June)
- ❖ Co-Operation and Promotion of Unity (21 June)
- ❖ The Home Base of Missions (23 June)

WWI (1914-1918) disrupted real progress, but 1921 **International Missionary Council** est. & 1948 **World Council of Churches**.

Analysis of Edinburgh 1910

“Missions historian **Andrew Walls** noted recently that in the century since Edinburgh, **all of the Conference’s assumptions about Christianity were proved wrong**. The evangelization of the world proceeded, but in other hands than Edinburgh delegates imagined, making clear that the vigor of **global Christian expansion did not depend on the West**. Robust forms of popular Christianity (like Pentecostalism) that were not on mainline Protestant radar screens in 1910 have become unstoppable as they have moved around the world. In 1910, no one imagined that Christians outside the West could perceive the West as a mission field. Rapid Protestant growth in Africa, Asia, and South America makes it evident that **Christianity will thrive with or without American missionaries or resources**. How could Edinburgh—where people who devoted their lives to evangelism sought to map its future—have been so wrong about the future course of Western missions?”

www.wheaton.edu/ISAE/Projects/Changes-in-Missions

Student Missions

1877: student dept. of YMCA formed to more Christian work on college & university campuses. Luther D. Wishard (1st collegiate secretary YMCA), had great personal interest in foreign missions.

1877: University of Cambridge UK group of Christian students met (disapproved some University officials) to pray, study Bible, witness to students.

They formed **British Inter-Varsity** (varsity= British term college-level students.) Strong concern to spread gospel all over the world.

1880: Inter-Seminary Missionary Alliance est. w/annual conventions until 1898, then merged w/ Student Volunteer Movement & intercollegiate YMCA.

Student Missions

1886 (July): Moody-backed Mount Hermon School “Northfield Conference” w/ 251 students from 89 colleges/ universities met together for a month.

1888: 5 students formed Princeton Foreign Missionary Society.

1889: Student Volunteer Movement became official missionary arm of YMCA & YWCA.

1895: World Student Christian Federation (WSCF), Vadstena Castle, Sweden. Founders = John R. Mott (US), J. Rutter Williamson (UK), Martin Eckhoff (Norway), Luther D. Wishard (US), Johannes Siemsen (Germany), Karl Fries (Sweden)

Student Missions

But, after 1918 (end of WWI)

- ❖ Rift developed in SVM b/w conservative & liberal theology.
- ❖ De-colonization and rebellion abroad made it harder to do mission work.
- ❖ Growing skepticism (opposite 19th c.) that Western civilization had all the answers (horrors of WWI).
- ❖ Great Depression (1929-1935) great loss of money for missions.
- ❖ WWII again disrupted missions.

Doubts about Mission post-WWI

Robert Speer, head Board of Foreign Missions of Presbyterian Church (BFMPC) committed to evangelism, yet crumbling consensus on civilizing & Christianizing. When added to changing views on millennialism, movement's foundation was precariously brittle by World War I.

Robert T. Handy, church historian Union Theological Seminary, noted widespread impact of war: “Protestantism was deeply affected by the general disillusionment of the postwar decade. During the war itself, the American people, with the vigorous support of most religious leaders, maintained a spirit of high optimism. But the tide turned swiftly.” The decline of enthusiasm for war led to “a wave of spiritual depression and religious skepticism, widespread and devastating.”

1920: 2,700 students in foreign mission work; 1928 only 252.

John C. Barrett www.internationalbulletin.org/issues/2015-03/2015-03-122-barrett.html

Fundamentalist–Modernist Controversy 1920s-30s

religious controversy Presbyterian Church in the United States of America responsible for divisions in many other Christian denominations as well. Conflict over liberal vs. conservative theology & ecclesiology.

Henry van Dyke: modernist pushed to revise Westminster Confession of Faith; taught all dying infants (not just elect) go to heaven; since God loved whole world & that Christ atoned for all mankind, not just elect.

1901: est. non-binding summary of church's faith. No mention biblical inerrancy nor reprobation; affirmed God's love of all mankind; adopted by General Assembly in 1902.

1910: (wealthy Presbyterian layman) Lyman Stewart, sponsored series of pamphlets *The Fundamentals: A Testimony to the Truth*.

Fundamentalist–Modernist Controversy 1920s-30s

1919: Church Union Debate proposed organic union w/ 17 other denominations, to be called United Churches of Christ in America.

Princeton prof. **J. Gresham Machen** gained prominence w/i denomination as fundamentalist (early on) opponent of liberalism.

1921: presbyteries defeated church union by vote of 150-100.

May 1922: **Harry Emerson Fosdick's** sermon “Shall the Fundamentalists Win?” (ordained Baptist) given special permission to preach First Presbyterian Church, New York City. Liberal influence wins.

1929: Machen founded Westminster Seminary, Philadelphia.

Controversy → 8 ministers w/ Machen, tried at General Assembly of 1936, convicted & removed from ministry. Machen led formed new denomination= Presbyterian Church of America, later forced to change name to Orthodox Presbyterian Church (1939).

Doubts about Mission post-WWI

By 1930s first wave of American missionary effort had collapsed amid theological turmoil. Modernist-fundamentalist debates, present also on mission field, came to fore w/ 1932 publication of *Re-Thinking Missions: A Laymen's Inquiry after One Hundred Years*.

Post-WWII foreign missions began to grow again.

Today missionaries in Presbyterian Mission Agency PCUSA only 170 (in 50 countries)—little more than 1/10 BFMPC at peak!

1973: PCA broke w/ Presbyterian Church in the United States (PCUSA Southern states 1861-1983→PCUSA)

Today PCA sends 600 missionaries to 85 countries around globe.

InterVarsity Christian Fellowship

Nov. 1941: official organization, w/ roots in movement British university students, Cambridge University 1877.

Movement to Canada before reaching USA. 1938 Stacey Woods, Canadian IV director, went to University of Michigan & students formed 1st IV chapter USA.

1947 IV USA became one of ten founding members of International Fellowship of Evangelical Students= federation of national Christian student movements.

1950 there were 35 staff workers serving students in 499 InterVarsity chapters; by early seventies, on-campus staff had grown to more than 200.

2014-15: 985 chapters on 649 USA campuses (40,219 members)

Reformed University Fellowship (RUF)

campus ministry of Presbyterian Church in America (PCA),
founded in mid-1970s.



RUF has experienced rapid growth the past few years, and currently has 140 chapters at different college campuses spread over 37 US States, Mexico, Peru, Greece, and Canada. Most of its schools are in the southern US, but it has ministries from California to Massachusetts.

RUF works to ensure that students commit to attendance at a local church where solid fellowship is essential.