

A SENSITIVE INDEPENDENCE
THE PERSONNEL OF THE WOMAN'S MISSIONARY SOCIETY
OF
THE METHODIST CHURCH OF CANADA, 1881 - 1925

by

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ABSTRACT

From its inception in 1881 until its activities were subsumed under the missionary mandate of the United Church of Canada in 1925, the Woman's Missionary Society of the Methodist Church of Canada energetically promoted the Church's gospel of social reform and individual salvation in its far-flung mission fields in West China, in Japan, in Canada's western frontier settlements and its inner-city immigrant ghettos. The Society's agents were 300 single women carefully chosen on the basis of age, educational background, related work experience and spiritual commitment.

The thesis argues that these women missionaries, broadly representative of small-town, middle-class, Protestant Canada in the Victorian and Edwardian eras, found in the W. M. S. an appealing alternative to both domesticity and the limited opportunities for women in secular careers. Nurtured by the structural and political autonomy of the W. M. S. within the Methodist Church of Canada, by an aggressive Board of Managers, by the developing sense of sisterhood among the Society's recruits, and by the freedom to act independently according to the circumstances of remote mission fields, missionaries became more than mere proselytizers, social workers and teachers. They became professional career women

with vested interests in the management, funding, success and rewards of their activities who were ultimately judged as much on the basis of their professional development as on the evidence of their spiritual commitment or their record of conversions.

Within this context, career commitment on the part of individual missionaries was dependent on several factors, including educational background, administrative skill and, not least of all, field location. Japan in the throes of industrialization and modernization was the Society's showcase. Its most skilled recruits were sent there; and it is not surprising that the Japanese mission field produced the largest number of life-long employees. The Home mission field, in contrast, enjoyed the lowest priority for funding and personnel, most of whom were drawn from a group of less skilled recruits for whom mission work was an interlude between school-leaving and marriage. West China, with its litany of political, social and physical hardships, arguably demanded, and produced, a degree of dedication and resoluteness unmatched in the recruits who served elsewhere.

At a time when Canadian society was widely debating the related questions of women's proper sphere and the social role of organized Christianity, the W. M. S. created for its women missionaries a separate sphere in which, freed from the sexual politics of both the home and the workplace, they

could pursue Christian activism as a fulfilling and rewarding .
career.

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CHAPTER I

"No Baptism of blood ... but simply the call of duty"

I

In the last half of the nineteenth century and in the early years of the twentieth century, missionary work offered a unique opportunity for ambitious single women to attain respect and authority in the workplace, along with public recognition and even adulation for their accomplishments. In spite of the upsurge of interest in women's history and its parent, social history, historians have been slow to examine the experience of women in the past who sought careers and professional status. Instead, insofar as historians have been concerned with Victorian women at work, historical interest has tended to focus on those women at the bottom of the class structure -- millworkers, prostitutes and domestic servants -- who represented the vast majority of working women. For the most part, women who chose a career, with the exception of physicians where the clearly defined sexual conflict could be used to bolster the feminist complaints of the 1970s, have not been objects of historical interest. Perhaps more to the point, Canadian social historians' preoccupation, on the one hand, with the cult of maternal feminism, the seed-bed of social reform as societal house

keeping, and on the other with the much lamented failure of radical feminism to advance the cause of suffragism, has overbalanced women's historiography on the side of middle-class wives and mothers for whom social activism was an avocation rather than a way of life or a livelihood.

This thesis is an attempt to place a particular group of Canadian women who chose missionary work as a career, if not in the vanguard, certainly in the front ranks of that minority of Canadian women who worked outside the home at a time when the domestic imperative was not easily challenged. Specifically, the study will focus on the women employed as missionaries by the Woman's Missionary Society of the Methodist Church of Canada (henceforward W. M. S.) from its inception in 1881 until 1925 when church union effectively ended the separate existence of the former Methodist Society. During these forty-five years, the W. M. S. hired more than three hundred women to staff its missions in Japan, West China and across Canada.

Among the many things about these women which might interest the historian, their social, economic, educational and occupational backgrounds provide evidence about the characteristics common to a group of women who sought professional careers, and eschewed marriage and domesticity for the sake of a career, at a time when female employment outside the home was largely the province of single working-class women, and marriage was the preoccupation of all but a

minority of women of all classes. Similarly, a study of these women can reveal much about the relationship between their apparent qualifications and the work-related opportunities available to them to define and control the quality of their professional experience, especially the degree of independence they sought, and partially realized, in a world and more particularly in an institution dominated by men.

None of this implies, however, that the majority of these women were not at the same time both idealistic and altruistic promoters of the Methodist Church's evangelical designs. This collective biography of the 300 or so women (it has been possible to identify 304) employed by the Society between 1881 and 1925 also adds a vital chapter to the history of the Methodist Church of Canada and its missionary activities. Like most components of history, until very recently Church history has been written without particular reference to the role of women. This omission is all the more glaring with regard to the Methodist Church whose founder, John Wesley, advocated the participation of women within the church, based on the premise that "if both sexes can receive an 'apprehension of divine grace', both can be capable of instructing."¹ In some "extraordinary" cases, Wesley gave considerable encouragement to women who showed potential as preachers.² This study will add to the growing body of material about Canadian Methodism and help to create a more integrated picture of the role that Canadian women

played in organized religion in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. More generally, an examination of these women and their work is a contribution to the still slim corpus of material relating to Protestantism in Canada and its role as an agent of social reform.

The thesis argues that the formal recruitment policies defined by the W. M. S. Board of Managers, themselves a group of extraordinarily able and independent women determined to establish and maintain their autonomy from the male dominated General Board of Missions, appealed particularly to educated young women from the small towns of Ontario and the Maritimes. Daughters of the parsonage and of the mercantile and professional classes, many of them with previous work experience as teachers, and at an age beyond which marriage was a statistically receding expectation, were especially attracted by the overtures of the W. M. S. The existence, however, of social and educational differentials among these recruits contributed, partly by design and partly through circumstances, to the emergence of a hierarchical division of labour within W. M. S. missionary work. This division of labour consigned the least qualified recruits to work among Canada's native peoples and recent immigrants, and the most accomplished, socially as well as intellectually, to the politically more visible mission fields of the Orient. These disparities help to explain why some of the women became career professionals, working for the Society until

their death or retirement, while for others, their years with the W. M. S. merely bridged the gap between dependence upon parents and the establishment of their own households.

Moreover, their social and educational backgrounds appear to have influenced not only where and for how long women served the Society, but also the quality of their individual experience as missionaries in the field, especially in regard to the degree of independence they were able to establish, either singly or collectively as the situation might dictate, and their ability to determine the quality of their social and physical existence in the mission field. In a word, distance from the centre encouraged administrative ability and fostered independence.

The evidence suggests that, as women and as employees of the W. M. S., the missionaries were able to distinguish between the aims of the institution and their own needs and aspirations as working women, goals which the Society by its own compatible nature was able to accommodate. For W. M. S. missionaries, there appears to have been little contradiction between serving God and the W. M. S. and pursuing their own ambitions to be self-supporting and independent women. On the other hand, these women were not self-professed or strident feminists. Present-day observers might, at times, find their interests appallingly narrow and restrictive. For example, many Canadian, American and British historians have argued for a causal connection between late-Victorian women's

participation in philanthropic and religious enterprises and their awakening interest in suffragism and other aspects of the women's rights movement. Some of the women whose voluntarist interests culminated in the creation of the W. M. S., Sarah Rowell Wright, for example, were impassioned advocates of universal suffrage.³ The employees of the Society, however, were not prototypes of the more radical elements within the Canadian feminist movement. Nor, on the other hand, do these missionaries always conform to the models of Victorian or Edwardian womanhood idealized in the now lengthy historiography of maternal feminism which interprets the woman's movement in Canada as a public manifestation of woman's private virtues.⁴ Neither rampant feminists nor passive apologists for woman's "proper sphere", these women missionaries, in spite of the limited parameters of their work and the prevailing attitudes towards working middle-class women, have a place among that substantial body of late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century women who, to cite Martha Vicinus

... prided themselves on their independence both from the narrow community of domesticated women and from the new vocal feminists. They had made their way in the world by hard work, perseverance, and determination, and they were convinced that others could do as well, if only they would try.⁵

The W. M. S. missionaries did not, however, lead charmed lives, despite the popular missionary literature of the day which tended to sanctify them and their work,

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portraying them as martyrs patiently accepting whatever God might send their way. Sometimes the accounts published by the W. M. S. did little to discourage this kind of interpretation. In fact, compromises and lowered expectations in the face of the harsh reality of their situations limited the missionaries' success in evangelizing and conversion and improving the social condition of their constituents. Some women quickly became disillusioned by the actuality of a missionary career which did not conform to their expectations and they left the Society as soon as their initial commitment was fulfilled, not a few even before. Nonetheless, most of those who remained with the Society were satisfied, often enthusiastic and elated, with the freedom and new opportunities which their work afforded and were proud of their own ability to adapt to the most unusual of circumstances.

In sum, this analysis of the backgrounds and careers of the W. M. S. missionaries intends to demythologize the experience of women missionaries and reveal them as a part of a larger group of multi-dimensional, ambitious and energetic career women whose historical experience has too infrequently been the subject of critical analysis by Canadian historians who, similarly, have paid scant attention to religion as an aspect of women's private and public lives.

II

Canadian historians have neglected these issues at the risk of a serious misinterpretation of the culture of nineteenth-century Protestant Canada. In recent years, American historians have begun to examine the special relationship between women and religious activities and how, in the nineteenth century, religion became the particular preserve of women. One of the first books to approach the topic was R. P. Beaver's All Loves Excelling, a comprehensive chronological survey of American women's participation in the missionary movement, both as missionaries in the field and as members of the many women's missionary organizations in the United States. While Beaver tends to focus on the religious aspects of this work and the environmental problems which the women missionaries had to overcome, he recognizes the special difficulties which single women had to overcome in pursuit of their careers. The most formidable obstacle was public resistance to sending single women to foreign mission fields. It was this opposition, Beaver suggests, which prompted the organization of separate women's boards by many American churches.⁶

Page Smith, writing in 1970, was among the first to identify, if not elaborate on, the church as the centre of the social and emotional life of nineteenth-century women. By mid-century, argues Smith, Protestant churches had, in fact, become "feminized" and the majority of the active

members of the Protestant churches were women.⁷ According to Smith, "redeeming the heathen" had a particular appeal for American women who were convinced that non-Christian women "lived lives of hopeless degradation."⁸ Women became highly visible participants in the Protestant mission movement where they acquired training in public speaking and in raising and spending money. Many of the women who belonged to missionary societies also became champions of women's rights. Smith, in short, places both women missionaries and the members of women's missionary societies within the mainstream of American feminism. Moreover, he credits women missionaries with a major role in "the social transformation of non-Western societies, conspicuously the change in the status of women."⁹ Smith argues for a more extensive analysis of the place of women missionaries in American society, concluding that "... as far as academic history is concerned it is as if all of this never happened."¹⁰

Whether her work was stimulated by Smith's dismay or not, Barbara Welter shortly afterwards published two seminal articles which elucidate the interaction of women and religion in nineteenth-century America. "The Feminization of American Religion, 1800-1860" examines women's participation in organized religious activities. Welter suggests that, at the very least, women's religious groups helped to bring about the essential preconditions for a later woman's movement, that is, a strong sense of sisterhood, which spilled

over into secular reform movements. Religion was, furthermore, the single area of social or political affairs where women participated more or less equally with men, albeit in different spheres of religious undertakings. "[T]he equality of religious experience," Welter argues, "was something [women] could personally experience, and no man could deny it to them."¹¹

In "She Hath Done What She Could," Welter moves beyond this generalized examination of women's fascination with religion and the function of religion as a training ground for the more visible and radical woman's movement to explore the changing role of American women in Protestant missionary work. The article broke new ground and Welter examines the motivation and experiences of both the single women who consciously and deliberately made missionary work a career and those women who were married to missionaries. She concludes, perhaps too optimistically in view of her limited evidence, that "[f]or the nineteenth-century American woman, on the foreign mission field, her life had meaning and joy and was infused by a sense of privilege at being the special recipient of God's grace. As they said on their gravestones, 'She hath done what she could.'"¹² Serenity, satisfaction and success were only one part of female missionary experience. Nonetheless, Welter's is a pioneering study which offers many tempting suggestions about the motivation and the nature of women missionaries.

Most recently, Jane Hunter, in The Gospel of Gentility, has examined one specific group of American women missionaries, namely those who went to China at the turn of the nineteenth century under the auspices of the Congregational and Methodist Episcopal mission boards. The book is, among other things, a stimulating study of the culture of women missionaries, both single and married, in China. These transplanted women, Hunter argues, discovered "... unexpected authority in their status as Westerners in colonial China."¹³ Hunter has been able, using diaries and letters sent from China, to recreate the domestic circumstances of these women for whom it became essential to "... reestablish familiar rituals in a familiar setting."¹⁴ Although many of Hunter's observations seem applicable to the Canadian Methodist women missionaries who were stationed in West China, the geographical location of the Canadian mission stations, Chinese regional politics and the nature of the Canadian women themselves, especially their upbringing and education, appear to have produced variations on the American experience. For example, Hunter credits these women with an acute political awareness and a strong sense of their own national identity, characteristics which are hardly as obvious among the Canadian contingent. On the other hand, it seems likely that Canadian women missionaries found, as their American counterparts had, that life and work outside the geographic boundaries of their own country them gave a unique

opportunity to "...share with men an appreciation for personal freedom and vocational competence and also an enthusiasm for the possibilities of power"¹⁵ which would have been denied them in Canada.

Inexplicably, there is no comparable body of British historiography about women missionaries to draw on, except for the contemporary hagiographical accounts of the trials and tragedies of missionary life in the nineteenth century. Although women were active and vital participants in, for example, the work of the China Inland Mission, their experiences have not been singled out for scholarly examination. In its stead, there is a wider body of historical writing which addresses the more generalized question of working women and women and philanthropy in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and which is relevant to this thesis. Most noteworthy is the work of Martha Vicinus, whose recent book, Independent Women. Work and Community for Single Women 1850-1920, examines the emergence of a relatively small group of unmarried middle-class English women who "could afford to live, however poorly, on their own earnings outside heterosexual domesticity or church governance."¹⁶ These women, suggests Vicinus, not only wanted to work but, because the so-called middle-class household was not one which could support many unmarried daughters, worked as a matter of necessity. Their presence had become "simply redundant in middle-class homes,"¹⁷ and they sought a culture of their

own, "apart from the domestic world of their married sisters and from the male world in which they often moved."¹⁸

Vicinus argues that in England the rapid growth of business and government, the extension of educational facilities and the improvement in health care in the latter part of the nineteenth century together provoked the need for cheap skilled labour which could be provided by single women.¹⁹

But, at the same time, any radical change in the divisions of labour along the well-established gender lines was not acceptable to the middle class. Consequently, spinsters had to move cautiously into the work force and without disrupting the existing social order. "The answer," Vicinus suggests,

lay in carrying the domestic world into the public or, in the words of an early feminist, Anna Jameson, 'that the maternal as well as the paternal element should be made available, on the principal [sic] which I believe is now generally acknowledged, that the more you can carry out the family law, the 'communion of labour', into all social institutions, the more harmonious and the more perfect they will be.'²⁰

English feminists of the day seeking a solution to the dilemma of spinsterhood suggested that women could make a special contribution to public life. Philanthropic work was especially suitable for single women as an area where they could further the "maternal influence" within their local community.²¹ At the same time, their religious faith gave women the courage "to move beyond conformity to social norms."²² Much of the responsibility for public philanthropy was appropriated by single women who elected to join Anglican

sisterhoods which offered them "... a refuge, a foothold from which to launch into the wider world, but most of all ... a home."²³ According to Vicinus, Anglican sisterhoods were among "the most important women's communities in the nineteenth century."²⁴ They attracted women from rural parishes or marketing towns, the daughters of high-church clergy and of the leisure class.²⁵ However, Vicinus argues that because women's communities were viewed by the public as a "second choice," in lieu of marriage, many women did not remain for more than "a pleasant interlude."²⁶

In the long run, "women's public and political presence was undermined in a variety of ways difficult to fight."²⁷ The public perception of a place within women's communities as second best did not readily invite long term commitments.²⁸ Women's communities themselves failed to adjust to the changing demands of society during the inter-war years and women in teaching, nursing and related professions lost their "... richly nurturing women's subculture of the past without gaining access to an aggressively married and heterosexual world."²⁹ Imperialism, the eugenics movement and medical and scientific thought combined to drive women back to the domestic scene and their traditional roles. The power of single women, Vicinus concludes, had been strongest when it was "directly concerned with mitigating the impact of male-dominated industrial society upon the weak and friendless, or where it met an immediate need of middle-class

women themselves."³⁰ Nonetheless, as Vicinus has argued elsewhere, the end of the nineteenth century had seen the emergence, in Britain, of a group of "exceptional Victorian women," who "... gave each other strength to create myriad institutions; to attack male domination in every area of society; and to fight for legal, educational, political and social reforms with an effectiveness that we have yet to match."³¹

Jane Lewis, too, in Women in England, 1870-1950. Social Divisions and Social Change addresses the problem of single working women. Lewis argues that by the end of the nineteenth century middle-class women had the option of a career or marriage and motherhood. The choice was agonizing and society continued to castigate women who remained unmarried as failures or sexual deviants.³² Even though a "conscious decision to remain unmarried signified a revolt against the prescribed feminine role,"³³ Lewis contends that the choice was only infrequently a "consciously feminist" revolt.³⁴ Like Vicinus, Lewis suggests that most women who espoused philanthropy were not committed to the radical feminist cause and that philanthropic activities were socially acceptable diversions which could take a woman beyond her own domestic situation without threatening her traditional place in society.³⁵ Moreover, middle-class women hesitated to challenge the views of eminent professionals whose scientific findings confirmed the differences between

the sexes which perpetuated the concept of separate spheres.³⁶ When the challenge to sexual roles came, it took two forms, an equal rights branch which defended women's participation in the public domain on an equal basis with men, and a second which claimed that women had special qualities which should be put to use improving society.³⁷ In spite of the increasingly vocal arguments favouring woman's entrance into the public sphere, at the turn of the century, Lewis suggests, it continued to be an unconventional and bold undertaking for a woman to embark on a career in a society "where the boundaries of change were in large measure set by men."³⁸

The strong affinity for philanthropic enterprises which Vicinus and Lewis find so characteristic of Victorian women has also been examined by F. K. Prochaska in Women and Philanthropy in the Nineteenth Century. Prochaska agrees that for single middle-class women the transition from home to public involvement was far from easy and frequently the move beyond the family and its domestic arrangements could be accomplished only after the death of both parents. Moreover, women quickly discovered that although Christianity might accommodate them and their work, men continued to dominate even in the field of philanthropy.³⁹ For women who were also evangelicals, Prochaska contends that the opportunity to apply the principle of brotherly love was the ultimate fulfillment of their Christian duty.⁴⁰ At the same time,

Prochaska questions the motivation of many women volunteers. Their concern for the less fortunate was "often a product of that anxiety of soul which asks, am I saved?"⁴¹ and not, as might be supposed, a consequence of class guilt. Like other Victorians, these women simply accepted class differences as God's will.⁴² They did not understand that the Victorian social structure, not individual weakness, was responsible for the all too visible human misery they were attempting to eliminate. Women's philanthropic work, Prochaska argues, simply reflected "the pragmatic, unanalytic mentality encouraged in the other spheres of their lives."⁴³ Nevertheless, women engaged in philanthropy were able to capitalize on their supposed moral superiority to gain access to a profession previously dominated by males and generally "... to increase their power in a society dominated by men."⁴⁴ It was in "such small areas," concludes Prochaska, that the "battle of the sexes was played out."⁴⁵

As tempting and as relevant as the work of British and American scholars might be, this analysis of women missionaries of the Methodist Church of Canada must ultimately be legitimized by some affiliation with appropriate Canadian historiography. It is not an easy task. While women's history has, in Canada as elsewhere, become a fertile area for investigation, no coherent syntheses have resulted. Moreover, many aspects of women's lives in the past have received little attention while historians have concentrated

on, for example, the very few radical feminists who are hardly representative of Canadian women generally. The public experience of middle-class Victorian women has largely remained undocumented with the exception of their participation in some of the social reform movements of the day. Professional women, doctors, lawyers and especially teachers, have been subjects for study only insofar as they were the victims of a male-dominated social structure. Women who chose religious work as a career have been even more neglected, except in Québec where several studies of the experience of women in Roman Catholic institutions have appeared.⁴⁶

There are, nonetheless, a number of articles and books which if pieced together form an adequate, if somewhat fragmented, backdrop for this thesis. In particular, several of the essays in A Not Unreasonable Claim. Women and Reform in Canada 1880s - 1920s examine the emergence of Canadian women as proponents and activists on behalf of social reform in Canada. Wayne Roberts in "The New Woman and Maternal Feminism, Toronto, 1877-1914" argues that women who aspired to a profession were caught in a dilemma whereby a society which defined woman's public role in terms of maternal feminism prescribed the course such a career would and could take. Consequently, professional women were "... shunted into specialized ghettos which reaffirmed their subordination rather than autonomy in the world of work. Dependent professionalism produced a distorted culture which was a

stunted version of feminism."⁴⁷ Women were never able to break free of the constraints which society had imposed upon them and, according to Roberts, their complicity explains the limited political gains made by a group of potentially progressive women.

In the same volume, Veronica Strong-Boag, in an article entitled "Canada's Women Doctors: Feminism Constrained," examines the problems facing Canada's women doctors at the end of the nineteenth century. Strong-Boag has identified twenty-five (15%) of the graduates of the Ontario Medical College for Women who became missionary doctors for Canadian Protestant Churches. Outside of Canada, she argues, these women doctors "were afforded a level of power and authority they never could have had at home."⁴⁸ She fails, however, to recognize the problems that many Protestant Churches had recruiting and retaining women doctors, especially for China. Moreover, her assertion that these women missionary doctors were "influential agents of British cultural and political imperialism"⁴⁹ is not consistent with the behaviour and attitudes of the W. M. S. missionaries in Japan and China who equated improving the social conditions of eastern women with, more generally, western cultural superiority and the mandate of their own missionary society. While western imperialist ambitions were certainly inherent in missionary work, the W. M. S. missionaries in the Orient do not appear to have been vigorous

exponents of the political goals of Britain or the western powers in China or Japan. In conclusion, Strong-Boag, like Roberts, blames the cult of domesticity and maternal feminism for the failure of Canadian women doctors, at home and abroad, to fulfill their promise and for their compliance with the conservative male medical profession which fought radical social changes which might threaten their dominance and control of the medical profession.

On the other hand, Wendy Mitchinson's "The W C T U: For God, Home and Native Land: A Study in Nineteenth-Century Feminism," is an examination of an essentially conservative women's organization whose members were able to capitalize on "the ideals of domesticity to justify their actions," and to use "what some historians have seen as restrictive concepts to extend and exert their power over society."⁵⁰ The W. M. S. and its missionaries operated under this same code. Mitchinson has also surveyed the role of the women's missionary societies within the larger Canadian woman's movement in "Canadian Women and Church Missionary Societies in The Nineteenth Century: A Step Towards Independence." She argues that Protestant woman's missionary societies, among them the Methodist W. M. S., gave "tens of thousands of Canadian women an outlet for their abilities and energies."⁵¹ Their conservative nature notwithstanding, missionary societies provided women "fortunate enough to have the leisure time to participate in them with the opportunity to

develop their abilities in leadership and administration."⁵² Moreover, the international aspects of missionary work expanded the outlook of the membership.⁵³ Methodist women, in particular, recognized the need to expand home mission work to meet the needs of an industrializing society and many Methodist women strongly endorsed women's suffrage as the logical vehicle for women's continued involvement in the movement toward social transformation. Consequently, Mitchinson contends

it is not surprising that the work of the Methodist women's society appeared more innovative and energetic than that of other existing women's societies. Methodist women had the most freedom to determine what they wanted to do; in turn, they used that freedom to expand their involvement in both religious and secular areas.⁵⁴

But, while affirming the social conscience of these women, Mitchinson denies church missionary societies a place as "vehicles for social reform,"⁵⁵ per se, partly because their members were collectively satisfied with their place within Canadian society.

There is, in addition, a small body of recent historiography related to Methodism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and to Canadian participation in the missionary movement. In "The Methodist Church and the National Gospel, 1884-1914," William Magney has analysed the changes within the Methodist Church in the thirty years after union in 1884 which led to the Methodist commitment to a social reform programme. Magney argues that during these

years Methodist Church members accepted the Church's participation "in a broad range of secular issues."⁵⁶ Missionaries in Canada, in spite of the evangelical thrust of their mandate, became "deeply involved in efforts to supply the basic sanitation, health and educational information" which newly arrived immigrants needed.⁵⁷ "And," suggests Magney,

because social activity was so basic an aspect of the religious character of Canadian Methodism these workers for Christ undoubtedly did much to make the lives of both native and immigrant more socially attractive, as well as physically bearable.⁵⁸

Moreover, Magney argues that "[a]s they became more interested in the expansion of missions, Methodists not only became agents of good works, but agents of national sentiment as well."⁵⁹ Magney's arguments are, however, limited to missionary activity within Canada, particularly in the West where the Methodist Church "conceive[d] that its mission ... was not simply to save souls for Christ but also to insure the continental destiny of a nation, a nation of unquestioned Protestant loyalties."⁶⁰ Because the W. M. S. membership and missionaries were among those involved with Methodism "literally from the cradle to the grave,"⁶¹ they would have been inevitably immersed in this tradition.

Most recently, Alvyn Austin has undertaken a history of both Roman Catholic and Protestant Canadian missionaries in China during the past one hundred years. While Austin has presented an interesting and comprehensive commentary on the exploits of these Canadians, he does not examine in any

detail the particular role of women missionaries in China although, by Austin's own estimates, "from the 1880s on - right up to the present - roughly two-thirds of missionaries in the field were women, half of them unmarried."⁶² Nor has he attempted any more than a cursory survey of the social and educational backgrounds of the missionaries. On the other hand, Austin revels in documenting the "success stories" of the McClures, Kilborns, Endicotts and Whites, which are, no doubt, a part of this tableau of Canadian missionaries in China, but cannot be considered representative of the hundreds of others whose experiences were neither as satisfying nor as visible. Austin's book may go some distance towards filling a void in Canadians' awareness of this particular group, but there is still ample scope for scholarly studies of the missionary forces of the individual Canadian churches represented in China and elsewhere, and more importantly, for an analysis of the specific role of women missionaries and their influence on Chinese society.

That missionary work had become a viable career choice for Canadian women in the last years of the nineteenth century was precipitated by two interrelated circumstances: the drive by Canadian women to form their own missionary societies and the impetus within Canadian evangelical churches to follow the example of American and British churches to expand their missionary work into foreign fields. The earliest woman's church society in Canada appears to have

been the Halifax Wesleyan Female Benevolent Society founded in 1816,⁶³ but it was not until the last decades of the nineteenth century that Canadian women initiated a broad range of religious and secular voluntary organizations, one of which was the Woman's Missionary Society of the Methodist Church of Canada.

In Canada, any large scale national voluntary organization could hardly have come about before Confederation. Until about 1870, the predominantly rural and pioneering nature of Ontario and the West and the lack of transportation had restricted women's organized and public activities to the local community or congregation. Nor were there before the last quarter of the nineteenth century significant numbers of educated women capable of directing the complex affairs of a large association.⁶⁴ By the last decades of the century, however, urban population growth had increased the potential participants in women's organizations and created the very visible problems which many of the women's organizations were designed to relieve. Moreover, the growth of industrial capitalism had, in Canada as in Britain and the United States, fostered the development of "homemaking as a woman's vocation."⁶⁵ Middle-class Canadian homemakers, in particular, were able to embrace the "cult of domesticity as more than a domestic presence - as the development of a distinct and important social vocation."⁶⁶

To do so, they moved out of the home, "out of the private sphere to reform the world."⁶⁷

Much of this social housekeeping had its roots in religious belief. Jane Rendall, for one, has suggested that "evangelical religion offered [women] not only a clear definition of their expected sphere but also a very positive, even exalted, role within it."⁶⁸ Karen Blair, too, attributes the common urge of American women to organize in groups and their sense of solidarity and sisterhood to their earlier participation in church-centered activities.⁶⁹ Wendy Mitchinson argues that, in Canada, church work "had always been acceptable for women and so the church became the most logical institution for women to turn to as many for the first time entered the public realm."⁷⁰ The Church simply "lent respectability to their efforts and shielded them from public scrutiny."⁷¹ The link between evangelical revivals and the formation and growth of voluntary associations which awaits further examination in the United States has hardly been noticed as far as Canadian women are concerned. It is probably no coincidence that women's missionary societies and the Woman's Christian Temperance Union originated in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, a period which was marked by strong waves of revivalism. Timothy Smith has suggested that in the United States the revivalism of the latter part of the nineteenth century "set the stage for a tremendous advance in interdenominational social and religious work,

quicken the pace by which the churches Christianized the land. Old benevolent societies took on new functions, new ones like the Y. M. C. A. ... appeared."⁷² In an exploratory paper tracing the roots of American women's voluntary associations, Caroline Gifford has proposed that "it is time to stop viewing these groups from the perspective of feminist scholarship exclusively and treat them also as what they were: expressions of strong religious belief and commitment."⁷³ Certainly, it is time to cease looking at the components of post-Confederation Canadian women's history exclusively in terms of the failure of suffragism and the triumph of 'maternal feminism.'

The singular obsession with maternal feminism as an explanation for the behaviour of Canadian women from 1880 to 1920 has recently come under sharp scrutiny. Joy Parr, for example, argues that the tendency to designate "those decades as an era of 'maternal feminism', to see the public actions of women definitionally as an extension of the private" has resulted in the exclusion of the activities of women whose "characterizations of self were not 'maternal.'"⁷⁴ Moreover, Parr criticizes the assumptions of Marxist historians who ascribe women's unskilled, low-paying position in the work force to the consequences and demands of industrial capitalism which, arguably, at the same time, to quote Julie Matthaie, spawned the cult of domesticity as a "perfect complement to capitalism's masculinity" and as a way to

"mother the losers."⁷⁵ Parr anticipates a new configuration of Canadian historiography reflecting contemporary opinion which "did not see industrialization as inevitably casting women as domestic beings and men as public creatures. Their perceptions were of two interconnected systems in transformation."⁷⁶ No doubt Canadian women seeking to move into the public sphere, either as professionals or volunteers, capitalized on their supposedly superior feminine attributes to advance their personal and collective goals. But, at the same time, as Margaret Conrad suggests, "[t]hose busy and often much discriminated against professional women who dominated the ranks of the suffrage societies must have had more than maternal feminism in mind when they fought for political rights."⁷⁷ Similarly, while the W. M. S. appears at times to have exploited the domestic imperative to reconcile public opinion to its ambitions, its administrators and missionaries alike preferred to rely on their own credentials and professional qualifications to legitimize their work in the field.

III

Although they were unable to comment critically on all the reasons why, Canadian Methodist women believed that they had been "very conservative and slow" to follow the example set by their sister Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States whose Woman's Foreign Missionary Society had

been organized in 1869 and whose constitution became the model for the Canadian society.⁷⁸ The W. M. S. boasted that "no ... baptism of blood" like the American Civil War had "prepared the women of Canadian Methodism for their work, but simply the call of duty, or ... the call of the Master saying to us, 'Go, work to-day in my vineyard.'" ⁷⁹ Within Canada, the Baptists in the Maritimes had been the first to organize a separate woman's missionary organization. Prompted by Hannah Norris who was sponsored as a missionary to Burma, a small missionary society formed in Canso, Nova Scotia, in 1870, grew within a few months to become the United Baptist Woman's Missionary Union. In 1876, the Woman's Baptist Foreign Missionary Society of Eastern Ontario and Qu bec was organized, followed, in 1896, by the Woman's Baptist Home Missionary Society of Eastern Ontario and Qu bec. Separate societies were also formed in Manitoba and British Columbia. But because of the higher proportion of Baptists in the Maritimes, most of the Baptist foreign missionary work, in particular the extensive operations in India, was administered by the Maritime organization.⁸⁰ The Maritimes also spawned the first missionary activity among Presbyterian women. In 1876, a year after Presbyterian union, the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society of the Presbyterian Church in Canada (Eastern Division) was constituted in Halifax and a Western division was formed in Toronto. Shortly after,

Presbyterian women began to sponsor women missionaries in central India.⁸¹

The Methodist Episcopal Church in Canada was the first of the Canadian Methodist churches to organize a separate woman's missionary society. Because there are no accounts of any discussions which might have surrounded the establishment of the organization, it is not possible to speculate whether its formation at this particular juncture was prompted by the action taken by the rival Baptist and Presbyterian churches. In the summer of 1876, the Woman's Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Canada was constituted, under the guidance of Mrs. Albert Carman and Mrs. Levi Massey. Its purpose was

... to work in harmony with and under the supervision of the authorities of the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church and be subject to their approval in the employment and remuneration of missionaries, the designation of their fields of labor, and in the general plans and designs of the work.⁸²

The Society does not appear to have had the same autonomy as its counterpart in the United States which only formally applied to the General Board for approval of its missionaries.⁸³ Future Methodist Episcopal missionaries had to

be approved by the constituted missionary authorities of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and shall labor under the direction of the authorities of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and of the particular mission of that Society in which they may be severally employed; and they shall be subject to the same rules and regulations that govern the

other missionaries in those particular missions.⁸⁴

The question of the women's ability to reach independent decisions about the nature of their work and the direction of their missionaries, however, never became a matter of great debate because the Society did not realize its goal of sending women missionaries abroad. In 1881, its receipts of \$399.00 allowed only a contribution of \$300.00 to the church in the Northwest,⁸⁵ and from June 1882 to June 1883, the last year of its separate existence, the Society raised only \$123.20.⁸⁶ When the Methodist Episcopal Church was incorporated into the larger Methodist Church of Canada in 1884, the Society merged with the W. M. S. of the Canadian Methodist Church without having sent a missionary into the field.

By comparison, the Canadian Methodist W. M. S. was a more immediate success, perhaps because of a widespread, if not universal, recognition of the need for its existence. Ironically, in view of the women's subsequent fiercely independent stance, the first official proposal for a Canadian Methodist Woman's Missionary Society came at the General Conference in 1878, from the members of the male General Board of Missions who requested the assistance of women missionaries with their work in Japan where social custom prevented men from reaching the female population and, just as importantly, because of financial difficulties.⁸⁷

A motion was presented which recommended

... that a Ladies' Missionary Society devoting itself exclusively to the work of Christian education on [sic] our Indians, French and Foreign Missions, would be a valuable auxiliary to our present missionary organization; but inasmuch as our society is now burdened with debt we do not consider it expedient at the present time to initiate a movement that might possibly involve responsibilities which we would be unable to meet.⁸⁸

This suggestion did not generate an enthusiastic reaction at the General Conference; many delegates feared that if the Methodist Church ever became unable to support the work of two societies, the older General Board of Missions might be the first to suffer. Rivalry and lobbying for financial support became a matter of jealousy and even hostility throughout the subsequent history of the two mission societies. Nevertheless, several representatives at the Conference seemed enthusiastic about the idea of a separate woman's society. The Rev. L. N. Beaudry, for one, pointed out to the delegates that in the United States, women's missionary societies had been a stimulus, not an obstacle, to missionary fund raising. One prominent clergyman, the Rev. John Williams, who became General Superintendent of the Methodist Church of Canada in 1883,⁸⁹ and whose daughter, Elizabeth Williams Ross, was President of the W. M. S. from 1896 until 1920, could see no reason why a woman's society would interfere with the operations of the General Board of Missions, especially when the General Board's programme to

convert French Canadians to Methodism was hampered by a shortage of workers and money.⁹⁰ When no satisfactory decision about an immediate plan for a woman's society was reached, the question was referred to a central board, with the mandate to organize a woman's society within the next four years "if, in their judgment, the financial condition of the General Society should warrant it."⁹¹

Proposals for a woman's missionary society did not surface again until June 1880, during the Annual Conference in Hamilton, when Dr. Alexander Sutherland, Secretary of Missions for the Methodist Church, met with a group of Hamilton women, the middle-class wives, daughters and widows of ministers, doctors, lawyers and merchants, in Centenary Methodist Church parlour to discuss the best way to proceed with a plan for a woman's society. Sutherland himself was receptive to the idea and remained supportive of the Society throughout his long tenure as Missionary Superintendent. A committee of ten women was appointed to study the operations of American woman's missionary societies and to draft a constitution and by-laws. All interested women from Hamilton Methodist churches were invited to a meeting on June 23 where the first auxiliary was formed.⁹² Over the next months, many more meetings, which took the form of one hour of prayers for missions, followed by a business session and tea, were held in private homes, the Wesleyan Ladies' College and city churches in Hamilton.⁹³ During the first year, the women

raised \$200.00 through voluntary donations, not public fund raising, which was sent to Dr. Thomas Crosby in northern British Columbia.⁹⁴

When the first issue of the Missionary Outlook appeared in January 1881, Alexander Sutherland took the opportunity to suggest that although it would be "premature" to try to form "a General Connexional Society" at that time, the success of the Hamilton experiment indicated that more branch societies could be organized immediately.⁹⁵ There were, Sutherland suggested, specific areas of missionary work - teaching in mission schools and working in the Crosby Home in northern British Columbia and the McDougall Orphanages in southern Alberta - which were especially suitable for women. If women undertook the responsibility for these teaching and custodial jobs, the General Missionary Society would be relieved "of part of its burdens, leaving it free to employ all its energies and resources in fully evangelistic work."⁹⁶ Because of the persistent fear that another missionary society would syphon off funds normally donated to the General Board, the women's auxiliaries were advised not to initiate any new missionary ventures. Any money which they might raise should be contributed to the support of existing institutions operating under the auspices of the General Board.⁹⁷ Sutherland's caveat did not escape the notice of the members of Hamilton's Centenary Church auxiliary.

From the outset, the W. M. S. was sensitive to the possibility that, as women, their Society might be assigned a secondary role in the missionary work of the Methodist Church. In fact, at the first annual meeting, the President, Sarah Burns, wife of the principal of Hamilton Ladies' College, and one of the founding members of the Society, urged the women not be restrained,

... because of the conservatism of some touching woman's sphere. As she was the first at the sepulchre to announce the risen Lord, so may she be first to announce to many a heart in our day 'he receiveth sinners still.'⁹⁸

Although the W. M. S. later acknowledged the support of Dr. Sutherland, without whose "help and encouragement, in the beginning, the Woman's Missionary Society would have found it difficult to overcome the prejudice and indifference of the times, if, indeed, it could have lived at all,"⁹⁹ his proposals about the particular sphere which should be assigned to women in the missionary movement and the disbursement of their own funds provoked the women of Centenary Church to re-examine their plans for a W. M. S.

Shortly after Sutherland's statement had been published, the Centenary auxiliary met to discuss the "most vital" question of the allocation of the money which they raised. They acknowledged the wisdom of the more experienced General Council in missionary affairs, but, clearly, they would not surrender their fiscal autonomy. Was it not better, they asked themselves, to


strike out on an entirely new line? Assume all the responsibilities ourselves, and take the burden upon our own hearts and heads, which will force us to our knees, to seek the wisdom from above which is profitable to direct, and the zeal which will surely accompany knowledge and love?¹⁰⁰

As far as these women were concerned, fiscal control and accountability were the keys to their independence as an organization. Their tenacity in this regard suggests, perhaps, a parallel with the domestic sphere and a similar connection between money and power in their own homes.

When the constitution for a nationwide W. M. S. was delivered in April 1881, the relationship between the new organization and the existing Missionary Society was clearly delineated.¹⁰¹ The object of the W. M. S. was, by definition,

to engage the effort of Christian women in the evangelization of heathen women and children; to aid in sustaining female Missionaries and Teachers or other special laborers, in foreign or home fields, and to raise funds for this work.¹⁰²

There was, however, no specific reference to surrendering the financial business of the W. M. S. to the General Missionary Society. Rather, the women chose, as had the Methodist Episcopal women, "to work in harmony with the authorities of the Mission Society ... and be subject to their approval in the remuneration of Missionaries or other Agents, the designation of fields of labor, and in the general plans and designs of the work."¹⁰³ As soon as the W. M. S. was on a firm footing, the latter part of the clause, at least, was



often conveniently ignored. The Board of Managers of the Society, consisting of the elected officers, was given the authority to review all the organization's work, to appoint and assign missionaries, and to approve the spending of funds.¹⁰⁴ It became the power behind the W. M. S. As Corresponding-Secretary, Elizabeth Strachan, who served in that capacity from 1881 until her retirement in 1924, assumed wide-ranging responsibility to make prompt decisions about the problems encountered by the missionaries in the field and which demanded an immediate solution. She became a respected friend and advisor to the missionaries in the field and the home which she shared with her cousins, Elizabeth Ross and Martha Cartmell, was designated by returned missionaries as "The House of Peace,"¹⁰⁵ a haven where the women often spent the first weeks of their furlough.

On November 8, 1881, at a meeting held in the Hamilton Ladies' College, the W. M. S. was formally constituted.¹⁰⁶ More than \$1000.00 was raised on that occasion by the sale of \$25.00 life memberships purchased by prominent Toronto and Hamilton businessmen and clergy for their wives.¹⁰⁷ The immediate response of other Canadian Methodist women to the new society as a way to demonstrate their concern for less fortunate women in foreign lands and in Canada was not as enthusiastic as that of Hamiltonians. As Harriet Platt, long-time President of the Bay of Quinte

branch and a dedicated member of the Board of Managers,¹⁰⁸ observed in 1906,

[b]usy women were not eager to engage in the work. Indeed, the way was, and still is, barred in many places by the prejudice of Christian women - women who look upon the work as optional, something they can take up or let alone. Many of us who now feel woe is me if I neglect this work were once conscientiously opposed. We thought there was work enough at home - that one missionary society was enough, and another would only detract from its funds; that the new movement was only a fad and would die a natural death. We sinned through ignorance, and we have been converted.¹⁰⁹

Both the Christian Guardian and the Missionary Outlook became active publicists on the Society's behalf, reporting the formation of new branches and urging other women to follow this example. The Society expected every Methodist woman church member to join the W. M. S. Citing chapter and verse of the scriptures, the W. M. S. pointed out that the Society was "called by God to this work."¹¹⁰ Although it always was presented first, the evangelical argument for membership in the Society appears, however, to have been secondary to the assumption that there were special duties which only women could carry out on behalf of heathen women in societies where "[t]he voice of man can never be heard behind their prison bars ... Woman's lips and woman's hands must do the work, or it must remain undone."¹¹¹ The programme of the W. M. S. and its expectations of what its missionaries might accomplish in the field bear the hallmarks of maternal feminism. For example, in an early recruitment

pamphlet entitled Ten Reasons Why I Should Belong to the Woman's Missionary Society, the Society explicitly identified the ideals of womanhood with the advent of millennium. As women and mothers, it was the responsibility of Canadian Methodist women to recognize that

[u]pon the condition and character of the mothers depends the condition and character of a nation, for in the hands of the mother is the moulding and developing of the character of the children ... to reach and save the mothers is to reach and save the children; and to save the children is to claim the nation for Jesus our King.¹¹²

As appears to have been the case with the W. C. T. U.,¹¹³ appeals couched in the rhetoric of maternal feminism attracted women whose husbands and families may have needed some reassurance that membership in a public organization was no threat to their own family unit, or, more generally, to social stability. Moreover, these same arguments may have been essential to convince the Methodist hierarchy that a women's¹ organization would not undermine their patriarchal authority at a time when allegiance to the church was threatened by an increasingly urban and industrialized society.¹¹⁴ This is not to suggest that as middle-class wives and mothers with the requisite time and money, the membership of the W. M. S. did not fervently believe their Society had a mandate to extend women's special nurturing and caretaking virtues beyond their own insulated households. However, sometimes the decisions made by the Board of Managers and the behaviour of the missionaries in

the field in defence of their Society's ideology seem to be at odds with "the self-denying exertions"¹¹⁵ which social housekeeping demanded. Perhaps this was because the women agreed with Mrs. James Gooderham who, in a presidential address in 1884, reminded the members that as women they should never take their participation in the missionary movement for granted. "Woman has not," Gooderham pointed out

won her way to her present position of usefulness, in connection with the great work of the world's evangelization, without a pretty severe conflict. The prejudices against women engaging in evangelistic labours in some of the churches have been so strong that they have raised a formidable barrier in the way of our sisters in these denominations.¹¹⁶

At the same time, Gooderham acknowledged that Methodism had been more accommodating than most churches to women's organizations,¹¹⁷ a circumstance which may help account for the ability of the W. M. S. and its missionaries to act in their own interests.

The W. M. S. gradually gained momentum and within a year twenty auxiliaries with 900 members had raised almost \$3000.00.¹¹⁸ In 1881, the Ladies' French Missionary Society of Montreal, founded in 1878 to work among the French-speaking Roman Catholic population of Québec, amalgamated with the W. M. S.¹¹⁹ Four years later, at the Annual Meeting of the W. M. S. held in Kingston a few months after the official union of the Methodist Church of Canada, the Methodist Episcopal Church in Canada, the Bible Christian

Church of Canada and the Primitive Methodist Church in Canada as the Methodist Church of Canada, the still small and inactive W. M. S. of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Canada formally joined with the larger and more visible society.¹²⁰ There were no significant constitutional changes, although a founder of the M. E. W. M. S., Mrs. Albert Carmen, assumed the vice-presidency of the consolidated organization.¹²¹ By 1906, on its twenty-fifth anniversary, the W. M. S. consisted of 946 auxiliaries across Canada with a membership of 42,841 in auxiliaries, circles and bands.¹²² Ten years later, pace of the growth was slower; the Society reported a membership of 44,315 in 1246 auxiliaries and it had raised \$168,916.44 during the previous year.¹²³

By the time that the W. M. S. was able to consider the possibility of hiring women to represent the Society in the mission field, which was, after all, the raison d'être of all missionary societies, the missionary reputation of the Methodist Church of Canada had already been secured. Canadian Methodists traditionally traced the roots of their missionary involvement to 1824 when the Methodist Episcopal Church Missionary Society first directed its attention to the conversion and moral reform of the native tribes of Upper Canada.¹²⁴ When the Methodist Episcopal Churches of Canada and the United States officially separated in 1828 and William Case assumed the general superintendency of the church in Canada, more formal plans were drawn up for the

evangelization of the Indians. By 1838, missions had been established as far west as Fort William and the following year a station was opened in connection with the settlement at Norway House.¹²⁵ Canadian Methodist missionary work among the Indians in British Columbia began in 1859 when four ministers were sent to look after the spiritual needs of the miners in the Fraser Valley. Their work expanded to encompass the Salish in the vicinity and stations were set up at Victoria, Nanaimo and Chilliwack where the Colqualeetza Institute was built in 1886.¹²⁶ In 1873, a Methodist mission was opened at Morleyville, Alberta under the guidance of George McDougall as a base from which to minister to the Stoney tribe.¹²⁷ Methodists justified their early work among native peoples by

point[ing] out that the government of the native tribes of Canada has been rendered comparatively easy by reason of the loyalty to the crown which the Methodist missionary has taught the Indian to recognize as part of his obligation to the Christian faith.¹²⁸

Later, in the 1890s, the emphasis shifted from checking "ignorance, immorality and disease" among native peoples¹²⁹ to the expedient of domestic and industrial training for the young so that they could become assimilated by Canadian society.¹³⁰

By the turn of the century, however, missionary work among native peoples was eclipsed by the demands of the emerging foreign fields and by the Church's perceived role in "[n]ation-building, home-building and church-building" in the

West in the face of the Laurier government's aggressive immigration programme.¹³¹ Methodists generally believed that if the immigrant were converted to evangelical Protestantism, "he would become a better citizen in the process. Conversely, they feared that Methodist social and religious ideals would be overwhelmed by European decadence if the Ukrainians were not won over to the Protestant side."¹³² Canadian Methodists believed that unless the foreign-born population was "transformed," it would "wreck many of the hopes that patriotic Canadians legitimately cherish[ed] regarding the future of the Dominion."¹³³ Furthermore, work among recent immigrants was a new opportunity for Methodists to compensate for failing to convert the Roman Catholic French-speaking population of Québec to Protestantism.

Methodist missionary work had first begun in Québec in 1856.¹³⁴ By 1880, the French Methodist Institute for the education of French-Canadians, "especially converts from Romanism"¹³⁵ and a French Mission Church were a prominent part of the Methodist missionary organization. Much of the work in Montreal had been carried out under the auspices of the Ladies' French Missionary Society which was organized in 1878. By 1914, however, the Methodist Church readily admitted that the work among the French in Québec was "the least encouraging of all the fields of activity in which the missionary zeal of Canadian Methodists finds expression."¹³⁶

By the time that plans were in place for the formation of the W. M. S., the Methodist Church of Canada had also established a foothold in foreign missionary work. In time, foreign missionary work would draw far more attention, money and staff than home missions. But, in 1873, the first proposal to open a foreign mission in Japan faced sharp criticism from many Methodists who argued that

home missionaries were struggling along with very inadequate stipends; many Indian tribes were still unreached; the calls from new settlements in our own country were loud and frequent, and the vast French population of the Province of Québec was scarcely touched by Methodist agencies. Under such circumstances, it is not to be wondered at that some were inclined to say: 'We have here only five barley loaves and two small fishes, but what are they among so many?'¹³⁷

That the opposition was eventually overcome was, apparently, the result of the intervention of Dr. Morley Punshon, a captivating orator whose persuasive advocacy of foreign mission work influenced the decision of Martha Cartmell to become the first W. M. S. missionary in Japan.¹³⁸ In 1874, Dr. Davidson McDonald and Rev. George Cochran were selected as the first representatives of the Methodist Church of Canada in Japan. Cochran's two daughters, Maud and Susie, later both served the W. M. S. briefly as missionaries in Tokyo. At the end of 1878, a church building had been constructed in Tokyo and some educational work had been launched. By March, 1879, the church had forty-nine members.¹³⁹

These, then, were the components of the missionary work of the Methodist Church of Canada in 1881 when the W. M. S. launched its own missionary programme. At the organizational meeting in November 1881, the W. M. S. decided specifically to give its financial support to the existing French work in Montreal, to the Girls' Home at Port Simpson which was operated by Dr. and Mrs. Crosby, to the McDougall Orphanage at Morley, Alberta but, in addition, the Board of Managers resolved to hire and support a woman missionary and to launch women's missionary work in Japan.¹⁴⁰

Martha Cartmell, who departed the next year to Japan, and Kezia Hendrie, who became the first W. M. S. home missionary when she was hired as matron for the Crosby Girls' Home, were not, of course, the first Canadian women to pursue a missionary career. Ten years earlier, in 1870, a Nova Scotian woman, Hannah Norris, had been sent by the Baptists to Burma,¹⁴¹ and by the 1880s the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society of The Presbyterian Church had several women missionaries at work in its field in Central India. Consequently, when the Methodist W. M. S. was ready to begin its missionary work, some of the earlier prejudice and animosity towards the participation of single women in the foreign missionary movement had been overcome. Before the American Civil War, a woman could only become a missionary "by marriage to an appointed missionary."¹⁴² "Evangelical churches had been known to arrange marriages so women could venture into

foreign lands or minister to American Indians."¹⁴³ But, once in the field and especially after children were born, married women had little time for the work among women which had been designated as their special preserve.¹⁴⁴ Consequently, the separate women's missionary societies which sponsored single women for whom missionary work with women was their full-time occupation very quickly became an integral part of the missionary network of many Protestant churches.¹⁴⁵ By 1900, forty-one women's boards employing single women missionaries were functioning in the United States alone.¹⁴⁶ As Jane Hunter points out, by the end of the nineteenth century, "the opposition to women's work had changed from concern about its impropriety to a beleaguered effort by men of the general boards to retain minority control over a majority of women workers."¹⁴⁷ While initially Canadian Methodist women were slower to respond to the demands for their services than American Methodist women,¹⁴⁸ and initiated missionary work only after the suitability of women as missionaries was, to cite a prominent Methodist clergyman, "no longer a doubtful question,"¹⁴⁹ in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a missionary career offered many Canadian Methodist women, the prospect of "a new role and status ... within one of the most important movements of organized religion."¹⁵⁰

The analysis of the experience of the missionaries of the W. M. S. of the Methodist Church of Canada which follows is derived principally from primary sources housed at the United Church Archives in Toronto. These include extensive biographical files for both clergy and layworkers of the Methodist Church. In the case of the W. M. S., these files served, in the first instance, simply to identify those women whom the Society had employed. The W. M. S. had, from time to time, published lists of its missionaries, but many of the women's names were dropped if they left the Society without completing their first term or if they were dismissed because of a failure to carry out their duties as the Society expected or improper conduct. In addition, most of the files of foreign missionaries in particular provided at least some information about the women's backgrounds and educational qualifications and sometimes contained correspondence related to their recruitment by the W. M. S. Manuscript collections which included the papers of the W. M. S., the West China Mission of the Methodist Church and the Japan Mission Papers were invaluable in documenting the history of the Methodist missions. The Strachan-Cartmell papers, Isabella Blackmore Letterbooks, Harper Coates family papers, Jolliffe papers and Mary Lamb papers all bear directly on the experience of individual W. M. S. missionaries in foreign fields. It is interesting to note that there are, however, fewer source materials to document the careers of the home

missionaries, indicating perhaps the relative positions of the two groups within the Church.

The biographical data in the Archives was augmented with material drawn from the manuscript census of Canada for the years 1861 to 1891. Educational data were reconstructed by reference to lists of the graduates of ladies' colleges and universities where available and from obituaries published in the Christian Guardian, the Missionary Outlook, and the United Church Observer. In this way, as complete a profile as possible was created for each woman. The data were then coded and analysed with the use of a computer programme.

The United Church Archives, the Hamilton Public Library and the McMaster University Libraries house a proliferation of printed primary materials, much of which was published during the glory days of the missionary movement. In particular, the Missionary Outlook, the Christian Guardian and the Missionary Bulletin are rich sources for reports and letters from the W. M. S. missionaries in both the home and foreign mission fields. The Christian Guardian documents as well the attitudes and functions of the Methodist Church during the period under examination. The Hamilton Public Library also houses the papers of Centenary Methodist Church, Hamilton where the first W. M. S. auxiliary was organized and which was the home church of the three cousins, Elizabeth Ross and Elizabeth Strachan, respectively long term President

and Corresponding-Secretary of the W. M. S., and Martha Cartmell, the first foreign missionary, whose hard work and perseverance contributed in large measure to the success of the W. M. S.

All of these sources elucidate the activities of a group of more than 300 Canadian women who strove, as employees of the W. M. S., 1881 - 1925, to fulfill their obligations to the Society and to the Methodist Church of Canada as harbingers of a new social and moral order rooted in the grand vision of a terrestrial Kingdom of God. They were, as well, working women trying to define, both within the Church and in relation to other women and men in society at large, a place for themselves where as ambitious, but not iconoclastic, professionals, they could not only earn a livelihood but achieve a degree of responsibility and independence consistent with their educational qualifications and their developing skills. In the long run, the missionary movement may not have fulfilled its evangelistic expectations, but for some Canadian women it offered between 1885 and 1925 yet another alternative to the Scylla of marriage, the Charybdes of solitary spinsterhood, or a career stunted by too close an attachment to the affairs of men.

Notes

¹Theodora Foster Carroll, Women, Religion, and Development in the Third World (New York: Praeger Special Studies, 1983), p. 151.

²Earl Kent Brown, Women of Mr. Wesley's Methodism (New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1983), p. 28.

³Carol Bacchi, Liberation Deferred? (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983), p. 38.

⁴See, for example, L. Kealey, A Not Unreasonable Claim (Toronto: The Women's Educational Press, 1979), pp. 2-6.

⁵Martha Vicinus, Independent Women. Work and Community for Single Women 1850 - 1920 (London: Virago Press, 1985), p. 33.

⁶R. P. Beaver, All Loves Excelling (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmann, 1968), pp. 61-63.

⁷Page Smith, Daughters of the Promised Land (Boston: Little Brown and Co., 1970), p. 178.

⁸Ibid., p. 187.

⁹Ibid., p. 195.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 201.

¹¹Barbara Welter, "The Feminization of American Religion, 1800-1860," in M. J. Hartman and Lois Banner (eds.), Clio's Consciousness Raised (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), p. 152.

¹²B. Welter, "She Hath Done What She Could," American Quarterly, XXX (1978), 638.

¹³Jane Hunter, The Gospel of Gentility (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), xvi.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 93.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 228.

¹⁶Martha Vicinus, Independent Women. Work and Community for Single Women 1850 - 1920 (London: Virago Press, 1985), p. 5.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 31.

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¹⁹Ibid., p. 5.

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CHAPTER II

"Here I am, Send me"

The youngest child of earnest Christian parents, my religious training received careful attention; and my interest in, and sympathy for, those who had heard not 'the tidings of great joy' was early awakened. - Even while I was myself a stranger to the Saviour's pardoning love. After spending three years at the Normal School Truro, I began teaching, at the age of 17 years. It was while teaching in Oxford-village [Nova Scotia] that my concern for my spiritual state became very great; ... the memory of the many times that I had rejected Christ's offered mercy, filled me with remorse and despair.

This continued for about five months, my distress and hopelessness growing deeper each week. But at length the promise, 'Seek & ye shall find' was fulfilled to me, as it always has been and thank God while earth remaineth always will be to every earnest seeker after Salvation through Christ. Soon after I was received into the Meth. Church by the Rev. A. D. Morton. I was then 19 years of age. Almost immediately the longing to carry the 'message of Peace' to those who knew it not, sprang up in my heart. Doubting, however, my ability for mission work, I gave up all thought of personally entering upon it, as duties at home lay in my path. Since then my time has been divided between teaching and housework at my father's home. So I have had about two years experience in farm housekeeping. I am now 25 years of age - hold grade C license ... the conviction that help such as I could give was needed in the Lord's Vineyards abroad, became so strong that I could no longer put it aside All I have and am I wish to belong to Christ. Gladly will I work in His service in any way or anywhere, if I may but know I am doing His will. As to how soon I can go, I feel I am

given but one answer. When the Master has need of me.¹

This sincere and candid letter, sent in 1888 by Isabella Blackmore to the Nova Scotia branch of the Woman's Missionary Society, seems an appropriate introduction to an analysis of the backgrounds of the more than three hundred women who served as missionaries for the Society from 1881 to 1925. Blackmore's letter rehearses many of the social and educational attributes which the women shared. But, at the same time, it shows the very individualized nature of the women's impulses, their willingness to sacrifice and their expectation of contentment and self-realization in return for a life of service to Christ and His teachings.

It is no coincidence that over the forty-five years covered in this study, the W. M. S. recruits had, even before they worked and lived together as missionaries, already shared many experiences. Whether or not it was recognized by the missionaries themselves, their prospective employers had a preconceived notion of the proper qualifications for a woman missionary. Although the Board of Managers advertised publicly in the Christian Guardian and the Missionary Outlook for applicants for missionary work, such a broad public appeal did not mean that every woman who felt drawn to missionary work would be acceptable to the Society. To deter obviously unqualified women from applying and to ensure the desired homogeneity among their workers, the Society established explicit guidelines concerning the education,

experience, age, marital status and moral character of potential missionaries. These regulations were published in the Annual Reports where any woman contemplating a missionary career could study them.

The question of Christian duty headed the list. The candidate "... must believe herself divinely called to the work of a foreign missionary, and assert her belief that she is activated only by a desire to work in accordance with God's will."² The Board asked for evidence of "Christian usefulness at home" as an indication of the ability to work in a foreign field.³ In these matters they sought third party verification from a minister. The Board made quite clear to prospective applicants that the W. M. S. demanded a total commitment from them. Candidates were warned that, if chosen, missionary work was presumed to be "the service of [their] effective years." They were required to "agree to give at least five of these years of continuous service, as a single woman, to the work of the Woman's Missionary Society, unless prevented by ill health."⁴ If a woman failed to discharge the terms of her initial contract or resigned for reasons others than illness before the first term had been served, she was obliged to repay the costs of her outfit and travel expenses, an amount which might, for a missionary in the Orient, equal a year's wages.

To realize the most potential in terms of years of possible employment and to insure some degree of maturity

among its employees, the Board of Managers established age limits for its recruits. Initially, the Society accepted women aged 22 to 30, although some women over 30 who exhibited "a thorough, intellectual training, with a facility in languages, and a remarkable ability for Christian work" were hired, especially as home missionaries.⁵ In fact, more than twenty-five per cent of the women were over 30 when they were hired. The lower age limit was waived less frequently; just 2% of the women were under 22. After 1895, in response to internal difficulties and quarrels in the Japan Mission which suggested that some of the women had been too immature to handle their responsibilities, the minimum age was raised to 25.⁶ Married women were not eligible for employment under any circumstances; in just two instances, both before 1895, when their services were considered crucial to the survival of missionary work, women who married while in the employ of the W. M. S. were permitted to continue with the Society until their term was up.⁷ But their contracts were not renewed for a further term.

"Financial and executive ability" and the "power of adaptation to circumstances" were among the other attributes the Board of Managers valued in their missionaries. Finally, the applicant had to forward testimonials to her scholarship, experience and general ability and to submit a medical certificate validating her physical fitness for the hardships which might lie ahead.⁸

By 1889, a rather more explicit challenge to the intensity of the candidate's spiritual commitment had appeared with the question, "Do you trust that you are inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon you the work of a foreign missionary?" No serious candidate would have answered negatively, just as "Yes" was the only possible response to the question of whether she had "... an experimental knowledge of salvation through the atonement of Jesus Christ our Lord"⁹ as confirmation that she had undergone that personal experience of conversion which was still a vital component of nineteenth-century Canadian Methodism.¹⁰ Certainly, Isabella Blackmore and her fellow missionaries replied positively to these questions of faith and doctrine and by doing so complied with the expectations of the Board of Managers. From time to time, changes were made in these guidelines, but the basic requirements were in effect for most of forty-five years of the Society's existence. In sum, the W. M. S. Board of Managers demanded as their representatives clever, experienced and devout women who could, as Elizabeth Strachan phrased it, introduce the women of the world to the "Friend that sticketh closer than a brother" and "purify the home fountain, from which it is hoped will flow clearer and sweeter streams into social, commercial and religious life."¹¹ An analysis of the collective demographic, social, educational and religious experiences of those women who became W. M. S missionaries confirms the

success of the Society in attracting, in the flesh, the archetypal missionary candidate.

Home addresses which were available for all but two of the women reveal that although it may not necessarily have been their place of birth nearly sixty per cent of the women recruited (58%) were residents of Ontario at the time they became W. M. S. missionaries. Eleven per cent had been raised in Nova Scotia while another ten per cent were from the other maritime areas, including Newfoundland which, though not politically a part of Canada, like Bermuda, fell under the jurisdiction of the Methodist Church of Canada. Five per cent had homes in Manitoba, five per cent came from Alberta and Saskatchewan combined and another five per cent from British Columbia. Fewer than four per cent, that is, eleven women, recorded Québec as their home province and all but two of these women were hired specifically to staff the W. M. S. missions in the Montreal area. Six women (2%), three of them the daughters of missionaries in Asia, were from outside the geographical boundaries of Canada. It was, perhaps, inevitable given Canada's demographic characteristics and especially the distribution of its Protestant population that Ontario would provide the largest number of W. M. S. recruits. In 1911, for example, sixty per cent of the Methodist population of Canada was centered in Ontario.¹² But it is also important to note G. N. Emery's argument that Ontario, in the period 1890 - 1914, was the nursery of

muscular Methodism which among other things stressed the Church's evangelical mission to the non-Christian world.¹³ Moreover, by 1910, more than three-quarters of the membership and sixty-six per cent of the revenue of the W. M. S. came from the Ontario and Montreal Conferences.¹⁴ In short, reasons other than demography may account for the number of women from Ontario among the W. M. S. missionaries. Nova Scotians are somewhat over represented in the group, a characteristic which shows up most clearly in the structure of the Japan mission where fifteen per cent of the women were former Nova Scotians. The higher proportion of women from Nova Scotia can be explained partly because consanguinity was strong (there were three sets of sisters and several cousins among the Nova Scotians) and, perhaps, because professional opportunities for women in Nova Scotia were more limited.

Just as Ontario-bred women were in the majority, so were women raised in rural areas and small towns with populations, at the time, of less than 10,000. More than seventy-five per cent of the 297 women for whom these data were available had lived in towns or on farms. Less than one-quarter of the W. M. S. missionaries indicated Canada's metropolitan centres, Toronto, Montreal, Halifax, Ottawa, Vancouver, and, after 1900, Edmonton, Calgary or Regina, as their home towns. Given the increasingly urban character of Canadian Methodism towards the end of the nineteenth century,¹⁵ it seems remarkable that so few of the missionaries

were recruited from among the growing urban middle-class. In her study of American women missionaries in China at the turn of the century, Jane Hunter found that only three of twenty (15%) American Board volunteers from Ohio had been born in urban areas of the state.¹⁶ Hunter speculates that the greater freedom granted in their early years to women raised in rural regions may help to explain the appeal of missionary work.¹⁷ It seems as likely that the higher ratio of non-urban women was a reflection of the more limited career opportunities for ambitious women outside the home and marriage in rural and small town Canada.

One of the most striking of the shared characteristics of the W. M. S. missionaries was their overwhelmingly middle-class social background. That so many of the future missionaries had middle-class origins is hardly surprising within the context of late nineteenth and early twentieth-century Canadian Methodism. The women's backgrounds coincide, if not with the reality, at least with the self image of the Canadian Methodist Church of the day, which envisaged itself as an institution sustained by the growing middle-class and which hoped to accommodate many of these nouveau riche¹⁸ as a part of the larger constituency needed to enable the Methodist Church to pursue its dreams of expansion both at home and abroad.

The women's middle-class backgrounds can be partially inferred from an examination of parental occupations, usually

that of the father. This information was available for 120 of the women, a smaller sample than for some other characteristics because occupational details were exceptionally difficult to locate. Twenty-five (21%) of the parents in the sample were identified either by the W. M. S. or on census records as farmers, while another six (5%) had agricultural occupations, that is, miller, sawyer, produce and stock-dealer. Sixteen (13%) engaged in business and commerce as merchants and manufacturers. Two fathers (2%) were reported as labourers and another nine (7.5%) can be grouped, rather loosely, as tradesmen: carpenters, butchers and tailors. Three (2.5%) were retired. On the other hand, half (59) of the parents in the sample can be classified as professionals - physicians and teachers, but, above all else, ministers.¹⁹ Fifty-four of the fathers (45%) in the sample were either ministers or, less commonly, missionaries. In fact, one in six of all the future missionaries had been raised as "a daughter of the parsonage,"²⁰ while at least another ten per cent had one or more close relatives, grandfather, uncle, brother, sister, who were ministers or missionaries. Almost one in three of Isabella Blackmore's associates in the Japan mission had a minister father and half were related to a member of the clergy.

Among those women whose families bore the distinguishing marks of the middle class were Minnie Brimstin, daughter of James, a leading Toronto Methodist layman,

described as "the best cutler in Canada,"²¹ and Lydia Sherritt, whose father William was a stockdealer and Conservative Member of Parliament for the Ontario riding of North Middlesex, 1900 - 1904. The Sherritt family, according to W. M. S records, was "well off."²² The prominent Nova Scotian family, the Killams, contributed two missionaries; Ada of the Japan mission and Maude Killam (later Neave) of the West China mission were two of the numerous children of wealthy Yarmouth shipowner Frank Killam, a federal Member of Parliament from 1867 to 1874.²³ The middle-class status of Mary Sherwood, whose father was a Fergus, Ontario, merchant, was confirmed, by some historical class standards at least, by the presence of servants in her home.²⁴ Florence Wickett, too, was brought up in comfortable surroundings in Toronto where her father, Samuel, was a prosperous leather manufacturer.²⁵ For these particular women, a career as a means of self-support was not an economic necessity. But, for other W. M. S. missionaries, like the late Victorian British women examined recently by Deborah Gorham, "... the nature of most middle-class incomes meant that the role of sheltered flowers, or ornaments in the household, was unattainable."²⁶ Most certainly the salary of a minister or teacher could not stretch to support many unmarried daughters who remained at home. After the death of their fathers, as Martha Vicinus argues, "these daughters could expect little in the way of an income ... and so had the most to gain from the new educat-

ional and job opportunities."²⁷ Employment for single women was becoming increasingly necessary and desirable in middle-class families and many of the women appear to have been educated with this eventuality in mind.

If there is any one attribute which distinguished these women from the majority of other Canadian women and is an indication of their middle-class status, it is their high levels of education or professional training. Whether or not Canadian Methodist women were better educated than women of other religious denominations cannot be confirmed from existing studies. Methodists had traditionally granted women a vital place within the Church. John Wesley himself had appointed women teachers and had permitted women to speak in meetings and to hold Church offices.²⁸ The oldest college for women in the world is Wesleyan College in Macon, Georgia which became Methodist in 1839.²⁹ Canadian Methodists, perhaps more than any other religious denomination, and especially in the last quarter of the nineteenth century when higher education for women became "a very respectable cause,"³⁰ were convinced that the education of women could be the panacea for the proliferation of social problems confronting Canada and the world. Prominent Methodists, both clergy and laymen, boasted about their enlightened and liberal attitudes towards women, their education and their appointed place in society. But, this broad-mindedness was usually tempered by an equally strong conviction that

education for women should bolster and maintain them in their "separate spheres" in order to preserve traditional family and national values.

In 1882, just a year after the formation of the W. M. S., Reverend C. Payne declared, rather pompously, in the Canadian Methodist Magazine that "no religious body ever honoured woman as Methodism has done, and none ever enjoyed so richly the fruits of her peculiar endowments."³¹ In 1888, in an appeal for "intelligent women" as church workers, teachers and missionaries, the Christian Guardian observed that

the time [had] gone by forever when culture and knowledge were assumed to be the exclusive privilege of the sons of a family. Women need education not only to enable them to perform the duties of positions for which without it they would not be qualified, but they also need mental culture in order that they may be intelligent companions of their husbands, and wise and capable teachers of their children.³²

The future W. M. S. missionaries and their parents appear to have heeded this message.

By 1871, most Canadian children of both sexes were the beneficiaries of compulsory elementary education for at least part of the year. Nearly half of the children in school in Ontario were girls.³³ Consequently, it is not remarkable that of the 190 W. M. S. missionaries for whom adequate data concerning their educations were available, and who would have attended elementary school from about 1860 to 1910, only one applicant had not completed her elementary

education when she applied to the Society. The single exception was Margaret Armstrong, (born in 1888), of Myrtle Station, a hamlet north of Oshawa, Ontario. The Board of Managers would not consider Armstrong's application until she had improved her qualifications. After four years as a secretary for the Toronto Bible College, during which she worked towards a diploma in stenography and bookkeeping from a Toronto technical school, the Board of Managers decided that Armstrong was acceptable for a position at Smokey Lake, Alberta to work among newly arrived eastern European immigrant groups.³⁴ The other W. M. S. recruits in the sample appear to have attended high school; some just long enough to acquire the minimum matriculation to enable them to register at a provincial normal school or a model school as preparation for a teaching career. It is, however, impossible to determine how many of the group actually completed high school because of the proliferation of diplomas and certificates and the differing provincial regulations.

Twenty-six women (13.5%) in the sample had attended a Methodist Ladies' College as a part of their secondary training. Some, like Agnes Wintemute, enrolled at Alma College which opened in her hometown, St. Thomas, Ontario in 1877. Others, or their parents, chose the Ontario Ladies' College established in 1874 in Whitby, Ontario or the older Hamilton Ladies' College before it closed in 1897.³⁵ Maritime women attended Mt. Allison Ladies' College in Sack-

ville, New Brunswick. In fact, twenty per cent (12 of 64) of the Maritime W. M. S. recruits had studied at Mt. Allison as a part of their education. After 1886, the Methodist ladies' colleges in Ontario became affiliates of Victoria University and some of the courses taken by the women students were accepted towards a B. A. degree.³⁶ Mt. Allison, Alma College and the Ontario Ladies' College offered a choice of two three-year courses at the high school level; one, which emphasized English, classical studies and two foreign languages, led to the Mistress of Liberal Arts degree while the other, the Mistress of English Language programme, required advanced work in English but no foreign language.³⁷ Despite their pretentious names, these were not university degrees.

Indeed, a commission established in 1921 to investigate the curriculum of Methodist colleges in Canada concluded that these programmes tended to discourage women from pursuing a further degree.³⁸

Women at these Methodist institutions usually registered for four terms per year. In 1890, Alma College advertised fees of one hundred and ninety dollars for the four terms to cover instruction in music and drawing, all board, room, lights, fuel, laundry and calisthenics. Riding lessons could be arranged, if desired, for an additional fifteen dollars for every twelve sessions. For the daughters of Methodist clergymen, fees were cut in half. According to Principal Austin, Alma's fees were the lowest in the country

for a comparable education.³⁹ Yet this kind of an education for a daughter was well beyond the means of, for example, a carpenter who in 1901 earned twenty five cents per hour.⁴⁰ Mt. Allison Ladies' College, in particular, faced sharp criticism during the last years of the nineteenth century as a "finishing school for the children of wealthy families"⁴¹ and because the clothing worn by the girls was becoming increasingly elaborate and ostentatious.⁴² John Reid has demonstrated, using parental occupational data from registers available from 1903 to 1908, that although the women at Mt. Allison came from varied backgrounds, children of labourers were in a distinct minority.⁴³

By 1920, Alma College had become more versatile, and offered preparation for high school, a four year high school course and a wide range of music, commercial, art, elocution and household science courses which, if so desired, might be taken for just a single term. In summer, both Alma and the Ontario Ladies' College hosted Methodist Church summer schools which over the years were both attended and taught by W. M. S. missionaries. Women at Methodist schools had, of course, religious obligations to fulfill as well: chapel, mealtime devotions and prayers.⁴⁴ And, if Alma College was typical, the colleges were frequently visited by missionaries of both sexes carrying out their furlough duties. Consequently, the atmosphere in these institutions was likely to

generate and sustain more than a passing interest in a future career as a missionary.

For about half of the women in the sample, high school, with or without graduation, marked the end of their formal education. After they left high school, many of the young women immediately began to prepare for their future by training as teachers, while others remained at home and looked forward to marriage and their own domestic arrangements. On the other hand, nearly one in five of all the recruits and one in three of the women in the sample continued on to university. Useful statistical comparisons are difficult to make because of inadequate data about the general educational levels of Canadian women. However, it is interesting to note that in 1941, a year when the majority of the W. M. S. missionaries and their cohorts in the general population were still alive to have been counted, only 6.2% of the female population reported some university as their highest level of education.⁴⁵ Quite clearly, the W. M. S. missionaries collectively represented an educational elite and the W. M. S. executive achieved its goal of attracting well-educated women who had demonstrated their ability through academic excellence.

At the time that the W. M. S. was organized in 1881, there were limited opportunities for women to attend Canadian universities. By 1900, most Canadian universities admitted women on equal standing with men and women's attendance at a

university was restricted only by academic standards and by family finances. In 1872, Mt. Allison University, in Sackville, New Brunswick, and Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario, had opened their doors to women and in 1875, the first woman to graduate from a university in the British Empire received her B. Sc. from Mt. Allison.⁴⁶ In 1877, Victoria College, then located in Cobourg, Ontario, admitted women for the first time.⁴⁷

The percentage of the W. M. S. missionaries who received a university education changed over the forty-five years examined, but not, perhaps, just as might have been expected.⁴⁸ Twenty-two per cent of the eighteen women born from 1855 to 1871 and for whom educational data were available had attended university. Forty per cent of the seventy-four born between 1872 and 1885 earned a degree. However, for the ninety born in the years 1886 to 1900 and for whom, presumably, there were the greatest educational opportunities, the percentage who attended university dropped to twenty-five per cent or one in four. The W. M. S. missionaries in Japan emerge as an anomaly. Among this particular group, the percentage with B.A.s rose from twenty-two per cent for those born before 1871 to forty-four per cent for those born 1872 - 1885 to a high of forty-six per cent for those born in the closing years of the nineteenth century. Clearly the Japanese mission, perhaps partly because of its emphasis on teaching rather than on medical

missionary work, became the beneficiary of a larger share of the university graduates among the recruits. Conversely, in China, where the number of nurses increased, the proportion of women missionaries with university degrees declined.

Quite predictably, most of the women from the Maritimes had graduated from Mt. Allison and the majority of Ontario-bred women chose Victoria University which moved in 1892 from Cobourg to Toronto.⁴⁹ Others graduated from the University of Toronto, McGill, and, after 1900, the University of Manitoba. Queen's, a Presbyterian supported university, and McMaster, a Baptist institution, graduated just one woman each, but women graduates of these two institutions made their way into the ranks of the Presbyterian and Baptist missionary forces.⁵⁰ For example, twenty-four of the one hundred women, both married and single, who were a part of the Canadian Baptist contingent in India before 1922 had attended a university, generally McMaster or Acadia.⁵¹ This is a higher percentage than the 19.5% of all W. M. S. missionaries, both home and foreign, who had attended university but considerably lower than the forty per cent of W. M. S. foreign missionaries who had been enrolled at a university.⁵² Whether or not higher than average educational levels were the exclusive mark of Canadian Methodist women generally and W. M. S. missionaries in particular cannot be resolved on the basis of existing research. Nevertheless, by any standards, as a group, the W. M. S. mission-

aries were exceptionally well educated women, whether the consequence of religion, social class and family wealth or their own aspirations.

Like other women of their generation in North America and Britain, the women tended to follow traditional patterns of study at university. Only a few departed from the conventional Arts courses which would prepare them for a future career as a teacher. One exception, Olive Markland, for example, graduated in 1909 from Victoria with a degree in Honours Philosophy, and later, in 1921, Christina Sturdy enrolled for a year in Divinity at Victoria even though she had no hope at that time of ordination.⁵³ Most others graduated with degrees in English or modern languages. Yet, no matter what courses these young women might have selected, the university experience itself and living away from home, as the majority did, exposed them to influences which could not help but change their perceptions of themselves and their future aspirations. Carol Bacchi has concluded that university education sparked in the Canadian suffragists "an activist frame of mind" and that "the spirit of social reform infected the classroom."⁵⁴ Certainly, the W. M. S. missionaries who attended university were exposed as well to that "disciplined intelligence" which, to cite Brian McKillop, at its best, "nurtured the largeness of vision that results from an honest acceptance of the burdens of both the past and the future, an open-mindedness that could weigh tradition and

change, stasis and flux, and do so with a clear sense of the social good."⁵⁵

Some contemporary accounts, however, suggest that women attending university and especially those living in women's residences did not always take their work very seriously and that they were not only a privileged, but also a pampered and self-indulgent, even frivolous, group. In her diary, Kathleen Cowan, a student at Victoria University from 1907 until 1910 and a friend of several future W. M. S. missionaries, recounted to the last detail the daily life of a small town girl away from home for the first time and living in Annesley Hall, the women's residence at Victoria. Many of the young women studied only when absolutely necessary and spent their time (and lots of money) in the stores and teashops along Toronto's Yonge Street. Apparently, they ironed their elaborate dresses and curled their hair more than they studied Plato or Shakespeare.⁵⁶ Cowan's diary also suggests that if universities of the time adopted a more vigorous role in loco parentis than they now exercise, the university was nonetheless a less restrictive environment than the family. The judicious management of time and finances and the mastery of personal relationships fell to the individual.

The W. M. S. Board of Managers believed that women who had attended university had already proven themselves capable of accepting some responsibility for their own

actions. In addition, the Board accepted a B. A. as a reliable indicator of general aptitude and, in particular, the ability to learn a second language if it were required to execute W. M. S. missionary work. Consequently, university education appears to have become the first yardstick by which the Board of Managers measured who was best suited for the coveted foreign postings. The result was that while slightly more than thirty per cent (52 of 165) of women hired for foreign missions had a university education, just five per cent of those who were designated as home missionaries had attended a university. Predictably, most of the university-educated home missionaries were sent to areas where they were required to learn a second language: Italian, Chinese, Japanese or Ukrainian. In sum, what immediately set the foreign missionaries apart from their sisters in home missions and from other Canadian women, in general, was their exceptional level of education.

While most W. M. S. missionaries had received an education which eventually prepared them for careers as teachers, nurses or doctors, some, because of ability, financial constraints, home ties and obligations or personal preference planned for their futures in a slightly less academic manner. About four percent of the total number of recruits attended a business college and, as mission affairs, especially in foreign fields, became more complex, the Board of Managers acknowledged a need for women whose backgrounds

encompassed business, accounting and stenographic skills. Musical training, too, was a popular choice, either as the appropriate preparation for the teaching of music or to complement the formal education of the true woman. Nearly one in four of the women posted to Japan reported that they had received some sort of musical instruction, privately, as part of the curriculum at a ladies' college or, more formally, at the Toronto or Halifax Conservatories of Music. Olive Lindsay, who was sent to the Japan Mission in 1912 and who eventually became an ordained minister, not untypically, had one year of vocal instruction, a year of violin and several of piano to her credit. Etta deWolfe and Ila Day were graduates of the Halifax and Toronto Conservatories respectively while Sarah Fullerton was recommended to the Society as an exceptional organist. Conversely, Florence Bird had, according to W. M. S. evaluations of her qualifications, very little music, an obvious shortcoming to be kept in mind when considering her application.⁵⁷ The extensive musical accomplishments and, to a lesser degree, artistic interests such as oil or china painting which the recruits enumerated in their applications suggest that, academic triumphs aside, many of these women, and possibly the majority, were, at the same time, still, like the daughters of British Victorian middle-class families, "expected to adorn the household with their skills in music, painting and fancy needlework."⁵⁸ The Board of Managers,

composed as it was of similarly well-bred women, took all these accomplishments into consideration.

In 1893, with the opening of the W. M. S. West China mission, the Society began to recruit medical personnel, both nurses and doctors. A few nurses were also hired to staff Methodist hospitals in Canada, namely at Port Simpson in northern British Columbia and at Lamont, Alberta. By 1925, slightly more than seven per cent of all the W. M. S. missionaries ever hired had been trained as nurses while fifteen per cent of the eighty-four women missionaries of the West China mission were nurses. Throughout most of the nineteenth century, nursing was not considered a reputable career for well-bred women and, as a result, the earliest nurses were frequently women whose only alternatives as a means of self-support were domestic service or factory work. In 1874, the first successful professional nurses' training school in Canada was established in St. Catharines, Ontario.⁵⁹ Other nursing schools, usually in connection with major urban hospitals which needed the unpaid labour, sprang up in its wake and, by the last decades of the century, nursing had become a more acceptable career choice for young women. The observant Canadian journalist, Sara Jeannette Duncan, offered this apologia for nursing as a "new bread-winning occupation for women"⁶⁰ after she had attended the graduation exercises at Toronto General Hospital in 1886.

...[T]hese girls, perhaps you do not know,
come from a well brought up class of Canadian

women. This was not formerly the case, when the profession had little dignity and few rewards. But now that the services of trained nurses are eagerly sought for in every case of serious illness where the expense can be borne, now that many qualities and much knowledge is required, (and the fair remuneration of ten and twelve dollars a week is paid for their services, the social condition of the nurses is vastly different from what it used to be, and as the importance of the profession becomes more widely recognized it may be depended upon to improve still further. There are now many accomplished young ladies among the uniformed nurses of the General Hospital, several daughters of clergymen, and one whose father is an English officer.⁶¹

In 1900, in a book prepared for distribution at the Paris Industrial Exhibition, the National Council of Women included nursing along with teaching and medicine as one of the few professions open to women in Canada.⁶² After the turn of the century, the nursing profession underwent a rapid expansion. In 1901, there were 280 student and graduate nurses in Canada, 5600 in 1911 and 30,510 by 1930.⁶³

There were, then, opportunities, especially for Canadian women born after 1875, to become nurses, but, only if, like the women wanting a university education, they could afford to move to a centre with a recognized school. It appears to have been less expensive to train as a nurse than to attend university because student nurses received their room and board and a small remuneration while they were in training.⁶⁴ Many of the missionaries both trained and worked as graduate nurses outside Canada at large and reputable nursing schools in the United States. For example, Fannie

Forrest (b. 1874) of Dundas, Ontario, graduated from Boston University Hospital; Caroline Wellwood from Wingham, Ontario, also born in 1874, trained in Washington, D. C. while both Martha Barnett of Ottawa and Violetta Shuttleworth had taken post-graduate courses at New York City's well known Bellevue Hospital. Mary Assom of Canmore, Alberta, attended the School of Nursing at the Ensworth Deaconess Hospital in St. Joseph, Missouri and remained there to work.⁶⁵ In fact, in the late nineteenth-century, Canadian hospitals found it hard to attract nursing students because of the greater opportunities for nurses in the U. S. As one hospital administrator recalled,

[t]he American schools offered far greater attractions, and the girls of good social standing and education, who developed the nursing fad, went to the United States with exasperating frequency. This was not altogether a misfortune, as it gave many clever, ambitious women an outlet for their abilities and numbers of them assumed leadership in the rising profession.⁶⁶

Like the university graduates, by the time they joined the W. M. S., nurses had already severed at least some of the connections which bound them to their families, establishing for themselves an independence and autonomy denied to most women of the time who were still accountable to fathers and husbands.⁶⁷

Nine of the W. M. S. missionaries were doctors hired specifically to staff the West China mission stations. Unlike the W. M. S. nurses, only one doctor, Maude Killam,

had left Canada for her medical training. Killam might, had she wished, have attended Dalhousie University Medical School which opened its doors to women in the early 1890s, but, presumably because her family could afford it, and because it had an excellent reputation for training women doctors, she chose the Women's Medical College at the New York Infirmary.⁶⁸ After graduation, Killam was licensed by New York State and practised at a sanatorium in Santa Clara, New York, before joining the W. M. S. Retta Gifford (later Kilborn), graduated from the Woman's Medical College in Toronto in 1891, as did Anna Henry in 1898, Mable Cassidy in 1902 and Olive Rea in 1903. May Austin and Florence O'Donnell, both natives of Halifax, graduated from Dalhousie Medical College shortly after 1900. For at least two of the doctors, medicine was not their first career, although it may have been their ultimate goal. Lily Snider (M.D. Toronto, 1918) taught for three years after she had received her B.A. in 1913 and Ada Speers of Brandon, Manitoba, had taught for seven years before she entered medical school. Speers, whose father died when she was thirteen, used her savings from teaching to finance her medical training.⁶⁹ In her examination of Canadian women medical graduates, Veronica Strong-Boag has identified several other women who appear to have paid for their medical studies with the proceeds from previous teaching careers. Strong-Boag concludes that although most of the medical students "seemed to be daughters

of ministers, doctors, teachers or farmers, a relationship which placed them, if somewhat precariously, in the middle class," the apparent lack of family financial support suggests "the marginality of [their middle-class] status."⁷⁰ While this argument is quite plausible, it is also possible that a medical career did not, even by 1900, always receive enthusiastic parental approval. In its early years, the Woman's Medical College in Toronto had reduced the fees for women prepared to become medical missionaries, but, in 1897, in the face of a serious financial crisis, the practice was abandoned, leaving individual missionary organizations to fill the gap.⁷¹ The Methodist W. M. S. did not, however, offer any new incentive to prospective medical missionaries. In a rare instance, in 1913, when Speers could no longer afford her medical school fees, the W. M. S., to whom she was already committed, paid the bill. But at the same time, the Board of Managers made it clear that Speers' case was an exception and was not to constitute a precedent.⁷²

Throughout its history, the Society had considerable difficulty both recruiting and retaining doctors. To the intense disappointment and frustration of the Board of Managers, seven of the doctors were hired before 1910; in the next fifteen years, only Speers and Snider were recruited and of the nine, only Drs. Henry and Speers made medical missionary work the lifetime commitment the W. M. S. had expected. Carlotta Hacker has noted that, by 1913, "at least a quarter

of all the women who had studied medicine in Canada had done so expressly so that they could serve usefully in the mission field."⁷³ If this is so, the Methodist W. M. S. did not attract its fair share of this valuable commodity; until 1913, only six of the 220 women (fewer than 3%) who had graduated from Canadian medical schools became missionaries for the Methodist W. M. S.⁷⁴ There were, however, according to the 1911 Census of Canada, just 196 women doctors practising in all of Canada,⁷⁵ and the small number may be part of the explanation for the W. M. S.' predicament. The Board of Managers itself may have been partly to blame for its dilemma because it did not offer prospective medical missionaries any preferential treatment, by offering them a higher salary commensurate with the time and money invested in their training or by subsidizing their medical education. The Board prided itself in providing the necessary equipment and drugs for its doctors, but it does not appear to have considered it necessary to give them a salary that was higher than other women missionaries, even though, as doctors in Canada, these women would have earned far more than teachers or nurses.

W. M. S. records indicate that after their formal education had been completed and before they became missionaries, more than half (60.5%) of all the women had already been employed outside the home. Because Board of Managers was reluctant to accept women under twenty-five, many of the

women had extensive working experience before they were recruited. Some, like Martha Cartmell, the first foreign missionary, entered missionary work in their mid-thirties after a lengthy teaching career because there had been no opportunity to become a Methodist missionary any earlier. Others, especially the university graduates and doctors, were closer to the minimum age limit and had been employed perhaps only a year or two. The 143 women for whom the appropriate data were available had worked an average of 4.4 years, with little variation from field to field. Generally those sent to China had slightly less experience; those in home mission fields just a bit more. As wage-earners, then, many of the W. M. S. missionaries had positions, which, if not always very satisfying or lucrative, had, at least, given them the opportunity to become self-supporting and possibly, to cite a contemporary authority on women's health matters, to "make for themselves a sphere of usefulness and happiness second only to that of happily married women."⁷⁶ By the time they decided to pledge themselves to the W. M. S., in all likelihood, their independence, which for many had been first established at a university, normal or nursing school, had become a fact of life.

As with higher education, it is impossible to determine whether Methodist women might have been over-represented in the labour force during this particular period, or whether any one occupation attracted more than its

share of Methodist women. Canadian Methodist spokesmen generally supported women's entry into the work force, especially in the traditional nurturing roles. To cite Reverend Professor Reyner, then the Dean of Victoria University, in 1889,

[n]o one can gainsay the wisdom and the force, as well as good feeling, manifested in some of the modern activities of woman, such as their work as nurses in times of war and of peace, their visiting and caring of the poor and the sick, their efforts to establish Christian truth and morals at home and to extend them abroad. In these things the new women have shown themselves true women still, and in the large and generous and world-wide sympathies of such organizations as that in which Lady Aberdeen ... has done such noble work ... we have the coming of a brighter and better day, not for women only, but for all mankind.⁷⁷

Reverend Benjamin Austin, the first principal of Alma College from 1877 to 1897,⁷⁸ argued that woman's sphere was not nearly so limited as was commonly supposed. The census of 1881 had recorded 227 different occupations where women were employed and, although Austin condemned cheap labour, he defended a woman's right to earn her living even in occupations generally accepted as male bastions. "If a girl can make money by milking a cow, making a horseshoe or packing shingles, it is quite as respectable for her to do it as for a man."⁷⁹ Austin tried to impress upon his female students his conviction that "no young woman should be placed in circumstances such as to make marriage an only refuge from poverty or dependence on her friends, or from a life of

ennui."⁸⁰ William Withrow, editor of the Methodist Magazine at the turn of the century, agreed with Austin. Withrow

...repudiate[d] the idea so commonly entertained that the higher education of woman is only a lure to the gilded bower of matrimony, to enable her to make her market in life to win a prize in the lottery of marriage. It has loftier and sublimer ends than these - the development of the noblest part of her nature, the intellect and the affections; the expansion and culture of all her powers.⁸¹

Yet, in spite of the claims of this kind of eloquent verbiage, until at least the outbreak of World War One, even the best-educated and most determined Canadian women had to face the harsh reality of sexual discrimination in the workplace and they continued to gravitate to those professions traditionally accepted as the special preserve of women.

In particular, women had carved out their niche in the teaching profession where, by the 1870s, they outnumbered their male counterparts in spite of the increasing discrepancies in salaries and opportunities between male and female teachers.⁸² More than one in three (123) of all the W. M. S. missionaries had attended a normal school, either after high school or university, to acquire one of the wide array of teaching certificates available. Another sixteen appear to have been hired as teachers without normal school credentials. In all, 137, almost half, of the W. M. S. missionaries had some teaching experience, 125 as public school teachers, four as high school teachers, and another eight as instructors at private schools. Sixty-three per cent of the women

sent to Japan and forty per cent of the China hands had been teachers before they joined the Society. On the other hand, just one in four of the home missionaries (29%) had been teachers, a circumstance which again reflects both the lower educational levels of that group and the higher demands for teachers in foreign fields. To the Board of Managers, teaching experience with or without a university degree may have seemed of no particular advantage in Pt. Simpson where sewing on buttons, combing hair and gardening were the order of the day and where the Government was responsible for providing teachers and a minimum education for the Indian population.

Four per cent of the women had worked as nurses, but only three of the doctors appear to have practised for even a few months before going to China. About five per cent of the women had some business experience while close to eight per cent had backgrounds in some form of social reform work or as deaconesses. There is, however, no information about the work experience for forty per cent of the women, probably because most of this group had no occupation outside of the home. Some of these women were proud of their ability to work hard and enumerated their household accomplishments to the Board of Managers. Rural applicants especially boasted of their domestic talents and seem to have regarded the responsibility of keeping a house for a widowed parent or orphaned brothers and sisters as the equivalent of outside

employment. Martha Swann of Moorefield, Ontario, "...thoroughly [understood] the keeping of a home having assisted during my vacation at my own home and being a close observer while away."⁸³ As a child, Ada Sandell had cared for the younger members of her family of seventeen when her recently widowed mother was forced to work in a laundry.⁸⁴ Retta Gifford had worked on her parents' farm near Meaford, Ontario before entering high school in Owen Sound at the age of eighteen.⁸⁵ As young women, raised in a strong Christian tradition which "implied obedience to older kin," the care and responsibility of the family was an integral part of their lives.⁸⁶ The members of the Board of Managers were sympathetic to these family obligations and regarded domestic experience as very useful training for work among immigrants and for the operation of boarding schools among the Indians.

Before they became missionaries, most of the women had led quite ordinary lives and, if they worked outside the home, held typically poorly paid, if "socially acceptable" jobs,⁸⁷ as classroom teachers, which "were probably a condition of female employment in the first place."⁸⁸ On the other hand, some of the women had worked their way into positions of respect and of authority. Elizabeth Alcorn who spent many years in Japan had been the head of the Art Department at Mt. Allison Ladies' College; her friend and co-worker in Japan, Myra Veazey, a graduate of the University of New Brunswick, taught privately in Maine and at the Cookman

Institute for Negro Students, one of the first negro colleges which was operated by the Methodist Church of the United States in Jacksonville, Florida.⁸⁹ Esther Ryan, another member of the Japan Mission, had been principal of Shawville Academy in Québec before she joined the W. M. S. in 1913. Annie MacLean had been the principal of two elementary schools in the 1920s while Muriel Hockey had been the assistant principal of the Methodist Training School in 1912. Mary Inglis had graduated in 1900 from the New England Training School in Boston and for at least two years was involved in prison work on behalf on several Boston churches.⁹⁰ Positions like these, if not always lucrative, allowed women to assert themselves, to become self-supporting and prepared them for the responsibility of independent decision-making when they reached the mission field.

This, then, is the profile which can be sketched using the collective data relevant to the Methodist W. M. S. missionaries. They were a select group of Canadian women, some fresh from college, others approaching the uncertainty of a lonely middle age, women with many and varied accomplishments and talents. Some had been the beneficiaries of middle-class ease and comfort and for them, a career was not a necessity; for others, it was essential to earn their own living and missionary work provided them with the security they sought. But, to a woman, like Eleanor Graham in 1914, they had made the deliberate decision "to put my life into my

Heavenly Father's hands to be used where it is needed most."⁹¹

Their educational and social backgrounds and past careers, though vital components of their collective experience, cannot, however, fully explain the women's momentous and considered decisions to change the patterns of their lives, to leave families and friends and familiar places, in some cases forever, and to renounce for the immediate future the possibility of marriage and a family, so that they could "share in the evangelization of the world in [their] generation."⁹² It was neither a sudden nor a rash choice. W. M. S. policies and red tape ensured that no women ever went into the mission field without adequate time to reflect carefully about her future.

For many of these women, nurtured in the deep-rooted Methodist evangelical tradition, the decision to devote themselves to missionary work and the service of God was quite simply a logical choice, a way to earn their living and, at the same time, fulfill what they perceived as their obligation to themselves, their families and God. With few exceptions, the women had been brought up in one of the Methodist churches in Canada, and after 1884, in the newly unified Methodist Church of Canada. For them and for their families, Methodism was an integral part of their daily existence, far more than a religion to be observed only on the Sabbath. Methodism has been called "a peculiarly social

religion" whose "characteristic institutions and values ... class meetings, lovefeasts, society meetings, protracted meetings, camp meetings, tea meetings, and even ... family worship, were all meant to create an organic solidarity amongst the membership."⁹³ Nineteenth-century Canadian Methodism was, as William Magney has shrewdly observed, "... a way of life with deep roots in the Canadian past. It encompassed a code of conduct, to which one subscribed with belligerent pride." By the end of the nineteenth-century, the Methodist Church had become "the bristling hub of community social activities, whether of a charitable, convivial, or regenerative character."⁹⁴

In the last decades of the nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth, Methodists, as active participants in the emerging social gospel movement, gradually began to accept the view that "[t]he Church was responsible for more than the spiritual welfare of the individual. The simple Christian gospel truths had to be applied to the whole institutional character of contemporary society."⁹⁵ The Church and its members crusaded vigorously on behalf of those causes which they believed would most benefit society as a whole. The strict observance of the Sabbath and the temperance and prohibition movements, traditional goals of both British and Canadian Methodism, took precedence over many other issues. William Magney, for one, suggests a "direct correlation between the growth of mil-

itancy in pursuit of these goals, and the awakening of a distinctive Methodist spirit of social, political, and economic reform."⁹⁶ The future W. M. S. missionaries were brought up to heed the Methodist Church's pronouncements on both secular and religious issues of the day.

As a child growing up at the turn of the century, in Brandon, a small town in Manitoba, Edna May Speers, a future missionary in China, had promised never to "play cards, dance or go to a horse race."⁹⁷ These restrictions were part of the "Note" to paragraph 35 of the Methodist Discipline, added in 1886 and not removed until 1910.⁹⁸ For Edna, and her sister Ada who joined the W. M. S. as a doctor, Sunday in Brandon was an endless round of religious activities and related good works. Edna recalled that

[W]e joined Prof. Taylor in his Sunday morning visits to the jail, got back in time for the 11 a.m. service, back again for Sunday School at 2:30 p.m., Evening worship at 7 p.m., and singing and refreshments in the Men's Parlour, downstairs, afterwards. And, yes, after Sunday School we had time for a good 'sing' at home, around our own piano before mother called us to supper.⁹⁹

The Speers' social and philanthropic pursuits which were typical of turn-of-the-century Canadian Methodists served to establish and reinforce a particular kind of restrictive social behaviour and, at the same time, again to cite Magney, aroused "the religious consciousness of the individual" and increased an "awareness of the applicability of Christian principles to his daily existence."¹⁰⁰ But, it can also be

argued that Methodists' concern about "the Note" and their pursuit of total abstinence were, at the same time, evidence of the persistence of the traditional Methodist quest for perfectionism,¹⁰¹ a trait which many of the older W. M. S. missionaries exhibited throughout their lives. In retrospect, some late nineteenth-century Methodist attitudes, in particular concerning labour problems and strikes, do not appear to have been motivated by the purely altruistic impulses expected of a religious body and are not harbingers of the social gospel. "Collective forms of action for labour such as unionization and strikes were viewed with coolness or hostility, and as late as 1894 urban poverty was attributed to 'indolence and intemperance', although 'unsatisfactory economic conditions' were also held partially responsible."¹⁰² Yet, by 1906, the Methodist Church had moved well beyond its earlier limited and narrow concern for individual spiritual health to assume, perhaps from an anxious and not easily defined sense of fear, a wider responsibility for the material and spiritual condition of, ultimately, all mankind. At the General Conference of 1906, the Church acknowledged its obligation to "set up the Kingdom of God among men, which we understand to be a social order founded upon the principles of the Gospel - the Golden Rule and the Sermon on the Mount."¹⁰³ For Methodism's faithful, among them many future W. M. S. missionaries, the millennial vision was not just a

fanciful myth, but an eternal verity always within the grasp of believers.¹⁰⁴

Although women were denied a voice in the inner sanctum of the Methodist Church and, in fact, were not granted the right to ordination until 1936, they were accorded a singular role in hastening the arrival of the millennium. Consequently, from birth, many prospective W. M. S. missionaries had been initiated into the social and religious rituals of their church through their own attendance at Sunday School and their parents' participation in the W. C. T. U., the W. M. S. and Bible study groups. Even closer to a life dominated by religious activities were the daughters of clergymen. Pressure to conform to very rigorous expectations was strong at a time when the minister was sacrosanct, and his family members acted out their roles under the sharp scrutiny of the congregation on whom they were dependent for their daily bread. Whether or not ministerial families applied exceptional pressure to persuade their children to follow a religious career cannot be known, but clerical families certainly contributed in full measure to swell the ranks of the W. M. S.

Sarah and Elizabeth Hart, for example, were two of the eight children of Reverend Thomas Hart, a Nova Scotian Methodist minister. In 1888, Sarah was appointed the matron of the Crosby Girls' School in Pt. Simpson; Elizabeth, in 1889, was sent to Japan. A third sister, Dr. Louise Hart,

applied for a position with the W. M. S. in China, but because of the unsettled political situation in China at the time, she switched her allegiance and spent many years with the Presbyterian mission in central India. Yet another daughter married Reverend J. C. Hennigar, a Methodist missionary in Japan. The remaining family members became a doctor, a minister, a dentist and a nurse.¹⁰⁵ The Woodsworth family, too, contributed its share to the missionary movement. The Reverend Richard Woodsworth, father of Hattie who went to China for the W. M. S. in 1906, was a cousin of the Reverend James Woodsworth, a Superintendent of Missions for the Methodist Church of Canada and father of James Shaver Woodsworth. Richard's second wife, Hattie's stepmother, had herself been a missionary in Africa for twelve years and after her return to Canada had undertaken deaconess work at Centenary Methodist Church in Hamilton. One of Hattie's sisters was the female principal of Alma College before marriage to Dr. Blewett of Victoria College. Another sister was on the staff of Clifton Springs Sanatorium, a popular rest home for foreign missionaries located near Rochester, New York. Hattie's choice of a career as a foreign missionary, while taken on her own initiative, closely conformed to family expectations and tradition.¹⁰⁶

Women like Hattie, Elizabeth and Sarah, reared in a strict, perhaps even stifling, Methodist atmosphere, could not easily or rashly dismiss their active sense of obligation

to family and church. As they matured, they and the other future W. M. S missionaries assumed roles within the church as Sunday School teachers, members of the W. M. S. and, as W. M. S. biographical files often indicate, as members and officers of the Epworth League, a Methodist youth group formed in 1889 to foster the active participation of young men and women in the church at a time when Methodist church membership was beginning to drop.¹⁰⁷

The League's goal was, according to a rather clumsily worded statement printed in the Christian Guardian in 1891,

... to promote the spirit which, familiarizing youthful workers with the truths of Methodist doctrine and the best methods of spreading them, will energetically follow out into mature life, without likelihood of break or hindrance, the methods and principles taught as essential to the life of our Church The stronger the bond between the Church and the young, the more united and continuous will be the force exerted in the uplifting of the masses into the light and liberty of the Gospel. A church in which the interests of the young are neglected, or in which they are not made an integral part of its work and organization, may be said to be divided against itself.¹⁰⁸

At a time when adolescence was becoming recognized as a distinct phase of life, the Methodist Church, like secular institutions, eagerly accepted its moral imperative to reform the youth of Canada, especially if, in return, the Church might benefit.¹⁰⁹ The Epworth League provided a logical extension of the missionary and evangelical programmes which began in the Bands of Hope and the Sunday Schools. Many

W. M. S. applicants cite membership and office holding in the Epworth League as an identifiable stimulus arousing interest in a future devoted to missionary work.

Within a decade, however, as the exclusive agency promoting Methodist missionary activities among young people, the Epworth League was overshadowed by a more direct instrument to stimulate interest in worldwide missionary ventures in the form of the Young Peoples' Forward Movement for Missions. This organization was launched in 1896 by Methodist college students with the blessing of Chancellor Burwash. Designed as an antidote to the malaise which seemed to be developing toward the missionary activities of the Methodist Church (the most visible manifestation of this apathy was the increasing difficulty in raising money for missions), the Young Peoples' Forward Movement was, in reality, the brain-child and almost total preoccupation of Dr. Frederick Stephenson and his wife.¹¹⁰ The organization, initially called the Students' Campaign for Missions, was the first in the Methodist Church to adopt the successful concept of systematic giving in order to bolster its financial contributions to the church's missionary needs.¹¹¹ A list of the campaigners for 1898 and 1899 contained no women's names but, by 1906, female college students across Canada, several future W. M. S. missionaries included, had committed themselves, through the Young Peoples' Forward Movement, to a future of missionary work.¹¹²

Dr. Stephenson's enterprise continued to play a role in fund raising and publishing missionary literature for many years, but, after 1900, it was, in its turn, eclipsed by the Student Volunteer Movement which proved to be the most powerful and vital of all agencies for recruiting missionaries and for generating enthusiasm for missions. The Student Volunteer Movement had been organized in the 1880s by American college students under the aegis of the prominent clergyman, John R. Mott.¹¹³ By 1891, 6,000 college students were members, 320 of them Canadians.¹¹⁴ The Student Volunteer Movement tapped the strong currents of revivalism still flowing in late nineteenth century America; the meetings, with their passionate appeals for "the evangelization of the world in this generation", have been characterized as latter day tent meetings in an urban, collegiate setting.¹¹⁵

Unlike the Young Peoples' Forward Movement and the Epworth League, the Student Volunteer Movement was interdenominational and was affiliated, not with any one particular church, but with the Y. M. C. A. It was, moreover, an international organization. Every four years, an international convention was held for delegates from colleges throughout the United States and Canada who gathered to hear speakers from missionary societies discuss all aspects of missionary work. Special sessions were set aside to address the role of women missionaries.¹¹⁶ In 1902, when Toronto was

host to the Fourth International Student Volunteer Convention, more than four thousand delegates and interested Torontonians crowded Massey Hall for the mass rallies. The basement of the hall housed an impressive panorama of missionary memorabilia and books and the latest fads in the outfits recommended for various foreign postings from pith helmets to rifles, all designed to whet the appetites of the curious visitors.¹¹⁷ In Canada, the prestige and credibility of the Student Volunteer Movement was enhanced by the patronage of prominent citizens, among them Timothy Eaton, Chester Massey, J. W. Flavelle, Methodists all, and S. H. Blake.¹¹⁸

Membership in the Student Volunteer Movement was restricted to those young people who belonged to a "Protestant Evangelical Church" and who had already "... accepted certain responsibilities and obligations as an individual Christian, and [had] been striving to live up to them through active service in his church, his Christian association and other college activities." If accepted, members were committed to "... strengthening their missionary purpose, stimulating and helping one another to secure adequate preparation, intellectual and physical for their future work."¹¹⁹ They were charged with deciding "how each volunteer [could] best relate himself as an individual Christian to various campus activities and thus help to create a foreign missionary consciousness on the campus."¹²⁰ Chan-

cellor Burwash, for one, had some reservations about the presence of the Student Volunteer Movement on the Victoria University campus. Burwash pointed out that it was "... a dangerous experiment to attempt directly to mold the missionary work of our College."¹²¹ To ensure that the administration could keep a watchful eye on the Student Volunteer Movement, a professor served as treasurer of the group.¹²² In spite of Burwash's own less than enthusiastic reaction, the Student Volunteer Movement became a fixture of Canadian campus life. By 1919, it claimed to have been responsible for pledges from fifty per cent of all those men and women who eventually became missionaries; at least fifteen of the future W. M. S. missionaries who had attended college were counted in this group.¹²³

Far more than the Epworth League or the Young People's Forward Movement, the Student Volunteer Movement demanded a firm commitment to a future career in missions. Signing the S. V. M. membership card meant that "the question is settled and that it closes the door with a click."¹²⁴ The bearer of the pledge card was now in "the rank of missionary candidates" and could not retreat "without quitting". Although the candidate might not reach the mission field "because of things which providentially hinder," and was, in fact, not bound to any particular mission society, his decision could be withdrawn only on the condition that it was ... as intelligent, as conscientious, as selfless, as distinctly the outcome of his

desire to fully do the work of God and to express most perfectly the surrender of his life as was the case with the original forming of the purpose. In other words, God's leading out of the purpose must be as clear, at least as clear, as was the leading into the purpose.¹²⁵

This seemingly irrevocable promise, taken even before acceptance by a missionary society, distinguished the S. V. M.'s particular approach to recruitment from the more flexible and informal modus operandi of the organizations within the Methodist Church. The W. M. S. did not request a written vow until just before the recruit was sent into the mission field. In fact, the W. M. S. found such an informal arrangement advantageous in those cases where they had some reservations about a prospective worker. However, by the time that many of the future W. M. S. missionaries reached a college campus where they might join an S. V. M. branch, they seem to have already decided to dedicate their futures to the salvation of the world and were quite prepared to sign the Student Volunteer's pledge. The promise "... if God permits, to become a foreign missionary" was for them merely the tangible evidence of a personal vow, often taken years before, and was, not likely the result of any pressure from the S. V. M.¹²⁶

These organizations and the less formal mission groups sponsored by local congregations played an important part in promoting the interests of missionary societies, but, at the same time, some women began to ponder the possibility

of a missionary career only after hearing a returned missionary describe her experiences in the field. For the first group of W. M. S. recruits, that is, those who joined before about 1895, there were few Canadian women missionaries against whom to measure themselves and their aspirations. There had been women missionaries from other denominations, mostly American, sent to India, China and Africa and reports of their work, sacrifices and, in some cases, ultimate martyrdom, appeared in Methodist publications. But, the first applicants could have had little of the personal contact with returned missionaries on furlough which later recruits remembered as a persuasive influence. Moreover, unless they had intimate discussions with a returned missionary who chose to be candid about her experience, the future W. M. S. recruits encountered, publicly at least, many Pollyanna-like returnees who seemed to ignore or reject reality in order to satisfy the congregations and organizations who sustained their presence in the field.

The most frequent summons to become a missionary seems to have been, very simply, the intense and overpowering impulse to "do service for the Master," usually experienced through a personal call from God.¹²⁷ Martha Cartmell recalled her own summons as "... very clear and convincing."

The night that Dr. Punshon made his powerful missionary address in the Centenary Church, Hamilton, I was an entranced listener. He urged that Canadian Methodism should have a foreign mission, and with prophetic vision advocated that Japan be thus adopted. He

depicted the need for lady missionaries. The impulse came upon me so strongly that when we bowed in prayer I felt myself alone in the presence of my Creator, and I said simply, 'Lord, Thou knowest me altogether and seest the line of my life from its beginning to the end. 'Here I am send me.' I was immediately, almost overwhelmed by the solemnity of the act and my sense of utter worthlessness. But I dared not retreat. Again and again I assured myself that I could not have been presumptuous. I sought to be obedient. I said, 'If Thou has spoken knowing me perfectly, if Thou canst use me, and will make Thy will known to me, I will obey and follow Thee.'¹²⁸

Cartmell, an elementary school teacher in Hamilton, Ontario, kept this experience "... as a secret in [her] heart for years, waiting to see what the board required. [She] had entered into the covenant and could not go back."¹²⁹

Agnes Wintemute who left for Japan in 1886 was invited, in the first instance, not by God, but by her minister in St. Thomas, to give her life to missionary work. A graduate of Alma College and a teacher, Wintemute had expected to continue her education at university. She had read and rejected the W. M. S. appeals for women missionaries to go to Japan which had appeared in the Christian Guardian because, at twenty-one, she was too young to be considered. Her parents, however, applauded Dr. Parker's suggestion and the Society which desperately needed a teacher was willing to waive the age regulation. Wintemute herself seemed rather ambivalent and prayed for God's intervention to assure "that if such were not His will that He would put hindrances in the way."¹³⁰ When no divinely-inspired impediments materialized,

Wintemute, now convinced that God had interceded on her behalf, had her teeth fixed and purchased a complete new wardrobe suitable for the unfamiliar Japanese climate.¹³¹

The months preceding her departure were fraught with private misgivings about her venture. Just two days before leaving home, Wintemute lamented in her diary that the "Lord's ways are not our ways," an adage repeated over and over again by missionaries in the face of uncertainty, fear and tragedy.¹³²

Other women, like Martha Swann who went to West China in 1900, were considerably more confident about their belief and commitment and appear to have experienced personal conversions. Swann had been "moved by the Holy Spirit to the work of a missionary." She was, she assured the Board, a particularly suitable candidate, because her sins were

all washed away in the precious blood of Jesus [She] had endeavoured to live a consistent and godly life and to let [her] light so shine before men that others might glorify [her] Father in Heaven.¹³³

A similarly self-assured attitude emerges from the application of Jean Holt who left for China in 1914. Holt had been teaching, as she put it, "the strangers within our gates" in Hilltop, Manitoba.¹³⁴ Although she loved the "little ones," Holt was not convinced that "God intended [her] to stay while others could do the work and voices are calling ... from across the waters."¹³⁵ In contrast, Uberta Steele struggled to find God and the conviction that she should follow a missionary career. Membership in the Young Peoples' Forward

Movement had initially led her to realize that God "had definitely called [her] to serve Him in the Foreign Field."¹³⁶ But Steele subsequently suffered through a loss of faith and it was only after an intense spiritual crisis that she felt ready to apply to the Methodist Training School in 1906. Katherine Drake was another who trusted that "God was leading [her] all along the way." "Is it possible," she wrote to the W. M. S. Board of Managers, "that My Master wants me to offer myself to Him for missionary work and is so shutting up other doors?"¹³⁷

What the other doors might have been is not alluded to in Holt's letter, but, for at least one young woman, a missionary career appears to have been the alternative to a marriage denied by the death of her fiancé.¹³⁸ For other women who were past the customary age for marriage, missionary work, especially after the stations were well established with comfortable living quarters, took on the appearance of an acceptable alternative to a traditional domestic arrangement, something which the teaching profession and a lonely boarding house could not provide. Mildred Armstrong begged the W. M. S. to accept her when, in 1902, the death of her mother left her without a family. Armstrong pleaded to a member of the regional executive.

[d]ear Mrs. McMechan, I want so badly to go. I have now no home ties to keep me here Since my dear mother has been taken from me, I am quite alone; and my girlish dream - or rather desire has come back to me with renewed force.¹³⁹

Amstrong was chosen for foreign service and the Japanese mission became her home for the next forty years. In the case of Alice Jackson, the death of a partner in the dress-making business led her to apply to the W. M. S. for the position of a sewing teacher at the McDougall Orphanage.¹⁴⁰

Widowhood, too, prompted some women to become missionaries. There were at least ten widows among the W. M. S. missionaries and it was considered an especially appropriate career for the widows of ministers or missionaries who had to earn their own living. Retta Gifford Kilborn who had practised medicine for the W. M. S. in West China from 1893 to 1897 re-enlisted in 1925 after the death of her missionary husband and she remained with the W. M. S. until she retired in 1934. Lily Howie Hockin joined the W. M. S. in West China in 1912 after the death of her missionary husband from typhoid. Her daughter, Katharine, was supported by the W. M. S. and herself became a missionary for the United Church of Canada. Most of the widows, however, were employed in various areas of home missionary work, probably because they did not have the requirements expected of a foreign missionary.¹⁴¹

Another appealing feature of W. M. S. missionary work may have been the respectable, if not lavish, salaries which the Society paid its employees, especially during the first twenty years of its operations. Moreover, a missionary career had other benefits, such as a partially paid furlough

every six or seven years, a bonus which a teaching career could not provide. Foreign missionaries were generally paid more than home missionaries. For example, the first foreign missionaries in Japan, Martha Cartmell and Eliza Spencer, were hired at \$600.00 per year in the early 1880s,¹⁴² while Kezia Hendrie, the matron of the Crosby School for Girls at Pt. Simpson, received \$400.00 for her services.¹⁴³ These salaries remained stable for many years. In 1911, salaries in the Home field were set at \$450.00 for the first and second years and at \$500.00 for subsequent years. For Japan, the first year's salary was to be \$500.00, the second to fifth years, \$650.00 and the second and following terms of service, \$700.00. Women employed in West China received \$500.00 the first year, \$550.00, the second, \$600.00 for the third to fifth years and \$650.00 for the second and following terms. No explanation was given publicly for the salary discrepancy among the fields. Moreover, there were no allowances made for previous related experience and there was no individual negotiation of salaries, even by the doctors. Furlough salary, after serving the first term of five years, was set at \$500.00.¹⁴⁴ In addition, all travel expenses to Canada and back to the mission field were paid for foreign missionaries. Not surprisingly many women took the long way home. By 1921, the salary differentials appear to have been eliminated and wages were increased to keep pace with the rampant post-war inflation. All first year recruits were

paid \$750.00, while veterans in their second and third terms received \$900.00. Furlough salary was also \$900.00.¹⁴⁵

Comparable salary figures for other occupations are not easy to find. Women teachers employed in Toronto in 1881, for example, might earn up to \$600.00; by 1910, the upper limit was \$900.00 and in 1920, a possible \$2000.00.¹⁴⁶ Rural teachers' salaries were considerably lower; their salaries ranged from about \$200.00 to \$600.00 over the period.¹⁴⁷ These lower rural wages may help to explain the preponderance of rural and small town women among the missionary force. Salaries for nurses at the turn of the century were about \$2.00 per day and \$3.00 for the care of patients with infectious diseases.¹⁴⁸ If a nurse were employed approximately 300 days, her salary would be the equivalent of a W. M. S. missionary. The Methodist W. M. S. salaries were higher than those paid by at least one other Canadian Church. In 1922, unmarried women employees of the Canadian Baptist Missionary Society were paid \$600.00 for the first two years and \$700.00 per year thereafter.¹⁴⁹ In addition to the salary and travel expenses, the W. M. S. provided missionaries with the outfit considered essential to their work. Moreover, the Society supplied accommodation and paid many of the living expenses for missionaries in the field. But, at the same time, the high cost of living and unfavourable exchange rates in both West China and Japan, especially after about 1910, seem to have offset many of the

small extra benefits which once might have been the expected perquisites of employment as a missionary and, at times, the W. M. S. missionaries complained bitterly about their inadequate wages.

Family pressure, too, may have influenced women to undertake missionary work. Some parents, themselves activists on behalf of missions, encouraged their daughters to become missionaries and several families, the Killiams, Harts, Speers, Howies, Lawsons and Josts, contributed two daughters to the movement. There was, on the other hand, a degree of parental resistance, even open hostility, to such a career. Consequently, the W. M. S. Board of Managers was always on guard for women who applied without the knowledge and consent of their parents.¹⁵⁰ Parental fears about their daughters' welfare as missionaries were not unrealistic, especially in view of the unsettled political situation in China throughout the history of the W. M. S. West China mission, the dangers of overseas travel and the health problems which beset women in the mission field. In two or three instances, women were able, over time, to convince their parents that their future lay in missionary work; but for others, the objections or the need to remain in the family home to care for aged parents were removed only by the death of one or both parents.

Jessie Munro was unable to apply to the W. M. S. until both her parents had died. Munro, a teacher in eastern Ontario, had dreamed of overseas missionary service since she

had been a child. When she was finally released from family obligations and felt free to pursue her own ambitions, she "covenanted with the Lord that if He called and opened the way," she would go to Japan. With extraordinarily good timing, she was shown an advertisement in the Christian Guardian for teachers for the W. M. S. Girls' School in Tokyo. For Munro, it was "... an answer to my vow, but so many spoke to me that I began to fear that I was activated by a love of adventure, and determined to think no more about it."¹⁵¹ After her application had been sent, Munro, in a singularly selfless manner, prayed, not so much that she might be sent, but that the best of those who volunteered might be chosen.

Munro's case raises the perplexing question of whether, in some instances, women who applied for foreign postings, in particular, were, in fact, deliberately searching for a life of excitement and adventure which they could not have found in Canada at the time. Neither the applications nor the notations made about the candidates by the Board of Managers would suggest an overwhelming dissatisfaction or frustration with their past work or personal relationships. But that is not unexpected. Rather, the religious life as embodied in a missionary career acted as a magnetic force, attracting and pulling women from across Canada into its field. Nevertheless, the appeal of missionary life was heightened, albeit inadvertently, by an overabundance of

travel literature, adventure stories and novels which have been collectively labelled "romantic escapism" by Desmond Pacey.¹⁵² For example, in 1907, John C. Lambert, author of The Romance of Missionary Heroism, asked "whether there [was] any career which offer[ed] so many opportunities of romantic experience and heroic achievement as that of a Christian missionary."¹⁵³ Lambert was convinced that the "adventurous and stirring side of missionary experience need[ed] to be brought out, and emphasis laid upon the fact that the romantic days of missions [were] by no means past."¹⁵⁴ The closely edited missionary columns of Methodist papers and journals contributed their share to the creation of an idealized and sanitized portrait of life as a missionary in other cultures. Even in times of extreme dangers for missionaries, the Methodist Church persisted, for the sake of its financial support, in glossing over the risks involved in spreading the word of God. There was, then, little to dissuade these two or three generations of Canadian women from a missionary career.

James Endicott, the General Secretary of the Board of Foreign Missions from 1913 until 1937, for one, placed the impulses of the W. M. S. missionaries above reproach. After a visit to the Orient in 1918, Endicott praised the W. M. S. while questioning the motives of some misguided missionaries of other churches. He could not deny that there was a romantic aura attached to missions, but he doubted very much

if the lure of distant fields was a serious element in leading these women to offer for foreign mission work. Certainly it is not what keeps them there. The romance of the work speedily dissipates, to give place to something much more inspiring.¹⁵⁵

Endicott's appraisal can probably be taken at its face value. In the final analysis, it appears that the overpowering passion to win souls for Christ, and not an excess of late-Victorian romantic imagination, brought most of these women to the W. M. S. Doubtless, they would have agreed with Ida Greenway Wright's assumption that women should be missionaries "because they cannot be true to their highest ideals nor help in God's great redemption plan if they are not."¹⁵⁶

Myrtle Wagg's wish "to live for others" and to be what she termed "a soul winner" is just one illustration of the altruistic attitudes and sincere conviction that Christianity could and would save the world which is common to the W. M. S. applications.¹⁵⁷ Moreover, many missionary hopefuls, seemingly still prompted by the traditional Methodist quest for holiness, expected, somewhat selfishly, that by helping and saving others they would secure for themselves a place in the Heavenly Kingdom. It was not that they, as Barbara Welter has suggested of American foreign missionaries, actively sought "death in the service of the Lord," as martyrs.¹⁵⁸ In fact, the possibility of dying in the mission field was not a matter of pressing concern to them, except as it might affect relatives at home. A greater worry, as diaries and letters written after they reached their destin-

ations reveal, was simply their personal failure to suppress the worldly habits which blocked the path to their own perfection and salvation. Earnest, eschewing frivolity, but, not entirely lacking a sense of fun and good humour, these particular women like the Jane Addams depicted so sensitively by Christopher Lasch sometimes seemed to be rebelling against the senseless and foolish way of life which society sought to impose on them.¹⁵⁹ Although for some the self-denial that dominated the late-Victorian cult of domesticity may have prompted their response to missionary work,¹⁶⁰ for many others, a life of service as a missionary was a reputable and respected release from the very restraints inherent in the cult of domesticity.

When a missionary was hired, the Board of Managers of the W. M. S. anticipated that she would be employed until retirement. In actuality, only three in ten of the missionaries remained with the Society until retirement. Most of those who left the Society did so to marry or because of ill health. Perhaps, when they joined the W. M. S., a perceptive few might have been aware of the possibility of a marriage to a fellow worker in the field, especially if they read the letters from the West China mission field which appeared in missionary publications. It is unlikely, however, that many women who joined the W. M. S. ranks anticipated that they would eventually marry and resign. By the time that most women became missionaries, the bloom was well off the rose,

with middle age and spinsterhood advancing as accepted facts of their lives and the prospects for marriage rapidly diminishing. The average age of missionary recruits was 29.3 overall. For women designated for Japan, the average age at entry to mission work was 27.9; for China, 28.3 and for Canada, where rules were more often relaxed for positions requiring domestic skills, 31.2. This was, clearly, well over the average age of marriage for Canadian women which, in 1921, was 25.5.¹⁶¹ The W. M. S., ever watchful of the financial investment in its missionaries, set up rules and procedures to guard against the likelihood of marriage in the field, although one young woman who clearly stated that she did not ever expect to marry was passed over.¹⁶² But, in spite of the Society's well-oiled screening process designed to deter those women who might not be prepared to make necessary personal sacrifices for the Society, at least one in four of the W. M. S. missionaries eventually abandoned her career for marriage.

Once a woman had made her personal decision to become a missionary, she submitted her application to the regional W. M. S. executive in her area who in turn referred it, if approved, to the Board of Managers in Toronto. Most of the correspondence was then carried on directly with the Board of Managers. The Board required letters of reference from former employers, usually school superintendents, educators and ministers. The authors of these testimonials, which,

rather regrettably, are available only for women who were accepted, placed a high value on common sense, unselfishness, untiring energy and perseverance. Critical comments were few, although one or two women were characterized by their male superiors as "timid" or "retiring," an apparent disadvantage in missionary work. Taken at their face value, these testimonials denote a select group of consecrated and devoted young women, of "sterling character," quite flawless, unblemished and pure, but, in every respect, well prepared to handle, with ingenuity and tact, the obstacles of the mission field.¹⁶³ When some of the earliest recruits did not live up to the expectations of the Board of Managers, their shortcomings were simply attributed to the folly and inexperience of youth, prompting the Board of Managers to raise the age requirement to twenty-five.

Before the Board gave final approval to a candidate's application, a thorough assessment of the woman's physical condition was necessary. In the first few years, the word of the family physician was sufficient, but after about 1890, the W. M. S. appointed its own medical examiner and adopted a standardized medical form borrowed from the Women's Foreign Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church of the United States.¹⁶⁴ The change seems to have been prompted by the suspicion that some women who returned to Canada at the Society's expense because of ill health should never have been accepted in the first place. The Board of Managers

prized a good medical report. Physical health and strength were vital when battling the real or assumed hardships in the foreign field. In actuality, Pt. Simpson was more isolated from the luxuries of civilization and good medical care if illness struck than Tokyo or West China, but this was not initially apparent to the executive. By 1920, the Board of Managers admitted that there was, in fact "no easy field" for those who could not handle adversity.¹⁶⁵

The doctor examined the candidate's heart, lungs, digestive system and urinary tract. The medical reports suggest a particular concern over tuberculosis and suspicious cases were turned down. The doctor studied the patient's past illnesses, family medical history, menstrual history and vaccination record before pronouncing on her physical condition. A complaint of "occasional flatulence" did not prevent one woman from entering foreign service.¹⁶⁶ But even a thorough examination by a reputable urban practitioner could not preclude serious illness, a mental breakdown or even death in the future, as was the case with Miss Dingman, an especially prized recruit who had survived the perils of missionary work in Africa but died in Canada shortly after her appointment to Pt. Simpson.¹⁶⁷ Ironically, some women relegated to home mission work because of a less than glowing medical report worked until retirement and lived well into their eighties.¹⁶⁸

Until 1894, if the candidate had a satisfactory medical report and no member of the Board of Managers objected to her application and testimonials, she was ready to be assigned to the field. The General Board of Missions of the Methodist Church technically held the final authority in appointments, but it does not seem to have interfered or even to have been consulted when candidates were being selected, yet another instance of the autonomy which the W. M. S. had established for itself from male control. After 1894, another hurdle was placed in the paths of the missionary candidates in the form of obligatory attendance, for at least a term, at the recently opened National Methodist Training School established to train Methodist women as deaconesses.

Only ten years earlier, the Christian Guardian had strongly opposed a Methodist deaconite because "... the employment of women as deaconesses and preachers ha[d] hardly been tried upon a large enough scale to make one confident respecting the results,"¹⁶⁹ but, by 1894, the deaconess movement had become an accepted part of the Canadian Methodist machinery. After 1900, as John Thomas has noted, "the Laurier boom, the continued patronage of wealthy Methodists, and vigorous explanation and promotion combined to vitalize the work."¹⁷⁰ The Christian Guardian praised deaconess work as "wise and laudable" and deserving "liberal support" because of its benevolent work among the growing hordes of

urban poor.¹⁷¹ To foster and expand the work of the deacon-ite, the Methodist Church took over 28 McGill Street, Toronto, as a Training Home and hired as director a graduate of the Chicago Deaconess Home and Training School.¹⁷² In May 1894, the doors of the Training School opened to interested women. The following year, the Board of Managers of the W. M. S. decided that their candidates would benefit from attendance at the Training School for periods of time which might vary according to the individual's qualifications. Most women paid their own way to Training School, but the W. M. S. was prepared to bear the costs if necessary. Only in exceptional cases did the executive release a candidate entirely from the obligation to attend Training School.¹⁷³ For example, it was redundant to require women who had attended the Moody Bible Institute or Folts Institute, a professional training school for missionaries in Herkimer, New York,¹⁷⁴ to spend additional time at the Training School. At times when the reserves of candidates dried up, the rules were waived more often to hasten the workers into the field. More than one-third of all W. M. S. missionaries attended the Training School.

The courses at the Training School were designed to repair a multiplicity of defects in both religious knowledge and character. In a rare case where the General Superintendent of Missions was consulted, a young woman whose credentials were "very satisfactory as far as her Christian

character and ability [were] concerned" was referred to the Training School because of "her lack of neatness ... a matter of great importance in any one who goes to work among the Indians, especially if the work be in one of the Homes."¹⁷⁵

A term at the Training School was expected to improve her personal appearance and give the Board of Managers "sufficient time to form a definite opinion in the matter."¹⁷⁶

Training School proved to be the appropriate corrective; the candidate was reformed, hired and remained with the W. M. S., serving in home missions for the next thirty years.¹⁷⁷

The spartan and almost cloistered life may have been a harsh introduction to missionary life, especially for women who had spent three or four years at college, but, once accepted at the Training School, few women seem to have dropped out. Residents of the Home had to pay for room, board, fuel and light and were expected "... to assume cheerfully [a] share of the general housework."¹⁷⁸ Students were advised to bring religious books, but only one trunk. They were required to furnish for their personal use blankets, towels and soap, kitchen aprons, heavy underflannels (with sleeves), overshoes and leggings and "gossamer and umbrellas, as the work may require one to be outdoors in all weather,"¹⁷⁹ and they were further warned that

the clothing should be simple and serviceable, special attention being paid to the comfort and health of the wearer. Dentistry, shopping and dress-making should be attended to before coming that studies may not be interrupted by these matters.¹⁸⁰

Social life at the Training School was equally regimented. Callers could be received only on Friday evening; Sunday and one other evening might be spent outside the home without special consent.¹⁸¹

The curriculum for deaconesses and other Methodist workers initially consisted of courses focusing on the interpretation of the Bible, church history, and the study of Christian doctrines with special emphasis on Wesley's sermons. Practical instruction was provided in kitchen gardening, that is, growing vegetables for consumption by the individual family, sewing, cooking and other skills which the deaconess or missionary might be required to pass on to her charges at home or abroad. Students also attended lectures on temperance, missionary work and emergency medical procedures. Reflecting the mood of the period, the women were expected to participate in physical exercise and drills.¹⁸² Twenty years after the Training School opened, the course for W. M. S. missionaries had expanded to fill seven months and included kindergarten work, household science, the history and methods of missions as taught by Dr. and Mrs. Stephenson of the Young Peoples' Forward Movement and the constitution and work of their own society as outlined by the president Mrs. W. E. Ross.¹⁸³ Again in the 1920s, with the increased emphasis on the social gospel and the Methodist Church's "call for a complete social reconstruction,"¹⁸⁴ the curriculum expanded to encompass such topics as "The Social

Gospel of the New Testament and its Application to Modern Life," and "The Social Programme of Canadian Methodism," a theme which covered child welfare and the "spiritual value of Golden Rule Application."¹⁸⁵ The women were, clearly, exposed to a variety of ideas and methodologies which they could apply to their subsequent work in the mission field and, just as importantly, they became acquainted with the students who would become their future colleagues.

Most women moved directly from the Training School to the mission field, but at least ten women who had attended the School served first as deaconesses before deciding to join the W. M. S. as missionaries. In any case, after completion of their courses at the Training School, the candidates were, as far as the Board of Managers could determine, ready for an initial five year commitment to the Society. The practical logistics of departure could occupy many weeks of the recruit's time. Because of the uncertainty and ignorance about living abroad and because extra time and money might be wasted by having personal and household goods shipped after the arrival at the designated mission station, most of the early missionaries tried to leave home prepared for all conceivable situations. Even as late as 1916, the W. M. S. council in West China felt obliged to endorse the following resolution concerning preparations of new recruits.

Whereas many of our new missionaries after reaching the field regret that they did not bring out more books, knicknacks, etc., and whereas it is much more expensive to have

these things sent out afterwards and whereas we are such a long distance from the coast, it means the inconvenience of waiting a year or more for many things that would be useful and handy, therefore be it Resolved, That outcoming missionaries be informed of the advantages and desirability of shipping one or two of their heavy boxes a couple of months ahead, to Vancouver by freight ... then the remainder of their baggage would be covered by their ticket which allows 350 pounds per passenger.¹⁸⁶

Martha Cartmell spent weeks preparing and packing her personal belongings for Japan. Her outfit, which the W. M. S. purchased contained a coal oil stove (with five nightdresses tucked into the oven), a desk, a chest, bedding and cooking utensils. Her clothing inventory, reminiscent of a bridal trousseau, included six new silk dresses, eight skirts (two white), two printed everyday dresses, four suits, six hats, five pairs of boots, three pairs of slippers and nineteen pairs of stockings. Among her books were Bibles, Wesley's hymns, the poetry of Longfellow and Tennyson, the Odyssey, the Iliad, Caesar, Herodotus, a Juvenile Temperance Manual and an assortment of Ontario secondary school books and readers intended for her prospective Japanese pupils.¹⁸⁷ Friends and admirers deluged her with dozens of gifts which she carefully listed - a gold watch, gold bracelets, evening shawls to ward off the night air of Tokyo, a bottle of wild strawberry which might have been a perfume but, more likely, was a remedy for dysentery, and photos of her hometown, Hamilton. The fare for Cartmell herself to Yokohama totalled \$221.10; her baggage \$311.90!¹⁸⁸

On November 23, 1882, a final farewell was said to Cartmell at her home church, Centenary Methodist, in Hamilton. She was presented with another purse containing two hundred dollars from the well wishers. During the evening,

all the speakers expressed the most profound sympathy with Miss Cartmell in the noble duty which she had undertaken, while they expressed their joy and satisfaction that this new missionary movement had been inaugurated and that such a worthy instrument had been selected to advance the objects of the society.¹⁸⁹

The Rev. D. Sutherland, Cartmell's cousin, responded on her behalf as was considered appropriate.¹⁹⁰ Once in Japan, however, Cartmell soon learned to speak for herself. The next day, Cartmell left the security and comforts of her home, her teaching career and her close knit circle of friends and family to journey to "The Mikado's Kingdom" on behalf of the Woman's Missionary Society.¹⁹¹ Over the next forty years, three hundred more women would follow a similar route to missions at home and abroad. Like Cartmell, they would be transformed by their encounter with unfamiliar cultures and environments and by their collective efforts to make missionary work a viable and rewarding career for women.

Notes

¹U. C. A., Biographical file of Isabella Blackmore, Isabella Blackmore to Mrs. Whiston, Claremont, N. S., October 12, 1888.

²Annual Report of the W. M. S., 1886 - 1887, p. 125.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Annual Report of the W. M. S., 1895 - 96, p. 125.

⁷See U. C. A., Biographical files of Retta Gifford Kilborn and Eliza Spencer Large.

⁸Annual Report of the W. M. S., 1886 - 87, p. 125.

⁹Ibid., p. 126.

¹⁰Michael Gauvreau, "The Taming of History: Reflections on the Canadian Methodist Encounter with Biblical Criticism, 1830-1900," Canadian Historical Review, LXV (September, 1984), 317. Bernard Semmel in The Methodist Revolution (New York: Basic Books, 1973), p. 17, offers the following explanation of "experimental religion." "By a profound emotional and mystical experience achieved by methods not requiring learning or analysis, by an experience more accessible to the humble and unsophisticated than to their better situated or better educated fellows, large numbers of men might attain the certainty - the Assurance - that though they had been sinners, their sins had been forgiven and they had been accepted by God and could by their own efforts, reinforced by the fraternal spirit of the societies, find ultimate sanctification, that is, Salvation."

¹¹E. S. Strachan, "Woman's Missionary Societies," Canadian Methodist Magazine, XVI (July - December, 1882), 228.

¹²G. Emery, "Methodism on the Canadian Prairies, 1896 to 1914. The Dynamics of an Institution in a New Environment," (unpublished Ph.d. dissertation, University of British

Columbia, 1970), p. 1.

¹³G. Emery, "Ontario Denied. The Methodist Church on the Prairies," in F. Armstrong, H. Stevenson and J. D. Wilson (eds.), Aspects of Nineteenth-Century Ontario (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974), pp. 313-14.

¹⁴G. Emery, Dissertation, p. 45.

¹⁵G. Emery, "The Origins of Canadian Methodist Involvement in the Social Gospel Movement 1890 - 1914," Journal of the Canadian Church Historical Society, XIX (March - June, 1977), 105-06.

¹⁶Jane Hunter, Gospel of Gentility. American Women Missionaries in Turn of the Century China (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), p. 28.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸William Magney, "The Methodist Church and the National Gospel, 1884 - 1914," The Bulletin, no.20 (1968), 3; Neil A. Semple, "The Impact of Urbanization on the Methodist Church in Central Canada, 1854 - 1884," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Toronto, 1979), p. 31.

¹⁹Except in cases where the parent was a minister, it was impossible to find the occupations of parents of those women who were born after 1881 and whose names did not appear on the available census records. Even a search of the 1891 census failed to bring worthwhile results. On the other hand, using Methodist Church records, it was possible to locate all fathers who were ministers.

²⁰The term "daughter of the parsonage" was used frequently in W. M. S. literature and reports.

²¹Thomas E. Champion (ed.), The History of Methodist Churches in Toronto (Toronto: G. M. Rose and Co., 1899), p. 299.

²²U. C. A., W. M. S. West China Mission Papers, Mrs. N. A. Powell to Mrs. Hales, May 12, 1924. Sherritt, a member of the West China Mission, left China because of the death of her father. She promised to return but did not. It appears that the Board of Managers added up the total furlough salary and the costs of a post-graduate course which the Society had paid for and sent the family a bill for \$2200.00 - hence the remark about the family's financial position.

²³H. J. Morgan, Canadian Men and Women of the Times (Toronto: William Briggs, 1912), p. 845.

²⁴Manuscript Census of Canada, 1881. According to E. J. Hobsbawm, "[t]he widest definition of the middle class or those who aspired to imitate them was that of keeping domestic servants." E. J. Hobsbawm, Empire and Industry (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books, 1977), p. 157. For the purposes of this particular study, the term middle-class is used to refer generally to white-collar workers, businessmen and to members of the professions.

²⁵U. C. A., Biographical file of Florence Wickett.

²⁶Deborah Gorham, The Victorian Girl and the Feminine Ideal (London: Croom Helm, 1982), p. 11.

²⁷Martha Vicinus, Independent Women. Work and Community for Single Women. 1850 - 1920 (London: Virago Press, 1985), p. 7.

²⁸Wendy Mitchinson, "Aspects of Reform: Four Women's Organizations in Nineteenth - Century Canada," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, York University, 1977), p. 84.

²⁹Frank A. Norwood, The Story of American Methodism. A History of United Methodism and Their Relations (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1974), p. 219.

³⁰Carol Bacchi, Liberation Deferred? (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983), p. 19.

³¹Rev. C. H. Payne, "Women and Their Work in Methodism," The Canadian Methodist Magazine, L (June - December, 1899), 500.

³²The Christian Guardian, January 25, 1888.

³³Ian Davey, "Trends in Female School Attendance in mid-nineteenth Century Ontario," Histoire Sociale, VIII, (November, 1975), 239.

³⁴U. C. A., Biographical file of Margaret Armstrong.

³⁵M. Royce, Landmarks in the Victorian Education of Young Ladies under Methodist Church Auspices (Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 1977), pp. 3-24.

³⁶Ibid., p. 24.

³⁷Public Archives of Ontario, Ontario Ladies' College Papers, Education Department Papers, School Reports, 1850-1890, Box 1, Ontario Ladies' College, Whitby, Ontario, 1879-1880, p. 16.

³⁸Report of the Massey Foundation Commission on the Secondary Schools and Colleges of the Methodist Church of Canada 1921 (Toronto: The Massey Foundation, 1921), p. 65.

³⁹B. F. Austin (ed.), Woman: Her Character, Culture and Calling (Brantford: The Book and Bible House, 1890), p. 443

⁴⁰M. C. Urquhart and K. Buckley (eds.), Historical Statistics of Canada (Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada, 1965), p. 86.

⁴¹John Reid, "The Education of Women at Mount Allison, 1854 - 1914," Acadiensis, XII (Spring, 1983), 24.

⁴²Ibid., 22.

⁴³Ibid., 24.

⁴⁴Public Archives of Ontario, Ontario Ladies' College Papers, Ontario Ladies College, p. 20.

⁴⁵Daniel Kubat and David Thornton, A Statistical Profile of Canadian Society, (Toronto: McGraw - Hill Ryerson Ltd., 1974), p. 131.

⁴⁶Anne R. Ford, A Path not strewn with roses. One Hundred years of women at the University of Toronto, 1884 - 1984 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), p. 5.

⁴⁷Bacchi, p. 19.

⁴⁸This sample consists of 182 women for whom both birth dates and educational histories were available,

⁴⁹C. B. Sissons, History of Victoria University (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1952), p. 197.

⁵⁰Ten of the women, both married and single, who served at the Canadian Baptist mission in India had attended McMaster University and another eight had attended Acadia University in Wolfville, Nova Scotia, another Baptist college. See Canadian Baptist Archives, McMaster University, A Sketch of the Origin and Development of our Mission Stations in India, (Toronto: Canadian Baptist Foreign Mission Board, 1922), pp. 187-197.

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²This data was available for 129 W. M. S. foreign missionaries.

53U. C. A., Biographical files of O. Markland and C. Sturdy; W. M. S. Notebooks.

54Bacchi, p. 21.

55Brian McKillop, A Disciplined Intelligence (Montreal: McGill - Queen's University Press, 1979), p. 232.

56Kathleen Cowan, It's Late and All the Girls Have Gone. An Annesley Diary, 1907-1910, ed. Aida Farrog (Toronto: Childe Thursday, 1984).

57U. C. A., Biographical files and W. M. S. notebooks.

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59Judie Coburn, "'I See and am Silent,' A Short History of Nursing in Ontario," in Women at Work, Ontario 1850 - 1930 (Toronto: Canadian Women's Educational Press, 1974), pp. 135-136.

60"The Life of a Nurse", The Globe, October 8, 1886, Thomas E. Tausky (ed.), Sara Jeannette Duncan, Selected Journalism (Ottawa: Tecumseh Press, 1978), p. 29.

61Ibid., p. 28.

62Women of Canada. Their Life and Work (The National Council of Women of Canada, 1900, reprinted 1975), p. 58.

63Coburn, p. 163.

64See for example, Papers of the Owen Sound General and Marine Hospital, Owen Sound, Ontario, "Owen Sound General and Marine Hospital School for Nurses. Requirements for Admission", ca. 1903. Women were paid \$196.00 over their three years of training and were given board and "a reasonable amount of laundry work."

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66C. K. Clarke, A History of the Toronto General Hospital (Toronto: William Briggs, 1913), p. 94.

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68Virginia G. Drachman, "Female Solidarity and Professional Success: The Dilemma of Women Doctors in Late Nineteenth-Century America," Journal of Social History

(Summer, 1982), 608.

⁶⁹U. C. A., Biographical file of Ada Speers; E. M. Speers Meuser autobiography in biographical file of E. M. Speers Meuser.

⁷⁰Veronica Strong-Boag, "Feminism Constrained," in Linda Kealey (ed.), A Not Unreasonable Claim (Toronto: Women's Educational Press, 1979), p. 119.

⁷¹Annual Report of the W. M. S., 1897 - 1898, vx.

⁷²U. C. A., W. M. S. Executive Minute Books, October 22, 1913.

⁷³Carlotta Hacker, The Indomitable Women Doctors (Toronto: Clarke Irwin, 1974), p. 93.

⁷⁴Ibid., pp. 242-249. Until other studies are published, it is not possible to know whether the Presbyterians, Baptists and other denominations were more successful in attracting doctors. If Hacker's assertion is accurate, these Societies must have had many more doctors in their ranks than did the Methodist W. M. S.

⁷⁵Fifth Census of Canada, 1911, Vol. VI (Ottawa, 1915), p. 44.

⁷⁶Eliza Mosher, M. D., "The Health of American Women," in Austin, p. 242.

⁷⁷Rev. Professor Reyner, "The 'New Woman' and the True Woman," The Canadian Methodist Magazine, XVI (January - June, 1882), 239.

⁷⁸See Ramsay Cook, The Regenerators. Social Criticism in Late Victorian English Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), Chapter Five for an extended discussion of the ideas of Benjamin Austin.

⁷⁹Austin, p. 35.

⁸⁰Ibid., p. 33.

⁸¹W. Withrow, "Higher Education of Women," in Austin, p. 330.

⁸²Women at Work, p. 177; M. Danylewycz, B. Light and A. Prentice, "The Evolution of the Sexual Division of Labour in Teaching; A Nineteenth-Century Ontario and Quebec Case Study," Histoire Sociale, XVI (May, 1983), 89; M. Danylewycz and A. Prentice, "Teachers' Work: Changing Patterns and

Perceptions in the Emerging School Systems of Nineteenth -and Early Twentieth.- Century Central Canada," Labour/Le Travail 17 (Spring, 1986), 79.

83U. C. A., Biographical file of M. Swann, Martha Swann to Mrs. Hardy, Wallace, Ontario, June 18, 1900,

84Women, Work and Worship in the United Church of Canada (Toronto: The United Church of Canada, 1983), p. 106.

85B. Hensman, "The Kilborn Family," in The Canadian Medical Association Journal, 97 (August 26, 1967), 1-13 and biographical file of R. Gifford Kilborn, U. C. A.

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90U. C. A., Biographical files, and Manuscript Census of Canada, 1861 - 1881.

91U. C. A., Biographical file of E. Graham, E. Graham to Miss Anderson, May 27, 1914.

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93J. Warren Caldwell, "The Unification of Methodism in Canada 1865 - 1884," The Bulletin, no. 19 (1967), 7.

94William Magney, "The Methodist Church and the National Gospel," The Bulletin, no. 20 (1968), 4.

95Magney, 4.

96 Ibid., 5.

97 U. C. A., Biographical file of E. M. Speers Meuser, Autobiography of E. M. Speers Meuser.

98 G. Emery, "The Origins of Canadian Methodist Involvement in the Social Gospel Movement 1890 - 1914," Journal of the Canadian Church Historical Society, XIX (March - June, 1977), 110.

99 U. C. A., Biographical file of E. S. Meuser, Autobiography of E. M. Speers Meuser.

100 Magney, 4.

101 Emery, "The Origins of Canadian Methodist Involvement in the Social Gospel Movement," 110.

102 Ibid., 111.

103 U. C. A., Methodist Church of Canada, General Conference, Journal of Proceedings, 1906, pp. 274-278.

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105 U. C. A., Biographical files for members of the Hart family.

106 U. C. A., Biographical files for members of the Woodsworth family.

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108 The Christian Guardian, March 4, 1891.

109 N. Semple, "'The Nurture and Admonition of the Lord,' Nineteenth Century Canadian Methodism's Response to 'Childhood'", Histoire Sociale, XIV (May, 1981), 174.

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¹¹³Student Mission Power. Report of the First International Convention of the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions. held at Cleveland, Ohio, U. S.A., February 26, 27, 28 and March 1, 1891. (Pasadena, California, 1978), p. 21.

¹¹⁴Ibid., pp. 26-28.

¹¹⁵C. J. Phillips, "The Student Volunteer Movement and Its Role in China Missions, 1886 - 1920," John Fairbanks (ed.), The Missionary Enterprise in China and America (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1974), p. 94; S. Endicott, James G. Endicott, Rebel Out of China (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), p. 28.

¹¹⁶See, for example, Abbie Child, "Qualifications of Workers," Student Mission Power, pp. 110-112.

¹¹⁷Phillips, p. 98; World Wide Evangelization: The Urgent Business of the Church. Addresses Delivered Before the Fourth International Convention of the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions. Toronto; Canada. February 26 - March 2. 1902 (New York: Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions, 1902), pp. 625-628.

¹¹⁸Ibid.

¹¹⁹U. C. A., Student Volunteer Movement Papers, (unsorted) Suggestions Regarding Student Volunteer Groups, p. 1.

¹²⁰Ibid.

¹²¹World Wide Evangelization, p. 571.

¹²²Ibid.

¹²³Phillips, p. 101.

¹²⁴U. C. A., S. V. M. Papers.

¹²⁵U. C. A., S. V. M. Papers, "What It Means to be a Student Volunteer."

¹²⁶U. C. A., S. V. M. Papers, Declaration of Fern Scruton.

¹²⁷U. C. A., Biographical file of M. Gormley.

¹²⁸U. C. A., United Church of Canada, Woman's Missionary Society Overseas Mission, Japan, Missionaries Files, Box 3, File of Martha Cartmell. William Morley

Punshon (1824 - 1881) was a Wesleyan Methodist minister who came to Canada in 1868. He was a powerful preacher and was influential in the 1873 unification of some of the Methodist Churches of Canada. In 1873, he returned to England where he died. Cartmell must have heard Punshon preach before 1873, at least eight years before her ultimate decision to become a missionary was made. See W. S. Wallace (ed.), The Macmillan Dictionary of Canadian Biography (Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada, 1963), p. 611 for reference to Punshon.

129 Ibid.

130 U. C. A., Harper Coates Family Papers, Box 2, Agnes Wintemute Coates Diaries, July, 1886.

131 Ibid., July - August, 1886.

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134 U. C. A., Biographical file of Jean Holt, Jean Holt to Mrs. Ferrie, Brandon, September 3, 1912,

135 Ibid.

136 U. C. A., Biographical file of Uberta Steele, Uberta Steele to Mrs. Briggs, April 23, 1906.

137 U. C. A., Biographical file of Katharine Drake, Katharine Drake to Mrs. J. Harrison, Hamilton, January 11, 1909.

138 U. C. A., Biographical file of O. Lindsay, Tribute to Rev. Olive Lindsay given at her funeral, April 24, 1965 by Fern Scruton.

139 U. C. A., Biographical file of Mildred Armstrong, Mildred Armstrong to Mrs. McMechan, London, May 14, 1902.

140 U. C. A., Biographical file of Alice Jackson.

141 U. C. A., Biographical files.

142 Annual Report of the W. M. S., 1884 - 1885, p. 9.

143 Ibid., p. 43.

144 Annual Report of the W. M. S., 1911 - 1912, ix.

145 Annual Report of the W. M. S., 1920 - 1921, vii.

146 Annual Report of the Local Superintendent of the Public Schools of the City of Toronto, as cited in "School-marks and Early Teaching in Ontario," in Women at Work, p. 194.

147 Ibid.

148 Women of Canada. Their Life and Work, p. 80.

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151 Mrs. W. E. Ross, Miss Jessie K. Munro, (Toronto: Woman's Missionary Society, 1923), p. 4.

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154 Ibid.

155 The Christian Guardian, June 12, 1918.

156 Ibid., January 4, 1911.

157 Ibid., October 11, 1916.

158 Barbara Welter, "The Feminization of American Religion," in B. Welter, Dimity Convictions (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1976), p. 91.

159 Christopher Lasch, The New Radicalism in America, 1889 - 1963 (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1965), p. 65.

160 See Lee Chambers-Schiller, "The Single Woman: Family and Vocation Among Nineteenth Century Reformers" in Mary Kelly (ed.), Woman's Being, Woman's Place. Female Society and Vocation in American History (Boston: G. K. Hall and Co., 1979), p. 341.

161 Urquhart and Buckley, p. 42.

162 U. C. A., T. E. Shore Papers, Box 8, File 148, Laura Hughes, Charlottetown to Dr. F. Stephenson, January 12, 1912. Miss Hughes was also, by her own admission, "... very

fond of risk, not good looking, and [had] few talents, needed more Bible study, more prayer, less love of pleasure."

¹⁶³U. C. A., Biographical files and W. M. S. Notebooks.

¹⁶⁴Annual Report of the W. M. S., 1888 - 1889, p. 12.

¹⁶⁵U. C. A., W. M. S. Notebooks.

¹⁶⁶U. C. A., Biographical file of M. Coon.

¹⁶⁷Annual Report of the W. M. S., 1893 - 1894, vi.

¹⁶⁸See, for example, U. C. A., Biographical files of N. McKim and M. Thompson who became home missionaries because they had weak hearts.

¹⁶⁹The Christian Guardian, January 30, 1894.

¹⁷⁰John Thomas, "Servants of the Church: Canadian Methodist Deaconess Work, 1890 - 1926," Canadian Historical Review, LXV (September, 1984), p. 379.

¹⁷¹The Christian Guardian, April 4, 1894.

¹⁷²Ibid., and J. Thomas, 378.

¹⁷³Annual Report of the W. M. S., 1895 - 1896, p. 199.

¹⁷⁴Patricia Hill, The World Their Household (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1985), p. 126.

¹⁷⁵U. C. A., Methodist Church of Canada, Alexander Sutherland Papers, Box 6, File 12, Sutherland to E. S. Strachan, July 5, 1894.

¹⁷⁶Ibid.

¹⁷⁷U. C. A., Biographical file of H. Paul.

¹⁷⁸Fifth Annual Report of the Toronto Deaconess Home and Training School of the Methodist Church of Canada, 1899, p. 8.

¹⁷⁹Ibid.

¹⁸⁰Ibid.

¹⁸¹Ibid.

¹⁸²Fourth Annual Report of the Toronto Deaconess Home and Training School of the Methodist Church of Canada, 1897 - 98, p. 11.

¹⁸³Bulletin of the National Training School, 1916, p. 30.

¹⁸⁴Richard Allan, "The Social Gospel and the Reform Tradition in Canada, 1890 - 1928," Canadian Historical Review, XLIX (December, 1968), p. 392.

¹⁸⁵National Training School Bulletin, 1922 - 1923, pp. 21-23.

¹⁸⁶U. C. A., Methodist Church of Canada, Woman's Missionary Society, West China Correspondence and Papers, 1915 - 1924. Minutes and Reports of the Seventh Annual Council of the W. M. S., West China Branch, 1916, p. 3.

¹⁸⁷U. C. A., Strachan - Cartmell Papers, Box 1, file 3.

¹⁸⁸Ibid.

¹⁸⁹The Christian Guardian, November 20, 1882.

¹⁹⁰Ibid.

¹⁹¹This term was often used by missionaries to refer to Japan. See, for example, Robert C. Armstrong, Progress in the Mikado's Kingdom, (Toronto: Missionary Society of the Methodist Church, Canada, 1920).

CHAPTER III

"The Spirit of a Sensitive Independence"

After a long, exhausting journey from her home in Hamilton, Ontario, Martha Cartmell reached Tokyo, her destination in Japan in December 1882. She had travelled over 8000 miles, first by rail from Buffalo to Omaha and San Francisco (the C.P.R. had not yet been built) and then by steamer across the Pacific. The W. M. S. had made arrangements to insure that Cartmell did not travel alone. At Buffalo she joined a party of, at least eight American missionaries also en route to the Orient. Although she became acquainted with two other women missionaries whom she characterized as "not nearly so good looking, but ... decidedly practical Christian workers," Cartmell regretfully confessed that even before she had left North America she was overwhelmed by extreme homesickness, a problem which would be close to epidemic among new W. M. S. foreign missionaries.¹ On her arrival in Tokyo, however, Cartmell was somewhat reassured by the warm welcome from her old friends, Dr. Macdonald, the patriarch of the Canadian Methodist mission in Japan, and Mrs. Eby, a missionary wife, whose first priority was to introduce the newcomer to the delights of Japanese cuisine at a Tokyo restaurant. With both stoicism and op-

timism, Cartmell conceded that the food looked "very nice," but added that "... some peculiar flavour made it less palatable than it will be by and by."² In spite of her confidence and her sincere intention to adapt to her new surroundings, Cartmell and many of the eighty W. M. S. missionaries who followed her to Japan over the next forty-five years, never became accustomed to Japanese food or to the many other aspects of the Japanese culture which they found hard to understand. For some women, even the Japanese custom of sitting on the floor was extremely distasteful and was the subject of many complaints in letters sent to Canada. If their life in Japan became tolerable and gratifying, the missionaries' own ability to sustain their middle-class Canadian manners and customs within the Japanese milieu was largely responsible. Adaptation did not become easier as time passed. The same problems which Cartmell confronted in the 1880s continued to bother women who arrived forty years later. The self-doubt and cultural shock chronicled by Sadie Tait when she first confronted Japan in 1917 were little different from Cartmell's initial reactions to her situation. As late as 1925, Canadian Methodist women continued to feel uncomfortable and isolated in Japan and, in turn, many never ceased to be perceived as outsiders and intruders by the majority of the Japanese.³

In spite of the hostility they encountered, these Canadian women carved out a niche for themselves within

Japanese society from which they operated relatively freely. Over time, they and their work became respected among the small percentage of the Japanese population which was receptive to Christianity. Moreover, the W. M. S. mission to the Japanese is remarkable for the degree of autonomy that its personnel acquired for themselves as highly qualified and self-reliant professional women. Their determination to manage their own affairs and to operate independently from the General Board of Missions ultimately created an unpleasant incident within the Methodist missions in Japan which threatened the very existence of foreign missionary work, but the episode also became the source of collective solidarity among the W. M. S. missionaries in Japan.

When Cartmell arrived in Japan in 1882, the men of the General Board of Missions of the Methodist Church of Canada had been engaged in their work of evangelizing and teaching at boys' schools for ten years. In 1873 the edicts which had prohibited the preaching of Christianity in Japan were rescinded by the Meiji regime and almost immediately flocks of Western missionaries, including the Canadian Methodists, had rushed to Japan, determined to make up for lost time. At first they encountered few objections to their message because the Japanese had become intensely curious about all aspects of Western culture and technology and were receptive to anything Western. The Japanese government had, in fact, in the 1870's hired "... scores of Occidental

experts and teachers at high salaries in order to attract real talents, and since, unlike contemporary modernizing countries, they paid for these people out of their own meager financial resources, they utilized them to the fullest."⁴ Under these circumstances, Western missionaries, paid by their own constituencies, were, if not eagerly welcomed for their proselytizing, at least tolerated because of the Western-style education they could offer to the ambitious Japanese middle class. Consequently, the 1880s were, in retrospect, a period of relative progress for missionary activity.⁵

The W. M. S. of the Methodist Church of Canada rode into Japan on the crest of this wave of interest in all things Western. This reception would not be repeated in the following decades. By 1880 it had become clear to Western missionaries in Japan that prevailing social taboos excluded male missionaries, even medical practitioners, from making any attempts to Christianize Japanese women. This was all the more problematic because of the Canadian Methodists' very limited success in converting the male population and because of the generally held conviction, a carry over of North American concepts of the character of women, that if Japanese women were exposed to Christianity, they would, in turn, influence the rest of the family. To direct attention to the problem, the General Board missionaries began to criticize the Canadian Methodist Church publicly for not sending women

missionaries to Japan. In an early request for women missionaries, a veteran General Board representative in Japan, George Cochrane, commended the work of other Protestant Churches among Japanese women. There had been

... no more encouraging feature in the labours of the last ten years than the wonderful growth and efficiency of woman's work for heathen women as I saw it during six years. Nearly every mission had a girls' school, under the care of Christian women, sent out and sustained by special funds. I have felt it as the one defect in our mission to Japan that we have nothing of the kind The needful complement of a school for woman's work will, we trust, receive such generous encouragement as to render it at no distant day an accredited part of our agency in the foreign field.⁶

The Canadian Methodist Church had not kept pace with other North American Protestant churches which, as early as 1869, had supported women missionaries in Japan.⁷ Japanese Bible women, trained by women missionaries to teach simple Bible stories and lessons to their friends and neighbours, had also, Cochran noted, "... proven a most effective means of reaching the native women in the midst of their own households."⁸ Methodist missionaries in Japan had become ashamed because they had not been in the vanguard in establishing women's work. Moreover, they were at a great disadvantage beginning work in those centers where other denominations had already set up schools and mission compounds. Cochran was not, however, suggesting that women should be supported by a separate woman's society; he hoped that they would form a part of the General Board contingent and would work under the

direction of their male counterparts. Perhaps Cochrane's dashed hopes in this regard accounted for some of the subsequent bitterness and hostility between the General Board and the W. M. S. in Japan.

At the time of Martha Cartmell's arrival in Japan, fifty-two woman missionaries were already at work throughout the country with seven girls' boarding schools under their supervision.⁹ While Cartmell felt compelled to begin her work on behalf of the W. M. S. immediately, her male compatriots suggested, out of deference to her sex, that she "ought not to do too much."¹⁰ In fact, she was forced to take their counsel. Because Cartmell had not learned any Japanese before she arrived in Tokyo, she could only work slowly and cautiously. But within a few months, she reported that she was "entering any open door to usefulness and influence," working in the Sunday School of the Mission Church, teaching English to a group of young men, conducting women's meetings and visiting the sick.¹¹ Her W. M. S. champions in Canada provided ample financial support for her enterprise. In addition to her annual salary of six hundred dollars and an outfit which equipped her for all eventualities, generous amounts of money were sent to Cartmell by concerned Canadian women to hasten the opening of the anticipated girls' school and the rehabilitation of Japanese womankind.¹² The practice of sending private donations to individual missionaries was disallowed by the Board of Managers a few years later when

they made clear to their missionaries that all funds must come from "the proper official authorities."¹³ Cartmell's welfare was of foremost concern to her Canadian mentors, possibly all the more so because she was the cousin of Elizabeth Strachan, W. M. S. Corresponding-Secretary, and Elizabeth Ross, who became President in 1897. Society members were proud of their ability to raise enough money to guarantee that their agents in the mission field were as comfortable and as happy as circumstances would permit. From the very outset, the W. M. S. missionaries were greatly admired by the Society's membership. For example, when a missionary entered a meeting room, W. M. S. members stood as a gesture of their respect.¹⁴ After a year in Tokyo, Cartmell could report that "... comforts surround me" and that her own lot was not an especially hard one.¹⁵ It was not more financial support that she believed she needed, but prayers from Canada as an antidote to the difficulties she was encountering in her work among Japanese women.¹⁶

Three years after Cartmell's arrival, the first W. M. S. girls' boarding school, the Toyo Eiwa Jo Gakko, (Oriental-English Japanese Girls' School) was opened. Although the original intention of the W. M. S. had been only to open a day school for girls, Cartmell persuaded the Society that a boarding school where "girls could be kept under constant Christian influences" was preferable to permitting them to return to a potentially anti-Christian

atmosphere after their classes ended.¹⁷ To establish the school, Cartmell had first to petition the Japanese government which regulated education. It appears that her request to open a school in Tokyo was granted quite readily.¹⁸ In fact, the Meiji regime gave educational reform a high priority. Education for women had become compulsory and, in 1871, the government had set up a Ministry of Education to formulate an educational system based on that of the United States. In 1872, the government had itself established the Tokyo Girls' School.¹⁹ When the General Board offered to sell Cartmell a piece of land adjacent to its Boys' School for the considerable sum of one thousand dollars, Cartmell, uncharacteristically it would appear, and to the astonishment of the Board of Managers, independently committed the Society to pay the amount so that she might begin her assignment. Fortuitously, at the very moment she requested the money, Mrs. James Gooderham, Society President, was "writing to Miss Cartmell telling her not to waste time and money on day schools but to begin a boarding-school at once," adding that she would personally contribute "... even to the lessening of [her] principal in the bank."²⁰ According to W. M. S. tradition, their letters crossed in the Pacific. This was interpreted by the Society as yet another example of God's mysterious ways.

With the help of Dr. Macdonald, Cartmell supervised the construction of the school building. The school was

designed initially to house twenty boarders with apartments for two missionaries. In October 1884, the school officially opened with two boarders in residence and a total capacity for fifty-four girls. Before the school year ended, the building was so overcrowded that an addition was immediately necessary.²¹ Cartmell's fears that the school might not be accepted by the Japanese were not realized, although other missionaries in Tokyo had warned her that the Japanese would "... watch and test both us and the methods employed."²²

Cartmell's struggle to establish the Toyo Eiwa Jo Gakko in the face of language barriers, Japanese suspicion towards westerners and "idol-worshippers" has been rehearsed over and over again in the annals of Canadian Methodism.²³ Within Methodist circles Cartmell became legendary in her own time. By 1930, when she was eighty-five, she had been canonized as one of the "seers of the early period who read the signs of the times and advocated education for girls who would play a big part in the coming era;" her struggle "would live forever in the life of the Christian Church."²⁴ In spite of the overriding hagiographical tones, much of this praise was quite deserved and hard earned. Even though the Japanese government had extended compulsory education to girls, there were "... no attempts to promote, at the same time, the requisite changes in attitude to get parents to pay for the education of daughters."²⁵ Moreover, the government's response to seemingly minor social changes such as the

advocacy of shorter hair which might affect women and their relationships within the family remained negative.²⁶ Consequently, for a foreigner to gain popular support for a girls' school in Tokyo was exceptional. But by her own admission, Cartmell had inched her way very slowly to this eventual success; years later, she admitted that several months had elapsed before she had been invited into a Japanese home.²⁷

For nearly three years, Cartmell was the only representative of the W. M. S. in Japan. The Society had deliberately avoided rapid expansion in Japan because the Board of Managers firmly believed that "... there was more danger in precipitancy than in delay."²⁸ At the same time, the experience of living alone had been unsettling for Cartmell, especially because she was under extreme pressure to succeed. Cartmell had met other missionaries in Tokyo, but she did not write about anyone as a special friend or confidante. To add to her sense of isolation, she was continually depressed by the -

... utter helplessness and inability to do anything that oppresses the missionary just entering a new field. Everything is strange, you are separated from those you wish to attract to yourself by race prejudice, habits and customs, which if not respected widen the breach, and more particularly by the language.²⁹

Even after the long anticipated arrival of a second missionary, Eliza Spencer, a Brantford, Ontario, teacher and daughter of a former editor of the Christian Guardian, to take over the administration of the girls' school, Cartmell

continued to be obsessed with her own "... inability to reach more of the women of the church, and through them the neighbours and friends who knew not the Gospels."³⁰ "[H]er lisplings of the language" hindered her attempts at the evangelical work which was her personal priority and she apologized that "the feeble effort [she] was making in the weekly Bible Class seemed so futile."³¹ To help with evangelizing, Cartmell hired a Japanese Bible woman who began under the supervision of a Japanese preacher to visit women in their homes. But always cautious and guilty over her lack of expertise in Japanese, Cartmell "... did not use Society funds until I knew it was sufficiently successful to justify my doing so."³²

Eliza Spencer's arrival, early in 1885, removed some of Cartmell's obligations to the school. When her health permitted, Cartmell drafted a course of study for the Bible women who were employed, at a minimal salary, by the Society. Cartmell remained devoted to her original project, the girls' school. Even when she was most discouraged about the progress of the work in Japan, Cartmell wrote optimistically of its future, believing that

no matter what these dear girls may be called upon to endure, in consequence of the contrast between the present of wonderful privilege and the future of necessary privation, they will have gained that which will enable them nobly to accommodate themselves to the changes of circumstances ... and the world be better for their having lived in it.³³

Cartmell's concern for the future of her schoolgirls and the welfare of Japanese women came to be widely shared by the W. M. S membership in Canada. Canadian Methodist women were reminded, in 1884 in a membership appeal which appeared in the Missionary Outlook, of their own unique and privileged position. God had granted Western women

...the honor of entering the dark abodes of heathen womanhood, where for so many ages they had been the victims of dire oppression and degradation. We, shielded as we are, can scarcely imagine what their sufferings have been, and still are, where the religion of Christ is unknown. For them, no light of homelife has ever shone. Slaves to brutal masters - not loving and beloved wives - have they ever been. Even motherly love - that precious and most enduring of all earthly loves - has been crushed and bleeding under the direful superstition of their so-called religion.³⁴

There can be no clearer evocation of the Victorian cult of true womanhood and domesticity, its foundation in maternal feminism and its centrality to the gospel of Christian social reform as espoused by Canadian Methodism of the times. For the W. M. S., girls' schools in Japan became the first line of attack in this assault on what Western Christians perceived as barbaric and immoral social and religious practices.

The Methodist Church of Canada's notion of the condition of Japanese women did not change perceptively over the next fifty years as the following excerpt from a 1931 publication confirms.

The freedom and individuality of Japanese women had been sacrificed on the altar of the family system, the result of the ethical teachings of Confucianism which flourished for six hundred years, and to this Buddhism had added its oppression of women. Socially and religiously their development had been hampered. Instead of self-expression, the tradition for women was self-effacement. Her virtues were negative - modesty and unobtrusiveness.³⁵

Recent studies of the status of women in the Meiji period indicate that Japanese women were, indeed, in an inferior position. Westerners in Japan at the turn of the century believed that "the doctrine of 'triple obedience' to father, to husband, and when old to son" had "disastrous consequences" for the country.³⁶ All education for women was directed at "produc[ing] the good wife and wise mother for the maintenance of the family system."³⁷ Christian mission schools, however, had a broad curriculum which encompassed mathematics, sciences, history and instruction in English. Consequently, many parents sincerely wanted their daughters to attend mission schools because of the high educational standards and even approved if their daughters became Christians along the way. For others, not attracted by Christianity, mission schools were simply the most convenient route for their children to take to the best possible Western-style education. Nonetheless, it had been suggested that the Christian mission school for girls was "an oasis of quality for women," and that these schools were among the

influences which helped to moderate traditional Japanese attitudes toward women's place in society.³⁸

The early curriculum of the Tokyo girls' school reveals the extent of the western influence. Mathematics was the only subject taught in Japanese. By graduation, girls were expected to have acquired "a reading and writing knowledge of Chinese, having taken their Japanese history and literature in Chinese, and facility in reading, writing and speaking English."³⁹ Some science was also included in the curriculum and Cartmell obtained a microscope and a set of slide specimens for use in the classroom.⁴⁰ The primary course lasted three years; the full course, eight, after which the student, according to the W. M. S., should have acquired the equivalent skills of a Canadian entering the second year of a high school. It was a far more comprehensive programme than the compulsory government education which covered only the four years from ages six to ten.⁴¹ The girls were required to attend many religious services on Sunday: Sunday School at 9 a.m., preaching at 10 a.m., prayer meeting at 4, English singing from 5:30 to 6.00 and, finally, an evening service at 7 p.m. As well, there was a daily compulsory Bible lesson.⁴² The low ratio of baptisms to the total number of students registered in Methodist schools suggests that many Japanese successfully inured their children against the proselytizing which was an integral part of the curriculum. Of the 250 students enrolled at the

girls' school in 1885,⁴³ seventeen, according to Eliza Spencer's accounting, had become Christians.⁴⁴

Whatever the impulses of Japanese parents in the mid-1880s, the Tokyo school became an immediate success. The Board of Managers had never intended the school to be a charitable institution for poor girls. The fees collected from the students paid for their board and for the salaries of the Japanese teachers hired by the Society and who taught most of the classes. The W. M. S. was responsible for the salaries and expenses of its own employees and some of the costs of construction and maintenance of the buildings. Much to the satisfaction of the Society at home and the missionaries in Japan, from the outset, the Tokyo school attracted the daughters of the "higher classes." The Board was proud and delighted to report that almost all the school girls came from very wealthy families and wore only silk clothing.⁴⁵ Among the early pupils were two princesses, the daughters of Marquis Hirobumi Ito, who was Prime Minister of Japan four times between 1885 and 1901, as well as the daughters of high ranking public officials and military officers.⁴⁶ A few girls from poorer families had their fees paid as "supported students", a practice which grew when enrollment slipped a few years later. In return, after graduation, supported students were required to serve for two years as Bible women, teachers or interpreters for the Society.⁴⁷ The missionaries

interpreted the affluence of their students as God's will.

"It was," wrote Eliza Spencer on Christmas Day, 1885,

the Master leading when the school was established here, where its students can do so much to support themselves, and we feel in winning those of influence and wealth to the Lord's side, that we can by their influence and money do much toward hastening on the time when from one end to the other of this beautiful land the "Glad Tidings" shall have been preached.⁴⁸

Organizing the Tokyo school and assuming responsibility for the future of the W. M. S. in Japan took its anticipated toll on Cartmell's stamina. Shortly after Spencer had arrived, Cartmell's health and her ability to continue her work began to worry the Board of Managers. The exact nature of her medical problem, if one existed, was unspecified and would not have been discussed publicly in any event. There was only a vague reference in the Missionary Outlook to an ailment referred to throughout W. M. S. correspondence as "the Japanese head."⁴⁹ According to the doctors in the mission community, Cartmell's affliction was quite simply the result of overwork; the proposed cure, rest in the cooler mountain regions.⁵⁰ Cartmell was devastated by the diagnosis. In a private letter to her family which, like many others sent home by missionaries, inexplicably appeared in the Missionary Outlook, she confided, most apologetically, that

my distress was so great that I was afraid I would bring upon myself the worst form of head trouble. It is only when I think I am eating the fruits of my own doings, and that

I am forced to rest when I ought to be working that anguish comes. I only tell you this because I know what your opinion of this kind of service is, and I cannot bear you to write, 'I know you were working too hard,' and I know you won't if you know it will pain me. Then, again, do not refer to anything that has been accomplished since my coming, except in words of praise to Him who has done it all The praise of men has not been what I sought and I cannot take it If I have done wrong, the Master's forgiveness is all I crave, and the forgetfulness into which He will cast my sin.⁵¹

Cartmell's overwhelming sense of guilt and personal failure seem consistent with the symptoms of a nervous breakdown. Her own analysis of the situation might, on the surface, suggest a rather serious breach of conduct on her part; but that anything of the sort occurred is most unlikely. If she had sinned in any literal sense, the indiscretion, as a later case confirmed, would never have been referred to publicly and Cartmell would have been recalled at once. Probably in response to Cartmell's situation, a sympathetic editorial appeared shortly after in the same journal. The editor reminded his readers that missionaries were merely "men and women with the same infirmities of body and mind as our own, and with far greater trials and temptations. They are placed in circumstances where the weakness of the flesh is sorely tried."⁵²

Cartmell did not respond to the prescribed rest cure; she could no longer continue to work and in April 1887, she returned to Canada.⁵³ By 1890, Cartmell had recovered enough to rejoin the W. M. S. as an advisor to Home Missions in

British Columbia; in 1892, she returned to Japan as an evangelist without the administrative tasks which she had obviously found so taxing. Three years later, during the upheaval in the Japan Mission, Cartmell resigned from the W. M. S., ostensibly for medical reasons, and retired permanently to Hamilton where she lived with her cousins. She remained a W. M. S. activist, addressing missionary circles and corresponding with her former W. M. S. colleagues and pupils in Japan almost until her death in 1945 at the age of ninety-nine.⁵⁴

In spite of the many accolades given to her as the successful architect of the Tokyo school, Cartmell remained self-effacing. Ten years after her return to Canada, she was haunted by the persistent fear that she had not known the Lord as she should; that she "did not exercise the self-control that would convince others of the grace I was conscious of - because I would talk of my fear of making mistakes when there should have been no fear."⁵⁵ Self-doubt, Cartmell believed, had contributed to her personal failure. More probably the responsibilities she was expected to assume on behalf of the W. M. S. in a culture totally alien to a middle-class, middle-aged Victorian Canadian spinster were simply too onerous for a woman about whom a fellow worker said, "I believe God never put a sweeter soul in human form."⁵⁶

Whatever Cartmell's doubts about the future of missionary work in Japan and her place in it, the Society itself was confident that succeeding women could develop and expand the work Cartmell had begun. When Cartmell left Tokyo in 1887, three other women remained to carry on. Two of them, Spencer and Agnes Wintemute, if not quite the antithesis of Cartmell's reticence, were, at very least, more opinionated, self-reliant and confident, qualities which became especially evident in their subsequent associations with the men of the mission community. Under Spencer's direction, a second station was opened in 1887 in Shizuoka about 130 miles southwest of Tokyo when a group of influential Japanese men approached the W. M. S. about a school in their city. If the W. M. S. were willing to direct the school and to pay the salaries of the missionaries, the men would assume responsibility for all other expenses.⁵⁷ The Society accepted the offer; the new venture was bolstered by a gift of one thousand dollars from two Toronto women.⁵⁸ Early in 1888, Mary Jane Cunningham, an experienced teacher from Halifax, took over in Shizuoka where she would remain for the next thirty years.⁵⁹

In the beginning, the Shizuoka school building did not live up to Cunningham's expectations. It was, in fact, only a Japanese home, albeit that of the deputy-governor of the city. The missionaries were somewhat appeased because, as in Tokyo, their pupils were the daughters of the elite.

Cunningham, who was not a timid woman, took the opportunity on at least one occasion to lecture the city officials about the value of an education for Japanese women. As she proudly reported to the W. M. S.,

Mr. Cassidy [a General Board missionary] had told me afterwards that he was astonished by my audacity - standing up and telling the governor and other official men of Shizuoka that their wives were inferior to American ladies. He was afraid that they would be offended, but no such thing. My 'lecture' quite pleased them.⁶⁰

Later, in 1908, Cunningham's failure to "exercise self-control" which "provok[ed] comment from Japanese" led to her recall,⁶¹ but at the time, her assertions of western cultural superiority do not appear to have prompted a critical response from the Board of Managers.

The opening of the school in Shizuoka marked a period of expansion and relative success for the W. M. S. that lasted for the next five years. Yet, these years of growth were marred by a variety of problems within the Japan mission which seem to coincide with the Board of Managers' decision, in July 1887, to sanction the marriage of Eliza Spencer to Rev. T. A. Large "lest the interest of [the] school in Japan should suffer by being deprived of valuable supervision."⁶² The engagement had been a well-kept secret even from Spencer's intimate friends, no doubt from the not unrealistic fear that she would be relieved of her duties and dismissed by the Society as soon as the news became public. Agnes Wintemute recorded her shock and disgust at the mission community's

reaction to the engagement announcement. "I really did not think that Christian people could be capable of getting up such detestable gossip as I have reason to believe from to-day's disclosures is being started in this compound."⁶³ Remarkably, considering the prevailing attitudes toward the employment of women after marriage and the Society's own rules against it, Spencer was permitted to marry and to retain her job. In a testimony to Spencer's abilities which was also a strong endorsement of Christian marriage, the Board of Managers, likely under pressure from the president Mrs. Gooderham who later became Spencer's staunch champion,

expressed the wish [for her] to remain in the position she hitherto filled so ably and successfully. In this matter she has acted in a most loyal and honorable manner towards the society; and the executive after careful consideration and proper consultation with all parties concerned, both at home and in Japan, has officially given a hearty consent believing that benefit may arise as the pupils have a somewhat near view of the privilege accorded by Christianity as the companion of man.⁶⁴

Spencer's case was not to be taken as a precedent. But at the time, her services seemed so vital and she was such an able administrator of the school that the Board of Managers overrode its own rulings against the employment of married women.

On July 18, wearing a traditional gown and veil, Spencer was married to Large in a ceremony performed by Rev. Hiraiwa, one of the Japanese Methodist preachers. The following day, the entire mission staff, newlyweds in tow,

departed for the annual summer trek into the mountains beyond Yokakawa, taking with them all the comforts of the mission compound, beds and dishes included.⁶⁵ With Spencer Large securely entrenched as the guiding force behind the Japan mission, the women began to take the first tentative steps towards establishing their own administrative structure. Whether the action was deliberately intended to do so or not, it was a step toward preventing the General Board of Missions Council in Japan from interfering with the women's work. When she arrived, Cartmell had relied heavily on the advice of Dr. Macdonald and other General Board missionaries, a practice which both she and the Board of Managers had accepted as a necessity under the circumstances.⁶⁶ But when the General Board Council meetings in Japan were instituted in 1886, the W. M. S. missionaries were not given any official voice, just as in Canada at the time, Methodist women had no official representation on church councils.⁶⁷ In a report written for the General Council in 1894, Dr. Macdonald recalled that

[f]rom the time the Woman's Missionary Society began to work in Japan, to Feb. 6, 1886, the ladies met regularly with us in our mission meetings. The last meeting they attended was on that date. On inquiry, I find that the reason they did not continue to attend was that after that date they never received any notice of our meetings. In 1886 the General Conference organized our Council. In the constitution of the Council no provision was made for any representation of the Woman's Missionary Society workers. I do not say that there should have been; the point is that the ladies did not withdraw

from us, but we seem to have, unwittingly, dropped them.⁶⁸

Following the example of the General Board of Missions and acting upon instructions from the W. M. S. Board of Managers, the women formed their own council.⁶⁹ The inaugural meeting was held in September, 1888, in Tokyo. The W. M. S. Japan Mission Council was designed explicitly to evaluate the needs of the women's particular work, to standardize their expanding network of schools and to determine the stationing of personnel. The Council was expected to meet monthly under the direction of a Secretary-Treasurer who served as the chairman and a Recording Secretary. These offices usually were assigned to veteran missionaries.⁷⁰ An Executive Council, based in Tokyo, was set up to meet in case of emergencies. The annual meeting, which, in later years, was held at resort hotels, became a highlight of the mission year, a happy reunion where as many missionaries as possible met to share their experiences and to solve their problems.

To consolidate its position in Japan, the W. M. S. opened a third station in Kofu, midway between Tokyo and Shizuoka, again with the financial support of a local group.⁷¹ Agnes Wintemute, now 25, with three years' experience in Tokyo and a good understanding of Japanese, was sent to direct the operation. No more schools were opened until 1897. In the interim, the W. M. S. moved into Kanazawa, an industrial city on the Sea of Japan where, for the first time, the women confronted the effects of urban industrial

poverty. The familiar techniques of door to door visiting and women's meetings were ineffective methods to introduce poor women to Christianity when the women "worked from early morning until long after lamplight at silk embroidery seven days in the week."⁷² Most parents were unable to pay the minimal fees charged by Government schools, let alone the expenses involved in sending their children to a mission boarding school. Instead, the W. M. S., under the direction of Isabella Hargrave, opened a night school and a Sunday School for the factory girls. The W. M. S. also rented a house in the poorest district of the city, where young children were paid to make matches and handkerchiefs. However, this scheme did not operate as smoothly as anticipated because the Sino-Japanese war seriously disrupted the match trade. Moreover, the residents of the area were very suspicious and the women faced more hostility in Kanazawa than anywhere else in Japan. Only fifteen years later could the W. M. S. report that the missionaries were being left to do their work in peace in Kanazawa.⁷³

By 1896, twenty-three women had been sent to Japan by the Society. Fifteen remained and this group shaped and determined the nature of W. M. S. missionary work in Japan for many years to come if only because of their long service in the field (on the average, seventeen years). Interested Canadians who read the letters these women sent to Methodist missionary publications must have envisioned the Japanese

mission station as an agreeable environment in which to live and work in these early years. The beauty of Japan and its vegetation, if not its unpredictable climate - typhoons, earthquakes and tidal waves - and the unfamiliar social customs and morals of the Japanese, far exceeded the expectations of Agnes Wintemute and others who set down their impressions of the country for Methodist readers. Wintemute was especially impressed by the clean streets of Tokyo and the quality of the housing. It was, in fact, she observed, quite a few weeks before she realized that she was "... in a heathen community; and for a while it almost seemed ... that there was not the great work to be done that I had expected."⁷⁴

The diaries Wintemute kept while she was in Tokyo studying the language in 1886 and 1887 describe both the routine of missionary life and her own delight and frustration as she entered into the work. The missionaries and their pupils operated within a highly structured and disciplined atmosphere. Day to day activity was rigidly regimented. Breakfast was at seven. For Wintemute and other "novitiates", the hour from 8:30 to 9:30, three times a week, was set aside for learning Japanese under the supervision of a Japanese teacher. Each evening, there was an hour of Bible study before dinner. On Wednesday afternoons, the women paid visits to Japanese homes hoping to gain an audience for their stories about Jesus, while on Fridays, from 3:30 to 6:00, the

mission was open to visitors, usually Japanese who might be curious about Christianity. In the intervals between these obligations, the women who served as teachers conducted classes in English while others, on their own or accompanied by Bible women, carried on evangelizing work in both urban and rural areas of the country, sometimes staying overnight in local inns in order to spread God's word.⁷⁵

Despite what appears to have been a rigorous schedule, Wintemute had time for leisure activities: croquet, horseback riding and lots of reading. She kept a list of the books she had read after leaving home. It included many contemporary novels (which might not have been approved Methodist reading), as well as classics such as Ben Hur, Nicholas Nickleby, Letters from Hell, Adam Bede and Looking Backward and religious writings of the popular evangelist Dwight Moody.⁷⁶ Some of the volumes were probably from the mission library and were available to all the women in the mission community.

Like Cartmell, the women could not legitimately complain of physical discomforts and had, in fact, brought with them the trappings of middle-class Canada. But they were often bothered by their status as foreigners in Japan and by their alienation from their homes and families. Overseas mail was eagerly anticipated, although as a veteran recalled, if it arrived on a Sunday, it was not opened.⁷⁷ Because responses to letters might take up to four months,

news of deaths and illness among family and friends was received with a stoical acceptance. Wintemute looked forward to her letters from home with "a strange mixture of ... anxiety, joy, surprise, pleasure and sorrow." When news of the death of an ailing relative arrived, she responded predictably with the pronouncement, "[t]hus one is taken and another left. Oh, to be ever prepared to meet our God."⁷⁸ Wintemute's diaries reveal quite clearly her discouragement and doubts about her suitability for missionary work, an uncertainty which had surfaced even before she had left Canada. The first anniversary of her decision to go to Japan was, for her, a day "when a person would lose all heart, if he did not truly believe that in some way or other there was a providence in everything."⁷⁹ A week later, still disheartened from a frustrating afternoon of house to house visitation, she admitted that " ... on Wednesday afternoons I feel that I would rather stay at home, but after I go I am always glad; and I almost believe it does me more good than the people whom I visit."⁸⁰ A trip to the mountains with the other missionaries opened Wintemute's eyes "to the most wretched squalid looking places that [she] had seen in Japan." One village in particular, Katatsui, where the party stayed overnight to observe an eclipse, was, she observed, so immoral that "Dante should have visited ... before he wrote his Inferno."⁸¹ Like most Western missionaries in Japan at the time, Wintemute was appalled by Japanese attitudes

towards nudity. In summer, in rural areas, men, women and children often wore only a koshimaki, a piece a cloth about two feet wide which was tied around the lower body.⁸²

Wintemute was especially shocked by the public baths which were constantly occupied by "people of both sexes bathing promiscuously" and by the open houses where one, as she delicately phrased it, could "see all."⁸³ In time, Wintemute become reconciled to Japanese culture. After her marriage in 1893 to Rev. Harper Coates of the General Board, in accordance with W. M. S. policy, she resigned from her position, but, she continued to work among Japanese women on a voluntary basis and became so identified with her adopted land that she remained there, even during World War Two, until her death in 1945.⁸⁴

Others of this pioneering group were more encouraged by their initial efforts to win converts to Christianity and to make their mark on Japanese society. Kate Morgan's first year in Japan was for her

... the brightest and happiest in my religious experience, for never before have I felt such entire dependence on God and so little able to do anything in my own strength. I often wonder as we walk along the streets, followed by men and women and children, if our teaching can ever reach them. Is it not wonderful that the very men who last year were opposed to Christianity have now built a school where it is to be taught?⁸⁵

But, from both private and published letters, it seems clear that towards the end of the 1880s, the work of the

W. M. S. in Japan was not proceeding as smoothly as the Society and the missionaries had anticipated. Individual missionaries were very sensitive to changes in Japanese attitudes towards mission schools and about the ensuing decline in enrollments. Publicly, the women preferred to ascribe the decreased attendance to a failing Japanese economy and not to the upsurge in Japanese nationalism which had produced, to cite a recent historian, "successive waves of chauvinism."⁸⁶ The following excerpt from a letter written by Mary Jane Cunningham in 1889 indicates that she, for one, understood all too well that the declining enrollment was related, if not to a reaction against Westernization generally, then to the obvious Christian character of the mission schools.

People complain that such a strong religious influence is thrown round the girls that those who enter the school as boarders are almost certain to become Christians. At first there was little or no objection to Christianity. It was something Western, and there was such a craze for anything from the West.⁸⁷

At the same time, Agnes Wintemute, on her own in Kofu, faced a hostile clientele composed of those "who [were] not as advanced as those of most of the provinces," Buddhists, and "others who hate[d] Christianity." Moreover, because some earlier private schools which taught English had closed after the fees had been collected, parents in Kofu were suspicious of yet another school.⁸⁸ When a decrease in enrollment at the girls' schools was recorded for 1890, the W. M. S.

Council in Japan found itself unable to justify the appointment of any new workers.⁸⁹ At its annual meeting, the W. M. S. Japan Council, possibly to conceal the realities of the situation, moved that the Board of Managers should publish only a general financial statement for the year.⁹⁰

An examination of the minutes of this same meeting suggests that the women were also becoming more concerned about their workloads and their own future security. For the first time, they petitioned the Board of Managers for an increase in their salaries, to \$700.00 per annum for the first five year term and \$800.00 for each subsequent term.⁹¹ The raise was warranted, they argued, because the Society was now employing many second term workers who had mastered Japanese and were more valuable. Moreover, because most resignations occurred within the first five years, second term workers were more likely to remain as employees with the W. M. S. until retirement and these women needed some assurance that they could save for their retirement. Accordingly, the council resolved that

... as there is no fund for wornout missionaries, those giving their lives up to the work ought to have a sufficiently large salary to provide something for the future when they can no longer engage in the active work. We feel that on a salary of six hundred dollars we cannot do this; and at the same time fulfil our duty to the Society, for, we find it necessary to spend a good deal on books, that we would not require if engaged in teaching at home, and it is impossible for us to economize much either in the way of clothing or household expenses, since we are expected to give to the Society

not only a limited number of hours daily, but our whole time, except what is necessary for rest or recreation.⁹²

Their proposal demonstrates clearly the women's view that their work had become a viable profession with unique characteristics, demands and qualifications. It is indicative as well of a new willingness to accept responsibility for their own future within their chosen profession, a profession which they argued convincingly was not without its risks. For example, they were convinced, rightly or wrongly, that the damp climate in Japan created health problems and that in order to work for the W. M. S. in Japan, "all alike give up the social privileges and opportunities of advancement they enjoyed at home."⁹³

Much of this anxiety about their future welfare may have derived from an event which had occurred just a few months earlier. In April 1889, Eliza Spencer Large, now the mother of a year-old daughter, somewhat ruefully, indicated to the readers of the Missionary Leaflet that her life had become rather dull and had assumed a predictable pattern. "I see almost nothing outside our own grounds; shopping and exercises are about the only calls that take me farther than the gate."⁹⁴ Just three months later, however, readers were horrified by her next letter to the same publication which was an alarming and painful antithesis, rehearsing the murder of her "darling" husband during the night of April 4 and 5. The event completely destroyed any complacency which the

mission community might have felt about its position in Japan.⁹⁵

The murder can be reconstructed from Mrs. Large's letters and from accounts published in English-language newspapers in Japan, although the latter tended to be critical of Rev. Large's response to the dangerous situation. Bandits had entered the Tokyo Girls' School late at night, bound up the watchman and, because they needed the keys to open the safe where it was rumoured large quantities of silver were stored, they set off to find Mrs. Large. They found their way into the Large's bedroom; the occupants awoke immediately; Rev. Large "sprang up" and "proceeded to action at once. Unhesitatingly [the robbers] struck at him with their swords and then made for the doors."⁹⁶ Rev. Large ran after the intruders; his wife followed, apparently joining in the fight before finally throwing herself between her husband and the attackers. "She received a slash which laid open the right side of her face, and seeking to grasp one of the assailant's weapons, the two first fingers of her right hand were almost cut off and the third finger deeply wounded."⁹⁷ The subsequent inquest reported that Rev. Large had incurred at least twelve wounds, including three to the head. At the insistence of Mrs. Large, the Misses Hart, whose room was next to the Large's, carried Rev. Large to his bed and administered ammonia to a man they knew was already dead.⁹⁸

The English-language Japanese paper concluded that the murder was not the result of "anti-Christian fanaticism or ... some sentiment of hatred towards Mr. or Mrs. Large." The robbers had not intended to kill Rev. Large and he was not severely wounded until he began to resist. The paper, nevertheless, conceded that

the absolute immunity enjoyed by foreigners in Japan from all personal violence during this past twenty years invests this sad event with peculiar interest. But burglaries with violence are common everywhere, and in Japan, the sword, freely used, is not an infrequent adjunct to robbery.⁹⁹

The admonition ended with a final disapproving comment about the Large's behaviour.

What could be less likely than that a gentleman and a lady, finding two men standing over them with naked swords, would dream of offering violent opposition to the commands of their assailants.¹⁰⁰

A few weeks later, Eliza Large had recovered sufficiently to write to the Society about her loss. She dismissed the tributes to her courage, preferring to express her grief which she couched in the metaphor of heavenly domesticity.

... [T]his earth is not my abiding place. Heaven is my home. My loved one is there. My father, brothers and sister are there and best of all, my God and Saviour is there. What a joyful homecoming I shall have someday.¹⁰¹

Large was granted a year's furlough with full salary and returned to Canada to recuperate.

Emerging from seclusion to attend the Annual Meeting of the W. M. S. held in Toronto in October 1889, Eliza

Spencer Large dramatically "came forward draped in black on the arm of Mrs. Willmott" and spoke, in true missionary style, not of her own sad circumstances, but about the development and expansion of the Japanese girls' schools.¹⁰² Apparently the strain of such displays caused a relapse and in December she withdrew to Clifton Springs Sanatorium, a popular retreat for returned North American missionaries located in upper New York State. Its director, who can be identified only as Dr. Foster, prescribed prayer as a remedy for a variety of physical ills. Foster also apparently advocated "the fulfillment of the Union between Christ and his people as the Bridegroom and the Bride, as typified in the Song of Solomon." According to one source, female patients were alleged to have appeared naked before Foster so that the betrothal with Christ might take place in the literal sense.¹⁰³ At the sanatorium, Spencer was prohibited from company, writing and even reading.¹⁰⁴ By July, 1890, whatever the treatment, Spencer Large had recovered and accompanied by two new recruits, returned to her position at the Tokyo school.¹⁰⁵ For the time being, the W. M. S. had gained a respected heroine.

While Large was furloughed in Canada, the W. M. S. council in Japan was redefining its rules to meet the exigencies of the field. But, as soon as Large returned to Japan, bitter quarrelling between the General Board and the women missionaries began to disrupt the usual pattern of

mission life. The sources of the disagreement between the two missionary groups were infinite, but defining the boundaries of their respective areas of work and personality or sexual conflicts emerge as the most obvious causes of the dissension. In September 1891, the W. M. S. Japan Council minutes had reported a request from Dr. Eby of the General Board for two women to go to Hongo, a suburb of Tokyo, to assist in the tabernacle and a second from Dr. Saunby for two more to teach in the Tokyo Boys' School. The W. M. S. Council wanted these requests to come to them through the proper channels and voted not to

consider propositions for opening new lines of work from the agents of the General Board, unless said propositions have received the approval of the Council of the General Board, and are sent to us through the Secretary of the same, and that a copy of the resolution be sent to the secretary of the Mission Council of the General Board.¹⁰⁶

Ad hoc arrangements between the two groups were no longer acceptable to the W. M. S. Council. At the same time, the women were careful to assure the General Board that any plans which they might have for the opening of new work in the future would continue to be sent to the General Board for its final approval.¹⁰⁷ For the time being, Dr. Saunby, at least, must have complied because the W. M. S. council provided two women to teach three and a half hours per week at his school.¹⁰⁸

At the Fifth Annual Japan Council Meeting in July 1892, attended by Mrs. Gooderham and Mrs. Strachan who were

on an inspection tour, an effort was made to maintain a good working relationship with the General Board in spite of its vague accusation that the W. M. S. had not operated within the discipline of the Methodist Church of Canada.¹⁰⁹ The General Board Council appointed

... a deputation consisting of Dr. Cochran and Messrs. Cassidy and Crummy to confer with the Council of the Women's [sic] Missionary Society with a view to a harmonious adjustment of the work, and a satisfactory understanding between the workers.¹¹⁰

The women received the emissaries politely, but no rapprochement was reached. The W. M. S. Council minutes tersely noted that "the main difficulty [was] that the women were not under the control of the Council of the Japan Mission of the Methodist Church of Canada."¹¹¹

Complicating the issue was a suspicion voiced by some of the women that many of the men disliked Eliza Large. In fact, when Mrs. Gooderham and Mrs. Strachan were in Tokyo, Large had tendered her resignation, but, after her co-workers pledged their support, it had been withdrawn. Her "superior executive ability, strict adherence to duty and her earnest devotion to the work" were cited as vital to the success of the mission.¹¹² The display of solidarity behind Mrs. Large did not improve relationships with the men of the General Board. Six months later, Lizzie Hart, who had been assisting the General Board at the Hongo tabernacle, was accused of destroying their work. The W. M. S. demanded substantiation of the charges through a fullscale investigation to be

attended by all members of both missions.¹¹³ Dr. Macdonald, Recording Secretary of the General Board Council and unofficial pater familias of the entire Japan mission, advised against this plan, fearing it would give "unnecessary publicity to matters which belong[ed] to the two missions only."¹¹⁴ His admonition to settle the matter privately did not satisfy the W. M. S. Council which insisted that only an open hearing could vindicate their organization and its agents.¹¹⁵

In a further attempt at reconciliation, possibly because the W. M. S. was stalling on a request from the General Board to inaugurate work in Nagano,¹¹⁶ Macdonald assured the W. M. S. that the General Board had not "... the slightest wish or intention to interfere with [their] autonomy as a mission;" they sought consultation, not control.¹¹⁷ From his vantage point in Canada, the General Superintendent of Missions, Dr. Alexander Sutherland, identified Large's presence in the mission as a leading cause of the trouble besetting both mission bodies. In a letter to Elizabeth Strachan in March 1893, he suggested that the Board of Managers should have accepted Large's resignation, even though "personally, [he would] be very sorry to have [her] leave."¹¹⁸ The Board of Managers chose to ignore his advice.

Subsequent testimony from both missionary contingents confirmed that Eliza Large's presence in Japan had engendered hostility, even hatred, not only from the male General Board

mission but from some of her own colleagues. Because of the discreet way in which the women wrote about the situation, perhaps because they suspected that their letters might be made public, it is difficult to determine exactly how individuals within the mission community reacted to the situation and to the web of accusations. Most of the women regarded such conduct as unbecoming to missionaries. Yet, their strong determination to protect their work and their autonomy and their resolve to defend Large led them into debates for which, by background and predeliction, they were unprepared. Although the women publicly supported Large, rumours persisted that she was often at odds with her fellow workers. In December 1894, for example, at a council meeting, Large challenged Marion Lambly about the way she had been treated since her arrival because "on former similar occasions, Mrs. Large's treatment of ladies ha[d] been said to have been cruel and to have caused ill-health."¹¹⁹ Lambly, perhaps because she was afraid to confront Large as chairman of the Council, responded that she alone had been responsible for her shortcomings and that she had at no time been mistreated by Large.¹²⁰

The women were equally quick to deny that the estrangement from the men was rooted in personal antagonism. They had only acted "in defense of their work." Yet, if "outwardly friendly relationships" between the two groups prevailed, the W. M. S. certainly sought "no ground for

closer friendship."¹²¹ The women were satisfied that their council had not allowed personal feelings to interfere with the work,

and realizing the sacredness of that work have kept within our own circle all knowledge of these difficulties until the giving of information was rendered necessary in our own defense, so that, from us, rumors have not spread either to the Japanese workers here or to the community at home.¹²²

The following forceful defense of their collective reputation was sent to the Board of Managers with a demand for immediate action.

We indignantly resent the idea that a band of women mostly experienced in Christian work before leaving home should be so lacking in strength of character as to submit to unjust treatment of themselves or stand passively by and see it imposed upon others; or should be so lacking in integrity as to refrain from expressing our conscientious convictions on all vital points.

We protest against Mrs. Large's being held personally responsible for the actions of the Council or of the Council Executive. We would deny most emphatically the very serious reports now carried in Canada that Mrs. Large's treatment of various members has been cruel or even unkind or such as is calculated to injure the health of her fellow workers.¹²³

In spite of this emotional apologia, the Board of Managers, "in order to restore harmony," relieved Large of her duties at the end of the school year and called her home ostensibly on furlough.¹²⁴

In retaliation, the W. M. S. Japan Mission Council sent an angry letter to the Board of Managers in July 1895, challenging the Methodist concept of justice and soliciting

the support of their W. M. S. sisters in Canada. It was a vigorous statement of their rights as missionaries.

Does God ask us to come here, offer to Him our all for the good of His work, and after spending the best years of our lives in His service, does He desire us to submit to be called home before we know the charges brought against us or have had opportunity to defend ourselves against them: With our hearts bound up in the work we have left, with health, reputation and fitness for work in Canada impaired or gone, yet most of us are obliged to work for our daily bread. It may be a legal thing to do, but to us the question comes in this form, Does God ask us to do this?

'Ladies, we appeal to you, as mothers, as sisters, or as friends, are you willing that the young Christian women who are bound to you by the strongest of earthly ties, shall offer themselves for the work under these circumstances.'

'We believe that a tribunal composed of Christian men and women ought to be of a higher nature than a law-court and yet the meanest British subject cannot be condemned before a law-court until he has been made acquainted definitely with the charges preferred against him and until he has had an opportunity to defend himself. But a missionary, the herald of Christ, can be condemned without even being told what wrong she has committed.'¹²⁵

The controversy culminated in October 1895, when the Japan Affair came before the General Board of Missions of the Methodist Church of Canada. All attempts by the Church and its missionary organizations to suppress rumours of trouble in the Japan mission had failed and even before the hearings began the situation involving the missionaries in Japan had become public through the pages of the Christian Guardian and the Globe.¹²⁶

Before the hearing, which was not officially designated to investigate the operations of the W. M. S., the W. M. S. Board of Managers carried out its own review of the situation. They began by citing an ideological disagreement about the opening of the Herbie Bellamy Orphanage in Kanazawa as one flashpoint. Dr. Macdonald, acting on behalf of his colleagues, had opposed the plan "as a pampering." Orphanages were not a legitimate part of the missionary enterprise which was designed to "train the Japanese to go forth and take up their work."¹²⁷ From the women's viewpoint, an orphanage was simply the logical extension of their work among the poor in Kanazawa, and had become all the more vital because of the Presbyterians' success in this new area.¹²⁸ During the review, the specific charges against Large were finally articulated; mistreatment of her fellow workers by hypnotizing them, and the cruel abuse of Hannah Lund, who had recently died at her home in Brantford, and whom, Large allegedly had confined to her room and fed only bread and water.¹²⁹ Missionaries who had returned home on furlough or who had retired testified. Isabella Hargrave recalled that she had first heard the allegations about Large from Dr. Sparling by way of Dr. Saunby who was Lund's brother-in-law. Hargrave "thanked God for tears ... if I could not [have] relieve[d] myself by tears the trouble that has been in regard to these Japanese matters would be almost more than I could bear."¹³⁰ Mrs. Burns, a prominent member of the

Society who had visited Lund's Brantford home after her death, admitted that she "... did not leave that home with the impression that that perfect harmony that Mrs. Large had spoken of existed."¹³¹ Isabella Blackmore and three others were prepared to resign if the situation in Japan could not be remedied. Blackmore could not return

... feeling that I was not sure of God's approval As far as I knew I had done what was right, and as I know Mrs. Large had done what was right as far as she knew I felt it was useless for me to go back I believe that God has called me to the work in Japan just as much as I believed it six years ago, and I am willing to go back as long as I have the support of the ladies at home.¹³²

The last months before the hearing were unbearable and unproductive for most of the women missionaries stationed in Japan. The problems became an embarrassment " ... not only to the parties themselves and to the officers of those Societies at home, but ... were known to many of the people in [Canada] and to many of the natives in Japan." The mission societies feared that "[t]he results [would] be but disastrous both upon missionary contributions in this country and upon spiritual results in Japan."¹³³ Martha Cartmell portrayed the situation as "a tempest ... raging here. It seems as if Satan has been let loose to rend and destroy the Church."¹³⁴ Jessie Munro, in a published letter, tried to throw the best light on the tense situation by applauding the solidarity of the workers.

Our household is very sober; overwork, poor health and heavy trouble take away much of

the merriness from life, but I can say we are not unhappy. We love and trust each other and help and sympathize.¹³⁵

The official report of the General Board hearings which ran to over seven hundred typed pages covered all aspects of the controversy. Most of the investigation focused on the complex internal problems of the General Board of Missions, but at the same time the members of the tribunal felt constrained to examine the relationship between the two mission bodies. The General Board missionaries upheld their accusation that Lizzie Hart had destroyed their work at the Hongo Tabernacle. Rev. Eby reiterated his charge that Hart and her interpreter "... simply could not do the work and failed."¹³⁶ Hart defended her position, pointing out that she had received no support from Eby or the church members in Hongo. "This lack of sympathy and co-operation," she argued, "not only paralyzed our work there, but unduly tax[ed] the strength, physical and spiritual, of our workers, both foreign and native."¹³⁷ Consequently, the W. M. S. withdrew its workers and requested an investigation. As Dr. Sutherland astutely concluded, the estrangement had "begun in little sparks of misunderstanding that, fanned by the breath of gossip and tale-bearing, kindled smouldering fires of mutual suspicion and dislike, and rendered more difficult the adjustment of wider differences."¹³⁸

Sutherland blamed Eby and Cassidy for most of the

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trouble. He declined to indict any W. M. S. missionaries because it was


... not for [him] to say how much responsibility rests upon the ladies of the Woman's Mission - their own Executive will deal with that question; but suppose what has been said of them were true, it is well known that it takes two to make a quarrel, and if our missionaries found they could not agree with lady missionaries, they had still the alternative of quietly letting them alone.¹³⁹

Elizabeth Strachan contended that the disputes had started when the General Board meddled with the W. M. S. evangelistic department and its Sunday Schools.¹⁴⁰ Nellie Hart cited her own personal problems with Cassidy who had pressured her to accompany him on trips of two or three days into the rural areas because the novelty of a foreign women would draw a good crowd.¹⁴¹ Hart had refused ostensibly because she could not neglect her obligations to the Society and because the trip would have involved travel on Sunday, a W. M. S. restriction which she refused to violate.¹⁴² When one tribunal member dared to raise the thorny question of the impropriety that might have been inherent in Cassidy's request, Hart replied simply, "that thought never came into my mind, it was purely that I felt that the girls who had come to our schools, were entrusted to our care."¹⁴³

Isabella Hargrave testified that in Kanazawa where she had been stationed, Saunby demanded that the W. M. S. Sunday School recruits be counted in his records, an action which the women interpreted as interference with their

designated work. Arguments had also arisen about the number of hours which Mary Jane Cunningham should teach in the Kanazawa Boys' School. The disagreement reached the point where Cunningham had seriously considered transferring to the Presbyterian mission. Saunby then resorted to a form of blackmail, threatening "to expose the [W. M. S.] Council and ... ladies to the Presbyterians in such a way that they would in no case take her in."¹⁴⁴ Because Cunningham had to teach some classes in English in order to hold a valid passport to remain in Japan and because the W. M. S. did not conduct any English classes in Kanazawa, in this case, a suitable compromise was reached.¹⁴⁵

Large testified last. She protested that everything had been blamed on her and while she would willingly shoulder her share, she would not accept responsibility for all that had happened. Her testimony uncovered yet another personality clash with Agnes Wintemute which had peaked when Large returned the invitation to Wintemute's wedding. Large herself was evasive, preferring to discuss the Tabernacle and "the evident desire on the part of some of the agents of the General Board to get control of the work of the Woman's Missionary Society."¹⁴⁶ Other women who had been in Japan agreed with Large that the General Board had sought more than consultation; they had wanted the women "to follow their advice which is control."¹⁴⁷



The tribunal decided with one dissenting vote that Cassidy should not be allowed to return immediately to Japan. Nor did Sutherland consider it wise for Large to resume her work.¹⁴⁸ In a confidential report written three years later, after an official inspection of the Japanese missions, Sutherland observed that the W. M. S. missionaries had been "faithful workers, and are rendering our beloved Zion a very noble and valuable service."¹⁴⁹ Every mission, Sutherland acknowledged, had setbacks. In the past, the Canadian Methodist missionaries had erred in "the pride of opinion."

The Methodist Church; Canada, [was] running a two-wheeled vehicle without any connection between the whole but the invisible bond of piety and good sense, which are not always present in large quantities. The riders on the separate wheels sometimes make vaulting sprints and dash in collision.¹⁵⁰

Futhermore, the W. M. S. workplans,

not of a set purpose but of an unguarded evolution, greatly accentuated and increased the difficulties that arose upon other causes, and may in some instances have even been the occasion of their development. The spirit of a sensitive independence did not conduce to harmony and cooperation.¹⁵¹

Sutherland's seems to be a fairly accurate analysis of the situation where the women missionaries, cut off by a three months' delay in communication with Canada, had decided to act on their own initiative. Their foremost obligation, as they had understood it, was not to the Council of the General Board, but to their own mission society and to their charges in Japan. The issue was further complicated by the

sexual question and by the resolve of the W. M. S. missionaries to look after their own interests as employees and women rather than simply yielding to what was commonly ascribed to God's will. One astute member of the tribunal recognized that the Methodist Church was itself partly to blame for the disputes between the men and women in Japan.

... [T]he friction between those two bodies out there, could have been avoided, would never have happened, if men and women had been placed upon equality long ago in the Methodist church, and we had no Women's [sic] Missionary Society. I trust that the day is not far distant when that will be brought about. There will be no Women's [sic] Missionary Society, but there will be a missionary society of the Methodist Church, men and women, all equal, standing in it, in its direction, government and carrying out.¹⁵²

The W. M. S. petitioned Dr. Sutherland to reinstate Eliza Large. But even before the hearings ended, the Executive of the General Board denied their request. This time, the Board of Managers, while deploring the verdict, acquiesced, acknowledging that the Executive was acting in the best interests of the work in Japan. The Board had no constitutional authority to act further.¹⁵³ In a letter to Elizabeth Strachan, Large reaffirmed her faith in her divine call to work in Japan and outlined her plans to return independently. She was "forced to take this position. I do it under protest, but realizing my duty and hearing my Father's voice saying, 'Behold I have set before you an open door;' I dare not do otherwise."¹⁵⁴ A few months later,

Mrs. Gooderham resigned as W. M. S. President to sponsor and accompany Large to Japan where they worked for several years in association with the W. C. T. U.¹⁵⁵ A few years later, Eliza Large moved to Ortona, Pennsylvania where she became involved in fruit farming until her death in 1933.¹⁵⁶

In the wake of the "imbroglio," as it was designated in Methodist circles, the W. M. S. tried to restore peace to its mission community in Japan. Consultation arrangements were set up between field secretaries in Japan and West China and the home base in Canada. Similar machinery was adopted to settle personal disputes. The following paragraph detailing the obligations of missionaries themselves for the well-being of the mission community was added to the list of requirements for missionary candidates.

Each mission is a little community in which the will of the majority should rule. Each member of it should do her utmost to promote its peace and unity, and to submit gracefully and not merely because she cannot prevail. She should keep herself well informed as to the work and policy of her associates, in order that her estimate of their needs and rights may be fair and comprehensive, and that of her own just and unselfish. In the possible case of a decision which she may think unfair, she has always the right of an appeal to the Board of Managers, but her strength will be in that 'charity that thinketh no evil, which suffereth long and is kind,' and in quiet waiting upon Him who makes 'all things work together for good to them that love him.'¹⁵⁷

By the end of 1897, Isabella Blackmore believed that "peace and confidence like that of the old days before the mission trouble, are coming back to us."¹⁵⁸ But both the

home organization and the missionaries in the field had been severely tested and their vulnerability exposed. To lessen the culpability of the missionaries, a metaphorical editorial in the Outlook placed some of the blame on the W. M. S. membership.

Perhaps all of our membership do not realize that the mission ship, whose sails and pennons bear the mystic letters, W.M.S., has at times sailed near dangerous shoals and sand-banks, but, thank God, has never drifted out of her course! The 'Captain of our Salvation' has ever been aboard, guiding and controlling the ship.

But, by far the greater number of the ship's crew have right loyally yielded obedience implicit and free to their Captain. They have learned to love the ship which for so many years has breasted every gale and weathered through heavy seas; and yet, some of these very ones, feeling secure in their love and loyalty, have actually grown careless and forgotten to pray as they should for the success of the outward-bound ship and its officers.¹⁵⁹

Ten years later in 1906, the official history of the W. M. S. confirmed that "there was no stain on the character of any of the missionaries, and that they personally retained the confidence of the Mission Board and, we believe, the favour of God."¹⁶⁰

The affair and the ugly accusations surrounding the missionaries could not help but change the future course of the Japan mission. For example, the W. M. S. assumed that some of the women sent to Japan had been too immature, and with just one exception all the women who were sent to Japan after 1896 were over the minimum requirement of twenty-five.

The Japan Affair had confirmed that missionaries needed, to cite Isabella Blackmore, "experience in life and work! The average girl of 24 is very young ... too young to be a real strength to the work."¹⁶¹ In the immediate aftermath of the Japan Affair, the women sent to Japan appear to have been handpicked and known personally to the Board of Managers or the regional secretaries. Many were daughters of prominent Methodist clergy. Nine of the twenty-three women who went to Japan before 1895 had been related to clergy, and nearly half fifteen of the thirty-six women recruited from 1896 to 1914 had ministerial connections. After 1896, too, candidates were required to attend the Methodist Training School or its equivalent to insure that they had the proper theological foundations and, at the same time, to be observed interacting with their future co-workers.

The overall effect of these tighter standards on the quality of life and conduct in the mission community is hard to evaluate, but the more intensive screening seems to have paid dividends, at least in terms of length of service. The thirty-six women hired from 1896 to 1914 remained in Japan an average of 24.4 years. Twenty-four continued until retirement, an indication of a strong sense of commitment to their profession and, at the same time, a testament to the relatively satisfactory nature of their work. In 1897, the second and subsequent terms were extended from six to seven years, further confirmation that continuity of service in the

field was a necessity for successful missionary work. Most women accepted the additional year before furlough, but, Isabella Blackmore, then halfway through her second term, showed some doubt about its benefits because of family concerns. Blackmore feared that "[i]f [her] father and mother are living three years from now, [she] would be sorry to disappoint them."¹⁶² At the same time, she supported the Board of Manager's new arrangement to pay all expenses incurred in the event of death in the field, a matter which evidently had been worrying the women, who, according to Blackmore, had "all thought more or less about the inconvenience to others if we should not have on hand enough money to cover expenses at the time of our death and some have endeavoured to always have sufficient money available for the purpose."¹⁶³ Blackmore, for one, was always very uneasy about her financial situation. In a letter sent to Elizabeth Strachan about this time, she applauded the suggestion of a Rest Fund for the missionaries. She believed that she was bearing a heavy financial burden.

I must contribute to my mother's support, my sister's daughter must be helped to get more of an education than their country home affords and I have a debt - which must be diminished little by little.¹⁶⁴

It was not, until 1902, however, that a Rest Fund was established for retired missionaries and for women who needed more than the furlough year to regain their health. The Board of Managers allocated some of the Society's funds to

the cause and the missionaries themselves contributed ten dollars annually to the fund. Annuities were paid out at an annual rate of ten dollars for each year of service. No annuity was given until twelve years of service had been completed, but in exceptional cases, the Board of Managers would assist missionaries who could no longer work.¹⁶⁵ Blackmore who died in 1942 at the age of seventy-nine drew on the fund for seventeen years.¹⁶⁶

After 1896, the W. M. S. activities in Japan began again to expand. In 1898, a new school building was approved for Tokyo. Its construction was carefully supervised by Blackmore, apparently with neither the advice or the interference of the General Board.¹⁶⁷ Unfortunately, just before the building was to open, a typhoon flattened it and again, in October 1899, it sustained damage during a second typhoon. A dispute between the contractor and the sub-contractor further delayed the official opening until November 1900.¹⁶⁸ By 1903, the school had reached its capacity of 145 students.¹⁶⁹ It is difficult on the basis of the statistical reports sent from the Japan mission field to analyze the relative success of the W. M. S. in Japan at the turn of the century. The annual statement drawn up at the end of the school year, July 1899, for example, reported 179 boarding pupils and 187 day students. Yet, the average daily attendance of 218 was far below the total, suggesting that many of the day pupils must have attended school only sporadically.

Nine baptisms were recorded for the year, none at the Tokyo school, although forty-two girls were listed as attending classes to prepare for the eventuality. The evangelistic department had made 5030 visits to homes in Tokyo, Shizuoka, Kofu and Nagano. Again, the harvest of 29 baptisms seems meager.¹⁷⁰ Quite clearly, conversion to Christianity was an excruciatingly slow process. Minnie Robertson, a teacher at Kofu in 1898, defended the mission's failure to baptize more of the school girls in the Missionary Outlook.

... [I]f all the girls do not turn out as we would like to have them, this we are sure of, they are better for the time spent here, be it long or short. Some day there will be a rich harvest from the faithful sowing that has been done in past years and is still being done all over the province. We are waiting and praying for it.¹⁷¹

In Kanazawa, a charity school had been opened especially for children of working women, first to give the children access to a rudimentary education, but also so that the missionaries might meet more Japanese and gain entry into their homes. The Kanazawa experiment exemplifies the W. M. S.' willingness to adapt to the situation at hand, rather than forcing the Japanese to conform to more traditional missionary methods. The Kanazawa school initially catered to fifty boys and girls who the missionaries complained "knew nothing of obedience and order, who had never been confined in a class before; dirty, repulsive, ignorant, ungrateful and disrespectful."¹⁷² Their curriculum differed from that of the young ladies in Tokyo and Shizuoka. In the

mornings, the children received a daily Bible lesson and instruction in reading, writing and counting for three hours. In the afternoons, the girls learned embroidery techniques. Their work was shipped to Canada and sold through the auxiliaries with the proceeds going back to the society. Boys made envelopes for Japanese factories.¹⁷³ The work in Kanazawa was closely scrutinized by the community. Buddhist priests in Kanazawa warned parents not to send their children to the school and they hired young men especially to harass the children still in attendance. The interference effectively closed the school for a term in 1892.¹⁷⁴

The 1890's had become a time of critical reaction to the intrusion of western culture which had been so welcomed a decade earlier. The decade was marked by political discontent and military threats from Russia and China. Increasingly, Christianity was interpreted as the advance guard of Western imperialism, especially because most Protestant missionary organizations had

national titles prefixed to their names, such as the American Methodist, the Anglican, the Canadian Methodist Suspicious minds thought that these bodies enjoyed political support in their several countries.¹⁷⁵

As well, Christianity faced strong competition from the doctrines of Herbert Spencer and Charles Darwin and English empiricism which had become firmly entrenched at Tokyo University.¹⁷⁶ Christianity was denounced as "unJapanese" with the result that, after about 1892, interest in Christian

missionary work and schools dropped sharply.¹⁷⁷ Finally, the war with China galvanized public sentiment against the West. While they were satisfied with the peace arrangements, the Japanese resented the Triple Intervention. The consequences for Christian Churches in Japan were devastating. In some instances the enrollment at mission schools fell by more than fifty per cent.¹⁷⁸

Though they put on a brave face for the benefit of the home audience, many missionaries had a reasonably clear grasp of the situation and were not so blinded by their own intense devotion to the work that they could ignore the Japanese response to them and to their work. In 1893, after seven years in the country, Eliza Large had felt that she had a perspective worth sharing. In a letter to the Missionary Outlook about the changing prospects for missionary success, she was very frank. She could

look back to seven years ago when, without any effort on our part, from thirty to forty women would gather around us to hear the word of God. Now it is only by constant, untiring work that we can get a half dozen to hear us. Why the change? I hear someone ask. Seven years ago everything foreign was sought after, and, in order to study us and be like us, they endured our teaching of a God whom they knew not of. Now foreign ways are not things to be desired, and the gods of theirs are good enough for them, Hence the change.¹⁷⁹

In the May issue of the same journal, a second letter from Large appeared. Perhaps as the result of further reflection or from pressure by the W. M. S., she concluded more

optimistically that "... the time has not all been lost. The discouragements are better untold." The schools might not be expanding, but good work was still being accomplished.¹⁸⁰

This awareness that they were foreign intruders and the sense of alienation continued to surface in the letters written by the Canadian women following the initial years of success.

Abby Veazey, stationed at Kanazawa in the 1890s, was disappointed that the people were not eagerly awaiting the arrival of the Christian gospel. Instead of an enthusiastic and receptive populace, she confronted "degradation, poverty, misery and filth in equal degrees, at least to that found in the slums of the great cities of our so-called Christian Lands."¹⁸¹ Veazey argued that she and her colleagues were disliked and distrusted more as foreigners than as missionaries. Consequently, they were forced to live on the fringes of Japanese life. Veazey, however, was careful to conclude on a more hopeful note by pointing out that the trust which the school girls placed in the missionaries was likely to spread to the adjacent neighbourhood.¹⁸² Mary Jane Cunningham reported some difficulty adjusting again to life in Japan in 1898 after her year-long furlough in Canada. Cunningham's complaints were wide-ranging.

... [T]he halls seemed narrower. The dresses, too, of some of our ladies wanted making over badly; they were decidedly not in style. One of your missionaries was reduced to the state of having no hat, and for some months had been wearing a cap which I had discarded two years ago. Everything was musty for Shizuoka is rather damp in summer

... the Shizuoka spiders were so large and I disliked them even more than I used to. It seems to me as if I never could get reconciled to the thought that I must live here for seven long years.¹⁸³

Cunningham, nevertheless, persevered and four years later could report that the Shizuoka school had become a great evangelistic centre where it was a pleasure to live and work.¹⁸⁴

In Nagano, a Buddhist stronghold where work had begun in 1897, the women confronted the greatest and most overt opposition to any of their attempts to establish a girls' school. The opening of the school was first delayed because there were no Japanese teachers holding the required government certificates. When the school did open, attendance was considered barely adequate. Indeed, pupils came only because of a renewed interest in learning English and not from any burning impulse to become Christians. In 1902, when the enrollment had dropped to twenty, a kindergarten was organized and the work continued along more traditional evangelistic lines. In Motto, a village serviced from Kanazawa, even evangelistic work was halted when the Buddhist priests incited the inhabitants to sign a petition barring Christians from the village and forbidding anyone to rent a house for missionary work.¹⁸⁵ In 1902, the Nagano mission station was temporarily abandoned when the school was closed by government regulation.¹⁸⁶ The enemy had been "... by no means silent," wrote Laura Wigle who had been stationed there. "In

many ways he shows his presence, but our cause is the stronger and our God will prevail."¹⁸⁷ By the end of the century, it was clear to the W. M. S. that their most successful work continued to be among the "people of wealth."¹⁸⁸

After twenty years, mission work had not become any easier for its champions. Laura Wigle's problems setting up work at Ueda in 1904 were scarcely different from Cartmell's earlier struggle. The Japanese women were still illiterate, causing Wigle to "feel a little discouraged over [my] work."¹⁸⁹ Children, on the other hand, made her task worthwhile.¹⁹⁰ When she

look[ed] into the pitiful faces of those children which bear the stigma of the sins of their fathers ... [she] could not help but feel a great heart-hunger to lead them to Him whose jewels are the little children that love Him.¹⁹¹

This new emphasis on the very young was to remain central to the work of the W. M. S. in Japan for the next two decades, and reflected, if somewhat belatedly, changing attitudes towards children within the Canadian Methodist Church.¹⁹² Elizabeth Crombie went so far as to comment that by establishing kindergartens the mission was following the advice of Ignatius Loyola who believed that the years before six were critical for molding the young minds.¹⁹³ Similarly, the Methodist Church's growing concern with social reform at home was reflected in Japan in the missionaries' increased interest in the welfare of prostitutes and women employed in

factories. But, the opportunities to move into new spheres of influence were restricted both by the constraints of Japanese society and by the personalities and inclinations of the missionaries themselves.

For every woman, like Annie Allen, who was bold and brave enough to enter the cotton factories in search of converts or to frequent the haunts of prostitutes in Tokyo, there was another like Alice Timberlake who felt obliged to remind her colleagues that

the true aim of missionary work [is] to preach the Gospel. Nothing else can support one in the trial and disappointment which are sure to come. Nothing else can give the joy which comes alone to those who tell others of Christ.¹⁹⁴

This strain was echoed by Myrtle Armstrong reflecting, in 1908, about what missionary life meant to her. The following appraisal of her role appeared as part of a widespread campaign to attract recruits to Japan at a time when the West China Mission was rivaling Japan for both funds and candidates.

What I have tried to teach is a Living Christ, a Saviour who saves us every moment of every day. But over and over again must the precious seed be sown till the mind and heart at last grasp it, and the 'desert rejoices and blossoms as the rose.'

It is no easy thing to give up home, perhaps, and friends, and one's own land, and the pursuits one enjoys, to go to an unknown country - to spend hours and days and months and years studying a difficult language - to learn customs, which, at first appear foolish - to be, at all intents and purposes a child, having none of the privileges and happy responsibilities and pleasant associations

that come to one after graduating from normal school or college, and on beginning to take one's place as a woman in the church life and social life of the town or city in which one lives.

It is no life of ease and luxury to which I entreat you to come. It is a life of cross-bearing. But, oh how near the Master comes! He lifts us over the roughest places, giving us such secret joy in His presence that the cross does not hurt us. 195

To the frustrations of their professional activities in Japan were added the challenges of self-preservation in an alien environment. For Armstrong, Japan held out

subtle temptations ... which never assail us in our native land. They are in the air, and they come to you with all the insidiousness of the serpent gliding from under some bank of fragrant blossoms.

Don't imagine that temptations will not beset a missionary! I doubt not that in the hereafter, when the great battles of the world are made clear to us, some of the greatest will be found to have been fought in the breasts of us on the mission field. 196

What these temptations might have been is left to the reader's imagination. Much less mysterious and elusive was the ill health from which many of these women suffered and which they attributed to living in Japan.

From the earliest days of the Japan Mission, the health, both physical and emotional, of the women in the field, was a worry for the individual, the mission community and, above all, the Board of Managers which ultimately bore the responsibility of medical costs and, if warranted, the expenses of a return to Canada and the loss of a valuable worker. Potential missionaries were screened as carefully as

possible; but, of course, unpredicted medical crises did arise. Of the eighty-one women who went to Japan before 1925, just two actually died there. Three others died while on furlough in Canada and still officially employees of the Society, or so shortly after their resignation that it is safe to assume that their final illness must have begun in Japan and prompted their return. Eight others resigned from mission work because of ill health and two more were transferred to the more beneficial climate of British Columbia where they continued as home missionaries. Overall, the women in Japan with an approximate death rate of 3.3 per 1000 years of service in the field seem exceptional healthy in comparison to the thirty British, Canadian and American missionary groups in Japan analyzed by William Lennox in 1933 and who had a death rate of 7.6 per 1000 years of service.¹⁹⁷ Letters and reports sent from the field indicate, nonetheless, that ill-health plagued the mission. The women's ailments were a source of speculation and gossip within the mission community to a far greater extent than in West China or Canada. When one young woman who suffered a nervous breakdown was sent home to Canada, the affair took on a very mysterious and secretive aura. Elizabeth Crombie, who was to accompany the woman, was counseled by Blackmore, the Corresponding-Secretary of the mission at the time, to

... understand that the course which seems to you one of 'secrecy and evasion' is the only one possible under the circumstances. In cases of sickness it is often impossible to

give details to outsiders, and I think a hint to your friends that nervous trouble is usually aggravated by questions will be sufficient to keep them from asking about her health.¹⁹⁸

Another woman, suffering from similar but less serious nervous problems, cured herself by riding a bicycle "which has the advantage over walking as an exercise, in that she [could not] think about her work while riding."¹⁹⁹ Many of the problems were not remedied so easily. Many missionaries, just like other women of their day, were frequently quite unwell. Their ailments were invariably not fatal but neither were they curable.²⁰⁰ Correspondence between the mission secretaries and the home base exposes a litany of complaints - incapacitating migraine headaches, menstrual irregularities and pain, suspected tuberculosis, carbuncles, bowel trouble, gall bladder and gynecological surgery and at least one mastectomy. Most of these illnesses were not reported in the pages of any missionary publication even when they occasioned the recall of the victim. Whether or not, these ailments had, in fact, a physical origin cannot, of course, be determined. It is, however, interesting to note Lee Chambers-Schiller's suggestion that nineteenth-century women reformers in the United States had a tendency to "retreat into illness." She argues that

as negative, self-destructive behavior, whether conscious or not, it did serve in a positive way to meet some of the spinster's emotional needs. It provided an opportunity for respite from the taxations of reform work, from the inner conflict associated with

so public and unfeminine a role, and from the demands of family and social obligation.²⁰¹

Certainly, in the Japan mission, the sympathy from their colleagues and the pampering that an invalid received might have helped to relieve the frustrations of an occupation, which for some women, could be frequently unrewarding and lonely.

While illness was a private matter, the death of a missionary provoked an outburst of public emotion and sympathy. The W. M. S. showed no reluctance in releasing the details of the last days of Hannah Lund when she died in 1894. Her death was described in glowing terms as " ... such a climax. Her face seemed to shine as if the glory of heaven had already dawned upon her"²⁰² Ten years later, when Alice Belton died suddenly in Japan following surgery, her bravery in the face of intense suffering and her life struggle against "adversity, against pain, against self" were celebrated for the benefit of W. M. S. members in Canada.²⁰³ Though the two had not died in true martyr's fashion at the hands of those they were seeking to convert, in the eyes of the W. M. S., they had sacrificed their lives for the church.

Despite the frequent complaints about the inhospitable climate, their poor health, the lack of converts and the hostility of the Japanese to their ministrations, the W. M. S. missionaries, generally, did not lead a desolate and deprived life. Poverty and discomforts were not necessary conditions for the propagation of Methodist doctrines in

Japan. Indeed, as spinsters, their situation may have been more agreeable than if they had remained in Canada. As circumstances and money allowed, the homes and schools owned by the W. M. S. were provided with running water, indoor plumbing, central heating and electricity, at a time when these amenities were notably absent in many parts of Canada and certainly were not available to W. M. S. missionaries in northern Alberta and British Columbia. The smooth operation of these modern conveniences was, sometimes, a source of annoyance to women who were not experienced in these matters. But through perseverance and patience they proved their ability to direct all aspects of mission work, including architectural design and construction supervision.

There are, nonetheless, constant reminders in the women's letters and W. M. S. literature of their difficult adjustment to living in Japan. To ease the shock of adapting to a new culture the women continued to bring as many of the material comforts of home as possible. This practice was not discouraged. A recommendation from the outfit committee in Japan in 1897, based on fifteen years' experience, enumerated the essentials which should be brought out from Canada. Extremes of climate necessitated a wide variety of clothing. A fur wrap, for example, would be "serviceable". Dresses could be made at a lower price in Japan, but underflannels (likely worn in Japan only by missionaries) were hard to obtain. The women believed that "[g]enerally speaking in

coming to Japan one cannot be too well provided with warm underclothing."²⁰⁴ Kid gloves, on the other hand, were not essential and would mildew in the damp summers. Bedding and towels, pictures, ornaments, books and a half dozen dinner knives and forks, dessert knives and forks, dessert spoons and teaspoons were still mainstays of the complete missionary outfit and vital to a well managed middle-class mission home.²⁰⁵

Similarly, many of the women took meticulous care with their personal appearance. The missionaries were certainly not preoccupied with their own vanity, but, for some, to be seen in the latest in ladies' fashion was important. Maude Preston, in a letter written to her parents in 1891, asked for a "white waist instead of [a] corset waist. I wish you to order one for me. They are quite expensive but appear to be serviceable."²⁰⁶ Three decades later, when a much needed and long awaited salary increase finally came through for the missionaries struggling with the post-war economy, the first purchase of Minnie Robertson, by now a W. M. S. veteran, was "a blue serge school-dress, the first winter garment I have bought since my return five years ago."²⁰⁷ Unlike their counterparts in West China, the women stationed in Japan made no effort to emulate what might be termed native dress. The brightly coloured clothing and elaborate coiffures of Japanese women were, as far as the missionaries were concerned, the outward symbols of

immorality. On one occasion, Agnes Wintemute exchanged clothing with a recent convert for a photograph, but the Canadian women preferred Western dress and prayed that their students could be persuaded to dress less garishly.²⁰⁸

The women's concern for appearances was not fed by demands which might have been imposed by an active social life outside the mission compound. Like the General Board missionaries, they lived, by choice, "remote from Japanese society."²⁰⁹ Apart from the concerts, teas, graduation ceremonies and elaborate Christmas and Easter celebrations concocted for the benefit of pupils and converts, the women appear to have been relatively isolated from members of the other missionary communities in Japan. Nor is there, in contrast to West China, much evidence that they mixed socially with representatives of the General Board of Missions and their wives, especially after the rift of 1895. The many activities associated with the schools and the women's groups filled the missionaries' days and, by their own admission, provided enough satisfaction. But, there are hints that, at the same time, some women were the victims of unremitting loneliness and unrelieved boredom. After a time, most became resigned to that aspect of missionary work. For Harriet Jost, stationed in Kofu in 1900,

[t]o live ten months of the year with nothing more exciting to break the monotony of everyday life than the Church service or the occasional literary meeting of young school girls would, at one time, have seemed a very dreary prospect ... But we still, far away

from any other English-speaking person, have lived so contentedly that we will return after vacation eager to repeat the experience and happy to be allowed to do so.²¹⁰

Under these circumstances, visits from Westerners were avidly awaited. When the Hon. Sidney Fisher, Canadian Minister of Agriculture and Commerce, visited the Azabu School in 1903, a musical programme was prepared in his honour by the schoolgirls and the children in the W. M. S. orphanage.²¹¹ When the news of an impending visit by Arthur, Prince of Wales, to Japan, leaked out, Isabella Blackmore persuaded the wife of the British Ambassador to arrange for him to visit the Tokyo Girls' School. The women were invited to the Prince's hotel to check the room and they set up his tea tray with the silver that Mrs. Strachan had given to the mission. Cunningham pronounced the visit "a great event for 'us Britishers'".²¹²

Rather than causing the women great anxiety about their future welfare, as might be expected, the Russo-Japanese war, 1904 - 1905, provided instead some variety and excitement within the W. M. S. mission community. Ironically, it offered, or so the women thought, a unique opportunity to gain new converts. The Skizuoka regiment, in particular, suffered heavy casualties. Mary Jane Cunningham reported visiting the survivors in hospital while "Miss Howie, accompanied by her Bible woman and two others, took her autoharp and sang hymns to the men."²¹³ Miss Hart credited the war and its dreadful aftermath with "open[ing] a

new door" for the flagging missionary effort.²¹⁴ The Tokyo missionaries dutifully attended the funerals of twelve Japanese officers, and to display their solidarity with the community, went to the railway station whenever troops were sent off to the front. Their concern had, they concluded, "made the people count us as friends."²¹⁵

New opportunities to extend the work of the mission were always being investigated. In 1910, Isabel Howie was quite elated when the factory managers permitted her to address the women workers of the Sappora Beer Company and the Calico Weaving Company,²¹⁶ while Annie Allen, daughter of Rev. James Allen, Secretary of Home Missions, who had arrived in 1905, spent most of her years in Japan trying to rehabilitate prostitutes in Tokyo.²¹⁷ By 1919, Maude Preston reported that the W. M. S. missionaries in Tokyo had some personal contact with 3,527 female employees in thirty-four factories and that a small rest home where overworked factory employees could recuperate had been set up in Kameido, a Tokyo suburb.²¹⁸ But concern for such projects was not, however, the sine qua non of all W. M. S. missionaries. As Preston put it, "one longs to give [the women] better conditions of life and above all a vital knowledge of the only Love that can adequately redeem and save, individually, morally, industrially."²¹⁹

Despite their somewhat more innovative approaches to the perennial problem of attracting converts, even those

women who arrived in Japan between 1914 and 1925 continued to carry on their work in much the same fashion as their predecessors. Twenty-one of the twenty four had been teachers in Canada; consequently, boarding schools remained the backbone of mission work in Japan. Moreover, by 1912, both the General Board and the W. M. S. missions in Japan were being overshadowed in numbers and in financial support by West China. Over the next fifteen years, competition for funds and staff was fierce. The now familiar problems besetting the women in Japan could not match the reports of bandit attacks, revolutionary upheavals, and new possibilities for conversion emanating from China.

Newcomer Ada Killam described Japan in 1914 little differently than Martha Cartmell and Agnes Wintemute had thirty years before. It was "a land of shrines and temples" where "most of the people have religious faith and it is faith that is ignorant, essentially selfish, not essentially moral."²²⁰ New arrivals were still warned not to study Japanese in the evening to prevent an attack of "'the Japanese head,' a species of headache which usually comes from over-study aggravated by the peculiar effect of the climate."²²¹ Some of those who arrived after 1910, Sadie Tait for example, seem to have been more inclined to understand and to embrace at least some aspects of Japanese culture. Tait admitted to enjoying Japanese foods and was adept at using chopsticks, a feat which had eluded the

earlier generation of missionaries. Similarly, after the war, there were fewer complaints about minor discomforts such as the custom of sitting on the floor, so distasteful to the earlier arrivals.²²² But, at the same time, these enlightened attitudes appear to have been offset by the conservatism and truculence of the older, more powerful and influential women like Maude Preston who remained obsessed with improving the quality of the Japanese hymn singing.

Life and work in the mission compounds were disrupted very little by events of World War One. The women were isolated from news of the progress of the war and when they did receive information, it was hardly current. For Isabella Hargrave, not knowing what was happening in the outside world was not particularly disquieting.

Here, we miss much of the tension that follows from the effects of the war on things in general, as the daily papers give nothing but the briefest telegrams, and when the home papers come in they are so behind the times, we find it is better not to read too much of the details the suffering in all directions has been beyond expression.²²³

One missionary, Margaret Keagey, became more directly involved in the war and its outcome than the others. In November 1918, Keagey who had spent ten years in Japan and had some previous experience in Canada as a social worker was approached by the Red Cross to assist with relief in Siberia, then overflowing with Europeans in the wake of the revolution.²²⁴ Reluctantly, the Japan mission council granted her permission to leave.²²⁵ The Board of Managers was even more

hesitant about committing one of their missionaries to a scheme which they suspected might involve considerable risk, although the Treasurer, Mrs. Powell, commended the plan as a valuable service contributing to the stabilization of Russia.²²⁶ Keagey reached Omsk in January 1919 where, clad in an army sheepskin coat and a fur hat, she travelled by sleigh to investigate refugee cases and thoroughly enjoyed the adventure.²²⁷

If the war itself did not bring hardship or worry to the missionaries, the post war years more than made up for what the women were spared. Everyone in the Japan mission seems to have been affected in one way or another. For the first time in the history of the mission, the women who were responsible for budgets and disbursements encountered severe financial limitations and the stark realities of rampant inflation. The price of rice, for example, soared so high that the mission considered an alternative to their students' staple diet.²²⁸ At the same time, the servants, newly aware of their potential as industrial workers, demanded higher wages. Minnie Robertson, Corresponding-Secretary of the mission council, scornfully and apparently unaware of the irony of her comments, complained that their servants had become "... insolent in their independence seeing that they can leave us any time for better wages." The coolies, too, were guilty of assertiveness and self-interest. "The spirit among that class," Robertson protested, had become "quite

equal to that of their class in other countries. This certainly is the labourers' epoch in the progress of evolution."²²⁹ By early 1920, Robertson was completely frustrated by what she, like countless middle-class North American women, referred to as "the servant problem;" to add to an increasingly uncongenial atmosphere, the decreased revenues of the W. M. S. in Canada prompted a warning from the Board of Managers that the Japan mission must curtail its spending.²³⁰

The financial difficulties dealt a demoralizing blow to the mission. Rumours of a salary cut excited a strong reaction from Isabella Blackmore, not so much on her own behalf as for more recent arrivals.

Those who have no debt and no Life Insurance, in which class I am glad to stand, can brace up and take our share of the hard times borne by our women at home, but to the younger women - some with heavy responsibilities, the last year as a series of makeshifts in the hope that this year would bring some relief. The Bonus was very welcome but for most it just went into a hole [of debt] and did not fill it I hate any appearance of a kick about our salaries, but I think our younger women at least must have a little help. Could we ask that the first term people having less salary should be exempt from the cut? ²³¹

Robertson found it demeaning and depressing to write constantly to the Board of Managers about monetary matters even though she knew that the future of the mission depended on wise financial decisions. The women had become

... as shabby as it is possible to be and yet be fairly decent. I heard one member of my

family shivering over the stove say 'Can't buy woollens on my present salary,' and yet not one of us but feel she is much better off than many another and is willing to 'get along' till prices change and living is easier.²³²

The problem was temporarily alleviated when the Board of Managers began to take into account the high losses incurred as a result of the soaring exchange rates. By the end of 1921, Blackmore, as custodian of the mission's finances, had discovered the challenges involved in dickering over the bank drafts.²³³ However, Blackmore faced the wrath of the Board of Managers on several occasions because the word "sundries" appeared too often in her reports and because of too many unanticipated expenditures. Moreover, she was warned that any favourable exchange which she might be able to gather was not to be added to the mission's budget.²³⁴ In absolute frustration, Robertson stated her position to the Board. Although she wanted to be businesslike, she refused to compromise her position as a missionary.

We are all busy missionaries first, and accountants, to the best of our ability after We deal not in commodities that can be labelled and priced, but in human energies which cannot always be estimated accurately in dollars and cents.²³⁵

Her letter hit a responsive chord at home; late in 1924, an assistant was appointed to help her with the budget which, in 1923, had been \$120,958.48 and to administer the special fund allocated for repairs to the Tokyo mission compound as a result of the calamitous Tokyo earthquake of

September 1923.²³⁶ The W. M. S. buildings escaped relatively unscathed from the devastation of the earthquake which killed perhaps as many as 100,000 in the city,²³⁷ but the General Board structures sustained a loss of more than one hundred thousand dollars. The W. M. S. mission in Tokyo was demoralized. The "spiritual suffering" of the women was extreme because many of their Japanese friends and acquaintances had been killed.²³⁸ In the long run, more than anything else which the women commented on over the years, the catastrophe was responsible for a more sympathetic attitude to the Japanese. Robertson was moved to write of her admiration for the people of Japan.

The skill with which relief has been organized, the kindness of the people, the ready assistance of one to another, the absence of looting and the cheerful fortitude of the people under this tremendous calamity have been marvelous.²³⁹

Ironically, because of the demand for female labour in the reconstruction process, even the missionaries themselves had to concede that the catastrophe and its aftermath made a more lasting contribution to the emancipation, if it may be so termed, of women in Japan, than all the work of the W. M. S. and its counterparts in Japan.²⁴⁰

In spite of financial restraints and the threat of a decrease in support from the members of the Board of Managers, the work in Japan did not come to a complete standstill in the post war period. In 1918, the Women's Christian College, a joint venture sponsored by several

Protestant churches, opened, although as part of the scheme, the higher departments of the Toya Eiwa Girls' school were closed to avoid competition with the new institution. In 1919, the training class for kindergarten teachers, originally established at Ueda, relocated in Tokyo, while, in 1920, the W. M. S. opened a community centre in Kameido, a factory area of Tokyo.²⁴¹ Attendance at the girls' schools, generally, dropped during the postwar years. Some missionaries blamed the American mistreatment of the Japanese in California.²⁴² Members in Canada prayed for "an awakening at home" to renew interest in missionary work for the W. M. S.²⁴³ while missionaries in the field sent assurances that, in spite of the American affront to the Japanese, they continued to be "amazed at the continued courtesy and kindness we invariably receive."²⁴⁴ This friendly treatment was interpreted as an indication of "... the deep spiritual hold the religion of Christ has upon the people."²⁴⁵ But, optimism did not result in the desired numbers of missionaries for Japan. Only two of the sixteen women who were recruited in 1924 and 1925 were assigned to Japan, whether by their own choice or that of the Board of Managers.²⁴⁶ Quite possibly, the careless accounting in the Japan mission fields had led to a decrease in favours. Late in 1923, Robertson was asked by the Board of Managers to explain why everything in Japan always surpassed the estimates. The Board was becoming "cautious in regards to Japan,

for we are beginning to feel that after things are started, we are sure to learn that the estimates are not sufficient", a situation which "has an unfortunate effect."²⁴⁷ In 1925, the mission staff numbered forty-three, which in spite of the problems the mission had faced in the previous fifteen years was an increase of eight women or close to twenty-five per cent compared to 1912. By 1925, many veterans had retired; Maude Preston, in 1924 after thirty-six years, Lizzie Hart and Isabella Blackmore, who also had thirty-six years of service to the Society, in 1925. Fourteen women with an average of at least fifteen years experience remained to oversee the transition from Methodist to United Church mission work.

Their experience in Japan had occasioned a wide range of responses from the eighty-one W. M. S. missionaries who had worked there from 1882 to 1925. A few, like Annie Allen, moved away from the cloistered mission schoolroom to strike out on her own in an area where she thought she could be helpful. The majority, however, were more comfortable with the traditional modes of teaching, conducting women's meetings, itinerating and as one bluntly put it "preparing bait."²⁴⁸ In 1922, W. M. S. president, Elizabeth Ross, seemed pleased to report that "the Japanese say Canadian women have a mother quality of winning power."²⁴⁹ At times, the women tended to cast themselves in the same light. Their letters home often contained references to their peaceful

life which they hoped the Japanese would discover and emulate; the members of a mission community were a family and some women, like Harriet Jost, longed for their own family and friends in Canada to observe the life they had created for themselves in this alien environment.

One day, I especially wished for friends from home. At the time, in two of the school rooms, English lessons were going on, in another twenty girls were having a cooking lesson. In a small room we call the 'waiting room,' one of our teachers had her Sunday-school class drilling them for Christmas, while in the room which has been furnished in Mrs. Whiston's memory, Miss DeWolfe was preparing for the Sunday-school Normal Class. An hour later, I was in our own little parlour helping a Government school teacher with some music she was preparing for our Christmas celebration. That is the way it is always - every room is useful and every room is constantly in use. The house is so comfortable throughout without being extravagant, and could not be better suited to our needs.²⁵⁰

Even living alone, which was not usually approved by the W. M. S., was described by one intrepid worker as a "life of single blessedness."²⁵¹

Usually, however, the women had companionship, and the relationships formed in the field, with few exceptions, brought them great satisfaction. Despite some patronizing of newcomers by older missionaries, the communities seem to have been as closely knit as the women themselves believed. Robertson might have frowned when, within a few months of each other, Annabelle Swann and Clara German decided to marry because, she wrote, "... they ought not to mix the W. M. S.

with their nuptial affairs."²⁵² But, she upheld the belief that "... young people ought to get married, it is the natural thing to do," adding, in a letter to the retired Miss Cartmell, that "perhaps you think I won't be nice to Miss German - Oh yes, I will, but it is too late to discuss this to her edification."²⁵³

Such camaraderie or sisterhood as was generated within the mission compounds was probably among those intrinsic factors which contributed to the higher average length of employment for W. M. S. missionaries in Japan compared to West China and Canada. By choice or chance, in Japan, attrition from marriage was considerably lower, 8.6% compared to 30.6% in West China. Spinsterhood may simply have been the result of demographic conditions in a country where suitable husbands did not present themselves, but, at the same time, the W. M. S. missionaries in Japan seem to have been less eager, perhaps because of the turmoil at the end of the century, to mix socially with other members of the missionary community, preferring the companionship of their colleagues and their students. Forty of the women who went to Japan (49.0%) remained with the W. M. S. until retirement, some, like Sybil Courtice, enduring the hardship and deprivation of internment during the Second World War.²⁵⁴ Nearly 40% of the group had careers lasting at least thirty years and half of the women went to Japan after the World War One had careers of 30 to 47 years duration. Many who joined

the mission in the 1920's continued to work in Japan until the 1950's.

While extrinsic factors, improved communications with Canada and a relatively comfortable lifestyle, and personal considerations such as freedom from family pressure and responsibilities obviously influenced an individual woman's decision to remain in Japan, a return to the statistical data may add a new dimension to an understanding of the career patterns of the W. M. S. missionaries in Japan. For example, the women of the Japan mission were clearly distinguished by their kinship with the Methodist hierarchy. While at least 25% of all W. M. S. missionaries had relatives within clerical ranks, 44% of those in Japan were related to clergymen. Half of the women who remained in Japan for more than thirty years and who consequently directed mission affairs were "daughters of the parsonage," a designation which in the case of Japan justified all the confidence the Board of Managers placed in it. Moreover, the Japan mission had been the recipient of a larger percentage of women from the Maritimes and of women who had attended ladies' colleges. Twenty-four, or 28%, of the women in the Japan mission had been raised in the Maritime provinces and their careers averaged just under twenty-eight years. Only four (17%) of the Maritimers had careers of less than twenty years, compared to forty-five per cent of all W. M. S. missionaries in Japan. There is no explanation for this except that job

opportunities may have been even more limited for Maritime women than for those in central Canada. At least twelve of the women (15%) in the Japan mission had attended a ladies' college (eight had attended Mt. Allison) compared to 7% of all W. M. S. missionaries. These figures raise the question of whether previous exposure to living in an exclusively female institutional environment could expedite the adjustment to the missionary milieu and, more simply, whether women who had already shared experiences in a community of women were more compatible. Finally, the Japan mission was the beneficiary of a much higher percentage of university graduates than the other W. M. S. mission fields. Twenty-eight members of the Japan mission had attended university and most of them were graduates. Their missionary careers averaged 27.1 years compared to 18 years for those in the Japan mission with no university education. This pattern is repeated dramatically in the other mission fields and suggests that women university graduates were more committed to the goal of a professional career as single women than their colleagues who had not attended university. This nucleus of career missionaries in Japan may help to explain why most of the drive for professionalization with its concomitant employee benefits and for administrative change was launched by the Japan Mission council. As the case of Ila Day, a graduate of the University of Toronto Conservatory of Music who arrived in Japan in 1908, illustrates, the women

in the Japan mission placed a high value on their independence and the extent of their personal freedom which had been given legitimacy by their status as foreign missionaries.

In 1911, Day, then aged thirty-one and a music teacher at the Tokyo Girls' School, resigned to marry the Rev. D. M. Perley of the West China mission. They had met when some of the Canadian Methodist missionaries from West China were evacuated to Japan during the 1911 revolution. After the danger in China had passed, the newlyweds returned to West China. A few months later, Perley reported to the General Board of Missions that his wife had suffered a breakdown. It was not, as was sometimes the case, attributed to the climate in West China. Rather, Ila Day Perley's problems were blamed on "the suddenness of the break with the old life in the W. M. S;" the cure, "a time of rest in the old surroundings of Japan."²⁵⁵ The treatment was not effective. After consulting with Blackmore and Hargrave and the doctors in Japan, the Perleys were advised to return home to Canada where Ila Perley, who did not show any signs of improvement, was institutionalized. Rev. Perley reported to the General Superintendent of Missions that his wife believed she had "made the fatal mistake of her life in leaving her work in Japan and marrying. She ordinarily professed no personal antipathy to me except as I happen to stand in the way of her freedom."²⁵⁶ Just three years as a missionary in Japan had an indelible effect on Ila Day, giving her a distinct

identity and making an adjustment to any other way of life, especially one where she apparently had to accept the authority of a husband, almost impossible. For Day and her colleagues, their strong sense of Christian duty did not preclude a concern for their own interests.

Again and again, W. M. S. missionaries in Japan remarked on their personal good fortune and, above all, the gratification they had derived from helping in any small way to improve the lives of the girls and women with whom they had come in contact. Most of the missionaries who did not complete their first term of service resigned because of ill health or, less often, marriage or family obligations and not from any identifiable dissatisfaction with their work or life in Japan. Consequently, Elizabeth Alcorn's pledge, "[i]f I had twenty lives, I would lay them all down for the women of Japan," taken when, after twenty years in Japan, illness necessitated her retirement, could have been repeated by dozens of her sister workers.²⁵⁷ Likewise, the elated testimony of an unidentified evangelist travelling on her bicycle to spread the Gospel summarizes the response of most W. M. S missionaries in Japan toward their chosen calling as missionaries. "As I told them the story, and watched their wondering, listening faces, I would not have changed places with anyone, in the world."²⁵⁸

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- 243 Ibid., Powell to Robertson, May 7, 1925.
- 244 Ibid., Robertson to Powell, July 11, 1924.
- 245 Ibid.
- 246 Letters written from Japan in 1922 and 1923 were filled with references to the failure to send new recruits.
- 247 U. C. A., W. M. S. Japan Papers, Box 2, File 10, Powell to Robertson, October 15, 1923.
- 248 E. S. Strachan, The Story of the Years, Volume III (Toronto: Woman's Missionary Society, 1917), p. 152.
- 249 U. C. A., W. M. S. Executive Notebooks, Ross to Miss G.A. Gollack, Edinburgh House, London, March 6, 1922.
- 250 Strachan, p. 144.

251U. C. A., Strachan - Cartmell Papers. Box 1, File 23. A. Belton to Cartmell, June 25, 1898.

252Ibid., File 26, Robertson to Cartmell, 1914.

253Ibid.

254See U. C. A., Cassette of Sybil Courtice's recollection of her time spent in a Japanese internment camp.

255U. C. A., Methodist Church of Canada, United Church of Canada. West China Mission Papers, Box 11, File 102, D. M. Perley to E. Shore, March 29, 1912.

256Ibid., Perley to Strachan. June 17, 1912. Mrs. Perley was examined by Dr. C. Clarke in Toronto and was sent to the Barrie Sanatorium for treatment. She subsequently recovered and returned to China with her husband where she raised a family. She died in Canada in 1963. Biographical file of D. M. Perley, U. C. A.

257The Christian Guardian, August 21, 1921.

258Ibid., January 18, 1899.

CHAPTER IV

"Living Face to Face with the Devil and His Works"

Encouraged by the apparent success of their enterprise in Japan and by the enthusiasm which it had generated among the W. M. S. membership in Canada, the Board of Managers was prepared, by the end of the 1880s, to entertain the possibility of beginning missionary work in a second foreign field. But, as had happened ten years earlier, it was the General Board of Missions which ultimately determined both the timing and the location of the next W. M. S. foreign base. The General Board of Mission, too, had begun to investigate the feasibility of expanding its foreign missionary work.¹ The growth of Canadian Methodist operations in Japan and the widespread receptiveness of the Japanese to western culture in the 1880s was reason enough to encourage the General Board to consider expansion, but, at the same time, the Methodist Church was faced with considerable public pressure to participate in the Christianization of China, in particular, because its rival, the Presbyterian Church, had, in 1888, just established its second foreign mission field in Honan. In 1890, when several very persistent and determined young men volunteered their services to the Methodist Church to go to China specifically as medical missionaries,

the Board of Missions could no longer postpone making a decision if it wished to retain its standing as a vigorous and creditable champion of mission expansion.²

The W. M. S. had not been especially drawn towards China and, in fact, had considered Syria, where many American women's missionary societies had begun work, as its probable second foreign field.³ Nor was the W. M. S. Board of Managers consulted when the General Board decided that Szechwan, a province deep in the western Chinese interior, should become the particular enclave of the Methodist Church of Canada.⁴ The Board of Managers, however, deferred to the General Board in this decision, accepting the "providential provision of men and money, which preceded the decision to open work in China" as yet another sign of "the Divine will in the selection of a second foreign field."⁵ During the next sixty years, both the General Board and the W. M. S. and their employees paid an enormous price for this choice as measured by the heavy outlay involved in travel and living expenses and by those more elusive and intangible human costs engendered by the anxiety and emotional and physical suffering on both sides of the Pacific which became an inextricable outcome of the experience.

At the time, however, Szechwan's remote location was part of its appeal to evangelical Protestants. In 1891, Szechwan was "... practically virgin soil for missionary work and a field worthy of the best endeavors of the virile

Canadian Church."⁶ Western missionaries had been granted access to the interior of China by the Treaty of Tientsin, signed in 1858, but because of the distance from the coast, Protestant missionaries had not reached Szechwan until the late 1870s. The aggressive evangelical non-denominational British-based China Inland Mission opened the first Protestant mission station in the province at ChungKing in 1877 and a second in Chengtu in 1881. In that same year, the West China Mission of the Methodist Episcopal Church (U.S.) whose spokesman, Rev. Virgil Hart, became the advisor to the first Canadian Methodist missionaries, opened a station in Chengtu.⁷

The W. M. S. endorsed Szechwan partly because of "the leadings of Providence,"⁸ but they concluded as well that China would be fertile territory for the medical mission which they were anxious to open. Because Japan already had an efficient Western-style health care system in place by the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the W. M. S. lacked an opportunity to engage in medical work and had restricted its activity there almost exclusively to teaching and evangelizing. However, medical work had become such a successful and prestigious weapon in the arsenal of other women's missionary societies, especially the Canadian Presbyterian women's organization which had several medical stations in Central India, that the Methodist women were eager to send their own medical personnel, especially doctors, to China

where women generally would not consent to examination and care by a male doctor and were otherwise lost to the church.⁹ But, in 1891, when the General Board was organizing its first party for West China, the W. M. S. failed in its attempt to hire a doctor. The Society had to be satisfied with Amelia Brown, a woman with no particular qualifications, and for whom there seem to have been no specific orders about the nature of her work,¹⁰ as its first missionary in China.

Amelia Brown's departure for China was less publicized than Martha Cartmell's journey to Japan a decade earlier. By the time that Brown left for China in 1891, Canadians had become quite accustomed to reading the accounts of single women missionaries who had ventured into strange lands where they managed their own affairs and those of the societies they served under unfamiliar and trying circumstances. Methodist, Baptist and Presbyterian women missionaries had, in a very short time, earned the respect of Canadians as models to be emulated by other young women seeking a respectable career. Consequently, Amelia Brown's appointment did not generate either the apprehension or speculation about a woman's ability to succeed in a previously male-dominated field which had clouded Martha Cartmell's undertaking ten years earlier. Perhaps, too, the more restrained attitude towards Brown's departure can be attributed to the discomfort of the Board of Managers because the Society's first priority for China had been a physician, and

after extensive publicity and pleading, none materialized. The Society had expected to hire a doctor readily, but perhaps their expectations were unrealistic. By 1891, only 36 women had graduated from Canadian medical schools.¹¹ The Board put the best face on its disappointment by reminding members, rhetorically, of the Society's purpose. "Are we devoting too little time to prayer? or too much to human machinery and methods."¹² It was a question that the problems of the China stations would raise repeatedly in the years that followed. The shortage of doctors became chronic and, in the long run, thwarted the Society's plans for an extensive network of medical facilities in Szechwan. Of necessity, W. M. S. medical work was limited to the city of Chengtu. In the meantime, the Board had to be satisfied with Brown if it wanted to send its own emissary as a member of the first Canadian Methodist contingent to China.

Brown left Toronto in early October 1891, in the company of Reverend Virgil Hart, his wife and daughter, Dr. David Stevenson, and two newly-wed couples, Dr. and Mrs. Omar Kilborn and Reverend and Mrs. George Hartwell. The party crossed the Pacific on the new C. P. R. steamship, The Empress of China, and, after a month-long voyage which included a brief stop in Japan to observe the Ainu in their native habitat, disembarked at Shanghai on November 3.¹³ Brown's first account of her travels appeared in the January 1892 issue of the Missionary Outlook whose cover

featured a photograph of the very attractive young woman. Brown was studying Chinese in Shanghai and making preparations for the arduous trip inland. She warned the Society that her stay in Shanghai might be prolonged because rioting in Hunan and along the lower Yangtze had convinced the British consul who was responsible for the safety of Canadians in China that the men of the party might go on to Chengtu, but the women should remain on the coast until spring.¹⁴ There were no more published communications from Brown; nor do any letters, if they ever were sent, from Brown to her employers survive. Instead of writing on her own behalf to the Board of Managers, Brown seems to have left Dr. Hart to explain the awkward circumstances in which she had become involved and which jeopardized the already uneasy alliance between the Board and the W. M. S. Without consulting either mission board as the W. M. S. implied they ought, Dr. Stevenson and Brown announced their engagement early in 1892. Dr. Alexander Sutherland was not surprised by the news and advised Dr. Hart that "the only thing to be done was to let matters take their course."¹⁵ The General Board, in fact, preferred that Stevenson begin work as a married man, because he would not be burdened with the problems of running his own household and, more importantly, he would not have to impose upon another missionary family.¹⁶ Moreover, the marriage would alleviate a potentially embarrassing and awkward situation for the party. The Chinese were puzzled

and offended by unmarried women travelling in the company of married couples and usually interpreted such an entourage as a ménage à trois or more.¹⁷

] To appease the W. M. S., whose reputation hinged on Brown's success as its ambassador in China, and to mitigate their public discomfiture, Sutherland decided that the General Board should refund Brown's travelling expenses to the Society and that Stevenson should personally be liable for repaying his wife's past wages.¹⁸ There was no apparent precedent for the arrangement; but, once in place, this plan was adopted time and time again when other W. M. S. employees resigned to marry either General Board missionaries and or men from other mission societies.¹⁹ Brown did not petition the Board of Managers to allow her to continue her work after her marriage, nor did the Board request her services, as had been the case with Eliza Spencer Large in Japan.

If the W. M. S. was inconvenienced by Brown's marriage, the General Board certainly was not. A General Board sympathizer later interpreted the marriage as evidence of the co-operation and accord between the two organizations.

... [E]arly in the history of Canadian Missions ... the Woman's Missionary Society [came] to the aid of the General Society in matters matrimonial - a precedent that was more than once followed in after years.²⁰

Marriages between missionaries of the two boards became endemic to West China. Over the next thirty years, one in three of the W. M. S. missionaries who arrived in West China

married, most frequently to another Canadian Methodist missionary, and often, after serving the W. M. S. for less than the initial term of five years. Consequently, the average length of service for missionaries in West China was 14 years, compared to nearly 18 for those in Japan and the Society constantly experienced difficulty in keeping their stations fully staffed.

These resignations eventually created serious problems in West China. Full of ambition and financially secure, the W. M. S. overextended itself and sometimes stations had to be closed and the work severely restricted because of a shortage of human resources. Yet, as good Christian women brought up to accept the notion that marriage was preferable to spinsterhood, the Board of Managers did not and could not prevent their employees from marrying, in spite of the pledge they had signed to the contrary. Because so much valuable time and money raised by the women of Canada had been expended on women who, in some cases, left before they completed their language training, the Board seems to have suppressed as far as possible the details about the marriages in West China. Brown's case was typical. The official W. M. S. history merely recorded that the marriage took place in Shanghai, "consent having been asked and received by cable."²¹

While the General Board party made its triumphant entrance into Chengtu, boasting of the dubious honour of

being the first missionaries to arrive wearing European-style clothing,²² the W. M. S. was beginning its search for a doctor all over again. This time, the advertisements drew, if not a flood of applications, at least one suitable candidate. By June 1892, the Board had accepted Dr. Alfretta Gifford, a farmer's daughter from near Meaford, Ontario, a small town on Georgian Bay, for service in China. A graduate of the Toronto Women's Medical College in 1891, Dr. Gifford had practised medicine in Owen Sound, Ontario for about a year.²³ In January 1893, the Society hired Sara Brackbill, who had, coincidentally, been attending Owen Sound Collegiate Institute in order to improve her teaching credentials, to accompany Gifford to China.²⁴ These two women would spend virtually the rest of their lives in West China as missionaries and, in their capacities as teacher and physician, shaped the direction of W. M. S. work there. Fortunately for the Society, both women were exceptionally diligent and talented correspondents. Many women complained about the obligation to write letters for publications and others simply did not bother at all. The letters sent by Brackbill and Gifford and published in missionary journals helped to restore the Society's slightly tarnished public image in the wake of Brown's defection, and gave thousands of Canadian women their first occasion to read about China. Gifford, in particular, produced detailed commentaries about Chinese society as it appeared to her, that is, from the perspective of the

missionary interests with which she identified as soon as she arrived in China. She was impatient to leave Shanghai where, she observed, exploitive western business ventures had become a fact of life and where missionary work was "retarded ... by the example of dissolute foreigners."²⁵ After several months in Shanghai, Gifford was "... more than thankful every day that [her] work [would] be in the interior, away from the influence of the large foreign element which abounds in the Treaty Port."²⁶ Gifford appears to have deliberately tried to distance herself from other foreigners, especially Western businessmen, whom she considered to be merely self-serving; the Chinese understandably were less able to make this distinction, and their persistently hostile reaction to any foreign presence was an insurmountable and often unfathomable obstacle for the Society and its agents.

Candid discussion and analysis of Chinese attitudes toward missionaries in general and to the Methodists in particular is conspicuously absent from the early accounts and letters sent by W. M. S. missionaries in China. Possibly because the W. M. S. was sensitive to the earlier opposition to the establishment of a separate women's society, let alone sending single women to China, they may have tried to avoid topics which could provoke unwanted criticism and controversy about the nature of their work. Only many years later did the Canadian Methodist missionaries confront and come to terms with the Chinese response to their presence and admit

their own ignorance and misunderstanding of Chinese culture and society. For the W. M. S. missionaries in West China and elsewhere, the thrust of missionary work, in the first decades at least, appears to have been predominately evangelical, that is, the winning over of individuals to Jesus Christ, and their first allegiance was to their employer, the W. M. S., and their sister members of the Society in Canada. However, Katharine Hockin, daughter of a W. M. S. missionary in West China and herself a missionary for the United Church, has observed that "[a]ll missionaries from abroad arrived, knowingly or not, burdened by the excess baggage of 'imperialist history.' Because their hands were so full, they were not free to reach out to the poor but proud Chinese on terms of human equality."²⁷ To the baggage of 'imperialist history' must be added, in the case of the W. M. S. missionaries, their parochial backgrounds and outlook and their limited exposure to the social realities of Canada's industrializing cities, let alone the squalid lives of an oriental feudal peasantry. Understanding required a heroic suspension of disbelief. Perhaps this accounts for the first letters sent by Brackbill and Gifford to be read by the small-town and middle-class women whom they represented. Instead of examining the confrontation of eastern and western ideologies, the letters focus on their day-to-day activities in Shanghai.

Most of their time was allocated for the study of Mandarin which was not spoken in Shanghai but which was, the pair were told, universally understood in Szechwan. Among other things they had to contend with was the coldest winter in three hundred years. To their chagrin, the women were still wearing winter clothing late in April.²⁸ After a few months in Shanghai, the missionaries began to comment on the position and treatment of women in Chinese society. Gifford condemned, in particular, the evils of arranged marriages and, in her capacity as a physician, footbinding. As she saw it, the solution was simply

... example as well as precept. You may smile at this, but it is true. Very often when the foreign teacher attempts to point out the sinfulness of the practice, she is met with the reply 'foreign woman bind her waist'. They do not understand the difference between a neat, close fitting dress and a tight one, as they wear all their garments so very loose. If we would exert the influence we wish over these women, we must discard corsets and everything approaching them.²⁹

Subsequent photographs suggest that Gifford ignored her own sensible advice.

By November 1893, Brackbill and Gifford were ready to leave Shanghai. After six months of study, they felt comfortable, if not completely fluent, with the language and they had met other missionaries from both China and Japan who had advised them about the preparations for the trip inland up the Yangtze. Gifford had visited several women doctors in Shanghai hospitals to observe their surgical procedures and

to learn how to set up a dispensary in Szechwan.³⁰ Unlike Japan, which by the end of the nineteenth century had adopted some of the material aspects of western culture, in West China, few of the familiar trappings of home were available without a wait of a year for a mail order which risked being lost, stolen or damaged en route. At the same time, many missionaries in China had an unrealistic notion of their own needs and were unwilling to relinquish the comforts and luxuries of their former existence in spite of the problems that transporting these accoutrements 2000 miles inland involved. Brackbill and Gifford were no exceptions. Their preparations left little room for a possible accommodation to the Chinese way of life or any personal discomfort if they could avoid it. Before they left the coast, they reported to the Society that they had been

... obliged to purchase lamps, dishes (bed-room, dinner and tea-sets), chairs, clocks, stoves, springs for bed, etc., as it is impossible to get the least foreign articles, even a pair of shoe strings, up there. We have also been purchasing supplies both for the journey up, and something to last for a time after arrival. Sugar, soap, flour, butter, spices, canned fruit as the bottles are needed for after use, canned meat for the journey, vinegar, salt, pepper, mustard. etc., all have to be purchased in Shanghai.³¹

The women left Shanghai with the second contingent of General Board missionaries; Mr. and Mrs. James Endicott and Dr. Hare. Dr. Kilborn, now a widower, travelled from Chengtu to escort the group to Szechwan. To avoid extra expense and

the curiosity of the Chinese, who crowded the inns where missionaries stayed for a glimpse of the foreigners, wherever possible the party rested at mission stations along the way.

Any voyage up the Yangtze could become a frightening experience because of strong currents and rapids and the constant threat of attacks by bands of robbers who roamed the river banks. The trip on the Yangtze posed a hazard to Methodist missionaries until the 1930's when personnel and supplies could be flown in from the coast. Gifford and Brackbill's trip was, more harrowing than most because their party was, in fact, "shipwrecked" while passing through the Gorges of the Upper Yangtze. Dr. Omar Kilborn's version of the episode illustrates well the dangers of river travel for missionaries en route to Szechwan.

On January 5th the larger of our two house-boats, the one we were all living in, struck a rock, filled in about fifteen minutes and sank, not however, before we were able to get near a sloping bank and get ashore ourselves, along with all easily movable articles and furniture from our rooms. Darkness closed in and we realized that we were ship-wrecked. Providentially, our small house-boat was right at hand, so we were able to have a sheltered sleeping place. Next day our cargo of boxes was slowly fished out of the sunken boat, and in forty-eight hours after the accident the old craft again stood upright in the water. In the meantime, we had purchased coal, built fires on the sand, set up drying poles, and commenced drying bedding, clothing, and books.³²

The women lost all their books and a wedding cake "which had

been entrusted to [them] by the mother of a prospective bride."³³

When they finally arrived in Chengtu in March 1894, Brackbill and Gifford rented a house near, but not in, the General Board mission compound. They began at once to plan for a girls' school and a women's hospital. However, their failure to communicate fluently enough in Chinese to make their needs understood forced them to spend several more months studying the local dialects in order to bridge the gap between, as Gifford put it, "the book language and the colloquial."³⁴ Similar frustration over their inability to speak and write Chinese plagued succeeding W. M. S. missionaries. The Board of Managers assumed that if a woman was well-educated, preferably a university graduate, she was capable of learning a highly complex and exacting foreign language without difficulty. But many women never became fluent enough in Chinese to feel confident about speaking in public; others blamed the long hours they had spent trying to master the language for their bouts of ill-health. The Board of Managers made no provision for recruits to study either Chinese or Japanese before they left Canada, nor did they devise even rudimentary tests which might have determined whether a woman had the capacity to master a foreign language. Well into the 1920s, missionaries continued to complain about their inadequate language preparation and how

it limited their effectiveness and undermined their self-confidence.

Brackbill and Kilborn wrote cheerfully enough about their early days in Chengtu, a city of about 500,000, which they preferred to some other cities they had visited because of its wide streets.³⁵ But, their sense of alienation from Chinese society because of their gender, nationality and calling became an increasingly insistent theme in their reports. Walking alone in the streets of Chengtu made them nervous and uncomfortable, and they chose to travel in closed sedan chairs, as did upper-class Chinese women. Gifford justified their conduct because "no respectable woman of the better class ever walks; another reason is our foreign dress attracts so much attention and calls forth so many remarks."³⁶ The former Amelia Brown, now in Chengtu as Mrs. Stevenson, questioned their timidity. She pointed out that "[t]he ladies of the C. I. M. and C. M. S. societies travel about as freely and easily as the men, and are winning their way into the hearts of the people. Why not the ladies of the W. M. S."³⁷ Gifford and Brackbill, however, continued to be careful about offending Chinese sensitivities.

Women missionaries especially were subject to close scrutiny by the Chinese and if they wished to overcome Chinese suspicions about their character and morals had to be painstaking in their behaviour. As the indomitable veteran Victorian traveller, Isabella Bird Bishop, (who accompanied a

party of Canadian Methodists down the Yangtze in 1896), explained:

[t]he fact of a young unmarried woman living anywhere but under her father's roof, exposes her character to the greatest imputations, which are hurled at her in the streets. ... The Chinese etiquette, which prescribes the conduct seemly for women, and limits the freedom of social intercourse between the sexes, certainly tends to propriety, and though to our thinking tiresome, no young foreign woman attempting to teach a foreign religion can violate its leading rules without injury to her work.³⁸

It was a particularly serious breach of etiquette for women missionaries to receive male visitors in their homes or to call at Chinese houses without the company of one of the middle-aged Chinese women who served as Bible women in the mission communities.³⁹

It was too delicate a matter for Brackbill and Kilborn to write about for the Canadian public, but foreign women were also suspect because their "long skirts suggested an absence of underclothing" to the Chinese who were accustomed to jackets and trousers.⁴⁰ The Chinese also thought it "scandalous for a woman to be seen in a tight bodice, or any other fashion which show[ed] her figure."⁴¹ The question of how missionaries should dress had been and, in the 1890s, still was controversial within missionary communities in China. Missionaries from British China Inland Mission wore Chinese-style clothing to appear less conspicuous and to avoid insults. Hudson Taylor, a prominent spokesman for the C. I. M., argued that "[m]any who would be afraid of [the

women] in foreign dress receive them willingly, and it is an advantage not to have the women's attention distracted from the message to the dress of the missionary."⁴² The men of the C. I. M. let their hair grow, braiding it in a traditional Chinese queue. Most Canadian Methodists retained their Western dress, although some, Dr. Maud Killam of the W. M. S., for one, became short-term converts to Chinese fashions.

Brackbill and Kilborn showed no inclination to adopt Chinese dress. They were, nonetheless, conscious of their appearance and comfort in the Szechwanese climate and reported to a presumably equally fashion-conscious Canadian audience that they needed a variety of clothing, including

... as heavy underclothing as we wear at home
 ... heavy dresses for the winter and plenty
 of light ones for summer. It is well to have
 several pretty prints as well as white ones.
 I would advise anyone coming out to bring a
 good supply of light-weight woollen
 guernseys. Many wear wool next to the skin
 all summer, as it removes to a great extent
 the danger of chill from sudden change in
 temperature. Cotton can be bought, and also
 some kinds of flannels, but it is expensive
 and not good.⁴³

Even under the most adverse circumstances, these Victorian women seemed loath to compromise their femininity. Some of the preoccupation about the variety in their wardrobe was, no doubt, a response to the presence of male missionaries with whom they were in frequent social and business contact. Gifford, however, was concerned temporarily with a rather more important issue than clothing. Shortly after she left

Canada, it appears that in response to a complaint from the General Board of Missions which was paying its missionary doctors \$500.00, the W. M. S. Board of Managers had reduced Gifford's salary of \$600.00 accordingly. When Gifford lodged a protest, the Board reinstated her salary and, moreover, agreed to pay the rent for the women's house in Chengtu until the W. M. S. had its own quarters.⁴⁴ There was apparently no further objection from the General Board and salaries paid by the General Board appear to have been increased to match Dr. Gifford's. Generally, the salaries which the General Board paid both its single and married employees were higher than those paid by the W. M. S., partly because most of the men, especially before World War One, were ordained ministers and were paid accordingly.

In spite of the social taboos to be observed as respectable ambassadors for Christ and the dearth of western material possessions, Szechwan was not the wasteland the women had envisioned. The province was just slightly smaller than Ontario, but with a population estimated by the British Consul in 1905 at 45,000,000.⁴⁵ The climate was generally better than Canada's, with fewer extremes of temperature although it sometimes reached 95 degrees in mid-summer.⁴⁶ Then, missionaries retreated to the cooler mountain region. Canadians in Szechwan drew parallels with Florida.⁴⁷ One of the most fertile agricultural regions of China, Szechwan produced a wide range of fruits, vegetables and grains. The

city of Chengtu, where the missionaries began work, was unique in the province because of its good supply of beef, better than "the cities where there [were] no Mohammedans, for they only are the beef butchers."⁴⁸ The inventory of food stuffs available to the missionaries included chicken, duck, geese, beef, mutton, goat, fish, wild fowl and pork, Irish and sweet potatoes, carrots, turnips, beans, celery, cabbage, eggplant, cucumber, peas, onions, radishes and,

of course rice, ... cooked as the Chinese cook it, big grains and dry, not soft as it is cooked at home. For breakfast foods we use popped rice, wheat and corn. We have our own stone hand-mills, and first have the grains washed, then baked, and after this it is ground. We use the whole wheat flour for breakfast food, pudding, brown bread and gems [muffins]. The corn meal we use the same as at home and it is just as good.⁴⁹

The variety of fruits, "cherries, mulberries, apples, apricots, pears, peaches, figs, grapes, persimmons ... pomelas [a grapefruit-like fruit grown only in Szechwan], and many varieties of oranges,"⁵⁰ especially appealed to missionary appetites.

Nevertheless, as in Japan, many women complained about their diet, partly because of the oils in which food was usually cooked and because of the monotony of the dishes prepared by some of the mission's Chinese cooks who were familiar only with peasant fare. A few women had very legitimate cause to be alarmed at the way their meals were prepared because of the unrelenting dysentery from which they suffered. But others, like Lena Jolliffe, who once fed her

dog the Chinese-style breakfast her students brought her,⁵¹ continued, even after twenty years in China, to avoid Szechwanese cooking, preferring instead expensive imported tinned food. There were, on the other hand, some strange degrees of culinary accommodation. Not a few missionaries developed a taste for Tibetan duck, serving it often, but ending the meal with a North American chocolate or cottage pudding.⁵²

Descriptions of Christmas celebrations, replete with plum puddings and mince pies, are further evidence of the lengths to which the women would go to duplicate a traditional Canadian meal.

There were more serious reasons for western women in Szechwan to complain about their environment. China lacked the most basic sanitation and was always redolent, as one woman delicately phrased it, of "pig odors."⁵³ Infectious diseases were rampant - typhoid, smallpox and the worst, cholera, which killed Dr. Kilborn's first wife. For the first time in their lives, Canadian women missionaries in China came face to face with the horror of leprosy. Moreover, to add to the challenge which the women as relatively sheltered products of a middle-class Victorian society not overly fond of Asians already faced in surmounting their own prejudices and preconceptions about the nature of Chinese society, many old China hands denounced the shortcomings of Szechwanese society as the outward manifestations of the moral corruption of an unusually volatile and evil people.

For example, Dr. Hart's searing catalogue of the problems missionaries confronted in China which appeared in the Methodist Magazine in 1898 did little to dispel the image that Canadians, future missionaries among them, might have of the Chinese people as anything but hopeless and degraded heathens while at the same time perpetuating the notion of western moral and intellectual superiority.

The Westerner teems with energy, is full of progressive ideas, and is much out of harmony with the do-as-little-as necessary Chinaman as a leviathan ironclad in the midst of a fleet of junks....


However much we deplore the Chinaman's obtuseness and his acceptance of ugliness and filth, for his own environment, we cannot sneer out of existence the poor and evil things he prizes so highly. His laws are not perfect, their execution a hundredfold worse, his officials are rapacious and pitiless toward the weak, his schools are better than none but lamentably deficient in every direction.

The religions and philosophers are practically dead, materialism reigns triumphant and the voice of conscience is stifled in dungeons of despair....

Streets and houses are filthy beyond description, harbouring every kind of vermin and germ imaginable. The moral filth is, if possible, greater than the physical. The common language, of both men and women, boys and girls, and indiscriminately used, could not be viler In a land of superior productiveness, beggary is a profession adopted by scores of thousands, poverty is wide-spread, wine drinking is universal, and opium smoking almost so, foot-binding universal, and the terrible evil of infanticide taints the whole moral life of the people. The social evil has driven out all modesty from society. The officials take no steps to deal with these great evils, and the burden of reform in all directions becomes more and more the missionary's imperative duty.⁵⁴

The W. M. S. accepted the missionary's imperative to reform Chinese society but the women were much less vindictive in their judgments of the Chinese. The W. M. S., responding to the observations of their agents in China, concluded, by 1905, that it was "not so much the vices of the people as their weakness that makes the work of regeneration all but hopeless."⁵⁵ Although the W. M. S. missionaries' mandate was the conversion of all the women they came in contact with and, through them, other family members, in the long run, the Society approached the problem of the moral regeneration of Chinese society by turning its energies to children, in particular, young girls, whose lives were cheap in traditional Chinese society. With the appropriate care and nurturing, the women hoped the girls would become grateful Christian women, wives, mothers and teachers. Brackbill seemed convinced of the effectiveness of this approach from the outset and she told the Board of Managers that the only way to succeed was by constructing a boarding school where girls could be placed in a totally Christian environment, a plan which the Society had already adopted in Japan. If the older generation did not often respond to the missionaries' gestures, the women were confident that "the young [were] material from which to form the church. The importance, nay, the absolute necessity of beginning with the children is forced upon [the missionary], and grows upon him."⁵⁶

Gifford wrote optimistically about her ideas for a modern hospital for the women of Chengtu, to relieve their all too obvious misery and, at the same time, to provide a place where the missionaries could proselytize a captive audience.⁵⁷ But her designs for medical work had to be abandoned for the immediate future, because, in May 1893, only two months after arriving in Chengtu, Retta Gifford, following the pattern established by Amelia Brown, married her colleague, Dr. Omar Kilborn. The Board of Managers did not request Gifford's immediate resignation. As a doctor, she was vital to the success of the West China operations and the Society could not afford either the public embarrassment of another missionary who had married before her work had even begun or the expense of recruiting another. Instead, the Board of Managers chastised Gifford for her breach of contract. In a rare, strongly-worded statement, they regretted "... that an engagement has been entered into between Dr. Gifford and Dr. Kilborn, but considering all the circumstances, we consent to the marriage and the continuance of Dr. Gifford in our work for her term of five years if her full time can be given to medical work among the women and children of China."⁵⁸ Gifford was penalized for her disloyalty to the Society; from the date of her marriage, her salary was reduced to \$300.00 for the duration of her term.⁵⁹ She does not seem to have questioned the terms that the Board offered, perhaps because it was accommodation enough for the



Society to have permitted her to continue her work under the circumstances.

Shortly after the marriage, Omar Kilborn was sent by the General Board to a open a second mission station at Kiating, about 120 miles to the south of Chengtu. His wife left with him and operated a dispensary in Kiating on behalf of the W. M. S. Early in 1895 the couple returned to Chengtu, where Gifford-Kilborn's plans for women's medical work were finally set in motion. In the meantime, she had given birth to a son while continuing to fulfill her obligations to the Society. She completed her term with the Society and, in her "retirement", remained an effective publicist on behalf of the W. M. S., assisting both mission societies with their medical work and contributing to missionary publications. After her husband died in 1920, Gifford-Kilborn returned to work for the General Board, but after one term, she transferred to the W. M. S. of the newly organized United Church and continued to practise in China until her retirement in 1934.⁶⁰ Yet, despite the outstanding work done by Gifford-Kilborn as a married woman and the fine example she set for those she worked with, the Society did not suggest that any other of its employees in China or elsewhere might continue to work after marriage, even when the plans of the Society were jeopardized by the resignation.

At the end of 1894, the Board of Managers was confident enough about the prospects for success in West

China to advertise for a second physician, a teacher and a nurse to instruct Chinese women students in simple medical procedures and health care. If they were properly supervised, Gifford-Kilborn had found that Chinese assistants could be efficient and cost-saving.⁶¹ Only the nurse, Jennie Ford, was hired. In March 1895, Ford reached Szechwan where she reported "all is peace and quietness,"⁶² assuring the Society that she was glad she decided to "... come now, instead of letting war rumours keep me at home."⁶³ Brackbill, in the meantime, had opened, not a boarding school which required an expensive building, but a day school which she reported was well attended. A dispensary where Gifford-Kilborn and her assistants performed minor surgery, most often to treat skin diseases and the complications which were the result of bound feet, and gave out medicine, was operating at full capacity.⁶⁴ Ford became Gifford's right hand. But, the enthusiasm of the women for their work was soon dampened. In 1895, Szechwan was becoming a potential powder keg in the wake of China's recent defeat by Japan during the Sino-Japanese War which had broken out in August 1894, and, in any event, the presence of Westerners in their country was increasingly taken as an insult by the Chinese.⁶⁵ In the spring of 1895 the Chinese had been forced by the Treaty of Shimonoseki to capitulate to the Japanese and to surrender Taiwan, the Pescadores and the Liaotung peninsula in southern Manchuria, to open more ports to foreign traders, and to

allow Japanese nationals to manufacture and to trade in their country.⁶⁶ The western powers took exception to Japan's attempt to control the sea route to north China. Russia, France and Germany intervened, forcing Japan to return the Liaotung peninsula in return for a larger indemnity. Russia moved into the peninsula, building a naval base at Port Arthur and a railway terminus at Dairen. Likewise, Britain took over Wei-hai-wei on the Shantung peninsula as a naval base. Germany and France also took advantage of the situation to establish strategic bases and to secure the rights for railway construction inland. "As the predatory spirit sharpened, talk of the partition of China was increasingly heard."⁶⁷ By the early summer of 1895, it was obvious to the Methodists in Szechwan that their situation had become very precarious. Gifford-Kilborn confessed she feared the worst but trusted "... in the One who is able to protect us then and now."⁶⁸

Ironically, on the same day that the violent anti-missionary rioting did erupt in Chengtu, the American Minister in Peking, Charles Denby, warned the U.S. State Department that the defeat of China soon threatened to provoke a reaction against foreigners throughout the country.⁶⁹ British officialdom, too, feared for its nationals, Canadians among them. But, while they were obligated to protect missionaries as British subjects, British diplomats in China regarded their missionary charges, and the single

women, above all, not as allies in the imperialist enterprise, but as nuisances who were usually to blame for any risks they might face. As a British diplomat in Shansi, who seemed to understand the Chinese point of view, complained,

[i]t is hard to speak temperately of the individual or society that sends girls wholesale into the interior of such a country as China unprotected, practically uncared for, and with most inadequate means These poor unfortunate women with the merest smattering of Chinese are being sent about the country - sometimes in pairs and sometimes alone - to pray, play the guitar, and sing hymns in the street, a life that none but an improper woman in China would lead, and which fosters the idea in the native mind that these girls were too bad to be allowed to remain in their own country.⁷⁰

That their missionaries were in any immediate danger at this time does not seem to have been conveyed to either of the Methodist mission societies in Canada. Two years earlier, Dr. Sutherland, in a moment of prescience, had questioned the rapid expansion of missionary activities. He had wondered whether

... in view of the strong tendency among the Chinese to suspect foreigners of some sinister design, it might be wisdom on our part not to reinforce our mission too rapidly, but to give the people time to become familiar with your teachings, motives, and intentions, and when confidence is fully established, additional workers might be sent in more rapidly and with entire safety.⁷¹

The events of 1895 were to validate Sutherland's caution but the Methodists' representatives on the spot did not have the sense or experience to foresee what was to follow.

The train of events of the next few months is very complicated. Simply put, the Viceroy of Szechwan, Liu Ping-chong, had been replaced and discredited in 1894 by the Governor of Shansi. As ex-Viceroy, Ping-chong remained in Chengtu where, before his final departure in June 1895, he incited anti-foreign and anti-missionary sentiment. Rumours spread that the foreigners were plotting to take over Szechwan, that they were criminals fleeing from justice, and that they were fortune hunters seeking buried treasures.⁷² Moreover, to cite a member of the Canadian Methodist mission at the time,

... [t]here was a widespread belief that foreign barbarians ate human flesh Did the foreigners use parts of the human body to perform their wondrous cures? The use of canned goods, meats, fish, vegetables and fruits aroused curiosity. It looked uncanny to eat food from tin cans. Another belief that was very common to all classes was that the foreigners kidnapped children.⁷³

The women missionaries faced special charges "...of eating babies and digging out their eyes for medicine."⁷⁴ Yet, throughout the early months of 1895, the Chinese officials in Szechwan reassured the missionary community that it was in no danger. For their part, the missionaries experienced little sense of "... personal danger, as Chengtu, the capital, was well supplied with military equipment and no trouble could arise unless sanctioned by the officials."⁷⁵

The Canadian Methodists in Chengtu were prepared for a possible disturbance on May 28, the annual Dragon Boat

Festival. Placards throughout the city warned the Chinese not to allow their children outside because missionaries would kidnap and roast them to extract medicine. The day itself proved uneventful enough but, as Dr. Gifford-Kilborn later reported to the W. M. S.,

[a]bout four o'clock the people who had been engaged in [scattering plums over the parade grounds as part of the celebrations] were returning home, when a large crowd gathered in the street outside the compound where Dr. and Mrs. Stevenson, Dr. Kilborn and I lived. Slowly the crowd increased, and some stones were thrown over the wall. As soon as the first stones were thrown, a messenger was sent to the yamen, the residence of the magistrate, with a card asking him to send men to scatter the crowd. The stone throwing increased, and the mob began to pound the heavy gates. Soon the gates were battered down and part of the gateman's house. At this juncture Drs. Stevenson and Kilborn faced the mob in the gateway, each with a gun. As soon as the crowd saw the guns they separated and ran a short distance up and down the street, but regained courage and renewed the attack. Shortly after, about ten men arrived from the yamen. With the aid of these men and the firing of two or three shots into the air, the mob was held at bay for about an hour and a half. Repeated requests were sent to the yamen for more help, but none came.⁷⁶

The mob broke through gates and was about to enter the compound when Dr. Kilborn again fired over the crowd and dispersed it. With the help of a loyal former Chinese hospital patient, the missionaries escaped from the compound, and, pursued by soldiers, reached the temporary security of the China Inland Mission home.⁷⁷

By morning, the General Board mission compound had been totally destroyed. The mob then burned Rev Hartwell's new home and headed towards the house where Brackbill and Ford lived, outside the compound. Brackbill and Ford climbed over their back wall, taking with them only a bag of silver. They reached the C. I. M., but within hours, it was also under attack. The missionaries narrowly escaped to the relative safety of a nearby Chinese home where, as Gifford-Kilborn recalled, they could hear

... not thirty feet away, and separated only by a mud wall, th[e] ... crowd destroy[ing] the China Inland Mission buildings. The shouts and curses of the maddened mob, mingled with the crash and roar of falling buildings - it was terrible! We knew not what moment they might find us, and if found probably not one would have escaped alive.⁷⁸

Late in the evening the group moved to the yamen, which was, they reluctantly concluded, the safest place in the city for them. Here they spent ten nerve-wracking days. Three small rooms housed thirty-two men, women and children. During their stay in the yamen under protective custody, stories circulated throughout the city about their malicious activities. To discredit them further, the Chinese killed hens and spattered the blood on what remained of the walls of the mission compound, claiming that it was the blood of those children whom the missionaries had murdered.⁷⁹ Drs. Stevenson and Kilborn were accused of drugging and murdering children to extract medicine from their bodies. As evidence, a young boy testified that he had been drugged and confined

in a tin box under the floor of the mission chapel. In a pseudo trial, Kilborn denied the incident. When he produced his British passport which stated that British subjects must be referred to the British consul for trial, the magistrate dismissed the charges.⁸⁰ At midnight on June 8th, the missionaries were escorted through the city to boats which were waiting to carry them to the coast. A month later, the party safely reached Shanghai.⁸¹

For public consumption, even at the height of the danger, Brackbill, for one, tended to make light of her situation. She wrote wryly from the yamen in Chengtu that

[w]e have no change of clothing and no books, and will be glad to see a home again; but perhaps the Chinese may have some of their homes a little better furnished because of all that they have carried off. Could we call this helping to civilize the Chinese?⁸²

Subsequent testimony exposed the extent of the emotional devastation which the rioting had inflicted upon the Canadians. Amelia Brown Stevenson had been beaten during the initial escape from the compound and her child was temporarily lost during the ensuing confusion of the escape to the C. I. M. Usually pacifistic missionaries had resorted to violence in their own defence - and, while in the yamen, several of the women had become very ill. A baby was born there and another unidentified woman either gave birth to a stillborn baby or miscarried. The baby's body, as Dr. Stevenson reluctantly revealed,

... gave us some anxiety. For what if they should find it? As a doctor I was asked to get rid of it and did. Shanghai friends may say this is disagreeable to write about. In the name of high Heaven what is it to bear these trials.⁸³

The Canadian Methodist women endured the immediate terror almost stoically, displaying a "capacity for self-control and sublimation" which Peter Gay suggests was characteristic of the late Victorian middle-class;⁸⁴ but their brush with death left serious scars. Amelia Stevenson suffered a massive nervous breakdown on the way to Shanghai and the couple never returned to China. Jennie Ford's subsequent death in 1897 from a form of meningitis was, perhaps erroneously, attributed by the W. M. S. to her horrible experiences in 1895.

From Shanghai, Brackbill and Ford travelled to the Tokyo mission station where they remained until permission to resume their work in Szechwan was granted at the end of the year. Eventually the Chinese government paid the mission societies an indemnity covering all losses of property, salaries and travel expenses. Local officials, including the Viceroy, were punished for their parts in the riots.⁸⁵ The Society applauded the action. By the time that the women returned in April 1896, the W. M. S. had raised enough money to purchase a piece of property in Chengtu for the girls' boarding school and a missionaries' home. By 1914, the compound in Chengtu encompassed three and a half acres.⁸⁶ According to the W. M. S.,

[t]hose who predicted that Mission work had been set back years, found that their fears were groundless. The seeming calamity had been over-ruled for the advancement rather than the suppression of Christian Missions.⁸⁷

The Society's assurances notwithstanding, the attack on the mission altered the future direction of work and life for the W. M. S. missionaries in Szechwan. The most visible manifestation of the more suspicious, less trusting but perhaps more realistic, outlook the women adopted was the construction, before any other work was begun on the boarding school and mission home, of "... 500 feet of brick wall, twelve feet high, to enclose the property."⁸⁸ The wall provided privacy and protection for the women; but it also gave them a false sense of security and, at the same time, it became a barrier, effectively separating the missionaries and the Chinese, both symbolically and in fact.

As Sydney Forsythe has argued in his study of an American mission community in China at the turn of the century, missionaries "really did not want to enter the Chinese world any more than they had to. Their whole purpose was to get the Chinese to enter theirs."⁸⁹ Partly to ease the culture shock of coming face to face with a country where everything from private rituals such as hair combing and face washing performed in public, naked trackers hauling the houseboats along the Yangtze, and full-fledged pitched battles between opposing warlord bands offended their sensibilities and simply terrified them,⁹⁰ the Canadian

Methodist women, like most other Western missionaries in China at the turn of the century, chose to distance themselves from the Chinese society around them. This "mission-centric" outlook has been seriously criticized in recent years.⁹¹ Forsythe argues that few missionaries, and even fewer women, moved beyond their compounds to attempt to comprehend the dynamics of Chinese society.⁹² Jane Hunter, while more sympathetic to the women's situation, draws a similar picture of American mission compounds where, in order to retain a hold on civilization, women chose to operate within the materialistic and cultural milieu of the small midwest towns where they had been raised.⁹³ It is tempting to conclude that this thesis applies equally to the Canadian W. M. S. missionaries. Two examples may serve to illustrate the point.

When, in 1923, the W. M. S. Board of Managers suggested employing Chinese-Canadian women as missionaries in Szechwan, the Canadian women on the spot resisted. Their objections seem to have arisen from their perception of their relationships with Chinese, even Chinese-Canadian, women. They did not want to grant Chinese-Canadian women equal status with other W. M. S. missionaries. Nor, does it appear, were they particularly welcome as a part of the W. M. S. mission family. The W. M. S. West China Mission Council wondered about

... their status on the field? Will they dress the same as we do, and live according.

to our (Canadian) standard of living, or will they live in the institutions as do our Chinese teachers, nurses and doctors, and eat Chinese food, etc.?⁹⁴

If the Canadian-Chinese women knew their places, were paid Chinese wages and deferred to the W. M. S. missionaries as the Chinese workers did, the Mission Council grudgingly conceded, their presence might "help bridge the gulf between the Chinese and the foreigner."⁹⁵ But, clearly, the missionaries were not comfortable with the suggestion that the Chinese women would move into the mission homes and become their intimate colleagues. This reluctance to recognize educated Chinese-Canadian women as their sisters in God's work is also an indication that the women believed only bona fide messengers, that is professionally qualified missionaries, could bring the message of Christ to China,⁹⁶ but it inevitably raises the uneasy question of how these Canadian women approached the poor and uneducated Chinese women whom they had chosen to serve, if their reaction to educated women was this negativistic.

A different sort of problem was posed by Mary Foster's unusually intimate relationship with her Chinese tutor. Foster's fate became an object lesson for any newcomer who might have wondered about the women's reluctance to move into Chinese society. Foster's destruction began when she got too close to the Chinese. Her attachment to her male Chinese language instructor progressed far beyond the sentimental relationships between western missionaries and

Asians Jane Hunter has described.⁹⁷ After eleven years of evangelical work in Kiating, several of them spent living alone with no other westerners for company, Foster had to be furloughed home because of what the W. M. S. publicly termed recurrent ill-health. In fact, Foster had a severe nervous breakdown. When she petitioned to return to China, the Board of Managers turned down her appeal; it refused to accept any further responsibility for her behaviour nor could the workers in the field be expected to "... endure the anxiety incident to the risk of [her] return to that land which tries the nerves of the very strongest."⁹⁸ But Foster, who seems to have been independently wealthy, returned to Szechwan on her own. Her behaviour there prompted her former colleagues to suggest to the General Board Mission Council that she should be sent back to Canada at once. The women were reluctant to discuss the matter openly, but a letter from George Hartwell to Dr. Sutherland revealed that Foster's "state of mind of three years ago was returning. It largely surrounds a former teacher whom she claimed was in sight of Heaven her husband."⁹⁹ Moreover, Foster was riddled with guilt for crimes she was convinced she had committed against the Chinese - cutting off heads and digging out eyes. The doctors who were consulted feared that she "... might during such spells take life."¹⁰⁰ Foster was subsequently escorted, under restraint, to Shanghai by several W. M. S. missionaries at the expense of the Methodist church. Foster's fate

alerted her colleagues to the narrow path which separated the necessary place of the individual Chinese, as tutor and friend, in the "making of a missionary,"¹⁰¹ and to the insidious effects of China and the Chinese on the mental and emotional stability of the unwary occidental.

This does not mean that the W. M. S. missionaries became obsessively attached to their mission compound and refused to go outside. In fact, when they could do so without the threat of violence, the women often left the security of the compounds to walk in the streets and to hike into the nearby countryside, sometimes in the company of the school girls. These were excursions which, in later years, the women liked to recall.¹⁰² When their freedom was restricted by the hostility of the Chinese they complained bitterly. Nonetheless, their neat compounds, rose gardens, Canadian-style meals, tennis games and summer retreats in the cool mountains became an essential panacea to counter those aspects of life over the wall which Lena Dunfield, for one, equated with the sixteenth century.¹⁰³ Not surprisingly, the women came to regard a "naturally cheerful disposition and good common sense" and an interest in cooking among the absolutely essential qualities for their future colleagues who might become an intimate part of life within the compound walls.¹⁰⁴

Only rarely did the women allow the Canadian public glimpses into the more depressing and upsetting aspects of

their lives. But when they did, they displayed a toughness that might not have been expected of middle-class women reared in Victorian Canada. This excerpt from a letter sent for publication by Brackbill demonstrates her ability, albeit after ten years in China, to adjust to the grim realities of the Chinese environment.

Sunday morning while passing the Parade Ground on our way to church I was surprised to see the body and head of a man who had been beheaded a few days before, lying beside the path. You may be sure I brought the children back by another street.¹⁰⁵

Coolheadedness, even a degree of nonchalance, towards the violence around them was just one of the characteristics which time spent in China fostered if the women remained long enough. But many of the women, like Dunfield, a Manitoba farm girl who had graduated from Wesley College just the year before her arrival in China in 1904, thought that repression of the sights, sounds and smells of China was the best way to retain their sanity. Dunfield confided in her diary that she simply avoided thinking about the cheerless atmosphere surrounding her in Kiating and that

[w]hen the missionary gets within his own compound he is glad enough to blot out as far as possible the memory of what he knows too well exists.

I am too anxious to preserve my sleeping ability to harass my mind in recounting the horrible at this time of night.¹⁰⁶

The difficulty was that closing their eyes and minds to their grim surroundings precluded careful reflection among the women about why they had come to China.

In the early years of the West China mission's history, few women paused to think about their own or the Society's motives or to evaluate the relative success or failure of the undertaking. Perhaps, as women educated in late-Victorian Canada, they did not have the analytical training and capacity which might have enabled them to adopt a more objective view of their work. But, more likely, as fervent and dedicated evangelical Methodists, they assumed that their own precepts and examples were justification enough for their presence in a heathen land. It was, moreover, preferable that Canadian audiences read about the neat and clean school girls making their own clothing and learning to embroider their shoes and not about the seamier aspects of the work or the missionaries' personal misadventures at the hands of beggars, purse snatchers and robbers, episodes which might prompt critical comments. For example, while the Annual Report for 1902-1903 recorded the deaths of eight of the nine babies who had been taken into the Jennie Ford Orphanage, the women in the field only rarely allude to such deaths in the correspondence with the Society.¹⁰⁷ By ignoring the depressing aspects of their work in China, did they perhaps delude themselves into believing that theirs was a happy and rewarding life? Or, were they very carefully and deliberately protecting their mission field and their careers by editing what the home front might find out about the realities of their situation? Certainly

Elizabeth Strachan exercised a heavy editorial hand on news directed to her and which was, in turn, presented to the membership. At the same time, the Board of Managers made no attempt to evaluate the circumstances of their missionaries in West China. Some of the Society's elected officers inspected the stations in Japan and in Canada, but, probably because of the expense and because the Board members were aging, none of the W. M. S. executive travelled to China before the First World War to study the needs of the stations and the employees. Only other workers in the field might have disputed Lottie Brooks' effusive opinion that "... the home life is delightful and the whole missionary community is so nice, and I am very fond of my work."¹⁰⁸ As a result, the campaigns which the Society launched periodically to recruit workers for China were based largely on the rose-coloured recommendations of the women in the field and, perhaps, misled some of the more unsuspecting candidates.

The years from the arrival of Brackbill and Gifford in China until the Boxer Rebellion in 1900-1901 were characterized by repeated unsettling events which made the women's work doubly difficult in the already inhospitable environment. For more than a decade after 1895 most of the work of the W. M. S. in Chengtu and in the other mission stations which opened was conducted within the walls of their cloisters. As for the women themselves, their confrontations with hostility and open opposition to their well-meaning

gestures, their own brush with death and their consequent reaction to it set them apart from their sisters in the Japanese mission field and those who worked in Home Missions. Whereas the W. M. S. missionaries in Japan had seized the opportunity to establish a degree of professional and institutional independence unusual among working women, even professional women; in Canada, the unsettled nature of Szechwan had a tendency to inhibit the women's pioneering instincts. They remained dependent on the Society, or the men of the General Board, on British administrators and on the limited tolerance of their antagonistic Chinese hosts for the security of the precarious foothold they had established. In these circumstances, it was unlikely that their perceptions of their work, of their purpose or of their special call as women missionaries would ever rise above the garrison mentality that the actuality of life in China made necessary and desirable. Consequently, they appear less aggressive and innovative than their colleagues in Japan, though no less ambitious about the expansion of their missionary empire.

In 1897, the W. M. S. Girls' School in Chengtu, an imposing three storey brick structure designed especially to impress the Chinese, and a mission home were completed under Brackbill's careful scrutiny. The arrival of Dr. Maud Killam in September 1897 enabled the W. M. S. to open a new dispensary, if not a hospital, in Chengtu. Mary Foster, a

second teacher, brought the number of W. M. S. missionaries in the city to four - Ford, Brackbill, Killam and Foster - a closeknit group, regarded by Killam as " ... sisters - ... congenial when we have been sent so far from our dear, dear brothers and sisters in Canada."¹⁰⁹

The women took their obligations to the Society and to God very seriously. They appear to have been shaken by their proximity to women in Chinese society, frequently comparing Chinese women's place with their own favoured status as Canadian women. Often, their concern about the spiritual welfare and salvation of Chinese women seems subordinate to the special obligation which, as women, they assumed for freeing Chinese womankind from the bonds of centuries' old social conventions. For most, however, an understanding of Chinese women was realized very slowly. At first, Maude Killam seemed surprised, even puzzled, that the women she encountered during her few house calls were pleasant, even if they did not listen to her Bible stories. Their ability to bear pain more bravely than Canadian women quickly impressed her. Killam, however, continued to be disturbed that whenever she entered a Chinese home she was offered a waterpipe to smoke opium.¹¹⁰ Jennie Ford, in particular, was disturbed by the consequence of infanticide, the countless baby girls abandoned to die by the side of the road. In an especially poignant and appealing letter, Ford

described how she had adopted a baby girl found in a ditch just below the mission compound. The baby had been left

... by its parents to die of cold and hunger, just because it had the misfortune to be born a girl We hesitated about bringing her in at first, because of the awful stories they tell about our eating babies and digging out their eyes for medicine, etc; but we quickly concluded the course the Master would take, and had her brought in. Such a bundle of dirty, vermin-infested rags you never saw, and from under a dirty cap two great black eyes staring open. No heart beat could be felt, and the little mite was too near gone to cry. We quickly gave her warm milk and stimulants, and getting her out of the dirty rags, put her in a hot bath ... and kept her in a basket by the oven door all day ... it was three days before she slept naturally. There was every evidence that she had been given opiates. But in a week of feeding on good milk we had a bright baby, not yet two months old, weighing now seven and a half pounds. We called the officials in and told them of the child, and that we would care for it. Proper papers were made out, so there can be no trouble, and her parents cannot claim her when she grows big enough to earn a little money ... this one I have adopted, and will bring her up, trusting that some day she may perhaps take my place when I am obliged to quit work; and she may more than fill it because of being native born.¹¹¹

When Ford died of cerebral meningitis just a few months later, the Society opened a small orphanage in Chengtu named in her memory.¹¹² Several other girls were "adopted" by the missionaries, but it was closer to a form of sponsorship because the children continued to live in the orphanages and not in the W. M. S. mission home.

Unlike Japan where initially, at least, W. M. S. schools had received a friendly reception, during its early

days, enrollment at the Chengtu Girls' School, forty-three day pupils and fourteen boarders, was disappointing to Brackbill, the school's principal. Attendance continued to be low because Brackbill stipulated that the girls must unbind their feet before they would be accepted as students. Parents were required to sign a contract indicating the number of years their daughter was to remain in school and promising that

... they are not to be betrothed without our [the W. M. S.] consent; in case of sickness or death no trouble is to be made; in case of disobedience we have the right to send them home, and while here our government is not to be interfered with.¹¹³

In effect, the W. M. S. demanded carte blanche to shape the girls as they chose in their new environment and would not tolerate any parental interference in their Christianizing processes.

The missionaries, and especially Brackbill, regarded unbinding of the girls' feet as the first step towards Christian womanhood. Footbinding represented, to missionaries, the most obvious physical manifestation of the degradation of Chinese women and was a constant challenge. According to Isabella Bishop, the custom was firmly entrenched in Szechwan,

... except among the Manchu or Tartar women and those of a degraded class ... and the shoe of even the poorest and most hard-worked peasant woman does not exceed four inches in length. Though in walking these 'golden lilies' look like hoofs, and the women hobble on their heels, I have seen them walk thirty

li [10 miles] in a day, and some have told me that they can walk sixty easily I have never seen a hospital in China without some case or cases not only of extreme danger to the foot or great toe, but of ulcers or gangrene involving absolute loss by amputation. It is fashion, of course. Hitherto a Chinese woman with 'big feet' is either denationalized or vile; a girl with unbound feet would have no chance of marriage, and a bridegroom, finding that his bride had large feet when he expected small ones, would be abundantly justified by public opinion in returning her at once to her parents.¹¹⁴

Footbinding was usually initiated when a girl was between four and nine. The process created "... a deep cleft across the sole of the foot and between the heel and toes, which are forced together."¹¹⁵ Graphic photographs of the results often appeared in missionary literature as visible proof for Canadians of the degraded condition of Chinese women.

Gifford-Kilborn and Killam were among the early members of the Anti-footbinding League which was active throughout China during the last decade of the nineteenth century. The League's concern seems to have coincided with, but did not engender, the Chinese government's own efforts to improve the position of women which came following the defeat by Japan in 1895 and culminated in 1902 in a formal anti-footbinding edict issued by the Empress Dowager.¹¹⁶ In Szechwan, the custom persisted into the 1920s, possibly because the sexual connotations of bound feet were hard to destroy. It is ironic that the zealous Brackbill later complained about the

hours she spent knitting socks designed to prevent further injury to the damaged feet of her students.¹¹⁷

The Society anticipated that after graduation most of the students at their schools would become Christian workers to staff the mission. In this, they succeeded. By the 1920s, more than thirty graduates from W. M. S. Normal Schools, for example, were teaching in mission schools.¹¹⁸ With this eventuality in mind, all the schools were designed "to weave religious thought and Christian endeavour in with their every day work, so that in the children's minds the one will be inseparable from the other."¹¹⁹ The pattern followed closely that of the schools already operating in Japan. Chinese teachers were hired to teach Chinese characters and language, leaving the missionary responsible for

... all other subjects, such as arithmetic, algebra, geography, history, physiology, botany, astronomy, English, calisthenics, nature study, and music; and she must teach them in the Chinese language, hence she must learn a good deal of the language before she can do much teaching.¹²⁰

In China, however, the W. M. S. could not boast of the high social standing of the students. At least during the first decade of operation, the majority of the students in Chengtu were from poor families "who were often glad to get rid of them."¹²¹ After the revolution in 1911, the ~~schools~~ attracted a wider clientele and in 1915, the missionaries at Kiating claimed that their school catered to girls "from the better classes ... daughters of officials, silk and silver merchants

and teachers."¹²² For the W. M. S. workers, class barriers were no easier to surmount than were racial barriers.

Medical work expanded more slowly than educational, because it was more expensive and because of the perpetual shortage of medical missionaries. In 1898, after serving an apprenticeship with Gifford-Kilborn, Killam was established as the resident physician at the dispensary where she reported that attendance and public response was very good.¹²³ But by September, rumours that all mission property in the vicinity would be destroyed were circulating widely throughout Szechwan. Brackbill predicted that the Roman Catholic missions would be the primary target of Chinese hatred, but the women were realistic enough to recognize that the Chinese would not and could not make a distinction between churches. The women no longer left the compound unless in sedan chairs and their property was heavily guarded by Chinese soldiers.¹²⁴ At the beginning of 1899, only four children remained in the orphanage and the number of patients treated at the dispensary had dropped sharply, a reflection of the hostile mood of the people of the area.¹²⁵ In June 1899, Lottie Brooks, the most recent addition to the mission, was threatened, but not harmed, by robbers on a return trip from Kiating.¹²⁶ Five months later, en route from Shanghai to Chengtu, Minnie Brimstin and Dr. Anna Henry were robbed while staying overnight at the C. I. M. home in Ichang. Dr. Henry's trunks containing her table and bed linen and her

underclothing were stolen.¹²⁷ Brimstin put on a brave face for friends at home to whom she reported that she had "... never felt better in [her] life,"¹²⁸ but even before her letter reached Canada, China again had erupted into terror and confusion in the wake of the Boxer Rebellion.

Renewed attacks against foreigners were centered in the province of Shantung, but hostility toward the foreign presence surfaced throughout China fed by the Boxers backed by the Empress Dowager and conservative elements in the court and throughout the country who were fighting to eradicate all vestiges of foreign imperialism. By the end of the nineteenth century, not even missionaries could deny that the Chinese had reason to dislike and distrust foreigners who had entered China uninvited.¹²⁹ The missionaries in China, however, did not implicate themselves. They took it for granted that they were blameless and that the Boxers wanted to destroy only the agents of foreign capitalism. Historians tend to disagree about the Boxers' motivations. The most recent analyses of the Boxer Rebellion suggest that the fanaticism of the sect was both anti-foreign and anti-missionary in nature and that the Boxers were explicitly anti-Christian in their activities.¹³⁰ Whatever the Boxers' impulses, before the Rebellion was put down by foreign intervention, two hundred and thirty-one foreigners, almost all missionaries, and countless Chinese Christians had been murdered and their bodies hideously mutilated.¹³¹

As British subjects, the Canadian Methodists in Szechwan were ordered by the British consul on July 15, 1900 to proceed "... with all possible speed to places where they might have British military or naval protection."¹³² Because gunboats were not yet stationed along the Yangtze, this meant travelling all the way to Shanghai. The Canadian Methodist mission stations were evacuated and closed. Foster, Brooks and Killam returned to Canada on early furlough; others spent the next months in Tokyo while Brackbill remained in Shanghai as liaison for the Society.¹³³

The barbarism of the Boxers towards Christian missionaries and their Chinese converts, which included castration and cutting off breasts, both terrified and sickened the Canadian women. They sought solace in Divine will, but their faith was profoundly tested. Why, asked Lottie Brooks, would God "... allow such atrocities! Why? ... [W]e must believe that it is for some good purpose, that all things even such things as this will be for the good of Christ's Church on Earth."¹³⁴ The British Consul General disagreed with their Christian interpretation of events. Because many single women living alone in outstations had been murdered, he threatened "not to allow married ladies to return to the interior before five years and unmarried ladies - never."¹³⁵ By the end of the year, he had retreated and granted the women permission to travel as far as ChungKing; but when they arrived, he would not allow them to continue to

their station in Chengtu. They took refuge with the members of the Episcopal Methodist mission while awaiting further orders.¹³⁶ The consul's caution was justified. ChungKing echoed with threats against missionaries. In June, "dodgers" from the north arrived in ChungKing, urging the people to "rise and massacre all the foreigners."¹³⁷ Only the vigilance of the British Consul prevented serious violence.

The missionaries' repeated requests to friends in Canada for "prayers to be kept faithful to our charge"¹³⁸ at last were answered late in September 1901, when their passports were granted. Even so, the four women returned to Chengtu in closed sedan chairs to avoid provoking an attack.¹³⁹ Remarkably, in their absence, the W. M. S. compound, which had been under surveillance by civic officials, was not disturbed. Once again, the Society accepted an indemnity of 5680 taels by the Chinese government as recompense for travelling and living expenses and salaries.¹⁴⁰ The school and dispensary in Chengtu opened immediately, but Foster's visits to women in the neighbouring villages were not resumed because of continuing unrest.¹⁴¹ Yet, even under these discouraging and risky circumstances the Board of Managers believed that a second station to complement that of the General Board in Kiating was warranted. Ignoring the recent controversy about single women working on their own, the W. M. S. sent Mary Foster by herself to Kiating to offer Bible classes for women and girls and to teach in the General

Board Sunday School.¹⁴² By 1905 two W. M. S. missionaries were established in Kiating, supervising the informal study groups for women and girls and a girls' school with eight boarders and twelve day students.¹⁴³

At the end of 1902, after nearly a decade of operations, there were just seven missionaries serving the Society in West China; four teachers who were also responsible for the evangelistic work, two doctors and one nurse. The nearly equal balance of medical to educational staff was higher than it would be in the following years. In spite of the dangers and the disruptions which threatened to destroy their work, these pioneers of the Society in Szechwan, especially Brackbill, Foster, and Killam, remained loyal advocates for their profession. They constantly reassured the Society that the mission needed more workers because China continued to have tremendous potential as a Christian mission field and that they personally were satisfied with their situation. When the Boxer incident was settled, the Board tried to comply with the women's request but the two or three workers recruited each year during the next decade barely filled the places of those who resigned.

From 1902 until 1910, Szechwan maintained a relative calm and for the first time the work of the W. M. S. progressed without interruption. In 1907, a new girls' boarding school was completed in Chengtu; the following year, a well-equipped gymnasium was added in order to introduce the

girls to western-style physical culture. These were years, too, of increased co-operation among the several Protestant missions in Szechwan in order to economize and to present a united front in the face of the prevailing indifference of the Chinese towards the evangelical side of the missionary enterprise. In 1906, for example, delegates from several Protestant missionary societies in Szechwan formed a committee to unify and centralize primary education for boys and girls by "means of a uniform course of study, similar text-books, and common examinations," a system designed to save money and to compete with the Chinese government's newly opened schools.¹⁴⁴ The long-range objective was the creation of a Christian University for graduates of the elementary and secondary mission schools. The W. M. S. sent representatives to the requisite conferences to help set these plans in place. Because the women had, in 1898, organized their own mission council, modelled after the Japan council, to administer the increasingly complex operations of the mission stations, they were able spokespersons for their own interests. Moreover, once a year the W. M. S. council held a joint session with the General Board to co-ordinate future development in Szechwan and, in this forum, the women quickly learned to defend their own ground and to resist suggestions from the men that they add their talents to bolstering the work of the General Board which was, according to even its own employees, "always in debt."¹⁴⁵ Any outspokenness of the

women did not, however, provoke the same hostility between the two councils as it had in Japan. The missionaries heeded the lessons learned from the Japan Affair and the joint meetings in Chengtu became anticipated social events on the women's calendars, especially for those women stationed outside Chengtu who had limited contact with westerners.

In spite of the relative calm in China after 1900, the expansion that Brackbill and her colleagues had anticipated did not manifest itself until the second decade of the twentieth century. Before 1910, there never had been more than about fifteen women working, at any one time, on behalf of the W. M. S. in Szechwan. The Society had, since 1891, sent twenty-eight women to West China, but, by 1910, thirteen had withdrawn. Jennie Ford had died, while Mary Foster's resignation had been requested. All the others had resigned to marry, five before their first term was completed and they had mastered the language well enough to have been valuable to the Society. In 1910, the West China Mission was reinvigorated as the result of an upsurge of interest in Canada about Chinese missions. Eight women, among them a doctor and three nurses, joined the mission staff. By 1916, there were thirty W. M. S. missionaries in West China; twelve teachers, five nurses, three doctors, eight evangelists, a matron of the orphanage and another woman whose duties were not specified. This increase in personnel allowed the Society to open a third station in Junghsien, a city of

30,000 located to the west of Kiating. Edna Speers and Elizabeth Hall set up a girls' boarding school in Junghsien where they hoped to attract girls whose parents could afford to pay for their education in return for the nourishment of their child "in body, mind and spirit."¹⁴⁶ Land was also purchased in November 1910 in Tzeliutsing, an industrial city of 700,000 located in the heart of the salt-well district about one hundred and fifty miles south of Chengtu. Construction of a school and home began there the following spring under the direction of Edith Sparling, a former bookkeeper who doubted her ability to manage the project but proved to be an efficient manager.¹⁴⁷ The Society was also able to commit itself to opening a smaller station in Luchow, two hundred miles west of ChungKing.

The sudden and rapid expansion of the W. M. S. work in China reflected general trends in the development of Protestant missionary work in China in the early twentieth century. In 1889, there had been 1296 Protestant missionaries in China; by 1905, the number had risen to 3445, including 964 single women. By 1914, of the 5462 missionaries in China, 1652 were missionary wives, 2176 male missionaries and 1614 (29%) were single women.¹⁴⁸ The shift in sex ratios is evidence both of the increased acceptability of missionary work as a female profession and the flagging interest in it as career for men. The Canadian Methodist mission in West China mirrored this trend. When the General

Board missionaries and their wives and the W. M. S. workers (are counted, the W. M. S. provided one-quarter of all Canadian Methodist missionaries sent to West China.

Because there are no surviving applications of women who were not accepted by the Board of Managers, it is not possible to construct a comprehensive picture of the qualifications of all the candidates or to know whether the Board became as selective about its recruits for China as it was about missionaries for Japan. In the first decade of the twentieth century, the Board of Managers made a special appeal to "the Methodist young women throughout our Colleges and Normal Schools of Canada" to "offer ... themselves for these posts where the need is greatest," namely, West China.¹⁴⁹ In particular, the Board wanted "Canada's young women with their Christian ideals and strength of character" as teachers.¹⁵⁰ The Board's request for highly qualified women appears to have been heard. The percentage of women hired for West China who had at least some university education increased from 16% (6 of 38) before 1910 to 23% (11 of 47) in the years 1911 to 1925. Most of these university-educated women were assigned to teaching positions. Moreover, the professional training of those hired after 1910 was better than for women hired earlier. Before the end of 1910, 42% (16 of 38) of the recruits had attended a normal school; after 1910, 64% (30 of 47). On the other hand, while seven of the missionaries hired before 1910 were physicians, only

two doctors were recruited after 1910. The percentage of nurses in the mission force also decreased; from 21% (8 of 38) before 1910, to 13% (6 of 47) after. Increasingly, after the first decade of the twentieth century, the backgrounds and education of the recruits determined the direction of the W. M. S. undertaking in China. The Board of Managers had to recognize its inability to attract and retain medical practitioners and abandoned its ambitious plan to set up medical facilities for women throughout Szechwan. Because of the similarity of their recruits' education and experience, the W. M. S. was unable to pursue perhaps as diverse a course as it might have wished to follow in West China. While the General Board, in comparison, recruited pharmacists, architects, bookkeepers, accountants and publishers to expand the range of social services in its mission fields after World War I, the W. M. S. pursued a more traditional course of evangelization through education, partly by choice, but also, it would appear, from necessity.

As the first decade of the twentieth century drew to a close, Canadian Methodist missionaries in China reported that they sensed that the country was changing. Dr. Anna Henry, for example, informed readers of the Christian Guardian in 1907 that she was witnessing the birth of a new China, even though the evidence was " ... not always [that] we would wish to see. On the Bund [in Shanghai] can be seen the carriages and motors rolling along filled with wealthy

Chinese, who look quite contemptuously at the foreigner, especially if he or she happens to be in Chinese dress."¹⁵¹

The animosity and suspicion of the Chinese middle and upper-classes toward foreigners remained as strong as ever. This new mood of the Chinese and the government's interest in modernizing the army, developing industry and reforming education, all part of its effort to emulate the success of its rival, Japan, did not translate, in Szechwan, into mass conversion to Christianity or floods of applications for the mission schools even though the mission schools were the only girls' schools in some areas. As Michael Gasster has pointed out, the idea that "rapid social change is both desirable and possible" had few adherents in early twentieth century China where the notion "that life should be very different from what it had always been" was only slowly beginning to be understood.¹⁵² In sum, the women had to find the evidence of their own impact on Chinese society in little victories. For example, Lottie Brooks wrote animatedly about her Bible study class which had attracted women from a neighbouring village who had made the forty mile trip in wheel-barrows.¹⁵³ When the husband of an incurably ill heart patient calmly accepted the verdict that nothing could save her and acknowledged that Henry had "been very kind to her and I thank you very much," Anna Henry interpreted his reaction as proof that her medical work was being viewed with considerably less suspicion by the Chinese.¹⁵⁴ Previously, missionary doctors had avoided

treating terminal cases lest they be held liable for the death of an already moribund patient. It was from such minor incidents that the missionaries' optimism was forged. But, after almost a decade of relatively uninterrupted, if not triumphant, missionary work in West China, in 1911, "a deep shadow," to quote Elizabeth Strachan, fell across the mission field.¹⁵⁵

Early in 1911, the General Superintendent of Missions, Rev. T. E. Shore, wrote to Charles Murphy, the Canadian Secretary of State, on behalf of both Methodist mission boards, concerning the safety of Canadian Methodists in Szechwan in the wake of rumours of political unrest in that part of China.¹⁵⁶ Joseph Pope, then Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs, replied in a rather perfunctory way that he had noted the newspaper accounts of unrest in China but "no information regarding these disturbances has reached this department."¹⁵⁷ These matters appear to have rested for the next few months. The W. M. S. Board of Managers continued to advertise for new workers while the missionaries wrote about their pleasant summer vacation in the cool mountain region. On September 20, however, an unusual plea from Elizabeth Ross, Society President, appeared in the Christian Guardian, soliciting prayers for the Society's twenty-five employees currently in West China who were in extreme danger.¹⁵⁸

From April until November 1911, revolutionary violence which culminated in the resignation of the imperial regent at the end of October and the establishment of a revolutionary government under Dr. Sun Yat-Sen spread throughout China.¹⁵⁹ In Szechwan, the situation was complicated by rioting associated with the nationalization and foreign financing of the railways. Troublemakers

... sought to give the movement an anti-foreign and anti-Christian attitude placarding places with scurrilous cartoons and wrecking chapels. Anything, past experience showed, might happen under such circumstances, so at the strong urging of the consular authorities, both merchants and missionaries gathered in the larger cities.¹⁶⁰

The Consul General advised that all mission schools should be closed. The W. M. S. reluctantly complied and most of the women left their stations for the relative safety of Chengtu where they were housed in the partially built General Board hospital.¹⁶¹ The women later moved to a resort in the hills above Chungking where they "lived quietly" and had "delightful climbs over the hills"¹⁶² while awaiting the outcome of the events which, they believed, would "all be overruled for the extension of God in this land."¹⁶³ Nonetheless, because they remembered the fate of other single women at the hands of the Boxers, they were sufficiently afraid that some, like Minnie Brimstin, sent their final messages home.

I am ready to go, and should this be the last message I ever send you, my dear brothers and sisters, it is one of joy and peace through believing in the Lord Jesus

Christ. I would not change places with anyone.

How one's heart goes out in sympathy to these poor people. I love and pity them to-day, when they are on the eve of a rebellion, more than ever. This is to be expected in a land where Christ is not known.¹⁶⁴

The women were unable to reassure their families in Canada that they were safe because during September and October communication between Szechwan and the rest of China was broken. Canadian newspapers, the Globe in particular, published some very alarming reports about the unrest in Szechwan which intensified fears of relatives in Canada. Frantic calls from the families of Methodists in China prompted Shore to ask the editor of the Globe to clear his information first with the Methodist Mission Rooms.¹⁶⁵

On October 31, the Globe reported the fall of the Manchu Dynasty and that the Viceroy had fled to Shanghai after revolutionary forces had attacked his headquarters in Wuhan.¹⁶⁶ In a few days, central China was in rebel hands. A revolutionary torrent swept the country and within a month, "nine provinces had declared their independence of the Imperial Government, though not necessarily their common adherence to one Revolutionary regime."¹⁶⁷ The imperial surrender forced the British Consul General, who feared that the Chinese army would become uncontrollable, to advise the missionaries in Szechwan to leave as soon as possible for the coast. Had the women refused to leave, the Consul would have been responsible for their safety, a burden which he seemed

unwilling to assume.¹⁶⁸ Both the Consul and the British Foreign Office feared that the missionaries could be attacked not only by revolutionaries but also by the bands of roving bandits who had taken advantage of the unrest in Szechwan to expand their own activities.¹⁶⁹ The decision to ask the missionaries to abandon their posts was not taken lightly, but Szechwan was isolated and well known for its tempestuous politics. A familiar adage insisted that "[w]hen the Empire is Peaceful, Szechwan is the first to have disorder; after peace is restored, Szechwan is the last to be stabilized."¹⁷⁰ The veterans Brackbill and Brimstin and two senior General Board missionaries remained in Chengtu after the others had left to move all the children from the orphanage to safe homes and to secure the mission property.¹⁷¹ Much as he might have wanted these two stubborn women to leave with the others, the Consul did not exercise his right to arrest and deport them.¹⁷² The defiant women remained in Chengtu for several weeks after the others had gone. Finally, after fighting and looting broke out in the streets, the last group left Chengtu escorted by 100 soldiers for ChungKing where they boarded boats for the exodus to Shanghai. Brackbill, a strict and rigid Methodist, reluctantly agreed for the first time to travel on a Sunday.¹⁷³

In spite of the foreign flags which identified their boats, the party was fired upon when the gunboat Widgeon apparently abandoned the flotilla under its protection.

Later, the Canadians in the party lodged a protest against the captain but any charges that he had failed to provide adequate protection could not be substantiated.¹⁷⁴ Ethel McPherson sent a detailed commentary describing the flight from the mission field to the London, Ontario newspaper where she had formerly worked. What she described was no different from the experiences of the other W. M. S. missionaries who left Szechwan in 1911 and her account did not evade the real dangers of the evacuation.

Boats were secured to leave Saturday, Dec. 9. While busy packing Friday morning we heard shooting and shouting on the Great East Parade Grounds, adjoining the C. I. M. property. I was on the top floor in our hospital at the moment and ran to the windows overlooking the parade grounds and the street. A number of soldiers were firing and presently they dashed down the street past our gate. The firing continued all day and all night and bullets went whizzing through the air all around us. Sometimes they clipped along the tiles on the roof at a lively gait. Soon we learned the first volley was a signal for outright robbery. The public treasury was robbed and the large Government bank ... at dusk the soldiers were looting within three blocks of our compound.

... Saturday morning our baggage was started to the boat, but before the loads reached the gate it was closed. After waiting some time it opened and a few loads got through. This performance was repeated many times before the last load reached the water's edge...

After lunch we called chairmen to take us, but very few could be had We started off afoot. We had gone about a hundred yards when we were met by the soldiers guarding the Si Shen Si street gate who refused to permit us to pass. They stated there was fighting outside the East and North gates and on no consideration must we leave the city. They escorted us back to our hospital gate talking

all the while about the danger of leaving Chengtu and offering us asylum in the barracks ... we received a message ... that the gates were open and everything outside the city was perfectly quiet. So we slipped out the back gate, half a dozen at a time, and walked through the streets out the East gate and down to the waterfront without the least trouble.¹⁷⁵

At Kiating the party transferred to more comfortable houseboats to continue their journey.

Above the city of HoChiang we passed the Widgeon at anchor. A little later we were opposite the rebel encampment outside the city. Strange that this place should still be under the Imperialists with a Manchu official. It was under seige and when we came within range from the city wall we were promptly fired upon as was every boat that passed. Several bullets hit our boat and many went through. One embedded itself in a pillow on one of the beds. On the same boat a Chinese oarsman was struck, the lead lodging in his cheek-bone.¹⁷⁶

Interestingly enough, no Methodist publication carried quite as frank and detailed an account of the missionaries' harrowing escape from Chengtu.

By the beginning of 1912, the West China mission field was completely evacuated. The women scattered; some remained in Shanghai to study Chinese and work in hospitals and schools; others travelled to Japan or, if near a furlough, home to Canada. Mary Smith compared their plight to that of "... the children of Israel who, having come in sight of the promised land, were compelled to wander about in the wilderness before they could occupy the land of promise."¹⁷⁷

The exile lasted for nearly a year. At the end of April 1912, apparently without consular approval, a party of General Board missionaries began the journey upriver from Ichang to Szechwan.¹⁷⁸ The Consul who expected more violence in the province throughout the summer advised that no women at all should return. "The fewer there are in the interior the better, for the summer."¹⁷⁹ In the past, the Canadian Methodists, including the W. M. S., had criticized what they regarded as an unduly conservative position of the British government towards their work and they had often questioned the Consul's motives in denying them access to their domain. This time, however, the Consular warning seemed to originate from genuine concern for their safety because only weeks before a young American missionary teacher at Szechwan Provincial College had been murdered while travelling by houseboat from Ichang to ChungKing.¹⁸⁰ Consul Hewlett also cautioned that

... if women return in any large number within the year they will find that their action in so doing has done permanent harm to Church work in Szechwan, for after a big upheaval like the departure of over 300 workers work ought to be resumed by very easy stages.¹⁸¹

Superintendent Shore agreed that those wishing to return to Szechwan must be governed by "the judgment and authorities of the British authorities in the various stations;" but he also insisted "that no undue conservatism should retard the return of our missionaries beyond a reasonable time."¹⁸² The women

were granted their passports in August. All but one who had been evacuated chose to return to Szechwan.¹⁸³ By Christmas, all members of both missions had reached their appointed stations or were en route. Correspondence between the Consul and spokesmen for the General Board of Missions seems to suggest that some missionaries resumed their work in defiance of consular authority;¹⁸⁴ but for the most part, work indeed resumed very slowly even though little physical damage had been done to mission property.

The winds of revolution did not sweep away all the aspects of Chinese society that missionaries had found so distasteful -- opium use, footbinding, and infanticide continued to remind the missionaries of their failure to regenerate Chinese society. But, for a few years at least, there was "a period of unprecedented open-mindedness to the Christian message and of friendliness to the messengers."¹⁸⁵ Perhaps this was because the messengers had also become capable of learning. After the evacuation of 1911, the women seem to have adopted a more realistic approach to what it was possible for them to achieve. Their energy now was directed toward improving the quality of life in the communities that they served rather than on the outright reconstruction of Chinese civilization, a vain hope in the best of circumstances and a challenge which they hoped the revolutionary government would take up. The W. M. S. continued to reassure its supporters that the ultimate aim of its workers in China

was to win souls for Christ, but it no longer apologized for the women's concern with some earthly matters. As recently as 1901 Maud Killam had been publicly chastised for informing a W. M. S. meeting in Guelph that "the greatest need of China is medical practitioners and hospitals."¹⁸⁶ The Board of Managers had immediately corrected her assumption and assured W. M. S. members that

[i]n as far as the hospital is an educator, it is of permanent value. Otherwise the medical work only clips off the fruit from an evil tree. Truth has its stronghold in the hearts of the youth and the proclamation of truth strikes at the root of evil. So [Dr. Killam] would call Christian schools of the greatest need, and place them foremost in laying the foundation of a Christian civilization.¹⁸⁷

Again, in 1907, the Society found it necessary to explain that

the purpose of medical missions is not simply philanthropic, although it finds glory in self-sacrificing philanthropy. It is not merely an enterprise to secure the inestimable benefits of medicine and surgery for those in these terrible needy lands. Its purpose is not education alone, though its liberal influences are far-reaching; nor is it to promote a temporal benefit as a bribe for spiritual blessing. The purpose of medical missions is to win men to Jesus Christ by the use of methods precisely compatible to those used by Christ when on earth as the great Succorer of bodies as well as the divine Saviour of Souls.¹⁸⁸

Clearly, it was not easy for the Board of Managers, at least, to move away from "the original purpose of missions, the salvation of individuals" and espouse "the larger vision of Christianizing society."¹⁸⁹ However, like the Japan Mission,

the West China Mission was flexible enough to accommodate many aspects of Christian endeavour.

The Board's attitude towards the role of medical missions gradually changed. In 1917, Elizabeth Strachan argued that "[m]uch had been accomplished in the breaking down of prejudice by the relief given to many afflicted ones, through unwonted kindness shown by our capable doctors and nurses, instruction imparted, intellects quickened, and in many cases spiritual life received through the power of the Divine One."¹⁹⁰ After the missionaries returned in 1912, the construction of a woman's hospital in Chengtu where the medical staff could function separately from the General Board's doctors and where they could establish a nurses' training school for Chinese women was given priority. It was completed in 1915. A large four storey brick structure, 109 feet by 65 feet, the hospital contained sixty-five beds and was the equal of any Canadian hospital. Dr. Anna Henry described her domain.

The ground floor, or basement, contains the laboratory, drug room, nurses' lecture room, dining-room, etc. On the second, third and fourth stories are wards, public and private, the charge for a bed in the former being one hundred cash, a day about five cents; in the latter, which is well furnished, from twenty-five cents to one dollar. On each floor are bathrooms, dressing-rooms and diet kitchens.

The superintendent's rooms, guest room, sitting-rooms and chapel are situated on the first floor. In addition to the wards, there is a suite of operating-rooms and an obstetric ward on the second floor, while on the third are an open-air ward for tubercular

patients, a dark room for eye examinations and a ward for opium patients. The fourth floor is mainly occupied by nurses in training, of whom there are more applicants than can be accommodated.¹⁹¹

The first class of Chinese nurses graduated from the hospital in 1918. May Assom who presented their pins expressed her own satisfaction at their achievement.

... I felt I had rather present these first graduates with hospital pins than to be presented to King George or Queen Mary, and I am British to the core and love my country too. But to have the honor of representing our Woman's Missionary Society in the work and labor of love for the King of kings was worth a whole lot.¹⁹²

As the Hospital and Nursing School illustrate, the W. M. S. missionaries succeeded best when their expectations and their abilities addressed real needs defined by the treacherous currents of modern Chinese history. Like the Union Normal School also established in 1915 with the co-operation of several woman's societies in West China, the hospital gave visible meaning to the missionaries' recent social commitment to the needs of the new China. Perhaps, Dr. Mae Austin summarized these new attitudes best when she confessed that she herself no longer dreaded and loathed personal contact with the Chinese whose physical suffering she was committed to relieving, a somewhat strange admission for a doctor.¹⁹³

World War I affected the West China mission by restricting the flow of both new recruits and financial support. As a result, the mission station at Luchow had to be closed. Happily, a recruiting campaign appealing to the

same patriotic sentiment which had driven Canada's war effort succeeded in attracting a good crop of post-war recruits for West China. The Society appealed to Canadian women's patriotic sentiment.

Our brothers have bravely responded to the needs of suffering humanity and to the call of our King. We women should just as promptly and bravely respond to the needs of our sisters in China and to the call of the King of Kings. It is our duty and privilege to meet this need at the present time.¹⁹⁴

In the next three years, twenty-one new missionaries arrived in West China and the girls' schools, now adequately staffed, were filled to their capacity.¹⁹⁵ But the early 1920s were years of financial difficulty for both the Society and its employees although the Board appears to have often favoured the West China mission over their mission in Japan. The situation in Szechwan reached a climax late in 1921 when an unidentified W. M. S. missionary home on furlough sent the following message to the Board of Managers.

The missionaries will hold at any cost ~~as~~ it means so much. I get hints in letters that they are making up the deficits of this year with their own salaries.... They would simply have to carry things over by their own money as far as it would go.¹⁹⁶

A questionnaire sent to the women in the field asked whether they had, in fact, covered deficits from their own salaries. Their reply did not really clarify matters and suggests that the rumour was probably true. The women regretted that the Society

should have been burdened with such pessimistic forebodings from insufficient data We can assure you that your West China workers still retain as always, an unbroken confidence in our Home Board, that what is really needed for carrying on the work, will, as heretofore be granted so far as it is in your power to do so.¹⁹⁷

Budgetary constraints aside, at the outset of the 1920s, the W. M. S. had in place an impressive network of seven stations with a total estimated real estate value of \$188,799.32 and forty missionaries to staff them.¹⁹⁸

After 1923, missionary work in Szechwan was again affected by political unrest. In October 1923, the British Consul placed some restrictions on travel within the province.¹⁹⁹ An elaborate coding system was devised to identify each W. M. S. missionary in case of mishap.²⁰⁰ In February 1924, a serious incident occurred which the Society appears to have tried to suppress. Several W. M.S. missionaries were abducted by bandits from the steamer they were travelling on and were carried off to the hills. They were released, apparently unharmed, after they paid the bandits all the money that they were carrying - about \$450.²⁰¹ The General Superintendent of Missions, Dr. Endicott, urged the Board of Managers not to send new workers to China because of the mounting dangers. His warning provoked a strong reaction from the women in China, because at the same time, the General Board continued to advertise for lady teachers for its own work. No women were sent, but one W. M. S. missionary was reminded of "that old proverb - 'What is sauce for

the goose, is sauce-for the gander.'"202 With funds and staff becoming scare, the W. M. S. began to guard its own territories and prerogatives more jealously than in the past, fearing that their work might be the first to suffer.

Yet, even in the face of this mounting anti-Christian activity, the women tried to convince themselves and the Canadian public that the opportunity to save the Chinese still existed. Constance Smith's response from Jenshow was typical of the women who as staunch evangelical Methodists continued to interpret Chinese hostility as part of God's plan.

No doubt many accounts of the anti-Christian movement in China have reached the homeland. For a time it was uncertain how effective the movement was going to be when the foreigners were being insulted in the streets, and work was being held up. But it has been found that where the greatest pressure was brought to bear the result was a greater interest in the Bible classes.²⁰³

In spite of their good educations and their years in China, the women still did not, as might be expected of first hand observers, write very perceptively about the chain of events which began with the Peking students' demonstration of May 4, 1919, designated as National Humiliation Day because of the treatment of China at the Versailles Conference²⁰⁴ and culminated in the reorganization of the Communist Party and of the army. Their letters fixed on the same concerns as twenty-five years earlier. Perhaps one explanation for this general complacency was that the events did not threaten them

and their work as directly as had been the case in the past and would be again in 1926. It is, nonetheless, surprising given their own involvement as student activists in, for example, the Student Volunteer Movement, that they tended to ignore student protest movements, especially when some of the students had been educated in Christian schools.

An exception to this narrow and apparently limited understanding was Mary Lamb. Lamb may not have been an especially astute political observer but she had a habit of asking difficult questions about the nature of missionaries and their work, if only in the privacy of her diary. Lamb was hired by the General Board of Missions, just after the end of World War I, as matron of the School for Missionaries' Children in Chengtu. She did not like working for the General Board and when her term expired in 1925, she resigned to join the W. M. S. as an evangelist.²⁰⁵

When she first arrived in China, Lamb encountered "too much social life" for her liking at Junghsien where she was sent to study the language.²⁰⁶ A few months later, she moved to her position in Chengtu where she first met the men of the Canadian Methodist mission, "good men" but "not very clever, not very well educated (or perhaps I should say not polished)."²⁰⁷ A year working with them did not change Lamb's opinion, which was reinforced by her general disregard for men. The men of the mission were

...lacking in the culture that comes from so-called 'good family.' Of course from my

democratic point of view this is not a serious lack - the only part of it that really jars on me is the attempt by some to appear cultural In fact, they are much as I expected to find Canadian Methodists. They are not sanctimonious or 'pious' but with a tendency of the age have swung a little too far to the other extreme.²⁰⁸

Excessive frivolity and self-indulgence seemed to her to be especially unbecoming traits among the Canadian Methodist missionaries and she begged God to deliver her from "the conversations and foreign outlook of Chengtu," from "the idea that one has to spend much time and money on clothes," from "afternoon teas...[and]...card parties."²⁰⁹ Lamb attributed the worst of these shortcomings to the natural selfishness of the "Lords of Creation" who represented the General Board.²¹⁰ Women missionaries, on the other hand, were unselfish. "I am coming to see," Lamb concluded, "that the W. M. S. is the place for me The W. M. S. puts the work first, last and always and pay as they go."²¹¹

"The work," as Lamb, who apparently had little sympathy for the more liberal element in the mission community, defined it, was "getting as close to the [Chinese] people as we should."²¹² From the outset she was convinced that Canadian Methodism was "not doing things in the right way"²¹³ There was, she believed, too great a

gulf fixed between the financial standing of the missionary and the Chinese - ... I wonder what will become of our fine houses when the native church needs the missionary no more. It seems to me that our lifestyle should be simpler ... it seems to me as if we laid

ourselves open more or less to anti-foreign sentiment.²¹⁴

From 1925 until 1942 Lamb laboured, as a W. M. S. evangelist, to bridge the gulf by improving the image of the missionary among both Chinese and Canadians in spite of a persistent, nagging fear that missionaries were "living in a 'fool's Paradise' here in Chengtu."²¹⁵ It was an old refrain, and there may be no better explanation for the failure of the West China mission to attract as many women into permanent careers as missionaries as the Japanese field did.

Living and working in the "fool's Paradise" drained the women physically and emotionally. The W. M. S. missionaries rarely wrote about their illnesses which, if they did not force their retirement, severely restricted their work and comfort. Even in the 1920s, many medical problems, commonly the consequence of the Chinese environment, were not amenable to any clinical treatment. One woman was sent back to Canada in the company of a trained nurse because her two year case of dysentery could not be cured in China and had left her totally debilitated.²¹⁶ Three women died on active duty in Szechwan; two others shortly after they had gone home on furlough. The deaths of Myrtle Wheeler during routine gall bladder surgery and of Mary Totten Smith in 1919 from influenza might have occurred in Canada but Jennie Ford's painful death in 1897 was, in the women's minds, connected to her dreadful experience during the riots of 1895. Ten other W. M. S. missionaries resigned because of either physical or

mental disorders which became evident only after they had been sent to the mission field. Several who remained in the field for many years, Brackbill, Henry and Killam among them, travelled to Canada, the United States or Japan, for more sophisticated medical care, especially for the diagnosis or treatment of malignancies. Most illnesses that the women sustained had a real physical basis, unlike some of the complaints of the women in the Japanese mission which were, perhaps, of a psychosomatic nature. On the other hand, many General Board missionary wives, some who had been W. M. S. employees, became unable to function because of a vague neurasthenia or hysteria which forced many of them back to Canada for gynecological surgery as a possible solution. In sum, at least twenty per cent of the W. M. S. missionaries in West China either resigned because of a physical or mental breakdown or died. Even so, the attrition from health problems was slightly lower than in Japan, perhaps because adequate medical facilities were close at hand to treat minor problems and possibly because so many of the women left the W. M. S. to marry before their health became a liability as they grew older.

What does distinguish the women employed by the Society in China from their counterparts in Japan was their susceptibility, not to illness, but to marriage. More than one in three of the W. M. S. missionaries (37%) abandoned their careers to marry. No doubt, many of the W. M. S.

missionaries who arrived in West China had not been offered marriage as a future option. Perhaps they might have remained single had they not volunteered for West China where, in a frontier-like society, and freed from parental restraints, social and sexual barriers were more readily crossed. The actual day-to-day work of the two mission boards, organized as it was to serve two different spheres, did not often bring the men and women together, but there were countless social occasions hosted by the various missions and even by the British Consul when the missionaries mingled. The women enjoyed entertaining other missionaries in their own homes. The West China Missionary News reported a typical event.

A 'poverty party' given by the ladies of the C. M. M. W. M. S. medical house, was held there on the evening of March 17, when fun was fast and furious, and laughter chased away care, at least for the time being from the faces of those present.²¹⁷

The summer treks to Mt. Omei, a resort of forty bungalows used by most of the missions in Szechwan as an escape from the oppressive summer heat, brought the sexes into more intimate and informal contact as they relaxed by playing tennis, a favourite missionary pursuit, hiked in the hills or studied. Engagement announcements were awaited at the end of the summer. The West China Missionary News regretted, in September 1923, that because of a shortage of single men at Mt. Omei the past summer there had been only one engagement.²¹⁸

The W. M. S. missionaries in China do not appear to have believed that their roles as missionaries consigned them to a life devoid of male companionship. Friendships with men were one of the more appealing features of the West China mission field even for Mary Lamb who preferred their company to their wives' who were overly preoccupied with domestic affairs for her liking.²¹⁹ Sometimes the husbands who remained at home when their families vacationed "ke[pt] bachelors' hall, and ...[got] together [with the W. M. S.] for an occasional game of tennis, or a sing-song, or a read."²²⁰ When their wives did not accompany them back to Szechwan after the 1911 revolution, several General Board missionaries on their own in Jenshow reported with amusement how they had received a "W. M. S. haircut One held the comb while the other cut."²²¹ As a result of their friendships with the W. M. S. missionaries, widowers quickly found new partners. In China, and not in any of the other mission fields where W. M. S. missionaries were be stationed, the women had the opportunity to marry a man with a compatible outlook and to plan a life of mutual dedication to serving mankind and God as an alternative to the domestic life of an exclusively female mission home.

Although the marriages between missionaries were an embarrassment to both Boards in Canada, the weddings in China were always occasions for festivities in the mission compound. British law required that a civil service be held

first; then, if desired, a religious ceremony could follow. The marriage of Lena Dunfield to Orlando Jolliffe was solemnized by only a civil ceremony for which the bride did not bother to have a new dress because "out here we wear low-necked dresses most of the time - not the kind you see at home - but to the band of our ordinary dresses."²²² In contrast, the marriage of Maud Killam to Rev. James Neave in 1904 was a lavish affair with a religious ceremony held at the W. M. S. home in Chengtu. The West China Missionary News, an interdenominational paper published by the missionary community in Szechwan, described the celebration which was little different than if Killam had been married in her home town of Yarmouth, Nova Scotia.

The bridal party entered the beautifully decorated parlour to the strains of Mendelsohn's [sic] Wedding March, they stood under an arch of bridal roses, having a bell of white roses suspended from its centre; and faced a bank of palms, and other artistically arranged shrubbery. The bride was grace itself, in a dress of cream silk, while the bridesmaid looked pretty in a gown of pale blue. Each carried a bouquet of roses.²²³

Like Killam who was 31, most of the women who married did so at an age which, in Canada, would have confirmed their status as spinsters. While the average age for Canadian brides in 1921 was 25.5, the average age of the W. M. S. West China missionaries who married was 32.²²⁴ The Board of Managers hesitated to criticize the women who married because most of the defectors married Canadian Methodist missionaries and remained in China as their husbands' helpmates.

Many of the W. M. S. missionaries who married had no regrets and enthusiastically assumed the role of wife and mother. For some others, it was not so easy to be merely counted as a part of the Methodist mission and to continue to work without any official status. From time to time, the married women, like Agnes Wintemute in Japan, tried to sequester specific areas of work, such as a school for wives of the Chinese evangelists,²²⁵ but more often, like Lena Jolliffe, they passed their time bearing children, making marmalade and applesauce, and dealing with the petty thievery committed by the many servants that Chinese convention required.²²⁶

Thirty W. M. S. missionaries made Chinese mission work a lifetime career. More than half (17) of them were educators, teaching in the girls schools or later in the co-operatively sponsored normal school. Another nine of the career missionaries were evangelists or matrons of the orphanage. Those who stayed were not necessarily the best educated of the West China workers; only fifteen per cent of those who continued in China until retirement had a university education. Nor were there, as had been the case in Japan, a disproportionate number of "daughters of the parsonage" among the career missionaries of West China. Moreover, only one doctor, Anna Henry, and two nurses remained in China until retirement. In fact, the average time spent in China by the W. M. S. doctors was just eight years, compared

to fourteen for all employees of the Society in China. All but two of the doctors resigned to marry. One who did not, Dr. Olive Rea, left at the request of the Society when she confessed that she had rejected conventional religion for faith healing and, as a consequence, could no longer practise traditional medicine. The Society decided that her nonconformist views would be "confusing, disturbing, and inimical to the best interest of the work under our care."²²⁷ Rea then joined forces with the "Gift of Tongues" people working in Yunnan and later married one of their missionaries.²²⁸ Perhaps this high percentage of resignations by M. D.'s has no rational explanation. Nonetheless, it might be asked whether their proximity to the suffering of the people of China and their inability to escape the lepers, the opium suicides, the victims of footbinding and the desperately sick children quite simply was more than these women could bear. As strong and determined as these particular women were to have pursued their medical careers at a time when woman doctors were an unwelcome anomaly in a traditionally male profession, as physicians in West China, they often felt powerless in the face of diseases which all too often had advanced beyond treatment or when they had to send patients back to filthy homes and inadequate care.²²⁹ Under these circumstances, the women could not perform the miracles expected of them. Moreover, marriage either to a layman or

to a missionary did not necessarily preclude continuing with a medical career.

Educators and evangelists, on the other hand, were a little farther removed from the misery of Chinese society. The missionary teachers believed that collectively and even individually their work, as teachers, was making a difference in the lives of that small number of Chinese women and children with whom they came in contact, even if it was only teaching them to identify some basic Chinese characters or to earn a minimal living through their embroidery which was sent to Canada for sale. They never doubted that their own presence was legitimized by their fervent desire to improve the situation of Chinese women. That their methodology threatened one of the most ancient civilizations in the world did not seem to disturb them. Conversely, neither did self-aggrandizement keep them in China. Elizabeth Graham, described when she joined the Society in 1916 as "a model of fidelity and industry, not brilliant but [with] solid, substantial ability and unwavering pluck"²³⁰ was one of the women who served the W. M. S. in China until retirement. If Graham's attitude is typical of the others who became old China hands, then, personal satisfaction combined with the conviction that theirs was a unique opportunity for women to serve God and other women explains their commitment to the W. M. S. in China. Even on the eve of another outbreak of anti-foreign violence late in 1924, Graham, who had just

opened a new Primary Girls' Boarding School at Luchow, remained enthusiastic about her vocation.

I cannot put into words the joy I am having day by day in this work. I did not quite realize how hungry I was to be back in close contact with Chinese girls until, at the opening of the school, my heart found rest in the work. To me the greatest and most wonderful work in the world is the privilege of close contact with human lives, and especially precious is the opportunity of moulding daily, it may be to only a very small extent, the lives of these young growing girls. I could ask no greater boon from my Heavenly Father's hand. My cup is running over.²³¹

In sum, the women responded as one might expect of the daughters of the Canadian small town middle-class, reared in a disciplined atmosphere. They recognized the realities of Chinese society and dealt with them matter of factly in the course of going about the everyday business of ministering to the bodies and spirits of their charges. For public consumption, with the connivance of their employers in Canada, they put the best possible face on their situation, in spite of the fact that a few hundred missionaries struggling to infiltrate an alien population of 50,000,000 Chinese peasants was improbable from the outset. Consequently, their private diaries and correspondence are riddled, not unexpectedly, with doubts, anxieties and hopes which must have been the subject of intense discussions in the confines of the compounds within which they chose to live, and where they strove to sustain an image of a world they had left in the midst of one they could scarcely comprehend. This small

group of Canadian women experienced and came to terms, each in her own unique manner, with a world they could never have imagined to exist. It was "an encounter of mind with world"²³² which could only be appreciated by those who like Jennie Ford had been there, living, they were convinced, "face to face with the devil and his works."²³³

Notes

¹U. C. A., Alexander Sutherland Papers, Box 4, File 8, A. Sutherland to E. S. Strachan, Toronto, April 14, 1890; see also E. W. Wallace, The Heart of Sz-Chuan (Toronto: Methodist Young People's Forward Movement for Missions, 1903), p.20.

²The Christian Guardian, November 20, 1898; Wallace, pp. 29-32; George Hartwell, Granary of Heaven (Toronto: Woman's Missionary Society of the United Church of Canada, 1941), pp. 4-5; Alexander Sutherland, The Methodist Church and Missions, (Toronto: Young People's Forward Movement, 1906), pp. 222-223.

³U. C. A., Alexander Sutherland Papers, Box 4, File 7, Sutherland to E. S. Strachan, April 14, 1890.

⁴This decision was reached by the Committee of Consultation and Finance after discussions with Reverend Virgil Hart, former Superintendent of the Central China Mission of the Methodist Episcopal Church of the United States, who was on furlough at his farm in Burlington, Ontario. See Wallace, p. 33 and also E. Hart, Virgil C. Hart. Missionary Statesman (Toronto: McClelland, Goodchild and Stewart, 1917), pp. 222-223; D. MacGillivray (ed.), A Century of Protestant Missions in China (1807 - 1907) (reprinted by Chinese Materials Centre Inc., San Francisco, 1979), p. 113.

⁵Mrs. H. Platt, The Story of the Years. Vol. II (Toronto: The Woman's Missionary Society, 1907), p. 69.

⁶Hartwell, p. 6.

⁷MacGillivray, p. 142 and K. S. Latourette, A History of Christian Missions in China (New York: Macmillan, 1929), p. 39.

⁸Platt, p. 89.

⁹R. P. Beaver, All Loves Excelling (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1968), p. 130.

¹⁰In Saving China (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986), p. 52, Alvyn Austin writes that Amelia Brown was a registered nurse. There is no record of this in W. M. S. papers and biographical material, nor does Austin provide any documentation for his statement.

¹¹C. Hacker, The Indomitable Lady Doctors (Toronto: Clarke, Irwin and Co., Ltd, 1974), p. 242.

¹²The Christian Guardian, October 7, 1891.

¹³Hartwell, pp. 6-10; Hart, pp. 222-231.

¹⁴Missionary Outlook, January, 1892, p. 15; Hart, p. 233; Hartwell, p. 10.

¹⁵U. C. A., Alexander Sutherland Papers, Box 20, File 40, Sutherland to Rev. Hart, Feb. 1, 1892.

¹⁶See the novel The Call (New York, 1985) written by John Hersey and based upon his father's experiences in China for a frank look at the pressure to marry before leaving for China.

¹⁷Barbara Welter, "She Hath Done What She Could: Protestant Women's Missionary Careers in Nineteenth Century America," American Quarterly, XXX (Spring, 1979), 633.

¹⁸U. C. A., Alexander Sutherland Papers, Box 20, File 40, Sutherland to Hart, Feb. 1, 1892.

¹⁹See U. C. A., W. M. S. West China Mission Papers, Box 3, file 11. Correspondence from China Inland Mission, Shanghai, July 28, 1908. This document is an agreement from the C. I. M. to pay the W. M. S. \$550.00 in gold as repayment for the outfit of a W. M. S. missionary who married one of their employees.

²⁰Hart, p. 233.

²¹Platt, p. 89.

²²Hartwell, pp. 26-27. The C. I. M. had set up mission stations in the area, but their missionaries wore Chinese style clothing to appear less conspicuous.

²³U. C. A., W. M. S. Executive Minute Books, June 10, 1892; U. C. A., Biographical file of R. Gifford Kilborn; see also Bertha Hensman, "The Kilborn Family," The Canadian

Medical Association Journal, 97 (August 26, 1967), 1-13.

²⁴The Christian Guardian, January 18, 1893. It is not clear whether Brackbill and Gifford were acquainted before they joined the W. M. S. It is quite possible that they may have attended the same church in Owen Sound or belonged to the same Church groups.

²⁵Missionary Leaflet, November, 1893, p. 4.

²⁶Ibid., July, 1893, p. 7.

²⁷Grant Maxwell, Assignment in China, 71 Canadians in China 1902 - 1954 (Scarboro: Scarboro Foreign Mission Society, 1982), p. 192.

²⁸The Christian Guardian, April 12, 1893.

²⁹Missionary Leaflet, September, 1893, p. 3.

³⁰Ibid., November, 1893, p. 5.

³¹Ibid., December, 1893, p. 6.

³²Platt, pp. 91-92.

³³Ibid., p. 92.

³⁴Monthly Letter, July, 1894, p. 1; Aug.- Sept., 1894, p. 12; Platt, pp. 92-93.

³⁵Monthly Letter., Aug.- Sept., 1894, p. 12.

³⁶Ibid. Chinese women of the upper classes were physically unable to travel far by foot because of their bound feet.

³⁷Ibid., October, 1894, p. 3.

³⁸Isabella Bird Bishop, The Yangtze Valley and Beyond, Volume 2 (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1900), p. 315.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Hartwell, p. 30.

⁴¹Bishop, p. 315.

⁴²J. Hudson Taylor, "Woman's Work in China," B. F. Austin (ed.), Woman; Her Character, Culture and Calling (Brantford, Ontario: The Book and Bible House, 1890), p. 180.

⁴³Monthly Letter, August - Sept., 1894, p. 12.

⁴⁴U. C. A., W. M. S. Executive Minute Books, April, 1893.

⁴⁵State Papers, Great Britain, Accounts and Papers, 1905, vol. CIII, vol. 60. Report by Consul-General Hosie on the Province of Such'uan.

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷O. L. Kilborn, Heal the Sick (Toronto: Missionary Society of the Methodist Church, 1910), p. 71.

⁴⁸Missionary Bulletin, V (1908) p. 121. letter from Mrs. Allen, January 13, 1908.

⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹U. C. A., O. Jolliffe Papers, Lena Jolliffe Diaries, June 7, 1905.

⁵²See Ibid., Lena Jolliffe Diaries for descriptions of typical meals served in missionary homes. For example, on April 8, 1919, dinner consisted of Tibetan duck and vegetables, cottage pudding and fruit; supper, cheese soup, cold duck, scalloped potatoes, peas, chocolate pudding.

⁵³Missionary Outlook, April, 1922, p. 339. This comment is from a letter written by E. Thompson on her way to ChungKing.

⁵⁴Rev. V. C. Hart, "Missionary Problems in China," Methodist Magazine, XLVII (June-July, 1898), 157-58.

⁵⁵Platt, p. 94.

⁵⁶Ibid.

⁵⁷Monthly Letter, June, 1895, pp. 4-5.

⁵⁸U. C. A., W. M. S. Executive Minute Books., April 18, 1893.

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰U. C. A., Biographical file of Dr. Retta Gifford Kilborn; U. C. A., W. M. S. Executive Minute Books, October 28, 1897.

- 61 Monthly Letter, June, 1895, p. 5.
- 62 Ibid., August, 1895, p. 4.
- 63 Ibid.
- 64 Platt, p. 95; Missionary Outlook, July, 1899, p. 191.
- 65 Michael Gasster, China's Struggle to Modernize (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1972), pp. 17-18.
- 66 Louis Heren, C. P. Fitzgerald, Michael Freeberne, Brian Hook and David Bonavia, China's Three Thousand Years. The Story of a Great Civilization (New York: Collier Books, 1973), p. 169.
- 67 Barbara Tuchman, Stilwell and the American Experience in China, 1911 - 45 (New York: Bantam Books, 1971), pp. 37-38.
- 68 Monthly Letter, June, 1895, p. 1.
- 69 George E. Paulsen, "The Szechwan Riots of 1895 and American 'Missionary Diplomacy'," Journal of Asian Studies, XXVIII (Feb., 1969), 287.
- 70 Report of Sir George Littledale in O'Connor to Lord Roseberry, Peking, November 3, 1893, FO 17/1172 in Edmund Wehrle, Britain, China and the Missionary Riots, 1891-1900 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1966), p. 57.
- 71 U. C. A., Methodist Church of Canada, West China Mission Papers, Box 8, Sutherland to Hart, Toronto, July 8, 1893.
- 72 George E. Paulsen, "The Chengtu Anti-Missionary Riot May, 1895," Methodist History, VII (April, 1969), 26; Hartwell, p. 45.
- 73 Hartwell, p. 44.
- 74 Monthly Letter, April, 1897, p. 2.
- 75 Hartwell, p. 46. and Paulsen, "The Chengtu Anti-Missionary Riots, May, 1895."
- 76 Monthly Letter, October, 1895, p. 2.
- 77 Ibid.; Platt, pp. 97-98.
- 78 Ibid., October, 1895, p. 6.

⁷⁹Ibid.

⁸⁰Paulsen, 29.

⁸¹Monthly Letter, October, 1895, p. 7.

⁸²Missionary Outlook, September, 1895, p. 139.

⁸³U. C. A., West China Mission Papers, Pamphlets, Box 5, File 1, D. W. Stevenson, "The Riots at Chengtu," in Alfred Cunningham, History of the Szechwan Riots, May - June, 1895, p. 15.

⁸⁴Peter Gay, The Bourgeois Experience. Victoria to Freud. Volume I. The Education of the Senses (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), p. 459.

⁸⁵Platt, pp. 99-100.

⁸⁶E. S. Strachan, The Story of the Years, 1906 - 1916. Vol. III (Toronto: Woman's Missionary Society, 1917), p. 181.

⁸⁷Ibid., p. 100.

⁸⁸Ibid., p. 101.

⁸⁹S. A. Forsythe, An American Missionary Community in China, 1895 - 1905 (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1971), viii.

⁹⁰See U. C. A., O. Jolliffe Papers, Lena Jolliffe Diaries, January 2, 1905; March 10, 1905; and U. C. A., Biographical file of Grace Bedford. In a letter to her father, dated Sept. 14, 1922, written "on a river," Bedford describes the trackers who pulled the boats. Their dress was "very picturesque, consisting of one very short jacket, for they are in & out of the water all the time. One of the other two girls is extremely modest (a very unfortunate affliction for China) & she is almost blinded every time she looks at the scenery & some of these trackers gets [sic] within her range."

⁹¹Forsythe., vi.

⁹²Ibid.

⁹³Jane Hunter, The Gospel of Gentility (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), pp. 128-130.

⁹⁴U. C. A., W. M. S. West China Mission Papers, Box 3. file 11, letter to Mrs. Hales, May 22, 1923.

- 95 Ibid.
- 96 See Hunter, pp. 218-220.
- 97 Hunter, p. 206.
- 98 U. C. A., W. M. S. Executive Minute Books, copy of letter to Miss Foster, September, 1908.
- 99 U. C. A., Methodist Church of Canada, West China Mission Papers, Box 9, File 83, Hartwell to Sutherland, November 15, 1909.
- 100 Ibid.
- 101 Platt, p. 43.
- 102 See, for example, U. C. A., Biographical file of Edna Speers Meuser, Autobiography of E. S. Meuser.
- 103 U. C. A., O. Jolliffe Papers, Lena Jolliffe Diaries, March 10, 1904.
- 104 Missionary Outlook, July, 1901, p. 167.
- 105 Ibid., March, 1903, p. 69.
- 106 U. C. A., O. Jolliffe Papers, Lena Jolliffe Diaries, April 26, 1905.
- 107 Annual Report of the W. M. S., 1902-1903, lxx.
- 108 Missionary Outlook, July, 1903, p. 166.
- 109 Monthly Letter, December, 1897, p. 4.
- 110 Missionary Outlook, August, 1899, p. 191.
- 111 Monthly Letter, April, 1897, p. 2.
- 112 Platt, pp. 102-103.
- 113 Monthly Letter, Feb., 1898, p. 5.
- 114 Isabella Bird Bishop, pp. 346-347.
- 115 Ibid., p. 348; see also Nigel Cameron, Barbarians and Mandarins. Thirteen Centuries of Western Travellers in China (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), pp. 363-366 for a discussion of the sexual connotations of footbinding.
- 116 Hunter, p. 24.

¹¹⁷Monthly Letter, April, 1898, p. 1.

¹¹⁸U. C. A., W. M. S. West China Mission Papers, Box 3, file 1, inquiry from the M. E. M. Board about normal schools, n.d., but probably from the early 1920s.

¹¹⁹Platt, p. 105.

¹²⁰Ibid., p. 106.

¹²¹U. C. A., United Church of Canada, West China Mission Papers, Pamphlets, Box 1, File 28, Laura Hambly, Our Girls' School in Chengtu, p. 5.

¹²²Platt, p. 238.

¹²³Monthly Letter, Feb., 1899, p. 6. —

¹²⁴Missionary Outlook, Feb., 1899, p. 41.

¹²⁵Ibid., Feb., 1899, p. 41; June, 1899, p. 142.

¹²⁶Ibid., October, 1899, p. 237.

¹²⁷Ibid., Feb., 1900, p. 46.

¹²⁸Christian Guardian, May 16, 1900.

¹²⁹Wallace, p. 76.

¹³⁰V. Purcell, The Boxer Rebellion (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), p. 121; C. Hibbert, The Dragon Wakes (London: Longmans Group, 1970), p. 328; Wehrle, p. 110. M. B. Young in Rhetoric of Empire (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1968), p. 143, suggests that in spite of the atrocities committed it is still possible to have sympathy with the Boxers but that American missionaries generally supported expansionist ventures and tended to vengeance. (p. 189) Canadian missionaries while not representatives of a nation with its own imperialist ambitions in China certainly supported the actions of Great Britain and after each incident, the Methodist Church of Canada pressed its claims for monetary compensation from the Chinese government without any consideration that such losses might be part of the price that the church had to pay for establishing missions in China.

¹³¹China's Three Thousand Years, p. 174; and Robert C. Forsythe, The China Martyrs of 1900. a Complete Roll of the Christian Heroes Martyred in 1900 with Narratives of Survivors. (London: The Religious Tract Society, 1904). See p. 67, for example, for a lurid description of the fate of

two women of the C. I. M. in Shan-si. "They were thus slowly battered to death while they remained in prayer. Their bodies were then stripped, exposed, and defiled. All their goods were piled in a heap in the courtyard, and gradually disappeared."

¹³²Platt, p. 114.

¹³³Missionary Outlook, November, 1900, p. 262; April, 1901, p. 94.

¹³⁴Ibid., April, 1901, p. 94.

¹³⁵Ibid.

¹³⁶Ibid., August, 1901, p. 191.

¹³⁷Ibid., October, 1901, p. 23.

¹³⁸Ibid.

¹³⁹Ibid., January, 1902, p. 22.

¹⁴⁰Ibid., and Platt, p. 116. 5680 taels was about \$4000 in gold according to the Annual Report of the W. M. S., 1901-1902, vi.

¹⁴¹Annual Report of the W. M. S., 1901-1902, lxiii. U. S. mission societies generally did not keep the awards offered by the Chinese government, but used the funds to create a scholarship fund for Chinese students who wished to study in the U. S.

¹⁴²Platt, pp. 130-31.

¹⁴³Ibid., p. 132.

¹⁴⁴Strachan, pp. 185-86.

¹⁴⁵U. C. A., Mary Lamb Papers, Mary Lamb Diaries, August 27, 1922.

¹⁴⁶Strachan, p. 255.

¹⁴⁷Missionary Outlook, May, 1911, p. 118.

¹⁴⁸Latourette, p. 606.

¹⁴⁹U. C. A., China Pamphlets, Box 1, A Call to Young Women from West China (ca. 1911), p. 1.

¹⁵⁰Ibid., p. 3.

- 151 The Christian Guardian, November 13, 1907.
- 152 Gasster, p. 21.
- 153 The Christian Guardian, April 1, 1908.
- 154 Ibid., July 22, 1908.
- 155 Strachan, p. 197.
- 156 U. C. A., Methodist Church of Canada, West China Mission Papers, Box 9, File 94, T. E. S. Shore to Charles Murphy, January 26, 1911.
- 157 Ibid., Joseph Pope to Shore, Ottawa, January 31, 1911.
- 158 The Christian Guardian, September 20, 1911.
- 159 Sterling Seagrave, The Soong Dynasty (New York: Harper and Row, 1985), pp. 121-123; Tuchman, p. 44.
- 160 J. L. Stewart in Forward with China (Toronto: Board of Foreign Missions of the United Church of Canada, 1928), p. 25; China's Three Thousand Years, p. 177.
- 161 Strachan, pp. 198-199.
- 162 Ibid., p. 200.
- 163 The Christian Guardian, November 22, 1911.
- 164 Ibid.
- 165 See The Globe, September and October, 1911 and U. C. A., Methodist Church of Canada, West China Mission Papers, Box 10, file 94, E. S. Shore to Stuart Lyon, September 12, 1911.
- 166 The Globe, October 31, 1911.
- 167 Tuchman, p. 45.
- 168 West China Mission Papers, Box 10, File 93, Order No. 35 (51644), His Britannic Majesty's Consulate, Chungking, October 31, 1911.
- 169 Great Britain, State Papers for China, China Papers, No. 3., p. 96. Consul General Wilkinson to Sir J. Jordan, Chengtu, October 15, 1911.

¹⁷⁰Robert A. Kapp, Szechwan and the Chinese Republic, Provincial Militarism and Central Power 1911 - 1938 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), p. 15.

¹⁷¹Missionary Outlook, April 12, 1911, p. 89.

¹⁷²U. C. A., Methodist Church of Canada, West China Mission Papers, Box 10, File 97, Kilborn to Shore, December 4, 1911.

¹⁷³Missionary Outlook, April, 1912, p. 89.

¹⁷⁴U. C. A., Methodist Church of Canada, West China Mission Papers, Box 11, file 99. This file contains a protest about the captain of the Widgeon. Ibid., file 102 contains a letter from J. Pope, Ottawa, Jan. 26, 1912 to E. S. Shore, Toronto in which Pope refused to back the missionaries' complaints. He argued, after considerable investigation, that the missionaries had refused to get on the steamer that had been provided for them. If they had, then the Widgeon would have escorted and protected them. Under the circumstances, the commander of the Widgeon was blameless.

¹⁷⁵The London Advertiser, ca. February, 1912, in biographical file of E. McPherson, U. C. A.

¹⁷⁶Ibid.

¹⁷⁷Missionary Outlook, Feb., 1912, p. 47.

¹⁷⁸U. C. A., Methodist Church of Canada, West China Mission Papers. Box 11, file 108, M. W. Hewlett to Rev. Mortimore, Ichang, April 29, 1912.

¹⁷⁹Ibid.

¹⁸⁰Ibid., File 107, Kilborn to Shore, Ichang, April 29, 1912.

¹⁸¹Ibid.

¹⁸²Ibid., Box 12, File 115, Shore to Rev. D. S. Kern, November 12, 1912.

¹⁸³U. C. A., Biographical file of Violetta Shuttleworth. Shuttleworth withdrew at her own request from China to work as a nurse for the W. M. S. at the General Board Hospital at Lamont, Alberta.

¹⁸⁴U. C. A., West China Mission Papers, Box 12, File 115, H. M. Consul, Ichang to D. S. Kern, September 23, 1912.

- 185 Latourette, p. 610.
- 186 The Christian Guardian, November 27, 1901.
- 187 Ibid.
- 188 Ibid., August 7, 1908.
- 189 Austin, p. 88.
- 190 Strachan, p. 211.
- 191 Ibid., pp. 216-217.
- 192 Missionary Outlook, November, 1918, p. 262.
- 193 Ibid., August, 1913, p. 190.
- 194 Ibid., March, 1919, p. 71.
- 195 The Christian Guardian, December 25, 1918.
- 196 U. C. A., W. M. S. West China Mission Papers, Box 3, File 3, Harrison to Powell, Chengtu, December 12, 1921.
- 197 Ibid.
- 198 U. C. A., W. M. S. West China Mission Papers, Box 3, file 6, Valuation of the Property held by the W. M. S. in West China.
- 199 U. C. A., W. M. S. West China Mission Papers, Box 3, File 3, Harrison to Powell, October 1, 1923.
- 200 Ibid., Harrison to Powell, January 12, 1924.
- 201 The Globe, February 29, 1924; Latourette, p. 817.
- 202 U. C. A., W. M. S. West China Mission Papers, Box 3, File 3, Harrison to Powell, September 16, 1924.
- 203 Missionary Outlook, February, 1923, p. 70.
- 204 Tuchman, p. 73.
- 205 U. C. A., Biographical file of Mary Lamb.
- 206 U. C. A., Mary Lamb Papers, Mary Lamb Diary, Junghsien, May 20, 1920.
- 207 Ibid., August 1, 1920.

- 208 Ibid., Feb. 2, 1921.
- 209 Ibid., August 27, 1921.
- 210 Ibid.
- 211 Ibid.
- 212 Ibid., September 24, 1921.
- 213 Ibid.
- 214 Ibid., April 27, 1921.
- 215 Ibid., March 26, 1924.
- 216 U. C. A., Biographical file of Mary Dallyn.
- 217 West China Missionary News, XVIII (April, 1916),
31.
- 218 Ibid., XXV (September, 1923), 37.
- 219 U. C. A., Mary Lamb Papers, Mary Lamb to Anne
Deware, Chengtu, July 1, 1923.
- 220 Ibid.
- 221 U. C. A., Methodist Church of Canada, West China
Mission Papers, Box 11, file 107, Earl to Shore, Jenshow,
September 28, 1912.
- 222 U. C. A., O. Jolliffe Papers, Lena Jolliffe
Diaries, October 18, 1905.
- 223 West China Missionary News, VI (June, 1904), 128.
- 224 M. C. Urquhart and K. Buckley (eds.), Historical
Statistics of Canada (Toronto: The Macmillan Company of
Canada, 1965), p. 42.
- 225 West China Missionary News, XX (January, 1918), 29-31.
- 226 U. C. A., O. Jolliffe Papers, Lena Jolliffe
Diaries, March 1, 1915; May 1, 1915.
- 227 U. C. A., W. M. S. Executive Minute Books,
Meeting of Executive Committee, January, 1912.
- 228 U. C. A., Biographical file of Dr. Olive Rea.

229Strachan, pp. 220 - 223. The letters written by the medical practitioners frequently referred to the unhealthy conditions in China, to the night soil deposited on the fields and to the sewage running down the urban streets.

230W. M. S. notebooks.

231Missionary Outlook, July, 1924, p. 167.

232Gay, p. 11.

233Monthly Letter, Aug.- Sept., 1897, p. 7. From a letter published after Ford's death. She wrote to members of the Society as follows: "you could realize better how we are living face to face with the devil and his works daily, and how much we need the prayers of the home folk to help us keep sweet and unsullied, and from being hardened to it all. The misery and suffering, the vileness and crime, the lying and cheating, the idol worship! How true it is of China 'professing themselves to be wise they become fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man,' and not only that, but lower things still 'and to birds and four-footed beasts and creeping things.' That first chapter of Romans never seemed so true before to me, and the book of 'the Acts of the Apostles never before read so like a real history of every-day living."

CHAPTER V

"No Serious Risk in Sending her to Pt. Simpson"

When the W. M. S. of the Methodist Church of Canada was constituted in 1881, the executive committed the Society to the support missionary work among women and children, not only in the foreign fields which the Society expected to open, but also in Canada where the Methodist Church already had a network of missions in place from Pt. Simpson in northern British Columbia to Montreal. This mandate was far more comprehensive, costly and demanding than the designs of other woman's missionary societies in Canada or the United States who usually defined their work in terms of home or foreign missions, but seldom both.¹ Throughout the nearly fifty year history of the Canadian Methodist W. M. S., neither the executive nor its missionary employees challenged this dual obligation to serve both home and foreign missions, even when the attendant financial burdens created situations within the missions which made living conditions and the execution of the work difficult or when, especially after 1900, public interest in foreign missionary work far outstripped that generated by home missions.

In the Society's first decade, home missions received a larger share of the budget than did the burgeoning foreign

enterprises. However, as the W. M. S. missions in Japan and China gained momentum and promised the transformation of the future generation of Asiatic women into the Christian women that the Society prayed for, the Board of Managers began to allocate more money and personnel to its foreign enterprises than to home missions where the reported results were less dramatic and the work less likely to capture the members' imaginations and, consequently, less likely to induce them to open their purses. By 1893, the expenditure on missions in Japan and the travelling expenses of Amelia Brown to China amounted to \$16,645.00, while work on three fronts in Canada, in Montreal, Victoria and Northern B. C., had cost the Society \$15,737.70.² As time passed, the gap widened.

The discrepancy in the financial outlay on home and foreign mission work was apparent to anyone who examined the Society's annual reports. What was less accessible to the Society's members and perhaps not readily identifiable by even the members of the Board of Managers was that the disparity went even deeper, to the background, education and professional training of the home and foreign missionaries themselves. It can, in fact, be argued that these differences in the women's individual experiences, which may have seemed quite inconsequential at the time the candidates were hired, in the long run, were detrimental to the overall success of W. M. S. home missionary work in Canada. The careful selection process whereby a few women on the Board of

Managers exercised their own judgment to evaluate and appoint candidates to a particular area of mission work was one which ultimately had an adverse effect on both home missions and home missionaries alike and was responsible for creating and perpetuating inequalities between home and foreign missionary work. The following analysis of the W. M. S. home missionaries and their work supports the argument that while the Board of Managers held a firmly fixed conception about the qualities desired in those women who would be sent to represent the Society abroad, home missionaries were hired on an ad hoc basis and that rules were frequently ignored if the need for a home missionary was very pressing. The Board syphoned off the very best applicants to become foreign missionaries who would represent the Society on the world stage and the less educated, less experienced and, not coincidentally, often less competent and career-oriented women remained in Canada. In sum, much of the apparent success and respect which accrued to the W. M. S. foreign missionary work was secured at the expense of home missions.

If the information on their applications is an accurate indicator, almost all W. M. S. candidates believed that God had called them to service as foreign missionaries and they anticipated an assignment in the Orient. It was the responsibility of the Board of Managers to decide who would be sent abroad and who would work in Canada. The selection was made carefully and deliberately. With few exceptions,

the best educated women - the doctors, university graduates and experienced teachers - and the daughters of clergy and families connected to the Church hierarchy, all women with the apparent hallmarks for success in a lifelong missionary career, were sent abroad while those with lower qualifications and lower social standing generally were assigned to home missions. It does not seem to be any coincidence that Martha Cartmell, the cousin of Elizabeth Strachan and Elizabeth Ross, and the niece of Rev. John Williams who, in 1883, became General Superintendent of the Methodist Church of Canada,³ Dr. Maud Killam and her sister, Ada, the well-educated daughters of a prominent Nova Scotian family, and Esther Ryan, McGill graduate and minister's daughter, were chosen to work abroad while Kezia Hendrie and Alice Jackson, both dressmakers, and Mary Fitzpatrick, whose only academic credential was a Grade XI certificate, became home missionaries. Even the applicant's physical condition was important in the Board of Managers' deliberations. Those whose medical reports indicated they were in superior physical condition were prime candidates for foreign stations where it was assumed only the fittest in every sense would survive. Unfortunately, the living and working conditions in Pt. Simpson and in northern Alberta were often worse than anything that the women ever encountered overseas. Ironically, illnesses which were the probable consequence of poor living conditions, forced the resignations of just as many,

if not more, missionaries stationed in Canada where environmental conditions were not considered a threat to the women's health and well being.

Presumably, because they faced fewer hardships than their foreign counterparts and were closer to their homes, for many years, home missionaries were paid less.⁴ But, in fact, only in the urban centres of Canada, did home missionaries live and work under physical conditions which were as comfortable as in Japan and China where the presence of a multitude of missionary societies produced a heightened awareness of the desirability and need of middle-class material comforts to offset the shock of an unfamiliar society. Elsewhere in Canada, many home missionaries worked and lived in conditions which the Society would not have condoned for their foreign workers.

The adversity under which many home missionaries carried on their work probably contributed to the excessive turnover of home missionary personnel. Whereas one in three of the women in foreign work resigned before they had completed their first five years, more than half (51%) of all home missionaries resigned in the same time period. At the opposite end of the spectrum, thirty per cent of all foreign missionaries remained with the W. M. S. for more than 25 years, but only eighteen per cent of home missionaries worked as long. Most of these women were among the one-third working in urban centres. Moreover, once they had begun

their work, few home missionaries seemed as infatuated with their work or remained as convinced that they were in the vanguard of Christ's forces as women who were sent abroad. Their applications may not indicate any apparent difference in the sincerity or intensity of their initial commitment to a life of missionary work, yet home missionaries became very disillusioned and their letters from the field are noticeably lacking in the idealism which impelled foreign missionaries. Home missionaries appear to have recognized very quickly what were realistic goals and held few illusions about their work.

To the scholar's disadvantage, the dichotomy between the two areas of work extends as far as the records which the Society kept about its employees. With the exception of the census material used in this study and which obviously was available equally for both groups of women, the materials which were preserved about foreign missionaries are more extensive than those relevant to home missionaries. This is partly because, as Corresponding-Secretary for Foreign Missions, Elizabeth Strachan kept close tabs on her flock while the correspondence between the Secretary for Home Missions, a position with a frequent turnover, and the workers in the field has largely disappeared. Many files of home missionaries contain little more than the location to which the woman was assigned, but, this is partly because if the woman did not have academic laurels or a previous career, there may have been little else to note.

There is, nonetheless, enough evidence to confirm that there were significant variations between the experiences of the women employed in the many facets of home mission work carried on across Canada and those sent abroad. In some ways, home missionaries differed little from their foreign counterparts. Over half came from Ontario; a slightly higher percentage (7%) were from Québec because women were recruited locally to staff French missions. As well, six per cent were from British Columbia where they were hired specifically as workers in the missions in Victoria or in northern B. C. Like foreign missionaries, the majority came from towns and farms. One in four had been raised in a city. On the other hand, fewer home missionaries (16%) had fathers or other relatives who were ministers or missionaries, and, although the background information about parental occupation is incomplete, fewer parents of home missionaries could be identified as professionals,⁵ a circumstance which, in turn, may explain the women's educational qualifications. Only eight of the 139 home missionaries (5.7%) had attended university. Ten (7.1%) had trained as nurses while twenty-five were normal school graduates. Twenty-seven had been teachers before joining the W. M. S. Home missionaries were, moreover, three to four years older when they were hired than the women sent abroad and they had spent an average of five years working, about a year longer than foreign missionaries. Few home missionaries, however,

had held the responsible positions that their foreign counterparts had. Several women had worked in offices and many as teachers, but probably because they had not been university graduates, they had access to only limited job opportunities. Nor do they appear to have acquired the administrative skills that many foreign missionaries appear to have acquired and which were increasingly essential to the operation of any mission station. Many of these women, under-qualified by the Board of Managers' own standards and over-aged as well, would not have been eligible for foreign missionary work. Yet, they were welcomed as W. M. S. employees if they accepted a posting to work among the French, Indians or immigrant groups in their own country.

Because much of the relative satisfaction, or disappointment, that the home missionaries derived from their work was the consequence of the location to which they were assigned in Canada, the home missionaries have been divided into smaller groups: missionaries in the Montreal area, women who worked among Indians in British Columbia and Alberta, those who were sent to the Eastern European immigrant communities in northern Alberta, and women who worked among immigrants elsewhere in Canada. This last category encompasses work in northern Ontario towns, the west and rescue work among Chinese and Japanese women in B. C. This somewhat arbitrary division also serves to highlight the

dichotomies which were present even within the W. M. S. home mission work.

Urban mission work did not require as many adjustments to the physical hardships of a harsh environment like northern British Columbia. Perhaps this factor alone explains why women tended to remain with the W. M. S. longer if they worked in missions located in cities. For example, the women hired by the Society for the French missions in the Montreal area and whose employment with the W. M. S. probably involved little change in their lives remained with the Society an average of 13.6 years, a figure which is slightly higher than the average of 12.2 years which all home missionaries spent in the Society's employ, but considerably less than the 18.5 years spent with the Society by foreign missionaries. The career-length of these women is somewhat remarkable because the W. M. S. French mission was little publicized and was hardly one of its triumphs. In fact, the work was an obligation which the Society bore uncomplainingly when it would have preferred to abandon the field for more visibly productive ventures.

The W. M. S.' interest in missionary work in the Montreal area did not originate from any altruistic concern for the welfare of the underprivileged of Montreal, but was a part of a larger Ontario-directed Methodist crusade begun in the mid-nineteenth century as an attempt to convert the Roman Catholic, French-speaking population of Québec to Methodism.

Nearly half a century after the improbable task had been taken up, Alexander Sutherland cynically characterized Methodist French missionary work as " ... an interesting though not remarkably successful department."⁶ The W. M. S. inherited its particular obligation in Québec from the Ladies' French Missionary Society of Montreal, organized in 1878 and which, before its amalgamation with the W. M. S. in 1881, had employed a Bible woman in Montreal and given financial assistance to the French Mission Church and the French Methodist Institute, a secondary school operated by the General Board. The purpose of the French Methodist Institute was the re-education, a euphemism for the conversion, of French-Canadian Catholic children.⁷ In 1885, the Society opened its own girls' school to accommodate twelve boarders as part of the Institute in Montreal;⁸ the following year, when a larger building was needed, the school moved to Actonvale, fifty-five miles from Montreal. However, after three years, the Actonvale school was abandoned when the two mission boards agreed to consolidate and open a new institute in Montreal.

By 1890, the Society was spending almost \$5000.00 on the French missionary work. The Board of Managers felt obliged to persuade Canadian Methodist women that the conversion of the Roman Catholic population of Québec was their special commission. As a representative editorial which appeared in The Missionary Outlook in 1887 contended,

"[o]thers will look after Japan, if need be; but, we, women of Canada, alone have the French-Canadians given us of God."9 The Society's response to the so-called evils of Catholicism was hardly exclusive to Methodists and must be recognized as simply part of the insidious overarching suspicion and prejudice toward Québec which infected late nineteenth century English-speaking Protestant Canada. Like most other English-Canadians of the day, W. M. S. members would have agreed with the General Board of Missions' warning that ["t]he greatest problem which the Dominion of Canada has to face is the attitudes of its French population, not because it is French, but because it is intensely anti-Protestant and anti-British."10 The following indictment of Roman Catholicism which came even as late as 1900 from Mrs. Gordon Wright, a prominent W. M. S. member and sister of Newton Rowell, and a woman who believed that the expansion of French mission work should be the Society's highest priority, is the embodiment of that English-Canadian nationalist sentiment which blamed the Roman Catholic Church for Canada's failure to achieve national greatness.

As a nation and as a people we can never rise and develop as we should in those sections where Roman Catholicism, with her dwarfing influences, holds absolute sway. Why should we not become more deeply interested in the work of bringing our fellow-countrymen to a knowledge of the true light without the immediate intercession of priest and virgin? Why should we not institute a great forward movement in the closing year of the old century? Why should we not spend more and more freely on a work so closely

touching ourselves as Canadians as this? ...
The people are weary of their bondage."¹¹

The solution, as Methodist mission societies saw it, was to open more schools like the one already in operation and whose object was not "... bigoted proselytism, but ... education based upon a study and knowledge of the Word of God. Its design is peaceful, not hostile."¹²

From 1885 until 1925, eleven women were employed to promote the interests of the W. M. S. in the Montreal vicinity. Their background and previous work experience are the least well-documented of any of the W. M. S. missionaries. Much of the responsibility for the direction of these women and their work appears to have devolved upon the local auxiliaries in Montreal and, as a result, there was little direct correspondence between the individual missionaries and the Board of Managers. Seven of the eleven reported Montreal as their home address and their surnames would seem to imply that most of them were French-speaking Québécois. The remaining women for whom information can be found were from Ontario, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. None of the records indicate that these women had any higher education. One had been a teacher before becoming a missionary. Three were widows but little more can be reconstructed about their backgrounds or reasons for turning to the W. M. S. for employment.

The French Methodist Institute where most of the women were employed accepted Protestant students, but "the

preference [was] given to boys and girls from Roman Catholic homes, in the hope that they [would] exert an influence upon those homes that cannot otherwise be reached."¹³ Applications were carefully screened to secure students whom the mission societies thought were the best prospects for conversion. The Institute prepared its students for entrance to university or McGill Normal School. Most classes were taught in French, which explains why most of the W. M. S. missionaries were from Québec. The girls under the supervision of the W. M. S. did not receive an exclusively academic education, but were prepared for the future in a way that the W. M. S. thought appropriate and practical. The girls learned domestic skills because the missionaries found that "nearly all [were] obliged to take up housework, sewing, etc."¹⁴ Unlike the girls attending W. M. S. schools in Japan and China who were exposed to the best academic education possible, girls in the French Institute learned "... plain cooking, practically in all its branches, from the preparing of a cup of tea or coffee to the cooking of meats, vegetables, etc., and the making of plain cakes and puddings."¹⁵ "Singing, sewing, and housekeeping, a happy combination of feminine accomplishments" were the most important aspects of the girls' curriculum.¹⁶ Isabel Masten, the Matron of the Girls' School for twenty years, considered this basic domestic training absolutely vital because for some of the girls "the proper care of their persons and their

rooms, as well as any kind of order about the house was as unfamiliar as the work of the class-room ... constant supervision [was] needed in every department from morning until night."¹⁷ The regime of the Institute seems to have been more strictly ordered than at W. M. S. schools abroad. The children were required to do the work of the servants in the Japanese and Chinese missions.

At 6:30 every morning the bell rings, and at seven o'clock everyone must be in the study room. At 7:30 breakfast is served. The bill of fare is simple, but wholesome. From 8:00 to 8:45 to school is like a bee-hive, yet everything is done with the greatest precision. Of course all the pupils have to make their own beds, sweep their room, class-rooms and corridors. The boys peel the potatoes, polish the knives and carry the ashes. The girls wash the dishes and tidy their own department. At a quarter to nine everything must be ready for inspection. After prayers the daily class work begins.¹⁸

In sum, the W. M. S. seems to have operated the school more like a charitable institution than the elite boarding school which it purported to be. Yet, the apparently strict programme did not seem to deter applicants and the Institute always reported that its facilities were stretched to their limits and that every year students had to be turned away. In 1905, the purpose of the Institute was as resolute as twenty years earlier: to train young people "... to carry on and broaden this work of enlightenment throughout our darkened Province."¹⁹

But, in spite of the soothing euphemisms, Roman Catholic parents were wary about sending their children to

the Institute because, the W. M. S. preferred to think, of pressure and coercion from parish priests who wielded the ultimate weapon of excommunication. Of the eighty-seven pupils enrolled in 1895, for example, only twenty-eight were from Roman Catholic families. In 1906, the W. M. S. decided that they needed to increase their efforts in Montreal. In accordance with their increased emphasis on shaping the minds of the very young, the Society opened the French Protestant Home, an orphanage where abandoned children were cared for in a Protestant environment and sent to Protestant schools in the expectation that they would be delivered permanently from Catholicism.²⁰

After 1887, the W. M. S. also provided financial assistance and teachers to two mission schools established in the west and east ends of Montreal for children whose parents wanted them to have a Protestant education but could not afford "... the fees of the ordinary public schools, low though they be; ... they are reduced to the alternatives, either of the influence of the Roman Catholic schools, or the gross ignorance resulting from no tuition."²¹ Under the direction of Lillian Bouchard, the West End Mission gradually evolved, after 1905, into the Syrian Mission School. In 1912, the W. M. S. purchased a building in the Syrian community where they established a school staffed by two teachers.²² This school provided a Protestant education for the Syrian children but it was also a means for the Society's

missionaries to visit the Syrian homes in the vicinity and to reach the families.

Bouchard's concern for her pupils went far beyond that expected of a regular classroom teacher. Through her home visitations she assumed, in effect, the guise of a social worker, giving advice and practical assistance wherever she could to the immigrants whom she encountered. Above all, she tried to improve the quality of public health and childcare in an area with an abysmally high infant mortality rate.²³ To convey her message, she outfitted a doll to demonstrate to the mothers the healthy way to care for their babies. At the school she ran a thorough hygiene programme for the children, many from homes where the mothers worked. Bouchard found that the children were "... naturally dirty, but [were] so simply because they know no better."²⁴ "Certain pupils came on certain days about a quarter to eight, and [she] devoted the time until nine o'clock in bathing them well with plenty of soap and water."²⁵ The doctor who visited the school regularly saw an immediate improvement in the children's health and credited Bouchard with the change. Bouchard tended the children's minor injuries, burns and abrasions, but she also insisted that the children under her care, existing as they did, in "a culture of poverty"²⁶ should have the opportunity to be happy and to enjoy themselves. From donations, she purchased "... swings,

see-saws, skipping ropes and games, also a few goldfish and some plants."²⁷

Bouchard, for one, appears to have been a very sympathetic and kind teacher, but, unfortunately, the reports sent by the women engaged in French mission work reveal relatively little about the nature of their experiences apart from the essentials details of their work as matrons and teachers in the schools which the Society demanded at quarterly intervals and which were often published in the annual reports. This omission probably occurred because many women were native Montrealers who continued to live at home and did not write about their private lives which they conducted quite separately from their mission work. In this sense, for them, missionary work was not a way of life as a daily occupation. By 1925, only Bouchard was employed in Montreal and she remained there until she retired in 1942. None of the women resigned to marry, a situation which can be explained, in part, because three of the women were widows when they were hired. One woman resigned because of ill health, while two of the twelve were asked to resign after just one year of service, one as matron of the French Institute because her work was not satisfactory,²⁸ and another because she could not speak French well enough to become a successful teacher. There is nothing to suggest that the others left their positions except because of increasing age. Overall their average length of service was

13.6 years, not remarkable if compared to the figures for foreign mission work, but certainly higher than the average of five years spent with the W. M. S. by women dispatched to the Indian missions in B. C.

The W. M. S. was astute enough, by the twentieth century, to recognize that their appointed task in Québec was futile and this may explain why the better educated women were not wasted on the French mission. No one ever suggested that English-speaking recruits should study French in order to work in Montreal. It was left, then, to local women who became, not the professional missionaries who dominated the foreign fields, but rather matrons and friends to the young people in the schools and social workers within the wider community that the W. M. S. hoped to reach. These women in French mission work were not strong activists for their particular cause, perhaps because their interest in the work was somewhat perfunctory and because they usually acted as caretakers and not innovators vis à vis the French work. Men hired by the General Board were in charge of the Institute which was the foundation of the French work. The W. M. S. missionaries dutifully filed their annual reports about their work, but rarely made suggestions for improvements, asked for money or urged expansion. There was not, then, in French missionary work the same opportunity for women to take the initiative and act on their own as appears to have been the case overseas or in some other areas of Canada. French

mission work rapidly become an anachronism with no promise of a rewarding, long-term career for an ambitious woman.

By about 1910, interest in French missionary work was clearly flagging because Methodist goals in Québec had not been realized and the foreign fields seemed far more deserving of financial support. Rev. P. Villard, principal of the Institute, admitted in 1919 that any woman whom the W. M. S. sent to teach at the Institute would find "the work more ungrateful and harder than [sic] similar work would be in China or Japan, but she would have the great opportunity of solving a most important problem in our own Dominion."²⁹ He appears to have been right. Some individual girls had been cared for and had been trained in domestic skills at the Institute and immigrant children had been given a taste of a more pleasant life, but in the long run, the W. M. S. missionaries had made little lasting impression on the vast Roman Catholic population that the Methodist Church hoped to enlighten. The W. M. S. and its representatives in Québec were simply ignored by the large French-Canadian population for whom they were just one more symbol of the continuing Anglo-Canadian presence in the province. As a result, neither the women nor their work ever captured the imagination of the Society's members. While publicly acknowledging their obligation to rid Canada of "the most solid, thoroughly organized and aggressive type of Romanism to be found in the world,"³⁰ the W. M. S. preferred to invest its resources

elsewhere where results would be more visible. After 1900, the Society increasingly directed its attention and assets to the hundreds of thousands of new arrivals who needed to be purged of their European habits and religions and converted to the values of an English-Protestant Canada and who might not prove as recalcitrant as the French.

The Society had first become concerned about the condition of immigrants in 1885 when the Rev. J. E. Starr first alerted the Board of Managers to the "nefarious traffic in Victoria" in Chinese girls brought to Canada as prostitutes.³¹ Incensed Victorians began, under the supervision of local churches, to try to eliminate this social evil. Later in the year, the W. M. S. made a commitment to help and hired Annie Leake, a Nova Scotian, to establish a Rescue Home to be operated by the W. M. S. The following year, the Society allocated \$1500.00 for rescue work. By 1925, the Society had employed a total of eighteen women missionaries specifically for this particular facet of their urban missionary work.³² From time to time, missionaries from Japan, or, less commonly, West China, spent a year or two assisting in Victoria while they were either on furlough or regaining their strength before returning to their foreign posts. Five of the permanent employees were from Victoria and nine from Ontario. There were no university graduates in the group, although five of the women had considerable teaching experience. Lily McCargar had worked with Chinese

boys in her home town, Moose Jaw, and understood Cantonese, the language spoken by most Chinese in Victoria at the time.³³ Margaret Eason had experience at a Vancouver Chinese and Japanese kindergarten,³⁴ while Grace Baker had worked previously at an Institute for the Blind in Halifax.³⁵ Elizabeth Staples of Cavan in Durham County, Ontario, who was the housekeeper of the Rescue Home for twenty years, had been an assistant nurse in Kansas, served as a deaconess and was employed at the St. John's Orphanage just prior to joining the W. M. S. at the age of 46 in 1917.³⁶ Several of the women were middle-aged, well into their forties, when they were hired. The average age of the eleven women for whom the appropriate data were available was almost thirty-seven. It is, however, not clear whether the Board of Managers preferred more mature women for this particular type of work, or whether women older than usually accepted were the only ones available in times of extreme shortages of recruits for work--which did not attract a flood of applicants.

Chinese Rescue work seems, nevertheless, to have offered an exciting challenge to those who were selected for it. The Society estimated that somewhere between one hundred and two hundred Chinese girls and women were brought to Canada annually to be sold into prostitution or slavery.³⁷ The Society was vehement in its attacks on the Canadian government for not enforcing the laws against this kind of criminal activity. In the absence of government inter-

vention, the Society resolutely accepted a twofold responsibility to rescue helpless women from the men who were exploiting them and, at the same time, to preserve the sanctity of the Canadian family against the unspeakable social evil of prostitution. Rescue work of this sort, removing prostitutes from their debauched environment to be rehabilitated as Christian wives and mothers, had, by the late nineteenth century, especially in Britain, become a respectable pursuit for middle-class women and, occasionally, men. Because of their susceptibility to the wiles of prostitutes, men, however, were seldom deliberately recruited for rescue work.³⁸ Women, on the other hand, as Josephine Butler argued, "as pure wives and mothers, as members of religious congregations ... could defend their public actions in the name of morality and religion."³⁹

Annie Leake and her successors proved to be militant and dogged rescue workers. They regularly met the steamships arriving from China, hoping to appropriate the girls and women as they disembarked. Other women were rounded up from "the haunts of vice" in Chinatown and brought to the Rescue Home for protection.⁴⁰ Because the girls were valued at anywhere from \$250.00 to \$1500.00, their owners did not let the Rescue Home take them without a fight. Usually the owners were served with a writ of habeas corpus for a court appearance. Once in court, girls were given the choice of moving to the Rescue Home or returning with their owner. If

a girl chose the Rescue Home, the W. M. S. was required to take out legal guardianship papers. There are no statistics indicating how many cases the W. M. S. won over the years. The Society insisted that many cases were lost because the Chinese owners were "... willing to spend money lavishly ... buying witnesses to swear just such evidence as he thinks necessary in order to regain his chattels."⁴¹ Such naivete was characteristic of the W. M. S. approach to rescue work. The missionaries assumed that the Chinese women would prefer to live in the Rescue Home and they could not imagine why the women might return to their owners who were not, perhaps, always guilty of the abuses the W. M. S. depicted. Moreover, the missionaries appear to have been oblivious to the reason why prostitution flourished on the west coast and defined it almost exclusively in moral terms as a problem which could be solved once and for all if the women found Christ or, at least, were be transformed into virtuous wives and mothers.

During the first five years of the W. M. S. rescue work in Victoria, Leake worked alone. She found it inexcusable that "... these poor women [should] live and die in a Christian country without an effort being made to offer them the bread of life."⁴² Her temerity in confronting both the courts and the Chinese procurers won her the respect of the Society's members who read her reports of her work. Leake's original hope had been to educate the girls she brought to the home as W. M. S. missionaries who could be stationed in

West China.⁴³ She soon realized, however, that she could not prepare the girls for missionary work by herself and asked the Society to send her an assistant, preferably who spoke Chinese and who would also institute a door-to-door evangelization programme throughout Victoria's Chinatown whose population was approaching 2,000.⁴⁴ The Board of Managers responded by sending Martha Cartmell who had been forced by illness to abandon her work in Japan and needed more time in Canada before resuming foreign missionary work. Cartmell, of course, spoke no Chinese but the Board of Managers, like most Canadians of the day, did not seem to distinguish readily among Asians and assumed that her knowledge of Japanese society qualified her to understand the Chinese as well. Perhaps, at the very least, her experience in Japan had given Cartmell increased self-confidence for she appears to have enjoyed her work in B. C. and was not overwhelmed by the responsibility as she had been in Japan. Her visitations, nevertheless, were seldom very fruitful, although, if she was invited into a Chinese home, she took advantage of the occasion to teach the women to knit and to introduce them to some Bible stories.⁴⁵ She found the contact with the girls in the Rescue Home more satisfying because the girls seemed sincere in their efforts to change their way of living and they tried "... to do right, though the training and discipline of life seem hard sometimes."⁴⁶

The accounts of their past experiences and their familiarity with infanticide especially touched Cartmell.

Cartmell's sympathy and patience at a time when Oriental immigrants were unwelcome in Canada and treated with extreme contempt as the source of moral and social evils appear quite remarkable and her attitude seems to have set the tone for many other W. M. S. workers in Victoria. Rather than condemning the conduct of their charges as immoral and wicked, the missionaries tried to find "... proofs that God has 'made of one blood all nations of men,' and that 'the Gospel is the power of God unto Salvation' for all alike."⁴⁷ Cartmell took a firm position against Canadian anti-Chinese prejudice. She admitted that "[w]ork among the Chinese is slow and difficult, because of their conservatism fostering everything Chinese," but her past experience had convinced her that "where they do yield they appreciate, or at least improve under instruction."⁴⁸ Yet, there is a certain ambivalence inherent in Cartmell's feelings towards her work among prostitutes. She openly admitted that, in spite of her sympathy with the Chinese girls, she really preferred not to have to write about what she was doing.

Continually are there imported (the right term) into Victoria, innocent little Chinese girls, who have been sold by their parents or stolen by procuresses in China and brought over for the vilest use of abandoned men and money makers. My heart turns sick at the thought of such plain statements appearing in print from my pen. But what avails modesty that only shudders and weeps.⁴⁹

But, once immersed in the rescue work, Cartmell and her colleagues in Victoria usually overcame much of their middle-class reticence and adopted a relatively accommodating attitude toward their charges.

The Society quickly abandoned Leake's plan to remake the rescued women in their own image as Christian missionaries in favour of a more modest goal of introducing them to the ways of Christian womanhood. The W. M. S. measured the realization of this goal by the number of women who married Chinese Christians. By 1896, eighteen couples had been married at the Home and the wives were all "... settled in peaceful and reputable homes of their own [and] won away from a state of slavery to which death would have been infrequently preferable."⁵⁰ Much of what passed for a social welfare and rehabilitation program for fallen women developed on an ad hoc basis. Some missionary work was being done by American societies among the prostitutes along the California coast,⁵¹ but the Methodist W. M. S. does not appear to have sought such outside advice as might have been available to them. Sincere as they were, the W. M. S. missionaries in Victoria had no background in this kind of rehabilitation work. Consequently, the reports of their work are sometimes amusing. Cartmell, for one, was an advocate of strong coffee as a cure-all for one woman who had been "a cigarette and opium smoker, a gambler and addicted to wine."⁵² Ida Snyder developed her own methods to wean one young Chinese woman

from opium. What the conservative Board of Managers might have thought was not reported. Snyder told the Board that

Ah Yute was received over two weeks ago and is getting on famously. She had been using opium and tobacco for at least ten years as nearly as we can make out, and is now content with three cigarettes a day and has had no opium for three days. I have given her both since she came to the home, as we were warned it would be dangerous to deprive her of them too suddenly; but the dose has been decreased so gradually that she has not complained, and she affirmed that the teachers are a 'heap good' which shows that so far she is content.⁵³

Two months later, when Ah Yute was smoking just one cigarette a day, Snyder pondered whether W. M. S. supporters could "... imagine the Matron of the Home doling out the tobacco?"⁵⁴

But the episode did not have a happy ending. By September, Ah Yute had fallen by the wayside and was in disgrace after she had stolen Snyder's secret supply of tobacco and was caught while making two cigarettes. Her punishment, which Snyder thought appropriate to the crime, was to consign the remaining tobacco in the stove.⁵⁵ Ah Yute's name does not appear again in W. M. S. reports as evidence of success in Victoria.

Whatever its shortcomings and failures, the work of the W. M. S. was complimented by the Royal Commission on Chinese and Japanese Immigration which convened in B. C. in 1901. Its report, published the following year, concluded that the Chinese could not be assimilated and that a head tax of \$500.00 should be levied to limit further immigration.⁵⁶

W. M. S. missionary Kate Morgan who had also worked in Japan testified before the Commission. Unlike Cartmell's comments a few years earlier, Morgan's responses do not demonstrate much sympathy for the Chinese. Morgan, like most Canadians, strongly opposed unrestricted immigration, because she believed it was "bad for the country."⁵⁷ She believed that the Chinese could not be trusted "for truthfulness," that they attended Christian night schools only from self-interest and that "a Chinaman will profess to be a Christian to get a wife." Moreover, Morgan saw no signs of the Chinese adopting "our mode of life." As far as she was concerned "they [were] all a menace to the public from their way of living, the way they herd together."⁵⁸ The Commissioners agreed with Morgan, concluding that it was futile to try to convert China by bringing Chinese to Canada. They commended the Rescue Home and its staff for their part in stopping the "infamous barter in humanity," which the government was unable or unwilling to control.⁵⁹ In retrospect, there is little doubt that, at a time when the Government was not expected to take the initiative for social welfare and the only alternative was private philanthropy, the W. M. S. and its workers had provided assistance and support for women who were willing to defer to its point of view and to accept its terms. The degree of accommodation expected by at least some of the missionaries must sometimes have been extreme.

In 1897, in response to appeals from the two women working at the Home, the W. M. S. sent a missionary especially to teach English to the children who lived in the vicinity of the home.⁶⁰ The children also learned Chinese from the wife of a Chinese missionary. Missionary work in Victoria gradually became more diversified as the Society realized that it needed to cast a wider net to convert Chinatown to Methodism and because the traffic in women was declining as more Canadian women settled in B. C. In 1899, the school had a reported enrollment of 230 and an average daily attendance of about thirty, but when it moved to new quarters to accommodate the larger numbers, the W. M. S. asked the General Board to assume full control of the school.⁶¹ The women then concentrated their efforts on the Home and began to include Japanese women and children as well as Chinese. In 1908 a kindergarten was opened and, in 1909, a new building was constructed to serve the increased needs of the Society in Victoria.⁶² The W. M. S. also expanded its work to encompass Asiatics living in Vancouver and vicinity. For several years, missionaries tried to service the mainland from Victoria, travelling several days each month to visit Japanese women whose husbands were employed in the canneries. But the Society was not satisfied with the results. In 1912, the W. M. S. opened a Japanese and Chinese kindergarten in Vancouver under the supervision of Gussie Preston, who had returned from Japan.⁶³

To the women's frustration, the work among the Japanese failed to attract many Christian converts. It was not, the missionaries argued, that the Japanese and Chinese women were visibly hostile to the W. M. S. missionaries but that they disregarded the missionaries' gestures of friendship. Jessie Howie blamed materialism for "... a spirit of indifference that is deadly to spiritual life." "The Oriental," she observed

... is here to earn a living and not to learn a new religion. Here we have no leisure class, like we have in Japan; all are young and ambitious to make good, and that means to make money. Second, they have their old religion - for here in our midst is a Buddhist temple and a priest in charge - and although under ordinary circumstances many are indifferent to its claims, yet when death enters their homes they turn to the Buddhist priest to bury their dead as they would in their own land. Then again the Oriental knows well the evils of this Christian Land; and treats with indifference all teaching that doesn't work out in a practical way in the world around him.⁶⁴

By 1919, the Society seemed less critical of Oriental customs. But it continued to stress that the work among Orientals had two goals.

First, to give our Orientals a knowledge of God as their Father and Jesus Christ as their Saviour. Second to help them become good citizens of Canada ... through the growth of friendship and understanding These strangers from across the sea need help when they come to this new land, and it is our duty and privilege to help them become as the home-born.⁶⁵

Yet, the W. M. S. missionaries in Victoria and Vancouver were among the very few Canadians who had tried, if

not always from entirely selfless motives, to be kind and sympathetic, towards Asian immigrants. For many Chinese and Japanese immigrants, the W. M. S. missionaries had been their only friendly contact in a society which was to prove no less inimical as the years passed. That some of these immigrants trusted the women was born out by the numbers of their children who attended the classes held at the Home and the girls who were placed in the care of the missionaries by parents who could not care for them. In times of emergency, both individual and community, many Orientals turned to "Jesus people" for advice and comfort. For example, in the wake of the influenza epidemic of 1918, the W. M. S. missionaries, at considerable risk to their own health, set up a temporary hospital in a Vancouver school to provide medical facilities for the Japanese community. Two hundred patients were treated within three weeks and the W. M. S. reported that their ten per cent mortality rate was the lowest of any hospital in the city. A grateful Japanese community gave Jessie Howie who had supervised the plan a gold watch and a tea service.⁶⁶ Howard Sugimato, for one, has suggested that this sort of good work, and particularly that carried on by the Methodist Church, among the Japanese "contributed to the general welfare and harmony in the community" and created "a better and more useful immigrant group."⁶⁷

The women constantly complained that rehabilitation work was exhausting and nerve-wracking. The women's openly

sympathetic attitudes notwithstanding, rescue work, in the early years, had provoked hostility among many of the Chinese community in Victoria who resented interference in their affairs. Annie Leake complained that as soon as prostitutes arrived, they were "taught to fear [the missionaries] and the Home more than any place in this world or any other of which they might have heard."⁶⁸ For Kate Morgan, "... one of the hardest lessons for missionaries to learn [was] that of patience in doing work that apparently bears no fruit."⁶⁹ Even Cartmell was sensitive to the malicious remarks of the Chinese as she passed through the streets of Chinatown. In 1900, Morgan admitted that "constant contact with this kind of work [made] the heart sick, and there are times at night when one's overcharged brain refuses to yield to nature's sleep."⁷⁰ Some of her disquietude at this particular time stemmed from an attack on the Rescue Home by Boxer sympathizers responding to rumours that Britain was about to divide China. A shell was thrown into the mission and, although no one was injured, attendance at classes held at the Home dropped amid fears of a second attack.⁷¹ When Snyder returned from her furlough in 1905, she was the first W. M. S. missionary in Victoria to have begun a second term. Snyder herself questioned the wisdom of her decision and hoped that she could "... bear the strain."⁷²

The average length of employment in this work was 9.5 years, much shorter than for the women who worked with

Japanese and Chinese in their native lands and who, the Board of Managers assumed, suffered far more physical dangers and emotional stress. Although they complained about the emotionally unsettling nature of their work, the women assigned to Chinese rescue work resigned for a variety of reasons, only some of which were related to the taxing aspects of their occupation. Five of the eighteen (28%), including Annie Leake at the age of 53, resigned their posts to marry. Two women resigned because of ill health and another two because they were needed at home, a reason specified quite frequently by home missionaries who resigned. Elizabeth Churchill left the W. M. S. in 1901 to become a foreign missionary for the American Presbyterian Mission in Canton, probably because she was already fluent in Cantonese.⁷³ Sarah Bowes resigned at age 59 to become the matron at the Victoria Court House, a position for which her experience in rescue work had well prepared her.⁷⁴ Only three women (17%), all hired after 1899 when the mission had passed the pioneering stage, remained with the Society until their retirement. Their careers averaged 25 years. There is little, however, to explain why these particular women, all from Ontario, remained with the Society. In the long run, relatively few of the W. M. S. missionaries employed in Victoria and Vancouver appear to have found that missionary work among Asian immigrants was as rewarding as converting the heathen in their native lands.

By 1920, there were only four women working with Asian women in B. C., hardly enough to influence the large Oriental community. Gradually government services began to encroach on the work that the W. M. S. was carrying out in Vancouver and Victoria. Because of the even more restrictive immigration laws passed in 1919,⁷⁵ there was little need to expand the staff. After World War I, the W. M. S. concentrated on the work of the Oriental Home and School which served as meeting place for the women and girls of the community as well as a temporary home for young Chinese and Japanese girls. It was closed in 1942 after the eighteen girls staying there were forced to leave.⁷⁶ Long before, however, the W. M. S. had ceased to believe that its future success in home missions depended on the expansion of Oriental work in B. C. Shortly after 1900, the Society's attention turned increasingly towards the thousands of new arrivals from Eastern Europe whom the Society and their fellow Methodists feared as a dangerous threat to Canadian national life.

The W. M. S. had not been a direct participant in the pioneering Canadian Methodist urban missionary work among European immigrants which had been instigated in Toronto at the Fred Victor Mission and in Winnipeg at the All Peoples' Mission just before the turn of the twentieth century. In 1901, the W. M. S. was approached by the Superintendent of All Peoples' Mission for financial support and the Society

contributed \$2000.00 towards a new building. But the Society was not, it seems, asked, nor did the Board of Managers volunteer, to send any missionaries to Winnipeg. Instead, deaconesses, trained specifically for urban missionary work, were hired both in Toronto and Winnipeg.⁷⁷ From time to time, the W. M. S. paid the salary for a deaconess at the All Peoples' Mission, but the deaconesses which they supported were not considered as employees responsible to the Society and their names are not included on the roster of W. M. S. missionaries.

After 1904, the W. M. S. gradually began to assume a more direct and aggressive role in missionary work among European immigrants in both urban and rural areas of western Canada. Canadian Protestant Churches, on the one hand, feared that the increasing numbers of European immigrants endangered "their elaborate programme of moral reformation."⁷⁸ On the other hand, "[a]s missionary enthusiasts, they were bound to see in the arrival of the newcomers a Macedonian call to service and witness."⁷⁹ The influx of immigrants to the west, - 12,000 Ukrainians had settled in western Canada in 1898 alone - aroused the fears of the English-speaking settlers who, in 1898, requested the Manitoba and Northwest Conference of the Methodist Church to petition the federal Government to limit immigration from eastern Europe.⁸⁰ In particular, the tendency of the eastern European arrivals to settle in blocs, rather than integrating

themselves into the existing farming communities, disturbed the English farmers who were already working the land.⁸¹ The Conference refused to interfere on the English settlers' behalf, but the problems associated with eastern European immigration caught the attention of the General Board Missionary Society which responded by establishing a mission at Pakan, in northern Alberta in 1900.⁸²

The Methodist Church believed that eastern European settlers were an essentially godless people who were intemperate, rowdy, unwilling to conform to Canadian conventions and had little or no regard for the women in their communities. Some of their apparent disregard for morality and religious convention may have been a consequence of a lack of religious leadership after the immigrants arrived in Canada because few eastern clergy accompanied their charges to greener pastures. Dr. Charles Lawford, the first General Board missionary stationed at Pakan, adamantly ascribed the flaws which he saw in the Galician character to their misguided belief in the Saints and rituals of the Eastern Orthodox church. The Greek Catholic Church, Lawford believed, was even more backward because its members worshipped the Virgin Mary instead of heeding the message of the Scriptures.⁸³ In the first years of its work in Alberta, the W. M. S. tended to be equally judgmental. In 1906, after its mission in Northern Alberta had been in operation for two years, the W. M. S. characterized their constituents there as

"the least desirable of all the immigrants that come to us."⁸⁴ Edith Weekes, a W. M. S. missionary in Alberta whom the Board of Managers especially admired, wrote a pamphlet distributed by the Society which condemned both the Austrians' social customs and their religion. Weekes thoroughly berated

... their ceremonial religion, its priesthood, its subservience and superstition, its bowing and crossing, its repetition of prayers to saint and Virgin, its belief in the efficiency of baptism, confession and sacrament to cleanse from sin - if any cleansing be possible, its observance of holidays and fast seasons and its hopeless 'How and whence can we know?' regarding the life eternal.⁸⁵

It was, Weekes argued, and the Society agreed, the duty of the W. M. S. and its missionaries "to make them Christians and Canadians."⁸⁶

The W. M. S. launched its work among eastern Europeans in 1904, when two women from Ontario, Jessie Munro, a former W. M. S. missionary in Japan for whom the work there was apparently too strenuous, and Retta Edmonds, a trained nurse, were selected to open a station in northern Alberta.⁸⁷ The Board of Managers had already chosen an appropriate site near Pakan on the north bank of the North Saskatchewan River in the center of the Ukrainian settlements where Lawford was working for their newest venture.⁸⁸ More than 250 families lived in the 600 square miles surrounding Pakan; most had come from the Bukovina, a part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire which in 1849 was made a separate province. Other

settlers arrived from Galicia, also part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and Roumania.⁸⁹

The Board of Managers was anxious for the women to begin immediately to dispense morality and Methodism to the immigrant community, but the women's first priority was to look after their own basic needs. The Board of Managers, in its haste to open the new mission field, had sent the women to Pakan before they had built a mission house. For several months, Edmonds and Munro lived in a tent while they supervised the construction of the mission station which would double as their home.⁹⁰ All the materials and furnishings for the building had to be floated down the Saskatchewan River from Edmonton, one hundred miles away. When completed, the structure was 22 by 24 with a school room and kitchen downstairs and two bedrooms, a sitting room and a hospital room in the upper storey.⁹¹ Even before the mission home was finished, Edmonds and Munro conducted Sunday School classes in their tent. Although the pair did not complain publicly about their living conditions, three months of the tent were more than enough.⁹² The smokey fire, dirt and stormy weather drove them into their still unfinished home.

A few days later, and before they were prepared to start their missionary work, one of their Sunday School students arrived expecting them to solve his particular problem. His dilemma was just the first of the practical matters which were to become the basis of the women's work in

the community and would demand all the ingenuity they could muster. The boy, Munro reported,

... brought some blue jean, with the request that we should cut out a pair of trousers. We had never done the like before and had no pattern, but we had resolved to do anything we could to show our goodwill and power to help, and so said we would try. Finding an old pair of overalls we washed and ripped them, using them for a pattern.⁹³

On November 1, 1904, the women opened their school with one pupil in attendance.⁹⁴ Because the school followed Alberta School Regulations and the W. M. S. teachers' qualifications conformed to Albertan standards, the Society received government grants to assist in its financial operation. By January, an average of thirteen children were attending daily and Munro hired a local teacher who read and wrote Ukrainian to help the children learn their native language.⁹⁵ In 1905, however, Munro was forced to resign temporarily because of poor health. She was replaced by two women, Edith Weekes, and Ethel Chace, who had earlier been rejected for service in China,⁹⁶ but who remained with the Society in Alberta until 1943. These two women were already good friends and Chace's letters to Weekes, written forty years after they began their work in Alberta, attest to the difficulty and diversity of their work.

Like more than half the women (21 of 38 or 55%) who worked in Alberta, Chace and Weekes were originally from Ontario. Nine (24%) were native Albertans and seven (18%) had been raised in the Maritimes. While this geographical

breakdown roughly corresponds to that of all the W. M. S. missionaries, there were proportionately more Albertans than in other areas of the work, evidence which would tend to refute George Emery's inference that the Methodist Church deliberately sent Ontarians to the west as the messengers of evangelical Protestantism.⁹⁷ Both Weekes and Chace were very well educated women. Weekes was a graduate in languages from Victoria College, while Chace had graduated with Honours from the University of Toronto and the Ontario College of Education and had several years teaching experience.⁹⁸

Although Weekes and Chace were certainly among the best educated of the nearly forty women who would eventually work in Alberta, others had good educations. If their educational standing was not the equal of the W. M. S. foreign missionaries, the women assigned to Alberta were far better educated and had broader working experience than most other home missionaries. While just four (10.5%) of the thirty-eight women who spent most of their W. M. S. career in Alberta had attended university, almost half (17 or 45%) were trained teachers and four others were qualified nurses. Four had been deaconesses and two had been employed in social service work. That these particular women were sent to Alberta, and not to Pt. Simpson or Victoria, is probably more than a coincidence. In the hierarchy of W. M. S. missionary work in Canada, the Society seemed to rank its work with the European immigrants higher than the Indian, Oriental or

French mission work, possibly because the promise of success might be greater. As a result, the Board of Managers appears to have carefully selected well-qualified women to direct their missionary endeavours in Alberta.

Their relatively high educational standing did not, however, give the women all the privileges which accompanied foreign mission work. By 1906, the three women at Wahstao, as they called their mission station, were operating a day school, a Sunday school, a night school for men and boys in winter, women's meetings and English language classes. When the weather permitted, they conducted house-to-house visitations in a horse-drawn wagon. They considered themselves very fortunate to have the services of a twelve year old boy who tended the horses and a young Ukrainian woman who helped with housekeeping and served as their interpreter.⁹⁹ The women tried to learn Ukrainian even though the W. M. S. had made no special provisions for language study. Weekes, who was fluent in German, had no difficulty with the language and compiled an English-Ukrainian dictionary for the benefit of the entire Methodist missionary community.¹⁰⁰

But neither a working knowledge of the language nor the family life which the women tried to create within the mission house could alleviate their initial feelings, not so much of homesickness, but of alienation from a society around them which they did not understand and which did not welcome them. As English-speaking native Canadians, they were in the

minority and they felt like foreigners in their own country.

Chace remembered

... how strange all our surroundings seemed
.... The muddled houses and farm buildings,
not very pretentious in those days, the
strange costumes, sheepskin coats, head
shawls, and homespun clothing were scarcely
more curious than the open prairies and
parkland with copses of white poplar.¹⁰¹

Moreover, the environment was a serious impediment to
missionary work in northern Alberta. Travel was restricted
in winter because of the severe weather and the women
suffered constantly from the cold inside their home. It was
impossible for them to keep the house warm on freezing
nights. As Chace recalled

you used to fill the box stove with big-wood
at bed-time and close off all the drafts;
then in the middle of the night you came down
to find nothing but a few glowing coals, when
you would fill it up again. So much for the
main four rooms, but not for the lean-to
kitchen. There frost had its way without let
or hindrance. When our thermometer register-
ed no more than 40 below we guessed at the
lower temperature by the thickness of the
hoar-frost that coated everything in the
kitchen as soon as the morning kettle began
to boil.¹⁰²

By 1911, Chace seemed to have adjusted to the harsh climate
which she now preferred to think of as "healthy" and she had
concluded that the missionary life in Alberta was no "harder
to bear physically than life in Japan or China."¹⁰³

In 1908, the Alberta Government opened a school for
the area which the W. M. S. teachers agreed to staff; it
operated from May to October and school attendance increased.

The Society applauded the public school, although the women continued to conduct their own mission school in winter. The Society believed that "[t]he strategic importance of the public school cannot be over-emphasized. It is, humanly speaking, the secret weapon that can be used against ignorance and bigotry."¹⁰⁴ The missionaries, too, supported the school because the people themselves were now responsible for the financial support of the school and, consequently, they were more willing to educate their children. The opening of the public school also allowed the women to concentrate on the spiritual needs of the people in the area.

In March 1912, Ella MacLean reported from Wahstao that the community appeared to have accepted the mission and that

... [p]eople come to our home on all kinds of errands, for letters to be read and to be written, for toothache and other ills to be cured, for garments to be cut out, to learn how to can fruit, to borrow money, sealers, flat-irons and umbrellas, and to sell all manner of farm and garden produce.¹⁰⁵

The women tried to conduct evangelistic work among the women of the community, but it was not even a moderate success. The Ukrainian women in the vicinity understood little English and the missionaries had difficulty speaking Ukrainian. Chace's first meeting in a Ukrainian farm house was, by her own admission, a disaster. The women quitted from ten until three, when Chace began her service. As she recalled years later,

[s]inging and reading passed off very well then an interruption occurred. From a dark corner, made darker with a heavy gray blanket, a hen walked out. She was quite inoffensive, just tired of close confinement. But she evidently had not been alone under the blanket, and the ray of light that she let in deceived her male companions into thinking that the dawn had come. You know what roosters do at dawn. Well they did it. There may have been seven of them or seventeen; it sounded more like seventy Every Ukrainian word that I had memorized so carefully fled from me, and I broke into violent perspiration as I looked in vain to the women for some interest and inspiration. They looked as if they cared not a whit whether they heard me or the roosters and I had to hurriedly close the service in deepest embarrassment.¹⁰⁶

Ukrainian women, the missionaries soon understood, had little time to waste on leisure activity. Their lives were characterized by "the harsh drabness of labour" and subservience to the will of their frequently uncaring husbands.¹⁰⁷ The children responded more quickly to the missionaries' eager overtures.¹⁰⁸

In 1908, a second mission station, was opened sixteen miles northwest of Wahstao at Smokey Lake. The women named the mission Kolokreeka, a Russian word meaning "beside the creek."¹⁰⁹ They had originally wanted a Ukrainian word to do with light to match the Cree "Wahstao", but as Chace and Ethel Hickman discovered, "every known word for 'light' meant also coal-oil, which did not seem to be a very suitable title."¹¹⁰ Weekes and Ella MacLean were sent to staff it. In 1911, after MacLean and her co-worker Phoebe Code took in four children, the parents of the district suggested that the

W. M. S. open a boarding school. Within a few years, it housed thirty children.¹¹¹ In addition to their other duties, the women at Kolokreeka held Sunday morning service if there was no minister present.¹¹² Whether they attempted to preach is not clear. Nevertheless, the women did not hesitate to take the initiative when it seemed necessary and may have acted in defiance of the church hierarchy which did not approve the ordination of women until 1936.

In 1912, Chace was moved to Chipman, an English-speaking community in the centre of immigrant settlements where she lived with the Methodist minister and visited women in their homes and taught Sunday School. But, in 1916, the W. M. S. transferred Chace to Edmonton where the Society had turned its attention to the plight of the many young immigrant women who had left their families to try to find work in the city as waitresses, domestics, or, if all else failed, as prostitutes.¹¹³ This work had been started in 1909 when Margaret Sherlock, an employee with the Edmonton social services who later joined the W. M. S. as a missionary, and a friend from the provincial police, decided to try to improve the social condition of these young women. The two women organized a volunteer committee which rented rooms where Bible classes for the girls could be held. They then petitioned the W. M. S. to hire a fulltime missionary to expand the work. The Society agreed,¹¹⁴ and later in the

year, Sherlock, on behalf of the W. M. S., rented a house which she hoped would become

... an uplifting force for every Ruthenian girl in household work in the city. To this end we have classes in English reading, that they may learn to read the Bible ... We have tried to make it homelike, restful and attractive, a place in which the girls are always sure to find a welcome and a friend In order to get acquainted with girls we have visited many hotels. To some we have gone again and again, for we have learned that six visits to one hotel produce better results than one visit to six. Much time has been given to girls out of work. To these we give a night's lodging for ten cents, and meals at ten cents each. Of course, sometimes this charge has had to be remitted. We advise them about places and try to induce them to prefer such. Sometimes these transients wash their clothes in the Home, and sometimes we have helped them to make new garments....¹¹⁵

A much larger and comfortable home opened late in 1912; by 1915 it was providing shelter for nearly one hundred girls, thirty-one of them steady boarders, during the year.¹¹⁶ The missionaries in charge of the Home made every effort to protect the morality of the young women and imposed strict discipline on them to prevent possible indiscretions. Not the least of Jessie Munro's concerns when she worked at the Home was a rumour that Ruthenian girls had been seen at Socialist meetings "... at which ignorant men speak against all religions and do much harm."¹¹⁷ Munro imagined that she was fighting with the Devil for possession of the girls. "Cheap picture shows, low theatres, public dance halls,

restaurants of ill-repute are all his agencies, and now these Socialistic meetings."¹¹⁸

Rural morality was just as subject to the missionaries' disapproval as the perils of urban life. Staunch prohibitionists, the women missionaries took up arms against the drinking habits of their immigrant neighbours. Quite characteristically, Alice Sanford, stationed at Wahstao in 1910, could not come to terms with "... the moral standards of a people who drink and dance, or buy and sell, on the Sabbath day, yet consider it very wrong to even sew few patches on a day set apart in memory of some saint, or of some less well known event in the history of their church."¹¹⁹ To combat these vices and to compete with public dances, the missionaries initiated their own "soirees" where "old-fashioned games" were played.¹²⁰ Temperance Sundays became a regular feature at Wahstao "to counter evil influences."¹²¹ On one occasion, Chace boasted that fifteen of the twenty-one men in attendance signed the pledge against "drinking, smoking and profanity."¹²² But the women were unable to change the habits of more than a few of their neighbours. A few months later the women attended a wedding in the vicinity and "wish[ed] we hadn't," a polite reference to the drinking and feasting that commonly were a part of wedding celebrations in the area.¹²³

The women were at their best when they assumed the roles of social service workers, and not guardians of the

public morality. Their letters and diaries suggest that the women in Alberta had a far different perception of their function as missionaries than did the Society's workers in Japan and China. There certainly are fewer references in their writing to the pressing obligation to win souls for Christ. Nor did the women brood about the number of possible converts or their failure to win the eastern Europeans to Methodism. The women at Wahstao were, in fact, reluctant to offer any statistical evidence of "... the success in leading young people ... to become disciples of the Lord. Jesus" because there had been so few converts.¹²⁴ Consequently, the women were usually satisfied if they could help the immigrants adapt to Canadian customs and if they were able to give the children and young people the advantages of a Canadian education.

In northern Alberta, as in Victoria, the W. M. S. missionaries provided services which no one else, including government agencies, offered. They were aware of the void they filled in the region. For example, while acknowledging that the purpose of the W. M. S. was "individual regeneration and salvation," in 1917, at the Sixth Annual Convention of Ruthenian Workers, Chace insisted that the missionaries in Alberta should also meet "the need for social service Each worker could apply her talents to the best advantage either as a teacher, housekeeper, social service worker or evangelist."¹²⁵ In 1918, the women aired their concern about

"the urgent need for a certain kind of work suited to the peculiar needs of the place, that could well be described as Y M C A work."¹²⁶ Some General Board missionaries appear to have resented the trust that the immigrant communities placed in the women and suggested that a General Board representative should work along with the women at their stations because of "the low esteem put upon women by these people."¹²⁷ On the other hand, most of the General Board workers praised and respected the work done by the women. Chace, for one, was singled out as

... a splendid woman, a woman of splendid executive ability, a capable woman, who is just pouring out her life. Miss Chace will die many years sooner than she should because of the sacrifice she is making out there at Wahstao - and there in those foreign settlements ... that woman's life will be shortened; she is grey - she is broken down - because for the love of those people - ... she is just pouring out her life, and her whole soul is in it - There is no reserve.¹²⁸

The Ukrainians themselves were more impressed by the women's willingness to help them than by the Christian message which as missionaries the women were expected to deliver. George Vernon, an early immigrant, recalled how, in 1918, at the height of the influenza epidemic, the missionaries at Wahstao set up an emergency hospital in their mission home. Chace was, Vernon noted, "no slouch." She was as orderly and as organized a person as one could find, although somewhat of a prude.¹²⁹ Caring for the sick in a mission house which still lacked electricity, running water

or indoor plumbing and which was a mile from the nearest telephone was an endless job. Chace herself described a particular day during the epidemic: "Black Monday - easily the blackest day I ever knew."¹³⁰

The cow complained bitterly that she was not milked, and we needed the milk so much too. There were the fires to keep up, medicines to dispense, soup to make and whatever else needed cooking, and ten patients to serve. To speak to the doctor meant a run of over a mile to the phone and back, but it had to be done.¹³¹

But if the Ukrainians appreciated the women's hard work and care, they did not repay by them joining the Methodist Church. Whatever rewards the work brought could not be measured in terms of converts.

Yet, many of the women were apparently quite satisfied with their careers in this phase of home missionary work. Chace, for example, remained in Alberta until she retired in 1943. She was, as Elizabeth Ross put it after her visit to the field in 1911, "a B.A. wiping up the floor, caring for [her] own horse, driving eight miles through intense cold to visit one house."¹³² Ten other women (26%) worked for the Society until their retirement. Their careers averaged 30 years while the average length of employment for all W. M. S. missionaries in Alberta was 12.7 years. Ten of the women (26%) resigned to marry, some to ranchers they met through their work or to ministers and missionaries. One woman resumed her teaching career while another resigned to work with the Alberta Department of Neglected Children, a

position for which missionary work had obviously qualified her. Three died and another three were forced to resign when they became ill. These figures are, in fact, above the attrition from illness and death among missionaries in West China, but the deaths do not appear to have been related to any situation arising from their work.

The women seldom stayed in one mission station throughout their careers, but, like their foreign counterparts, were shifted from one station to another as need dictated. Perhaps this variety made their work more interesting and helps to explain why a relatively large proportion of these women made missionary work in Alberta a lifetime career. The isolation and hardships seemed to present a challenge to some of the women and their strong friendships and pride in their independence enabled them to surmount the most daunting obstacles. As well, their education and work experience appear to have made them more adaptable than their lesser educated colleagues who staffed the Indian missions and who sometimes seemed quite unable to cope with the problems of the work. Finally, because they were not obsessed with gaining converts, they may have been less frustrated by their work than the women who worked in Victoria and who measured their success by the numbers who claimed to have become Christians. Their social concern which does not appear to have been universally shared by the General Board missionaries in the vicinity was appreciated by

the people whom they served. The gratifying response of the immigrant community, and not the occasional conversion which frequently proved to be in name only, was the source of whatever satisfaction they derived from their work.

The perspective of the other W. M. S. missionaries who were designated to work among recent immigrants in cities and towns across Canada was likewise characterized by their interest in helping the victims of Canada's increasingly serious social problems. The women were not, however, concerned about changing the nature and structure of Canadian society itself. The W. M. S. began its work in Toronto among the Italian community at the Elm Street mission. From 1911 to 1925, five women were employed in three missions in Toronto to staff kindergartens, Sunday School, night schools and mothers' meetings, but not, it appears, to engage directly in evangelical work. Later a woman was hired to carry on more limited work in the Hamilton Italian community. Like many other immigrants groups, the Italians turned to the missions for English classes, rather than "cultural soirees and hymn singing."¹³³ At about the same time, the W. M. S. sent Hannah Paul, who had formerly worked with the Indians in British Columbia, to the immigrant mining community in the Crows' Nest Pass area. Paul settled first in Frank, but after the devastating earthslide in 1912, she relocated in the nearby town of Fernie. Paul eventually devised a scheme whereby she spent one week in Fernie and the next in Natal

and Michel. Like the women in northern Alberta, Paul gave help wherever she could, in the hope that her example would change the lives of those in the area. But she appears to have been most comfortable with familiar and less innovative solutions. Most of her letters focussed on drunkenness which she was determined to eliminate and which the Board of Managers agreed was "the greatest enemy of the community."¹³⁴

Whether women like Paul and those in towns like North Bay, Welland, Copper Cliff or Sudbury who worked by themselves were able to provide much assistance to the many immigrants in their constituencies is somewhat doubtful. The women faced competition both from the Presbyterians and other more evangelical churches. In Regina, where Nellie Forman worked alone for many years, only the Sunday School was considered of "much consequence."¹³⁵ Yet, even when the work might have been improved and the costs reduced by increased co-operation with either the General Board or another Protestant church, the women chose to work independently and were reluctant to become too closely associated with the General Board missionaries. Consequently, the work of the Methodist Church as a whole may have suffered because the two groups appear to have co-operated even less in Canada than they did in foreign fields. The women defended their position quite vehemently. For example, in 1925, Annie Hind steadfastly upheld the W. M. S. interests in Welland when the

General Board missionary stationed there tried to assure her that

[his] work would not interfere in any way with her work. [Hind] certainly did not get any impression from me that I was intending to discipline her; I have told her repeatedly that I wouldnt [sic] willingly undertake my work there if the W M S did not continue their work, for the simple reason that a man could not do the required work among women and girls.¹³⁶

W. M. S. urban missionary work did, nonetheless, offer many services to the people within its limited reach. A typical week's activities as recorded by an anonymous missionary working in a city with a large ethnic population included:

Sunday. two sessions of Sunday School total average attendance 105. Monday aft. classes in Eng. for the women - the men attend night school in the Coll. Inst. evening - Jr C. G. I. T.- 'Wide Awake Group'- Tuesday aft - Baby Clinic - aver. attendance 20-25, Doctor and city nurse are in charge, after school Mission Band and Kitchen Garden. evening - C. G. I. T.' Golden Rule Group'. Wednesday Aft - Women's Meeting Thursday Aft. Eng. Classes Frid. Eve. Sr. C. G. I. T. - 'Blue Birds' Remainder of time spent in paying calls or receiving callers, &c, &c, &c.¹³⁷

While the public lives which they described for the Board of Managers were busy and hectic, details about their private lives, like those of the women in Montreal, are sparse. These women generally lived alone, or, as was the case with Hannah Paul, a relative might join them and help keep house. These women were not often critical of their personal situations; there was, in fact, little to complain

about because most of them did not face the loneliness of an isolated area of Canada or the pressure of living in a strange environment. The immigrants' reaction to the women has not been well-documented and it is difficult to know whether recent immigrants distinguished very clearly among the various groups which were eager to minister to their needs. Could an ill woman who spoke no English understand that a W. M. S. missionary was the agent of God while a public health nurse was merely the servant of the city employing her? At any rate, based on their own analyses, urban missionaries appear to have been the center of attention in their neighbourhoods and, although they may not have had close friends nearby, they were very much a part of their immediate communities. Their presence did not go unnoticed among grateful people who generously repaid their kindness in produce, eggs, chickens or whatever what considered appropriate. This relatively friendly reception given to the women missionaries in the cities seems to have encouraged them and contributed to their satisfaction with their work.

There were eighteen W. M. S. missionaries who spent most of their years of employment engaged in this diverse urban work; two others who began as urban missionaries but transferred to foreign work after Church Union have been included in the group. Their average length of service was 21.1 years, the highest of any of the areas analyzed. And, in addition, eleven of these twenty women remained until

retirement. Their careers averaged 32.3 years. There may be no more plausible explanation for this than personal comfort, a sense of security and relative proximity to family and friends. However, because these women worked alone and were responsible only to the Board of Managers of the W. M. S., perhaps some of their contentment derived, as well, from an independence which few other careers could offer and which was absent even in foreign mission fields where a strict hierarchy, based on seniority, was in place. Moreover, these women had been, in the first place, well qualified for their work. Some of the data for these women is missing, but at least 3 (15%) had attended university, and eight (40%) had normal school training, followed by a teaching career. As well, several used their furloughs to visit Italy or Eastern Europe for a firsthand encounter with the homelands of their constituents.¹³⁸ Only three of the women resigned from their profession to marry which suggests that women missionaries in urban areas may have been more career-conscious, and possibly less intimidated by the prevailing winds of maternal feminism. Perhaps, too, satisfaction with their chosen careers and their independent way of life simply disinclined the women from assuming the more confining role of wife and mother.

At the opposite end of the spectrum were the W. M. S. missionaries who were sent to the Methodist Indian missions in southern Alberta and northern British Columbia. These

women faced far more physical deprivation and mental anguish as a consequence of their work than any other W. M. S. missionaries. Ironically, they were, collectively, the least well-prepared for their arduous assignments. It might have been anticipated that they would be, as well, the least satisfied with their work and would have very short careers. Many aspects of their backgrounds differed little from those of the other W. M. S. missionaries. Thirty (56%) of the fifty-four women employed in Indian missions from 1881 to 1925 were from Ontario; nine (16%) came from the Maritimes, and five from B. C. Thirty-five of the forty-seven women (74%) for whom the appropriate data were available had lived in small towns or rural areas while the remaining 26% were from urban centres, figures consistent with the data for all home missionaries. Eight (14.8%) of the women had close relatives connected with the ministry, just slightly less than the 16.3% for all home missionaries, but considerably fewer than the 25% for all W. M. S. missionaries. Perhaps, because they did not have relatives in the ministry, most women who worked among the Indians were less familiar with the nature of missionary work than their sisters in other fields.

While complete records are lacking for many of these women, it seems clear that only two, Mary Lawson and Lottie Deacon, both Maritimers, had attended university and that only Deacon had graduated. Even she arrived in northern

British Columbia by default. Deacon had attended Mount Allison on a W. M. S. scholarship to prepare for a career as a foreign missionary and was first sent to Japan. But the work was so taxing that she had to return to Canada and a supposedly easier posting.¹³⁹ Only five of the W. M. S. Indian missionaries appear to have attended the Methodist Training School which would have familiarized them with the routines and problems of missionary life and have given them a wider perception of their roles as missionaries to the Indians. As well, just seven Indian missionaries (13%) had the teaching experience which typified W. M. S. missionaries elsewhere. Five of these teachers were stationed at Pt. Simpson where the Society made some provision for the formal education of their pupils. Perhaps because the Society was not always responsible for the academic training of the Indian girls, the Board of Managers did not recognize the value of this sort of previous contact with children as an essential prerequisite for their workers. Five other women were trained nurses, three of whom were employed at the Pt. Simpson hospital. One woman had been a music teacher and Alice Jackson, like Kezia Hendrie, the first W. M. S. Indian missionary, was a dressmaker before joining the Society. For the others, there is no record of previous work experience, if they had it. The Society may not have thought it very important that their Indian workers have any previous extra-domestic experience, and, in fact, there may have been few

situations which could have armed them for their life and work in the Indian communities. But better educated and trained personnel might have remained on the job longer and found the experience more satisfactory as was the case with the well-educated missionaries in the Orient.

Many of the women working among the Indians quickly became disillusioned with their chosen vocations. They could not come to terms with a people and a culture probably as unfamiliar to them as the Japanese or Chinese. Twenty-three of the fifty-four women (43%) who were sent to Indian missions resigned in their first three years. Another fourteen left before their first five year term had elapsed or at its end. In total, 37 women (68%) worked for only five years or less. While the average length of career for all home missionaries was just over 12 years, the women assigned to Indian missions remained with the Society for an average of 7.5 years. Moreover, only five of the fifty-four women in Indian missions (9%) remained with the W. M. S. until retirement. These frequent resignations and the abbreviated careers of the missionaries frustrated whatever good intentions the Board of Managers may have had about the future of their Indian missions.

The W. M. S. had assumed some financial obligation for work with Indians as soon as the Society was founded in 1881. The Society's particular interest was Thomas Crosby's work in Pt. Simpson. In fact, Kezia Hendrie of Brantford,

Ontario, who became the Society's first emissary to the Indians was hired for the position of matron at the newly opened Girls' School at Pt. Simpson, not by the W. M. S., but by Reverend Crosby who had been working, since 1871, as the first full-time Methodist missionary among the Indians in northern British Columbia.¹⁴⁰ When the W. M. S. allocated \$500.00 as Hendrie's salary, she was designated as their own agent.¹⁴¹ While Martha Cartmell's departure as the Society's first foreign missionary was publicized and apotheosized, Hendrie left, in the autumn of 1882, for the British Columbia wilderness almost unnoticed. Cartmell represented the respected echelons of the Methodist establishment, but Kezia Hendrie had been merely an uneducated dressmaker for a Brantford department store.¹⁴²

Unlike Cartmell, and perhaps as a consequence of her limited education, Hendrie was not a prolific letter writer and there are few accounts in her own words of her initial experiences. For several years, Mrs. Crosby continued to supply the Society with the necessary details of the work. From Mrs. Crosby's letters it seems that Hendrie's duties as matron were limited to the upkeep and running of the Home and teaching the girls basic housekeeping skills. Because the girls attended the nearby public school, Hendrie was not responsible for their academic training.¹⁴³ By late 1884, Hendrie had thirteen girls under her care. She found "... [m]any things in connection with the 'Home' [were] very

trying and unpleasant," but she had learned "many precious lessons and [was] getting better acquainted with Jesus."¹⁴⁴ Her own salvation was especially important to her. One of the highlights of her stay in Pt. Simpson was her spiritual awakening, described as "a gracious spiritual blessing which the better fitted her for her missionary labours."¹⁴⁵ The transformation occurred when

[o]ne morning Kezia wandered alone into the woods and kneeling beside a log spent many hours in communion with God. The power of the Holy Spirit came upon her in a wonderful way. When she returned to the camp the girls soon recognized a change in her appearance and remarked on it. Kezia told them the Spirit of God was present in power and bade them gather in her tent for prayer a sense of the presence of the Lord was felt by all.¹⁴⁶

But, in spite of her strong faith, Hendrie discovered that supervising the girls was neither easy nor personally rewarding. She became extremely distraught when as she discreetly put it, the "large girls became so reckless and dissatisfied that several ... left without permission."¹⁴⁷

From the time that the Home opened, illness and death were a familiar and unnerving part of the missionary experience in Pt. Simpson. Hendrie was upset by the deaths of the younger children, especially one girl, Dollie Robinson, "the most unloving, ill-natured child," that she had ever known, but who, in the face of death, had repented her sins.¹⁴⁸ Like W. M. S. missionaries elsewhere, Hendrie complained that her charges were "naturally so dirty." In an attempt to

improve both their "spiritual and temporal" condition, Hendrie tried to meet with concerned women once a week, but she found that the meetings were most useful in relieving the monotony of her own life as matron.¹⁴⁹ One of her success stories was Annie, a young woman who had returned home to Pt. Simpson after a stay in Victoria, "with a sin-stained soul and a disease-stricken body."¹⁵⁰ As a friend recalled,

[w]hen Kezia first went to see [Annie], she refused to listen to her. As she lay in her bed she turned to the wall her face, which a sense of shame had led her to cover. Hoping by kindness to awaken some response to the love which yearned to tell of a Christ who had given his life to save not the righteous, but helpless, hopeless sinners, Kezia took her flowers and tempting morsels of food. Confidence was at length awakened. Kezia won her way to the heart of the poor sinner; and as the story of the love of God was told, weeping for her sins Annie listened and believed. Being assured of forgiveness she longed to die and passed away happy in the knowledge that the sins which had been 'as scarlet' were 'as white as snow'.¹⁵¹

At the end of 1885, Hendrie resigned as matron to marry Edward Nicholas, a General Board missionary from a nearby Indian village, whom she had met shortly after her arrival.¹⁵² The couple remained in northern B. C. for many years. There was no public reaction from the Society and Hendrie was promptly replaced by Agnes Knight of Halifax whose credentials do not appear to have been better than Hendrie's. Knight took her responsibilities towards the girls very seriously and she believed that they needed a very strict set of rules to keep them under control. "We have,"

she wrote, "bedroom, dining-room, kitchen and washroom rules, also general rules, or a timetable giving the hour for everything, from the rising-bell to bed-time."¹⁵³ Knight felt a special obligation to protect the older girls from the promiscuous life led by the Tsimshéan in the area.¹⁵⁴ In 1887, with twenty girls under her care, Knight became seriously ill and a second worker, Sarah Hart, also of Nova Scotia, was hired to assist her. From that time, the Home continued to be supervised by at least two missionaries.

The W. M. S. also supported the Indian mission station at Chilliwack, B. C. and the McDougall Orphanage at Morley, Alberta.. Grants of \$200.00 to \$700.00 were made to Morley, but the W. M. S. did not hire its own worker there until 1904 when a woman who can be identified only as H. Buehler of Kitchener, Ontario, was appointed to help the Indian women in the area. Two years later, the W. M. S. sent K. Laing, one of their Japanese missionaries, as a nurse to the Morley Hospital.¹⁵⁵ Laing remained there for four years.¹⁵⁶ Buehler held women's meetings where she tried to instruct them how to "mend their ways"¹⁵⁷ and give up their Indian customs. Her work, she reported, was successful. "[S]ome of the women are anxious to have tables, pretty dishes, make cakes and puddings,"¹⁵⁸ and they were becoming more thrifty. However successful Buehler may have been at introducing the Indian women to the English-Canadian way of life, when she resigned from the W. M. S. to work independ-

ently as an unpaid deaconess with the Indians, the Society abandoned its mission work at Morley.¹⁵⁹

The Society's commitment to missionary work in the Chilliwack area of B. C. at the Coqualeetza Institute was more extensive. In 1885, the Society gave \$400.00 to help the General Board establish an industrial training school for Indian children. A year later, the Society contributed \$2000.00 towards a new building and when it was completed the Society hired Lavinia Clarke as the matron. Four women spent brief terms at the Institute. But by 1900, the services of the W. M. S. missionaries had been withdrawn although the Board of Managers was still willing to provide financial aid to the General Board for the Institute if their help was needed.¹⁶⁰

In 1889, the Society opened a second Indian Girls' Home in Kitamaat, an Indian community one hundred and sixty miles south east of Pt. Simpson where the General Board had been working for ten years. At least seventeen women worked here as matrons, teachers and dressmakers during the history of the Society.¹⁶¹ The Society also supported nurses at Hazelton and Bella Coola in B. C. and in 1913, Alice Jackson of Kitamaat was sent to Nelson House in northern Manitoba to establish a mission station for native people in the area.

While the women's lack of education and limited exposure to the world of work may have made their jobs more difficult given the best of situations, the inhospitable

environments of Pt. Simpson, Chilliwack and Kitamaat made the experience even harder and unpleasant. In 1906, the Society maintained that Pt. Simpson was the most progressive and advanced of all the Indian settlements in B. C .

The Indians, of whom there are some 800, representing eight or ten tribes, are Methodists. In addition to a fine church, a mission house, or Boys' Home, the Crosby Girls' Home, and a hospital, this village boasts of a fire hall, two stories high, with a tower; a two-story drill hall, a sash and door factory, a shingle mill and a turning mill, both worked by water power, and an excellent brass band.¹⁶²

But, during the earlier years of the mission's existence, life at Pt. Simpson had few of the advantages of Tokyo or Chengtu where the women formed close friendships among their W. M. S. colleagues and the larger European community.

The problems Elizabeth Long described at Kitamaat in 1899 were characteristic of the Indian mission stations. The first, home there had no indoor plumbing; water had to be carried uphill for half a mile and sometimes, in summer, the stream dried up.¹⁶³ Japanese and Chinese boarding schools lacked little in the way of physical comforts as an inducement to encourage parents to send the children to Christian schools, but, in 1894, most of the children at the Coqualeetza Institute slept on the floor. Myrtle Burpee appealed to her friends in Canada to provide pillows, towels and "... every variety of goods and clothing" for the children.¹⁶⁴ The parents promised to provide all the clothing their children needed but the Society often had to

help and the missions became dependent on bales sent by the Society's auxiliaries. These bundles were welcome if they did not contain the castoff dress clothes of Toronto matrons and their husbands. When used clothing was received, the girls were taught to make it over. The W. M. S. missionaries do not appear to have been guilty of selling or trading the used clothing for Indian handicrafts and furs as a few General Board missionaries were alleged to have done.¹⁶⁵

Living conditions at Pt. Simpson improved in 1892 when a new Home was built, as the women requested, just off the Indian reserve. When it was operating at maximum capacity, the three-storey frame house accommodated forty-five to fifty girls. Some of the girls were orphans; others had been placed in the home by parents who were able to pay for their instruction. But life in the homes at Pt. Simpson and Kitamaat continued to be very rigorous for staff and students. The food eaten by missionaries and students alike was usually little more than adequate. Most Indian schools had their own gardens and cows, but at Pt. Simpson where the climate was too severe for gardening, native foods - salmon, seaweed, fish and game - had to be bought for the children. The missionaries did not impose their own tastes on the children, partly because they believed that it was healthier for them to eat as they had been accustomed, but also because it was very expensive to obtain other than native fare.¹⁶⁶ Even though they could not tolerate the stench, the W. M. S.

missionaries used oolachan grease, a form of fish oil, in cooking because they noticed a change in the girls' health when they were deprived of it.¹⁶⁷ The girls themselves were taught how to dry and salt the fish for the winter. At Kitamaat, in one season before 1906, the girls dried and smoked 30,000 small fish for their own use.¹⁶⁸ The missionaries did, however, try to encourage the girls to bake and their bread and cakes were served at tea parties held often in the Home.

The girls neither spoke nor understood English when they entered the Home. The missionaries appeared to have no training in the Tshimshean dialect and made little effort to learn. The accommodation was all on the side of the Indians. The missionaries reported that the girls quickly learned to speak English. As well, the girls were taught how to "make and keep in repair all their own garments," and "most of the manual labor connected with the house-keeping [was] performed by the girls."¹⁶⁹ Discipline in the home continued to be very strict and directed towards the regeneration of the Indian character. At W. M. S. Indian institutions,

exact obedience. [was] required of every pupil, irrespective of personal inclination; and to so blend love and firmness, hard work and recreation, that every girl will voluntarily choose the discipline and restraint instead of the free idle life, proves the genius of the successful teacher.¹⁷⁰

According to Lavinia Clarke, stationed first at Chilliwack and then Pt. Simpson, the spiritual welfare of the

girls should always "take first place [F]ailure to lead our girls into a true Christian life means failure in all we value most."¹⁷¹ To this end, the girls were instructed every day in Bible history, Methodist doctrines and in catechism and regularly attended religious services. But, Clarke had to admit that "... all [had] not been victory, and our girls have need to be sorry more times than we could wish."¹⁷² Twenty years later, an unidentified missionary argued that the work carried on at Pt. Simpson

ha[d] to be done largely in faith, with the hope that in the future a harvest will be reaped. The worker needs all the love and patience and tact of a mother, and that toward children who are not only not her own, but who are of a different race. All womanly virtues, graces and accomplishments can find scope here.¹⁷³

But, it would seem that many of the missionaries did not possess these hallmarks of true womanhood which were deemed essential to success as a missionary among the Indians.

The W. M. S. missionaries agreed that the quality of Indian life would improve when there were

better mothers, pure minded, with the grace of God implanted so deeply in their hearts that it will influence their whole lives; mothers who will not be content to bring up their families amidst the surroundings which will fill their minds with thoughts of evil at a tender age; mothers who by cleanliness and industry will make their houses home-like and attractive, not mere stopping places; educated mothers who will see the need of education for their children, and who will do their utmost to give them that advantage, and who will not love them in a blind, selfish way, thinking only of the present.¹⁷⁴

Yet, the emphasis in the W. M. S. homes was not on an academic education for their charges and very little pressure was put on the girls to excel in academic matters possibly because many of the women did not believe that Indians were capable of doing well or because so many of the missionaries were not very well educated themselves.

The women do not seem, in spite of their isolation, to have become very attached to the girls under their care. They did not adopt orphan girls as W. M. S. missionaries had done in China. Margaret Butcher, a well-liked and respected member of the Kitamaat staff, believed that obedience to her was an absolute necessity if she were to succeed with the girls. The children were not "vicious" or "wicked" but, Butcher, even in 1917, reminded W. M. S. members that the girls were nevertheless only "the second generation from pure heathenism."¹⁷⁵ Only a few of the women appear to have been able to overcome their strong personal prejudices against Indians. Some of the women did not conceal their contempt for their charges. The reaction of Mrs. Redner who arrived in Pt. Simpson in 1893 is not unusual. For her,

... it [was] much easier to see the defects than to make any permanent improvement, and I am only surprised that the teachers have succeeded as well as they have with this class of people. Their dispositions and habits are so very different from those of white people that we need not expect the same results from our efforts to improve them.¹⁷⁶

Two months later, Redner reported a change of heart. Her work had become enjoyable and she had some understanding of

the problems that her charges faced growing up in Indian society.

There is so much to keep them down, and such terrible temptations for young girls, that this Home seems to be a blessed refuge for them. They do not appreciate it very much, it is true, but that is nothing to us; our work is for the Master, and I hope will meet with his approval.¹⁷⁷

After she had been at Pt. Simpson for almost a year, Redner's co-worker, Ellen Beavis, a sewing teacher, admitted there had been a gradual improvement in the behaviour of the girls, but it was measured in small things. If she left the sewing room for ten minutes, the girls no longer stole the needles, thimbles "or anything we might happen to have on our sewing table."¹⁷⁸

The missionaries might have wished to transform the girls under their care into proper housewives and mothers, but, they accepted the moral and physical welfare of the girls as their first priority. The women agreed that mission homes were the only possible way to lead the girls away from their otherwise immoral lives. But the homes were not adequately financed and staffed to train the girls in the way that the missionaries thought desirable. Hannah Paul was disturbed by the limited facilities of the home at Pt. Simpson and begged W. M. S. members to be generous in their support of Indian missions.

If those at home fully realized the position of these poor Indian girls, as we do who are in the field, that the only way to save them from a life of immorality and make

of them intelligent Christian women is by taking them into some such Home as this, where they are shielded from temptation, surely the money would be forthcoming to establish homes among other tribes. I was pleased with the work of the Home in other departments, but very much discouraged about the schools. I reasoned that if these girls could learn house work, knitting, sewing, fancy work, they could learn at school if they were only interested.¹⁷⁹

Paul, for one, did not think that the Indian girls were stupid. She had "... succeeded beyond [her] expectations in arousing in them a desire for knowledge. They have a natural talent for music. They are also very observant and can copy almost anything."¹⁸⁰ Yet, other W. M. S. missionaries, like Sarah Alton, did not agree, believing that the girls were "... not as intelligent as the men" and were incapable of formal learning.¹⁸¹

The disobedience and immorality of the girls made the lives of many missionaries very difficult, but the illnesses which the girls suffered made life almost unbearable. The mission homes were continually victimized by epidemics of contagious diseases - measles, whooping cough and influenza. In October 1892, Sarah Hart, whose kindness towards the children was admired and envied by the other women, reported that every child at the Pt. Simpson home had whooping cough. "These last days seem[ed] like a terrible dream."¹⁸² Hart had never seen anyone die before. After the death of a little girl, Hart "... could scarcely believe it was death; I had never seen it come before[W]hen I came into the

room and found the woman with the child's body in her arms, it was almost more than I could stand."¹⁸³

Episodes like this left the women emotionally and physically drained. As Redner wrote during an outbreak of influenza in 1896, "the constant watchfulness necessary to properly guard these children leaves but little rest for the body and none for the mind, except time spent in sleep."¹⁸⁴ For Myrtle Burpee, the greatest pleasure of her furlough was "... on retiring to know that there will be no half-past five bell in the morning to wake me to another day's routine."¹⁸⁵ Whether the women liked the children or not, they took their responsibility for the children's welfare very seriously, all the more so because of the repercussions that deaths and illness might have in the Indian community which was suspicious of missionary medical practices.

Improvements to the physical facilities of the missions in B. C. came very slowly. When the Elizabeth Long Home was opened in 1908 at Kitamaat after the former home had burned, the women had indoor plumbing for the first time with "all sewage ... carried to tide water by a large drain pipe."¹⁸⁶ But the atmosphere was not homelike. Although at any given time there were usually four or five women staffing each of the homes, there were not the intense friendships formed among the women which were a feature of other mission fields, probably because of the frequency of the resignations and because the women were moved from station to station to

fill the gaps left in the ranks. The camaraderie of Japan was strikingly absent in northern B. C. On more than one occasion, women were transferred because they did not get along with their fellow workers.¹⁸⁷ The women organized social activities, especially during the holiday season, for the Indian communities, but they did not really care to become involved with many of the other residents of the area, particularly the rough and ready unattached men. Consequently, the women had to come to terms with their isolation and with the fact that a trip to Vancouver could only be taken once a year, during the summer when the girls had gone home to their own families.

Alice Jackson who was sent to Kitamaat in 1900 was one of the few women who came to enjoy her isolation. Removed from the company of others, Jackson found that it was

... natural to turn to something else; that is why I think all nature has a new meaning to me and I enjoy it as never before - the sea, the mountains, and the flowers and trees all seem to be real friends.¹⁸⁸

Jackson adapted well to living alone. She left Kitamaat in 1913 for Norway House, in northern Manitoba, where she spent the next thirteen years working by herself and travelling extensively by dogsled to nurse the Indians in the vicinity. Usually she was "happy and content." Writing in 1915, she admitted that there had been

... lonely hours, but, for these and all I am deprived of, there have been abundant compensations Suffering relieved, a sick one made more comfortable, a mother's fears

removed, sad and lonely hearts comfortable and strengthened, sympathy given, hungry ones fed and little children happy.¹⁸⁹

Outdoor activities and games became, of necessity, an important part of the routine at the Indian mission homes, possibly to instill some sense of discipline and order. The games, as J. A. Mangan suggests, were probably "much more than mere entertainment for leisure hours. They were a significant instrument of moral training."¹⁹⁰ Some recreation was for the benefit of the missionaries as much as for their charges. At Kitamaat, for example, in summer, the women took their charges camping at a nearby ranch owned by Methodist friends. Elizabeth Anderson Varley, daughter of the ranchers, recalled that for both girls and teachers these were happy and relaxing breaks from the more disciplined routine.¹⁹¹ Varley's own impressions of the missionaries is worth mentioning. She remembered the Mission Home as the scene of happy Christmas concerts where Santa presented everyone with the requisite candy, nuts and oranges, but neither Varley nor her brother really liked the women missionaries.¹⁹² As she recalled nearly seventy-five years later,

[t]here were few men who came to the ranch that we children did not like. There were few women from the Mission that we did. Most men teased us, which brought out the worst in us, and this worst was increased against the visiting ladies from the Mission, who tried to counteract the 'bad influence' of the men by imposing disciplined good manners.¹⁹³

The affectations of one missionary were particularly irksome to young Elizabeth. The woman in question was visiting Kitamaat for a period of rest while on furlough from Japan. Among her other peculiarities, this woman objected to the use of the word 'bull' in front of the children, preferring instead the euphemism 'gentleman cow' which she felt was more suitable for civilized and refined conversation. Elizabeth's father, normally polite to all the women from the mission, was "overheard ... to say to [her] mother, 'I find the expression 'gentleman cow' disgusting. The children don't have to mention the bull at the table, if it's offensive, but I'll not have either of them saying 'gentleman cow'.'"194

This puritanical pose may seem merely amusing and somewhat ludicrous given the frontier atmosphere of Kitamaat. But, far more serious, and disturbing even to the child Elizabeth was the same woman's unconcealed disdain for the Indian girls and her mistreatment of young Elizabeth to whom she briefly gave piano lessons.¹⁹⁵ Obviously this was the way that the woman believed children should be treated and while a Canadian child sensed that the woman was odd and nasty, an Indian child might not have understood.

At the schools and homes, work and discipline were always "the law." According to Lavinia Clarke, there was "... no place in our economy for idlers."¹⁹⁶ Clarke herself set such a splendid example that in 1902 she was forced to resign because she was "... very tired and cannot summon

strength to do everything up to the mark I set myself."¹⁹⁷ Clarke remained convinced that her approach had been right, and continued to believe that "[a] life fully consecrated to God, in every relation is the only one, and my word to the sisterhood is to live and serve. Go, therefore, and teach and Jesus will be with you even to the end."¹⁹⁸ Within two years, Clarke was dead, and her death, like that of Elizabeth Long who died in 1907, was attributed to their arduous work for the W. M. S.

Long's devotion to "her people" was praised at length and she was eulogized as a woman who

fully realized Ruskin's ideal of true womanhood in that 'she must be enduringly incorruptibly good, instinctively, infallibly wise - wise not for self-development but for self-renunciation; wise, not with the narrowness of insolent and loveless pride, but with the passionate gentleness of an infinitely variable, because infinitely applicable, modesty of service - the true changefulness of woman.'¹⁹⁹

Women like Long, according to Mrs. Carmen, the author of this screed, were the irrefutable proof that women had a role to play in the Church and any Church that ignored "the value of woman's ministry in its missions" did so at its peril.²⁰⁰

But this sort of praise lavished on Long and others who died in harness in the mission fields could not relieve the isolation and hardship of the women stationed at Pt. Simpson and Kitamaat.

Only five women remained in Indian missions until their retirement. They served an average of 30 years and

among them was Lottie Deacon, stationed at Pt. Simpson until 1940. Two others had also been trained as teachers while a fourth had been a nurse. The fifth was Alice Jackson. Many women resigned for the same reasons as missionaries in other fields. Sixteen (30%) married, two died, three were forced to leave because of poor health and two returned home to help their aging parents. However, in nearly half (26 or 48%) of the cases, there is simply no reason given for their resignations and because the women were liable to repay some of their initial travel expenses to the Society if they resigned during their first term, their decision was likely made only when they believed that they could no longer tolerate their work and their living conditions.

Some, like Kezia Hendrie and Sarah Hart married missionaries and remained in the area, but others married ranchers or farmers whom they met while in northern B. C. and severed all connections with missionary work in the area. The Board of Managers did not always approve of these marriages. A case in point is Dr. Dorothea Bower. Bower has not been included in the statistical analysis of the W. M. S. missionaries because of inadequate documentation about when she was hired or even by whom.²⁰ According to Elizabeth Anderson Varley, Dr. Dorothea Bower, M. D., a recent graduate of Trinity Medical College, arrived in Kitamaat in 1904 as a W. M. S. missionary to practise medicine and to assist at the girls' home. For Elizabeth Long, matron of the Home,

[t]he most pleasing event of the quarter was the arrival of Dr. Bower, to take charge of the school. With a regular teacher, and the necessary books, we expect the girls to advance rapidly next year. Her bright and cheery disposition has already been sufficient passport to the hearts of the people.²⁰²

Bower quickly became a close friend of the Anderson family and at their home she met Jack Fountain, one of "... the stream of men who passed over the trail." Fountain, Varley recalled,

arrived at the ranch one night in desperate condition, ill and exhausted, with a forearm in an advanced state of blood poisoning from devil's club My father rowed over to the village and fetched Dr. Bower. Doctor and patient remained in the Anderson home until Mr. Fountain was recovered beyond the necessity of medical care Not only did Dr. Bower save the life of Jack Fountain but his arm as well.²⁰³

The couple became engaged and married but "when news of the engagement leaked out, tongues wagged up and down the coast. Jack Fountain was much older than Dora, and not religious ... a real northern B. C. type,"²⁰⁴ and hardly a suitable husband for a missionary. Bower's behaviour was a discredit to the Society and it appears that her name was dropped from the roster of missionaries after her morganatic marriage. Leda Caldwell, too, was disowned by the Society when, several years after she had been asked to resign because the Indians at Pt. Simpson complained about the way the school was being run, she began privately to solicit funds for the Indians in B. C.²⁰⁵

Another woman resigned from her work at Kitamaat in the midst of a bitter dispute between the two mission boards over the division of the work and responsibility in the area. The struggle of "two societies with two distinct heads living in a very limited area, controlling 250 people at variance" created open hostility between the W. M. S. missionaries at the home and the General Board missionary reminiscent of the Japan Affair and led to gossip in the neighbourhood and widespread unhappiness within the mission community.²⁰⁶

There were, then, a variety of circumstances which led to the women's resignations, but it appears that the nature of the work alone, without other complicating factors, was enough to discourage even the most buoyant recruit. A General Board missionary at Kitamaat who was familiar with the work of the W. M. S. was provoked to write to a fellow minister that "... had I a daughter qualified for mission work I should do all I could to dissuade her from entering the employ of any society whose policy it was to require of their workers what is required of Misses Kilbourne and Lawson."²⁰⁷

For most of the women whom the Board of Managers had chosen to staff the Indian missions, the reality was not what they had expected. That so many of them stayed less than three years and that only five persisted until retirement is ample proof that Indian missions were by far the most taxing of any field at home or abroad. The few who endured the

hardship of the environment and shed at least some of their conventional Methodist and middle-class Canadian attitudes and prejudices were exceptional women by any standards. These particular women themselves seemed to sense that they were able to do work which other women could not, and would not, attempt and they perceived of themselves as working women, not just do-gooders. As Alice Jackson wrote from Nelson House in 1922 at the age of 59, after she had plastered her sitting room,

[a]s I was working away at it I often thought of the tasks women did in war days. I thought we surely ought to be just as willing to do hard work for our beloved Missionary Society. I did so well at the sitting-room, I think I will try the dining room.²⁰⁸

But Jackson usually was left little time to ponder about the dimensions of her career and seems to have been genuinely happy travelling with her dog team even in fifty below temperatures.

Lizzie Donagh, who after much soul-searching resigned from the W. M. S. after four years' service, was not so convinced that work as a missionary in B. C. had been what God had intended or what she fitted for. In the final weeks before she resigned, she had felt "so wretched", but managed to continue with her work. It eventually became "more and more of a drag tho," and [she felt] that it would be very unjust to the other workers as well as to the Society and to [herself] to continue too long."²⁰⁹ She described some of her recent sad experiences to the Society's president.

Sunday morning, while we were at church, a little girl 2 years old died, just choked with cold. I left here early, thinking I would call to see another sick child before S. S. to find that the wee laddie had gone. There was great wailing and crying, but when on Monday night another little 3 year old girl died, and this morning a tiny baby, the whole village is panic stricken, five babies within a week, in a place this size, is awful Today I have attended two funerals and visited the house where the two other deaths were. It was awful, on one side of the stove, on a bed on the floor, sat one mother frantically trying to quiet her sick babe, near her on a table lay the body of the little girl who died last night. At the other side of the stove, on another bed on the floor sat the other mother and father nursing a child who was too sick to keep her eyes open, and near them on another table lay the little babe that had died a few hours before. The place was dirty and untidy as you can imagine and all around sat the old women wailing and mourning....

March 6th 1912. on the SS "Vadao:"
... I am really trying not to worry about things but it seems as tho we had just reached the limit at Kitamaat. Another child in the village died since I wrote the fore part of this letter....

Sunday 3rd about 7:30 we were startled by fire in the village. There are only 2 men of any strength in the village and three or four boys. So I left the Home brigade go to carry water. I stayed to care for the little tots. They were so frightened As it was, all the homes were safe with the exception of one, but our church was burned to the ground....

Just as I came on board the body of a Kitamaat young man was carried ashore, being brought home from the logging camp, so the ladies will have a funeral to look after unless Mr. Anderson comes to the rescue....²¹⁰

Donagh went home to Mt. Forest, Ontario where she stayed for a year. She returned to Kitamaat to marry a rancher and

remained in the area for many more years, but she clearly had been disillusioned by her experiences with the W. M. S.

Perhaps there was little the Board of Managers could have done to prevent the attrition among women employed in the Indian missions, but when these women are measured against the other W. M. S. missionaries employed in Canada and abroad, the evidence suggests a positive relationship between higher educational levels and work experience and a longer tenure as a missionary. The women whom the Society employed in the Indian missions were the least educated and had little previous work experience. In particular, there were far fewer teachers among them. Moreover, it appears that many women in the Indian missions had not been as independent, at least in terms of living apart from their family, as the women in other aspects of home missionary work or foreign missions. All these factors combined to make the adjustment to life in northern B. C. very difficult for women raised in small towns and urban centres in eastern Canada. Very few were able to surmount the circumstances of an inhospitable environment to succeed in a career which they had once believed God had designated especially for them.

In 1898, Alexander Sutherland, the General Superintendent of Missions, referred an application from Jennie Elliott who hoped to become a missionary to Elizabeth Strachan. Sutherland observed that

[h]er education seem[ed] to be rather defective, but that would not interfere with

her particular work if she is competent to do it. Her health certificate is good, and she seems to be a pious girl, so I imagine you will run no serious risk in sending her to Pt. Simpson. Her testimonials refer exclusively to her ability as a seamstress, but I suppose you will have other letters which certify to her standing in the Church.²¹¹

Elliott was hired and, typically, remained in Pt. Simpson for five years before resigning. More than twenty years later, the Board of Managers continued to look to "college and normal school students and graduates" to work among "the young women of the East, who need the wealth of intellect and heart which you have to offer,"²¹² but they never appealed to these same highly educated young women to remain in Canada as home missionaries. The Board of Managers failed to grasp that a broad education gave women more than the ability to learn foreign languages. The self-confidence, independence, management and administrative skills and social adaptability that accompanied a university degree or medical training were essential qualifications for success in a missionary career. If certain aspects of home missionary work were less productive than the Board of Managers had anticipated, it can largely be attributed to the high turnover in the personnel of home missions. More B. A.'s cleaning floors in home mission stations would, in the long run, have strengthened and stabilized W. M. S. home missionary work.

Notes

¹Harriet Platt, The Story of the Years, Vol.I (Toronto: The Woman's Missionary Society, 1907), pp. 21-22.

²Annual Report of the W. M. S., 1890 - 1891,, xiii.

³W. S. Wallace (ed.), The Macmillan Dictionary of Canadian Biography (Toronto: Macmillans, 1963), p. 801.

⁴See Chapter Two for details of salaries.

⁵Data about parental occupation were available for only 37 home missionaries (26%). Sixteen of the fathers were professionals, nine farmers, seven engaged in trade and commerce, four labourers and one boarding house keeper. 11.5% of the fathers of all home missionaries were professionals compared to 34.6% for the parents of Japanese missionaries.

⁶Alexander Sutherland, The Methodist Church and Missions in Canada and Newfoundland (Toronto: Young People's Forward Movement, 1906), p. 217.

⁷Platt, p. 84.

⁸P. Villard, Up to the Light. The Story of French Protestantism in Canada (Toronto: Board of Home Missions of the United Church, 1928), p. 170.

⁹Missionary Outlook, June, 1887, p. 85.

¹⁰The Christian Guardian, October 19, 1887.

¹¹Missionary Outlook, March, 1900, p. 70.

¹²The Christian Guardian, August 24, 1882.

¹³Ibid., p. 87.

¹⁴Platt, p. 89.

¹⁵Ibid.

- ¹⁶Missionary Outlook, May, 1892, p. 78.
- ¹⁷Ibid.
- ¹⁸Ibid., pp. 90-91.
- ¹⁹Platt, p. 89.
- ²⁰E. S. Strachan, The Story of the Years, Volume III (Toronto: Woman's Missionary Society, 1917), p. 43.
- ²¹Platt, pp. 93-94.
- ²²Strachan, pp. 44-45.
- ²³Terry Copp, The Anatomy of Poverty (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1974), pp. 93-96.
- ²⁴Strachan, p. 46.
- ²⁵Ibid.
- ²⁶Copp, p. 43
- ²⁷Strachan, p. 46
- ²⁸U. C. A., W. M. S. Executive Minute Books, January 20, 1909.
- ²⁹U. C. A., Methodist Church of Canada, Missionary Society, Home Department, Box 7, File 14, Report of Board of Directors Meeting, French Methodist Institute, May 30, 1919.
- ³⁰Sutherland, p. 219.
- ³¹Edmund H. Oliver, The Dominion of Canada. A Study in the Background, Development and Challenge of the Missions of the United Church of Canada (Toronto: United Church Publishing House, 1932), p. 225; Platt, pp. 103-104; U. C. A., Albert Carman Papers, Box 26, file 157, copy of letter from Robson in "Work of the W. M. S., 1882 - 1887", n.d.
- ³²This number does not include the missionaries from Japan and China who sometimes worked for a year or two in the Chinese and Japanese Rescue missions before returning to the Orient.
- ³³U. C. A., Biographical file of Lily McCargar.
- ³⁴U. C. A., Biographical file of Margaret Eason.
- ³⁵U. C. A., Biographical file of Grace Baker.

- 36U. C. A., Biographical file of E. J. Staples.
- 37Platt, p. 105.
- 38F. K. Prochaska, Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth-Century England (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), pp. 188-193..
- 39Judith Walkowitz, Prostitution and Victorian Society (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), p. 117.
- 40Platt, p. 105.
- 41Ibid., p. 106.
- 42Missionary Leaflet, March, 1890, p. 6.
- 43Ibid., February, 1890, p. 7.
- 44James Morton, In the Sea of Sterile Mountains (Vancouver: J. J. Douglas, 1974), p. 122.
- 45Missionary Leaflet, January, 1891, p. 5.
- 46Ibid.
- 47Ibid., August, 1891, p. 3.
- 48Ibid.
- 49The Christian Guardian, September 21, 1887.
- 50Ibid., January 22, 1896.
- 51See Lucie Cheng Hirata, "Free, Indentured, Enslaved: Chinese Prostitutes in Nineteenth-Century America," Signs (Autumn, 1979), 3-29.
- 52Missionary Leaflet, August, 1892, p. 7.
- 53Missionary Outlook, February, 1900, p. 46.
- 54Ibid., April, 1900, p. 93.
- 55Ibid., September, 1900, p. 216.
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- 58 Ibid.
- 59 Ibid.
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- 61 Ibid., p. 110.
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- 63 Ibid., p. 63.
- 64 Ibid., p. 65.
- 65 Annual Report of the W. M. S., 1918 - 1919, cxi.
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- 67 Howard Sugimoto, Japanese Immigration, the Vancouver Riots, and Canadian Diplomacy (New York: The Arno Press, 1978), p. 232.
- 68 Monthly Letter, August, 1892, p. 6.
- 69 Missionary Outlook, March, 1889, p. 66.
- 70 Ibid., September, 1900, p. 216.
- 71 Ibid., July, 1900, p. 167.
- 72 Ibid., September, 1905, p. 214.
- 73 U. C. A., Biographical file of Elizabeth Churchill.
- 74 U. C. A., Biographical file of Sarah Bowes.
- 75 R. C. Brown and Ramsay Cook, Canada, 1896 - 1921, A Nation Transformed (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1974), p. 323.
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- 121 Ibid., March, 1909, p. 71.

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¹²⁴U. C. A., Methodist Church of Canada, Missionary Society, Home Department, Box 9, File 10, Buchanan to Manning, April 10, 1919.

¹²⁵Ibid., File 9, Report of the Sixth Annual Convention of Ruthenian Workers, 1917.

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¹²⁷Ibid., file 6, Buchanan to Manning, Edmonton, September 10, 1919.

¹²⁸Ibid., Box 26, File 2, Address of the Rev. J.A. Doyle, Superintendent of Missions for Manitoba, given before the General Board of Missions, October 18, 1921.

¹²⁹Ukrainians in Alberta, Volume 2 (Winnipeg: Ukrainians in Alberta, 1981), p. 81.

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¹³²Missionary Outlook, November, 1911, p. 256.

¹³³Robert Harney, "Chiaroscuro: Italians in Toronto, 1885-1915," Polyphony. The Bulletin of the Multicultural History Society of Ontario, VI (Spring/Summer, 1984), 47.

¹³⁴Strachan, p. 90.

¹³⁵U. C. A., Methodist Church of Canada, Home Missions, Box 6, File 3, C. E. Manning, Journal and Reports, 1918 - 1927, Trip to the West, 1926, p. 13.

¹³⁶Ibid., Box 6, File 2, Harvey Foster, Welland to C. E. Manning, May 13, 1925.

¹³⁷Methodist Church of Canada./Home Missions. Box 26, File 3. Letter to E. Strachan from an unidentified W. M. S. missionary, undated, U.C.A.

¹³⁸See for example, U. C. A., Methodist Church of Canada, Missionary Society Home Department, Box 26, File 3 for a manuscript written by an unidentified W. M. S. missionary which describes her attempts to visit the relatives of some of her constituents during a visit to

Eastern Europe. U. C. A.

139U. C. A., Biographical file of Lottie Deacon.

140John Webster Grant, Moon of Wintertime (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), p. 134.

141Platt, pp. 33-34.

142U. C. A., Biographical file of Kezia Hendrie; U. C. A., Young People's Forward Movement Papers, Box 24, "The True Story of Kezia Hendrie by a Friend," unpublished manuscript

143Platt, p. 34.

144Missionary Outlook, February, 1885, p. 24.

145U. C. A., Young People's Forward Movement Papers, Box 24, "The True Story of Kezia Hendrie," p. 21.

146Ibid.

147Ibid.

148Ibid.

149Ibid., p. 25.

150Ibid., p. 19.

151Ibid.

152Ibid., p. 22.

153Platt, p. 34.

154Ibid.

155U. C. A., Biographical files of H. Buehler and K. Laing. Laing had returned to Canada after the death of her close friend and fellow missionary in Japan, Alice Belton.

156U. C. A., Biographical file of K. Laing.

157Platt, p. 53.

158Ibid., p. 54.

159Ibid.

160Platt, p. 31.

¹⁶¹It is hard to specify the number of women based at each Indian mission station at any time because the women were shifted frequently from place to place.

¹⁶²Platt, p. 36.

¹⁶³Missionary Outlook, July, 1899, p. 167.

¹⁶⁴Monthly Letter, May, 1895, p. 5.

¹⁶⁵See U. C. A., Endicott-Arnup papers, Box 2, file 28.. In a letter dated May 15, 1919, H. Whaley, a former missionary at Oxford House, reported that he knew of "several instances where such clothing is either sold or traded out to the Indians for fur, moccasins, etc., etc." Whaley argued that missionaries should not "pauperize the Indians by giving such clothing gratis," but suggested that the money received should be returned to the mission societies.

¹⁶⁶Platt, p. 38.

¹⁶⁷Elizabeth Elmsley Long, How the Light Came to Kitamaat, n.d., p. 18.

¹⁶⁸Platt, p. 71.

¹⁶⁹Ibid., p. 39.

¹⁷⁰Ibid., p. 40.

¹⁷¹Ibid.

¹⁷²Ibid.

¹⁷³Strachan, p. 23.

¹⁷⁴Missionary Outlook, July, 1902, p. 167.

¹⁷⁵Ibid., January, 1917, p. 22.

¹⁷⁶Missionary Leaflet, August, 1893, p. 8.

¹⁷⁷Ibid., October, 1893,

¹⁷⁸Ibid., May, 1894.

¹⁷⁹Ibid., December, 1895, p. 2.

¹⁸⁰Ibid.

¹⁸¹Missionary Outlook, Feb., 1904, p. 47.

- 182 Missionary Leaflet, January, 1892.
- 183 Ibid.
- 184 Monthly Letter, July - August, 1896, p. 6.
- 185 Ibid., October, 1896, p. 6.
- 186 Strachan, p. 26.
- 187 See U. C. A., W. M. S. Executive Minute Books.
- 188 Missionary Outlook, November, 1901, p. 262.
- 189 Strachan, p. 37.
- 190 J. A. Mangan, The Games Ethic and Imperialism (London: Viking, 1986), p. 191.
- 191 Missionary Outlook, January, 1902, p. 23; Elizabeth A. Varley, Kitamaat, My Valley (Terrace, B. C.: Northern Times Press, 1985), p. 130.
- 192 Ibid., p. 81.
- 193 Ibid., p. 93.
- 194 Ibid., p. 108.
- 195 Ibid., p. 109.
- 196 Monthly Letter, January, 1894, p. 2.
- 197 Missionary Outlook, December, 1905, p. 284.
- 198 Ibid.
- 199 Missionary Outlook, April, 1907, p. 85.
- 200 Ibid.
- 201 There is no biographical file for Dr. Bowers in the United Church Archives; nor is her name on any list compiled by the Society of their missionaries. None of the W. M. S. histories refer to her. A letter from C. S. Reddick, a missionary at Kitamaat, to the General Board of Missions, dated April 23, 1905, reported that the W. M. S. intended to appoint a successor to Dr. Bower, but there appear to be no further references to the woman. U. C. A., T. E. S. Shore Papers, Box 1, file 115.
- 202 Varley, p. 51.

203 Ibid., pp. 51-52.

204 Ibid.

205 The Christian Guardian, March 31, 1897. The Board of Managers denied that Caldwell had any connection with the W. M. S. after she circulated a chain letter asking for prayers to help the Indians and fifteen cents.

206 U. C. A., T. E. Shore Papers, Box 2, file 111, Rev. Raley to Shore, January 23, 1913.

207 Ibid., file 115, Reddick to Ferrier, Kitamaat, December 30, 1910.

208 Missionary Outlook, July, 1922, p. 4.

209 U. C. A., Shore Papers, Box 2, File 117, Lizzie Donagh to Mrs. Ross, February 13, 1912.

210 Ibid., L. Donagh, Kitamaat Mission, B.C. to Mrs. Ross, Feb. 12, 1912.

211 U. C. A., Alexander Sutherland Papers, Box 8, File 16, Alexander Sutherland to E. Strachan, April 15, 1898,

212 E. W. Ross, Life Investment (Toronto: Woman's Missionary Society, ca. 1920).

CHAPTER VI

Conclusion

Shortly after World War I, Agnes Wintemute Coates gave a talk in British Columbia about her life as a missionary. During her speech, she questioned some of the common misconceptions about missionaries. People assumed, she observed, that to be a missionary "one must be very good but that clever people should not go off to waste their talents on Indians or Orientals, but ought to stay here where they will be appreciated and can climb the ladder to success and renown" Why, Wintemute Coates wondered, should a missionary "be good and a lawyer or doctor or business man be clever?"¹ Based on her own experience, Agnes Wintemute Coates obviously believed that the two qualities were not mutually exclusive. As the evidence in this thesis suggests, Wintemute Coates' associates in the W. M. S. embodied both attributes. Throughout its history, the Woman's Missionary Society of the Methodist Church of Canada had succeeded in recruiting a steady flow of clever, ambitious, yet pious and dedicated, women to serve in its foreign and home mission fields. The Society chose as its representatives single young women with, equally, exemplary religious backgrounds and exceptional levels of education. Many, as well, had

acquired relevant work experience. In this way the W. M. S. built an efficient and professional missionary corps to represent and extend its interests. In turn, for more than forty years, the Society afforded a singular opportunity for career-minded and hard-working women to pursue missionary activity not only as a calling, but as a profession. Freed from most of the sexual tensions and professional jealousy which inhibited women's entrance to, and subsequent success in, male-dominated professions in Canada, the women developed their own professional standards and work-related skills.

For those women who worked in Japan, West China and northern Canada and who resided within missionary communities, their careers expanded to encompass all aspects of their life. Missionary work became not only an acceptable alternative to spinsterhood but offered as well the opportunity afforded to few Canadian women of the time to develop leadership and administrative skills. The close friendships formed among members of the individual mission stations and the widespread sense of sisterhood which pervaded the whole Society forged, as the Japan Affair demonstrated, a strong and supportive women's network. In turn, this solidarity, rooted in the female sphere, gave the women leverage within the patriarchal institution from which they operated. By creating another separate sphere for themselves where neither their spinsterhood nor their gender was a bar to their success, they earned for themselves a place in society much

nearer equality with men than was permissible for other women of the same generation and background. Their work and success became respected, envied and even feared by their male counterparts.

It is difficult to describe missionary work as a profession in the usual sense as an occupation with restrictive admission standards because the W. M. S. accepted applicants from a wide variety of backgrounds and then tried, as far as possible, to assign them work consistent with their strength and the Society's priorities. One result was that workers with the lowest qualifications were always over-represented in the home mission field. Moreover, the Society's inability to recruit and retain, in particular, women with medical degrees for their missions in West China, also determined, to some extent, the Society's direction and the nature of its work. Within this context the W. M. S. nevertheless recruited, between 1881 and 1925, a group of extremely able women, prepared to make personal sacrifices and to face hardship and dangers, who might more easily have pursued their philanthropic impulses at home as middle-class wives and mothers who limited their sense of social obligation to membership in a W. M. S. auxiliary. This would have been the normal expectation of their families, and of Canadian society. But, as paid employees of the W. M. S., these women were able to turn their predilection for

Christian social activism as well into an instrument of personal independence, professional development and social standing. Moreover, religion legitimized their movement beyond the exclusively domestic sphere.

The period of the Society's existence was a time of great change for Canadian Protestantism and for the Methodist Church, in particular. The founders of the W. M. S. and the first women hired by the Society were, as their testimonials affirm, steeped in the Methodist evangelical tradition which asserted "that man could do nothing, either by works or by wishes for salvation, unless he was saved by Christ's freely offered grace."² Their views, of course, influenced the direction of their work in the field, as shown by the persistent emphasis on the numbers of converts whom the women had won over. Moreover, because many of the missionaries, especially in Japan, remained in the Society's employ for twenty-five years or more, these attitudes persisted even after World War I, when it is often assumed the emphasis throughout the Methodist Church had shifted to the wider concerns for society as embodied in the social gospel. At the same time, the W. M. S. missionaries were, as has been argued generally of Methodists of this period, "not distracted by millennial escapism" and shared with other Canadian Methodists an ability "to deal effectively with this world."³ The emphasis on ameliorating the social conditions of their female constituents, both at home and abroad, became

stronger after the turn of the century, as the increasingly middle-class Methodist Church shed the more emotional hallmarks of evangelicalism. According to Richard Allen, as an awareness of social reality grew, "the individualism of the evangelical way seemed to many to be less and less appropriate. The demand 'save this man, now' became 'save this society, now' and the slogan 'the evangelization of the world in our generation' became 'the Christianization of the world in our generation'."⁴ There is little doubt that many women who joined the W. M. S. as missionaries after World War I were committed to the principles of the social gospel. But equally, from the moment they arrived in the mission field and perceived the human misery around them, many of the pioneer missionaries had attempted, as their letters confirm, to relieve this distress from both sincere compassion and from concern for their own perfection. While the W. M. S. and other missionaries may have failed in their ultimate goal of the regeneration of society, many girls and women received medical attention and educational opportunities which might not otherwise have been available and were made aware of their own worth in societies which placed little value on women's welfare. That the methods, in retrospect, were not always appropriate or welcomed does not, in any way, lessen the sincerity of the intent.

The strength and the duration of the women's commitment to missionary work as a lifetime career depended very

much, however, on the nature of their individual experiences in the field. Japan in the midst of its industrial revolution, China in the twilight of the Manchu dynasty and Canada in its first great era of social transformation each presented unique demands, problems and opportunities for the missionary. Not surprisingly, it was in Japan where hostility and suspicion were tempered by a recognition of the value of the missionaries' secular skills that the pattern for institutional and individual success was established. Home missions, on the other hand, proved to be the least fertile fields for cultivation and this, together with the Society's decision to staff them with the least qualified recruits, produced the highest rates of turnover. In the end, however, degrees of commitment sometimes revolved around intangibles. Dr. May Austin, who was forced to leave West China because of illness, found "... [life] in the homeland ... empty, because no one [had her] Chinese experience "⁵ and she longed to return. For others, resignation, marriage, even death, delivered them from responsibilities and mission fields which often threatened to destroy - and sometimes did - their physical, emotional and, most critically, spiritual well-being. What is important is that the majority persevered long enough to be recognizable as part of a growing number of Canadian women for whom a lifelong career was no longer an anomaly and, indeed, had become a conscious and essential alternative to marriage, home and family.

A wide-ranging and widely-read critique of Protestant missionary work published in 1932 complained that among the thousands of men and women engaged in this work all over the globe, there were too many who were "of limited outlook and capacity; and there [were] not a few whose vision of the inner meaning of the mission [had] become obscured by the intricacies, divisions, frictions and details of a task too great for their powers and their hearts."⁶ The critique particularly singled out unmarried women for comment. "Many of them represent the highest values in the missionary field, and in general they appear to be contented in their work and healthfully adjusted to their environment ... [but] ... the abnormality of the missionary's life ... is accentuated, in the case of the unmarried women, by the lack of family ties and domestic responsibilities on the one hand, and of the social and recreational outlets of the professional woman ... on the other."⁷ In retrospect, these comments seem scarcely applicable to the employees of the W. M. S., 1881 - 1925, whose superiors selected them carefully, and then provided them with an institutional structure and the individual freedom to make a satisfying career out of professional social activism in the name of Christ. From this perspective, the Society's assumption that "[a]mong 'Progressive Women' the educated, cultured missionary holds first place ...⁸ seems justified.

Notes

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³Neil Semple, "The Impact of Urbanization on the Methodist Church in Central Canada, 1854 - 1884 (Unpublished Ph.d dissertation, University of Toronto, 1979), p.31.

⁴Richard Allen, "The Social Gospel and the Reform Tradition in Canada 1890 - 1920," Canadian Historical Review, XLIX (December, 1968), 384.

⁵Missionary Outlook, July, 1923, p. 158.

⁶Re-Thinking Missions. A Layman's Inquiry after One Hundred Years (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1932), p. 15.

⁷Ibid., p. 300.

⁸Missionary Outlook; September - October 1921, p. 191.

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