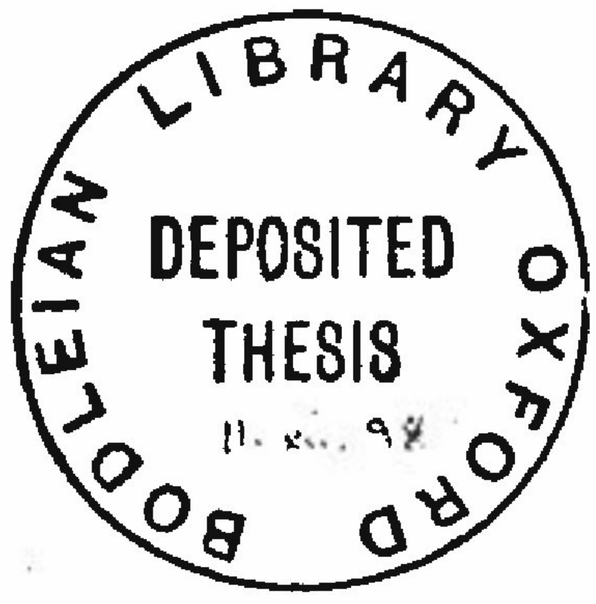
Women in British Nonconformity, circa 1880-1920, with special reference to the Society of Friends, Baptist Union and Salvation Army

by

L.E. Lauer
St. Hilda's College



A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Oxford

Trinity 1997

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Abstract

The reclamation and analysis of women's experiences within three Nonconformist denominations is the focus of this thesis. The first chapter places each denomination in its social and theological context, and describes its governing structures. The bulk of the thesis is devoted to situating women within this context and examining the ways in which women sought representation within male-dominated governing structures.

Chapter two examines the conflict between Friends' egalitarian theology and women's lack of governing power. Although women Friends gained access to the governing body of the Society, the issue of equality remained problematic. The chapter finishes with a discussion of the Society's split over women's suffrage. The Baptist Zenana Mission is the focus of the third chapter. Zenana missionaries claimed spiritual and imperial authority over "native" women and used the languages of separate spheres to carve out a vocation for single women in keeping with denominational norms. In so doing, they marginalised the work done by missionary wives. The fourth chapter begins with an examination of the life and theology of Catherine Booth, whose contribution to the Salvation Army is often neglected. Catherine advocated women's ministry in terms that validated both "women's work for women" and public preaching. This chapter looks at the appeal of officership for

women, especially the empowering experiences of salvation and holiness, and charts the growth of the Women's Social Work. Despite the Army's egalitarian theology, conflict was felt by women officers who struggled to combine corps and family duties.

The final chapter briefly examines idealised representations of women to conclude that their defining power, while significant, was by no means hegemonic.

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Abstract

The reclamation and analysis of women's experiences within three Nonconformist denominations and the ways women sought representation within denominational governing structures forms the focus of this thesis. It was acknowledged, by contemporaries and later by historical commentators, that women outnumbered men as church members; despite this, women's contributions to church life have often been marginalised. In general, the historiography of religion has taken the form of three types of account: denominational history, studies of religious thought and theological controversy, or the relationship of the churches to the working classes. In all three, the central points of analysis have been church institutions, resulting in histories of policymakers and theologians. In such conventional accounts, women rarely emerged as institutional leaders; the impression given is that stories about women and stories about religion are incompatible. This need not be the case, as work on sectarian religion and extra-denominational bodies, the sociology of religion, philanthropy, and missions has shown. In such contexts, women had opportunities to subvert or redefine accepted ideas of feminine behaviour.

Religious history was initially ignored by feminist historians who were often interested primarily in the reclamation of exemplary feminist lives from the past.

However, increasing attention has been devoted to the link between religion and feminism or social activism. Religion is coming to be seen by feminist historians as a potentially empowering and important force in a woman's life. In this thesis, conventional representations of women - as pious, domestic beings - are contrasted with the activities of women within each denomination and the ways in which they sought representation with its governing structures. Such an analysis has already been attempted for the Church of England; therefore, it was decided to focus on three Nonconformist churches. The Society of Friends, Baptist Union, and Salvation Army were selected for study because they provided a good cross-section of Nonconformist ideas and culture. This thesis is based on the diversity of material to be found in the denominational press of the period, magazines such as *The Friend*, *The British Friend*, the *Baptist Magazine*, the *Missionary Herald* and *Baptist Zenana Mission Magazine*, the *War Cry*, and *The Deliverer*. Their circulations ranged from 10,000 per month (*Baptist Zenana Mission Magazine*) to around 250,000 per week (the *War Cry*). The first chapter elaborates each denomination's particular theological and structural context. The next three chapters look at the ways women functioned, ideologically and practically, within such structures. Lastly, the defining power of idealised representations of domestic femininity, prevalent in the press at the time, is questioned.

Each denomination possessed distinctive theological, social, and organisational characteristics. The Society of Friends, despite its relatively small size, had a high proportion of upper-middle class members. It was governed by a tiered system of business meetings, ranging from the local Monthly Meeting to the national Yearly Meeting, the "parliament of Quakerism." Despite a long tradition of equality within

the ministry, these business meetings, which had a devotional aspect, were segregated by sex, with governing power vested in the men's meeting. In the late nineteenth century, the Society was emerging from the dominance of evangelical theology - a theology which rejected George Fox's doctrine of the Inner Light and the possibility of an experiential knowledge of God. Instead, evangelicals privileged the Bible as the chief source of knowledge about God and stressed the atoning sacrifice of Christ. Evangelical Friends, however, were unable to change the system of unpaid ministry in their Society, so in this respect, older, Quietist traditions which had facilitated the ministry of women existed alongside evangelical activities. What the evangelical movement among Friends did accomplish, however, was to pull their church out of its isolation and make it part of the mainstream Christian culture in Britain. At the end of the nineteenth century and in the face of biblical criticism, evangelical thought was being replaced by the liberal theology of John Wilhelm Rowntree. Liberal theology cleverly combined elements of traditional Quaker thought - the Inner Light - with the more active Christianity of the evangelicals.

Baptists continued to experience growth over the nineteenth century, with membership peaking in the first decade of the twentieth. Socially, they were more mixed than the Quakers, with middle-class and upper-working-class families forming the bulk of their membership. In the Baptist polity, governing power rested with each individual chapel which raised its own funds and selected its own minister. The Baptist Union existed to provide general services - it set standards for pastoral training, and provided some financial support to ministers working at poorer chapels - but the Baptist congregation remained sovereign. The government of the Baptist Missionary Society, however, was very different. From 1818, the BMS appointed a

full-time, salaried secretary. Contrary to Baptist denominational government, the BMS was run by a committee, directing the project from the mission's London headquarters. With the exception of the BMS, power rested in the chapels. Notionally, all baptised chapel members had a say in its government, but from the early nineteenth century, however, women were increasingly marginal to chapel government. Although both Joseph Angus and William Landels published on the subject of women's ministry, Baptists at grass-roots level found it difficult to ascribe spiritual authority to women.

The Salvation Army was a latecomer compared to the other two denominations, both of whom had a respectable seventeenth-century pedigree. Impatient to wage a great "salvation war," William and Catherine Booth, the Army's founders, became convinced that a military style chain-of-command, with a General at its head, would be the most efficient form of government. Orders flowed from the top down, and, occasionally, officers at lower ranks rebelled. The Army's theology was based on two principles: salvation and sanctification. It was an intense, experiential religion with no need for outward ordinances; early in the Army's life, both baptism and the Lord's supper were rejected as unnecessary. The experience of salvation (being saved from one's past sins) and sanctification (a state of purity in which the believer becomes unable to sin) proved empowering for women. Like Friends' theology, Salvationists firmly maintained the spiritual equality between men and women. The Army preferred to emphasise the working-class character of its officers and certainly, at least at lesser ranks, this seems to have been the case, although there was a significant lower middle-class element.

Friends' theology, their notions of an heroic, egalitarian early Quakerism, and their Radical political connections contributed to the widespread belief, both within

and outside the Society, that Quakers were leaders in the field of sexual equality. Despite this, many Friends perceived that the numbers of women ministers were in decline and that women were not coming forward to exercise Friends' spoken ministry. This decline proved more apparent than real; over the period 1861-1920, roughly 3/8 of the Society's ministers were women. The nature of ministry, however, was changing. Motherhood and child-rearing tasks gained in status among Friends and could provide an alternate spiritual outlet to the spoken ministry of the Society. This change was far from universal, as many women were liberated to undertake ministerial journeys to lecture on Friends' principles of worship or the peace testimony. Increasingly, women Friends also found outlets in local government and the professions. As women Friends developed expertise in public service and political campaigning, the inequalities of government within their own Society seemed unsustainable. Particularly important in placing this issue on the denominational agenda were the women of the Sturge and Priestman/Bright/Clark families, women with a long tradition of participation in reform causes, including women's suffrage.

In the debates which followed, women Friends and their supporters appealed to their egalitarian past in rejecting the principle that separate sittings meant equal sittings. Some Quaker women, however, did not wish to see separate women's meetings come to an end, finding in them an opportunity for fellowship and profitable discussion. Although women were made constituent members of the Yearly Meeting in 1896, they continued to meet separately until 1906, when pressure of business in the Yearly Meeting meant that any time taken out for separate meetings would mean that women would miss the discussion on important topics. Women Friends continued to hold an informal evening conference to discuss matters of mutual interest. The

battle to gain equal access to the Yearly Meeting, however, proved a pyrrhic victory. Women were not participating in its proceedings to anything approaching their numerical superiority. The long tradition of separate meetings for business, difficulties in making oneself heard in a large assembly, and the dominance of "weighty" male Friends acted as constraints to women's action.

Although the Society had now acknowledged women's spiritual and institutional equality, the question of women's suffrage split the denomination. Some Friends argued that, according to Quaker theology and tradition, men and women were equals, with equal rights to citizenship. Opponents countered by arguing that suffrage, as a political issue, had no place in the deliberations of a religious Society. The Friends' League for Women's Suffrage, a group of interested Quakers, organised a series of meetings to publicise the issue among Friends and to lobby to have women's suffrage adopted by the Society as one of its "concerns." That they failed illustrates the extent to which Quaker notions of equality were still relative and limited.

The women of the Baptist Zenana Mission appealed to pervasive notions of domesticity and the importance of the mother as spiritual guide in articulating a case for single women missionaries. Because well-off Indian and Chinese women lived out of the reach of male missionaries, there was an opportunity for Western women to make their evangelisation their special task. Zenana missionaries contrasted the physical separation of women in zenanas and the like with the benefits of Christian family life, in which a woman was the spiritual equal and "helpmeet" of man. By highlighting the condition of non-Christian women, and emphasising their own duties as British Christian women, BZM missionaries presented single women as the answer to this missionary problem. In evangelizing the women of India and China, women

missionaries took the Christian family as their template. It was their intention to create good, Christian wives. That it was single women who were educating married women in their Christian duties never seemed paradoxical because the missionaries had internalized a domestic, maternal ideal. This is seen most strongly in the BZM's acceptance of a limited role for women married to BMS missionaries. The BZM reflected, to a great extent, Baptist norms regarding acceptable female behaviour. But in accepting and buttressing those ideas, they created a space in which single women could undertake meaningful work.

Although linked with the committee of the BMS through family ties, the BZM, through its championing of women's special and separate duties, remained a separate organisation. This reflected their belief that women best knew the needs of their fellow-women. Late in the nineteenth century, the BZM refused a BMS offer of greater cooperation and zenana missionaries retained control of their work at local level. It was only in the changed atmosphere of missions following the Edinburgh conference that the Baptist Zenana Mission allowed itself to be united with its larger counterpart. Even in this amalgamation, the BZM retained control of its finances and of the activities of women missionaries.

Of all the women in the Army, none could match the status and influence of Catherine Booth, the "Army Mother." It was her holiness-centred theology and advocacy of the spiritual rights of women that found concrete expression in Army structures. The first section of the chapter traces the influences on Catherine's life, from the backsliding of her father and her own serious illness to marriage to William and her encounter with holiness teaching. Her example, and those of her daughters

and daughters-in-law, was important; in the Booth family Salvationists could see the practical results of Catherine's egalitarian theology.

The Salvation Army instituted a separate wing, dedicated to the rescue of prostitutes in 1885, in the wake of the spectacular allegations in "The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon." In 1890, it was subsumed under the Women's Social Work created as part of General Booth's Darkest England scheme. This marked a change to Army practice, which had concentrated merely on preaching. With the institution of the Women's Social Work, the Army had a mechanism to appeal to women as women and a specific career path to offer them. It also offered women power - the power that came from salvation and sanctification, which allowed women to transcend the limits of society and its rules. In releasing women from "worldly bonds," the Army demanded women's loyalty to its structures. For many women, a clearly-defined hierarchy assisted in delineating women's authority, whether in corps command or in social work. For others, however, the promised equality was more of an ideal than reality. This was especially the case amongst married women officers, on whom child training, the maintenance of a "Salvationist home," as well as corps duty fell.

Representations of pious domestic womanhood, and of women's unique character and abilities, are easily found. Yet this conventional picture, criticised as unrealistic by some feminist historians, remained a potent, although not the sole, image of female authority. Such images were employed in the Society of Friends in the creation of an alternate spiritual outlet for women. In pressing the need for women Friends to become involved in local government, both their "natural" qualities and their particular Quaker traditions were stressed. In the Baptist Zenana Mission,

ideas about the complementarity of the sexes and women's proper sphere were used to justify the existence of single women missionaries. In the denomination, women began addressing church meetings on subjects deemed to be within the measure of "womanly" competence. William Booth regarded the different characteristics of the sexes as part of the God-given order, although this in no way diminished for him the fundamental issue of spiritual equality. Some Salvationists interpreted women's difference in a positive light. Florence Booth was part of this tradition but she also maintained that women possessed less favourable characteristics - these qualities had to be overruled by the power of salvation and sanctification. Representations of idealized womanhood could and did shape the ways the members of these denominations thought about women and the ways women thought about themselves. However, other identities, from theological precept and denominational tradition, mitigated the defining power of such idealised stereotypes.

Although there was no one path to institutional power for Nonconformist women, the range of women's activities - as workers, organisers, campaigners, theologians - portrayed in this thesis has shown that women did engage with denominational structures at many points.

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Introduction: Writing about Religion and Women

> And in the muster-roll of heaven will stand high the hidden names of the captive maiden, of the poor widow, and of many an unknown mother and sister and daughter in England.[1]

This thesis is a work of recovery. It is an attempt to uncover and analyse the activities of "unknown" women within late nineteenth- and early-twentieth century church structures and the ideologies which validated their participation. The paucity of studies on Nonconformist women, as opposed to Anglican or Roman Catholic women, has led me to focus this study on three very different representatives of that tradition. The Society of Friends (Quakers), Baptist Union, and Salvation Army were selected because a study of these groups offered the widest possible spectrum of Nonconformist culture, theology, and social composition. Both Old and New Dissent, experiential and Bible-based faith, loose and rigid governing structures, and upper-middle and working-class spirituality are represented within these three denominations. By examining three women's organisations within the churches - the Women's Yearly Meeting of the Society of Friends, the Baptist Zenana Mission, and the Salvation Army Women's Social Work - this thesis will fill a gap in our knowledge about the activities of Nonconformist women and will also challenge the perception that women were absent from church institutions. The remainder of this Introduction is devoted to a discussion of the conventions of denominational history, identifying the insights offered by recent work on women within the churches, and introducing the sources consulted in writing this thesis.

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[1] *The Friend*, 22 May 1896, p 329.

I. Women, the churches, and "feminisation"

The mid-Victorian construction of ideal womanhood, a legacy of the formation of middle-class identity which took place in the early nineteenth century, stressed women's inherent morality, piety, and spirituality. The proper location for the exercise of women's abilities was the domestic arena where women, as mothers and household managers, would reign supreme. An important factor in the formation of this "domestic ideology" was evangelical religion, both of the Anglican and the increasingly prosperous and vocal Nonconformist variety.[2] But it was an ideology which, although dominant, was contradictory, fragmented, and subject to challenge. When the respectable wife confronted the working-class prostitute, the spectre of women's carnality, glossed over but not destroyed by the evangelical construction of womanhood, reasserted itself.[3] In debates about access to education and the professions and about women's legal and medical position, the dominant paradigm was challenged.[4] Over the century, although women's superior piety remained a given, the outlets that piety might take - philanthropic activities (encompassing both individual acts of charity and participation in regional or national organisations),

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[2] Catherine Hall, "The Early Formation of Victorian Domestic Ideology," in Sandra Burman, ed., *Fit Work for Women*, Croom Helm (1979); Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class 1780-1850*, Hutchinson (1987) Part One; Sean Gill, *Women and the Church of England*, SPCK (1994), pp. 77-79.

[3] Judith R. Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge and New York (1991 - first published 1980).

[4] Mary Poovey, *Uneven Developments: the Ideological Work of Gender in Mid-Victorian England*, Virago Press Limited (1989 - first published by University of Chicago Press, 1988).

deaconess orders, sisterhoods, missions, social service, church government - expanded, altering and extending any purely domestic ideal of women's piety.

Implicit in the construction of women's piety was their perceived loyalty to the church. Their predominance in Anglican congregations proved a favourite argument of anti-suffragists: H.S. Thompson wrote to *The Friend* to express his horror that votes for women would mean votes for the established church, to the detriment of Friends' interests.[5] Richard Mudie-Smith, however, in his survey of religious attitudes in London conducted during 1902-03, found that in all denominations women outnumbered men. The disparity was greatest in the Church of England, where women had the least institutional power - women were unable to take part in the election of parochial councils set up after 1894.[6] Here nearly 66% of all church attendance was by women, whereas women constituted 54% of London's adult population. These attendance figures characterise Baptist churches as roughly 60% female while Methodists (Wesleyans, Bible Christians, and United Methodist Free Churches), Congregationalists, and the Salvation Army hovered around 57%. The Society of Friends and the Primitive Methodists had figures which favoured men slightly relative to population; in each women made up about 52% of adults attending services.[7] Baptist Zenana missionary Annie Aldridge, dissatisfied with the largely

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[5] *The Friend*, 21 April 1911, p. 258.

[6] Jose Harris, *Private Lives, Public Spirit: Britain 1879-1914*, Penguin Books (1994 - first published by Oxford University Press 1993), p. 155.

[7] Hugh McLeod, *Piety and Poverty: Working-Class Religion in Berlin, London and New York, 1870-1914*, Holmes and Meier, New York and London (1996), pp. 159-160. For a purely statistical analysis, see Clive D. Field, "Adam and Eve: Gender in the English Free Church Constituency," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 44(1), January 1993. For raw figures on church membership, see Robert Currie, Alan Gilbert, & Lee Horsley, *Churches and Churchgoers; Patterns of Church Growth in the British*

male constitution of the church in North China wrote to her supporters in England, "If a Church has women members in it, it will prosper and stand, but if only men, they stand still or go back."[8] Women were important church members not only because they were entrusted with the training of children, but also, as Baptists (and indeed most other Protestants with perhaps the exception of Quakers) knew well, women performed many important tasks as parish visitors, Sunday School teachers, or Bible Women.

Hugh McLeod, in his analysis of Mudie-Smith's figures, has devised a four-part test to explain why the services of some denominations were more attractive to women. The first factor is the proportion of working-class membership; religion tended to be assigned to women's area of competence in working-class families. Thus, a church with more working-class than middle-class members would be likely to contain a higher proportion of women. Secondly, he looks at the clerical/lay division. If the division between clerical and lay roles was very great, men were likely to resent clerical authority. It is clear that where high-status lay roles were available, they were often filled by men. In 1923, the Baptist Home Preparation Union (H.P.U.) - a scheme that catered initially largely for women - formed a section to prepare lay preachers for the exercise of their ministry; in ten years, the numbers of men joining the H.P.U. increased by a factor of five. By 1933 almost two hundred men were preparing for the lay preachers' exam, some at least with the aim of attending

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Isles since 1700, Clarendon Press, Oxford (1977), p. 25.

[8] *Baptist Zenana Mission Magazine*, April 1910, p. 96.

theological college.[9] The third factor was the extent to which denominations separated male and female roles, both in the church and in society. Where sex roles where rigidly defined, as among Orthodox Jews, female participation in the public observances of religion was slight. McLeod continues:

> In practice, Anglicans and Roman Catholics, and to a lesser extent mainstream Nonconformists, often took the view that religious matters belonged to women's sphere of responsibility, although this particular separation of spheres was not any part of the official teaching of the churches. The fact that preaching and administration of the sacraments were male monopolies, and that positions of lay leadership were exclusively male, helped to promote the idea that women and men were essentially different, and thus to legitimate the idea, widely current throughout society, that churchgoing was a highly appropriate activity for women, but less so for men.[10]

Hence the higher proportion of women to men in those congregations. Those denominations, the Quakers and Salvation Army, which had a more equitable polity (in theory) did not attract more women than men as might be expected; instead numbers were relatively equal. Lastly, the disparity in attendance tended to be lower in sectarian denominations, where commitment to the faith, the responsibility of both sexes, and the rejection of "the world" combined to insulate them from prevailing social attitudes.[11]

Should women's greater church attendance be taken to imply that the religious culture of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century England had become feminised,

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[9] Irene Morris, *The Story of the H.P.U.*, Priory Press, Malvern, n.d. [post-1944], pp. 4, 7. "Minute Book of the Home Preparation Union 1915-38," Regents Park College, p. 89.

[10] Hugh McLeod, *Religion and Society in England, 1850-1914*, Macmillan Press Limited (1996), p. 68.

[11] McLeod, *Religion and Society*, pp. 67-68; McLeod, *Piety and Poverty*, pp. 160-162.

along the lines suggested by Ann Douglas in her study of Protestant women in the northeastern United States in the nineteenth century, *The Feminization of American Culture*? In Douglas's analysis, women and the clergy were on the "losing side" of a cultural realignment in which religion lost its "masculine" qualities through the decline of Calvinism and women's role in the family economy was eroded by the separation of the home from the workplace. Cultural power shifted to those men in commerce and industry, who became increasingly estranged from churches in which sermons dealt with sentimental rather than intellectual themes. Masculinity became defined as something apart from religion and displaced clergymen and women became allies in the presentation of a counter-culture of religious sentimentality.[12] In his overview of "things ecclesiastical" in the American church, American Baptist Revd R. Kerr Eccles told his British co-religionists that although there were "good, noble and active men", it was women who, through their sympathy, were nearer to the "secret of [Christ's] heart." He continued:

> The grand factor in the American Christianity of to-day is feminine. Men may be professors, preachers, and deacons, but the activities of the membership of the church at large are sustained by women. ... In education, in responsiveness, in perseverance, in tact, in resourcefulness, in energy, they are superior to the average of male membership.[13]

Women sustained churches by their activity and piety. Margaret Lamberts Bendroth, on the other hand, in her study of religious fundamentalism in America from 1875, describes the backlash against popular assumptions of superior feminine piety. Fundamentalists preached a distinctly masculine faith, setting themselves against the

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[12] Ann Douglas, *The Feminization of American Culture*, Anchor Books, Doubleday, New York (1988 - first published 1977).

[13] *Baptist Magazine*, April 1887, pp. 169, 170.

status quo. In this reformulation, women were no longer seen as possessors of special moral characteristics; instead, both men and women were equally weak morally.[14]

An example of "feminisation" in the Catholic context suggests that a "feminine" faith could offer women a measure of power. Amongst the bourgeoises of the département du Nord studied by Bonnie Smith, the identification of religion with the world of the feminine was a conscious strategy on the part of middle-class women removed from the productive to the reproductive arena. It both provided a means of legitimating their own status through elaborate rituals and posed a deliberate challenge to the commercial world of their husbands, from which they were excluded. Through their militant Catholicism, they built up the ideal of motherhood, eventually attempting to reform the morals of lower class women to their own high standards. In this case, a "feminized" religion provided group identity and a space in which middle-class women could articulate and disseminate their values.[15]

To an extent, England was similar to the United States in that middle-class women were edged out of the productive sphere and there was a pronounced shift in theological emphasis over the century; while this shift in preaching from the death of Christ to the life of Christ affected primarily the Church of England, Nonconformists were far from immune. Charles Haddon Spurgeon, the most popular Baptist preacher of his day, caused a sensation when, in 1887 he accused his fellow Baptists of being in danger of following a merely sentimental Christianity, stripped of teaching on the

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[14] Margaret Lamberts Bendroth, *Fundamentalism and Gender, 1875 to the Present*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London (1993).

[15] Bonnie Smith, *Ladies of the Leisure Class*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ (1981).

sinfulness of mankind and of the sacrificial death of Christ.[16] While the muscular Christianity movement - YMCA, boys brigades and such - was, to a certain extent, a rejection of the perceived link between femininity and religion, it does not automatically follow that religion in England was feminized.[17] In the English example, it was never a case of religious adherence versus industrial progress. As Davidoff and Hall have argued, Evangelical religion actually assisted in the construction of middle-class identity.[18] Further, the politicization of dissenters brought religion and religious values squarely into male "public" spaces. Sean Gill, writing about the Anglican Church, points out that while the "feminine" qualities of Christ were depicted so also were the "masculine." Neither gained ascendancy and the ideal Christian was the Victorian gentleman, courteous but strong.[19]

Much more important in the English case are class-based patterns of religiosity, which have at their heart ideas about working- and middle-class leisure. As the work of Rosemary Chadwick on the Nonconformist community in Bradford during the period shows, religious observance in working-class families was very much the province of women: of working-class attenders, women were disproportionately in the majority. The disparity amongst middle-class chapelgoers was much less pronounced,

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[16] D.W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britian: a History from the 1730s to the 1980s*, Routledge (1993 - first published 1989), p. 145.

[17] See John Springhall, "Building character in the British boy: the attempt to extend Christian manliness to working-class adolescents, 1880-1914," in J.A. Mangan and James Walvin, eds., *Manliness and Morality: Middle-Class Masculinity in Britain and America, 1800-1940*, Manchester University Press, Manchester (1987).

[18] Davidoff and Hall, *op. cit.*, Part One.

[19] Gill, *op. cit.*, pp. 85-87. See also E. Anthony Rotundo, "Learning About Manhood: gender ideals and the Middle-Class family in nineteenth century America," in Mangan and Walvin, *op. cit.*

suggesting that these married couples spent more leisure time in common pursuits.[20] Pamela Walker also described the segregated leisure pursuits of working-class men and women in London - the world of men characterised by drinking and gambling and that of women by piety and family. Consequently, men's conversion narratives often contained references to their mothers (or mothers' memory) as a meaningful symbol of piety available to working-class men.[21] This evidence suggests that in working-class communities, sin and spirituality were represented in gendered terms. The middle-class "Christian Gentleman" offered something to both men and women - for men it allowed compassion and for women a platform from which to exercise "masculine" spiritual courage, necessary when undertaking visiting, mission work, or public speaking. Women as well as men had an obligation to be spiritually vigilant, for the sake of their souls and for the sake of society. Middle-class Nonconformists, when educating their daughters, favoured an education which included a thorough grounding in Dissenting principles, cultivation of social skills and manners, and a development not only of young women's consciences but of the will to have the courage of their convictions. As Clyde Binfield points out, Nonconformist girls were being trained to exercise rights that they could not possibly exercise in public, but neither was it acceptable to Dissenters for women to be merely "passive" moral

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[20] Rosemary Chadwick, "Church and People in Bradford and district, 1880-1914: the Protestant churches in an urban industrial environment, D.Phil thesis, University of Oxford (1986), pp. 163, 171-173.

[21] Pamela Walker, "Pulling the Devil's Kingdom Down: Gender and Popular Culture in the Salvation Army, 1865-1895," Ph.D. thesis, Rutgers University (1992), pp. 72, 91, 93. See also Bebbington, *Evangelicalism*, p. 129.

guardians. They too required a knowledge of their history and of their distinctive religious principles.[22]

II. Women's Invisibility in Church History

Despite women's numerical dominance in the churches of the late Victorian and Edwardian periods, issues related to women (and to gender) within the churches have only begun to be treated by historians since the 1980s. This neglect was due both to the priorities of church/religious history and to the neglect of women's history in general. Whether religious history takes the form of straightforward denominational history, histories of the church in society, or studies of religious thought and theological controversy, the central points of analysis have been church institutions (this includes both ecclesiology and the development of theology), ministry, and eminent laypersons.[23] In general, this history of policymakers and theologians has excluded women's experiences and activities, although there are important exceptions which will be discussed below.

Denominational accounts rely on institutional narrative because it is particularly good as a model for charting change over time and allows for an analysis of the personalities involved. Each of the denominations studied in this thesis, the Society of Friends, Baptists, and Salvation Army, has a history of this type. The most recent treatment of Baptists in the period is J.H.Y. Briggs's *The English Baptists in the*

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[22] Clyde Binfield, *Belmont's Portias: Victorian Nonconformists and Middle-Class Education for Girls*, Friends of Dr Williams's Library Thirty-Fifth Lecture, Dr Williams's Trust (1981), p. 8.

[23] The categories are from Karen E. Smith, "Beyond Public and Private Spheres, Another Look at Women in Baptist History and Historiography," *Baptist Quarterly* XXXIV(2), April 1991, pp. 79-87.

Nineteenth Century (1994). In it he seeks to describe "Baptist life" separate from the Baptist Union (treated by Ernest Payne) and the Baptist Missionary Society (treated by Brian Stanley). Leaving aside these two important Baptist institutions, the book focuses on a series of themes, tracing the evolution of the Baptist position on, for example, the administration of communion, or their participation in debates on political and social issues. That such a structure is not conducive to an analysis of women's activities is shown by the placing of the brief section on "women" in the section dealing with social class and geographical distribution.[24] They do not fit into the received categories of denominational history.

Brian Stanley's study of the Baptist Missionary Society, written for its bicentenary (1992), bears the hallmarks of a classical institutional account. It divides its emphasis between developments on the mission field and the description of administrative epochs in the Society. The Baptist Missionary Society sent few single women to the mission field; those women married to BMS missionaries are dismissed with an apology that sources for their story do not exist.[25] Women's efforts to promote the BMS and its objects, whether through fundraising or drawing-room meetings, are lost in a history of committees.

The only substantial account of the Society of Friends in this period is Elizabeth Isichei's *Victorian Quakers* (1970). Her central theme is the change which took place over the nineteenth century when Friends moved away from their sectarian heritage to become a Christian church in the mainstream. The engine for this change

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[24] J.H.Y. Briggs, *The English Baptists in the Nineteenth Century*, The Baptist Historical Society, Didcot (1994). The section on "women" occupies pages 278-289.

[25] Brian Stanley, *The History of the Baptist Missionary Society 1792-1992*, T & T Clark, Edinburgh (1992).

was chiefly theological - the shift from quietism through evangelicalism to liberalism - and was evidenced by the creation of new institutions within the Society. Women did not gain access to the governing body of the Society, the Yearly Meeting, until 1896; their absence from this assembly proved a barrier to their inclusion in much of the story told. On a more specialist theme, John Ormerod Greenwood's history of Friends' social service traces the development of Friends' relief efforts from individual projects to denominational mobilisation, culminating in the Friends' Ambulance Unit of the First Wold War.[26] It is a history of the creation of institutions within the Quaker church.

The multi-volume *History of the Salvation Army* (1947-1968), the product of two Army officers, Robert Sandall (volumes 1-3) and Archibald R. Wiggins (volumes 4-5), also makes use of the paradigm of institutional history. It offers portraits of William and Catherine Booth, their children (almost all of whom became officers, the Salvationist equivalent to a minister) and highlights "Outstanding Salvationists".[27] Each volume either covers an epoch in Army history, exhaustively charting the evangelistic developments occurring in it (new stations opened, etc.), or a particular theme is treated: Volume III, for example, charts the Army's efforts in "Social Reform and Welfare Work." Thus, one finds individual women in the *History*, but their inclusion is random and no systematic effort to analyse women's position in the Army is made. Their story is sacrificed to the task of describing the Army's extensive programme of religious and social work.

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[26] John Ormerod Greenwood, *Quaker Encounters: Volume I, Friends and Relief*, William Sessions Ltd., York (1975).

[27] See Sandall, *History*, vol. I, Chapter 2; vol. II, Chapters 2, 3, 5; Wiggins, *History*, vol IV, section VIII on Catherine Booth and section XII.

Some of these histories do attempt to include women in the overall story; yet it is precisely the institutional and apparently gender-blind nature of denominational histories which has contributed to the invisibility of women. This can be seen by comparing Isichei's *Victorian Quakers* with Phyllis Mack's seminal *Visionary Women*, set in seventeenth-century England, with regard in particular to differences in methodology. *Victorian Quakers* reports theological schisms (notably those of the Beaconites and the "Fritchley Friends"), the struggle between evangelical and liberal Friends to gain ascendancy in the Quaker consciousness and the social movements in which Quakers took part (for example, temperance). The leaders of schisms are men, and so are the theologians. Isichei discusses women tangentially in her section about the "theory and practice" of the organisation of the Society. In explaining women's participation in the spoken ministry of the Society, she writes:

> For Victorian Quaker women the ministry filled an obvious latent function. Like all their middle-class contemporaries, they were "shut out by the social disabilities of women from any adequate exercise of [their] highest faculties in action on the work without." The ministry offered a magical escape, for an able woman, from the narrow confines of domesticity. It enabled her to speak in public, and travel abroad, with the approval, indeed the deference, of her co-religionists.[28]

Illustrations of the tensions between ministry and domesticity are located by Isichei not in the lives of women ministers, but in the alienation of the children of some eminent women ministers from the Society. It is possible, as Isichei suggests, that the children of women ministers - especially those who travelled often - felt neglected by their mothers and disillusioned with the Society. Such an interpretation hints at, but does not fully explain, the complicated relation of women to the ministry. In Isichei's analysis, the ministry serves as sort of stopgap, allowing the brightest and most

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[28] Isichei, *Victorian Quakers*, pp. 94-95.

socially prominent Quaker women an outlet for their otherwise frustrated desires for public work and recognition. It would lead us to believe that women and men exercised the ministry in exactly the same way; that women, as ministers, were unaffected by the domesticity expected of them, although their children might have been. However, important questions are left unaddressed: were the terms on which women could undertake ministry the same as for men, how did the process of being "set apart" for ministry affect the numbers of women who became ministers; how did the spontaneous nature of ministry affect attitudes toward it; could women ministers travel with the abandon Isichei suggests? These questions have their roots in a desire to examine the workings of a female identity which evidently existed despite Friends' cherished beliefs in spiritual equality. Isichei, throughout *Victorian Quakers*, presupposes an ungendered individual subject (in practice a man) and devotes most of her analysis to class-, rather than gender-based factors. Thus, the ministry is an unproblematic "magical escape" for a few middle-class women, not a site of ideological conflict as to what constitutes revealed ministry and how a person is fitted to deliver it.

Mack begins her analysis with a different set of priorities. She explores in detail the conflation of the feminine with "nature", or the spiritual world, as well as with the subversion of the social order.[29] The early sections of *Visionary Women* are devoted to describing and analysing the mental world of the seventeenth century and its prevalent symbols. As marginal figures without fixed social position, Quaker female prophets had to carve out an identity for themselves within this mental,

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[29] Phyllis Mack, *Visionary Women: ecstatic prophecy in seventeenth-century England*, University of California Press, Berkeley, CA (1992), pp. 45-85.

symbolic and linguistic world which would give their prophecy authority. Friends believed prophecy to come direct from God, and women prophets could shelter under this, claiming to have transcended their physical womanhood and, by extension, their femininity, by acting as a vessel for a divine message. Male Friends also desired to repudiate their corporeal form and the wider world of social obligations as evidence of their faith. Their displays of transcendence, of freedom from masculinity, were usually characterised by quaking and the shedding of tears during meetings for worship.[30] For women, the status of public prophet was fraught with contradictions and subject to revocation at any time. The femininity which she claimed to transcend lurked in the background. "However, should the prophet ever lose her integrity in their eyes, all the stereotypes of her gender and social position would instantly reappear and envelop her as if by magic, and she would find herself back by the hearth, dressed in the rags of her own shabby individuality."[31]

In contrast to Mack's gendered analysis, most standard works about the development of religious thought and theological controversy seem to be doubly hostile to women's inclusion as they operate within the history of ideas and privileged clerical opinions. Women, as the ultimate laypeople (lay*men* can train for clerical office) do not figure in debates about religious ideas. This, at least, is the impression gathered by works which treat mainstream (Anglican) theology, such as Bernard Reardon's *Religious Thought in the Victorian Age: A Survey from Coleridge to Gore*, in which Nonconformists, with the exception of the Congregationalists, are castigated

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[30] Mack, *op. cit.*, pp. 185-86.

[31] *Ibid.*, p. 207.

as theologically sluggish.[32] George Eliot figures in the section dealing with the loss of faith, both as the translator of Strauss and Feuerbach, who made German criticism accessible, and for her own spiritual journey from evangelical christianity through agnosticism to positivism.[33] Suzanne Stark has argued that translation, whether of hymns or books, need not be a passive activity and that for some nineteenth-century women, it allowed them to articulate their own deeply-held beliefs.[34] Translation, hymnody and poetry are important contributions to the propagation and development of religious ideas, all of which require much more scholarly attention than they have as yet received.[35] The full range of women's theological writing has yet to be explored; Debra Campbell very convincingly charted the development of Hannah Whitall Smith's religious thought both in terms of her life experiences and intellectual milieu.[36] Smith turned ideas of womanly meekness upside-down, articulating a theology of "active submission" in the service of a motherly God. "Active submission" was not annihilation of the self, but fuller self-realisation and purification

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[32] Bernard M.G. Reardon, *Religious Thought in the Victorian Age: A Survey from Coleridge to Gore*, Longman (1995 - first published 1971), p. 15. J.H.Y. Briggs comments, "The Baptist community in the nineteenth century, though second to none in the power of its pulpit orators, was not greatly gifted with either thinkers of original intelligence or with major theological scholars.", *English Baptists*, p. 159.

[33] Bernard Reardon, *op. cit.*, pp. 188-190.

[34] Suzanne Stark, "Women and Translation in the Nineteenth Century," *New Comparison* 15 (Spring 1993), p. 36.

[35] Karen E. Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 83. The only treatment of women's contribution to church music is Walter Hillsman, "Women in Victorian Church Music: their social, liturgical, and performing roles in Anglicanism," in W.J. Sheils and Diana Wood, eds., *Women in the Church*, Studies in Church History 27, Basil Blackwell for the Ecclesiastical History Society, Oxford (1990).

[36] Debra Campbell, "Hannah Whitall Smith (1836-1911): Theology of the Mother-hearted God," *Signs* 15 (Autumn 1989), pp. 70-101.

through public service.[37] Because mainstream accounts are predisposed against women's ideas, Smith's influence remains underrated.

Extra-denominational bodies were sometimes places where women were more visible, as Anne Haight's work shows. The mid-nineteenth century American holiness movement allowed women to assume leadership positions and, in effect, some control over religious ideas. The lay "holiness community" of which Phoebe Palmer was a prominent member believed that it was necessary for Christians to "perfect" their souls, and argued that such spiritual purification would eventually result in a sinless life. Holiness teaching was inextricably bound up with notions of femininity. Women were considered more spiritual and male members of the holiness group respected their superior moral character. In the case of the holiness connection, religiosity was valued, religiosity raised the status of femininity which in turn led to a new respect for the feminine.[38] In Britain, "female" qualities of self-surrender and tenderness, not to mention a greater religiosity, opened the door to women's active participation in the dissemination of holiness teaching.[39] At the Keswick Conference, first held in 1875 and the premier gathering of holiness advocates, women took the lead in altering devotional practice, addressing prayer directly to Christ.[40]

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[37] *Ibid.*, p. 98.

[38] Anne Haight, "Status and Feminine Leadership in a Mid-Nineteenth Century Evangelical Community: Phoebe Palmer and the Holiness Connexion, 1835-1874," D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 1985.

[39] Olive Anderson, "Women Preachers in Mid-Victorian Britain: Some Reflexions on Feminism, Popular Religion and Social Change," *Historical Journal*, XII(3), 1969, p. 477.

[40] Bebbington, *Evangelicalism*, p. 175.

Most recent accounts of the religious history of nineteenth- and early-twentieth century England are neither denominational accounts nor studies of religious thought. Two key issues have preoccupied historians: secularisation and churches' relationship to the working class, with its corollary of the question of the use of religion as a means of social control.[41] The question of secularisation is beyond the scope both of this thesis and this introduction; of necessity, the thesis assumes the importance of religious belief and denominational affiliation to the women studied, evidenced through their active participation in church organisations.

Of the relationship of the churches to society, more must be said. Here there is an established corpus of material which discusses social control, popular religion, social thought, welfare provision, and leisure activities. E.P. Thompson, in his classic formulation, argued that Methodism bound working people in psychic chains, cultivating in them habits employers found congenial (sobriety, time-work discipline) through indoctrination, a sense of community, and revivalism.[42] Robert Colls's study of revival patterns among Primitive Methodists in northern coalfields offers some support to Thompson's theory of the order-sustaining qualities of religion, although Colls's study reveals that Primitive Methodism, as well as inspiring order, also fuelled working-class confidence.[43] Thompson's view has been further undermined by the work of Deborah Valenze. In her study of splinter-group Methodism during the

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[41] McLeod, *Religion and Society*, pp. 1-10; Jose Harris, *op. cit.*, Chapter 6.

[42] E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, Penguin Books (1991 - first published 1963), pp. 393-440.

[43] Robert Colls, "Primitive Methodists in the Northern Coalfields," in J. Obelkevich, L. Roper, and R. Samuel, *Disciplines of Faith: Studies in Religion, Politics, and Patriarchy*, Routledge and Kegan Paul (1987), p. 326, 327.

period 1790-1850, *Prophetic Sons and Daughters*, Valenze shows convincingly that religion was a powerful form of social protest and of class identity. Moreover, she has looked behind Thompson's (male) factory operative and analysed the gender dimension of this protest. Cottage religion "rendered sacred and public many aspects of the labouring household" and when that household was threatened by economic dislocation, women preachers came to the fore to defend their community's way of life.[44]

K.S. Inglis's work, published in the same year as Thompson's, was also pessimistic in its interpretation of working-class religiosity. His study examines the response of the churches to the 1851 Religious Census and their attempts to draft working-class members into the churches and chapels of England. He traces these schemes denomination by denomination, to conclude that the effort was largely unsuccessful. Inglis's analysis, one based on church institutions, leads him to the conclusion that religion was primarily a middle-class phenomenon which could not and did not meet working-class needs.[45] In an earlier article, he developed the argument that evangelical Nonconformists were incapable of radical social ideas precisely because of the nature of evangelical theology. In such a formulation, the faithful viewed poverty as evidence of moral lapse and were unable to fathom its structural causes.[46]

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[44] Deborah Valenze, *Prophetic Sons and Daughters: Female Preaching and Popular Religion in Industrial England*, Princeton University Press, Princeton NJ (1985), pp. 32, 109.

[45] K.S. Inglis, *Churches and the Working-Classes in Victorian England*, Routledge and Kegan Paul (1963).

[46] K.S. Inglis, "English Nonconformity and Social Reform," *Past and Present* 13, 1958, pp.73-88.

Jeffrey Cox's *The English Churches in a Secular Society* (1982) offered a more sympathetic interpretation of the churches' efforts to meet working-class spiritual and temporal needs. Of these efforts, Cox attaches great importance to district visiting, a predominantly female activity, arguing that it was more important than settlement houses and the activities of the Charity Organisation Society (itself a predominantly female organisation)[47]. That women were at the front end of much social work as visitors, social researchers, settlers, proto-social workers, is less important to Cox's analysis than the projects themselves. This is because Cox was engaging not only with the historiography of class relations, but with causes of religious decline. In this case, increased state provision of welfare services eroded the churches' presence.[48]

III. Ways of Viewing Women's Activities

Questions of denominational evolution, secularisation and relations between classes are not in themselves sufficient to guarantee the inclusion of women in the picture. There are, however, other ways of approaching the history of nineteenth-century Christianity which have been much more amenable to either a women-centred analysis or one which acknowledges the importance of gender. The contributions of scholars of the heated religious atmosphere of Christian sects and of revival, sociologists of religion, and historians of philanthropy, missions and of women's movements within the church have provided important insights into the opportunities

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[47] Jane Lewis, *The Voluntary Sector, the State and Social Work in Britain*, Edward Elgar, Aldershot (1995), p.34; Patricia Hollis, *Ladies Elect. Women in English Local Government 1865-1914*, Clarendon Press, Oxford (1987), p. 22.

[48] Jeffrey Cox, *The English Churches in Secular Society: Lambeth, 1870-1930*, Oxford University Press, Oxford (1982).

religion offered to women for spiritual and vocational fulfilment, while illustrating the power of religion in defining and challenging gender roles.

Much of the writing about women's activities comes from scholars who have examined the more fluid relationships within sectarian religion or at times of spiritual revival. Keith Thomas first suggested in 1958 that sectarian religion not only had political consequences, but that it offered a challenge to the patriarchal family and offered leadership opportunities for women in preaching and church-founding.[49] The Civil War sects he described - Brownists, Independents, Baptists, Millenarians, Familists, Quakers, Seekers, Ranters - varied in the specifics of their theology and government. However, Thomas argued that it was their <u>similarities</u> which were important:

> What they had in common was that they all were *sects*, that is, they believed in a pure church, they made spiritual regeneration a condition of membership and insisted upon separation from a national church which contained ungodly elements. More often than not they believed in the complete self-government of individual congregations; they usually thought in terms of direct inspiration by the Holy Spirit; and they tended to depreciate the role of the ministry, of "outward ordinances" and of human learning. Their assertion of the spiritual equality of all believers led to an exalted faith in private judgement, lay preaching, a cult of prophecies and revelations, and culminated in the Quaker doctrine of the spirit dwelling in all men.[50]

In the 1640s, aspects of sectarian theology - the "pure" Church, the validity and importance of individual experience, the importance of the Holy Spirit - influenced the forms of government and ministry - congregational autonomy and lay preaching. Women of humble social status and minimal education based their claims to authority

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[49] Keith Thomas, "Women and the Civil War Sects," *Past and Present*, (13)April 1958, pp. 42-62.

[50] *Ibid.*, p. 44.

on spiritual experience, not theological training; ideas of the gathered church made up of the converted offered women an arena in which to exercise this new-found ability.

The analysis of sectarian theology offered by Bryan Wilson, building on themes first articulated by Thomas, sought to categorise sectarian "responses to the world" and was more explicit about precisely which forms of sectarianism benefited women. Of the seven "deviant responses," he argues that "conversionist" sects, especially when these adopted holiness teaching, offered the fullest opportunities for participation and leadership to women. The distinguishing characteristics of the "conversionist" response are a personal experience of and conscious knowledge of salvation and a desire to return to "scriptural" Christianity.[51] These sects,

> accepted, and perhaps stimulated, the emancipation of women, especially in the lower classes. This was not merely the emergence of a semi-charismatic woman leader. Women became full participants with more equal opportunity than in other types of religion available to the same social classes. The intense emotionalism, subjectivism, and the rejection of formal education in these sects facilitated the greater involvement of women.[52]

Both Olive Anderson and Anne Haight, in studies of holiness connections in England and in America, have stressed that the holiness movement, with its emphasis on submission and purity of heart, appealed to those aspects of religion seen to be within women's competence.[53] In the American "Holiness Community," a geographically dispersed group of individuals, meetings took place not in churches, but in private homes "where women felt particularly confident and at ease. In such

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[51] Bryan Wilson, *Religious Sects*, World University Library, Weidenfeld and Nicolson (1970), pp. 37, 66-67.

[52] *Ibid.*, p. 64.

[53] Olive Anderson, *op. cit.*, p. 476.

meetings, female adherents were expected to participate fully in giving personal testimony and were rewarded with attention and nurture by the group for doing so."[54] Anderson's women preachers operated in the context of the revival of the mid-1860s. The characteristics of this revival - sensationalism, holiness, pre-millennial expectation (adherents believed they were living in the biblical "last days" before the second coming), and its reliance on lay support - were particularly conducive to women's involvement. In a study of women in a very different social context from that of the comfortable middle-class adherents of the holiness connection, Deborah Valenze locates early nineteenth-century sectarian Methodism in cottage society. The movement, in its early years, relied heavily on the domestic arena for meeting space and for hospitality for travelling preachers.[55] These works opened up the possibility of female agency within the churches, clearly visible at times of revival and sectarian formation.

Frank Prochaska's pathbreaking work on nineteenth-century philanthropy, while accepting religion as a formative element in domestic ideology, shows how, for many women, philanthropic activities - from the organisation of fancy sales to membership on charity committees - offered an expansion of their role.[56] Prochaska's argument, that middle-class women could enter the public sphere through the manipulation of notions of femininity (females were particularly interested in and successful in moral reform charities and those which dealt with children), has proved an important one

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[54] Anne Haight, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

[55] Valenze, *op. cit.*, chapters 5 and 6.

[56] F.K. Prochaska, *Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth Century England*, Clarendon Press, Oxford (1980).

with historians of women. Patricia Hollis used it successfully in *Ladies Elect*, describing women's efforts to gain access to local government. On a much larger scale, the activists of the Women's Christian Temperance Union attempted to articulate a global culture of womanhood, using the languages of sisterhood and motherhood, which fostered female activism.[57]

The subversion of restrictive, domestic norms of femininity has been explored by Martha Vicinus and Brian Heeney, among others.[58] In her chapter on sisterhoods and deaconess orders, Vicinus traces the re-creation of a recognised feminine religious vocation both for High Church Anglicans and Free Churchwomen, one which undermined the patriarchal family by allowing women a religious space in which to live communally and to undertake meaningful work.[59] For Catholic women, the convent could provide opportunities for personal development unavailable within the family context.[60] Brian Heeney, in his study of Anglican women's efforts to secure representation both in the governing body of their own church and at the Parliamentary level as well as admission to the priesthood, first analyses the models of femininity accessible to and appropriated by the Anglicans of the time. These models, from scripture, contemporary culture, and "tradition," provided the languages

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[57] Ian Tyrrell, *Woman's World/Woman's Empire: the Women's Christian Temperance Union in international perspective, 1880-1930*, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill and London (1991).

[58] For subversion in a different context see Alex Owen, *The Darkened Room: Women, Power, and Spiritualism in late Victorian England*, Virago Press Limited (1989).

[59] Martha Vicinus, *Independent Women*, Virago Press (1985).

[60] Susan O'Brien, "*Terra Incognita*: The Nun in Nineteenth-Century England," *Past and Present* 120 (1988), p. 138.

through which Anglicans debated the role of women in the church. Sean Gill builds on Heeney's methodology in an attempt to relate the teaching of the Church to the actual practice of Anglican women.[61]

More recent work on philanthropy suggests that, for some women at least, a career in philanthropy could lead to an increased political consciousness, sometimes a feminist one. In an essay devoted to providing a conceptual framework in which to understand American women's philanthropy, Anne Firor Scott looks not only at the purpose of such organisations but also at their social, economic, and political consequences and the effects they had on women's status and on definitions of women's sphere. Scott charts women's progression on a scale from "charity" to "reform". Charitable or benevolent women were given their first real opportunity to organise during the U.S. Civil War, as necessary adjuncts to the war effort. Post-war American society witnessed a huge growth of women's associations, both religious (the majority) and secular (the club movement). Many began working for changes in local conditions - campaigning for better schools and other general welfare issues - and this dialogue with the problems of society, coupled with the rise of social science and advanced education for women, led organisations to shed their "charitable" label, entering the political fray as "reformers."[62] Maria Luddy's pioneering study of Irish women's philanthropy posits a link between philanthropy and support for women's enfranchisement. For a minority of philanthropic women like Rosa M. Barrett, Isabella Tod, Margaret Byers, and Anna Haslam charitable work provided a sound

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[61] Sean Gill, *op. cit.*

[62] Anne Firor Scott, "Women's Voluntary Associations: From Charity to Reform", in Kathleen D. McCarthy, ed., *Lady Bountiful Revisited: Women, Philanthropy, and Power*, Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, NJ and London (1990), pp. 36-45.

education and charities themselves a platform from which to give voice to their social and political concerns.[63]

Mindful that women mission workers had been marginalised both by church historians and mission scholars (who preferred "official church structures" as subjects of study) and by historians of women (who prioritized the study of women's involvement in suffrage, temperance and education), a crop of women scholars set out to reclaim missionary women.[64] Jane Hunter found gender constraints operating in slightly different ways when comparing married and single women. Married women, especially with the arrival of children, found their mission service in the home, recreating the domestic ideology which would teach by example. Single women lived according to accepted feminine notions of personal service and self-denial while at the same time their freedom of movement and association offered self-fulfilment.[65] Patricia Grimshaw has analysed the conflicting roles of married women missionaries in Hawaii. As missionaries, they had a commitment to the residents of the island; as mothers, they had a duty to raise their children according to Western moral standards which meant, in practice, shielding children from "natives" and "native" practices. Many resolved this conflict by discarding their missionary vocation in favour of a full-time maternal role, an action which was socially acceptable.[66] Reflecting an

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[63] Maria Luddy, *Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth-Century Ireland*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge (1995), pp. 209-213.

[64] Leslie Flemming, "Introduction: Studying Women Missionaries in Asia," in Leslie A. Flemming, ed., *Women's Work for Women: Missionaries and Social Change in Asia*, Westview Press, Boulder, CO (1989), pp. 1-2.

[65] Jane Hunter, *The Gospel of Gentility*, Yale University Press, New Haven (1984).

[66] Patricia Grimshaw, "'Christian Woman, Pious Wife, Faithful Mother, Devoted Missionary': Conflicts in Roles of American Missionary Women in Nineteenth-Century

anthropological perspective, the collection *Women and Missions: Past and Present* (1993) begins to analyse the effects of missions on women, both as white missionaries and non-white recipients of missionary attention.[67]

IV. Feminist *rapprochement*

Although theology rapidly felt the effects of second-wave feminism, religious history has not been a high priority for contemporary feminist historians. The church, in many eyes, was nothing more than patriarchy in its most obvious form - male God, male clergy, male dominance. Gerda Lerner, in her study of the ancient near east, traced the "dethroning of the goddesses"; first, by a god-king and finally by an all-powerful male god. "This symbolic devaluing of women in relation to the divine becomes one of the founding metaphors of Western Civilization."[68] Sylvia Walby argues that there are six structures which constitute patriarchy: paid work, housework, sexuality, culture, violence, and the state.[69] The church, as a social institution and an enforcer of social codes, permeates all six structures to varying degrees, but is also influenced by cultural change. It is possible to argue that the opportunities offered in mission work and philanthropy were of a limited type and that any "advances" were of a conservative kind. But to make such an argument is to deny the importance of

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Hawaii," *Feminist Studies* 9(3), Fall 1983.

[67] Fiona Bowie, Deborah Kirkwood, Shirley Ardener, eds., *Women and Missions: Past and Present: anthropological and historical perceptions*, Berg, Oxford (1993).

[68] Gerda Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy*, Oxford University Press, New York and Oxford (1986), p. 10.

[69] Sylvia Walby, *Theorizing Patriarchy*, Blackwell, Oxford (1990).

those moments when the boundaries between masculine and feminine "spheres" are renegotiated.

The link between religion and feminism, tentatively made by Philippa Levine, has, however, become more widely accepted.[70] Barbara Caine, in her brief appraisal of the life and ideas of Josephine Butler, shows that religion was important in setting her on the course of social reform and of sustaining her during the campaign to repeal the Contagious Diseases Acts.[71] Sheila Fletcher's life of Maude Royden - preacher, feminist, author, devout Anglican, pacifist - should act as a caution to those who wish to argue that feminism and religion are not compatible.[72] Maude Royden was a key figure in the Church League for Women's Suffrage (which supported female enfranchisement by nonviolent means and campaigned for women to be given a voice in the government of the Church of England) and its successor, the League of the Church Militant (which pressed for the ordination of women to holy orders). Both of these organisations form the focus of Brian Heeney's important study, *The Women's Movement in the Church of England* (1988). Sandra Holton, Clare Midgley and Kathryn Gleadle have begun to analyse networks of Radical women, women who were very often Quakers or Unitarians.[73] Jane Lewis has identified a religious connection

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[70] Philippa Levine, *Victorian Feminism 1850-1900*, Hutchinson (1987), p. 21.

[71] Barbara Caine, *Victorian Feminists*, Oxford University Press, Oxford (1993 - first published 1992), pp. 164, 180.

[72] Sheila Fletcher, *Maude Royden: A Life*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford (1991).

[73] Sandra Holton, *Suffrage Days: Stories from the Women's Suffrage Movement*, Routledge (1996); Clare Midgley, *Women Against Slavery: the British Campaigns, 1780-1870*, Routledge (1992); Kathryn Gleadle, *The Early Feminists: Radical Unitarians and the Emergence of the Women's Rights Movements, 1831-1851*, Macmillan (1995).

amongst women social activists. Three of the women in her study *Women and Social Action in Victorian and Edwardian England* had close contact with Unitarianism which "inspired a strong commitment on the part of men and women to social action".[74]

V. The Inclusion of Women in Institutional Histories

The concept of the subversion or redefinition of femininity is an important one when addressing women's involvement in the churches, one which gives them agency and visibility. Because women have very rarely emerged as institutional leaders (although Catherine Booth is a notable exception) and hence have not been recorded by historians, conventional institutional accounts fail adequately to represent women's involvement in church life. Does this mean that the institutional style of writing church history should be shunned by those who wish to incorporate women's stories into the denominational whole? Karen Smith attacks institutional accounts as limiting our knowledge about women, since we see them only in "gender-appropriate" roles, not as women really were in the denomination. She argues that localised studies and critical biography should be employed to help break what she sees as the trap of institutional history. She also advocates a shift to new materials in an attempt to analyse the paradigms and perceptions of womanhood.[75] This would perhaps give historians a new set of priorities, which is exactly what Smith thinks is needed. She does not consider, however, the possibility of an institutional history in which women

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[74] Jane Lewis, *Women and Social Action in Victorian and Edwardian England*, Edward Elgar, Aldershot (1991), pp. 11, 25, 29.

[75] Karen Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 82-84.

are not only included, but in which feminist theories of recovery and attention to gender also informs the parameters of the discussion. The work of Heeney, Vicinus, and Prochaska acts as a caution to those who would condemn the institutional account as intrinsically biased in favour of the male members of a church.[76]

VI. Sources

The Freeman, a weekly Baptist newspaper, had the following high expectations of denominational magazines:

> Among the influences which form public opinion at the present day the denominational press has a foremost place. It has become a power which every wise man knows cannot be disregarded without peril. ... It would do well to present for family reading fresh, hallowed, and helpful thoughts from our more highly esteemed preachers.[77]

As reflectors of trends and opinions, purveyors of news, and arbiters of taste the religious periodical press played an important role in church life. The wide range of articles contained in such magazines - fiction and non-fiction, reviews and essays - make them an ideal source for discovering not only what attitudes to women were, but also what women were doing within the denomination. These periodicals form the primary material analysed in this thesis: the *Baptist Magazine* (to 1904), the *Missionary Herald* and *Baptist Zenana Mission Magazine*, *The Friend*, *The British Friend*, the *War Cry*, and *The Deliverer*.[78]

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[76] To this list could also be added a number of works about American women: Ian Tyrrell, *op cit.* Kathleen McCarthy, ed., *op. cit.*

[77] *The Freeman: A Baptist Record*, 2 January 1880, p. 1. Also *Baptist Magazine* January 1885, pp 12-15.

[78] The *Baptist Magazine* ceased to be published after the December 1904 issue, blaming "increased denominational weeklies and religious papers in general" as the reason for cessation. *Baptist Magazine*, December 1904, p. 471. I have not included

Some of these periodicals, notably those published by the Salvation Army, had huge circulation figures. In 1886, the weekly circulation of the *War Cry* in the United Kingdom was given as 210,000. At the Army's 25th anniversary celebrations (1890), General Booth claimed that 300,000 copies were sold each week. At the end of 1929, nearly 250,000 *War Cry*s were published each week.[79] In its first year (1889-1890), Florence Booth wrote that over 500,000 copies of *The Deliverer*, the magazine of the Army's rescue and social work, had "gone forth" - a rate of roughly 42,000 per month.[80] Nine years later, its circulation was still strong at 40,500 per month.[81] Salvationist periodicals were cheap (1d.) and easily available as they were sold in the street by Army members.[82]

Baptist periodicals had more modest circulation figures, but these are deceptive. The *Baptist Zenana Mission Magazine* had a circulation of between 8,000 and 11,000 copies per month.[83] Of this total, 6,000 copies were distributed in England, 1,800 for London and the rest bound for the counties. Welsh Baptists accounted for a further 2,000 copies, while 1,000 went to Scotland and only 100 to Ireland. A further 1,000 were sent free of charge to Baptist missionaries and to the

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the many name-changes undergone by the Baptist missionary periodicals - they are listed in full in the bibliography.

[79] Sandall, *History*, vol. 2., p. 338, vol. 4., 169, Salvation Army *Year Book*, (1930), p. 3.

[80] *The Deliverer*, 1 July 1890, p. 8.

[81] *The Deliverer*, January 1899, p. 110.

[82] Prices for all periodicals in this section from *May's British and Irish Press Guide*, Frederick L. May and Co, (1885) and *Willing's British and Irish Press Guide*, later just *Willing's Press Guide*, James Willing, (1895, 1905, 1915).

[83] *Baptist Zenana Mission Magazine*, December 1904, p. 177, May 1907, p. 101.

ministers of contributing churches.[84] To save money on carriage, parcels of the magazine would be sent to churches, where they would be distributed to subscribers.[85] Such reading material was almost certainly shared by mission-minded church members. Between 1896 and 1903, the BZM did not publish a separate magazine, but instead rented space in the BMS publication, the *Missionary Herald*. This periodical enjoyed a larger circulation (28,500 per month in December 1886, rising to 50,000 in 1906).[86] Again, the price was not large, 1d. per week for the *Missionary Herald* and 4d. (rising to 6d.) per month for the *Baptist Magazine*.

More modest still was the circulation of Friends' magazines, although this must be expected given the small size of the denomination. The weekly *Friend*, had between 1645 and 1462 subscribers in the period 1879-1888; income figures for the next ten years would seem to indicate that subscribers hovered around 1500 over the next ten years.[87] Prices of Quaker publications are consistent with Baptist periodicals: 1d. for *The Friend*, and 6d. for the literary monthly the *British Friend*.

Denominational periodicals, as expressions of nonconformist culture, are exceptionally good sources because of the variety of material contained within them - material designed to inform, instruct, and entertain. What was most striking, however, was the extent to which real women and their activities - as opposed to idealized representations of womanhood - were present in their pages. In this thesis an attempt

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[84] *Baptist Zenana Mission Magazine*, July 1908, pp. 151-152. The regional breakdown is not given in full, but Yorkshire and Lancashire headed the list with 600 copies each, followed by Birmingham, which took 425.

[85] *Ibid.*, p. 153.

[86] *Missionary Herald*, 1 January 1887, p. 3, January 1906, p. 1.

[87] From the archives of *The Friend*, Temp MSS 727 Box J.

is made to use these sources to construct a history of women's organisations within three free churches, organisations which themselves have not received treatment by historians, and show that an institutional account can be effectively joined with critical attention to the construction of masculinities and femininities. However, other subjects follow naturally from this analysis. In the Society of Friends, the principle of equality was tested not only by women Friends seeking greater participation with their denomination's governing structures, but in debates about women's suffrage. The Baptist Zenana Mission carved out a sphere of work for single women by appealing to "traditional" views of women's nature. In the Salvation Army, the creation of a specific work for women marked a break with that organisation's policy of pure evangelisation but one in harmony with the theology and example of Catherine Booth. At the same time, many married women officers were finding the double demands of home and Army duty difficult to reconcile.

These women's organisations - the Women's Yearly Meeting of the Society of Friends, the Baptist Zenana Mission, and the Women's Social Work of the Salvation Army - although part of the Nonconformist tradition, operated within a distinctive denominational setting. The description of this denominational context forms the first chapter. The next three chapters look at the ways women functioned, ideologically and practically, within such structures. Particular attention is paid both to moments of challenge and periods of reinforcement as women sought representation within church hierarchies. Chapter five looks in more detail at women's "separate sphere" as presented in these periodicals and considers the implications of the stereotype of domestic femininity at a time when the boundaries between public and private, as understood by contemporaries, were being blurred by "secular" developments in

women's education and professionalization. In all cases, rather than finding women conforming to "gender-appropriate roles," in the words of Karen Smith, women challenged, subverted, and manipulated the supposedly rigid boundaries of the public/private divide.

Chapter One. The Denominational Context: Governing Structures, Theology, and Opportunities for Women in the Society of Friends, Baptist Union and Salvation Army

The link between women's active participation in religious bodies, theological precept and church government has been most effectively studied by historians of sectarianism, revivals, or other independent religious movements. Almost by definition, these are extra- or even supra-denominational movements (eg. the Keswick Conference sheltered a wide range of denominational affiliations under its umbrella of holiness[1]). Apart from two studies of the Church of England[2], the relationship between opportunities for women, church structures, and theology within Protestant denominations in the nineteenth century is unexplored, a casualty of historiographical trends. In beginning to reconstruct what denominational identity might mean to women and how they operated within church structures as women, the insights offered by studies of unusual religious movements within the Protestant churches prove a useful starting point. Each of the three denominations studied maintained some link to its sectarian past in the form of a particular theological and organisational tradition, for example, Baptist insistence on congregational autonomy, Salvationist rejection of the sacraments of baptism and Lord's Supper, and Friends' conflation of meetings for business with meetings for worship. This chapter focuses on these distinctive principles, some of which particularly facilitated the involvement of women within the church. As Nonconformist Christian bodies operating within the cultural world of late nineteenth-century England, there are, of course, important similarities between the

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[1] David Bebbington, *Evangelicalism*, p. 177.

[2] Brian Heeney, *The Women's Movement in the Church of England* and Sean Gill, *Women and the Church of England.*

three. However, even apparent similarities at the most basic doctrinal level, for instance, on the spiritual equality of men and women, could be manifested quite differently at the level of church government.

Studies of women's participation in religion rely on three broad categories of analysis: theology, government, and location.[3] Theologically, the most important strands are: the extent of holiness teaching, anti-sacramentalism, which is bound up with notions of lay authority, and the doctrine of spiritual equality.[4] Issues of church government revolve around a dual axis; the distinction between clergy and laity and the question of whether individual congregations or central denominational bodies are sovereign.[5] Location has been shown to be an important factor in women's participation.[6] Religious meetings, recognised by the denomination, held in recognised "women's spaces" sometimes allowed women to wield religious authority.

This chapter is intended to provide an overview of each denomination's composition and to place it within the continuum of nineteenth-century churchmanship. The Salvation Army was perceived as a working-class group and noisily interventionist in society. The Army preached a radical experiential religion

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[3] McLeod adds class structure to this list.

[4] Bryan Wilson, *Religious Sects*, pp. 59-60; David Bebbington, *Evangelicalism*, p. 176; Anne Haight, *op. cit.*, *passim*, Olive Anderson, *op. cit.*, *passim*; Phyllis Mack, *op. cit.*

[5] On lay government, see Keith Thomas, *op. cit.*, pp. 44, 47; Deborah Valenze charts the fate of women preachers as the Primitive Methodists began to build training colleges and as the denomination as a whole began systematising its internal structures, *op. cit.*, pp. 11-12, 275-276.

[6] Deborah Valenze, *op. cit.*, chapter 2.; Anne Haight, *op. cit.*, p. 24. The female preachers of the 1860s spoke by invitation only to drawing-room meetings and indeed, to larger mixed gatherings, but took care to keep their respectability and femininity intact. Olive Anderson, *op. cit.*, p. 469, 472.

with a strong lay element, governed in military fashion by strict hierarchical government. The Baptists were in the process of uniting over the century as the rift between Calvinist and Arminian slowly healed. Baptist chapels did not tend to draw members from the very top and bottom of the social scale; in general chapels were characterised by lower-middle and working-class membership.[7] The denomination was the inheritor of seventeenth-century radical theology (believer's baptism) and a strong commitment to congregational autonomy. The Baptist Union was a voluntary federation of churches governed only loosely by committee. Quakers also retained their distinctive beliefs, forged in the sectarian seventeenth century, but a key aspect of that theology - the Inner Light - was being challenged by Friends with Evangelical convictions. The Society of Friends was a relatively small denomination with upper-middle class representation disproportionate to society as a whole. It was governed by a tiered system of meetings, segregated by sex, along the lines set out by George Fox in the seventeenth century. To a certain extent, "Nonconformist" and, indeed, evangelical values were shared, but each denomination remained a separate and distinctive community despite the widespread political cooperation and commitment to social reform.[8]

I. The Society of Friends

> Martha is the fine executive woman, the good housekeeper, Mary has "chosen the good part," which shall not be taken away from her. In the

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[7] Briggs, *English Baptists*, pp. 270-276.

[8] The exception here is the Baptists, who as a denomination campaigned to remove "sins" such as drunkenness from society, but were noticeably less committed to social reform. See David Bebbington, "The Baptist Conscience in the Nineteenth Century," *Baptist Quarterly* XXXIV(1), January 1991, pp. 13-24.

> large heart of our Christ there is room for all varieties of character. He cordially appreciates the busy willing worker, and the quiet devotion of the reverent listener to his word.[9]

This note from a First Day School lesson illustrates the tensions between two competing theologies - quietism and evangelicalism - which divided nineteenth-century Friends. Historians of Friends stress the process by which the Quakers shed their sectarian heritage (exemplified in speech and dress) in favour of inclusion in the social and religious mainstream. Elizabeth Isichei, in her authoritative *Victorian Quakers*, sees the change as taking place over the course of the nineteenth century, fired by developments in theology.[10] Bryan Wilson has argued that a combination of Quaker concern for ethical behaviour with evangelical theology brought the Society into politics and out of its self-imposed insularity by the mid-nineteenth century.[11] Richard Vann and David Eversley suggest that, in terms of involvement in commerce, science, and medicine, Quakers were integrated into the secular world by 1750.[12]

Important differences from their Nonconformist brethren in theology, ministry, church government, and denominational activity ensured that Friends as well as their contemporaries perceived the Society as unique. Friends may have lost their sectarian

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[9] *The Friend*, 10 April 1899, p. 232.

[10] Elizabeth Isichei, *Victorian Quakers*, pp. 280-281; and Chapter I, *passim*. She qualifies this argument in, "From Sect to Denomination among English Quakers", in B. Wilson, *Patterns of Sectarianism*, Heinemann Educational Books Ltd, (1967), pp. 161-181. In this article, she argues that the transformation was not a linear one and proposes a cyclical model "of recurrent phases of conversionism and withdrawal, which must be explained in terms of social and ideological changes" (p. 176).

[11] Wilson, *Religious Sects*, pp. 178-181.

[12] R.T. Vann and D. Eversley, *Friends in Life and Death: the British and Irish Quakers in demographic transition, 1650-1900*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, (1992), p. 253.

exclusiveness through evangelical moves towards integration, but by the early twentieth century had rediscovered a distinctive identity, albeit one which engaged with society and which may have even placed Friends in a position of spiritual leadership. In the Quaker foundation of Woodbrooke, a permanent centre for Christian enquiry and education, there was indeed room for both the "busy willing worker" and the "reverent listener."

The lifestyles of fin-de-siècle Friends would have been condemned by their quietist ancestors. Compared with early nineteenth-century austerity, late nineteenth and early twentieth-century members of the Society lived the lives of "carriage Friends" or "gay Quakers" (an epithet applied to the aristocratic Gurneys of Norwich before they came to Evangelical convictions). However, this should not lead us to think that Quaker conformity in dress and speech and their alliance with other Nonconformists on moral/political issues caused the death of a separate Quaker identity. Indeed, certain moments in Quaker history show Friends reverting to their sectarian roots. For instance, during the First World War, many individual Friends refused to fight or assist the war effort in any way; for men who refused war work of any kind, persecution and prison followed.[13] Friends' right both to care for those suffering and to articulate their subversive and unpopular peace testimony was claimed in the name of religious liberty. The Meeting for Sufferings publicised, as it had in the seventeenth century, those imprisoned for conscience's sake. Friends visited those in prison and supported their families, or, as in the case of Roger Clark, acted as

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[13] David Boulton, *Objection Overruled*, MacGibbon and Kee (1967), p. 132.

Quaker "chaplains" for conscientious objectors.[14] The war did divide Friends; about one third of male Friends of military age felt bound to enlist in the armed forces, to the distress of the wider denomination.[15] However, Thomas Kennedy has shown that the denomination as a whole, and especially those "weighty" Friends who were influential informing Society opinion, retained a pacifist stance.[16] Despite this, there was sometimes disagreement on the sorts of caring roles Friends could undertake. Agencies sanctioned by the denomination such as the Friends' War Victims Committee tended to minister to the needs of civilians, providing maternity hospitals and housing for refugees.[17] An unofficial organisation, the Friends' Ambulance Unit courted controversy in Quaker circles by providing medical aid to combatants.

Being a Quaker in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century England involved a mixture of cooperation with aloofness and adherence to tradition. Cooperation could include alliances in the political arena, while a certain amount of aloofness is detectable within the Yearly Meeting and local meetings which attempted to articulate a distinctively "Quakerly" response to issues in wider society. This section will examine the government of the Society, the evolution of Quaker theology, and Quaker involvement in Woodbrooke, founded in 1903. The college at Woodbrooke is seen as revolutionary by Isichei, who cites it as an example of just

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[14] Percy Lovell, *Quaker Inheritance, 1871-1961. A portrait of Roger Clark of Street based on his own writings and correspondence*, Bannisdale Press, (1970), p. 156. Clark visited prisoners held at Shepton Mallet.

[15] J.W. Graham, *Conscription and Conscience. A History*, George Allen and Unwin (1922), p. 352.

[16] Thomas C. Kennedy, "The Quaker Renaissance and the Origin of the Modern British Peace Movement, 1895-1920", *Albion* 16 (3: Fall 1984), p. 253.

[17] Greenwood, *op. cit.*, pp. 194-195.

how far Friends had strayed from sectarian notions of a spirit-led, anti-intellectual ministry.[18]

The Society of Friends was governed by a tiered structure of representative business meetings, also known as "Meetings for Discipline," which drew their membership according to geographical area.[19] They progressed in size, though not in importance, as follows: Preparative Meetings, covering one or more local congregations; Monthly Meetings, bringing together a larger group of congregations; Quarterly Meetings, made up of a group of counties; finally, Yearly Meeting, the "parliament of Quakerism". Each was controlled by a Clerk, usually elected on a yearly basis, to serve as mediator and to produce the record of the meeting. Parallel systems existed for the Women's Meetings and for Meetings on Ministry and Oversight (a meeting of ministers, elders, and overseers largely concerned with the Society's pastoral activities).

Preparative Meetings gathered information on births, deaths, and burials to forward to the Monthly Meeting and appointed representatives to attend it. In 1899, the functions of the Preparative Meeting were enlarged to include a pastoral role and community service.[20] The Monthly Meeting was the most powerful local body, exercising disciplinary and executive powers. It was the Monthly Meeting that investigated and admitted applicants for membership, recorded ministers, registered

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[18] Isichei, "From Sect to Denomination", in Wilson, *Patterns of Sectarianism*, pp. 167-168.

[19] Isichei provides a brief, clear description of the government of the Society in *Victorian Quakers*, pp. 70-75. A longer account, dealing with the history of business meetings from the foundation of the Society to the 1950s is L. Hugh Doncaster, *Quaker Organisation and Business Meetings* (1958).

[20] Doncaster, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

the births and deaths communicated to it by the Preparative Meetings, dealt with delinquent members, and oversaw the rules governing Quaker marriage. Monthly Meetings were particularly powerful before the rules on dress, speech, and marriage were relaxed (1859-60), as they were the interpreters of the laws of discipline, with the power to disown (Quaker for expel) rebellious Friends. In addition, they had the important task of administering the collection of subscriptions for the National Stock, the general purposes fund. Monthly Meetings appointed delegates to the meeting above them, the Quarterly Meeting which, although larger in geographical area, was considerably less powerful. Essentially, the Quarterly Meeting forwarded business from the Monthly Meetings to the Yearly Meeting and appointed representatives to it. By the end of the nineteenth century, some Quarterly Meetings attempted to supplement these functions by adopting a conference format and introducing prepared speeches on contemporary issues to compensate for their lack of real work.[21]

The men-only London Yearly Meeting stood at the top of the pyramid. Originally it had been a gathering of representatives appointed by Quarterly Meetings around the country, but the 1861 *Revised Book of Discipline* extended the right to attend to any interested Friend. While Monthly Meetings exercised local executive power, Yearly Meeting functioned as the legislative body of the Society of Friends. The policy of Friends as a whole towards issues such as temperance and the opium trade were formulated there, the "State of the Society" analyzed there, and the Epistles (Yearly Meeting's messages to Quakers worldwide) drafted and approved there. Its standing committees, growing in number during the nineteenth century, ran the Society when Yearly Meeting was not in session. By far the most influential standing

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[21] Isichei, *Victorian Quakers*, p. 71.

committee was the Meeting for Sufferings. Originally constituted to supervise Quaker publishing and to gather and broadcast information on the persecution of Quakers in the seventeenth century, it gradually assumed the role of executive committee of the Society, representing the interests of the whole denomination when Yearly Meeting was not in session.

With the Society's governing body located in London, Friends who were resident in the capital or who could afford to spend extended periods of time there on Society business constituted a voluntary governing elite. Isichei has shown that such an elite, taken for granted by most Friends, was self-selecting and self-perpetuating. Equating wealth with power in the Society, the existence of this oligarchy effectively marginalised any contributions to be made by poorer Friends.[22] The Society was not completely insensitive to the exclusive character of the Yearly Meeting. In 1902 a conference of Friends discussed ways to improve access to it. One suggestion was to hold meetings in provincial centres, for it was acknowledged that "[p]robably the weakest element in our Yearly Meeting is that it is not representative in character. The trend of modern life has made it easier for women to attend large religious assemblies than men. Business demands close attention if conducted efficiently and honourably." In addition, Friends who were working men (brought in to the Society through the First Day Schools) were unable to have 10 days' holiday in order to attend

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[22] Isichei, "Organisation and Power in the Society of Friends, 1852-59," in Wilson, *Patterns of Sectarianism*, p. 209.

the Yearly Meeting.[23] As a result, the Yearly Meeting was held at Leeds in 1905, Birmingham in 1908, and in 1912 at Manchester.

The Yearly Meeting was not only a legislative assembly; all Friends' meetings for business had a devotional aspect. Meetings for discipline invariably opened with words of prayer and praise. At the discussion of the State of the Society in 1884, "J.B. Braithwaite trusted the meeting would be privileged to deliberate as in the presence of the Living Head of the Church. He thought they must all have been sensible of the reality of His presence and guidance in their midst, in the course of that Yearly Meeting."[24] Meetings for business were to be conducted in a spirit of worship. In keeping with this, Friends hesitated to employ confrontational terms like "debate" to describe the proceedings of a meeting for discipline. "Controversy" was to be avoided as it poisoned the atmosphere.

> Many estimable people have a strong aversion to controversy. We need not enumerate the reasons assigned for this feeling; as it is readily to be admitted that, conducted as is often the case in a wrong spirit, controversy becomes inimical to what should be its great object - the triumph of truth over error - which we may trust will always be the result, if discussed in the meekness and gentleness of Him who is Himself the Truth.[25]

The reverential character of Friends' meetings for business seemed under threat when the 1861 *Revised Book of Discipline* changed the constitution of the Yearly Meeting to allow any interested Friend to attend. Daniel Pickard, an opponent of the revision,

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[23] *The Friend*, 21 February 1902, p. 115. In terms of bringing new members into the Society, Isichei has shown that converts from the First Day Schools were never numerous, *Victorian Quakers*, p. 275.

[24] *The Friend*, 6 June 1884, p. 149. For Oliver Samson's amusing account of the Dublin Half Year's General Meeting, see Doncaster, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

[25] *British Friend*, 2 February 1880, p. 39.

wrote, "the Yearly Meeting will become less and less a *religious*, and more and more of a merely *popular* assembly...."[26] However, the 1861 extension had merely codified trends in the Society - London Friends had already been active in the Yearly Meeting. There is little evidence to suggest that after 1861 the conduct and devotional aspect altered, yet the character of the Yearly Meeting was obviously an important issue to Friends. Jane Morland used the spiritual basis of business meetings to argue for women's inclusion in them. She maintained that women's inherent spirituality would temper the men's commercial nature. She told the 1883 Women's Yearly Meeting, "while inferior to men in business ability, there is that in women's hearts which helps to more religious feeling, and prevents the meeting from being one for business only."[27]

The idea that business meetings were also times of worship, with discussion in the spirit of Christian meekness, affected the way meetings were conducted, although it did not prevent controversy or strong feeling from being aired. At the 1919 session of the Yearly Meeting to discuss "Preparation for Our New Responsibilities," it was recorded that "some plain things were said in love."[28] Because the meeting was one for worship and business, there was no voting as such. The Quaker method of taking decisions involved the Clerk gauging the "sense of the meeting." The Clerkship, then, was an extremely important post; it was the Clerk who judged whether a Friend's speech was of sufficient "weight" to affect the sense of the meeting and the Clerk who recorded the meeting's decisions. Some issues proved so

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[26] Quoted in Doncaster, *op. cit.*, p. 43. Emphasis in original.

[27] *The Friend*, 8 June 1883, p. 159.

[28] *The Friend*, 30 May 1919, p. 322.

divisive that a consensus could not be reached, in which case, the decision would be postponed until the next meeting, when the discussion would be held again. While taking the sense of the meeting and relying on consensus meant that minority opinion was protected from the dictates of the majority, decisions in such a context can only be shaped by what was actually said in the meeting. Those who were silent were effectively disenfranchised. This will be an important issue when the role of women in business meetings is considered.

In comparison with the Men's Yearly Meeting, the women's equivalent was recent in formation. When George Fox was touring the country in 1666-68 setting up Monthly and Quarterly Meetings to govern the growing Society, he encouraged the formation of a parallel network of meetings for women. While male Quakers were eager to help their female co-religionists establish Monthly and Quarterly Meetings, they were curiously unwilling to allow women Friends to hold a parallel Yearly Meeting, although the women gathered in London at the same time male Friends did. The Men's Yearly Meeting of 1766 refused to recognise the gathered women as a Meeting and denied them the right to issue an Epistle to the Women's Meetings in the country, noting:

> The forming of such a meeting hath appeared to our predecessors, as it does to us, a matter of great difficulty. As therefore the meeting of a number of Women Friends, and of suitable abilities to carry on so weighty and important a work, appears to us very doubtful and uncertain, and can but subject the few who are qualified to assist in this work to great inconveniency, it is therefore our unanimous opinion that the present is not the proper season for complying with the proposal.[29]

A Women's Yearly Meeting was finally established in 1784, but from its beginning it was made clear that the Women's Yearly Meeting was a "meeting of record" and

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[29] Doncaster, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

not a "meeting of discipline" - legislative power and membership in the Meeting for Sufferings remained with men Friends.[30]

After the formation of a separate Women's Yearly Meeting, the administrative structure of the Society did not change in any significant way until 1896, when women were made constituent members of the Yearly Meeting. This change, which illuminates the activities of women Friends both within and outside their Society, is discussed in a later chapter. Friends' government was in theory truly representative - at its lowest level, the Preparative Meeting, all were free to participate. In practice, however, leisured London Friends dominated the Yearly Meeting and Meeting for Sufferings. The parallel network of women's meetings kept power in the hands of men although, increasingly, lower-level Meetings were held in joint session.

Among Victorian Quakers, Isichei has identified four strands of belief: quietism, evangelicalism, unitarianism, and liberalism. In the broadest sense, Friends' theology evolved from quietism, through an evangelical period from about 1830 to 1885, to a fusion of the social and devotional in the liberal theology of John Wilhelm Rowntree. The unitarian experiment was confined to Manchester Friends at mid-century. Its significance to this later period is that it prefigured the rejection of evangelical doctrines by the next generation of liberal theologians.[31]

An anonymous correspondent to *The Friend* enumerated the fundamental principles of worship in the Society based on Fox's theology:

> 2. The Spirit of God, as the Teacher, Comforter, Counsellor and Guide of His people, holds immediate intercourse with our Spirits. ...

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[30] *Ibid.*

[31] Isichei, *Victorian Quakers*, chapter I, esp. pp 28-29.

3. There is no privileged or priestly caste among believers; all belong to the royal priesthood; all may be recipients of spiritual gifts; and all, both men and women, without the laying on of human hands, and without requiring collegiate training, may be called by Christ to the ministry of the Gospel. ...

5. All worship must be in spirit and in truth; everything of mere form - utterances that do not come from the heart - are altogether out of place in the worship of God. ...[32]

Amongst Quietists, the ministry was not dependent on education as it was seen as a manifestation of the divine will, one which might settle on both men and women.

However, Friends were not "Ranters"--although anyone was eligible to receive a divine message, Quakers developed the practice of "recording" to distinguish acceptable preaching (that under the aegis of the Spirit) from messages of a personal nature.[33] As a rule, the Society of Friends employed no clergy or pastoral staff, rejecting this as a "hireling" ministry. Thus all adults were free to preach and pray in a meeting for worship. Quaker beliefs in the validity of inner experience encouraged women to participate in the spoken ministry of the Society. Those who claimed the status of recorded minister were recognized by their meeting as being especially good preachers and were seated, along with elders, in a special place in the room, usually a raised platform facing the congregation. Recording provided a formal recognition of what was regarded by Quakers as a divine gift. However, the institution of recording ministers was a contentious one among Friends in this period and the practice was waning in the face of critics who argued that it would undermine

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[32] *The Friend*, 2 August 1880, p. 212.

[33] Even after the practice was instituted, Joseph John Dymond pointed out the difficulty sometimes experienced by Friends in distinguishing the message of God to the meeting from other messages of a personal nature. *The Friend*, 26 August 1892, pp. 566-67.

Friends' concept of ministry. Recording was formally abandoned in 1924. Yet, in the period when women could claim the status of recorded ministers, they did enjoy a certain amount of status within the Society and could obtain certificates which would enable them to travel as an itinerant minister on behalf of the Society and with its financial backing. [34]

Remaining true to their sectarian origins, Quakers eschewed the sacraments of water baptism and the eucharist, rejecting them as false "forms." Thus, Quakers avoided many of the doubts that plagued other Christian denominations, especially the Church of England, as to the propriety of a woman consecrating the bread and wine[35]. The Society dealt tangentially with the issue during the Beaconite schism, sparked off by the publication of Isaac Crewdson's *A Beacon to the Society of Friends* (1835). When Crewdson and his sympathizers seceded from the Society and set up a new church, they differed from mainstream Quakers at many points. Most importantly, these dissident Quakers adopted the sacraments of baptism and Lord's Supper and rejected the ministry of women as unscriptural.[36]

Having a ministry based on the internal leadings of the Spirit could offer advantages to women and enable them to transcend behavioral norms.[37] Given that

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[34] Janet Scott, "Women in the Society of Friends," in D. Blamires, J. Greenwood, & A. Kerr, eds., *A Quaker Miscellany for Edward H. Milligan*, Friends Book Centre (1985), p. 129.

[35] This issue occupies a considerable amount of space in the report of a committee appointed by the Archbishop of Canterbury and published as *The Ministry of Women*, SPCK (1920).

[36] Elizabeth Isichei, *Victorian Quakers*, pp 45-53.

[37] On this, see Alex Owen's contribution, "Women and nineteenth-century spiritualism: strategies in the subversion of femininity," in J. Obelkevich, L. Roper & R. Samuel, eds., *Disciplines of Faith: studies in religion, politics & patriarchy*

sex ratios in the Society were nearly equal, Quakerism had a high proportion of women ministers within the denomination (roughly one woman to every two male ministers).[38] Yet, speaking "in ministry" for the first time could prove a daunting prospect, especially with recorded ministers looking on, whose proven capacity for preaching earned them separate seating. The reactions of the elders, who were charged with both encouraging "acceptable" preaching and censuring inconsistent or unclear utterances, would also figure in the new speaker's mind. Of course, women who gained the status of recorded minister certainly must have preached more than once in order to gain such recognition; however, after their recording, there is no way to gauge the frequency or length of their addresses to assembled Quaker congregations. Despite the numbers of women ministers, the ministry was sometimes presented to Quakers as a man's role. An anonymous contribution to *The Friend* on the nature of meetings for worship asked, "to put a plain question, how many parents amongst us fervently desire and pray that, if the Lord will, their sons may become ministers in the Society?" A plea on behalf of the Friends' fledgling mission to China was specifically addressed "To the Young Men of the Society of Friends." Lastly, referring to service in the Church, "A Word for Young Men" stated, "the statesman, the merchant, and the scholar have real service in the Church. Is the calling away of

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(1987), pp. 130-153. Sheila Wright, "Quakerism and its implications for Quaker women: the women itinerant ministers of York Meeting, 1780-1840," in W.J. Sheils and Diana Wood, eds., *op. cit.*, pp. 407-408.

[38] Figures for membership are based on a sample of London & Middlesex Quarterly Meeting. The numbers of adult Friends were as follows: 1885 - 1058 men, 1067 women; 1900 - 1026 men, 1078 women; 1915 - 1231 men, 1373 women. From "List of Members of the Quarterly Meeting of London & Middlesex", 1885, 1900, 1915.

such men to dishearten, or is it to inspire us anew? It is a voice to young men to fill up the ranks, not looking to their own insufficiency, but looking to Christ."[39]

Quaker evangelicalism differed from its quietist predecessor in nearly every facet. Evangelicals rejected an experiential knowledge of God as articulated through Fox's theology of the Inner Light; instead the Bible was the means through which individuals could know God.[40] The atoning sacrifice of Christ (as mediator between a sinner and God) was elevated to a central position. Evangelical Friends campaigned for higher standards in ministry, standards to be achieved through ministerial training and by the payment of ministers. Traditional quietist theology, with its stress on experiential religion, was against ministerial training, believing firmly that it was the divine message that was important, not the messenger.

The triumph of evangelicalism can be seen in an article in *The Friend*, taking to task the Christians who persisted in criticising the Quakers' "modest" missionary effort:

> He quite ignores the thousands of men and women taught in the "First-day schools," amounting to two-thirds of the whole membership of the Society, and forming in many towns an influential organisation of working men. He ignores also the large amount of Home Mission work zealously pursued by the Friends in many places. Of the "General Meetings" and their evangelistic character he has probably never heard. He cannot be aware that the Home Mission work in the Society has been gradually progressing during the last forty years, whilst their foreign work, in its present form, did not come into existence till about fourteen years ago ... .[41]

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[39] *The Friend*, 2 August 1880, p. 213; 1 August 1888, p. 223; 15 January 1892, p. 33.

[40] Rufus Jones, *The Later Periods of Quakerism*, Vol. I, Macmillan and Co. Ltd. (1921), p. xv. Edward Grubb, "Christ or Quakerism?", *British Friend*, April 1905, pp. 110-111.

[41] *The Friend*, 3 July 1880, p. 182.

Here was a list of the projects evangelicals held dear. First Day Schools, Home Missioners, and General Meetings were all differing forms of Friends' outreach to the labouring, godless, poor, and a badge of their rapprochement with other evangelical churches. For instance, "Home Missions" was a term borrowed from the Wesleyans, who had begun dedicating workers to slum or deprived areas in the 1850s. Much like an Anglican district visitor, Wesleyan Home Missioners exercised pastoral responsibility at the individual level.[42] Amongst Friends, Home Missioners were charged with the building up of a flagging rural meeting, one presumably so small that it lacked many ministers, elders, or overseers. The Home Missioner fulfilled, to an extent, the roles of all three. Charged with preaching, meting out discipline, and providing pastoral care, as well as increasing the membership of the meeting, Home Missioners began to look, to some Friends, uncomfortably similar to clergymen.[43]

Despite evangelical dominance of the Yearly Meeting, some Quaker traditions remained stubbornly resistant to change. *The Friend*, a magazine with evangelical sympathies, regretted that the Society held "too tenaciously to the principle of unpaid ministry", acknowledging that "[t]ill lately, at least, there has been a tendency to disparage intellectual training for the ministry, because it is held to be unessential. This we hold to be a perversion of our principles."[44] By 1904, William Tallack, increasingly a lone voice, pressed for a paid system of "district helpers", although he

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[42] K.S. Inglis, *Churches and the Working Class in Victorian England*, pp. 10, 88. As Inglis points out, the Wesleyan Home Missions budget was small, and the movement was unsuited for an urban environment.

[43] Isichei, *Victorian Quakers*, pp. 99-101.

[44] *The Friend*, 2 August 1880, p. 213.

was careful to distinguish them from pastors.[45] Evangelical Friends did gain a victory of sorts with the formation of the Friends' Foreign Mission Association, an organisation which would never have come into being had evangelicals not been dominant. The FFMA sent its first paid agent, Rachel Metcalfe, to India in 1866. Friends with evangelical sympathies also turned their attention to bodies outside the society, as in their support of Justine Dalencourt's mission to working-class women in France, associated with the Congregationalist Revd Robert McAll. Ministry in the meeting-house remained unpaid and formal training was never required.

With the rise of biblical criticism and a science which seemed to prove that the world was much older than scriptural accounts had made it, evangelical Friends fought, unsuccessfully, to retain the Bible as the preeminent source of knowledge about God. Francis Frith, William Pollard, and William Edward Turner published, anonymously, *A Reasonable Faith, by three Friends* in 1884. The *Reasonable Faith* attacked a purely legalistic view of the Atonement and the doctrine of eternal punishment. Edward Worsdell's *Gospel of Divine Help* (1887) questioned the Biblical literalism of extreme evangelicals. *The Friend*, the denomination's evangelical journal, refused to review it.[46] The tide was beginning to turn in favour of the liberals. Tallack, in the same letter of 1904, accuses Friends of reacting against evangelical ideas:

> The question is not so much of what is said, as of what is so often and so extensively unsaid. For there does appear to be a very regrettable reticence, at least in the quarters attended to, respecting the supremely fundamental facts of the Deity and atoning sufferings of the Lord Jesus

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[45] *The Friend*, 26 February 1904, p. 132. See also: "Our Meetings for Worship are Not Satisfactory: Where Does the Fault Lie?", in *The Friend*, 2 August 1880, p. 213.

[46] Greenwood, *op. cit.*, p. 169.

> Christ. Amongst some influential Friends there seems to be not only an habitual avoidance of reference to the most precious blood of Christ, but even a dislike of the term.[47]

In rejecting an atoning sacrifice, liberal Friends replaced the crucified Christ with an emphasis on the life of Jesus whose death was not to appease an angry Father, but a lesson in self-abnegation and love.[48] Effectively closing the chapter on evangelical hegemony, the Yearly Meeting committee on Ministry and Oversight agreed to send a letter to the Clerks of all Preparative Meetings. Its message reaffirmed the Inner Light as the chief source of inspiration: "[w]e were led to the deep conviction that any true revival of life and power in the vocal ministry must spring from a fuller experience of the presence of the indwelling Spirit."[49]

The liberal movement also made an emotional and effective appeal to Friends' history, and reacquainted Friends with the mystical writings of Robert Barclay and George Fox. This stress on history was a natural outgrowth of liberal ideas as liberals were effectively modernising the Quakerism of Fox and Barclay for presentation to a late-nineteenth century audience.[50] The "Tramps", which took in historic Quaker meeting-places, were a visible sign of liberal Friends' reclamation of their history. The Friends' Historical Society dates from this period.

Evangelical ideas, however, influenced the liberals in many ways. For instance, Tallack's call for paid district helpers could be seen to have a liberal

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[47] *The Friend*, 26 February 1904, p. 132. Emphasis in original.

[48] Isichei, *Victorian Quakers*, p. 37.

[49] *The Friend*, 13 October 1905, p. 673.

[50] Isichei, "From Sect to Denomination", in Wilson, *Patterns of Sectarianism*, p. 169.

counterpart in the Tramps. Founded by young Friends in Yorkshire in 1905, they were a kind of missionary hike. Small groups of men or women Friends would walk or cycle over the countryside to hold meetings, often in disused or rural meeting-houses. The aim was to inspire Friends and reinvigorate the Society from within. The necessity of revival, expressed in the committee on Ministry and Oversight, was an evangelical legacy. In their circular letter, they also considered whether it would be appropriate for Friends to devote a day in prayer to enable the Society to fulfil its "mission to the world."[51] Evangelical ideas did not entirely disappear, then; sometimes they remained, clothed in the garb of liberal theology. As late as 1914, definitions of Quakerism which combined references to the Inner Light and Christ as man with a decided plea for evangelisation:

> If we believe in the inward light, in the seed of God, we necessarily give to the education and cultivation of the soul-life a primary place, we necessarily desire to bring men to a recognition of their sonship with the Father of lights and the Creator of the seed, we necessarily want to help forward, wherever and whenever we can, the larger freedom and emancipation of men and women as tabernacles of the divine. And, lastly, the true Quaker must proclaim the Evangel, he must take his share in the *evangelisation of the world.*[52]

The tangible effects of the long evangelical period of Quakerism outlasted evangelicals' domination of Yearly Meeting. Home Missioners and First Day Schools lasted into the twentieth century, albeit in scaled-down form. In 1918, George Cadbury complained to the editor of *The Friend* that the adult school movement was languishing due to a lack of recognition by the Yearly Meeting and the Meeting for

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[51] *Ibid.*

[52] *The Friend*, 16 January 1914, p. 32. Italics in original.

Sufferings.[53] However, by the end of the century, individual Friends interested in social reform were more likely to take advantage of the increasing opportunities for service at a local level - as J.P.s, members of school boards and the like, or else pursue a life of private philanthropy.[54] The very shift of emphasis from social salvation to social reform marks a significant departure from evangelical ideology.

In many ways, the decline of evangelicalism and the rise of liberalism is shown in the change of emphasis within Friends, from First Day Schools to Woodbrooke. The First Day, or Adult, Schools were indisputably evangelical. First Day School lessons appeared in *The Friend*, usually in the form of commentary on a biblical text. In form and content, they closely resembled Sunday School lessons of other Nonconformist denominations. The First Day School combined scripture lessons, hymn-singing, and tutoring in basic literacy. Towards the end of the century, influenced by the Pleasant Sunday Afternoon movement, Friends' First Day Schools became more club-like, running libraries, stewarding savings-banks and sponsoring sports clubs.[55] The First Day Schools were particularly hard-hit, not just by liberal theology, but by developments in wider society that appropriated their functions. Co-operative societies, professional sport, and organised labour all filled the social and

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[53] *The Friend*, 1 February 1918. Since 1905, the numbers of those attending and Friends associated with Adult Schools were in decline.

[54] Roger Clark often intervened in individual cases that came to his attention. As philanthropist or self-appointed reconciler and counsellor, he was sometimes disappointed by the failure of his efforts. See Lovell, *op. cit.* Seebohm Rowntree made a pioneering study of poverty in York.

[55] Isichei, *Victorian Quakers*, p. 270.

economic needs of working people without the attendant paternalism of the First Day Schools.[56]

Elizabeth Isichei points, rightly, to Quaker distrust of theological learning. Evangelicalism, which prized biblical learning, also prized theological scholarship (or at least systematic scriptural exposition). She regards the foundation of the Quaker college, Woodbrooke, in Birmingham as evidence of a sea-change in the Society's attitudes. According to Isichei, it was "a change which marked a revolution in Quaker attitudes, the abandoning of a typically sectarian emphasis on direct inspiration and distrust of intellectualism in favour of a denominational recognition of the value of religious education."[57] One of the prime exponents of liberalism within Friends, John Wilhelm Rowntree was also one of the proponents of Woodbrooke.[58] Should the historian of Quakerism view Rowntree's concern for an educated ministry (a concern shared, to an extent, by the evangelical Tallack) as a departure from quietist principles, the final legacy of the evangelicals? To decide, we must first look at the sort of education provided at Woodbrooke and its predecessor, the summer school movement.

Both have their roots in Friends' reaction to "modern thought" in general and scientific/historical criticism of the Bible in particular. The Manchester Conference of 1895 marked Friends' first collective attempt to wrestle with these ideas. Attendance at the conference fluctuated between 1,000 and 1,300. Although not all

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[56] *Ibid.*, pp. 273-274.

[57] Isichei, "From Sect to Denomination", in Wilson, *Patterns of Sectarianism*, p. 167.

[58] Isichei, *Victorian Quakers*, p. 42.

those who attended were Friends, this was still an impressive turnout for a denomination with a total membership of about 16,500.[59] In size, it rivalled the Yearly Meeting, a measure of how seriously the Conference was taken by Friends. The Manchester Conference was followed by a summer school in Scarborough in 1897. Based on its success, others were held in Birmingham (1899), Scarborough again (1901), Windermere (1902), and Woodbrooke (1903). It is perhaps significant that the summer school held in 1901 in Scarborough was called "Settlement for Bible Study" and the one held just a year later at Windermere adopted the title "Settlement for Religious Study".

John Wilhelm Rowntree had been advocating a permanent "Quaker Settlement" since 1899. In two articles in *Present Day Papers*, a small periodical founded by Rowntree, he articulated a desire to establish a place, almost a retreat, for spiritual meditation. He acknowledged that teachers and ministers in the Society would find his proposed curriculum helpful, but insisted that such a settlement should not be considered a theological college.[60] Woodbrooke was founded in 1903 as a private venture between interested Friends. Its existence was made possible by the generosity of George and Elizabeth Cadbury who gave their home for the purpose. From the start, it was a young people's movement:

> There were among Friends, some leaders who had come to terms with Darwin and the thought of the day, but they were few and far between, and their position was suspected by the still dominant older generation. Friends were losing many of their younger folk who were receiving a scientific training and their message was not being presented in a way that could arrest the attention and satisfy the intelligence of the better

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[59] *Ibid.*, p. 40.

[60] Herbert G. Wood, "Origins," in Robert Davis, ed., *Woodbrooke, 1903-1953*, Bannisdale Press, (1953), pp. 16-17.

> educated classes. The adult schools through which Friends reached some of the more thoughtful artisans had arrived at a point where something more was needed than simple Bible study, and the supply of teachers was beginning to decline. To put the matter in a nutshell, Friends did not know enough.[61]

Throughout the period under study, Friends were concerned that young people were deserting the Society, or were becoming inactive in it.[62] Six years after the foundation of Woodbrooke, Elizabeth Braithwaite Emmott told the Yearly Meeting during its discussion of the "State of the Society" that she believed that young people were leaving Friends.[63] Further education was one way of ensuring that young, socially aware Quakers explored the problems of early twentieth century society within the embrace of their denomination. Professionals made up a sizeable proportion of the Society's membership. Even Friends "in trade" made use of the increasing number of vocational courses available in the late nineteenth century; Roger Clark, for example, went from the Quaker Bootham School to Victoria College in Leeds to learn dyeing. Some Friends at least felt a need to engage with educated men and women Friends on an intellectual level, to channel their energies into the Society.

Other Friends were decidedly uneasy about the venture; their reservations kept Woodbrooke from becoming an official foundation of the Society. Instead, Woodbrooke's governing Council was an *ad hoc* body, independent of Yearly Meeting. An editorial in *The Friend* attempted to allay any fears:

> Therefore, it should be clearly understood that Woodbrooke is by no means only for men who are called to give their lives to home or foreign missions. It is specially intended as a residence where

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[61] *Ibid.*, pp. 15-16.

[62] See *The Friend*, 3 June 1880, p. 165; 21 April 1899, pp. 237-238.

[63] *The Friend*, 28 May 1909, p. 363.

> businessmen may turn aside for a month or two from business when opportunity presents, and give themselves to prayer and study and Christian fellowship.[64]

Woodbrooke was further distanced from evangelical ideas of a trained pastorate early in 1904:

> It is clearly shown that the purpose of the Settlement is not to turn out professional ministers or set aside a new class in the Society; but rather "to enable men and women engaged in the ordinary avocations of life to equip themselves better for the service of the Church."[65]

Again, to avoid the charge that Woodbrooke was a training college, it was decided that there would be no set terms of residence, no exams, nor any diplomas or degrees of any kind given. A social work qualification was awarded from 1908 and a teacher training department added in 1916. For the most part, arrangements were flexible. Isabella Fryer was resident only for two weeks, but was impressed enough with what she saw to recommend to the Yearly Meeting on Ministry and Oversight that parents should try to send their children there for a brief spell.[66]

Yet there were aspects of life at Woodbrooke that provoked the defensive tone of the two *Friend* editorials. A typical day included devotional exercises, classes, games, excursions, and opportunities for private study and contemplation; each day ended with the singing of a hymn in the common room before retiring.[67] Woodbrooke's first director of studies, J. Rendel Harris, was not a birthright Friend. A Congregationalist, he had become "convinced" of Friends' principles.

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[64] *The Friend*, 30 October 1903, p. 720.

[65] *The Friend*, 1 January 1904, p. 4.

[66] *The Friend*, 27 May 1904, p. 344.

[67] Wood in Robert Davis, *op. cit.*, p. 26; *The Friend*, 23 August 1907, p. 564.

Compassionate, serious, and learned, he was a popular head. He believed that those who came to Woodbrooke did so by God's will, and welcomed and valued them accordingly. He believed that to be loyal to Christ meant loyalty to the truth, in religious matters as well as in wider society. The ethos of Woodbrooke was to discover, by means of devotional reading, interaction with those of other faiths, and/or practical training, this truth.

What is the place of Woodbrooke in the evolution of Quaker theology? Isichei's judgment of Woodbrooke needs to be modified. If lectures are seen to mark the end of Friends' distrust of intellectual pursuits, then its demise should be located in the last two decades of the nineteenth century, when Quarterly Meetings began adopting a conference format and prepared addresses.[68] Certainly there is no escaping the charge that Woodbrooke was a centre for religious education, but it was education in the broadest sense. It encompassed the Bible, Friends' history, and the study of social problems, amongst other topics. Herbert Wood sees Woodbrooke's first director's motives thus:

> Rendel Harris was not intending to train ministers, but to help laymen to find the basis of their faith in spiritual experience and to appreciate the spirit and method of honest critical inquiry. To deepen a concern for ministry - for the vocal ministry in the meetings for worship, for teaching in adult and first-day schools, and for various forms particularly of voluntary social service - such was the purpose of Woodbrooke as Rendel Harris understood it.[69]

In many ways, it was a deeply spiritual place, with an ethos Friends' sectarian ancestors would have recognised. While at Woodbrooke, Friends learned to apply their faith to the outside world by questioning, pondering, investigating. It may have

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[68] See above, p. 7.

[69] Wood in Robert Davis, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

opened Friends' eyes to alternative methods of devotion - the nightly hymn-singing - and led them to find kindred principles in other faiths. In this respect, Woodbrooke does represent a significant move away from sectarian righteousness and exclusivity.

Woodbrooke was never merely a retreat for weary Quakers. Rendel Harris was adamant that those sympathetic to Friends' principles be allowed to attend. The site itself became a magnet: a working-men's college was founded there, and in 1912, a joint women's missionary training home had located there. Selly Oak (the location of Woodbrooke) became a byword for internationalism, and to a limited extent, ecumenicalism. Students were encouraged to attend a wide range of lectures, although accommodation tended to be denomination-specific. In this experiment, Friends emerged as leaders.

The ultimate outcome of the liberal movement was to continue Friends' interest and participation in the world outside the meeting-house. To this extent, it was a natural successor to evangelical universalism. But it also imbued Quakers with a sense of their own history and a knowledge and understanding of their distinctive principles. Had such a movement not existed, Friends would have been deprived of mystics such as Joan Mary Fry, a member of the Woodbrooke committee, who devoted her life to the principles of worship in the Society. By the early twentieth century, there was room enough for the purely evangelical "busy willing worker" and the quietist "reverent listener", but most importantly, there was a space for a combination of the two.

II. The Baptist Union

Over the course of the nineteenth century, Baptists grew in power and influence. Fired by the Evangelical Revival, the numbers of Baptist chapels and members quadrupled between 1800-1850. W.T. Whitley estimated that for every Baptist church founded between 1649 and 1789, three were established between the outbreak of the French Revolution and the accession of Victoria. For a time in the early nineteenth century, the denomination was growing more rapidly than the population as a whole.[70] Although this spectacular rate was not sustained, growth remained steady; Baptist membership reached a peak in the first decade of the twentieth century. The 1851 religious census showed Baptists' main support in the area from East Midlands to East Anglia. Relatively weak in the north of England, Baptists consolidated their strength in the south and south-east in the second half of the nineteenth century.[71] Politically, David Bebbington charts Baptist involvement in three stages: an initial "quietist" period from 1800-1832; the period 1832-1867 as one of increasing political mobilisation and the "birth of the politics of nonconformity"; and finally a mature stage from 1867-1900, when Baptists "held an assured place in the life of the nation."[72] Baptists became increasingly visible in the capital. Ambitious projects such as the Metropolitan Tabernacle (built for Spurgeon) or Sir Morton Peto's Bloomsbury Chapel arrested and demanded Londoners' attention.

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[70] W.T. Whitley, *A History of British Baptists*, Charles Griffin & Co. Ltd. (1923), p. 249.

[71] John Gay, *The Geography of Religion in England*, Gerald Duckworth and Company Ltd. (1971), pp. 121-122.

[72] D.W. Bebbington, "The Baptist Conscience", p. 13.

Another significant move was the relocation of the London training college for ministers from Stepney to Regent's Park in 1856.

The nineteenth century was, in retrospect, a "good" one for Baptists. But growth and appearances on the national stage masked important divisions amongst Baptists. Calvinist versus Arminian, open versus closed communion, biblical literalists versus those who sought an intellectual basis for faith - on all of these issues, individual Baptists had to make a choice. Unlike the inheritors of Wesley's Methodism, Baptists managed to avoid fragmentation into competing sects, although Clyde Binfield has suggested that their internal divisions kept Baptists from exerting an influence proportionate to their numbers.[73] The sections that follow briefly explain the theological differences amongst Baptists and then look in more depth at the crucial elements that united them: the principle of believer's baptism and their insistence on congregational autonomy.

The term "Baptist" has a certain utility for the historian. It rightly isolates believer's baptism as the defining characteristic of the tradition. But it needs qualification. In the nineteenth century, there were two main strands within what is known for convenience as the Baptist denomination: Particular and New Connexion General.[74] Most numerous were the Particular Baptists.[75] Throughout the rest of this thesis the Particular Baptist will be referred to as "Baptists." This shorthand has

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[73] Clyde Binfield, *So Down to Prayers*, J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd., (1977), p. 6.

[74] This section, of necessity, ignores associations of Strict and Particular congregations and the Spurgeonite secessions in favour of concentrating on the mass of Baptists. The "old" General Baptists can be more usefully studied as being in the Unitarian tradition.

[75] Roger Hayden, *English Baptist History and Heritage*, Baptist Union of Great Britain, [Didcot], (April 1990), p. 107.

some precedent. The "General Meeting of the Particular (or Calvinistic) Baptist Denomination", formed in 1813, was known by contemporaries simply as the Baptist Union. Similarly, the "Particular Baptist Missionary Society for Propagating the Gospel Among the Heathen" was widely known as the Baptist Missionary Society (BMS). For clarity's sake, the full names of each Baptist grouping will be used in this section.

Particular Baptists had their origins in the sectarianism of the early seventeenth century, but rejected the Arminianism of the Anabaptists and Mennonites. Seven London churches promulgated the first English Confession or statement of principles in 1644.[76] Its Calvinist assumptions were honed in the eighteenth century, a period dubbed by Himbury as the "great age of Calvinistic scholasticism". Baptists also began articulating systematic theological arguments against infant baptism at this time.[77] The triumph of narrow Calvinism was epitomised in the writings of John Gill. His five points of Calvinism included: eternal personal election, particular redemption, original sin, efficacious grace in conversion and sanctification, and the perseverance of the Saints in holiness to eternal blessing.[78]

The Evangelical Revival at mid-century transformed attitudes. While many Baptists remained suspicious of Wesley's Arminianism, moderate Calvinism, with its emphasis on social and spiritual responsibility, made steady progress.[79] Three young

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[76] D. Mervyn Himbury, *British Baptists. A Short History*, Carey Kingsgate Press (1962), pp. 35, 43.

[77] *Ibid.*, pp. 66, 69.

[78] *Ibid.*, p. 67.

[79] *Ibid.*, p. 74.

Baptist pastors - John Ryland, Andrew Fuller, and John Sutcliff - were heavily influenced by the American theologian Jonathan Edwards' work *An Humble Attempt to Promote Explicit Agreement and Visible Union of God's People in Extraordinary Prayer*. Edwards was attempting to synthesize his belief in human agency with the Calvinist theological fact of divine sovereignty.[80] In 1785, Andrew Fuller published *The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation*. Its publication brought down the wrath of the rigid Calvinists, but it was an important step in drawing Baptists out of their Calvinistic shell. By arguing that the Gospel was worthy of all acceptation, Fuller undermined the doctrine of election and, by extension, particular redemption. Fuller's theology, like that of Edwards and typical of the Evangelical Revival itself, stresses individual responsibility. The converted and the unconverted had a responsibility to believe in Christ.[81] From this position, it was only a short intellectual hop to the idea that it was the duty of Christians to bring the Gospel to the unconverted. William Carey made this leap in 1792. *An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of Heathens* proved to be the foundation document of the BMS which was formed in the same year.

For rigid Calvinists, the crunch came in 1832, when the Baptist Union was reorganised to take in those "who agree in sentiments usually denominated evangelical." This move allowed greater communication between Particular and New Connexion General Baptists. For stalwarts, this proved that the dominant "Fullerism" was nothing more than Arminian theology masquerading as Calvinism. Some churches and individuals left the Union to form Strict and Particular Baptist

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[80] Brian Stanley, *The History of the Baptist Missionary Society, 1792-1992*, p. 4.

[81] *Ibid.*, p. 6.

Associations.[82] Their concerns were premature. Theological differences between moderate Calvinists and Arminians were still regarded as significant up to the 1860s.[83]

By the 1880s, the situation had changed. It was no longer a straight Calvinist versus Arminian split. Baptists were having to come to terms with biblical criticism and developments in science. John Clifford, of the New Connexion General Baptists, welcomed it; Charles Spurgeon, one of the most gifted preachers of the nineteenth century and a Particular Baptist, was unsympathetic to it.[84] Spurgeon had begun to wonder where evangelicalism and its attendant ecumenicalism was leading Calvinists. Indeed, he had experience of a cross-denominational body; both Clifford and Spurgeon were supporters of the Liberation Society. He felt that Calvinism was being abandoned. After the Congregationalist "Rivulet" controversy of 1856, it was understandable to feel that the certainties of Calvinist theology were being supplanted by sentimentalism.[85] In spring 1887, Robert Shindler wrote two articles which appeared in Spurgeon's magazine, the *Sword and Trowel*, attacking Arminianism. This attack was followed by three articles by Spurgeon, in which he accused fellow Particular Baptists of being on the "down-grade", the slippery slope away from Calvinism.[86] Despite frantic efforts to contain and repair the situation, Spurgeon's

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[82] Hayden, op. cit., p. 105. David M. Thompson, *Nonconformity in the Nineteenth Century*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, (1972), pp. 6-7.

[83] D.M. Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

[84] Hayden, *op. cit.*, p. 134.

[85] D.M. Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 7; Binfield, *So Down to Prayers*, p. 6.

[86] Hayden, *op. cit.*, p. 133.

resignation was accepted in 1888. Some seceded with him to form Spurgeon's Connexion, but the moderate Calvinist majority remained.

Spurgeon lived to see the Calvinist Particulars and Arminian New Connexion Generals united from 1891. It was a union which, for him, had meant an unacceptable watering-down of Calvinist precepts. Particular Baptist theology had been gradually changing. The existence and popularity of the BMS was the death knell of election and particular redemption. Hard experience undermined the perseverance of the saints; Baptists were as capable as other Christians of "backsliding." Through their involvement in the social world of politics and in the politics of society, Baptists adapted their theology to suit their circumstances. Such an adaptation made union with the New Connexion General Baptists possible.

The "General" Baptists were so called because of their belief that salvation was obtainable by all; redemption was "general", not "particular." The original assembly of General Baptists was in decline in the eighteenth century, with many congregations rejecting Trinitarian doctrine in favour of Unitarianism. The remains of the denomination were given new life by Dan Taylor, a Methodist who came to reject infant baptism. Taylor's theology spoke to individual experience and was attractive to General Baptists who were influenced by the Evangelical Revival. He affirmed each soul's free will to accept or reject the redemption offered by the scriptures. Once accepted, he warned that it was possible to fall from grace.[87] In 1770, those General Baptists who followed Taylor's message formed themselves into the General Baptist New Connexion.

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[87] *Ibid.*, p. 84.

Never as numerous as the Particular Baptists, the New Connexion General Baptists were nevertheless part of Baptist society.[88] Obituaries of both Particular and General ministers appeared in the *Baptist Handbook*. General and Particular Baptists did not compete in the mission field, preferring to work in different provinces to assure the spread of Baptist principles. Gradually, the two main representatives of English Baptists moved toward union during the nineteenth century, through missionary cooperation, political activity, and a shift in the intellectual climate of religion away from the sacrificial death of Christ to the humanity of Christ.[89]

Although the Particular and General Baptists were not formally united until 1891, when their mission societies fused and General Baptist Churches were absorbed into provincial Particular Baptist Associations, their joint activities and close relations make it possible to talk about "Baptists" during this period. Even after union, however, differences remained between individual Baptists and individual congregations. The structure of Baptist government was largely able to contain a wide spectrum of opinion due to its stress on congregational autonomy. From Baptists' belief in congregational autonomy springs their distrust of episcopal ordination; within each self-governing congregation, individual members were received into the denomination through the administration of believer's baptism. Each Baptist church had the power to select and ordain its own minister. In the Baptist polity, power rested not in any kind of hierarchy, ecclesiastical or otherwise, but in each sovereign

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[88] At the 1851 religious census, Particular Baptists had 1,491 chapels in England and 450 in Wales. The New Connexion General Baptists had 179 chapels in England and only 3 in Wales. *Ibid.*, p. 107.

[89] See Boyd Hilton, *The Age of Atonement: the influence of evangelicalism on social and economic thought, 1795-1865*, Clarendon Press, Oxford (1988).

congregation. Individualism is the hallmark of Baptist polity; whether the individual act of testimony and baptism before the congregation or the freedom given to congregations within the Union.

Arthur Dakin, president of Bristol Baptist College, attempted to pinpoint the unique features of Baptist government. Heading the list of what made Baptists distinctive was their insistence on congregational autonomy:

> On the first point I have not been able to escape the idea that Baptists start all their organisation from the local church - the two or three gathered together with the Lord in their midst. While others begin with the conception of a central organisation that is thought of as including the local church, Baptists start at the opposite end, and, from the local church, work up to such central position as on that basis can be achieved. This it seems to me is fundamental to Baptist polity and cannot be departed from without abandoning the essential Baptist position.[90]

Churches in an area organised at local level. The BMS, for example, was a product of the concerns of the churches in the Northamptonshire Association. Associations were not always the preferred form of Baptist government. The whole of the New Connexion General Baptists met in annual assembly to discuss issues of importance. The small size of the New Connexion made such a meeting possible. The Particulars revived the Associations from the mid- to late eighteenth century. New Associations were still being formed in the early nineteenth century in areas of Baptist growth - Norfolk, Suffolk, Berkshire, Oxford, Essex, Shropshire, and West London.[91]

The Baptist pattern does not follow the Quaker form of local-provincial-national organisation, with the Yearly Meeting at the top of the pyramid. Local

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[90] A[rthur] Dakin, *The Baptist View of Church and Ministry*, Baptist Union Publication Department, (1944), p. 5.

[91] W.T. Whitley, *op. cit.*, pp. 87, 225-228, 265.

churches did organise in provincial Associations, but the Baptist Union was a union of individual churches, not of Associations. Individual churches decided whether to affiliate to their provincial Association and whether to count themselves within the Baptist Union. At no point can the Baptist Union be said to encompass all Baptists.[92] Some established rival Associations - the Strict and Particular Baptists, for example. In such a polity, the Baptist Union, notionally the controlling central organisation, was weak in comparison with other nonconformist denominations. In the early 1860s, the committee of the Baptist Union comprised the secretaries of eight Baptist societies and thirty-two elected members (half of whom were from London). It had an income of £90, met annually, and essentially existed to gather denominational statistics.[93] Organisation of the Baptist Union did improve: the committee met quarterly, two annual meetings were held (one in London and one in a provincial city), and an acting secretary was appointed to handle denominational business when the committee was not in session. The Baptist Union provided essential services - it set standards of training for ministry, supplemented poor stipends, and provided superannuation, but it did not really govern.[94] 1904 saw the opening of Baptist Church House, a move which recognised the increased importance of the Baptist Union but was in no way the death knell of congregational autonomy.

Such a slow-moving form of government, in charge of limited funds, would have been incapable of the day-to-day running of a large enterprise, such as a mission. At the foundation of the BMS in 1792, it was to be run by two committees - the

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[92] A. Dakin, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

[93] W.T. Whitley, *op. cit.*, pp. 313-314.

[94] A. Dakin, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

General and Central - and presided over by a part-time secretary. It quickly became apparent that the amount of mission business necessitated a full-time appointment. John Dyer found it impossible to undertake both his Reading pastorate and the secretaryship; after a year of attempting to do both he was, in 1818, appointed the first full-time salaried secretary of the mission. The distinction between the two committees was abandoned in 1843 with the creation of a 36-member BMS committee.[95] Over the course of the century, the number of seats on this committee increased steadily - in 1914, it had 107 members. This committee further subdivided into specialised sub-committees - finance, candidates, etc. As the mission grew, the BMS added the post of Foreign Secretary to assist the General Secretary in the business of the mission. The Baptist Zenana Mission, studied in chapter three, modelled itself along these lines. As it was a smaller organisation, its general committee was smaller and it was run, in practice, by its officers.

With the exception of the committee-style government found in its missionary societies, Baptist government does not make any sense if looked at from the top down; power amongst Baptists came from the bottom up. For this reason, there is a great need for more studies of individual churches like Clyde Binfield's *Pastors and People* as well as much work still to be done on county Associations. However, it is possible to make some generalisations about the government of individual chapels. Baptists believed in a priesthood of all believers; God worked on individuals and all who were converted had equal standing.[96] In practice, a priesthood of all believers makes for disorderly government. Baptist chapels were governed by the deacons' meeting (an

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[95] Brian Stanley, *op. cit.*, p. 215.

[96] *Ibid.*, pp. 41-42.

executive committee of the deacons and the minister). The deacons' meeting put items to the church meeting, a gathering of those baptised members of the church which can be seen as the chapel's legislative body.[97] It was here that applications for membership, chapel enlargement, and the financial accounts were discussed. It was also here that women were marginalised.

The many ministries of Baptist women have received scant historical attention. Indeed, Baptists seem to have lagged somewhat behind other denominations in their construction of organisations and opportunities for women - it was only in 1890 that the London Baptist Association opened a small deaconess home; the project was taken over by the Baptist Union in 1919. A national organisation of women's guilds, the Baptist Women's League, was formed in 1908.[98] Baptist women worked very much within their own churches, activities about which historians know very little owing to the paucity of local studies. Of course, the exception to this is the Baptist Zenana Mission, an organisation which could draw on the whole community of Baptist women for funds and workers.

The accepted outline of the "feminine dimension in Baptist life," as John Briggs puts it, is that following their involvement in the radical sects, there was a marked decrease in women's preaching and participation in church government in the eighteenth century; instead, women worked in education (small ventures or Sunday schools) or as hymn-writers as proper outlets for their spirituality.[99] Briggs argues

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[97] *Ibid.*, pp. 22-25.

[98] J.H.Y. Briggs, *English Baptists*, pp. 287, 288.

[99] John Briggs, "She-Preachers, Widows, and Other Women. The Feminine Dimension in Baptist Life since 1600," *Baptist Quarterly* XXXI(7), July 1986, pp. 337-352. His section on "Women" in *English Baptists of the 19th Century* is

that the formation of an organisation like the Zenana Mission and other developments in women's work for the church "did not explicitly challenge either the social convention that respectable women played no public role in mixed society, or Christian teaching that women should be silent in the church."[100] Instead, he argues, the engine for change in the nineteenth century is the second evangelical awakening of the 1860s and the crop of articulate women preachers attached to it, women like Phoebe Palmer and Catherine Booth. Such a development sent Joseph Angus, President of Regent's Park College, and William Landels, pastor of Regent's Park chapel, back to their Bibles for a reexamination of the scriptural precepts surrounding women's preaching.

Angus, in his *Christian Churches* (1862), argued that deacons could be of either sex. Accepting that prophesying could be interpreted as preaching, he interpreted I Corinthians 11:5 (read with Acts 2:17 and 21:9) as verses permitting the public ministry of women.[101] Landels, who first wrote on women in 1859, returning to the subject in 1864 and 1870, eventually came to the conclusion that the biblical office of deaconess could be seen as analogous to women's ministry in the nineteenth century.[102] But what sort of work was permissible? Here it is helpful to distinguish between the terms "deacon" and "deaconess." A deaconess was simply a worker

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substantially the same as this brief article, showing how little work has been done on the subject.

[100] John Briggs, "She-Preachers, Widows and Other Women", p. 344.

[101] *Ibid*, p. 345. The verses from Corinthians relate to the covering of heads, while those from Acts are about the pouring out of the Spirit and the prophecy of Philip's daughters.

[102] Olive Anderson, *op. cit.*, p. 481.

(sometimes paid) for the church, with no voting privileges. Deacons assisted a minister in governing the congregation. The scholarship of Angus and Landels may have reminded Baptists that the deaconess had a respectable biblical pedigree, but did not guarantee her acceptance. R.P. MacMaster, writing on "Deacons: their Character and Work" made one reference to women deacons existing in Apostolic times and then goes on to discuss the important role of the "pastor's cabinet ministers."[103] The works of both Angus and Landels had been in print for eighteen and ten years respectively when MacMaster made his study of the diaconate. While the ideas put into print by them were very important because they provided a theological justification for women's ministry, ideas alone would not see women into the diaconate. As Violet Hedger, the first woman to study for the ministry at Regent's Park College, remembered, "the urge to use one's powers in holy service is not enough, unless the Call be reinforced by the Call of a Church, acting first through the local community, then through the accredited organisations, and when these are recognised, then it seems fair that the whole ministry should be open. There is a tragedy in the lack of encouragement here."[104]

In their study of middle-class piety and society, Davidoff and Hall have shown how women came to be excluded from matters of church government as women's piety came to be more narrowly defined. Among Baptists, the numbers of women deacons plummeted in the early nineteenth century.[105] In the church studied by

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[103] *Baptist Magazine*, November 1880, p. 465.

[104] Violet Hedger, "Some Experiences of a Woman Minister," *Baptist Quarterly*, X(1940-41), p. 250.

[105] Davidoff and Hall, *op. cit.*, p. 137.

Binfield, Queen's Road, women deacons had been mooted since the 1880s. In 1917, it was seriously suggested that women be appointed to the chapel diaconate; none were.[106] In the government of the chapel, in which all were held to be spiritual equals, women were excluded from voting. There is some evidence to suggest that women deacons, who vanished from Baptist chapels in the early nineteenth-century, had begun to reappear by the end of the century, although numbers were still very small.[107] Briggs suggests that the "size of the church fellowship and the availability of men to hold office" influenced whether or not a congregation might have women deacons.[108] Certainly the large London church of Bloomsbury refused to admit women to its eldership.[109] Baptist deaconesses also appeared, almost certainly first within individual churches, ministering to the sick and poor and to women and children.[110]

At the heart of the issue of women deacons was the issue of leadership. The minister may have been "first among equals" and his deacons elected by the church but such attempts at spiritual levelling did not prevent Baptists from equating authority with maleness. The Revd T.G. Rooke's speech on biblical criticism was hailed by the *Baptist Magazine* as "one of the wisest, most discriminating, and manly to which we

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[106] Clyde Binfield, *Pastors and People: the Biography of a Baptist Church, Queen's Road, Coventry*, Queen's Road Baptist Church, Coventry, (1984), p. 165.

[107] Davidoff and Hall, *op. cit.*, p. 137; J.H.Y. Briggs, *English Baptists*, pp. 286-287.

[108] Briggs, *English Baptists*, p. 287.

[109] *Ibid.*

[110] The *Baptist Magazine* "cordially commend[ed]" an appeal by the Revd William Brock of Bloomsbury Chapel for a deaconess. *Baptist Magazine*, July 1894, p. 358.

have listened on the subject for a long time."[111] In 1892, the centenary year of the BMS, an appeal was launched for 100 new missionary candidates to increase the society's work. With the appeal came an attack on "false standards" of manliness and a definition of Christian manhood:

> Christianity is not asceticism. It does not frown on the ordinary business of life, or insist on withdrawal from the world. There is nothing akin to effeminacy in it. Under its influence, properly understood, we approve of physical development. ... I am at one with you in your admiration of manly sports - cricket, football, tennis, and boating. Only let them be kept in their own place. ... The mind, again, must be cultivated, filled with knowledge - knowledge of the material world, of history, of life. Young men should aspire after a sound judgment, a sensitive and vigorous conscience, pure affections that love only the true and the good, and a regal will, which shall guide them with a strong hand and keep command over the reins of appetite and desire. Above all, the spirit should be cultivated.[112]

Young Baptist men were urged to make their way in the world, but to ensure that the path they followed was a Christian one, imbued with the values of the "nonconformist conscience." Such qualities were, thus, the ideal qualities of the ministerial student.[113]

It is clear that individual Baptist congregations found it impossible to give women's ministerial talents official recognition. Within its loosely federal polity, women ministers and deacons could not be appointed from above; any movement would have to originate at chapel level. The inequality of women with men was a

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[111] *Baptist Magazine*, June 1889, p. 279.

[112] *Baptist Magazine*, September 1892, p. 424.

[113] See the description of the "Christian Gentleman" in E. Anthony Rotundo, "Learning about manhood: gender ideals and the middle-class family in nineteenth century America," in Mangan and Walvin, eds., *Manliness and Morality: Middle-class masculinity in Britain and America 1800-1940*, pp. 38-39.

handy stick with which to beat the established Church, but Baptist rhetoric remained just that.[114]

The minister was supposed to be the leader, both within chapel and outside it, of the local Baptist community.[115] Baptists rejected any notion of special grace attendant on the minister and bitterly criticised the Anglican and Roman Catholic concept of a priesthood:

> Episcopal ordination is supposed to create special and exclusive function, so that he who receives it becomes an authorised mediator between God and man. The priest is regarded as a necessary medium of communication between heaven and earth, a dispenser of grace, apart from whose action the blessing of forgiveness can never be received, nor the Kingdom of Heaven opened for our admission.[116]

In theory, a minister was first among equals in a Christian community, set apart only by his training and work.[117] He was responsible to his congregation. Congregations selected their own ministers; importantly, they also paid the minister's salary. It was customary practice to invite a minister to preach on a series of Sundays; at the end of this probation the gathered church had to decide whether to invite the minister to become their pastor. In accepting a minister, a congregation put its seal of approval on his theology, organisational skills and suitability. If a minister and a congregation were happy with each other, the partnership could be lifelong. A settled minister and a contented congregation made for easy government. More local studies are needed

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[114] See *Baptist Magazine*, August 1899, p. 400; December 1899, pp. 579-580.

[115] Queen's Road, Coventry, selected its ministers on leadership capacity as well as sound theology. See Clyde Binfield, *Pastors and People*, *passim*. Also, A. Dakin, *op. cit.*, pp. 39-40.

[116] *Baptist Magazine*, March 1884, p. 104. See also A. Dakin, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

[117] *Baptist Magazine*, March 1884, p. 105; A. Dakin, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

before we can begin to guess to what extent the wishes of deacons, minister, and congregation harmonized.

There is some evidence that Baptists tended to idolise able ministers. The *Baptist Magazine* ran a series of portraits of eminent Baptists, almost all of whom were ministers. Spurgeon, although he rejected any idea that a minister was any different than a devout layman, was a leader to be deferred to. Baptists, as "evangelicals" who "exalt the Gospel and the preaching of the Word" would naturally respect the trained exegesis of their leader.[118] Baptist ministers were never a completely separate caste, but neither were they totally "of" their congregations either.

In chapel government, it appears that the minister and deacons held a disproportionate amount of power. They could control what business came to the church meeting (in practice a meeting of men, not of all baptised believers), and defer awkward discussion. The government of individual Baptist chapels seem to conform to the standard top-down pattern. At all levels of church government, women were either absent or present only in an ancillary capacity. The spiritual equality of all baptised believers, a keystone of Baptist theology, was subordinated to gendered patterns of authority prevalent in wider society.

III. The Salvation Army

Created out of William and Catherine Booth's experiments in revivalism and church government, the Salvation Army self-consciously constructed itself as a

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[118] A. Dakin, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

religious movement different to and separated from the churches of the day.[119] Catherine Booth told a group of middle-class enquirers that the Army had identified the gap between the respectable churches and the working classes and had come into existence to fill the spiritual void.[120] Initially, the Booths' project, a tent-mission in East London, was limited to a "converting shop" at which sinners would be saved and passed on to the churches. It became obvious to the Booths that only the "respectable" were wanted in church; most Army converts were unlikely to darken church or chapel doors, pay pew rents, or, indeed, own an extra set of clothes for "Sunday best." For those converts that the churches would not welcome, the Booths' enterprise expanded to cater for their spiritual needs. William Booth reflected in 1885:

> My first idea was simply to get the people saved and send them to the Churches. This proved at the outset impracticable.
> First, they would not go when sent.
> Second, they were not wanted.
> And third, we wanted some of them at least ourselves to help in the business of saving others. We were thus driven to providing for the converts ourselves.[121]

Such an acknowledgement marked a break with the Booths' revivalist past. Instead of acting as a clearing-house for spiritual wrecks, picking them up and putting them on the ladder to regular church attendance, the Salvation Army claimed to be the

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[119] *War Cry*, 4 November 1882, p. 3. Roland Robertson examines the Army's "anti-denominational" tendencies in "The Salvation Army: the Persistence of Sectarianism," in Bryan Wilson, ed., *Patterns of Sectarianism*, pp 49-105.

[120] Catherine Booth, *The Salvation Army in Relation to the Church and State*, S.W. Partridge and Co., Book Depot of the Salvation Army, G.T. Horn (1883), p. 32.

[121] Quoted in Robert Sandall, *The History of the Salvation Army*, Volume 1: 1865-1878 Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd. (1947), p. 66. For the persistence of pew-rents in nineteenth-century churches and chapels see K.S. Inglis, *op. cit.* See also Hugh McLeod, *Religion and the Working Class in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, p. 58.

church of the "Churchless Masses."[122] Army parlance intentionally omitted references to "chapels"; instead, places of worship were labelled "barracks" or the "Salvation warehouse." Adherents were enlisted as "soldiers" of a "corps".[123] It retained this image of itself throughout the period and significantly reinforced it through the "Darkest England" scheme (1890) through which Britain's neglected and "submerged tenth" were to be brought to Christ and introduced to useful, remunerative employment.[124] In its efforts to reach those masses, the Army adopted tactics unlike any of the churches of its day. It was aggressively expansionist in terms of home and foreign missions and was governed from the top down with military inflexibility. Encased within rigid Army hierarchies was a religion not "of intellect, of culture, of refinements, of creeds, or of ceremony or forms"[125] but of the heart - immediate, emotional, experiential. This section will consider the Army's most basic theological principles - personal salvation and personal holiness - and examine its abandonment of the sacraments. Next, the evolution of Army government will be traced. Lastly, this section will chart the growth of the Salvation Army over the period and examine the Army's claims to reach and convert the lowest of the low in society.

As its name states, the Salvation Army directed its efforts towards the salvation of souls. Salvation was not an abstract principle but a personal battle with the devil

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[122] See the Army's reference to itself in the *War Cry*, 8 September 1917, p. 3.

[123] Glenn Horridge, *The Salvation Army. Origins and Early Days: 1865-1900*, Ammonite Books, Godalming (1993), p. 49. Similarly, the Army shunned the term "hymn", as too "churchy," opting instead for the secular "song." Sandall, *History*, Volume 2: 1878-1886, (1950), chapter 19.

[124] William Booth, *In Darkest England and the Way Out*, International Headquarters of the Salvation Army, n.d. [?1915 edition], pp. 17-23 and *passim*.

[125] Catherine Booth, *Church and State*, pp. 10-11, 38, 42-43.

and temptation. William and Catherine Booth's experiences as Methodists and as successful revivalists had impressed upon them the need for individual attention. Catherine explained that, in the Salvation Army, "all its members [are] being taught to make all the other objects and aims of life subservient to the one grand purpose of preaching the Gospel to every creature, and striving to win every soul with whom they come in contact to its salvation."[126] Army services, which always included a call to the repentant, were designed not only to edify and interest the faithful, but to reclaim the prodigal.

The Doctrines and Disciplines of The Salvation Army (1881, many later editions), written for use in officer-training by General Booth, is a succinct guide to Army beliefs.[127] Set out in question-and-answer format and broken up into sections such as "The Divinity of Christ" and "How we became sinners," this slender red book was an officer's first point of reference when dealing with enquirers or hecklers. Its purpose is to explain, as simply and directly as possible, the Army's position on a variety of theological issues, from water baptism to entire sanctification. The *War Cry* praised its usefulness, "Fewer of our people would be puzzled by the modern views of Christian doctrine if they read this work. It goes right down to the rock-bottom of Divine truth and shows whence unscriptural heresies arise." According to this article, an Army cadet could expect to receive 72 hours' instruction in the *Doctrines* over the course of the six-month training regimen, with more time spent in private study and class preparation.[128]

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[126] *Ibid.*, pp. 31-32.

[127] *War Cry*, 6 February 1897, p. 3.

[128] *War Cry*, 12 November 1898, p. 5.

Chief amongst the "rock-bottom" truths explained by the *Doctrines* were the sinfulness of mankind, the divinity of Christ, and the necessity of salvation. One exchange, proving the divinity of Christ, reads as follows:

> Has he done that for you and in you which only God could do? Yes! He has pardoned my sins, reconciled me to the Father, delivered me from the power of sin and the Devil, and He keeps me and comforts me daily in this mighty conflict, and gives me a holy assurance that He will, if I prove faithful, finally give me a crown of life.[129]

As this passage shows, salvation ("He has pardoned my sins and reconciled me to the Father") is but the first step in the Christian life. The Salvationist may also become sanctified ("delivered from the power of sin and the Devil"). Deliverance in the Salvation Army took place on two levels referred to in the Army motto: "Blood and Fire."[130] At one level, Salvationists believed in the saving blood of Christ, who died in place of each individual sinner.[131] However, the Army believed that, "after conversion there remain[ed] in the heart of the believer inclinations to evil, or roots of bitterness, which, unless overpowered by Divine grace, produce[d] actual sin."[132] The Army preached a doctrine of holiness or entire sanctification represented by the white-hot, purifying fire. To be sanctified was to be without sin and without the ability to sin. "Entire sanctification supposes complete deliverance. Sin is destroyed out of the soul, and all powers, faculties, possessions, and influences of the soul are

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[129] [William Booth], *The Doctrines and Disciplines of The Salvation Army*, Prepared for the Training Homes by the General, Headquarters (1881), p. 9. For the sinfulness of mankind see pp. 11-14.

[130] Brigadier Margretts of Canada called for officers "ambitious for the salvation of souls and the sanctification of believers"; *War Cry*, 26 March 1892, p. 3.

[131] *Doctrines*, pp. 18-19.

[132] *War Cry*, 6 January 1906, p. 2.

given up to the service and glory of God."[133] To be kept perfect and pure in the midst of one's labours in the sinful world was the goal of every officer; holiness was seen as essential for the rigours of officership and was especially important in giving women the confidence and authority to undertake Army duty.[134] Salvationist theology denied the doctrine of final perseverance.[135] Both salvation and sanctification could be lost, through inattention to prayer and surrender to the secular world. To prevent this, the Army held weekly holiness meetings to assist those seeking it and to reinforce the experience of those who possessed it.

Salvation Army theology relied heavily on the presence and intervention of the Holy Spirit.[136] It was this privileging of the third member of the Trinity which distinguished Salvationist theology from mainstream evangelical thought and which gave it its sectarian quality. Catherine Booth justified women's right and duty to preach by a lengthy exposition and reinterpretation of the Pauline epistles which allude

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[133] *Doctrines*, p. 62.

[134] *Doctrines*, p. 90. *War Cry*, 16 March 1889, p. 14; *The Deliverer*, 1 April 1890, p. 130. William Booth, *The Seven Spirits*, Salvation Army Book Department, (1907), pp. 24, 43-46; [Minnie L.] Carpenter, *The Angel Adjutant of "Broken Earthenware"*, Hodder and Stoughton Ltd., [1921], pp. 24-25, 137-140. See also the prayer of a mid-20th century Salvationist in Jenty Fairbank, *Booth's Boots: The Beginnings of Salvation Army Social Work*, International Headquarters of The Salvation Army, (1983), pp. 23-24.

[135] *Doctrines*, sections 21-22.

[136] The Booths' eldest daughter, Catherine (known as La Maréchale), resigned from the Army in 1902 to join her husband Arthur Booth-Clibborn at the charismatic John Alexander Dowie's "Zion City". Their departure prompted William Booth to deny the possibility of faith healing (which could be seen as a manifestation of the Holy Spirit). In the Army, the power of the Holy Spirit manifested itself by purifying the soul. Even before this pronouncement, Army folklore was rich in examples of the weak, dying body contrasted to the glowing soul - Catherine Booth's courage in the face of cancer was well-known. See also, Mrs Lieutenant-Colonel [Minnie] Carpenter, *Miriam Booth: A Sketch*, Salvationist Publishing & Supplies Ltd., (1920).

to women's speech. She ended her argument by posing a significant question: can women's preaching be unscriptural if the Holy Spirit profits their ministry? She asked:

> If the word of God forbids female ministry we would ask how it happens that so many of the most devoted handmaidens of the Lord have felt themselves constrained by the Holy Ghost to exercise it? Surely there must be a mistake somewhere, for the word and the Spirit cannot contradict each other.[137]

The blessing of the Spirit was actively sought, for it amounted to a divine seal of approval for an individual's and indeed the Army's actions. All-night prayer sessions were not uncommon, especially before an important undertaking. Lieutenant Eliza Haynes shouted invitations to Salvation Army meetings in Nottingham wearing a placard bearing the words "Happy Eliza"; her techniques proved a success and she was soon sent to Marylebone to continue the Army's work. Her motives for such an outrageous display, however, were unobjectionable by Army standards.

> It would be unjust to Eliza Haynes, as to other earnest women of her type, to conclude that she adopted unconventional methods because she liked to show or was herself as rough as the people she sought to attract. Nor had she been inspired by the concentrated fervour of a great and enthusiastic council of war! It was from the quiet of a night spent in prayer that she had gone out to make her whirlwind round of the town.[138]

Divine blessing on the Army's unusual activities was also used as a defence mechanism. Frances Power Cobbe charged that the Salvation Army was lowering the tone of religion and predicted a downward spiral as each preacher concocted more and

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[137] Catherine Booth, "Women and the Ministry," undated typescript, Salvation Army International Heritage Centre, "Female Ministry, File Number 1", pp. 19, also 20.

[138] Sandall, *History*, Volume 2: 1878-1886, pp. 16-17.

more "grotesque orations" to "outsensationalize" the others.[139] The Army's reply was to stress that man is not reformed by intellect, but by the Spirit of God working direct on an individual soul. Catherine Booth regarded intellectual cultivation as a false god:

> You may educate; but don't you know, some of you, the state of the educated classes? Is it any better than that of the uneducated? Has not the education only increased the capacity for mischief? You know it is so. You know how fast we have been going back for the last fifty years in morality.[140]

William stressed the need for plain language, arguing, "we believe the greatest possible kindness to a man who is doing wrong and going to hell is to tell him so in the plainest and most urgent language that can be used."[141]

The Army's sectarian emphasis on the "things of the Spirit" is further seen in its denial of the efficacy of the Christian sacraments. At the time of the Army's foundation, when it was still more "converting-shop" than denomination, there was no set policy on sacraments. With the Army's development of a theology centred on the Holy Spirit, outward ordinances became less important and were gradually abandoned.

In the early days of the Salvation Army, both men and women officers were empowered to administer the Lord's Supper.[142] The 1881 *Doctrines* allowed the administration of the ordinance if it was thought to be helpful to the faith of the

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[139] Frances Power Cobbe, "The Last Revival", *Contemporary Review*, Volume XLII (August 1882), p. 186. Cardinal Manning argued that low language distanced the believer from God, "The Salvation Army", *Contemporary Review*, Volume XLII (September 1882), pp. 340-341.

[140] Catherine Booth, *Church and State*, pp. 42-43.

[141] William Booth, "What is The Salvation Army?", *Contemporary Review*, Volume XLII (August 1882), p. 176.

[142] Pamela Walker, *op. cit.*, p. 123.

soldier, but it was firmly stated that it was not necessary for salvation.[143] Only two Army outposts were administering it by mid-1882.[144] Redundant in Salvationist theology, William Booth finally ruled against the practice in 1883. Conversion, not communion, was uppermost in the Army agenda. What was important was the personal work of the Holy Spirit on each individual soul, not regular attendance at services or participation in ceremonies.[145]

The only baptism recognised by the Army as valid was the "baptism of the Holy Ghost"; if a believer possessed this, the rite of water baptism was unnecessary.[146] Catherine Booth's emphasis on preaching and prayer, as well as her admiration for Quaker practice, made her the leading anti-sacramentalist in the Salvation Army. She and Booth's aide, George Scott Railton, convinced William of the futility of such ceremonies.[147] Believer's baptism was officially removed from acceptable Army practice in the same 1883 *War Cry* pronouncement which abandoned the Lord's Supper. As was the case in other sectarian movements, the abandonment of sacraments served as a facilitator for women's ministry. In place of water baptism the Salvation Army adopted a dedication ceremony for infants. Any child over the age of six or seven, though, had reached the age of accountability.[148] The Salvation

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[143] *Doctrines*, section 26.

[144] Horridge, *op. cit.*, p. 116.

[145] Walker, *op. cit.*, p. 121, 123.

[146] *Doctrines*, section 26.

[147] Raymond Caddy, "Co-Founder (Catherine Booth and the Salvation Army)", in Clifford W. Kew, ed., *Catherine Booth - her continuing relevance*, Salvation Army International Headquarters, (1990), p. 124.

[148] Horridge, *op. cit.*, p. 116.

Army actively preached the need for children to make an "immediate decision for Christ", much to the disgust of Randall Davidson.[149]

Randall Davidson's criticism of the Salvation Army went further than his evident distaste at Army tactics for evangelising children. As an organisation whose weekly *War Cry* had attained a circulation of 300,000, Davidson gave it his close attention. He praised some aspects of the movement: its use of personal testimony, the zeal of its leaders, and the way it employed converts in the evangelisation of others.[150] Chief among the Army's defects was, according to Davidson, the absolute authority vested in the General, a form of government which he likened to that of the Jesuits.[151] The government of the Salvation Army was a concern to non-Salvationists until well into the 1890s; always the fear was that the General had too much power and could easily abuse it.

Both William and Catherine Booth believed that it was through strong government that their evangelistic efforts would succeed.[152] As a young woman, Catherine had gone from the Wesleyans to the breakaway Reformers. Still unhappy with the church government she found, she attended her local Congregational church. Eventually she settled with William in the Methodist New Connexion.[153] The young

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[149] *Phases of Work in the Salvation Army*, Salvation Army Printing Works, St Albans, (1911), p. 8; Jean James, "Training ... Christians from Babyhood", in Kew, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 110; Randall Davidson, "The Methods of the Salvation Army", *Contemporary Review*, Volume XLII (August 1882), p. 197.

[150] Randall Davidson, *op. cit.*, pp. 190-192.

[151] *Ibid.*, p. 193.

[152] Horridge, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

[153] Frederick de L. Booth-Tucker, *The Life of Catherine Booth*, The Salvation Army, [1892], pp. 49, 51, 70, 94-98.

couple had hoped that the liberal Methodism of the New Connexion would allow them enough latitude. At first this appeared to be the case. William was appointed an evangelist in 1855. For two years, they conducted revivals together. When appointed to the Gateshead circuit in 1857, they went, hoping that William would be reappointed to the post of evangelist after he had done one turn on a circuit. This did not happen and the Booths resigned in 1862.[154]

For the next three years they worked as independent revivalists. With the doors of Methodist chapels closed against them, the Booths developed a revival technique which relied on the use of secular buildings and open-air meetings to propagate their message.[155] When William accepted an invitation to preach at the tent mission in East London in 1865 the Booths found a measure of security and stability.[156] With the family finally settled in London, the development of governing structures could actually begin. From the first, it was apparent that Booth's style of ministry and government repelled as well as attracted. After the mission's first year, its personnel numbered a disappointing sixty. There had been considerable turnover in personnel which, according to the official historian of the Army, in Booth's eyes amounted to desertion. Objection was raised to the doctrine of sanctification; others disliked the tone of the meetings.[157] Another important factor in this equation was Booth's autocracy. Despite its constitution, which provided for a Methodist Conference-style of government, William Booth was the ultimate authority in the

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[154] Sandall, *History*, Volume 1: 1865-1878, Chapter 2.

[155] *Ibid.*, p. 16.

[156] Horridge, *op. cit.*, pp, 21, 26.

[157] Sandall, *History*, Volume 1: 1865-1878, pp. 46-47.

Christian Mission.[158] Control was effectively centred on Booth and a small group of intimates. For those who disagreed, the only option was to leave. Many clearly did.[159]

In 1875, he was given the right to veto any decisions made by Conference and was confirmed as General Superintendent for life. The 1875 constitution permitted the Conference to alter the document after a period of five years. Three sections were, however, deemed to be inviolable and were not included in Conference's power to change. They were: the doctrines of the Mission, the position of William Booth, and the right of women to hold any position within the Mission, a reflection of its unique theology.[160] The 1878 Foundation Deed of the Salvation Army confirmed Booth's position as the undisputed head of the organisation.[161] Catherine Booth held no official rank in the Army, but she was a member of the Staff Council - a body which existed to advise the General.

Roland Robertson sees the Salvation Army in the sociological context of the "organisational society" - a society in which the Army was one among many similar organisations competing for public money and sympathy.[162] In such a society, the adoption of a military style of government served to differentiate the Army from its competitors and give it a definite identity. Here, however, Robertson is arguing from effect rather than cause. The use of military metaphor did distinguish the Army from

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[158] *Ibid.*, Chapters 15 and 16.

[159] Horridge, *op. cit.*, pp. 57, 89, 149-150.

[160] Sandall, *History*, Volume 1: 1865-1878, pp. 182, 184.

[161] Horridge, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

[162] Robertson, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

other movements, but that was not the reason for its adoption. In the 1870s, religious language in general was influenced by militarist overtones.[163] Most important, a military hierarchy fused the element of control with the ability to respond quickly, an important practical consideration. One of the perceived disadvantages of the Conference system of government was that it was too slow to prosecute an urgent "salvation war".[164] Vesting all authority in one person, the General, simplified the decision-making process; a clear hierarchy meant that administration was straightforward.

Ranks in the Army were divided into four groups: local officers, field officers, staff officers, and, later, social officers. Local officers remained in "secular" employment and did not draw pay from the Army. They were required to wear uniform and assisted in the running of the corps; the higher-ranking local officers fulfilled functions analogous to that of deacon (although with less power). Included in the ranks of the local officers were the positions of: Secretary, Treasurer, Sergeant-major, Bandmaster, Deputy Bandmaster, Songster Leader, Quartermaster, Colour Sergeant, Corporals, Envoys, and Bandsmen.[165]

Commanding the local officers and in charge of each corps was the field officer. A field officer would have received between six and nine months' training before going on "active duty." Typically, a corps would have two field officers - one commander and one deputy. In the 1870s, it was not uncommon for men and women

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[163] Horridge, *op. cit.*, pp. 33-34.

[164] *Ibid.*, p. 30; Sandall, *History*, Volume 1: 1865-1878, chapters 16 and 17.

[165] For a full list, see *Phases of Work in The Salvation Army*, Salvation Army Printing Works, St Albans (1911), p. 10.

evangelists of the Christian Mission to be stationed together, although the practice was not long continued.[166] This change in policy must have been due in part to the fact that field officers in the Salvation Army were expected to live as cheaply as possible.[167] Two men or two women could easily share lodgings; the lodgings bill would double if a man and woman were appointed to the same corps. The work of a field officer was extremely demanding. "Each officer is expected to conduct 19 to 25 meetings weekly, extending over 30 to 35 hours; to spend 18 hours visiting from house to house, and to spare no effort besides for the good of souls."[168] Field officers were also required to complete extensive paperwork, detailing meetings held and souls saved. Moves between commands were frequent, a vestige of Booth's Methodist past. A typical officer, Adjutant Amelia Eva served in two corps as lieutenant. In her five years and ten months as captain (February 1889-December 1894), she held twelve commands in and around the midlands.[169]

Staff officers headed the Army's various territorial divisions and Headquarters departments (eg. Trade and Literature, Property, Finance). Some were field officers, promoted to regional commands; others made their Army career one of administration. The Army reckoned that its staff officers were, for the most part, "self-made men" who applied (or to use the Army term, "consecrated") their business skills to

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[166] Sandall, *History*, Volume 1: 1865-1878, p. 215.

[167] Field officers had to ensure the expenses of their corps were met before drawing any salary. For a critique of this policy, see John Manson, *The Salvation Army. A Religious, Social, and Financial Study*, George Routledge and Sons Ltd, (1906), p. 51.

[168] William Booth, "What is the Salvation Army", p. 181.

[169] *War Cry*, 25 June 1898, p. 11.

administering the Army's increasing bureaucracy.[170] In general, their salaries were higher than those of serving field officers.[171] Staff officers enjoyed more fixity of tenure than field officers, although the commanders of territorial divisions were sometimes uprooted en masse and transferred to new divisions.[172] As the result of such moves, two of the Booths' children resigned: Ballington in 1896 and Herbert in 1902.

Social officers staffed the Army's social work wing, officially inaugurated in 1890 by the "Darkest England" scheme. Essentially, they shared the same ranks as field officers, but their work was officially separated from the evangelism/corps superintendence of their field officer counterparts. In practice, however, the two overlapped as social work "cases" were forwarded to social officers from the "field". Social corps cadets held open-air and indoor services as part of their training.[173] Margaret Allen's "Day with the Scotch Rescue Secretary", finds a social officer not only looking after the women in her care, but spending a few hours each day selling the *War Cry* and *Deliverer* as well as holding impromptu meetings in the streets.[174] Generally, though, social officers were regarded as a breed apart and had their own training home.

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[170] *Phases of Work in The Salvation Army*, p. 13.

[171] John Manson, *op. cit.*, pp. 57, 226; Memorandum by Edward Higgins, Head of the British Territory, "Promotions and Salaries of Field Officers", 25 July 1916, Salary file, International Heritage Centre.

[172] *War Cry*, 5 November 1892, pp. 9-10; 15 February 1896, p 8.

[173] *The Deliverer*, Christmas 1891, p. 101.

[174] *The Deliverer*, September 1893.

Where did these dedicated men and women come from? The Army preferred to stress the working-class character of its officers. The *War Cry* declared, "If the London bar-room may be said to supply the Army with its male officers, the factory may, with equal truth be said to supply the Army with its female officers."[175] But it also had in its ranks women like Major Haartman, head of Army operations in Finland, whose "breeding has been of a high order. The possessor of splendid linguistic powers, she is able to converse fluently in French, German, Swedish and English. ... The War has rubbed off the few niceties of speech and the slight stiltedness of manner that clung to her in London as a cadet ... ."[176] Here was clearly no factory lass. It could also boast about its real-life "Major Barbaras," women "of education and refinement, [who] have voluntarily and cheerfully accepted the rough road of a Salvationist's career."[177] When choosing a spouse, the Booth children all wed Salvationists, but preferred spiritual and social equals. Bramwell married Florence Soper, a doctor's daughter in 1882; Emma's husband, Frederick de Latour Booth-Tucker, had been a member of the Indian Civil Service.[178]

Historians disagree about the extent to which the Army can be said to be a working-class phenomenon. The lack of officer returns for the whole of the period, and of many officers' career files, has fuelled this debate. Without useful statistics, historians must rely on the estimates given by the Army itself as well as those of its

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[175] *War Cry*, 22 January 1898. p. 5. Also, *Phases of Work in the Salvation Army*, pp. 12, 15.

[176] *War Cry*, 29 April 1893, p. 5.

[177] *War Cry*, 30 December 1905, p. 13. See also the career of Major Marie Meidinger (Mrs Commissioner McKie), *War Cry*, 12 October 1901, pp. 3, 6.

[178] Fairbank, *Booth's Boots*, pp. 112, 114.

critics and supporters for information about officers and members. Such pronouncements are very much open to interpretation. Most importantly, however, historians argue about the class composition of the Army in an attempt to place it within an accepted historiographical tradition. Was the Army about social control, giving potentially disorderly workers a uniform, respectability, and a good sprinkling of middle-class values? Or was it an organic movement, in tune with working-class spiritual needs? Pamela Walker criticizes Gareth Stedman Jones and Victor Bailey for viewing the Army as an extrinsic, middle-class force. Instead she offers an interpretation of the Army as an organisation grappling with working-class values on working-class terms and operating within working-class neighbourhoods.[179] Robertson concluded that the social constituency of the Army during the period was "lower middle class, initially conjoined with a substantial minority of diverse lower-class elements."[180] He found that the middle and lower grades of the officer ranks were populated by the lower middle class and working class, with a shift toward the lower middle class apparent in the first decade of the twentieth century.[181] Robertson's conclusions were based on the observations of contemporaries A.M. Nicol, a former Salvation Army commissioner (he resigned in 1908), and Zoë Fairfield. Glenn Horridge has examined officer returns between 1878-1883 and has estimated, for that period, 93% of the Army's officers came from the working classes. Women

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[179] Walker, *op. cit.*, pp. 167-172; 207-208. See Victor Bailey, "Salvation Army Riots, the 'Skeleton Army' and Legal Authority in the Provincial Town," in A.P. Donajgrodzki, ed., *Social Control in Nineteenth Century Britain*, Croom Helm (1977), pp. 239, 240.

[180] Robertson, *op. cit.*, p. 98.

[181] *Ibid.*, pp. 88, 98.

officers tended to be either domestic servants or in the garment trade (milliner, dressmaker, staymaker). Significantly, a high proportion had some religious affiliation before joining the Army; it was not the "unchurched" who were applying to save their submerged brethren.[182] This leaves the highest ranks to members of the Booth family (as has been seen above) and to those above the level of artisan or small shopkeeper. Two of the "Army Barbaras" highlighted for their "gentle birth" in a 1905 *War Cry* article, Minnie Reid and Mildred Duff, both held high places in the Army hierarchy, as Provincial Commander for Ireland (the first Army woman to hold this rank) and in the Editorial Department of International Headquarters, respectively.[183]

Robertson has suggested that Army activity brought respect and status. Hence, for those officers in the lower grades, there was a strong incentive to achieve status through promotion in the Army.[184] For converts, salvation was represented as a passport to a better lifestyle, perhaps not a luxurious one, but a move from Booth's "submerged tenth" to the respectable working class. One example concentrated on the dwelling of a "reclaimed drunkard":

> A clean workman's kitchen. A brightly burning fire, brighter fire-irons, spotless white table-cloth and curtains, a cat sleeping on the hearth-rug, and a bird twittering happily in its cage. ... It was very hard to believe that this had recently been a drunkard's home.[185]

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[182] Horridge, *op. cit.*, pp. 73, 76, 82-85, 86.

[183] *War Cry*, 30 December 1905, p. 13.

[184] Robertson, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

[185] *War Cry*, 11 May 1907, p. 8. See also *War Cry*, 17 January 1880, p. 4; *The Deliverer*, August 1895, p. 23; "The Salvation Mill", in the *War Cry*, 20 February 1904, p. 6.

In emphasising sobriety and cleanliness, and offering opportunities for further education and a public persona within its officer ranks, the Army echoed the values of other working-class self-help agencies - Trades Unions, cooperative societies and the like. As the Army hierarchy solidified, some became in essence career officers, committing themselves to the Army and trusting it to provide not only the necessities of life but a framework of rewards and recognition.

Over the last twenty years of the nineteenth century, the Salvation Army put the finishing touches on an image of itself as the saviour of those the churches had given up for lost. Its Spirit-centred, experiential, and egalitarian religion made instant salvation - immediate forgiveness - possible and facilitated the involvement of women.[186] Closely governed by William Booth and then by his son Bramwell, the Army hierarchy provided an amount of control over what otherwise could easily have become a disorganised sect or a decentralised holiness movement. Those who remained "under the Flag" were united by a strong belief in the efficacy of the Army to reform and regenerate society.

Although not unaffected by the strong ecumenical movement of the late-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, these three denominations preserved their integrity by retaining their distinguishing theological and organisational features, whether military government, reliance on the Light Within, or the absolute necessity of believers' baptism. The next three sections will look at women's strategies for circumventing, taming, or working within denominational structures - strategies which involved reinterpreting denominational conventions as well as manipulating notions

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[186] For the attractiveness of this idea see Walker, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

of the feminine, questioning or sometimes affirming received tradition, and redefining it in such a way as to allow women's participation.

Chapter Two. Denominational citizenship and women's suffrage: spiritual equality and sexual difference in the Society of Friends

Quakerism in this period was perceived by both its members and their contemporaries of other denominations as offering unusual opportunities for women and maintaining a tradition of sexual equality. At the 1903 meeting of the National Council of Evangelical Free Churches, Mrs W.S. Caine stated that Friends' commitment to sexual equality was the chief reason for their progress.[1] Mrs Fawcett welcomed the support of the 1913 Yearly Meeting for the women's movement, writing: "[w]e valued this all the more because of their fine record in the matter of sex equality in religious matters from the foundation of the Society. They had from the first practised as well as preached the doctrine of equality as between men and women, and had again and again been pioneers in matters of education and social reform, besides giving us many of our most valued colleagues and leaders."[2] Certainly, many Quaker women, as individuals and through family networks, actively participated in political and social reform movements, including women's suffrage.[3]

Members of the Society would have approved of Mrs Fawcett's praise of the opportunities available to women within the Quaker organisation. An address by Handley Carr Glyn Moule on "The Public Ministry of Women" was dismissed with the comment, "One would not expect much more advanced theories from a Church of

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[1] *The Friend*, 20 March 1903, p. 181. Alice Caine was the daughter of the Baptist minister Hugh Stowell Brown; her husband W.S. Caine was a Liberal Unionist MP.

[2] Millicent Garrett Fawcett, *The Women's Victory - and After*, Sidgwick & Jackson Ltd (1920), p. 76.

[3] Sandra Holton, *op. cit.*; Clare Midgley, *op. cit.*; June Hannam, *Isabella Ford*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford (1989), pp. 16-17, 32.

England clergyman."[4] A report on "Jubilee Celebrations and Female Education" published in the 1881 *Friend* is evidence that such attitudes were widely held within the Society. Friends saw themselves as leaders in the field of girls' education because "[t]he place assigned to women in the ecclesiastical polity of Friends demanded an education more substantial in its character ... ."[5] Thirty years later, Wilfrid Grace argued that, in the past, Quakers' separation from the world had limited the social outlets of women Friends, but this same isolation fostered women's position within Friends. "Our history, I think, teaches that the limitations which the discipline placed upon women were in large measure responsible for the public position which they have continued to take in the work and ministry of our Society since the decline of its early enthusiasm."[6] Separation from the world had nourished a culture among Quakers that not only permitted, but encouraged women's involvement in the denomination through a system of women's meetings and support for female ministry. Indeed, in more cases than the Quaker one, female preaching has been one of the ways in which sectarian theology is manifested.[7] In most instances, the pattern seems to have been that as sects became institutionalized - by church-building, developing a church administration, and professionalising the ministry by requiring a certain

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[4] *The Friend*, 14 April 1892, p. 259. Moule was principal of Ridley Hall, Cambridge.

[5] *The Friend*, 2 July 1881, p. 187.

[6] *The Friend*, 19 May 1911, p. 326.

[7] Keith Thomas, *op. cit.*; Bryan Wilson, *Religious Sects*; and Deborah Valenze, *op. cit.*

amount of theological training - women's preaching was suppressed.[8] Friends' tradition, buttressed by the principles of Inner Light theology, proved remarkably resilient. The Society resisted a professional ministry and women's part in the administrative process was ensured by the network of women's meetings.

Friends in this period were also able to refer to their own heroic past, a past in which women like Margaret Fell (who married George Fox) were jailed for their beliefs and women ministers made long, arduous, and even dangerous journeys under the aegis of the Spirit and with the approval of the denomination.[9] Nineteenth-century Friends liked to point out that, after George Fox, the first minister of the Society was a woman. In the seventeenth century, women were the first to preach Friends' message in London, Oxford, and Cambridge. Gulielma Crosfield encouraged Quaker women to participate in Home Mission work by recounting the exploits of eminent women preachers, such as Mary Fisher, "who went to preach to the naughty students."[10] Mary Fisher's ministerial career also included a journey to the Ottoman Empire, in the belief that she brought a divine message to the "Grand Turk."[11]

Often the sectarian legacy of the seventeenth century remained unquestioned, the bedrock of Friends' reforming tradition. This is not, however, the case when one

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[8] This was certainly true of the Methodists and Methodist splinter groups. See Valenze, *op. cit.*, Chapter 12. For a contemporary comment, see Dr Richard Thomas's article, "The Pastoral Question," in *The Friend*, 2 January 1888.

[9] Elfrida Vipont Foulds, "Travel Under Concern: 300 Years of Quaker Experience," *Journal of the Friends Historical Society*, Vol 50 No 4 (1964), pp. 187-210.

[10] Report of the Annual Public Meeting of Friends' Home Missions, *The Friend*, 18 June 1909, p. 411.

[11] Foulds, *op. cit.*, p. 196.

looks at the interests and activities of women Friends. Here the heroic past and a historic Quakerism in which women enjoyed equality with men rested uneasily against gendered notions of respectable behaviour. It has been suggested that Inner Light theology and sexual subordination were incompatible.[12] While Friends' theology did have a strong egalitarian message, the Society was also affected by the embourgeoisement of its members and the gendered patterns of identity which were being developed in response to these changes. Throughout the period, there was a fear among Friends that women were not coming forward in Quaker ministry. Although this decline is not borne out in an examination of the number of recorded ministers, this concern for women's ministry does indicate that some Friends, at least, felt that the constraints of respectable behaviour could hinder women's participation. Increasing professional opportunities for women, and indeed the women's movement, raised women's awareness of their status within their own denomination. Women Friends began to demand an equal share in the government of their Society and admittance to its highest councils, the Yearly Meeting and Meeting for Sufferings. The implications of the movement for women's suffrage, in which many individual Friends took part, further illustrates the tension between the egalitarian past Friends claimed as their own and the unequal realities of the franchise system. The issue divided the denomination, splitting it into those Friends who advocated women's suffrage on the grounds of Quaker practice and the history of the Society in espousing just causes, and those who deemed it a "political" issue and thus inappropriate for discussion in a religious society.

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[12] Jacques Tual, "Sexual Equality and Conjugal Harmony: the way to celestial bliss. A view of early Quaker Matrimony," *Journal of the Friends Historical Society*, Vol 55 No 6 (1988), pp. 161-174.

I. Ministry and Travel "Under Concern"

At a small conference of women Friends held at the end of the first year of the First World War, Dr Henrietta M. Thomas reported that the meeting ended with an appeal for women Friends to take as their example their seventeenth-century predecessors:

> We were urged to go forth on our journey baptised with the same baptism, and with our knapsacks filled full to overflowing with courage, having been set free from the fear of those who can only injure and kill the body. And we ended with the call to take up the mantle of the early women Friends who were humble enough to be directly guided by the Holy Spirit and having heard the call, "Go here, or go there," and having been filled with a great love for those to whom they were sent, went forth fearless in the face of every danger and carried their message to the uttermost parts of the world.[13]

If the heroism of these early "publishers of Truth" was an inspiration to women struggling to cope with the effects of the war in a climate of national emergency, it also contained the implicit criticism that late nineteenth and early twentieth century Friends were not being faithful to the sectarian witness of their ancestors. There was a sense, throughout the period, that women Friends were not speaking in ministry, and even that the numbers of women ministers were declining.

Joseph John Dymond's "Thoughts on Gospel Ministry" offered this reflection on spiritual equality and the practice of ministry within Friends:

> It has often been a subject of much regret with him[self] that whilst this truth [women as men's equals] is coming into fuller recognition outside the Society, and whilst the number of men giving themselves up for Gospel labour within our own body has increased, the list of our women ministers has been a diminishing one. The sterner work of the reprover for sin, and the "speaking with the enemy in the gate" in the area of doctrinal controversy, may more properly belong to men; but

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[13] *The Friend*, 13 August 1915, pp. 631-632.

> there are instruments of blessing in the hands of woman which none but she can wield.[14]

What was a matter of regret to Dymond was also a condemnation of the worldliness of the Society according to Wilfrid Grace:

> Statistics are not available to show the relative numbers of men and women ministers a century ago, but my decided impression is, that at that period, women were more active in this service. The tabular statement for 1910 shows that out of a total of 357 ministers only 141 are women, though the members of that sex are in a majority of nearly 1,400 [in the Society]. Thus, during a century marked by an enormous advance in the education and position of women, their public activity in the Society of Friends has proportionately to the other sex, tended to decline. ... It appears to me that as we have passed into conventional modes of life, so the position of women in our Society has tended to become conventionalised also.[15]

Anna R. Whiting told the 1893 Women's Yearly Meeting:

> There were many elders and many who spoke in our meetings, but hardly any increase in recorded ministers. If we were all longing to be used, we should have a message given us; and a simple word, spoken under God's guidance, could be much blessed by Him. Women Friends are especially behind in this particular. She believed that in the meeting at Ackworth, where so many children were gathered, a woman's voice was seldom heard ... .[16]

That year's Epistle urged the Society's preachers to speak boldly when they were moved to do so.[17]

Although there was general anxiety within the Society about the numbers of young Friends perceived to be leaving the denomination, or at least not seeking to be

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[14] *The Friend*, 9 September 1892, p. 600.

[15] *The Friend*, 19 May 1911, p. 326.

[16] *The Friend*, 9 June 1893, p. 373.

[17] *Extracts from the Minutes and Proceedings of the Yearly Meeting of Friends, Held in London*, (Printed by the direction of the Yearly Meeting), Office of the Society of Friends, 1893.

active within it, the position of young women Friends was seen as a special problem. Mary Snowden Braithwaite told the Women's Yearly Meeting in 1893 during a discussion of the subject that, "[i]t was terribly sad to know there were young women in our meetings up and down the country who had messages given them, and were conscious of it, yet refused to deliver them."[18] Eight years later, Mary Lucy Whiting identified "self-disparagement" and "self-consciousness" as problems, over and above the usual fears of first-time speakers in ministry ("fear of criticism" and "thoughts of repetition").[19] This perceived decline was contrasted to earlier periods in the Society's history, when women ministers appeared to be more in evidence. Matilda Sturge, an author and cousin of the Radical MP Joseph Sturge, looked back to the period 1750-1850 as the zenith of women's preaching in the Society, typified by women such as Elizabeth Fry and Hannah Chapman Backhouse.[20] Sheila Wright's analysis of the women ministers of York Monthly Meeting during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries reveals an active ministerial culture among women, with daughters often travelling in ministry for the first time in the company of their mothers.[21]

This perceived decline in women's ministry was investigated by the Society on two occasions. Yorkshire Quarterly Meeting commissioned an enquiry into the

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[18] *The Friend*, 9 June 1893, p. 373.

[19] *Ibid.*

[20] Matilda Sturge, *Types of Quaker Womanhood*, Booklet Series #5, Friends Tract Association, n.d. (pre-1900), p. 22.

[21] Sheila Wright, "Quakerism and its implications for Quaker women: the women itinerant ministers of York Meeting, 1780-1840," W.J. Shiels and Diana Wood, eds., *op. cit.*, pp. 407-408.

recording of ministers within its boundaries. The committee, reporting to the session of the Quarterly Meeting held at Bradford in 1892, found that there were 36 men and 21 women recorded as ministers. Additionally, "[t]here are also about 90 men and 50 women who not unfrequently (*sic*) take vocal part in the service of our meetings for worship, but whose gifts have not been recorded."[22] These figures are consistent with the totals computed from the *Index of Recorded Ministers 1861-1924*. Between the years 1861-1920, 799 Friends were accorded the status of minister: 300 women and 499 men.[23] Whereas sex ratios in the Society were nearly equal, roughly three-eighths of the ministers of the Society were women. There is evidence of very slight decline in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, from a peak in the 1870s.

Ministers Recorded 1861-1920 in the UK (including Ireland)

Decade	Women Recorded	Percent of Total	Men Recorded	Percent of Total	Total Recorded
1861-1870	45	30.8	101	69.2	146
1871-1880	76	43	101	57	177
1881-1890	62	40	93	60	155
1891-1900	66	38.5	105	61.5	171
1901-1910	38	33	77	67	115
1911-1920	13	37	22	63	35
Totals:	300		499		799

Source: *Index of Recorded Ministers 1861-1924*, LSF G8/2.

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[22] *The Friend*, 23 September 1892, p. 639. See also the proceedings of Yorkshire Quarterly Meeting, *The Friend*, 10 February 1911, p. 89 and the editorial, "Friends' Ministry: a Comparison," *The Friend*, 25 November 1904, p. 776.

[23] These figures are based on the unpublished *Index of Recorded Ministers 1861-1924* held at the Library of the Society of Friends and include numbers for Ireland. LSF reference G8/2.

The figures for the twentieth century are much less accurate, as meetings were beginning to abandon the practice of recording ministers. Of the 79 Monthly Meetings which made up London and Dublin Yearly Meetings, 37 recorded no ministers in the period 1901-1910; of these, 5 recorded ministers in subsequent years. Therefore, it is assumed that 32 meetings of the 79 had discontinued recording. In the period 1911-1920, 63 meetings recorded no ministers.[24]

Early in the twentieth century, the Meeting for Sufferings also investigated the recording of ministers. In this case, the committee found some evidence of decline. In 1866, the Society had 261 ministers, 131 men and 130 women (women made up 49.8% of those in ministry); in 1883, 319 ministers, 183 men and 136 women (42.6%); and in 1902, of the 375 ministers of the Society, 223 were men and 152 were women (40.5%).[25] The Meeting for Sufferings's figures deal not with the total numbers of ministers recorded, but with the number of recorded ministers at three particular moments. Even so, the decline of 1.9% between 1883 and 1902 is hardly significant. Yet Friends felt strongly that women's ministry was being adversely affected by the end of the century.

Widespread perceptions of decline in the later part of the century could be explained by subtle changes in the nature of women's ministry and the opportunities available to women Friends outside their Society. There is evidence that many Quakers viewed the ministry of men and women as complementary, a view which would allow women's ministry, but one based on social and sexual differences.

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[24] *Ibid.* There is no information for Balby Monthly Meeting for the period 1911-1920.

[25] "Report of the Committee of the Meeting for Sufferings on the Recording of Ministers," *The Friend,* 4 December 1902, p. 809.

Joseph John Dymond alluded to "instruments of blessing" which belonged peculiarly to women. Anna R. Whiting, in lamenting the absence of women ministers from a meeting which included scholars from Ackworth School, was also making reference to the special duties of the woman minister.[26] The ministry was urged on all, regardless of age or sex, in the 1899 Epistle, but women had an additional, domestic aspect to their "spiritual priesthood":

> Especially, though by no means exclusively, in the ministries of home life, are Christian women called to fulfil their spiritual priesthood, and we desire earnestly to urge them not to be neglectful of this holy calling. And how great is the privilege to themselves and to the Church, when, through obedience to the teachings of the Spirit of Truth, children are early introduced into the same honourable vocation.[27]

The 1897 obituary of Martha Braithwaite mentioned that she was a recorded minister, but focused on her role as "devoted wife and mother and conscientious mistress of a large household."[28] The minute of Yorkshire Quarterly Meeting on the death of Janet Clark in 1909 read:

> So quiet, so gentle, and unobtrusive was that life, that it made no stir in the Monthly Meeting and was perhaps comparatively little known in the Quarterly Meeting, though for a short time she was assistant-clerk on the women's side, an office which she was obliged to resign almost immediately, owing to the serious illness of her youngest child. But yet it was a life so full, so deep and so true that its influence for good, whether direct or indirect, must be felt more or less throughout our borders. She was not led to much vocal service in our Meetings for

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[26] See above, pp. 101-102.

[27] *Extracts from the Minutes and Proceedings of the Yearly Meeting of Friends, Held in London*, Office of the Society of Friends, 1899, p. 77.

[28] *The Friend*, 8 January 1897, p. 27.

> Worship ... but her whole life was a sermon more eloquent than words."[29]

By contrast, the women ministers of Yorkshire Monthly Meeting in the late eighteenth century were involved in the propagation of the message of Quakerism in public meetings organised for this purpose.[30]

While home and family were not unimportant to women ministers in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, marriage and children did not prevent them from travelling, sometimes great distances, to deliver their message. In 1769, Rachel Wilson travelled to the American colonies, leaving her husband Isaac and eldest daughter to care for their large family.[31] Even during these decades when women were very active, frequent prolonged absences from home were frowned upon. Matilda Sturge found that the extensive travels of Hannah Chapman Backhouse in the early nineteenth century "tended to test the faith even of her sympathising friends and fellow professors, or rather to lead them to doubt whether so much active service was really called for at her hands."[32] In the early nineteenth century, the tension between spiritual equality and feminine decorum was becoming marked.[33] In earlier periods of Quakerism, ministry had allowed women to transcend their sex and the gendered assumptions associated with it. As such, their ministry was not limited to addressing

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[29] Quoted in Elizabeth Mary Cadbury, *A Dear Memory. Pages from the Letters of Mary Jane Taylor*, Printed for Private Circulation, Cornish Brothers Ltd., Birmingham (1914), p. 446.

[30] Sheila Wright, in Sheils and Wood, eds., *op. cit.*, p. 404.

[31] Foulds, *op. cit.*, p. 202.

[32] Matilda Sturge, *Types of Quaker Womanhood*, p. 18.

[33] Davidoff and Hall, *op. cit.*, pp. 138-140.

"female" concerns.[34] Over the course of the nineteenth century, a domestic, non-ministerial piety was gaining legitimacy amongst Quakers. Such a construction of acceptable piety offered women an alternate venue to the meeting-house for expressions of spirituality. Matilda Sturge acknowledged that her readers would find the ministerial activities of Mary Dudley shocking:

> She had seven [children] at the time of her starting, with other Friends, for the Continent in 1788, the youngest of them being only ten weeks old, and she seems to have been absent from home as much as six months. Things of this kind certainly excite our surprise, and a feeling of doubt as to the reality of such a call ... . The answer must depend on the degree of faith which we have in the perceptible guidance of the Holy Spirit. These Friends believed in it utterly ... . Accepting their view, we can only say that these servants of the Lord were also called upon to make great sacrifices, and that when any man or woman has a special work to perform for God and mankind, it is scarcely right for us to complain that some of the natural duties belonging more or less to us all, have in their case to be deputed to others.[35]

In urging her readers to "judge not," Sturge is admitting that the nature of women's ministry has changed.

A ministry based on the "engrossing duties of the home," in the words of an American Friend, need not be a limiting one.[36] It could prove a stepping stone to wider ministry:

> A Friend from America said, lately, he wondered how it was we had now so few powerful preachers among English Friends, and we may well ask whether we are not in some way to blame for this lack. If we do not use the liberty which has already been won for us, are we prepared to have more privileges given us? Are we building up the Church as we ought to, or do we excuse ourselves by saying, "Woman's work is at home?"

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[34] Phyllis Mack, *op. cit.*, Sheila Wright, in Sheils and Wood, eds., *op. cit.*, pp. 407-408, 413.

[35] Matilda Sturge, *Types of Quaker Womanhood*, pp. 9-10.

[36] *The Friend*, 1 October 1881, p. 267.

> The Church is a great deal more than the congregation that meets on Sunday. The Church begins at home. ... Home is specially where woman's light must first shine. It is a great mistake to think we have no work in the Church because our lives are spent in supplying the daily needs of our households. ... Learning how best to supply the needs of the family teaches us often in every-day parables the needs of souls around us. ...
>
> As women, we do not want to be dead-weights in the public worship of God; yet the life of the Church cannot rise higher than its individual members. If we want to see that life grow stronger in spite of the temptations which surround it, we must do our part in keeping the lamp of God's light continually burning in our homes, till it sends its rays further and further, and extends its influence from the home to the Church, and from the Church to the public life of the country.[37]

In this case, the values of home and family were to be broadcast through the church to wider society as well as providing women ministers with useful spiritual insights. Women's place, then, was not merely in the home.

> The change was a subtle one. Domesticity did not suddenly become the rule, nor was it the only acceptable ministry available to women. The women Friends of York Monthly Meeting in the early nineteenth century had not just a religious persona, but a domestic one. They were expected to be serious in secular matters, which would include the running of a household.[38] In the context of patterns of Quaker ministry, there would always be both men and women who did not undertake the spoken ministry of the Society. For women who did not take part, a domestic ministry offered a useful and acceptable outlet and it is likely that over the course of the nineteenth century, many women adopted this as a means of expressing their piety. What one finds by the late nineteenth century is the promotion of the tasks of motherhood and child-rearing to the status of ministry, the culmination of

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[37] *The Friend*, 26 February 1892, p. 147.

[38] Sheila Wright, in Sheils and Wood, eds., *op. cit.*, p. 413.

developments in middle-class behaviour over the century and thrown into relief by Quaker concerns about the numbers of women prepared to speak in Society meetings for worship. However, the discourses of domestic female ministry, common in all Protestant denominations of the period, did not supersede the claims of spoken ministry within the Society. Rather, they acted as a supplement to it, as the examples of women's ministerial journeys in this period indicates.

Reasons for travelling in ministry were diverse and break down into three broad categories: the visitation of Friends in other parts, undertaking a specific task, or articulating a specific testimony (anti-slavery, peace). Sometimes the duties were combined in a visit. When a minister felt what Quakers called a "concern" it remained to their local meeting to judge the strength and rightness of that concern before the minister could be liberated to travel as a representative of the Society and with its financial backing. Friends could and did travel without the Society's permission, but such journeys were unofficial; no "minute" would be issued confirming the traveller's credentials and the support of the Society for the journey.

There are examples of women travelling as adjuncts to their husband's ministry, as in the case of Mary Anna Newman. Henry Newman, clerk of the Leominster Monthly Meeting, was liberated to travel in America, leaving in 1888 and returning in 1890. In his return, he gave a report of his journey to the Women's Yearly Meeting, and his wife asked to add a few words. Mary Anna Newman, herself recorded as a minister in 1878, joined her husband in the U.S.A. in 1889, telling the meeting:

> She herself had not expected to work there in the ministry, she went in hope of holding up her husband's hands. But when she saw the women bringing their little children to meeting, whom they could not leave at

> home alone, she felt that her text was before her, and a message was given through her heart to theirs.[39]

When Edith and Edward Annett appeared before the Meeting for Sufferings asking to be liberated for service in New Zealand, Edith Annett suspected that her activities, "would lie with the women in their homes, and the children."[40] However, there is also the case of Priscilla Pumphrey, whose concern was to visit the constituent meetings within Essex and Suffolk Quarterly Meeting. In this instance, her husband was liberated to accompany her.[41] Nor was concern for children limited to women. Arthur Pim held various meetings in Dublin, including three meetings specifically for children.[42]

In this period, it was equally likely that women, like men, would be liberated to broadcast Friends' message. In 1900-01, Henrietta Brown and Emma M. Bishop visited Australia and Tasmania to give spiritual comfort to Friends isolated from each other. Henrietta Brown at least was also liberated to lecture on peace.[43] Sarah Jane Lury and Elizabeth B. Rutter travelled to New Zealand six years later to help strengthen the position of Friends in that country by operating a hostel for the children of Quakers at school or college and by visiting and encouraging Friends when schools were not in session.[44] Mary Elizabeth Beck, of Lewes and Chichester Monthly

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[39] *The Friend*, 6 June 1890, p. 167. Also her remarks to the meeting of the Bedford Institute, *The Friend*, 1 January 1885, p. 20.

[40] *The Friend*, 8 September 1905, p. 580.

[41] *British Friend*, 1 September 1885, p. 216.

[42] *British Friend*, 2 November 1885, p. 264.

[43] *The Friend*, 29 March 1901; 29 November 1901, p. 783.

[44] *The Friend*, 31 May 1907, p. 350.

Meeting, was liberated to spend three weeks in the Birmingham area to hold meetings and give public lectures on the "Distinguishing Views of Friends," "Public Worship and Ministry," and "Ordinances Under the New Dispensation." Five years later, she visited Ireland, promoting Friends' views through social tea meetings and public lectures.[45] In 1895, Ellen Robinson returned her minute, granted four years earlier, "to hold religious and Peace meetings throughout the country." She was immediately granted a fresh minute to broadcast the Friends' Peace testimony.[46] Sarah Satterthwaite and Mary White travelled to America, with minutes to visit New England Yearly Meeting and the Yearly Meeting of Indiana. Their visits provided valuable first-hand reports of the divided American denomination. As travelling ministers, they acted as ambassadors of British Quakerism.[47] In all of these instances, their concerns were motivated less by gendered assumptions of domesticity than by what these women, as individuals, believed was the necessary work of the church. In some cases, like that of Mary Elizabeth Beck, the traditional practice of a Friends' public meeting, held to explain their distinctive beliefs, was supplemented by the less formal "at-home," a popular strategy of women philanthropists.

Throughout the period, women's ministry was never limited to the purely domestic realm and the Society continued to uphold the validity of women's ministerial concerns. The heroic tradition of Quaker ministry, which allowed the

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[45] *British Friend*, 1 March 1880, p. 60; 1 January 1885, p. 10.

[46] *British Friend*, January 1895, p. 13; February 1895, pp. 37-38; March 1895, p. 62; June 1900, p. 137. Peace was not an issue confined to women - William Robinson and George H. Farrington held public peace meetings in the areas around the meetings of Guisborough, Richmond and Sedburgh. *British Friend*, October 1900, pp. 269-271.

[47] *British Friend*, 1 April 1880, p. 82; 2 August 1880, p, 204; 1 December 1880, pp. 294-295.

freedom of Friends to express concerns without reference to gender norms, coexisted alongside gendered notions of women's service. This divided ministry is illustrated by L.V. Hodgkin's address to the Women's Conference of the 1913 Yearly Meeting. She separated women's share in ministry into two parts: "Our [women's] Ministry in the World, shared with all women" and "Our Ministry of the Word, especially as women Friends."[48] The development of an alternative to the spoken ministry of the Society, rooted in what was perceived to be women's special talents, mirrored developments that had been taking place over the century. In the cases of philanthropy and nursing, middle-class women found meaningful careers rooted in the domestic ideal. With the reform of the local government system following the Reform Act of 1867, women ratepayers were made constituents of the municipal electorate; by 1900, over one million women had the borough vote, although women could not stand as town councillors until 1908. The 1870 Elementary Education Act allowed ratepaying women to vote for, and any woman to serve as, members of the new School Boards. Women served as Poor Law Guardians from 1875 and the landmark election of Martha Merrington. From 1894, properly-qualified women could stand for election as urban, parish or rural District Councillors.[49] Local government served as a sort of halfway-house between philanthropy and parliament: women framed their cases for inclusion in it using the languages both of sexual difference and of the fundamental equality between women and men.[50] Dr Henrietta M. Thomas, herself

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[48] *The Friend*, 30 May 1913, p. 342.

[49] Patricia Hollis, *Ladies Elect*, pp. 6-8, 330, 491. In 1872, the borough franchise was narrowed to unmarried women ratepayers.

[50] *Ibid.*, p. 7.

a beneficiary of the movement for the higher education of women told a 1915 conference of women Friends, "[a]s we were reminded, women are the housekeepers of the world. We are only just beginning to realise that in national and international politics we are also needed as housekeepers."[51] In 1896, 17 women Friends were poor law guardians and 4 were District Councillors; in 1898, they had their own session at Yearly Meeting to discuss matters of mutual interest.[52]

In 1919, Mrs Elizabeth Cadbury won the Kings Norton ward by-election for a seat on Birmingham City Council. Early the year before, she had received the OBE for services to Birmingham's education committee and hygiene sub-committee.[53] Elizabeth Cadbury fought the election as an Independent Progressive against another member of Bournville Meeting, Mrs Frances Elliott. Her platform was: "the safe-guarding of child life, housing reform, education and the social advancement of the workers generally."[54] Her policies, and her standing in the city (her nephew was mayor of Birmingham at the time), won the election.

Increasingly, women Friends found opportunities for service outside the spoken ministry of their Society. The "concerns" of women Friends were no longer limited to the membership of their own denomination or to the historic testimonies of their Society (although these precepts often guided their activities once outside the

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[51] *The Friend*, 13 August 1915, p. 631.

[52] *The Friend*, 24 April 1896, p. 270; 10 July 1896, p. 460; 13 May 1898, p. 294. There are no figures available for School Board women, although Emily Sturge was elected to the Bristol School Board in 1880 and served until her death in a riding accident in 1892. Matilda Sturge, *Emily Sturge. A Portrait in Outline*, Printed for Private Circulation, (1892), p. 2.

[53] *The Friend*, 18 January 1918, p. 42.

[54] *The Friend*, 5 December 1919, p. 751.

denomination). It is certainly possible that those who may have been hesitant to speak in ministry found it easier to speak on other issues. During the 1903 Women's Yearly Meeting, Martha Baker "longed that women Friends should feel their responsibilities, especially with regard to the preaching of the word. So many of our Friends are capable public speakers, but few are preaching."[55] Margery Fry found outlets for her energies first at Oxford, then at Birmingham.[56] Isabella Ford's convictions led her away from respectable Liberal circles as a socialist organiser and suffrage campaigner.[57] Local government, higher education, and the professions opened to women at a time that the ministry of the Society was undergoing a change. Spoken ministry was challenged on two fronts: by an increasing stress on the "ministries of home life" as the province of women and by the plethora of opportunities for public service available to educated, well-off women. As the practice of recording ministers waned within the denomination, women Friends expanded their service. As women Friends developed expertise in matters of local government and as political campaigners, the inequalities of the government of their own Society came under scrutiny. The women of the Sturge and Priestman/Bright/Clark families who were prominent in Bristol and Somerset Quarterly Meeting, as well as in other reform causes, questioned the position of women in the governing councils of Friends and put the issue on the denominational agenda. Their activism and intellectual leadership gave shape to what would otherwise have been a formless feeling for change.

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[55] *The Friend*, 12 June 1903, p. 394.

[56] Enid Huws Jones, *Margery Fry: the Essential Amateur*, William Sessions Ltd., The Ebor Press, York (1990).

[57] June Hannam, *op. cit.*

II. Representative Quakerism: Women Friends and the Yearly Meeting

The formation of an official Women's Yearly Meeting in 1784 gave women Friends a national forum for discussion and the power to issue Epistles or messages to other Quakers worldwide. This was an improvement on previous practice, by which women gathered in London at the time of the men's meeting but were not recognised as a Meeting in their own right. Its establishment completed the Quaker pyramid-style of government, for now a Women's Yearly Meeting stood above the Women's Quarterly and Monthly Meetings. For every Men's Meeting, there was now a Women's equivalent.[58] While these parallel meetings corresponded in name and geographical area, however, decision-making power always resided in the Men's Meeting. The Women's Yearly Meeting did not consider the same issues as the Men's Meeting, nor did it have the power to amend the denomination's rules (called the "discipline"). The duties of women's Monthly Meetings included visiting women applicants for membership, supervising the relief of poor women, and assisting in cases of disorderly conduct amongst Friends. However, it was the men's side of the meeting which had authority to admit applicants for membership and to expel erring Friends, "women Friends being afterwards informed who were to be their fellow-members, and who had been disowned."[59]

The rules of the Society required men and women to meet in joint session on two occasions: the recording of ministers and the consideration of Friends who desired to travel in the ministry. These exceptions to the tradition of separate

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[58] The exceptions here are the committees of the Yearly Meeting, which had no female equivalents.

[59] Matilda Sturge, "The Position of Women Friends in Our Meetings for Discipline," *The Friend*, 11 October 1895, p. 656.

meetings for the consideration of separate business were due no doubt to the numbers of women active in the ministry. Other joint conferences were permitted, although not required, by the *Book of Discipline*. By the end of the nineteenth century, some Monthly and Quarterly Meetings met jointly as a matter of course while others held joint as well as separate meetings, with the Clerks of the respective meetings deciding which subjects were for joint consideration and which should be considered separately.[60] A joint sitting of the Yearly Meeting was, however, rare, and only the consideration of an issue crucial to the Society or pressure from the Women's Yearly Meeting would prompt such a sitting, as in the case of the 1880 Yearly Meeting. The proceedings of the Men's Meeting were interrupted by "a visit ... from our friend Eliza Watson, who earnestly laid before us her concern that we should share some of the responsibility with which our Meeting is much pressed with our sisters in the adjoining house."[61] Such "visits" of this kind were frequent during the Yearly Meeting. Members could request to be "liberated" to visit the other sex's meeting. It seems that both men and women took advantage of this practice, going to the other meeting to exhort, pray, or otherwise express concern for the welfare of the Church. It was, however, unusual for a joint sitting to be requested, given the tradition of meeting separately for the consideration of most business. In Eliza Watson's case, the assembled men Friends agreed with her concern and two days later women Friends were admitted to the Men's Meeting to "hear the important discussion and decision as to its action respecting the opium traffic."[62]

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[60] *Ibid.*

[61] *The Friend*, 3 June 1880, p. 149.

[62] *Ibid.*, p. 164.

Apart from these infrequent joint conferences, women Friends had no means to influence the government of their Society at its highest level. At local level, however, things had begun to change. Once women had been accepted as equals in counsel at Monthly and Quarterly Meeting level, their lack of power in the Yearly Meeting seemed all the more puzzling in a Society which prided itself on its treatment of women. Matilda Sturge wrote:

> Where, therefore, Friends have agreed to avail themselves of this permission [to meet jointly], it seems to be implied that women are on such occasions on an equality with men, that they may express opinions on any subject that arises, their sentiments being taken into account in determining the sense of the meeting. This is all that can be wished; but it is supposed that the power thus exercised is conceded as a matter of courtesy rather than of right; there is need for its clear recognition. ... Yearly Meeting is said to consist of all the members of our Society in Great Britain, but as regards matters of legislation it consists of the members of one sex only. ... While women are sitting in one house, - it may be helping and edifying one another, passing separate epistles (to be read in joint meetings in many cases), or reading documents which have already been read in the men's meeting, - their brethren in the other house are considering subjects which concern them as much as men, and discussing propositions coming up from the Quarterly Meetings which they may have helped to frame.[63]

Margaret Tanner of Bristol and Somerset Quarterly Meeting, a sister-in-law of John Bright and herself a prominent campaigner for the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts and for women's suffrage, wrote to *The Friend* in 1879 about women's lack of influence on the Yearly Meeting.[64] Her concern was widespread enough to prompt the 1880 sitting of the Yearly Meeting to appoint a committee to consider the arrangements of Yearly Meeting. A committee of women Friends joined in the

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[63] Matilda Sturge, "The Position of Women Friends," pp. 656-657.

[64] *The Friend*, 3 July 1879, p. 193. Also, Holton, *Suffrage Days*, pp. 24, 31.

deliberations, although it was the men's Yearly Meeting which discussed the report and its recommendations.

The report, which came to the 1881 Yearly Meeting, provoked intense debate. Especially controversial was the Fourth Minute, which

> encouraged the Women's Yearly Meeting to bring to the men's meeting any subject on which its judgment is desired. Occasionally it may be well that subjects connected with the general interest of the Society should be committed to the Women's Meeting for their consideration before the final decision is arrived at.[65]

Although it was recognised that such a change would not give the Women's Yearly Meeting as much power as the men's meeting, and was described as a "medium course" by Thomas Harvey, some male Friends argued against any change on practical grounds, by asserting that the Minute violated Quaker methods of government, and, most importantly, that it blurred the distinction between men's and women's business.

The Minute "encouraged" the Women's Yearly Meeting to communicate with the Yearly Meeting and it suggested that some subjects should be considered by both meetings in separate session, but it did not propose any procedure for such an interchange to take place. In Monthly and Quarterly Meetings, it was the custom for the clerks to meet together first, to determine which business should be considered jointly and which separately. While this may have been in the committee's mind as the Minute was drafted, the omission of such a procedure seemed to jeopardise the sovereignty of the Yearly Meeting. It was not clear to some whether women Friends would consider the subject before the men's meeting, or whether the Yearly Meeting should send its conclusions in for discussion by the Women's Yearly Meeting. If the latter were to be the case, the women's meeting would be in a position to amend or

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[65] *The Friend*, 3 June 1881, p. 154.

at least suggest amendments to the men's decisions. J.J. Dymond complained that "we shall be debarred from arriving at any conclusion until we have received the decision of the women."[66] Although the Minute was eventually passed by the Meeting, the men were unable to decide on a procedure for business to be shared between the two meetings, thus leaving the amendments a dead letter.[67]

The second objection - that the "traditional" way of doing business would be threatened - breaks down into two related concerns. The first was a defence of the representative character of the Yearly Meeting. Secondly, there were serious misgivings that the sharing of the business between the two assemblies would affect the nature of the Yearly Meeting's deliberations. The views of Henry Hipsley best illustrate this position. He told the Yearly Meeting:

> The mistake is, the loss of the representative principle on which we act in administering affairs - the men act for the women. We are getting into all manner of mistaken ideas in religious and political questions by the plan of counting heads, - and idea directly contrary to the principles of the Society. We all know, socially and by other means, the views of our women Friends. Of course if they send in a message to us we treat it with all the consideration it deserves. Suppose we have a serious question affecting the Society's interests before us, and some think we should get the opinion of the women Friends, time will be wasted in discussing whether or not to send it in. The concession will only lead to much more extreme views being pushed.[68]

In referring to the Quaker practice of separate meetings for business established by George Fox, Hipsley appealed to the past in an attempt to retain control of

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[66] *Ibid.*

[67] Nor had any procedure been established by 1885, when Margaret Tanner asked whether the Women's Yearly Meeting "could suggest some plan by which decisions on important subjects equally affecting both should be shared by men and women." (*The Friend*, 6 June 1885, p. 152.)

[68] *The Friend*, 3 June 1881, p. 154.

administrative affairs. Hipsley's opinions would have carried weight with the Clerk of the meeting as well as with other Friends. In 1859, he was able to retire from commercial life at the age of forty-nine after a career with the tea merchants Tuke and Company and devote himself to the ministry; in 1871 he moved to London. Henry Hipsley, as an eminent and leisured London Friend, formed part of the governing elite of the Society.

The preservation of the spirit of the meeting was very important to Quakers.[69] The Minute under discussion did not envisage joint conferences of men and women Friends for the consideration of business. Hence it was not the spiritual tenor of joint meetings which was criticised but the likelihood that the process of deciding which issues to send to the women's meeting would polarise opinion among men Friends and turn the proceedings into debate and division ("the plan of counting heads") instead of more Quakerly consensus-building. This debate would be triggered by the last and most serious consideration, that such a concession blurred the distinction between the business of the men's and women's meetings.

Walter S. Lean approved of the change on the grounds that "we shall then have the opinion of women Friends on questions which concern them."[70] Henry Hipsley countered, "Does not every possible subject that comes before us concern the women? The question is, what fitly belongs to them as well as to us?"[71] Hipsley, although not in favour of sharing power with women Friends, had homed in on the crucial

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[69] In the Clark family of Street, Somerset, all major decisions were taken after quiet consideration, allowing for the "leadings of conscience" - the revelation of the Inner Light - so important to Friends. Holton, *Suffrage Days*, p. 166.

[70] *The Friend*, 3 June 1881, p. 154.

[71] *Ibid.*

words of the Fourth Minute and recognised that they allowed women Friends to participate in discussing "subjects connected with the general interest of the Society." Previously, the laws of the Society clearly stated that women Friends could participate in the recording of ministers and the considerations of requests to travel in ministry. The acceptance of this broad principle would prove an open door for women, as most business conducted by Yearly Meeting dealt with the "general interest of the Society." Many men Friends, however, accepted that there might be some business which could usefully be referred to the women's meeting, although they did not state what subjects this would cover. James Clark, for instance, told the Yearly Meeting, "women often see things in a way we cannot." Fielden Thorp thought that, in practice, only a small number of subjects would be referred to the Women's Yearly Meeting.[72] Despite the objections of Henry Hipsley and others, the Minute received the assent of the Yearly Meeting and was incorporated into the *Book of Discipline* as one of the rules governing the Society. On paper at least, women Friends could share in the Yearly Meeting's deliberations. In practice, the men assembled at the Yearly Meeting did not make use of the Minute's provisions and the Women's Yearly Meeting remained a talking-shop for women Friends, with no power to participate in or challenge the decisions of the men. The privileges of the Yearly Meeting were jealously guarded. Even those who favoured a moderate approach, such as Francis Frith, felt that the men-only Yearly Meeting should remain the highest authority: "we must certainly not have anything like a co-ordinate standing of the two meetings".[73]

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[72] *Ibid.*

[73] *Ibid.*

There was growing discontent among women Friends with the part allocated them in the government of their Society, especially as the agitation for the 1884 Reform Act escalated, and increasing sentiment that women be allowed to take their share. In the Women's Yearly Meeting, feeling began to crystallize around the Minute sent in by the Women's Quarterly Meeting of Bristol and Somerset in 1884. In it, they proposed that women be eligible for appointment to the Meeting for Sufferings and that the Clerks of the Men's and Women's Yearly Meetings should decide which subjects needed the approval of women Friends as well as their male counterparts. It was a modest proposal, it demanded neither joint sittings nor equal numbers of women and men on the Meeting for Sufferings. Charlotte Sturge, the sister-in-law of Matilda Sturge, explained to the meeting that the Minute had the approval of all of Bristol and Somerset's constituent monthly meetings and that the issue was being raised "to ventilate the subject and see if other Quarterly Meetings would take it up."[74] At the next year's meeting, both the General Meeting of Scotland and the Women's Quarterly Meeting of Sussex & Surrey had endorsed the Minute, while the proceedings record that the Durham Quarterly Meeting of Women Friends sent proposals on how to make the Women's Yearly Meeting more "profitable."[75] The nature of Quaker government, relying as it did on consensus-building rather than confrontation, dictated that change would happen slowly. In the early 1880s, some women Friends did desire to give the Women's Yearly Meeting more power, but there were sufficient doubts as to the working out of this power in practice to delay any

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[74] *The Friend*, 6 June 1884, p. 163.

[75] *The Friend*, 6 June 1885, p. 152.

change. As more and more local meetings met in joint session, however, a workable blueprint became available for grafting onto the structure of the Yearly Meeting.

The issue that sparked off the final campaign to give women Friends equality with men in the business of the Society was the discussion over the American Epistles which claimed the attention of the 1894 Yearly Meeting. The American Quaker meetings had been torn apart by schism, with Yearly Meetings formed in Philadelphia, North Carolina, Baltimore, and at other places around the country.[76] The question facing English Friends was whether to address Epistles to each separate meeting, or to write only one American Epistle.[77] The women Friends involved in the committee to draft the documents, meeting on a Saturday when the Women's Yearly Meeting was not in session, requested that women Friends should join in the discussions. As the request came only from a committee of the Women's Yearly Meeting and not the Meeting itself, men Friends found it easy to decline to consider their proposal.[78] The committee reported to the Women's Yearly Meeting on Monday morning, arguing,

> they had felt a strong concern that women Friends should unite with the Men's Meeting in considering the question of the American correspondence. They had communicated this request to the Yearly Meeting on Seventh-day [Saturday] morning, and received a reply that, although their action as a committee was unconstitutional, the subject would be deferred to till the afternoon, that the Women's Meeting might ask for a conference if they wished.[79]

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[76] The *British Friend* divided them into three broad groupings: Orthodox, eg. those in correspondence with the parent body in London; Independent, or those believed to be in correspondence with the small body of "Fritchley Friends"; and Hicksite. *British Friend*, May 1894, p. 135.

[77] *British Friend*, 9 June 1894, p. 176.

[78] *The Friend*, 1 June 1894, pp. 353-354.

[79] *The Friend*, 8 June 1894, p. 379.

The Women's Yearly Meeting divided along three lines: those who wished for a joint conference, those who wished to send representatives only, and a small minority who thought it best to leave the question to men Friends. Mary Elizabeth Beck and Ann Ford Fowler expressed the opinion that, owing to considerations of space, the women's meeting should send representatives in to act on its behalf.[80] The Clerk, Jane Eliza Brayshaw, pointed out that if representatives were sent the Women's Yearly Meeting could not be constitutionally held under the laws of the Society. She concluded that, "an entire joint conference was the only course now offered to us."[81] The majority present felt that women Friends should not be excluded from the discussions, with only "two or three" who wished the meetings to continue their deliberations separately.[82] A minute requesting a joint conference was prepared and sent to the men's meeting.

Since the question of the American correspondence was to be discussed that same afternoon, men Friends did not have leisure to consider the request at length. Quite a few men Friends felt that since women Friends had requested a joint conference through the proper channels and in accordance with the laws of the Society, the request could not be refused. A majority of men in the Meeting were opposed to the idea of a joint conference on the grounds that the issue of the American correspondence was not in the "general interest of the Society" but merely

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[80] *The Friend*, 8 June 1894, p. 379, 380.

[81] *Ibid.*, p. 379.

[82] *Ibid.*, p. 380.

a practical question, and thus an issue to be decided by the men.[83] The Clerk concluded that "if women Friends were invited in conference, it should be with unanimity on the part of Friends, or at least with a very large preponderance in favour of that course, and he could not see that there was that preponderance that morning."[84] In refusing the women's request, the men's meeting clearly demonstrated where power in the denomination resided. The issue settled, men Friends spent the rest of the afternoon and all of the next morning in discussion, to conclude that one epistle should be sent to all meetings with whom British Quakers were officially in correspondence, but not to those who had broken with the Yearly Meeting.[85] But the question of women's participation was only deferred, not defeated. Samuel Price had warned the men's meeting, "in the present state of the question, it would be a fatal mistake to refuse the request of women Friends."[86]

The refusal provoked a debate among Friends, led again by the Friends of Bristol and Somerset Quarterly Meeting, to determine what precisely their concepts of equality meant with regard to women Friends. Those in favour of allowing women to join in the government of the Society had to argue against the weight of tradition attached to the Yearly Meeting and its committees and to shake Friends out of their complacent acceptance that separate sittings meant equal sittings. Helen Priestman

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[83] *The Friend*, 1 June 1894, pp. 355-356. Although the Men's and Women's Yearly Meetings met during the same week, the whole business of the men's Yearly Meeting was printed first in *The Friend*, followed by the proceedings of the Women's Yearly Meeting.

[84] *The Friend*, 1 June 1894, p. 356.

[85] *British Friend*, 9 June 1894, p. 183.

[86] *Ibid.*

Bright Clark had remarked that "she had found it difficult to persuade those outside the Society that the women in it were still an inferior caste in all matters relating to its control."[87] The task of persuading those within the Society that women had the aptitude for and a right to the business affairs of the Society was an equally difficult chore, as the tradition of separate meetings for separate business found favour amongst both men and women Friends.

In the autumn of 1894, the Women's Quarterly Meeting of Bristol and Somerset appointed a committee to examine the position of women in the Society. The committee's report, forwarded to the Women's Yearly Meeting, urged that women be acknowledged as constituent members of all meetings for business in the Society. In this request, they were strongly backed by the Men's Quarterly Meeting who brought the issue to the attention of Yearly Meeting of 1895. Two other Quarterly Meetings also submitted Minutes to the Women's Yearly Meeting.[88] Both began by giving thanks for the privileges enjoyed by women Friends, but called for "serious consideration" to be given to the subject of women in business meetings. "We think the time has come," read the Minute from Derby, Lincoln and Nottinghamshire, "to consider whether there might be some modification of existing customs, in order that the feelings and opinion of women Friends may find expression."[89]

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[87] *The Friend*, 29 May 1896, p. 355.

[88] Lancashire and Cheshire Quarterly Meeting of Women Friends and Derby, Lincoln and Notts Quarterly Meetings of Women Friends.

[89] 5th Minute of Derby, Lincoln & Notts Quarterly Meeting of Women Friends held in Nottingham, 18 April 1895. From the "Minute Book of the Committee appointed by the Yearly Meeting Held in London 1895, to consider the position of Women Friends in Meetings for Discipline," MS Box $X^3/3^a$, p. 12.

The women's committee of Bristol and Somerset Quarterly Meeting was presided over by Matilda Sturge, who signed the report on their behalf. It read:

> We have met according to appointment and are united in the opinion that some change is desirable as regards the position of Women in the Society of Friends. We consider that in all the business meetings of the Society, namely Preparative, Monthly, Quarterly and Yearly Meeting, and in the Meeting for Sufferings, Women Friends should be recognised as forming a constituent part of the Meeting, whether sitting in joint or separate session.
>
> We are impressed by the fact that this is not the position of Women Friends at present. They are not officially recognised as a part of the Yearly Meeting and important questions have been decided without their being consulted. Nor have they any representation in the Meeting for Sufferings.
>
> We feel that this state of things is incompatible with the view of religious equality always held by our Society.[90]

The men Friends of Bristol and Somerset Quarterly Meeting also appealed to the egalitarian Quaker past in their support of the women's report. In advocating the proposal that women should be recognised as a constituent part of the Yearly Meeting, the men's minute closed by quoting the words of George Fox:

> Faithful women called to a belief of the Truth, and made partakers of the same precious faith, and heirs to the same everlasting Gospel of life and salvation as the men are, might in like manner come into the profession and practice of the Gospel order, and therein be helpmeets to the men in the service of Truth, and the affairs of the Church, as they outwardly in civil and temporal things; that so all the family of God, women as well as men, might know, possess, and perform their offices and services in the House of God.[91]

For those who favoured women's inclusion, Fox's actions in setting up separate meetings were less important than his pronouncements on the irrefutable equality between men and women. The Minute of the Women's Quarterly Meeting of

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[90] "Minute Book", pp. 7-8.

[91] "Minute Book," p. 2.

Lancashire and Cheshire referred to the "privileges which we have always understood that we possessed, of equality with our brethren in all matters affecting the well-being of the Society," adding, "we feel that it would be an advantage, not only to Women Friends, but to the Society at large, that this essential principle of our constitution should be more fully recognized and acted upon."[92]

At the reading of the Bristol and Somerset Minute in the men's side of the Yearly Meeting, Friends both for and against the proposal framed their arguments with ideas of women's special nature firmly in mind. Arthur Pease reported that in his Monthly Meeting (Darlington) all of the business except that relating to property, money, or delinquent members was taken in joint session. And although favourable to greater discussion of the points raised, he believed that women's meetings "showed that they had a very special service by themselves, which he thought it would not be well to supersede."[93] William Graham believed strongly that "women should be given their right place in the constitution of the Society" but this belief did not lead him to support joint conferences within the Yearly Meeting as he felt that "there were many things which had best be dealt with by women separately."[94] Frank Dymond, an opponent of any change, made the most sustained argument for the special opportunities separate meetings gave to women.

> [He] thought it would be a great pity to do anything that should annihilate the Women's Yearly Meeting, and so prevent them from performing the distinct functions they did at the present time. They

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[92] *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9. See also the letter from George Dixon, jr. in *The Friend*, 1 March 1895, p. 141 and Hannah Whitall Smith in the Women's Yearly Meeting, 8 June 1894, pp. 379-380.

[93] *The Friend*, 7 June 1895, p. 377.

[94] *Ibid.*, p. 378.

> considered a great many interesting questions now, which they would have no opportunity of doing if they sat with men Friends.[95]

Although the Bristol and Somerset proposals did not press the issue of joint conferences, the fear was clearly there that women Friends wished to jettison "their" business and the separate meetings associated with it.

The Clerk of the Women's Yearly Meeting, Jane Eliza Brayshaw, communicated to the men's meeting, "the subject has taken great hold of the Meeting, and a strong expression has been given, that the principle of the equality of all in Church affairs should be recognised, though not wishing to propose the frequent holding of Joint Conferences. We ask the Men's Meeting to unite with us in appointing a Committee to nominate Friends to take the whole subject into consideration."[96] The committee, which consisted of representatives from both Yearly Meetings and the (men-only) Meeting for Sufferings, was appointed with instructions to report in a year's time. The male-dominated committee (see Appendix I) presented the 1896 Yearly Meeting with a set of recommendations that certainly alarmed some Friends, as it began by urging that women Friends be recognized as a constituent part of all meetings for business in the Society, incorporated the Minute from Bristol and Somerset recommending that the two Clerks meet to determine which business should be jointly discussed and which separately, and ended by asserting women's eligibility for appointment to the Meeting for Sufferings on the same terms as men. The Clerk of the committee, Caleb R. Kemp, confided to his journal, "if our

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[95] *Ibid.*, p. 377.

[96] "Minute Book of the Committee appointed by The Yearly Meeting held in London 1895, to consider The Position of Women Friends in Meetings for Discipline," Ms Box $X^3/3^a$, p. 2.

recommendations to the Yearly M[eetin]g are accepted, the date of our Committee will mark an important epoch in the history of our Society."[97]

Kemp's enthusiasm was not shared by all of those who had served on the committee. Frank Dymond, an influential Friend who urged that more time and consideration should be spent on the issue, wrote to Caleb Kemp, "[I] was certainly rather startled to find how far we had gone - especially with regard to the Meeting for Sufferings: which I thought was rather left for reference to the Yearly Meeting itself...."[98] One of the key changes desired by Quaker women, their right to be recognized as constituent members of all meetings for business, prompted J. Lister Godlee to declare:

> I feel as strongly as Ever the mistake of the first recommendation - a sweeping statement of principal [sic.] which if adopted may be in future appealed to as obliging the Y[early] M[eeting] to go to very great lengths and which the subsequent proposals do not come within a hundred miles of. It makes the whole report a rather ridiculous business which I can't help thinking must be irresistibly comic to the outside observer. The M[eeting] f[or] S[ufferings] proposal is a delightful example.[99]

It was in fact the general principle proposing women's equal status with men in business meetings and their election to the Meeting for Sufferings which occupied most of the time allocated to the consideration of the report. Friends spent all morning discussing the former and a good part of the afternoon on the latter. The proceedings record that, "men and women Friends met in joint session in the large

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[97] Caleb Kemp, *Journal*, Vol. V, 1882-1896, pp. 263-64.

[98] F. Dymond to C.R. Kemp, 5 April 1896, LSF ref. MS Box X3/3b.

[99] J.L. Godlee to C.R. Kemp, 21 April 1896, MS Box $X^3/3^a$.

meeting-house, which was filled nearly to its utmost capacity."[100] The women attending this meeting realized that these sessions were the culmination of a movement to give Quaker women a governing voice in the Society; hopes and tensions were running high. Many male Friends, according to Isaac Braithwaite "so many Friends,"[101] feared that adopting the report would result in joint conferences which would ruin the devotional, almost contemplative character of meetings. Thomas Hodgkin, favourable in principle to an equal standing between the two meetings, was concerned lest "the meeting assume a different character."[102] This dwelling on the practical details while ignoring the principle caused Ellen Robinson to appeal to the fairness of Friends' representative system, at least where men Friends were concerned. "If," she exclaimed, "there were to be an enormous increase in our membership, and there were some millions of men Friends, a way would be found by which all could be represented, however small might be the meeting-house."[103] She followed this barb at the selfishness of men Friends with a reference to Friends' tradition of sex-segregated meetings. Women, she argued, desired to consider the same business as the men, but not necessarily in huge joint meetings:

> It did not follow if, as was suggested, matters were considered by men and women Friends, that they would be considered jointly. And if the meetings differed [in opinion], she thought that it would be easy, by the appointment of a joint committee, or in some other way, to reconcile them. She hoped this difficulty of joint conferences would

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[100] *The Friend*, 29 May 1896, p. 354.

[101] *Ibid.*, p. 355.

[102] *Ibid.*

[103] *Ibid.*

> not be held up as a bugbear. Many women did not like these joint conferences; women could not make themselves felt there.[104]

These assurances from women Friends, that they preferred as few joint meetings as possible, but did desire to consider the same issues as men Friends, won the meeting over, and the first clause of the report was passed. The most important barrier had been crossed. When discussing the working details, Quaker women actively and, at moments, indignantly defended their right to send separate Epistles, as well as join in the formulation of the joint Epistle. Women Friends also supported meeting separately when addressing the State of the Society to allow each meeting to draw its own conclusions.[105]

Women had a harder fight convincing men Friends that they should be allowed to sit on the Meeting for Sufferings, the most prestigious committee in the Society, and one hedged about with vested interests. Howard Nicolson stated outright, and Frank Dymond concurred, that he "preferred that the Meeting for Sufferings should remain a men's committee of the Yearly Meeting."[106] It was suggested that issues were discussed in the Meeting for Sufferings at which "it would not be desirable that women should be present." However, Caroline Armfield disabled that argument by pointing out that women sat on Boards of Guardians without difficulty.[107] In the

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[104] *Ibid*, pp. 355-56. Other women Friends, notably Sarah S. Clark and Rachel E. Mounsey, also spoke to this point, saying that women preferred their own meetings and had no special desire to have joint meetings.

[105] *The Friend*, 29 May 1896, p. 357.

[106] *Ibid.*, p. 358.

[107] Metford Warner in *The Friend*, 29 May 1896, p. 358. Frank Dymond agreed.

end, women were to be admitted to the Meeting for Sufferings, and Quarterly Meetings were instructed to appoint equal numbers of men and women Friends to it.

Although women Friends clearly desired to take part in the "real business," as Matilda Sturge called it, there were reservations.[108] At the time of the amendments to the *Book of Discipline*, some women Friends regretted that local meetings were doing away with separate women's sittings, a feeling that persisted even after women Friends were made full partners in the deliberations of the Yearly Meeting.[109] The tradition of separate meetings was hard to break as they were valued as times for fellowship and the exchange of information. Jane Eliza Brayshaw commented that "... it was a loss to women that they had not more business, and [she] feared lest joint meetings might lead to the giving up, in time, of the Women's Yearly Meeting, and to great loss to our Society."[110] At the 1895 Women's Yearly Meeting, there was an almost unanimous feeling against joint conferences although in favour of joint action, a sentiment led by Matilda Sturge and Ellen Robinson, a noted Quaker educationalist. Catharine Wilson, a former Clerk of the Women's Yearly Meeting, recorded minister, and member of Bull Street, Birmingham, worried that separate meetings would be cast away in the rush for joint conferences:

> ... as regards our Quarterly Meetings, I do not know how far women Friends throughout the country are finding it possible to keep up their separate meetings as well as the joint sessions we all much value. In this Quarterly Meeting we are not succeeding well, but are hoping to find some plan by which we may draw together from our Quarterly Meeting area of three counties, so that we may become better acquainted with each other and learn something of the various ways in

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[108] Matilda Sturge, "The Position of Women Friends," p. 656.

[109] *The Friend*, 8 June 1883, p. 159; 31 May 1895, p. 358.

[110] *The Friend*, 6 June 1885, p. 152.

> which everyone is more or less engaged in the service of the Master, and thus help to build each other up in what applies to us more distinctly as women Friends.[111]

By 1905, there were only two separate sessions of the Women's Yearly Meeting and a special Epistle to all women Friends had not been issued since 1897, the year after the constitutional change.[112]

Mary Jane Godlee, of London and Middlesex Quarterly Meeting, who had been on the committee appointed in 1895 to investigate the position of women in business meetings, was much more favourable to the trend to joint meetings and suggested to the 1906 session of the Women's Yearly Meeting that perhaps the time was ripe to discontinue separate sittings at the highest level.

> Monthly and Quarterly Meetings for women Friends are being very generally discontinued. In 1896 it was laid down that women Friends equally with men have a share in carrying on the affairs of the Church, but that when separate sessions were held the minutes of the Men's Meeting constituted the decisions of the Yearly Meeting. ... We should all agree that these [separate women's] discussions were very useful and interesting, but should they take place while the Yearly Meeting is sitting? Last year a Query was altered without consulting women Friends; this year a concern introduced by a woman was considered in a separate men's meeting.[113]

The Women's Yearly Meeting appointed a committee to address this issue, with Godlee as clerk. In its statement, published in January 1907, the committee set out the parameters for the discussion in that year's Women's Yearly Meeting: joint action was desirable because the Yearly Meeting was empowered to take decisions in the women's absence. Against joint sessions, the committee found that some women

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[111] *The Friend*, 21 May 1897, p. 330. Wilson was Clerk between 1883-84.

[112] *The Friend*, 16 June 1905, p. 391.

[113] *The Friend*, 15 June 1906, p. 401.

Friends "believe[d] that in them [separate meetings] there is an opportunity for more to take part than can possibly be the case in the large joint gatherings, and also that in them women can speak to their sisters with greater freedom."[114] There was also the sense that some issues were best considered separately, in the Quaker tradition of segregated meetings, and that the women's Epistle was valuable.[115]

In the Women's Yearly Meeting, it was proposed that women Friends should meet in a conference to be held on the eve of the Yearly Meeting. This compromise solution would allow for a separate gathering of women, although not as a Yearly Meeting, and would also permit women to hear all the business in joint session with men Friends. Nor was it an unusual arrangement. During the week of the Yearly Meeting, philanthropic groups associated with the Society would have their annual meetings when the Yearly Meeting itself was not in session. Some women, such as Hannah Southall, Mary Richardson and Jane Burtt, objected outright to the plan, which would end the Women's Yearly Meeting and with it, the power to issue separate Epistles. However, the opinion of Mary Jane Godlee won the day:

> The business of the Yearly Meeting is done whether we are there or not; the Men's Meeting is the Yearly Meeting, and has legislative power. As a member of the Arrangements Committee she had been conscious of the growing difficulty of arranging the work of the separate sessions [when women considered a different agenda]; there is nothing that comes up in which some women are especially interested. The discussions of the Women's Meetings, however good or helpful, are not the real business of the Church ... .[116]

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[114] *The Friend*, 25 January 1907, p. 54.

[115] *Ibid.*

[116] *The Friend*, 14 June 1907, p. 398. See also Lucy F. Morland, *British Friend*, June 1907, p. 180.

The reservations of Henry Hipsley had proved well-grounded. Women Friends, as local government officers and inspectors, as political campaigners for issues such as temperance, anti-slavery, and suffrage, as university graduates, teachers and doctors as well as mothers of the next generation of Quakers, could claim that all sessions of the Yearly Meeting concerned them equally. Separatist arguments continued to be influential, for until 1904 the State of the Society was considered separately by each meeting and women Friends continued to meet as a conference before the Yearly Meeting to discuss subjects important to them. Subjects discussed include: amusements and recreations (1897), young people in the Society (1899), preparation for effective social work (1902), the Welsh revival (1905), women in civil life (1910), mothercraft (1911), and the preparation of children to face "the present unsettled state of religious belief" and to train them for "righteous living" (1912).[117]

With the crucial issue of their right to be consulted on matters of Society business finally acknowledged, the integrity of their separate meeting preserved (they held separate sessions of the Women's Yearly Meeting every year until 1906), and membership on the Meeting for Sufferings granted, Quaker women must have felt that they had achieved almost beyond their hopes. However, the nature of Quaker business meetings still meant that only those who spoke wielded practical power. In the 1896 discussions, Ellen Robinson had argued that women found it hard to speak in joint meetings. Other Friends, both men and women, were also of this opinion.[118] When

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[117] *British Friend*, 4 June 1897, p. 169; July 1899, p. 189; July 1902, p. 188; June 1905, p. 176; June 1910, p. 171; June 1911, p. 175. *The Friend*, 17 May 1912, p. 303.

[118] Sarah S. Clark and J. Fyfe Stewart, among others. *The Friend*, 29 May 1896, pages 356, 358. Also Matilda Sturge in *The Friend*, 11 October 1895, p. 656. Yearly Meeting proceedings, *The Friend*, 7 June 1907, p. 388.

the 1907 men's Yearly Meeting received the women's proposal that the separate sittings of the Women's Yearly Meeting be discontinued, there were three main reservations. While the men's meeting agreed with the proposal, some expressed the concern that continued large joint meetings would jeopardise the character and order of the meeting. Others wanted to keep the principle of separate meetings alive, for, as Joseph Storrs Fry remarked, he "could quite conceive that questions might arise as to which it would be desirable and almost necessary that men should sit alone."[119] Lastly, William Nash worried that young women Friends might be discouraged from taking part; Marshall Sturge noticed that even "prominent women Friends" found it difficult to be heard in joint meetings.[120]

At the first joint sitting of the Yearly Meeting in 1897, *The Friend* commented that it had gone off without incident. "Yet," it mused, "the increased size of the meetings resulting from this change seems to call for increased restraint of liberty of speech on the part of men."[121] Three years later, Emma Holttum wrote to *The Friend* with her observation that, in the Yearly Meeting, women Friends did not seem to be speaking. "I wonder," she continued, "whether they have been too modest and diffident in expressing their views, or whether men Friends have hardly exercised restraint, and so have not allowed full opportunity to the more retiring ones."[122] In 1913, the Quaker Edward Harold Marsh, a contributor to *The Christian World*, found reassurance in women's unwillingness to play an active role in meetings, reporting that

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[119] *The Friend*, 7 June 1907, p. 388. J.B. Hodgkin agreed.

[120] *Ibid.*

[121] *The Friend*, 4 June 1897, p. 367.

[122] *The Friend*, 29 June 1900, p. 431.

although women were eligible for the clerkships of nine or ten Quarterly Meetings (out of 18), every one was held by a man.[123] He goes on to describe "an adjournment of the yearly meeting ... held in London."

> The sittings extended over about three days, and were generally attended by several hundred people, the women being nearly twice as numerous as the men. The speeches made numbered 724 - 528 by men and 186 by women. If the women had availed themselves of their complete liberty of opportunity to the extent of their numerical proportion, they would have claimed 65 per cent. of the speakers instead of only 26.[124]

Women, then, were reluctant to speak, even in mixed meetings where they were in the majority. The reasons for this are far from clear. Perhaps the long tradition of having separate meetings for men and women, with separate business agendas, gave women Friends the impression that they should only speak on certain issues. Perhaps women Friends, like first-time speakers in ministry, feared the reactions their speech could cause. Whatever the case, the structure of Quaker business meetings was not favourable to women, or, indeed, for other less "weighty" Friends who struggled to make their voices heard.

In examining the ministry and business meetings, Quaker "equality" must be qualified. While it was acknowledged that women could receive divine messages to communicate to their meetings, the pressure of speaking for the first time could keep them silent. Women who were recorded ministers did have the freedom to travel in the service of the Society, but there was also a growing realisation that the "ministries of home life" were also a valid spiritual outlet for women. In business meetings,

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[123] Edward Harold Marsh, "Women in Public Life. Facts from the Society of Friends," *The Christian World*, February 13, 1913 (no page numbering given). Tract Volume PP, page 202.

[124] *Ibid.*

although women possessed a parallel network of meetings, these were practically without power, except in isolated instances, until 1896, when they were recognized as constituent members of meetings for discipline. However, less than twenty years after the change, women still appeared to be playing a very small role in the government of the Society.

III. A Reform Network: the Bristol and Somerset Connection

The women of the Priestman/Bright/Clark clan and the Sturge family living within the boundaries of the Bristol and Somerset Quarterly Meeting had an impressive record of participation in the major campaigns for social reform in the nineteenth century. The Bristol-based Priestman sisters - Mary Priestman, Anna Maria Priestman, and Margaret Tanner - were all related to John Bright by marriage. Helen Priestman Bright Clark was their niece, who had relocated to Street on her marriage to the shoe-manufacturer William Clark. Their children - Esther Bright Clothier, Margaret Clark Gillett, Alice Clark, Dr Hilda Clark and Roger Clark (and Roger's wife Sarah Bancroft Clark) - continued the family tradition as suffragists and peace campaigners. The Sturge women were supporters of girls' and women's education. They attended the "Lectures for Ladies," a forerunner of Bristol University College and helped to establish Redland High School, a member of the Girls' Public Day School Trust, in 1882.[125] Matilda Sturge was part of the network of Bristol Sturges

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[125] Ian Bild, ed., *Bristol's Other History*, Bristol Broadsides (Co-op) Ltd., Bristol (1983), p. 109.

which included the doctor Caroline Sturge, Elizabeth Sturge, who worked with Octavia Hill, and Emily Sturge, who was elected to the Bristol School Board in 1880.[126]

These two families, both rooted in radical politics, could hardly fail to overlap. Emily and Elizabeth Sturge, together with their mother were active in the campaign to repeal the Contagious Diseases Acts.[127] Anna Maria Priestman and Helen Priestman Bright Clark (and other relatives) were on the governing body of the Ladies' National Association and active at local level; Margaret Tanner and Mary Priestman provided a central organising core on which Josephine Butler could depend.[128] Anna Maria Priestman and Emily Sturge were both involved in the Women's Liberal Association in Bristol, founded to make women's suffrage a test question for prospective Liberal candidates.[129] A mid-1880s anti-slavery petition included the names of Helen Priestman Bright Clark and two of her aunts, Margaret Tanner and Mary Priestman.[130] The connection continued in the committee appointed to investigate the position of women Friends. Bristol and Somerset Quarterly Meeting nominated three men and three women, the women being Matilda Sturge, Margaret Tanner, and Helen Priestman Bright Clark.

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[126] *Ibid.*, p. 110. Matilda Sturge, *Emily Sturge. A Portrait in Outline*, Printed for Private Circulation (1892), p. 2.

[127] Bild, *op. cit.*, p. 109.

[128] Holton, *Suffrage Days*, p. 30.

[129] *Ibid.*, pp. 57-58. Matilda Sturge, *Emily Sturge*, pp. 10-11.

[130] Clare Midgley, *Women against Slavery*, p. 196

These women brought to their activities outside the Society of Friends, Quakerly principles and Quakerly ways of doing things.[131] What they brought back into their denomination from these campaigns is largely neglected. When Mrs Fawcett referred to the Friends' "fine record in the matter of sex equality," women had only been constituent members of the Yearly Meeting for 23 years. The first consideration of women's position in the Yearly Meeting, between the years 1880-84, corresponds to the formation of the Women's Liberal Association and the campaigning leading up to the attempt to enfranchise women householders within the 1884 Reform Act. To an extent hitherto unrealised, agitation for women's suffrage outside the Society informed the attitudes of those activists within the Society.

IV. Women's Suffrage and Quaker Conscience

Women Friends had successfully penetrated the government of their Society at all levels, although the equality was more one of opportunity than of results. Among Friends, the question of votes for women could only mean the national franchise. Unlike the Church of England, with its houses of clergy and laity on a parliamentary model, the Society was governed without recourse to voting. But if voting was alien to the Society when conducting its denominational business, both men and women Friends would have exercised their votes outside the meeting-house. As both electors and candidates, Quaker business- and professional men by virtue of their class were involved in local and national politics.[132] As unmarried daughters,

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[131] Holton, *Suffrage Days*, pp. 30-33.

[132] For an analysis of the social position of Friends, see Richard T. Vann and David Eversley, *op. cit.*, pp. 70-74.

sisters, and widows, some Quaker women had the municipal vote, and could vote for and serve as Poor Law Guardians or as members of a School Board. Friends in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century were the antithesis of their ancestors of three centuries earlier who had rejected the outside world as unrighteous. As such, Friends had to confront the agitation for women's suffrage.

It is not the intention here to trace Friends' contribution to the suffrage movement or to feminism in general. Philippa Levine has acknowledged that a radical or Quaker family could expose a young woman early in life to concerns that would make her a feminist.[133] Quaker women were active as individuals in the suffrage movement and at times acted as a powerful bloc.[134] This section will explore the arguments used by suffragists within the denomination who attempted to get the Society to recognise women's suffrage as one of its concerns. From 1910 onwards, women's suffrage occupied the letters column and was a talking point among Friends. In 1897, Anne W. Richardson addressed the Devonshire House Quarterly Meeting lecture course on "Modern Womanhood", praising the virtues of the women's movement. By the 1910s, there was an ad-hoc committee of London Friends arranging lectures on suffrage.[135]

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[133] Philippa Levine, *Victorian Feminism*, p. 21.

[134] Olive Banks, *Faces of Feminism*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1981, reprint 1986, pp. 25, 120.

[135] *The Friend*, 10 December 1897, p. 817. Anne Wakefield Richardson (1859-1942) was educated at Newnham and Westfield College. She was a faculty member of Westfield College from 1887-1925 and served as its Acting Principal between August 1917 and May 1919. Janet Sondheimer, *Castle Adamant in Hampstead. A History of Westfield College 1882-1982*, Westfield College, University of London (1983), biographical index. *The Friend*, 4 November 1911, p. 744.

It would have come as no surprise to the Recording Clerk of the Yearly Meeting, Isaac Sharp, that the topic of women's suffrage was proposed for the agenda of the 1910 Yearly Meeting.[136] The Yearly Meeting of the Society reflected, in its agenda and Epistles, the concerns of English Quakers and the woman question was very much in the public eye. What might have alarmed the Clerk was the long list of signatures - 74 in all - which were appended to the brief request. In the normal course of Quaker government, business came to the Yearly Meeting through the network of meetings below it. For a group of women who were not united in the geographical bounds of a Quarterly Meeting to write to the Clerk was indeed unusual. His reply, if one was written, has not survived but women's suffrage was omitted from the agenda of the Yearly Meeting. Interested women who attended the Yearly Meeting instead held a supplementary meeting devoted to supporting women's suffrage and raising the issue among Friends.[137] In 1911, suffragists used more orthodox means to get women's suffrage on the agenda for the Yearly Meeting. Three minutes were introduced on the "Spiritual Position of Women" by the Quarterly Meetings of Berkshire & Oxfordshire, Bristol & Somerset, and Sussex, Surrey & Hampshire. The ensuing discussion, more about suffrage than spirituality, lasted for nearly an hour after the appointed close of the meeting, but no resolution could be made.[138] Helen Sturge used the language of Quaker ministerial "concern" to obtain a brief hearing for the issue at the 1912 Yearly Meeting. She had a "heavy concern to lay on the hearts

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[136] Appeal from Women Friends for Consideration of Women's Suffrage at Yearly Meeting, 1910. Letter to Isaac Sharp, Recording Clerk, Box $X^2/16$.

[137] From a report of the meeting by Evangeline Barratt and Edith M. Williams in *The Friend*, 6 May 1910, p. 293. Both women had signed the letter to Isaac Sharp.

[138] *British Friend*, June 1911, p. 171.

of Friends the moral and spiritual aspects of the Women's Movement."[139] While the urgency and eloquence of her appeal was reported to have moved many, no opportunity for discussion was allowed, nor was a Minute drafted.

In the early 1910s, both suffragists and anti-suffragists marshalled their arguments over the contested terrain of Friends' social and religious conscience and the link between religious conviction and secular reform. At stake was the adoption of women's suffrage as a tenet of the Society. Mary E. Butler objected strongly to any discussion of suffrage at the Yearly Meeting. She wrote:

> It is a political movement, and on that account numbers of women, who are strongly against it, decline to take an active part in opposing it. It appears to many that meetings related to politics should not be held during Yearly Meeting in any part of Devonshire House.[140]

Butler painted a picture of Quaker women as apolitical and clearly viewed the gathering as an aberration not only from Yearly Meeting's religious business but from accepted Quaker practice. For women like Evangeline Barratt and Edith M. Williams, there was no inconsistency in espousing suffragist politics and Quakerism. Friends who supported women's suffrage sought to make it a tenet of the Society - it would then be Friends' religious obligation to support it. In their attempt to subvert the arguments of Butler and Friends who agreed with her assessment of "the Cause", Quaker suffragists stressed the moral nature of the enterprise and appealed to the Quaker tradition of espousing just causes.

Calls for women's "rights" were, by and large, deprecated. In 1885 Mary Jane Taylor wrote to one of her children, "I hope that in the general *mêlée* of the country

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[139] *British Friend*, June 1912, p. 175.

[140] *The Friend*, 13 May 1910, p. 314.

we shall not get any woman putting themselves forward as candidates, just to show their "rights". Do you notice how some or at any rate one, has had (more than once, I think) her goods distrained for taxes, saying she will not voluntarily pay them until she has a voice in levying them?"[141] Yet Friends as a denomination, and Nonconformists in general, were no strangers to civil disobedience in the case of church rates or denominational religious education. In the past, Quakers had been jailed for refusing to pay charges deemed unjust; the highest executive committee in the denomination, the Meeting for Sufferings, was originally a means of publicising the injustices done to Friends. The argument was not that it was unseemly for a taxpayer to protest. Nor was it that women had no political identity; in the same letter in which Taylor made her comments about self-seeking actions, she gave an assessment of the impact of the redistribution of Parliamentary seats, effected in 1885.[142] Mary Jane Taylor, perhaps inconsistently given her own willingness to "talk politics", disapproved of civil disobedience in this case as a <u>political</u> action, one divorced from moral and religious conviction.

Friends opposed to discussion of the enfranchisement of women sheltered behind the belief, often strongly held as the examples of Mary Butler and Mary Jane Taylor show, that the issue was a political one.[143] As such there was no need for

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[141] Elizabeth Mary Cadbury, ed., *A Dear Memory*, p. 418.

[142] "The Redistribution Act of 1885 broke up the multiple representation of ancient communities, replacing it in many cases with single representation for smaller, often socially homogenous suburbs - thus powerfully enforcing the stratification of politics into blocs based on social class." Jose Harris, *op. cit.*, p. 190.

[143] Mariabella Fry drily remarked, "if our meetings are to become the arena for party strife, the sooner we drop the title 'Friends' the better." *British Friend*, February 1911, p. 49. See also *The Friend*, 17 June 1910, p. 411; 17 February 1911, pp. 111-112; 24 February 1911, p. 128; 17 March 1911, p. 177; *British Friend*, January 1911,

the Society as a whole to pronounce on it and individual Friends would be left to follow the dictates of conscience and political inclination.[144] *The Friend* occupied an uneasy middle ground. In 1907, it printed a notice for *The Case for Women's Suffrage* but declined to give a review, stating, "a discussion of this book is beyond our province."[145] Edward Grubb, the editor of the *British Friend*, was more sympathetic. He told his readers in 1911:

> It appears to us clearly inexpedient that a political proposal of this kind should be taken up officially by a religious Society so long as its members are seriously divided about it. But the prior question remains as to whether they ought to be divided about it, any more than about slavery, which was certainly in part a 'political' question.[146]

Pro-suffrage Friends combined arguments about women's desire to effect moral and social reform with references to Friends' egalitarian practice, rooted in Quaker theology. The 1910 suffrage meeting blended references to the equality of men and women within the denomination as well as the moral force of the suffrage cause:

> This meeting of women Friends has considered the enfranchisement of women in the light of the experience of Friends, who have in practice recognised equality between men and women in spiritual affairs and in the business of the Society. Our experience has led us to value highly the benefit to the community of this equality, and we wish to see the principle extended to the laws of the country and the social habits of the people. We regard the enfranchisement of women as a necessary step in this spiritual and moral movement, and we believe that the

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p. 23; February 1911, p. 50.. This viewpoint was not solely the preserve of anti-suffragists; in *The Friend*, 10 June 1910, the suffragist Katherine Pease Routledge thought it inappropriate for suffrage and Yearly Meeting to be associated (p. 395). Also, *The Friend*, 10 March 1911, p. 161.

[144] *British Friend*, January 1911, p. 23.

[145] *The Friend*, 23 August 1907, p. 560.

[146] *British Friend*, January 1911, p. 23.

> question calls for the earnest consideration and sympathy of Friends.[147]

Quaker theology posited that men and women were spiritual equals and equally eligible to receive divine insight. E. Claude Taylor thought that according to Quaker principles, the rights of citizenship were "innate and divine."[148] Charles Lawson Smith cited the position of women in the Yearly Meeting ("a great and manifold benefit to the Society and themselves") as reason enough for women to be admitted to the national electorate.[149] The examples from Friends' egalitarian theology and revised governing practice were buttressed by appeals to the Society's history of righting moral wrongs.

Sarah Jane Tanner, who held women's suffrage to be "the latest of the great world movements towards human freedom", remarked, "surely such great issues ought not to be ignored by a religious Society whose Meeting for Sufferings watches over subject races and oppression and world over."[150] Tanner contrasted the ambivalent attitudes of some Friends about "human freedom" with the Society's historic role as champion of oppressed peoples. Inevitably, emphasis on the Society's previous involvement in reform agitation brought charges that suffrage, unlike Friends' anti-slavery stance, was a political act. Many Friends pointed out that the Society had always engaged in "political" questions. Elizabeth Spence Watson wrote:

> I cannot see why the subject of Women's Suffrage should be considered more political than the subjects of Temperance legislation,

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[147] *The Friend*, 10 June 1910, p. 393.

[148] *The Friend*, 28 April 1911, p. 274.

[149] *British Friend*, February 1911, p 49.

[150] *The Friend*, 31 March 1911, pp. 144-145.

> Arbitration instead of War, the Opium traffic, or Anti-State regulation of Vice, in all of which subjects Friends have taken a leading part, and have also often discussed them in our meeting-houses.[151]

Alongside the appeal to Friends' egalitarian practice and the denomination's tradition of social reform rested a construction of the suffrage movement as a moral crusade and women as moral agents. Ellen Marriott of Bristol, when protesting about the cruelty of vivisection, lamented that women were unable to make their voices heard on this moral issue. "On English men - not on English women -", she wrote, "rests the responsibility of the Vivisection Act."[152] The implication is that a legislative process which involved women would root out immorality. An anonymous article in the *British Friend* made the point more graphically:

> [W]herever the interests of the drink trade and of that terrible form of vice which preys on the bodies and souls of women are powerful, the cause of Women's Enfranchisement is always virulently opposed. Why is this? It is because these traffickers in evil are under no delusion as to the real nature of the movement - they know that it means an uprising of all that is best in womanhood and a real increase in power to opposed the wrong for which they stand.[153]

Madeline Grubb and Mabel Lean linked suffrage with reform. Highlighting the double standard, currently in the public eye because of the Royal Commission on Divorce, they pleaded for moral equality and argued for the elevating spiritual power

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[151] *The Friend*, 20 May 1910, p. 330. Maria Richardson wrote in support the next week, p. 362. See also *The Friend*, 3 March 1911, p. 145.

[152] *The Friend*, 1 December 1891, p. 310. Ellen Marriott was an elder and overseer in the Bristol and Frenchay Monthly Meeting, and on the committee of the Bristol, Somerset and Dorset Friends' Tract Association (*Printed Members' Lists for Bristol and Somerset Quarterly Meeting 1886-1894*).

[153] *British Friend*, November 1913, p. 300.

of female enfranchisement.[154] It was truly a case of "votes for women, chastity for men".

The link between suffrage, morality and women is also visible in attacks by anti-suffragists. If women would bring positive qualities to the political arena, some opponents stressed the possible negative "womanly" attributes and their effects. H.S. Thompson raised the bogey of women's supposed preference for the "clerical party" and continued:

> The fact that most women are probably Conservative <u>at least</u> can be ignored, at any rate in this journal. Their conventionality and love of so-called "respectability" and their adoration of fashion and social position are bywords. That women are apt to take things too personally and to look upon life from a narrower standpoint than men, and that they go to extremes is also against them. ... In conclusion, however loyal women may be to their sex collectively, one cannot ignore how hard, unjust, and even cruel many of them are to each other individually.[155]

Instead of women's sympathetic understanding and essential purity, Thompson highlighted their alleged conservatism, vanity, hyper-sensitivity, narrow-mindedness, and cattiness. W.P. Martin, jr. questioned the part women in Australia and New Zealand (countries in which women could vote in national elections) had played in supporting compulsory military training.[156] For some anti-suffragists, women's natures and their "conservative" politics did not fit them for the responsibility of the parliamentary franchise.

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[154] *The Friend*, 1 April 1910, p. 210. For letters agreeing with them, see *The Friend*, 8 April 1910, pp. 225-226; 15 April 1910, pp. 242-243.

[155] *The Friend*, 21 April 1911, pp. 258-259.

[156] *British Friend*, December 1913, p. 342.

The Friends' League for Women's Suffrage

The Friends' Council (later League) for Women's Suffrage (hereafter FLWS) grew out of a gathering at Hampstead meeting-house in October 1910.[157] Its object was to explain why Friends, as Friends, should support the movement.[158] The organisation existed, at least in part, because interested Friends often encountered resistance from their local meetings. In September 1910 women Friends gathered at the Saffron Walden meeting-house to hear Margaret Gillett speak on "The Spiritual Nature of the Women's Movement." Those who had attended forwarded a request to their Quarterly Meeting that a similar event should be held during the Meeting's next session; it was decided against.[159] In January 1911, the Council assembled at Hammersmith meeting-house to hear Catherine Graveson speak on the wider sphere available to women, and argument which stressed the vote as a symbol of women's service.[160] The group condemned the actions of the militant suffragettes as both unwomanly and offensive to Friends. During 1913, notices of meetings organised by the League appear in *The Friend* almost every week. By the end of 1914, the FLWS

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[157] Although the FLWS bears the identification "Friends'", the group was not officially associated with the Society; in this instance, "Friends'" refers to the composition of the group, not its standing within the Society.

[158] For the FLWS's objectives and methods see, *Friends' League for Women's Suffrage. Second Annual Report for Year Ending May 1914*, Orphans' Printing Press, Leominster, [1914], p. 2.

[159] *The Friend*, 23 September 1910, p. 630. This is not to say that all Quarterly Meetings were hostile, Yorkshire QM was generally favourable to the idea, *The Friend*, 10 February 1911, p. 89.

[160] *The Friend*, 3 February 1911, p. 81.

had 19 branches and over 1,000 members and "associates."[161] This is an impressive total for a denomination whose total membership hovered at the 17,000 mark.[162]

The FLWS encapsulated the full range of pro-suffrage opinion within its ranks. At a meeting held in May 1911 (while the Yearly Meeting was in session), Gulielma Crosfield defended women's suffrage on religious and ethical grounds, Helen Sturge viewed it as a weapon to fight moral evils, Edward Grubb contended that spiritual equality and spiritual ideals were intended to find expression in public laws and institutions, and Anne Joyce argued that it was a question of justice.[163] The meeting ended by forwarding a Minute to the Yearly Meeting affirming the principle of spiritual equality and arguing that the privileges of men should be extended to women.[164]

In 1913, the Epistle of the Yearly Meeting finally addressed the issue of women's movement:

> Out of great and bitter need, the women of the world are asking for their opportunity to serve their generation. The history of our Society brings abundant evidence of the advantages which come to the community through a full recognition of the dignity of woman, and through according her her rightful place in family, social and church

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[161] *Friends' League for Women's Suffrage Second Annual Report for Year Ending May 1914*, Orphans' Printing Press, Leominster, [1914], p. 2. According to the Report, there were only 56 "associate" members, or 5% of the total. It is not clear whether "associate" members were men or non-Friends.

[162] Isichei, *Victorian Quakers*, p. 113. The Society was still growing more slowly than the population of the nation as a whole.

[163] *British Friend*, May 1911, pp. 174-175.

[164] *Ibid.*, p. 175.

> life. We as Friends, both men and women, are called to bear our share in bringing this movement to its full fruition ... .[165]

It did not specifically advocate support for women's suffrage, although Mrs Fawcett and other suffrage campaigners welcomed the Epistle. The Society never adopted it as a concern and the FLWS never gained the status of a standing committee of the Society. The Meeting for Sufferings produced a minute on "The Position of Women in the Society of Friends" which was adopted by the 1914 Yearly Meeting and which effectively ended discussion of the issue. The statement was a full rehearsal of women's participation in the government of the Society and acknowledged that the sex-segregated Yearly Meetings had been a mistake.[166] Significantly, it left the issue of suffrage to the conscience of individual Friends. After the adoption of the Minute, *The Friend* declined to print "political" letters.

While the League welcomed the statement in its 1915 *Report*, there must have been an element of disappointment. If suffrage was not a concern, the FLWS would be unable to draw on the Society's considerable resources in forwarding its objects. By the time of the 1915 *Report*, the war in Europe dominated the agenda. The Honorary Secretary, Hannah Bellows wrote:

> This League, in common with all other suffrage societies, is naturally giving up its special work at present, and we are hoping to be able to offer the services of our organising secretary, whom we are very anxious not to part with, to one of the committees of relief connected with the Society of Friends.[167]

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[165] *Extracts from the Minutes and Proceedings of London Yearly Meeting of Friends, Held in London*, Office of the Society of Friends (1913), p. 165.

[166] *Extracts from the Minutes and Proceedings of London Yearly Meeting of Friends held in London*, Office of the Society of Friends (1914), pp. 186-187.

[167] *The Friend*, 11 September 1914, p. 678.

Agitation may have been discontinued in the face of a national emergency, but the League did not disappear altogether. In 1915, there was a notice of a FLWS meeting to discuss "The Religious Aspect of the Women's Movement in its Relation to war and peace."[168] In the discussions and reports in *The Friend* and *British Friend*, the question of the political responsibilities of Quakers was central. Was women's suffrage a spiritual or political movement? Was it possible to separate the two? The long history of Friends' involvement in social reform was invoked and the moral nature of suffragist politics was emphasised. However, the nature of Friends' government, which relied on consensus, left the denomination with no way to cope effectively with such a divisive subject. The only option was to delay discussion and, in the end, to end that discussion.

At the end of the nineteenth century, Friends were forced to reexamine their denomination's commitment to egalitarianism in terms of the reality of women's participation in Quaker government and ministry. Although statistics collected by the Society showed some evidence of decline, there remained a substantial number of women ministers. The status of the ministry, and with it leave to travel on Friends' business, remained and women did take advantage of these opportunities. Increasingly, however, the ministry was challenged by the opportunities available to women Friends outside the Society and the growth of a home-based piety within it.

In the light of feminist campaigns for women's suffrage and social reform women

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[168] *The Friend*, 12 March 1915, p. 208. The League declared its intention of holding meetings to prepare women for equal citizenship in April 1915, but thereafter mentions of the League dwindle. There is no 1916 *Report* in the Library of the Society of Friends.

Friends questioned the fairness of separate meetings for men and women in a Society which promoted spiritual equality. In juxtaposing sexual subordination and spiritual equality, women Friends pointed to inconsistencies in Quaker practice. Having won equal access to the business of their denomination, women Friends as a group, and as individuals, failed to take advantage of the change in government. This led to calls for restraint on the part of men Friends, to allow for a wider spectrum of opinion to be heard. The suffrage campaigns of the twentieth century also proved problematic. Friends had accepted the principle of equal government within their own Society and many individual Friends were active supporters of women's suffrage. Although Friends' own practice and the Society's traditional support for just causes was invoked by supporters, the issue remained too divisive for the denomination to formally pronounce upon. Nineteenth-century Friends could hardly retire from the world around them; instead, in these instances they faced an uncomfortable reassessment of the extent and nature of equality between the sexes, with reference to the heroic Quaker past and a problematic, gendered present.

Chapter Three. Non-western women, Christian service, and the spread of the gospel: the separatist rhetoric of the Baptist Zenana Mission

The period during the First World War was a difficult one for the missionary community. Passages to and from England, China, India, or Africa were delayed or impossible, thus depriving many missionaries of much-needed furloughs as well as of reinforcements; inflation and fluctuating exchange rates ate up salaries and there was little money around to undertake new ventures; prospective candidates for mission work (primarily men, but to a certain extent also women) seemed few and far between.[1] In the bleak climate of 1917, a war-weary Baptist denomination celebrated the 50th anniversary of Women's Missionary Association (formerly the Baptist Zenana Mission). The Revd C.E. Wilson, Foreign Secretary of the Baptist Missionary Society, was invited to sound a note of optimism much needed by a battered mission community. This he did, concentrating on the improvements of pre-war years and the potential for more successful work at the war's end. He praised the women's proven capacity for mission work and pointed to a bright future for Baptist missions since the BMS and WMA had opted to unite four years before:

> The years in which women's work was organised separately from the main body of the Mission have gone, happily never to return. The whole Mission is one body, and can only do its work effectively as such. ... We have come to realise that mission stations manned by men only are really as incomplete and unscientific as mission stations "manned" by women only.[2]

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[1] See *The Herald*, October 1915, p. 267 for the shortage of men volunteers. In *The Herald*, March 1919, p. 32, the Secretary of the Medical Mission Auxiliary complained that women doctors had not filled the gap left by men on active service. Yet the WMA accepted 43 women for service during wartime, compared with 27 during the pevious four years, see *The Herald*, May 1915, p. 60.

[2] *The Herald*, June 1917, p. 106.

Wilson had correctly interpreted the inclinations of the Baptist mission community since the Edinburgh Conference of 1910. Efficiency and "scientific" method were the order of the day, and small societies (like the BZM/WMA) were being subsumed by larger bodies. The WMA held out until 1921, when it was completely incorporated into the BMS and lost all separate identity. Unquestionably, Wilson was looking forward when he praised the principle of concerted action. In doing so, he dismissed the first forty-six years of the BZM/WMA's existence as days "never to return."

From the mid-nineteenth century until the first decades of the twentieth, the Baptist Zenana Mission provided a lifelong religious vocation for single women acceptable to and in tune with Protestant ideals. Through participation in the BZM, Baptist women gained access to the wider world of Empire, and developed expertise in their particular patch of it - the status/education of Indian and Chinese women in general, and of zenana women in particular. As a career, it offered independence and administrative responsibilities to the daughters of artisans and the middle classes.[3] The very formation of the BZM forced the articulation of conceptions of Oriental and Occidental women, of beliefs about their skills, needs, and place in society. This chapter explores the construction of Indian and Chinese women by western missionary observers as both "sisters," implying some sort of commonality with western women, and as "heathens," proper objects for evangelisation. Turning to zenana missionaries, on what terms could single women legitimately be sent abroad to do the church's business as its representatives in a foreign country? What adjustments, if any, needed

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[3] J.H.Y. Briggs provides a summary of recent historiography on social class among Baptists in *English Baptists*, pp. 268-278.

to be made to the category of "women" to allow zenana missionaries status both on and off the mission field? In what ways was their employment abroad, living outside the family home, made acceptable? The phenomenon of trained single women missionaries throws into sharp relief the treatment of women married to missionaries of the Baptist Missionary Society. Finally, as an independent organisation founded, sustained, and staffed by women yet linked through a common denominational bond to the BMS, the BZM was both as a separate space for women and a part of a more complicated denominational whole in which opportunities for women were limited. Did the existence of the BZM fundamentally alter women's church work amongst Baptists as a whole?

I. "Native" Women and Christian Responsibility

The Baptist Zenana Mission was founded in direct response to a pamphlet entitled *A Plea for Zenanas* (1866), written by the wife of a Baptist Missionary Society (BMS) missionary in India. Its author, Marianne Lewis, was acquainted with the efforts of the Society for Promoting Female Education in the East and the Free Church of Scotland among the women in India.[4] She and another missionary's wife, Elizabeth Sale, had attempted a similar work in the areas surrounding their husbands' mission stations. What Marianne Lewis proposed in her pamphlet (and zealously promoted during her furlough in England) was that Baptists should emulate the activities of these two societies and employ "ladies" full time to visit, educate, and evangelise the women of India's zenanas. Traditionally, high-caste Hindu and Muslim women occupied a "women's" part of the house (the Zenana), with multiple

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[4] Brian Stanley, *History of the Baptist Missionary Society 1792-1992*, p. 229.

restrictions and customs dictating movement outside of it. The custom of zenana or purdah applied only to certain social classes and was enforced only in certain regions of India. It formed a part of upper- and middle-class society in the north, northwestern, and eastern India, and in pockets where Moghul influence still remained.[5] The BMS (and later the BZM) operated primarily in north and north-eastern India where the zenana tradition was still strong.

As a result of Mrs Lewis's campaign, a committee of women, chaired by the long-serving Secretary of the BMS, Edward Bean Underhill, resolved to form itself into the "Ladies' Association for the Support of Zenana Work and Bible Women in India, in Connection with the Baptist Missionary Society" (hereafter BZM, or Baptist Zenana Mission, its 1897 shortened title). The BZM was certainly not the first to send single women to India for the purpose of evangelizing other women; the Society for Promoting Female Education in the East, founded in 1834, pioneered this method.[6] Yet the Baptist Zenana Mission, for a multiplicity of reasons, developed a strong missionary rhetoric favouring single women missionaries, celebrating their special work and its attendant achievements, and tightly defining the role of women married to BMS missionaries.

The BZM came into being to fulfil <u>one</u> purpose--to convert the women of India to Christianity. Later, China would be added as another field of endeavour but the

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[5] Janaki Nair, "Uncovering the Zenana: Visions of Indian Womanhood in Englishwomen's Writings, 1813-1940", *Journal of Women's History*, Vol. 2, No 1 (Spring 1990), p. 11.

[6] Margaret Donaldson, " 'The Cultivation of the Heart and the Moulding of the Will...' The Missionary Contribution of the Society for Promoting Female Education in China, India, and the East", in W.J. Shiels & Diana Wood, eds., *Studies in Church History 27 Women in the Church*, p. 434.

overriding intention, whatever the mission "field", was the evangelization of "native" women by trained workers. Initially, this goal was pursued through zenana visiting, that is, paying repeated calls on individual women or small groups of women within their own homes. However, schools soon followed. In the early years of the mission, it was held that low caste women could hear Gospel preaching in the markets by male missionaries and paid evangelists and the mission targeted the respectable, cloistered women of the "better classes." Gradually, BZM women undertook itinerating tours, intending to speak to as many women (of whatever caste) as possible, and day schools were opened for "heathen" girls to attend (boarding schools tended to be reserved for converts and daughters of "native Christians").

The Baptist Zenana Mission, from its inception, constructed itself as a unique organisation fitted to meet a unique need. Indeed, this rhetoric could be said to precede its foundation, as Mrs Lewis's *Plea* also made just this point. In order properly to understand the way that the BZM validated missionary careers for women, it is necessary to examine the way the society viewed its clientele - the unevangelised women of India, and later, China. For if there had been no special need that only women could fill, the mission probably would never have been formed as existing missionary provision would have been deemed sufficient.[7] Conditions in India and China proved conducive to a woman-only mission. In India, it was the seclusion of the zenana which motivated the Society, while in China, cultural norms made it

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[7] The General Committee of the BMS was generally averse to sending single women as missionaries. Stanley, *op. cit.*, p. 232.

awkward for male evangelists to speak with respectable women, who inhabited the walled family compounds.[8]

From the earliest accounts, missionaries remarked on the absence of women from public gatherings and in "social life" in general. However, the accounts of male missionary observers tended to be biased toward the men they were likely to have encountered and their lifestyles. It was not until the last quarter of the nineteenth century that a corpus of literature developed on the position of women in Indian society, largely the result of organisations like the BZM.[9] Thus, the BZM assisted in building up a perception of Indian (and later Chinese) womanhood which came to dominate mission circles. Mrs Lewis reported in her *Plea* that it was the height of bad manners to even ask a prominent Hindu about his wife, let alone invite her to tea at the mission compound. Practically invisible and inaccessible to BMS missionaries, Indian women entered mission accounts as victims of suttee (the immolation of a widow on her husband's funeral pyre), child marriage (with betrothals occurring in infancy and girls leaving their natal home before puberty), and the general prejudice against widows. The Revd C. Spurgeon Medhurst reminded the whole Baptist

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[8] In the 1870s, Chinese opponents of Christian missions spread scurrilous stories of sexual indiscretions at mixed church services. Missionary newcomers were sensitive to such charges, and sought to preserve their mission's respectability by confining their attention to men. The BMS was to some extent conscious of this state of affairs and feared that sending single women into areas where a single male missionary or missionary couple were residing would only injure BMS work. Either the relationship between the two single missionaries would become a topic for gossip and speculation, or, in the case of a married couple, the new arrival could be considered the secondary wife. The BMS did not request the aid of the BZM to evangelize the women of China until 1893. Jane Hunter, *The Gospel of Gentility*, pp. 21-22, 63.

[9] G.A. Oddie, "Missionaries as Social Commentators: The Indian Case", paper given at the Workshop on Missionary Archives, held at SOAS in London, 8-9 July 1992, p. 5.

community that in China, not only were women uneducated and illiterate, but they also suffered from the handicaps of foot-binding and early marriage. On the whole, he argued, women in China take "second place."[10] Mrs Lewis confirmed this point in her *Plea*, when she wrote that Indian women were "neglected and despised."[11]

Metaphorically, these disabilities were represented by the physical space of the zenana. Any account of a visit by a missionary to a zenana inevitably included a description of the room itself: the women "inmates" clustered together, sometimes playing with trinkets; the dirt, despite the fine clothes and jewels worn by the women; the cramped nature of the women's apartments, often in sharp contrast to the size of the house; and most importantly the lack of light which was due to small, high windows. Here were women literally and figuratively in darkness. Emily Spurgeon's poem "Wanted-for the Service of the King," entreated women to join the missionary cause in these terms:

> Wanted, women, tender, true, / Women's work none else can do.
> Women sit in darkness yonder, / While we hesitate and wonder;
> Women, cursed with bands that tighten, / Bands of caste which nought can lighten.
> Sisters! give a helping hand; / Take God's peace to sin-cursed land.[12]

The darkness of heathen women's souls was manifested by the darkness of their surroundings and in their mental lassitude. The opposite of this "heathen darkness" was Christian "light" or "brightness." Mary Shekleton, serving the BZM in China, wrote of the transformation Christianity wrought in the lives of Chinese women:

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[10] *Missionary Herald*, 1 December 1898, p. 566.

[11] Mrs C.B. Lewis, *A Plea for Zenanas*, no publisher, no date (1866), p. 7. Bound with "BZM Papers".

[12] *Missionary Herald*, 1 March 1895, p. 96.

> In addition to the spiritual joy which the knowledge of Christ brings to the Chinese woman, which thus transforms her whole life, there is the intellectual change, the greater alertness and brightness, the realisation of the privileges and responsibilities of motherhood, which makes her become the light of her home.[13]

Zenana missionaries measured the achievements of the ancient societies of India and China in terms of the status of women. Christian societies headed the list, as Christianity was seen to be the guarantor of women's privileged position. In characterizing Indian and Chinese society as unjust or primitive in its organisation (and thus primitive in its treatment of women), the BZM was operating within an accepted imperial stereotype in which the Oriental Other was seen as materially different from and in opposition to the English norm. Sometimes this otherness was expressed as an essential femininity or weakness inherent in Oriental cultures. The Revd James Smith of Delhi wrote:

> Mohammed, in making polygamy, female degradation, and domestic slavery vital parts of his religious, social, and political creed, more than counteracted the good effects of the one truth that lay at the foundation of all his early successes. Nay, more, he thus planted the seeds of destruction in the wonderful system he inaugurated. Mohammedism [*sic.*] must eventually succumb to the luxurious and enervating influence of the Zenana. So long as the people have to fight for their position, the effects are modified; but no sooner are they thrown on their own resources for existence and pleasure than they become absorbed in the luxuries of the harem; the deterioration of bravery and administrative power rapidly follows, and the end is a second childhood, rendering them an easy prey to every enemy.[14]

The less advanced a society, the less it conformed to accepted Western gender roles. This was especially true in the case of African tribal societies, which were by common consent deemed the most primitive as they lacked a written culture. The BMS's Mrs

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[13] *The Herald*, February 1912, p. 49.

[14] *Missionary Herald*, 1 October 1883, p. 343.

Kirkland reported the difficulties in communicating and enforcing Christian standards of marriage among new African converts:

> It was a great move for them to break away from native customs, and we wondered if they really knew what this meant. So the matter was fully explained to them, and the girls together - they were not to take their wives as slaves, but as equals and helpmeets; they must not beat them or use them cruelly; they must not send them back to their friends if they did not agree or if they got tired of them; and they must help provide for them and attend to them in sickness.[15]

Mrs Stephens, stationed with her husband the Revd J.R.M. Stephens at Wathen station on the Congo River, began a mothers' meeting with the intention of teaching the women how to make garments, in express opposition to tribal custom. The traditional division of labour allocated needlework to men and garden work to women. Reverend Stephens noted the women's slow progress, observing, "It is hoped that this meeting may be very useful in helping the mothers to understand their duties to their husbands and children, and leading those to the Saviour who are not yet trusting Him."[16] If India, or China, or Africa was to join the advanced nations, missionaries advocated Christianity as the blueprint for ordering the individual, the family, and the nation.

Yet it was not only the physical and cultural separation of women in these societies which prompted BZM attention. Over the years, the Zenana Mission honed a rhetoric not only of separation but of the centrality of women to these cultures, and, thus, to the success of any movement to convert the nation to Christianity. They had to define non-christian women as the problem, and then present themselves as the

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[15] *Missionary Herald*, April 1909, p. 108.

[16] *Missionary Herald*, May 1900, p. 255. Wathen, or Ngombe Lutete, is near present-day Matadi, south-west of Kinshasa.

solution. In so doing, they drew on the rich high Victorian tradition of "woman's mission" and imperial ideologies which were not unconnected with race.

In the seminal *A Plea for Zenanas*, Mrs Lewis warned:

> Neglected and despised as women have been in India, and still are, yet there, as everywhere else they exert a powerful influence; and the writer has ceased to wonder at the insurmountable barriers they have too often opposed [sic] to the reception of Christianity, as she has witnessed the fond affection subsisting between the Hindoo mother and her sons.[17]

This fascinating portrait which she draws of Indian women, as both central to and downtrodden by a non-christian society, contrasting power and powerlessness, became the hallmark of BZM thinking on the subject. Women were the fountain of all civilised society, and if India, or China, or Africa, was to be made Christian, women had to receive the benefits of Christianity for two reasons: so they would not hold back the progress of the men and so they could train the children.[18] Of course, by positing the family, and thus women, as the central unit of society and vehicle for social renewal, the Zenana Mission earned wide approval within the denomination. Ministers had already heavily theorized women's influence - as the number of advice manuals to mothers show - over children and as the preserver of the moral tone of the home, so it was no great ideological leap for them to apply a separate spheres doctrine to other cultures. The Reverend E. Medley of Clapton gives a good indication of the ways in which Zenana ideology harmonized with the denomination's views of women as a whole:

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[17] Mrs C.B. Lewis, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

[18] The Rev. Herbert Anderson labelled the home in India "a citadel of false creeds." *Baptist Zenana Mission Magazine*, June 1906, p. 122.

> The supreme place which woman holds in the economy of this world is hers of divine right,and whilst men in their blind selfishness may seek to alter all that and take the diadem from her brow, they cannot wholly depose her. Still, a woman's hand is on the springs of a nation's life, and to seek her elevation and redemption is to move along the lines indicated ... by God ....[19]

This attitude enjoyed a wide currency amongst all denominations, so much so that the BZM could approvingly quote the Anglican Constance Maynard in its jubilee volume when she said, "to women even more emphatically than to men it is given to build up the character of the nation."[20]

Jeffrey Cox, discussing the work of single women for the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Delhi and Lahore, argues that missionaries were unable to understand the realities of Indian women's lives; instead, their perspective was shaped by stereotypes.[21] The zenana, and the women who lived in it, were open to many interpretations. Janaki Nair, a historian critical of western blindness to race and gender issues, sees the zenana as an ideological battleground on which English women, allowed access owing to their sex, were the key providers of information and interpretation. Women, instead of standing apart from the colonialising processes of

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[19] *Our Indian Sisters*, July 1892, p. 173. The above quotation is taken from Reverend Medley's address to the annual Zenana Breakfast Meeting. For other examples of the centrality of women to the success of missions see: *Missionary Herald*, 1 October 1883, p. 343, 1 April 1898, p. 137, 1 December 1898, p. 567, 1 February 1895, pp. 54-56, 1 October 1896, p. 536; *Baptist Zenana Mission Magazine*, June 1906, p. 122.

[20] *Jubilee 1867-1917: Fifty Years' Work among Women in the Far East*, The Carey Press, no date (1917?). For two Anglican opinions, see A.R. Buckland, *Women in the Mission Field*, Isbister & Co. Ltd. (1895), p. 18; and E.C. Dawson, *Heroines of Missionary Adventure*, Seeley & Co. Ltd. (1909), p. 131.

[21] Jeffrey Cox, "Independent English Women in Delhi and Lahore, 1860-1947", in Richard T. Helmstadter and R.W. Davis, eds., *Religion and Irreligion in Victorian Society: essays in honor of R.K. Webb*, Routledge (1992), p. 171.

subjugation and the creation of identities, were active agents, whose complicity must be addressed.[22] The four elements most used when describing women living in a zenana characterise them as: mysterious and exotic (with inevitable erotic overtones), filthy and ignorant (the conflation of "darkness" and dirt), degraded and downtrodden by Indian society, or central to the spiritual and moral life of the nation.[23] Invariably, some combination of the four was utilised by English women, whether supporters of women's emancipation, travel writers, memsahibs, or missionary agents.[24] As we have seen above, the BZM defined its field of work in terms of the ignorance of zenana "inmates" (who lacked basic literacy to read the Scriptures), the degraded social state of women (their seclusion was termed a "prison"), and their centrality to the "soul of India" (which required a home-life transformed by Christianity). These arguments proved powerful within the denomination because they echoed Baptist norms on the role of women--spiritual responsibility, "freedom", and purity of home-life. The conditions of India were creatively shaped to suit (or rather stand in stark opposition to) English norms and mores, hence the urgent need for the reform of the zenanas. Even after the BZM branched out into founding schools and open-air itinerating tours, the "prison" of the zenana came to signify the perceived

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[22] Janaki Nair, *op. cit.*, pp. 8, 11.

[23] Nair, *op. cit.*, p. 17; Marni L. Stanley, "The Imperial Mission: Women Travellers and the Propaganda of Empire", Oxford D.Phil thesis, 1990, p. 79; Cox, *op. cit.*, p. 170. See also the collection of essays edited by Leslie Flemming, *Women's Work for Women: Missionaries and Social Change in Asia*, pp. 38, 40, 119-121.

[24] See Antoinette Burton, *Burdens of History: British Feminists, Indian Women and Imperial Culture, 1865-1915*, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill (1994), pp. 67-74.

plight of Indian women in general--illiterate, caste-bound, and cut off from the inheritance Christianity promised to women.[25]

What emerges from examining BZM narratives about zenana women is that they are stories with an explicit purpose. Mary Kingsley voiced her distrust of missionary literature on the grounds that it was all calculated to raise funds.[26] Certainly money was needed to sustain the work of zenana missionaries, but their representations of the zenana and of the lives of Indian and Chinese women were more than titillation for the sake of ensuring subscriptions. Members of the BZM appealed to their denomination and to the wider missionary world in terms of shared reference with regard to India. G.H. Rouse wrote:

> Whilst, then, it is the duty of all Christians to carry the Gospel to India, it is emphatically the duty of <u>British</u> Christians to do so; for God has, in a most wonderful way, given India to Britain. No doubt there has been much of unrighteousness in the means by which the Indian Empire was built up, but, as a matter of fact, God, in His providence, has given it to us, the present generation of Englishmen; we inherit the responsibility and cannot divest ourselves of it.[27]

Rouse left little to the imagination when advocating the "white man's burden." Zenana Missionaries tended to be less dogmatic; India was a responsibility, to be sure, but would be won over by the sanctified lives of English men and (especially) women. In the biography of Isabel Angus, Dorothy Angus relates the tale of Mrs Dann, who visited house-to-house during a plague, caring for the suffering. On meeting an Indian government official:

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[25] Nair, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

[26] Stanley, *op. cit.*, p. 118,

[27] *Missionary Herald*, 1 January 1882, p. 4. Emphasis in original.

With a friendly smile Mrs Dann apologised for not shaking hands, showing her hands soiled with her horrid tasks. The man looked at her strangely and with a word of appreciation passed on his way. Afterwards he told a large meeting of his fellow-countrymen the meaning of that glance. "As I looked at her hands stained with the care of my stricken people, I felt I was looking upon the hands of Jesus Christ."[28]

Above all, zenana missionaries wanted to care for the women of India, body and soul. In claiming the women of India as their special prerogative, zenana missionaries accepted much of the "unrighteousness" of British rule in return for the privilege of service and sacrifice. Their optimism of the elevating influence of British and Christian rule on the peoples of India was part of a wider view of the benefits of empire, shared by contemporary feminists and colonial administrators.[29]

As a mission by women to women, the BZM was a product of contemporary notions of women's nature, which placed her expertise in the realm of the sympathetic or emotional. The Zenana Mission's appeal for the "raising of womanhood" was also couched in Biblical terms which were very much in line with thinking about "woman's mission" and theological representations of the nature of women. The Bible abounded with examples of women whose tenderness, sympathy and sacrifice could be held up as examples - Dorcas, the woman of Samaria, and Mary, mother of Jesus. The Revd R. Cameron, in arguing that the process which created Eve was fundamentally different from that by which God created Adam, said,

> As has often been remarked, the part taken was not out of his head, to rule over him, nor out of his feet, to be trodden on, but out of his side, to be his loved and loving companion. ... even those who doubt its

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[28] Dorothy Angus, *The Favour of a Commission. The Life of Isabel M. Angus, 1858-1939*, Carey Press, n.d., p. 56.

[29] Burton, *op. cit.*

> literal interpretation must, at least, acknowledge that it embodies a truth of universal interest.[30]

This "truth of universal interest", the equal, though different, nature of women, was at the very heart of Zenana missionaries' and their supporters' thinking about the desirability of a mission from women to women. The difference between women's and men's natures in the Divine economy also comes through in a description from the *Baptist Magazine* which praises women's "beauty of soul", seen:

> [i]n the ready and intuitive tact with which she meets trying emergencies - in her unselfish and unostentatious charities - in the quickness and tenderness of her sympathy - in the serenity with which she reposes in the love of God - in the peaceful delight with which, like Mary, she sits at the feet of Jesus - in the alacrity with which, like Martha, she will arise and serve - always a frank and unsuspicious recipient, always a loving and gentle helper.[31]

Zenana missionaries strengthened their case, which was based on the physical separation of women in Eastern societies, with the ideological buttress of a distinct women's nature which only other women could fully understand.[32] Mrs Coleman, President of the Nottingham Auxiliary of the BZM stated it plainly, "no woman can pass heedlessly by any individual sister-woman in sorrow or distress when it is in her power to render aid."[33] In the case of the BZM, the womanly aid rendered was to give Indian and Chinese women knowledge of God, the Bible and their souls.

Not only was it alien to a woman's nature to refuse assistance to her heathen sisters, it was manifestly her Christian duty to see that all women received the benefit

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[30] *Baptist Magazine*, May 1880, p. 217.

[31] The editor, Revd J.P. Barnett, in the *Baptist Magazine*, March 1881, p. 101.

[32] Cox, *op. cit.*, p. 170.

[33] *Missionary Herald*, 1 April 1897, p. 190.

of Christianity. The Revd J.G. Greenhough, writing on "The Complexity of the Missionary Problem" emphasised the contrast between Christian and non-Christian womanhood. "The conception of woman's position and place in the whole of the heathen world is as utterly opposed to our own as darkness and light. It has taken centuries of Christian teaching to lift woman up to the dignity which she enjoys among Christian nations as the equal partner of man, and even now some complain that her emancipation and elevation are not complete."[34] The BZM was not among those organisations "complaining" that women's long journey to emancipation was unfinished. Following the theology of John Wesley and the evangelical revival, women were the spiritual equals of men and it was Christianity that they had to thank for their privileged position.[35] At the turn of the century, this belief still had strong roots. When sending a donation to the BZM, the girls of a Yorkshire Sunday school wrote,

> You see that we, being young women living in this Christian country, enjoy many more privileges and freedom than our sisters in India; and we shall feel thankful if our "little effort" [the proceeds of a concert totalling £13 10s.] can be so used by our Heavenly Father as to be the means of helping to lead to Christ some of those sisters who are bound by the fetters of Hindooism.[36]

The BZM drew on this tradition in two ways: firstly, by highlighting the sufferings of non-christian women, then, as a means of giving thanks for their own

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[34] *Missionary Herald*, August 1903, p. 401.

[35] For a lengthy statement by a prominent Nonconformist, see the collection of sermons by the Congregational minister John Angell James, *Female Piety: or the Young Woman's Friend and Guide through Life to Immortality*, London, 1852, Sermon I. See also F.K. Prochaska, *Women and Philanthropy in 19th Century England*, Introduction.

[36] *Missionary Herald*, April 1901, p. 159.

prized place due to Christianity, showing their willingness to "arise and serve" and even to endure hardship to "uplift" fellow women.[37] Isabel Angus proclaimed that BZM missionaries were "free to serve" - constrained by Christian freedom to render Christian service.[38] Seen in the context of feminist imperial thought, itself influenced by evangelical values, Baptist women were staking a claim to denominational citizenship by asserting their duty to evangelise non-christian women.[39] On a visit to mission stations in India, Mrs D.M. Scott reported to the *Baptist Zenana Mission Magazine* that, "I was prepared for the utterly insignificant position of women from a social point of view; but, in spite of my previous knowledge, I was profoundly impressed by their absolute nonentity in religion ...." She went on, aghast, "by both these systems [Hinduism and Islam], woman is denied an equal standing before God ...."[40] It was imperative that these women should experience the advantages of Christianity to raise them from their state of servitude.

Having constructed an image of their "Indian Sisters"[41] as ignorant, superstitious, and downtrodden, the BZM then proposed the remedy for the ills of "heathen" society - Christianity - and the agents for its improvement - women missionaries. In 1894, Mrs C. Spurgeon Medhurst, wife of a BMS missionary in

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[37] See also the letter from Miss Thorn[e], a Delhi missionary in *Baptist Zenana Mission Magazine*, January 1904, p. 6; and "The Christianizing of the World - Woman's Part" by Mrs Andrew MacLeish of Chicago, in the *Baptist Zenana Mission Magazine*, August 1911, p. 171.

[38] *Missionary Herald*, November 1901, p. 542.

[39] Burton, *op. cit.*

[40] *Baptist Zenana Mission Magazine*, February 1905, p. 18.

[41] Before the addition of China to the BZM's scope of activity, the society's magazine was entitled *Our Indian Sisters*.

China, contributed a lengthy article to the Baptist *Missionary Herald* on "Women's Work for Missions". She stressed that women should feel gratitude to Christianity and that they should work to "elevate" their "heathen sisters" who were not yet saved and who lived in a society as yet not purified by Christian influences. But Mrs Medhurst did not stop with a plea for sympathy for Eastern women, she then laid out the need for women missionaries as only women could "raise" women.[42] At this time, the BZM had only just begun sending single women missionaries to China. A missionary conference in Shanghai, held in 1907, supported this view. The women assembled held that they should be exempted from work amongst Chinese men, as they were needed to teach the women and girls.[43] "LMR" (?Lydia M. Rouse) wrote:

> It is impossible to educate the men in the highest sense, nor to raise the moral and social standard effectually, while women are debarred from sharing equal advantages. As soon as Indian women are trained and fitted to take their proper position in domestic and social life, we cannot doubt that a mighty change will take place ... .[44]

The Zenana Mission, when giving thanks for their status as Christian women, also laid claim to pursue the evangelisation of their less-favoured, although influential, sisters. Drawing on conventional ideologies of women's nature and behaviour, they had convinced themselves and their denomination of the suitability and indeed necessity for women to undertake this important work of forming the attitudes of women and children in India and China. What lessons did they attempt to transmit as they went about their daily rounds? The best example of BZM attitudes is found by examining

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[42] *Missionary Herald*, 1 September 1894, pp. 375-77.

[43] *Baptist Zenana Mission Magazine*, August 1907, pp. 173-74.

[44] *Missionary Herald*, 1 October 1896. This article, "The Work We Are Called to Do" originally appeared circa 1883-84, but the BZM reprinted it, stating its relevance to the current situation.

their work in China, a society undergoing tremendous social and political changes in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These changes, and how missionaries coped with them, throw BZM ideology into sharp relief.

II. Missionary Ideologies - Creating Christian Women

Missionaries in China had multifarious obstacles to overcome, difficulties which made mastering the ancient classical speech of the country seem easy by comparison. Christianity had been outlawed in China since the early eighteenth century as a threat to the social order. The small numbers of protestant missionaries who were literally smuggled in to the treaty ports in the early years of the nineteenth century had only a limited sphere in which to work. They had access to the Europeans within these busy enclaves, but saw practically nothing of the interior. If they journeyed into the countryside, they were required by law to return to the port by sunset. They discovered that the Confucian-trained gentry were their staunch opponents, resisting "barbarian" ideas and resenting the military presence which secured foreign privileges.[45] Although Western military technology was exploited by the Manchu ruling elite to suppress the Taiping rebellion, use of Western tools did not entail acceptance of Western religion. Moreover, the heterodox and rather confused brand of Christianity advocated by the Taipings further threatened the prestige of the new religion. Even after missionaries gained the right to reside inland, progress was slow. Although people in the countryside were more receptive to the Christian gospel, conversions were still comparatively rare. It took a great deal of

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[45] John King Fairbank, *The Great Chinese Revolution, 1800-1985*, Chatto and Windus, (1986), p. 126.

persuasion to convince people to abandon their Confucian ancestors, whose unregenerate state would consign them to the Christian hell.

This all-embracing prejudice against Western ways among the elite began to crack only when "barbarian" technology was demonstrated. Scholars and gentry could not deny the spectacle of the railroad, or the enforcing power of a gunboat. Some conservative reformers like the scholar Chang Chih-tung acknowledged the new technologies as superior, but attempted to overlay Western invention with Confucian principles. His oft-quoted slogan, "Chinese learning for fundamental principles, Western learning for practical application", was attractive to intellectuals as it reaffirmed China's cultural superiority and assumed the ability of Confucianism to cope with the mechanical devices of the modern world. (One might compare this cultural arrogance with the current aphorism which casts Western nations as innovators and the Japanese as clever copyists of cars, computers, etc.) In his lifetime, Chang attempted to live out this principle, supporting railway projects and founding a press to disseminate classical Ch'ing studies.[46] This acceptance of Western "practicalities" did not extend to Christianity. In the years leading up to 1900, conversions amongst members of the educated classes remained a rarity. Nor was it sweeping the common people by storm. One estimate places the number of converts and practising Christians among the Chinese at 100,000 by 1900.[47]

Nowhere were the cultural differences between English missionaries and Chinese more apparent than when comparing their views of women. The ancient ordering principles of China, *yin* and *yang*, expressed the two sexes. *Yang* was

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[46] *Ibid.*, p. 117.

[47] *Ibid.*, p. 127.

masculine, active, heaven, light. *Yin* was feminine, passive, earth, darkness. After thirty years of painstaking activity wearing away Confucian principles and establishing a European presence that was distinctively Christian, missionaries in the 1890s could begin to consider the position of women. Jessie Louise Medhurst, stationed with her husband C. Spurgeon Medhurst in China, wrote to the *Missionary Herald*, "Here, from the very earliest times, men and women have been kept apart, the men being deprived of the kindlier sympathy and more refined manners of the female sex, and the women being excluded from the wider horizon and more intellectual society of the men, to the grave injury of both. In China, woman is supposed to be of a different nature from man, and to be as far below him as the earth is below the heavens."[48] Mrs Medhurst's description of the Chinese situation betrays her own assumptions about the relations between men and women.

Missionaries brought a view of women which endowed them with moral agency and gave them an active role in religious life. They also preached an essential equality between the sexes (even if such was not manifested in practice). Westerners treated their wives in a way which was completely incomprehensible and inherently amoral to educated Chinese for whom the education of women and the participation of women in religious services was unheard of. Missionaries had to tread carefully to avoid charges that Christianity promoted sexual licence through mixed services. Most elected to preserve their respectability (and recruiting power) by confining their attentions to men. The BMS's most senior missionary in China, the Revd Timothy Richard, expressly opposed the introduction of single women into BMS compounds

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[48] *Missionary Herald*, 1 August 1891, p. 337.

for fear of the effect it would have in the local community.[49] Yet single women missionaries would eventually be accepted, and not a moment too soon for some BMS agents. The Revd J.J. Turner pleaded:

> I know I am touching a delicate subject when I make an appeal for lady workers, but surely there is urgent need that something be done for the women in Sin Cheo. It is hardly safe for ladies to venture into new stations quite at first; but my wife is eager to commence the work, and she will come as soon as the people are a little more used to the presence of Europeans. ... We need a band of devoted women who can and will learn the language, who will go into the homes of the women and in spite of dirt, and ignorance, and sin, make friends of them, and lead them to Christ. Where such can be found I do not know, and the fact that there are very grave objections to the presence of young unmarried ladies in the interior, does not make the problem easier to solve.[50]

Before the flood of missionaries to China in the 1890s, and their acceptance by the missionary community already established in that country, the BZM had sent Florence Sowerby in 1882. Fortunately for the Society, she married Revd Samuel Drake of the BMS that same year, preventing an embarrassing BZM withdrawal. It was only after the BMS deputation to China (1890-91) was satisfied that the introduction of single women would cause only a minimum of misunderstanding and not pose a serious threat to the Christian position in China that sending significant numbers of unmarried women missionaries could be contemplated. In a hostile environment with few Europeans the BZM had to rely on the goodwill of the BMS, whose agents were in situ, to gauge the situation among the Chinese people. Once conditions, both for the women's safety and for mission success, seemed favourable,

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[49] See 100th Report of the BMS in *Missionary Herald*, 1 May 1892, p. 198.

[50] *Missionary Herald*, 1 March 1886, p. 89.

the BZM began appealing for women to undertake the arduous task of learning the language and for funds which would enable the BZM to set up work in China.[51]

Those first BZM missionaries, sent in the early 1890s, were arriving at a critical point in the long history of the Middle Kingdom.[52] The Confucian order was nearing collapse; China's defeat by its small (but "Westernized" and technologically superior) neighbour Japan came as a tremendous shock to the educated elite. When the news of the signing of the Treaty of Shimonoseki reached Beijing, the candidates assembled there for the triennial examinations showed their indignation by sending a memorial to the Emperor urging the continuation of the war, and the reform of the government.[53] Western powers threatened to carve China up into "spheres of influence." The Emperor Kuang-hsu, influenced by the scholar K'ang Yu-wei, issued a series of reforming decrees in the summer of 1898. This effort at reform from above was aborted by the coup d'etat staged by the Empress Dowager who imprisoned her nephew and executed the reformers in her grasp.[54] She would rule until her death in 1908. It was the Manchu princes and, indirectly, the Dowager Empress who patronized the Boxers, altering their slogan from "Overthrow the Ch'ing" to "Support the Ch'ing."[55] The rebellion itself, a product of both Chinese intransigence and Western provocation, proved a watershed for missions in China. Despite the 250

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[51] *Missionary Herald*, 1 May 1892, 198, 201; 1 August 1892.

[52] Between the years 1893-1900, the BZM sent 12 women: two in 1893; two in 1894; one in each year 1895, 1896, 1898; four in 1899; and one in 1900.

[53] John King Fairbank, *op. cit.*, pp. 131-132.

[54] *Ibid.*, p. 135.

[55] *Ibid.*, p. 137.

foreign dead and many thousands of Chinese Christians killed in the summer of 1900, missions began the twentieth century in a much stronger position than they had been 50, or even 10, years before. The defeat of the Boxers and the punitive sanctions levelled against China opened the door for increasing missionary influence. There were martyrs, Western and Chinese, whose sacrifice spurred the living to greater things, and the example of Chinese Christians' steadfastness heartened missionary supporters.[56]

Missionaries scented change in the air; a defeated China finally seemed ready to embrace modernization. Missionaries, as Europeans who had weathered the storm of rebellion, hurried to provide it. The Revd Samuel Couling of Tsing Chu Fu saw a great opportunity for disseminating Western learning which amounted to a crying need for Christian colleges.[57] The medical missionary Dr Paula Maier summed it up in her valedictory address: "I also found that the Chinese are asking for modern education and I thought that if we send them education without the Gospel we do not know how long China may be opened to us, but that now we have a good opportunity of giving them the Gospel combined with our science."[58] The rapidly changing social and political landscape of China in the first two decades of the twentieth century, times during which missionaries provided some stability, provides a revealing glimpse into what the Zenana Mission hoped to achieve. Missionaries like Timothy Richard had been attempting to reach the upper class of Chinese society since the

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[56] For an account of Chinese Christian women's bravery during the rebellion, see *Missionary Herald*, August 1902, pp. 385-388.

[57] *Missionary Herald*, July 1902, pp. 338-39. Also John King Fairbank, *op. cit.*, p. 141.

[58] *Missionary Herald*, April 1907, p. 112.

1890s, in the hope of influencing the reform movement.[59] Medical missionaries like Dr Maier wed medical science to Christianity. Zenana missionaries, especially after the collapse of Imperial government in 1911, looked to form a new sort of Chinese womanhood. In inventing the Chinese Christian woman, zenana missionaries enthusiastically proclaimed her emancipation from Confucian tradition, and instead placed her within a Christian framework which, while granting her a modicum of authority, was ultimately conservative in its implications.

The Empress Dowager looms large in the history of this period. She was enough of a pragmatist to accept the reforms of 1898 (for which she had imprisoned Kuang-hsu) once they seemed inevitable. After Japan's victory in the Russo-Japanese war, she was willing to learn from their example of a constitutional monarchy. Intent on retaining power, while placating the reformers, she announced a series of constitutional principles to be implemented over a nine-year period. Even in death she ensured that the government remained incapable of reform. Kuang-hsu paid dearly for his precipitate reforms; the Empress Dowager died on 15 November 1908, it was announced, the day after the imprisoned thirty-seven-year-old Emperor had died. The Throne of Heaven passed to P'u-yi, then a small boy.[60] The regent, courtiers and princes kept up the imperial facade until the Ch'ing collapsed in the face of provincial declarations of independence provoked by a bungled attempt at power-seizing by the Revolutionary Alliance. Sun Yat-sen's deputy, Huang Hsing, proved an adept negotiator knitting together the provincial authorities with Sun's Revolutionary

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[59] John King Fairbank, *op. cit.*, p. 129.

[60] *Ibid.*, p. 157.

Alliance leaders.[61] This first Chinese republic, although incapable of embracing universal suffrage (the tradition of meritocracy was too ingrained and the common people deemed far too uneducated), witnessed a flowering of missionary activity, as the "new China" dawned.

There seemed no limit to missionary opportunity. To get a sense of the possibilities the "new China" of the years after the Boxer rebellion offered, compare it to the enormous excitement generated in more recent times by Western businesses gaining a foothold in the Chinese market. A China whose industry was created by Mao's Great Leap Forward but which lacked capital was ready for new injections of cash. A market of over a billion people beckoned. In the early twentieth century, missionaries saw a China ready to be moulded into a Western image. If the great challenge now is the repair and integration of the Chinese economy, for missionaries then the challenge was the reconstruction of Chinese society. They were living in a country which no longer had an Emperor or an examinations system (the bulwarks of the Confucian order), which accepted, or at least tolerated, Christian missionaries, and which was receptive to Western technology and methods in education. Schools for girls were established by a proclamation of 1906; Jane Hunter estimates that by 1908 there were more girls in government schools than in mission schools.[62] Despite the hopeful activities of thousands of Christian missionaries all over China, most historians are agreed that they made little direct impact, in the form of mass conversions, on the society they devoted their lives to moulding. It was not the

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[61] *Ibid.*, pp. 161-162.

[62] Jane Hunter, *The Gospel of Gentility*, p. 26. It is interesting to note that the examinations system (a source of social mobility for men) was abolished the year before steps were taken to educate women.

Christian faith that was adopted, but the personal example of missionaries as educators that was most persuasive.[63] If missionaries ultimately failed in their quest to convert the whole of China, it is still worthwhile and informative to explore their vision of a Christianized Chinese society. This is doubly the case when studying women missionaries: BZM missionaries offered Chinese women not only the salvation of their souls but also a recognised role in society. Precisely what this role entailed speaks volumes about how zenana missionaries viewed women's opportunities and how they constructed female authority.

The most eloquent exponent of the BZM's work in China was Mary E. Shekleton. She was also one of the Society's most experienced missionaries. Mary Shekleton went to China in 1891 (two years before the first BZM pair) as a governess and member of the China Inland Mission and transferred to the BZM in 1900. When the Ch'ing fell, she was aged 47 and had twenty years' experience in China. The events leading to the 1911 republic and the opportunities for change following its formation were, for her, unprecedented. She wrote to her Baptist supporters: "Never in history has there been a time when the women of a great nation have been calling out passionately and intensely for the blessings which with us are a woman's birthright, and which we owe to Christianity." These blessings "in education, in home life, and in chivalrous consideration and respect" would be the crown of Chinese women in a Christian community.[64] In the unstable climate of the first years of the

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[63] John King Fairbank, *op. cit.*, p 143ff. Hunter, op. cit., chapter 7. For the Indian case, see Leslie Flemming, "New Models, New Roles: U.S. Presbyterian Women Missionaries and Social Change in North India, 1870-1910," in Leslie Flemming, *op. cit.*, pp. 36-37.

[64] *The Herald*, February 1912, pp. 50-51.

republic, opportunities for women were multiplying fast. We have already seen the increase of girls in government schools over missionary schools. Mary Shekleton regarded such unsupervised and non-Christian transformation in women's lives as profoundly dangerous. She reported that a woman in Sianfu "imagines she is proving her emancipation by standing for hours outside her husband's gate on a main thoroughfare, smoking cigarettes, gaily dressed in a silk robe, with manners far too free."[65] Does this Sianfu woman not sound like the "girl of the period" who was vilified for abusing her privileges? Or the "advanced woman," a fabrication beloved by the opponents of women's higher education?[66] With the breakdown of the social order, Chinese women could begin to make their own lives. Missionaries feared that unless women were saved and accepted the Christian social order freedom would be replaced by immorality. Mary Shekleton warned her readers: "The fact faces us that unless the Christian ideal of womanhood is brought to China to be a real power in the land, moulding lives to tender service for those in the home and to unselfish work for others in public life, the latter state of women in China will be worse than in the former, and the true moral and social progress of the country will be thrown back indefinitely."[67]

The angelic nature of the Christian woman was readily accepted by the Baptist denomination as the root of domestic harmony; this idea was transported to India and

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[65] *The Herald*, September 1913, p. 290.

[66] Perry Williams, "Pioneer Women Students at Cambridge," in Felicity Hunt, ed., *Lessons for Life*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford and New York (1987), p. 186. Williams's clever, cigarette-smoking women undergraduates date from the 1870s, yet there was still some shock value to be gained by reporting women outside the home and smoking.

[67] *The Herald*, September 1913, p. 290.

China by the BZM.[68] The emancipation of Chinese womanhood was envisioned in accordance with established notions of appropriate feminine behaviour. If China was to become a "modern" nation, its women needed schooling in "moral" principles. And who better to hold up as an example of sobriety, propriety, and morality than the English mother, whose influence on the character of her children, the well-being of her husband, and the stability of the nation was the subject of such denominational approbation? Unmarried zenana missionaries in China set themselves the task of converting Chinese women to Western marital domesticity.

Baptist missionaries were not the only ones to endorse such a viewpoint. The Christian Literature Society, in its pamphlet "The Woman's Messenger," advised:

> [E]vents of the past few months show that the passion Chinese women have for patriotism and self-sacrifice needs to be diverted into channels of homemaking. Our paper will have little to say about national affairs. Instead, we hope to give Chinese women new visions of loveliness than [?that] can be builded into their own kingdom of Home. We want to furnish helps along the line of hygiene, domestic science, child training ... .[69]

Women missionaries from America likewise promoted the example of Christian mother- and wifehood.[70] BZM writings about China did not concentrate on the educational opportunities or employment prospects the change in Chinese society would bring to women; instead they concerned themselves with matters domestic and set about transforming the "Chinese home." Mary Shekleton wrote: "When, from

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[68] On women's centrality to home and religiosity see above, and *Baptist Magazine*, March 1881, p. 101; March 1896, p. 139; *Missionary Herald*, 1 October 1896, p. 536; July 1904, p. 352.

[69] From a review in *The Herald*, December 1912, p. 398.

[70] Marjorie King, "Exporting Femininity", in Leslie Flemming, *op. cit.*, p. 118, 124. Jane Hunter, *op. cit.*, p. 175.

despising, the husband begins to respect the wife and to treat her with the gentle consideration learnt from the teachings of Christ, when the daughter is cherished and cared for, when the dignity of woman's service as taught in the New Testament has given a new value to life, the sordidness of the petty routine of the day is transfigured by the realisation of its true glory and meaning." Chinese women would learn "the privileges and responsibilities of motherhood, which make her the light of her home."[71] The women of China qualified for Christian emancipation by virtue of their sex; it remained the task of single women missionaries to instruct them in their new gendered identity.

Marjorie King, examining the activities of American women missionaries, argues that they transmitted a domestic ideology to their Chinese women converts because it was the one role which appeared to offer change without antagonizing Chinese men.[72] On the surface, this seems a logical enough explanation. Missionaries, men and women, wrote about the illiteracy of women, the scandal of foot-binding, the sin of murdering girl children (with its corollary, the importance of bearing sons), and the capriciousness of the Chinese mother-in-law. Giving a married woman the responsibility of her own home, and an acknowledged superiority there (although one as a dutiful and obedient wife), could appear to represent a significant advance without further upsetting the social order. However, the domestic ideal was more than a simple expedient, something which offered authority to women without upsetting men. In the case of the Baptist Zenana Mission, and indeed among the BMS, the Christian family and domesticity was urged on converts not because it was

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[71] *The Herald*, February 1912, p. 50, 49.

[72] Marjorie King, "Exporting Femininity" in Flemming, *op. cit.*, p. 118.

the least contentious option but because missionaries had no other conception of female authority to offer despite the existence of independent, unmarried women missionaries.

Among Baptists, as among nonconformists generally, any tradition of female leadership or preaching had been superseded by women's well-established domestic role, her absence from remunerative work, and the increased status of the ministry (as reflected in better training).[73] Women might assist in preparing women candidates for baptism, but in church polity they remained ignored. The Baptist Union, presiding as it did over a loose confederation of churches, could offer neither guidance nor support. Individual churches grappled with the question of how best to employ women's skills and found different solutions. Among nonconformists in the early nineteenth century, Davidoff and Hall cite some instances of women voting on crucial church matters, but usually only to ensure a favourable outcome to the side who drafted them in.[74] Women could be useful in special circumstances, but only in a temporary and informal way.

The dearth of public church positions for women does not in itself explain the hegemony of the maternal ideal although it does point to a lack of role models for single women. Another aspect lies deeply entrenched in the Baptist psyche: its militant protestantism in the face of episcopal hierarchies, and especially its opposition to the Tractarian "menace".[75] For this reason, Baptists opposed vows of celibacy

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[73] Davidoff and Hall, *op. cit.*, p. 126.

[74] *Ibid.*, pp. 133-136.

[75] J.H.Y. Briggs, *English Baptists*, pp. 223-227. Baptists also opposed the spread of Roman Catholicism but not with the same vehemence that they attacked the established church. For example, Baptists could adopt arguments against the state

with the same vigour as infant baptism. Robert Shindler, writing of Katharine von Bora, the wife of Martin Luther, praised the courage that led her to escape the convent with some other nuns: "with the light of Gospel liberty they saw through the pretentious sanctity of conventual vows, and very properly desired their own freedom."[76] He continued, in a biography of Catherine Tell:

> Among all the great blessings which the Reformation conferred on the Church and the world, not the least was the restoration of woman to her rightful places in the Church, the family, and in society. The dignity and honour and influence of the wife and mother had been overshadowed by the supposed greater holiness of the nunnery and the avowed chastity of single sisterhoods.[77]

BZM missionaries undertook to remain single for a period of years, or else pay back a part of their passage money to the society. The organisation could not ask for a lifelong commitment to celibacy as it was contrary to Baptist ideas. Many of its missionaries married after only a few years; some spent a lifetime serving the society. Despite the numbers of women who obviously regarded missionary service as a substitute for marriage, in principle, official approbation of the single state was not forthcoming. Married life was the norm, and there were no mechanisms within the denomination (for instance, an alternative single lifestyle) to challenge it. The authority of the married woman/mother remained uncontested by the only group in the denomination able to question it because single women missionaries fully accepted and internalized "maternal" authority as their own. They showed their acceptance in several ways: by viewing converts as "spiritual children," by stressing the domestic

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patronage of Roman Catholic institutions (Maynooth) and expand them, emphasising the injustice of a state-supported church.

[76] *Baptist Magazine*, July 1882, p. 303.

[77] *Baptist Magazine*, January 1886, p. 33.

nature of the mission, and by attempting to inculcate those same values in their converts.

When residents of the Shantung province asked Harriette Sifton about her children, she replied that she had "over a hundred."[78] Her school pupils were her children, her legacy to China. Gertrude Fletcher was the "mother" of the girls and women at the Salamatpur Industrial Settlement. As the head of a large boarding institution for women, Gertrude Fletcher often had to find wives for Christian converts. As the guardian of the girls' welfare, she required prospective husbands to bring testimonials and be interviewed. It was only when Miss Fletcher was satisfied that the two could meet for the first time. Those girls who did marry and leave the Settlement received from Gertrude a white sari bordered in blue.[79] The intensely personal relationships between converts (who may have had to leave home because of their Christian profession, or who were on the margins of society) and the missionary fostered a sort of mother-daughter relationship. BZM missionaries were the adults, schooling "children" in the faith. An examination of the surviving candidate papers reveals that nearly all applicants had extensive experience working with children, whether at Sunday school, youth Bible classes, or special children's meetings. Miriam Young's "Story of Salamatpur" describes a young missionary's "family" consisting of an abandoned woman, an orphaned child, a widow, a disabled woman, a beggar, and an enquirer who had been abandoned by her natal family. Young's tale even includes a description of how some of the "family" rebelled against

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[78] *The Herald*, January 1915, p. 18.

[79] Isabel M. Angus, *Salvage of Souls: A Memorial of the Work of Gertrude Morley Fletcher*, The Carey Press, n.d. (ca. 1924), pp. 44-45.

the "parental" authority of the missionary, and how she attempted to rescue them and return them to the "family."[80]

Zenana missionaries, even in the most extreme conditions, still attempted to place their mission activities within a domestic framework. Emily Saker described a trip in the BZM mission boat to visit village women. Unfortunately for the missionaries, the men in the village insisted on monopolising the missionaries' time, disappointing their hopes that they would be able to speak only to the women.[81] The very style of BZM evangelisation reveals much about the mission's ethos. BZM workers visited women in their own homes, winning them over to the Christian faith not by reasoned argument, but by love and friendship.

Having internalized the maternal and domestic, BZM missionaries attempted to turn out converts who also regarded the creation and maintenance of a Christian family as their goal. Bertha Thorn, of Dehli, wrote, "every girl is not capable of receiving a high education, but if she has a deep and true sense of her duty as a Christian wife and mother she is a shining light that none can disregard."[82] For the bulk of girls and women under the care of the BZM, education was basic: the three R's, cooking, sewing, general cleanliness, Bible lessons.[83] Care was taken not to educate girls above the station they could expect to fill in their home country.[84] The

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[80] *Missionary Herald*, November 1911, pp. 334-335.

[81] *Missionary Herald*, April 1900, p. 157.

[82] *Missionary Herald*, August 1902, p. 385.

[83] *Baptist Zenana Mission Magazine*, May 1907, p. 2; *The Herald*, March 1916, p. 66.

[84] *Baptist Zenana Mission Magazine*, January 1908, p. 7; *Missionary Herald*, November 1911, p. 338; *Missionary Herald*, April 1913, p. 114; *The Herald*, April

BZM did train and employ some converts as teachers or Bible-women, but marriages out of these careers were frequent.[85] As an organisation which viewed the marriage and the Christian family as the norm, the BZM did not question or seek to expand opportunities for their converts. Instead, they attempted to give a Christian framework to women's lives and daily tasks. Agnes Orr Kirkland, writing about village schools in China, explained:

> The bulk of women's life in China, especially young women's, is truly hard toil, with comfortless and trying surroundings, unkind actions, and bitter words as their daily portion. So much grace and true piety will alone enable them to rise superior to their lot in life. Our desire is to teach them to know they have minds and hearts capable of receiving great and glorious truths. Second, these truths are the words of Him whom to know is life eternal. Thirdly, we earnestly desire to fit and help these girls, by this learning, to be better able to brave the battle of life which lies before each one, and also that they will fill the place of daily duty in their homes more efficiently than those who have not had this privilege.[86]

BZM missionaries had always emphasised the transformative power of the Christian family and women's crucial position in the family. English women missionaries claimed superiority of education, culture, and status and used these advantages, attributed to a Christian society, to highlight the disadvantages of Indian and Chinese women. This situation was cemented by BZM teaching on marital and maternal duties. The persistence and power among Baptists of the conception of female authority as maternal is illustrated by the BZM's acceptance and transmission of its tenets. Zenana missionaries offered "Christian freedom" to women, but at the same time advocated their "Christian subordination" as wives and mothers. The

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1915, p. 101; Isabel Angus, op. cit., p. 47.

[85] *Missionary Herald*, 1 May 1893, p. 200; Isabel Angus, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

[86] *Missionary Herald*, September 1902, pp. 441-442.

BZM's vision of the limited (although important) duties appropriate to married women is also reflected in its position on women married to BMS missionaries.

III. Single Women Agents and Missionary Wives

Having highlighted the condition of non-Christian women, their central place in society, and the obligation of "more-favoured" British women to save their bodies and souls, it was necessary to have women suitable for the task. The overriding qualification for a BZM missionary was that she be single. Mrs Lewis commented:

> Up to the present time those engaged in Zenana teaching, in connection with the Baptist and London Missionary Societies, have given their services to the work gratuitously; Missionaries' wives and daughters being almost the only European agents employed. But now that the demand for instruction is growing very rapidly it becomes necessary for us to emulate the noble example set us by our friends of the Church of England and Free Church Missions, in supporting ladies exclusively devoted to this work.[87]

In her *Plea*, Marianne Lewis was drawing on her own experience as a missionary wife, attempting to fit in Zenana visiting when not engaged in other tasks at the mission station. While advocating the importance of the work, she acknowledged that only unmarried women could undertake visiting full-time and systematically. This was reflected in the contracts signed by BZM missionaries pledging to remain unmarried for five years (in some cases eight years), or else pay back some or all of their outfitting and passage expenses to the Society.[88] On marriage, a BZM missionary had to resign from the Society, thus keeping the jobs of zenana missionary

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[87] Mrs C.B. Lewis, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

[88] "Rules and Regulations for the Guidance of the Missionaries of the Ladies' Association for the Support of Zenana Work and Bible-Women in India and China, in connection with the BMS - For Private Circulation Only", n.d. (pre-1897).

and missionary wife separated. BZM agents accepted that married women's missionary activities would be curtailed. Harriette Sifton, who ran a BZM school in Tsing-Chow-Fu, summed up Society attitudes. She wrote to supporters at home: "then I tell them about the school, and [they] finally say, 'You wouldn't have time to look after the school, as well as look after your husband, and children, and house.' 'Rather not!' is the reply. So then I tell them that therefore I have never had time to get married ... ."[89] Married women's place in the home was not questioned; instead, the BZM urged the opportunities available to single women to undertake mission work.

For most of this period, the Baptist Missionary Society failed to address the qualifications necessary for the work of missionaries' wives. An examination of the BMS's candidate papers shows that the primary qualification for a missionary's fiancée was health - she should be able to withstand the climate of the country where her husband-to-be would undertake work. For, unlike the Zenana Mission, BMS missionaries could marry after they had completed their probationary period of two years. Although the BMS did not require any training for missionaries' wives[90], they were deemed to have an important domestic role to play in the mission community. It was not until 1913 that the BMS adopted the suggestion that, for the efficiency of the Mission, fiancées should be sent to a mission station a year before their marriage and should be encouraged, though not required, to take the same exams as single women missionaries. This meeting of the BMS committee also decided to recommend

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[89] *The Herald*, January 1915, p. 18.

[90] In the American missions to China studied by Hunter, she found that married women were sometimes exempt from language requirements or had to pass exams at a lower standard than their missionary husbands. Hunter, *op. cit.*, p. 95.

that the wives of BMS missionaries should complete language training and engage themselves in a definite work at the mission station.[91]

All of this points indirectly to the BMS attitude towards the wives of its missionaries, a good example of which appears in the debate over Mission finances. When W.S. Caine charged that the BMS should economise by employing only unmarried male missionaries, Dr Richard Glover, a member of the influential BMS deputation to China, put the case for the Society. He argued:

> Our men draw extra pay for their wives and for each child, and have house-rent provided. But I find that the cost of each celibate missionary in Calcutta and Delhi [sites of the Oxford and Cambridge missions, respectively] is about £200 a year, while the average cost of our married missionaries in India, including house-rent and wives and children, is given by Mr Kerry as £261, out of which passages home and holidays have all to be paid. The Christian wife and mother is, as Mr Davis described it, *the object lesson India wants*. And if, for £50 or £60 a year more, we can get a *man and a woman* - the woman being often the better of the two - I think the true economy is to pay the £260 for the two complete persons instead of the £200 for the one, whom we must regard as incomplete.[92]

Missionary wives, then, were there to provide a civilising influence on the community around them (especially true in the case of Africa[93]), and according to Dr Ashmore, prevent their husbands from becoming "barbarised" by the host

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[91] "Minutes of Meeting of Committee 18 March 1913", Minutes of General Committee, Vol. 11 (1913), pp. 57-58.

[92] From Glover's paper, "The Present Aspect and Needs of the Mission Field", read at the Missionary Conference, Freemason's Hall, printed in *Missionary Herald*, 1 June 1889, pp. 224-25; italics in original.

[93] An example is the tale of the "white woman" preventing a Lokele infanticide, *The Herald*, April 1915, p. 99. See also Beverley Gartrell, "Colonial Wives: Villains or Victims", in S. Ardener and H. Callan, eds. *The Incorporated Wife*, Croom Helm (1984), p. 169.

society.[94] In a foreign country, the maintenance of the Christian home, complete with family prayers, formal dinners, and the example of respectable domesticity, took on enormous importance.[95] Any evangelising activities had to be undertaken around domestic duties. Even former BZM missionaries, used to independent work, faced problems on marriage. Mrs Drake, formerly Florence Sowerby of the BZM, wrote to *The Herald* that although she felt responsible for the women in her husband's district, she could not travel to hold services with them, as she had a young baby. Instead, she compromised and invited some wives in the neighbourhood to stay with her for Gospel instruction. She admitted that when it became imperative to have a teacher for the women in the surrounding villages, she and her husband requested the BZM's aid.[96] The experiences of Florence Sowerby and other missionary wives led the Foreign Secretary of the BMS, Charles E. Wilson, to comment:

> very valuable work is being done by the missionary wife, who in addition to the cares of her household and family, finds or makes opportunities for visiting the Christian or non-Christian homes about the Mission House, receiving native visitors, teaching native women and children, nursing the sick in emergencies and teaching others to nurse, and engaging in a thousand unregistered and unrecognised ministries of Christian love. But in very few cases is it possible for the missionary wife to undertake systematic schoolteaching or work that involves travelling or long hours of service.[97]

The fundamental problem with the work of missionaries' wives it was that it could never be "systematic", as a wife would always have other commitments, chiefly

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[94] *Missionary Herald*, 1 June 1891, p. 253. See also Gartrell, *op. cit.*

[95] *Missionary Herald*, November 1911, pp. 327-28, 331. Hunter, *op. cit.*, Chapter 5, "Domestic Empire." Also Gartrell, *op. cit.*

[96] *The Herald*, April 1917, p.77.

[97] *The Herald*, June 1917, p. 105.

to her missionary husband. There was no wish to devalue their contribution. The Revd Kenred Smith, of the Congo, gave an appreciation of their ability, saying: "In school work, in translation work, they have in many instances on the Congo proved themselves true helpmeets. So far as I have observed in this great field of labour, the wives of our missionaries are not wives merely, but wives *and missionaries*, doing most earnest and helpful work ... ."[98] But they did their work as and when the exigencies of housekeeping allowed.

The BZM made good use of missionary wives in the early years of the Mission, utilising them as superintendents.[99] At the commencement of BZM work in India, using missionaries' wives played an important role in helping new missionaries to acclimatise. Their contacts and advice would also be invaluable. With a few well-publicised exceptions, the BZM tended to locate its mission stations in areas where the BMS had already undertaken evangelistic work. Thus, the resident missionary's wife could provide guidance and assistance to new arrivals. This would especially be the case if only one BZM worker was sent to the area. Indeed, new BZM missionaries were sometimes boarded in BMS compounds until their own accommodation had been constructed. It would be up to the single woman agent to begin zenana visiting and the responsibility of the missionary's wife to advise her, and forward her reports to the BZM. If the married superintendent had time, she might teach a class in the zenana school, but her role was never really envisioned as an active worker. As an "incorporated wife" of the BMS (to use the term employed by

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[98] *Missionary Herald*, 1 October 1896, p. 521; italics in original.

[99] A small proportion of these superintendents were widows of missionaries, but the main group were women married to BMS missionaries. I am indebted to Rosalind Gooden for pointing out BZM superintendence patterns to me.

Shirley Ardener), she had clear duties to husband, home, and family, all of which took precedence over any missionary inclination she might have. Of course, there were women married to BMS missionaries who did pursue evangelistic work full-time or nearly full-time - Marianne Lewis is a good example - but the expected pattern was that a missionary's wife assist her husband by providing the comforts of home on the English model. The BZM, assenting to BMS views that full-time mission work was unsuitable for missionary wives, provided them with part-time responsibilities as superintendents of BZM mission work abroad. From the evidence, it is not clear whether the missionary wives who acted in this capacity received any payment, but given the sometimes precarious state of BZM finances, it is unlikely.

The BZM appointed the first single woman superintendent, Bertha Thorn, in 1883. This was followed in 1887 by the appointment of Isabel Angus to Bhiwani (outside Bombay), a risky venture, as no mission station of any description existed there. However, the BZM and Miss Angus in particular felt strongly that the Mission's presence was needed. The BZM did not then dismiss all of its married superintendents, but by the twentieth century there had been a complete reversal of superintendence patterns.[100] Single women superintendents were now the rule rather than the exception.

Of course, using the resident missionary's wife as a superintendent had its drawbacks. Missionaries and their wives were subject to transfer by the BMS, over which the Zenana Mission had no control. Continuity could not be assured in such a way. Yet this arrangement was necessary until single women, like their married

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[100] Based on data from the manuscript "History of the Baptist Zenana Movement 1850-1909" which lists workers and superintendents for all BZM stations in India. Data for China is not available.

counterparts, had gained experience and seniority on the mission field. The BZM knew well that women of experience were made, not born, and there were not appreciable numbers of them until the 1890s. Taking the five years 1872-76 as an example, 14 women were sent to India by the BZM; however, in the period 1882-86 36 new missionaries were sent abroad.[101] The BZM did not continue to experience growth on this scale, but this large influx provided a core of Zenana missionaries who would later add superintendence of BZM stations to their list of duties.

In this climate, the BZM carved out a role for the properly educated and fully dedicated single woman missionary. In so doing, they did not seek to displace the missionary wife, but to secure in addition the services of more effective full-time workers. There are some parallels in the world of English philanthropy, in which "casual" visiting was deprecated in favour of systematized visiting. Twenty-five years after its founding at a drawing-room meeting, the Revd William J. Henderson paid tribute to the success of the Baptist Zenana Mission in achieving the access to women that had long been recognized as important:

> This agency is highly valued by the missionaries and their wives, as it meets a long-felt want. No more important auxiliary can be imagined. It goes right to the fountains of society. It cleanses the waters at their sources in family life.[102]

Even when the BZM affiliated more closely to the BMS, becoming the Women's Missionary Association in 1913, it gained control over the work of all single women (the BMS had a handful of single women working in Ceylon and on the Congo). Married women remained under the jurisdiction of the BMS.

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[101] E.G. Kemp, *There Followed Him Women*, Baptist Missionary Society, n.d. (ca. 1927), pp. 117-119.

[102] In Myers, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

Although the duties of a wife unquestionably came before any missionary inclination a woman might have, by the twentieth century, the activities of a missionary wife were receiving more recognition in the Society. Part of the reason was certainly the sheer number of missionary martyrs - whether to the Congo climate or the BMS wives who were murdered in the Boxer rebellion. At the service held for the Boxer martyrs, Dr Richard Glover formally recognised their service (and sacrifice) as warranting the status of full missionaries.[103] Another factor was the growing number of former BZM missionaries to be found amongst the ranks of missionary wives. Trying to see the BZM point of view, "A Missionary's Wife", wrote when a "missionary mates with a missionary" that

> whatever light such marriages may be regarded by the Society which has to suffer the loss of an agent (and it must be admitted that such losses are exceedingly trying at times!) yet the gain to the *general* work is so great that those on the field cannot but hail such marriages with the most complete and unmixed satisfaction.[104]

The influx of trained women into the BMS was beginning to change attitudes, even among the BZM, which strenuously supported the work of single women. One of its longest-serving missionaries, Isabel Angus, asked the Eighth Triennial Conference of the BMS, "whether the influence and the aid of the resident missionary's wife is invited and reckoned upon as fully as it should be? Granted that the claims of family and domestic duties stand first, surely some time is available for visiting the women

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[103] *Missionary Herald*, January 1901, p. 9.

[104] *Missionary Herald*, November 1911, p. 329; emphasis in original.

near by, and after all what the Mem Sahib is in herself counts more than what she does."[105]

The missionary wife was beginning to be seen to be more of an equal in the mission field with her husband, although the BMS did not require her to have formal qualifications. The BMS General Secretary, C.E. Wilson, advised missionaries to choose their prospective spouses carefully - the intending bride should be not only physically, but spiritually fit. This was because, as Wilson noted: "There is probably no career in which a man and wife are called upon to share the difficulties and burdens the joys and responsibilities of life more than a foreign missionary and the woman he marries." A missionary's wife, he urged, must have "missionary spirit. If she has not, there is not satisfaction in the life for her, and only disaster can follow."[106] It was increasingly recognised that, in mission work, it benefitted the Society for a couple to act as a team, rather than a male evangelist and wife. However, the domestic example of a missionary wife was never questioned, nor was systematic work required by the BMS. These factors combined to give single women hegemony on the mission field. The missionary wife was left in an ambiguous position - her mission experience was largely what she made of it, as no specific tasks outside the domestic arena were allocated to her by the BMS.

Despite missionary wives' lack of training and irregular participation in purely evangelistic work, some historians have argued that in the context of mission

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[105] "The Jubilee Year of the Baptist Zanana (sic) Mission, 1917", marked for private circulation only, B.M.P. (?Baptist Mission Press), Calcutta, n.d. (1917), p. 6.

[106] *Missionary Herald*, March 1910, pp. 86-87. From a series of articles on the theme "Shall I Be a Missionary?".

structures, missionary wives were accorded higher status than single women.[107] This status stems in part from the missionary wife's intimate connection with the male missionary agent. The BMS was on the whole unwilling to send laymen as missionaries; a wife benefitted from her husband's status as an ordained minister.[108] Although in theory, an ordained minister had no special ecclesiastical or sacramental significance among Baptists, in practice, the increased availability for college training for ministers, as well as the ordination service itself, lent stature to the ministry as the century progressed.[109] A wife's importance also stems from her location in the exemplary "Christian home." Jane Hunter argues that single women were forced into a dependent role when billeted in the homes of married couples "in the field." The construction of "Ladies' Homes" at the turn of the century, spaces which allowed groups of single women to live together in an atmosphere not unlike college dormitories, revolutionized single women's experience of mission work.[110] In the BZM, independent domestic arrangements were the norm, although communal buildings such as schools could be shared with the BMS. BZM missionaries, singly, or in pairs or trios, made their home in the BZM-owned bungalow from which they would plan their forays into the community. This may seen at odds with general Baptist prejudices against an independent lifestyle for single women. Certainly the

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[107] Marni L. Stanley, *op. cit.*, p. 109; Hunter, *op. cit.*, Chapter Three, especially pp. 52, 83.

[108] On the issue of lay/ordained missionaries, see C.P. Williams, "The Recruitment and Training of Overseas Missionaries in England between 1850 and 1900", M.Litt thesis, University of Bristol, 1976, pp. 46, 67, 273.

[109] J.H.Y. Briggs, *English Baptists*, pp. 86-89. Charles Haddon Spurgeon eschewed ordination on these grounds.

[110] Hunter, *op. cit.*, pp. 63, 68.

BZM never emulated the college-style accommodation of American missionary organisations. Care was taken to preserve as homelike an environment as possible. At Salamatpur, for instance, Gertrude Fletcher lived "as an English woman" who dressed for dinner and presided over an orderly table; on Sunday evenings, she would invite girls to the sitting-room and through her manner and the assistance of photographs, show them "English ways."[111] Single women, as well as married women, could construct an emblematic "Christian home."

The BZM's stress on the separate and important nature of its work did have some adverse consequences. If BZM missionaries were excluded from mission business, it was because they viewed their work as separate and not subject to BMS control. In 1893, Alfred Baynes told the BMS General Committee that he had approached the BZM intending to propose "concerted action" between "the two sides of the one work." In his report, he mentioned that as BMS and BZM missionaries did not have any official mechanism to exchange information, "friction" developed.[112] In the end, Baynes and the BMS were unable to bring the BZM and its missionaries into the fold.[113] The officers of the BZM gained access to the BMS India and China sub-committees; the final agreement of the negotiating delegates was to appoint the officers of each society ex-officio members of the other.[114] These agreements did

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[111] Isabel M. Angus, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

[112] BMS General Committee Minute Book C.C., December 1892 to January 1894, p. 471. The date of the meeting was 19 December 1893.

[113] Gertrude Fletcher struggled to keep Salamatpur Industrial Settlement out of BMS station control. Isabel Angus, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

[114] BMS General Committee Minute Book D.D., January 1894 to December 1894, p. 188; *Missionary Herald*, 1 May 1895, p. 152.

not extend to the level of the mission station; BZM agents retained control of their work on the ground.

IV. Spiritual Qualities and Educational Qualifications

Early zenana missionaries, like Mrs Lewis and Mrs Sale, set about gaining entrance to the Indian home. That entrance was difficult to come by. While supporters at home prayed for an "open door", zenana missionaries employed a variety of tactics in order to get a foot into that door to spread the Gospel. Quite ingeniously, they employed their "feminine accomplishments" - singing, needlework, drawing - as a means of entry. Missionaries advertised their willingness to tutor Indian women in these Western arts. With contacts made, women missionaries plied their genteel trade, making the acquaintance and gaining the trust of their pupils, and waiting for an opportunity to ask to teach reading in the zenana. If that permission was granted zenana pupils were invariably taught from Bible-based primers, learning simple Scriptural texts. The more advanced were given proselytising pamphlets such as the *Peep of Day* and encouraged to purchase the Gospels in translation. In this way, women, under the guise of teaching fancy arts, made inroads into a section of society unreachable by men.

Thus, domestic accomplishments came into the purview of mission work. Early BZM workers, lacking formal training, instead made the case for their existence dependent on the "womanly" activities of visiting and, once in the Indian domestic sphere, needlework and other adornments. This method of evangelisation, made up of time-consuming and often seemingly fruitless personal visits, was, in the beginning, the least controversial way to institute work. The hours spent by dedicated

missionaries in ill-lit and airless zenanas seemed to a male colleague to call for much endurance. "One is driven to reflect upon," wrote George Hawker, "the appalling amount of inane and trivial talk which must have afflicted our women missionaries, taxing their patience to the point of exhaustion, in those early days, and, indeed, all the way along."[115] It was only after the work had gained a foothold that missionaries could begin to advertise themselves as Christian teachers first and foremost and demand that Bible lessons be a part of a zenana pupil's education.

The Baptist Zenana Mission was also a product of its time. In keeping with current notions about women's work that placed it largely behind the scenes and in the realms of influence, the BZM conformed nicely to gender expectations. The secluded zenana removed all suspicion of public preaching, and the work itself, based on the personal relationships between missionary and zenana pupils, could hardly arouse adverse comment. The BZM's annual report for 1899-1900 quoted Dr Livingstone's words as being especially true for women's mission work: "It is not by grand meetings, fine speeches, and much excitement that anything great is done; no it is by hard work, working in quiet, working under a sense of God's presence everywhere."[116]

The BZM did not perform zenana baptisms, leaving the baptism of their converts to BMS missionaries.[117] There were two compelling reasons for this. The first and most obvious reason is that, although women were present to assist a new

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[115] George Hawker, *Open the Window Eastward*, Carey Press, n.d. (ca. 1917), p. 20

[116] *Missionary Herald*, May 1900, p. 291.

[117] *Missionary Herald*, 1 July 1893, p. 312.

female church member at her baptism, the act itself was invariably performed by a man. BZM missionaries were merely following the patterns learned in their home churches. The second reason relates to the public nature of baptism, as specified in Baptist theology. Both a public profession of faith and a public immersion accompanied acceptance into the church; women who were restricted to a zenana could hardly make a public profession. Zenana baptisms could be seen as baptisms in secret and thus at odds with Baptist principles of spiritual rebirth and an open declaration to live a Christian life. Yet the pressure for zenana baptisms would not go away. Zenana missionaries readily admitted that a public profession of faith could mean the convert's expulsion from her home and family, or even physical abuse. The BZM maintained a converts' home in Jessore and its missionaries were prepared to offer shelter to women who professed Christianity.[118] As late as 1903 the Indian Decennial Missionary Conference passed a resolution stating that zenana baptisms were "not advocated."[119]

In China, however, the situation was slightly different. Here, a public baptism was possible, but local opinion was against a man actually officiating. As Mrs Florence (Sowerby) Drake explained in her report to the BMS for Chouping:

> Recently I had the pleasure of baptizing several women. Seventeen more were received into church membership in 1891, and seventeen more last September (1892). As it seemed desirable that this service should be conducted by a lady, instead of a gentleman, missionary, I baptized the women myself, Mrs Nickalls, Mrs Smyth, and Mrs Harmon being present. On both occasions we had a solemn and impressive service.[120]

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[118] Ms "Memorandum of BZM Stations," 1894-1905, 1905-1918, p. 124.

[119] *Missionary Herald*, March 1903, p. 135.

[120] *Missionary Herald*, 1 May 1893, p. 200.

These baptisms in the early 1890s were indeed exceptions to BMS practice. Florence Drake had the authority of her ordained missionary husband and the support of three other missionary wives to ensure the legitimacy of the proceedings. As soon as the native Christian community would accept the authority of a male minister, however, baptisms of women by women ceased.

At its start, the BZM envisioned itself as operating within zenanas, very much a domestic mission. As such, it fitted in comfortably with similar sorts of work done by women in England - tract distribution, district visiting, collecting money for charitable societies, or preparing women church members for baptism. Such activities allegedly required the peculiar skills possessed by a "lady." The Zenana Mission, at its inception, was a ladies' organisation which utilised a lady's skills. The remit of the mission expanded as missionaries coped with developments in their host country: famines produced orphans, exiled converts needed shelter, Christian converts needed wives, Bible women required training, medical provision for women was lacking, and, within India, attitudes to education were changing, especially amongst nationalists.[121] The BZM, then, began distributing food, setting up orphanages, founding training colleges, providing schools for converts and their daughters, setting up dispensaries, and attempting to pre-empt "heathen" principles from being taught in school by establishing free day schools for girls. By the time the BZM sent its first missionaries to China in 1893, the province of the Mission had outgrown its domestic origins in

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[121] Indian nationalists like Gopal Krishna Gokhale believed that, as a precursor to political independence, Indian social and religious ideas should be modernised. This included tackling the widespread illiteracy problem among Indian women. See Stanley Wolpert, *A New History of India*, Oxford University Press, New York & Oxford (1989), p. 253.

the zenanas and embraced a multifaceted programme of traditional zenana visiting, school superintendence and teaching, itinerating tours, and medical work.

Initially, the BZM relied on Baptist girls reared in a tradition of service to staff its mission stations, regardless of formal training. An early "Occasional Paper" of April 1876 gives an indication that faithful duty came first and training second:

> A female Missionary to India, then, should have, as an indispensable qualification, of course, the love of Christ in her heart. She should be patient and industrious, and have the ability to learn a language. ... If she has had practice in teaching, so much the better. If she can sing, or play, or draw, so much the better. ... More than anything else of this nature, perhaps the habit and love of study, if it has been acquired, will be of the greatest service.[122]

Increased training opportunities for women - as nurses, teachers, doctors - led the BZM to revise its expectations of candidates. An ideal of service alone was insufficient - specialised mission work required specialised training. The development of a professional ethos in the BZM, culminating in its partnership in the Carey Hall training college in 1912, must be traced in connection with the changing nature of BZM work, the growth of missionary training in general, but especially the idea of a "scientific" study of missions, and wider educational opportunities for women in the late Victorian period.

The BZM had staked a claim on the unevangelised women of India and China and backed it up with powerful appeals to Scriptural precepts about women's nature and mission. But if BZM visitors were to be superior to the missionary wife, they needed to be more than merely available for the work. From the first, the BZM

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[122] Ladies' Association for the Support of Zenana Work and Bible-Women in India, in Connection with the Baptist Missionary Society, *Occasional Paper*, No. 11, April 1876, p. 3; emphasis in original.

looked for certain spiritual qualities in its applicants, and as late as 1910 appealed for workers in the language of Christian duty and womanly virtues:

> [W]e want women filled with a genuine passion for imparting knowledge, adaptability to every circumstance, ready to face unremitting toil, and to fight a daily battle with heat and physical inconvenience, and with a fund of patience as inexhaustible as the widow's cruse of oil. Above all, they must be ... women of sympathetic temperament and gracious personality, full of the love which never faileth ... .[123]

While the spiritual dimension of mission work could not be denied, the BZM placed a growing emphasis on formal training and qualifications. As such, the Mission was very much in line with Nonconformist attitudes to girls' education; that is, education should make a girl "useful" to her society.[124] What was perceived as useful changed in degree, although not substantially in kind, from the mid-nineteenth century onwards. The girls of the "Cherry Lawn" schools (as Binfield calls them), well-schooled in Nonconformist precepts, social accomplishments, and imbued with Christian conscience, gave way to products of more academic girls' schools like the Congregationalist Milton Mount whose aim was to release women's "possibilities" for service in the Christian world.[125] At no point was academic learning an end in itself. Nonconformists set girls' education within the context of religious knowledge and duties. Neither did they wish to turn out girls whose gentility and status would be questioned - hence the emphasis on "accomplishments."

Baptists, however, were not prolific school-founders like their Congregationalist or Quaker counterparts. Instead, they tended to share in ventures. Their support

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[123] *Baptist Zenana Mission Magazine*, April 1910, p. 93.

[124] Clyde Binfield, *Belmont's Portias*, p. 8.

[125] *Ibid.*, p. 28.

ranged from an extensive commitment to the British and Foreign School Society, participation in nonconformist joint-ventures such as Mill Hill and Taunton, and involvement in schools for missionaries' children (Eltham and Walthamstow Hall).[126] Baptists hardly entered the boarding school market at all, a lack manifested in graphic detail in the advertisements for schools which accompanied issues of the *Baptist Handbook*. The paucity of Baptist schools as such does not mean that Baptists were at odds with wider nonconformist views on the purpose of educating girls. Their participation in nonconformist joint-ventures is evidence of their commitment and cooperation. The crucial difference was that Baptists strenuously resisted the notion that their children be trained up according to a rigid confessional code. As befits believers in adult baptism, church membership was a highly individual decision, a path to be chosen, not taught. Hence Baptist willingness to support schools which offered broad christian teaching and their opposition to doctrinal (for Baptists, read Prayer-Book) education.[127]

Nor was education confined to school-room pursuits. All of the BZM applicants whose candidate papers have survived had participated in church work of one form or another: Sunday School teaching, mothers' meetings, sick visiting, girls' clubs, Bible classes or any combination of the above. Clyde Binfield, in tracing the networks surrounding the Baptist church at Queen's Road, Coventry, was able to piece together the long and roundabout education of Katherine Franklin who was sent to China by the BZM in 1905.

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[126] Briggs, *English Baptists*, p. 352.

[127] *Ibid.*, pp. 353-355 for Baptist support of board schools.

> Slowly the missionary vocation, first encountered in the 1890s, matured. In a hospitable household where Baptist missionaries were frequent guests this was unsurprising, and the activities which were expected of an educated and talented girl - Sunday school work, assisting at women's meetings, attending university extension lectures, taking courses in first aid and home nursing, reading missionary biography - encouraged this. She was eighteen when she was baptised, and twenty-five when she was accepted by the Baptist Zenana Mission. Then her training - just a year and a half of it - began in earnest at Stockwell and in Edinburgh.[128]

Education in its broadest sense was deemed desirable for women missionaries. The BZM wished to enlist "the daughters of our families, who are free from school-life, to consecrate their powers and gifts, whether in reading and study, in music, or in handicraft, to the Master's use in His work."[129]

These new dimensions and responsibilities called for a new sort of candidate, one with fewer "accomplishments" and more formal qualifications. Mrs Katherine Robinson, president of the BZM, articulated the Mission's desire when she described the "flowers of the flock" who were offering for mission service. "The brightest sons and daughters of happy homes, who might reasonably anticipate careers of honour and usefulness at home, are consecrating their loving hearts and cultured minds [to mission work] ... ."[130] Her sense that eager, intelligent, career-oriented Baptist youth were taking up the mantle of Carey, Marshman and Ward (the BMS's first missionaries - known as the Serampore trio), while possibly exaggerated in an attempt to present mission applicants in the best possible light, does have some basis in fact. Given the dearth of surviving candidate papers for the BZM and its successor organisation, the

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[128] Clyde Binfield, *Pastors and People*, p. 101.

[129] *Missionary Herald*, December 1902, p. 560.

[130] *Baptist Zenana Mission Magazine*, January 1905, p. 2.

WMA, it is only possible to infer what appear to be general trends about the educational level of applicants (see Appendix II). Of the six surviving nineteenth-century applications, there was one B.A., one pupil teacher, one Licensate of Medicine and Surgery from the University of Madras, one who attended private school until age 17, one whose educational history is unknown, and one whose skills fell into the realms of "accomplishments." Of the remaining twentieth century papers for the BZM (21), by far the largest total (8/38%) had nursing training. The next largest group were those with some teacher training (4/19%). Three had attended North London Collegiate School for Girls and one of those had gone on to Bedford College. There was also a lady doctor and a London B.A. in this group. The applications for the WMA (32 total) see this trend continuing, with an increasing proportion of women taking further education after leaving high school (25/78%), with three of those having taken a course at Carey Hall. Valedictory articles in the Mission's publication increasingly stressed the qualifications of the missionaries just set sail.

In the early twentieth century, the BZM placed increasing emphasis on missionary study as a vehicle for motivating its supporters as well as inspiring future missionaries.[131] To this end, it formed a lending library in 1903. Another organisation, aimed at instructing missionaries while still in Britain (it catered to the 17-25 age group) was the Home Preparation Union, founded in connection with the London Missionary Society in 1915. The HPU worked on the principle of distance learning - members were allocated a tutor who set them essays, which they returned

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[131] *Missionary Herald*, January 1903, pp. 52-55; and July 1903, pp. 388-90.

via the post. By February 1920, the HPU had 265 students (of which 41 were men) and 61 tutors.[132]

The opening of Carey Hall in 1912 was a significant step in BZM training. The idea for a missionary training institution having some connection with the BZM was investigated in 1906, but foundered due to lack of funds.[133] In the revitalized atmosphere following the Edinburgh Conference in 1910, three societies - the BZM, the London Missionary Society and Women's Association of the English Presbyterian Mission - met again and through the generosity of the Somerville-educated Baptist Emily Kemp, a member of the BZM committee and President of its London guild, were able to buy suitable premises.[134] Previously, the committee could only send women to extra-denominational institutions, like the Lady Missionaries' Training Home in Glasgow, over whose curriculum they had no control. A brochure advertising the Home spelled out the two-year course. The first year was made up of a series of lectures on the Bible, district visiting, gaining experience in addressing meetings, first aid and dispensing, class singing, and practical cookery. Students could leave the home after the first year, but would not be awarded a certificate. In the second year, students continued the first year curriculum with the addition of some medical lectures, three months at an eye dispensary, lessons in bookkeeping, education

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[132] Irene Morris, *The Story of the H.P.U.*, The Priory Press, Malvern, n.d. (post-1944), p. 4.

[133] Hugh Martin, *Fifty Years of Carey Hall, 1912-1962*, The Council of Carey Hall, Selly Oak, Birmingham, n.d. (ca 1962), p. 12.

[134] *BZM Report 1910-1910*, Alexander Shephard Ltd. (1910), p. 4; BZM Minute Book 13, 1911-14, p. 150.

work, and practice cutting out garments.[135] Carey Hall offered guaranteed places for Baptist women, as well as giving the BZM some control over the subjects taught. Situated on the site of the Selly Oak Colleges (of which Woodbrooke is probably the most well-known), it was ideal for students training to be missionaries. The Selly Oak Colleges boasted students of many different nationalities and tutors with a wide range of interests.[136] Carey Hall pupils were not always taught on-site, Selly Oak students were encouraged to sample courses at other colleges. The venture proved so successful that in 1919, a second house, to hold 18 students and two more staff members, was rented. Of applications received by the committee after 1912 (32 total), three had already undergone training at Carey Hall and another 14 (43%) were recommended to spend between one and three years further training there.

The other important quality for mission work was a Divine call from God and, sometimes, if the BZM committee were convinced of the genuine nature and strength of such a call, they would allow a candidate with fewer formal qualifications to become a missionary. However, after an admission of this nature, the committee usually required the individual to undertake some kind of training. In the case of Minnie Pearson, a music teacher from Southampton who had left school at 16, the committee were concerned by her lack of education but were convinced by her evident call to the work and a prior record of Christian service which included Sunday school teaching, holding Mothers' Meetings, and infirmary visiting. She was accepted into

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[135] "Lady Missionaries' Training Home" prospectus, in L. Collett file, BMS Candidate Papers.

[136] Martin, *op. cit.*, pp. 18, 21.

the BZM with the proviso that one year's training be arranged for her.[137] She began work in 1910 and was still serving in 1927.

Yet in many ways, the call to mission work, an essential prerequisite, proved problematic for the BZM. At its most basic level, it is a powerful solvent of the established order, offering a divine justification for breaking through the traditional bonds of society, in obedience with God's will. The most obvious example that springs to mind are the seventeenth century sectarians, each group convinced of its special message from God. Baptists, as Evangelicals, and successors to this sectarian tradition, were doubly bound in obedience to both the word and voice of God. The *Missionary Herald* did not mince its words or exaggerate when it printed the admonition, "And every one that hath forsaken houses or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife or children, or lands for My name's sake shall receive an hundred-fold, and shall inherit everlasting life."[138] Although this passage was primarily directed at men, Baptists could not deny the wisdom of God to call whomever he pleased for the work of the church - indeed it relied on it. To what else could they attribute the evident spiritual qualities of Charles Haddon Spurgeon, known as the "boy preacher" when he burst onto the Baptist scene? Or of one of the founding figures in the BMS, William Carey, who had become convinced of the necessity of missions when studying in his workshop? It was evidently the desire of God that the lad from the fens and the Midland cobbler, be called and qualified for the work of a minister and missionary, respectively.

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[137] Angus Library, Regent's Park College, BMS Candidate Papers - Pearson file.

[138] *Missionary Herald*, 1 April 1886, p. 151.

For men, the possibilities seemed endless. In practice, the call to service for women usually was hedged about with family commitments. John Angell James, for example, had acknowledged women's divine leading to serve, but placed their service firmly within the domestic arena. For the Zenana Mission, this could never do. In accordance with its stated mission (the conversion of foreign women), and with its preferred agents for this transformation (single women), the BZM had to overcome the tradition that stressed the domestic nature of women's service, as well as mediate the more radical elements implicit in the call in order to preserve the Mission's good reputation.

The Zenana Mission, indisputably an evangelical foundation, placed its trust in heavenly things. In pressing the case for support of the Mission, it invariably stressed prayer: prayer to strengthen the missionaries, to sustain the committee, to break down prejudice against Christianity, and to assist new converts in the faith. Although never to the extent of the China Inland Mission, the BZM proclaimed itself reliant on God to provide missionaries, money, and "openings" in India and China. Like other religious groups, ultimate success or failure was ascribed to the unfathomable providence of God. Faith and obedience provided the nucleus around which the call to service was interpreted, legitimised, or circumscribed.

The BZM had to redefine the denomination's heavily domesticated notions regarding the religious service of women. The *Baptist Magazine* puzzled:

> In our zeal for the promotion of Christian and philanthropic effort, are we not apt to forget that sometimes a holier work is being done for Christ by the pious mother who, after the long and tiring labours of the day, in which she has borne with patience the fractiousness of her children, will deny herself the enjoyment and benefit of an evening service, rather than depute to others the precious privilege of putting

her little ones to bed, and teaching them at her own knee their simple prayer to "Gentle Jesus"?[139]

The Zenana Mission had no intention, however, of abandoning the ideal of domestic service. There were several reasons for this. Most importantly, the BZM did not fundamentally disagree with the mainstream Baptist position. This is obvious from their position on the duties of missionary wives. Furthermore, had they done so, their pecuniary support from within the denomination would have dried up.[140] It would also never have occurred to the Mission to press for women's "right" to be missionaries. In this context the faith-nature of mission work must be remembered. The biography of one of the BZM's longest-serving missionaries, Isabel Angus, was entitled *The Favour of a Commission*. This is precisely the point - the call could not be demanded, it had to be sought for in humility and obeyed completely, wherever it led.[141]

Instead of adopting a confrontational approach, the BZM merely modified the wider denominational position. Stressing the call, and the imperative for a Christian to surrender her will to it, they also acknowledged that God created spheres of usefulness both at home and abroad. Thus, they validated mission work without devaluing the home service of the majority of Baptist women. The example of Florence Payne is instructive. Returning to mission work after a hiatus caring for her family, she wrote:

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[139] *Baptist Magazine*, June 1888, p. 263.

[140] *Missionary Herald*, September 1901, 460. The BZM spent a lot of page-space lauding their supporters' "consecrated" service. As we shall see below, the BZM praised and validated both foreign and domestic service.

[141] *Missionary Herald*, 1 September 1898, pp. 445-47.

> I am going back to India because I have the conviction that, away back in my life, God called me to work there; and although during the last seven years circumstances have indicated that my place was at home, I feel He is now as distinctly calling me to return.[142]

The call could be a flexible one, that allowed both for home and foreign service. For BMS missionaries, this was usually not the case - their agents, as trained ministers, were expected to provide a lifetime of continuous service. This sometimes entailed long family separations, as wives and children were often left in England, or at least spent extended furloughs at home. The Zenana Mission acknowledged family commitments, and indeed their Christian nature, thus their version of the call to service was more adaptable to women's circumstances. Of the surviving candidate papers (58), twelve women, or nearly a quarter of the total, had previous contact with missionary work, either through friends or family (see Appendix II). A further seventeen (29%) had fathers or uncles who were ministers, Sunday School teachers, or deacons. Family interest and commitment, as in the case of Katherine Franklin, was a significant factor in the validation of women's missionary vocation. Given the Mission's legitimation of foreign service and careers for women, BZM missionaries developed a strong sense of vocation, both spiritual and professional.

V. The BZM and Opportunities for Women

The BZM, as a highly-publicised vehicle for women's work within the denomination, has been criticised by Baptist historians for failing to enlarge opportunities for women within the denomination as a whole.[143] Brian Stanley, the

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[142] *The Herald*, November 1912, p. 355.

[143] John Briggs, "She-Preachers, Widows and Other Women", p. 344.

historian of the BMS, has remarked that the employment of single women as missionaries by the BZM ultimately circumscribed the contribution other single women could make to the wider missionary effort of the BMS.[144] Yet he also admits that the General Committee of the BMS was unwilling to sponsor the work of single women. Of the two sent to the Cameroons in 1879-80, both were admitted on the strength of their family connections. One was the daughter of BMS missionary Alfred Saker and the other the elder sister of the three Comber brothers serving with the Mission.[145] Baptist Zenana missionaries, in claiming independence from the BMS, were able to pursue their work without the direct superintendence of male missionaries. Women sent out by the BMS, and numbers were never large, found their authority circumscribed by male station superintendents and committees.

Such a judgment seems unduly harsh, considering the attention Baptists as a whole paid to sex-specific authority and service. In Chapter One, it has been shown that individual Baptist congregations were unwilling to recognise women's ministerial abilities, despite the fact that two eminent Baptist ministers offered biblical justification for their ministry. Across the denomination, women's call to service was steered into "appropriate" activities. In this context, the BZM served as a positive force, giving women who felt a spiritual vocation the opportunity to live it out. Stanley and Briggs seem to be arguing that the BZM was the originator of Baptist ideas of separate women's service, consigning women to "women only" ventures. Such a process predates the foundation of the BZM by nearly a century. The main argument of this chapter has been that the women of the BZM worked <u>within</u> these

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[144] Brian Stanley, *op. cit.*, p. 232.

[145] *Ibid.*

gendered boundaries, often seen as limiting women's opportunities, to construct an organisation through which single women's missionary activities were validated and given status.

VI. Links with the BMS

Its original elongated title describes the BZM as being "in Connection with the Baptist Missionary Society" and besides the most obvious denominational links, some connections did exist, mostly of a family kind. For instance, the committee of the BZM tended to include wives (and indeed daughters) of the members of the BMS committee.[146] A good example of the family connection is found in the Angus family. Joseph Angus, for many years principal of Stepney College, later Regent's Park College, the denomination's most prestigious ministerial training institution, was one of the best known London Baptists. He had served as secretary of the BMS early in his career. His wife, Amelia, who had edited the *Juvenile Missionary Herald*, was foreign secretary of the BZM from 1869 until her death in 1893, at which time two of her daughters, Amelia and Edith, became Foreign Secretary and Minute Secretary. Amelia served as the first President of Carey Hall (1912-1919) and was its treasurer from 1919-1932.[147] The youngest daughter, Isabel, was a BZM missionary in India for over 30 years.[148]

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[146] Lady Peto, the BZM's first President (1867-1892), was the wife of Sir Samuel Morton Peto, a Baptist businessman and Treasurer of the BMS from 1846-67. Maria Compston Kerry, Home Secretary from 1904-1918 had been a BZM missionary (1886-95) until her marriage to the Indian Secretary of the BMS, George Kerry. See Brian Stanley, *op. cit.*, pp. 218, 372-2, 382; *Baptist Handbook* (1927), p. 346.

[147] Martin, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

[148] Brian Stanley, *op. cit.*, p. 231.

However, it would be a mistake to suppose that because the two societies were joined by close family ties, the BZM was subordinate to the BMS or integrated into its government. After the failure of the attempt by Alfred Baynes in 1893 to bring the two organisations closer together, the two societies agreed to share information of common interest in an attempt to prevent the friction which concerned Baynes, but this did not extend to policymaking matters. Relations between the two were businesslike and often became strained over financial matters. For example, Amelia Angus reminded the BMS General Committee that the BZM had refrained from staging any 25th anniversary celebrations during 1892 in order that the BMS could appeal for its Centenary Fund. The Zenana Mission had lost income as a result. She wrote, reproachfully, when requesting a share of the Centenary Fund, "we believe that there is a very widespread impression amongst the members of our Churches that in contributing to the Baptist Missionary Society they are also helping the Zenana Missionary Society ... ."[149] Yet the funding dearth worked both ways. The Revd Charles Williams complained that the Zenana Mission "attracts lady helpers from the service of the parent society [for fund-raising purposes]" and "that contributions to the zenana missions do not increase the income of the Baptist Missionary Society ...."[150]

The BZM was emphatically a separate organisation, which selected, trained, outfitted and sent out its own missionaries, and raised its own funds with which to purchase mission property (not always within BMS compounds) and pay salaries. Support was centred on a network of local Ladies Auxiliaries, the London circle being

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[149] Quarterly Meeting of Committee, 18 July 1894. BMS General Committee Minute Book D.D., Jan. 1894-Dec. 1894, p. 262.

[150] *Missionary Herald*, April 1904, p. 159.

especially active. Even in its publications the BZM remained independent; when, from 1894-1903, the BZM reported its news through the BMS organ *The Missionary Herald*, it did not fall under editorial control and the space was rented, not given by the BMS.

The BZM's insistence on autonomy made it very different from the nearest comparable denominational society, the London Missionary Society (LMS). The LMS, which became identified with Congregationalism over the course of the nineteenth century, organised "women's work" on quite different lines. Before 1890, a "Ladies Committee" existed which was charged with encouraging the formation of women's auxiliaries to the LMS as well as the examination and recommendation of candidates for the "Female Missions of the Society". This committee consisted of fifteen London ladies. After 1890, this separate committee was abolished and, instead, women became eligible for membership on the LMS Board of Directors. This appears to have been a mixed blessing; although women were now involved at the highest committee level, numbers remained low--in 1895, there were 33 women Directors out of a Board membership of 295.[151] Even the head of the Salvation Army's Women's Social Work, Florence Soper Booth, though supreme over the entire scope of the activities of Army women, remained responsible to General William Booth and after his death to her husband, Bramwell. In organisational terms, the BZM resembles independent women's missionary societies like the Women's Boards in America described by Jane Hunter.[152]

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[151] Norman Goodall, *A History of the London Missionary Society 1895-1945*, Oxford University Press, (1954), p. 538.

[152] Hunter, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

One of the effects of the World Missionary Conference, held at Edinburgh in 1910, was a re-emphasis on efficiency and unity. For most missions, efficiency was already a concern as they attempted to make their funds stretch to cover their seemingly innumerable projects around the globe. However, the Conference, and the many committees spawned by it, addressed efficiency in the broadest sense, looking beyond mission society borders. It recommended that "there should be definite co-operation between men and women in the administration of Mission Work, in order to link the different branches for more effective service."[153] The BMS and the BZM were joined primarily by family ties and by an administrative courtesy which allowed the officers of either organisation to be *ex-officio* members on the board of the other. This was primarily to facilitate communication between the two at the highest level, but as late at 1911, there was no offical connection between the BMS and the BZM "in the field."[154] Actually being a part of the BMS organisation as a "Women's Missionary Association" had never been considered. The languages of "efficiency" and "unity" popularised by the conference, however, had a profound effect on Baptist missionary thought. The first concrete proposal to trace its roots to this new ideology was the BZM's surrender of its own *Baptist Zenana Mission Magazine* in favour of a joint publication with the BMS to be called *The Herald*. The BZM committee charged with investigating this avenue reported:

> it is desirable, in deference to the strongly expressed desire among miss^{y} workers in the Churches and in the interests of the work in

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[153] As reported in *The Herald*, June 1913, pp. 193-94.

[154] BZM Minute Book 13, 1911-14, meeting on 21 September 1911, p. 52.

> general that the separate issue of magazines should cease and the various sections of the work unite in <u>one</u> monthly organ.[155]

The argument that the BZM ought to supervise the single women employed as teachers by the BMS proved extremely attractive to a society whose reputation had been made by its advocacy of single women workers. The BZM, when broaching the affiliation and eventual name change it would entail to its members and supporters, echoed these sentiments, stressing the advantages which would accrue when the BZM controlled the work of all single women.[156]

In reality, the change hardly went smoothly, for either side. BMS missionaries in Ceylon and the Congo, the two areas in which the BMS had both men and single women missionaries working, resisted any change.[157] The BZM, in considering closer union, agreed only in general terms to a "United Fund," preferring to control its own finances. It also reacted lukewarmly to the proposal of a Central Committee with authority to oversee the general men's and women's work as well as allocate funds. The Zenana Mission argued that this committee should be composed of equal numbers of men and women.[158] In the end, the idea of a United Fund was dropped (to the BZM's relief), as was a Central Committee with equal representation. The BMS General Committee, numbering 107, was to have 30 members elected to it by

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[155] BZM Minute Book, No 13 (1911-1914), p. 12. Committee meeting 18 May 1911. The BMS's magazine was called the *Missionary Herald*.

[156] *The Herald*, May 1913, pp. 169-70.

[157] Minutes of the General Committee, Vol No 10 (1912), p. 185; Vol No 11 (1913), p. 56.

[158] Committee Meeting, 21 March 1912. BZM Minute Book No. 13 (1912), pp. 138-39.

the WMA.[159] The women of the WMA sought representation on BMS sub-committees connected most closely with their work: there were 10 women on the 42-member India and Ceylon sub-committee, but only 3 women out of 33 members on the China sub-committee, a reflection of the low numbers of single women missionaries in China.[160] The WMA retained control over its finances (at that time, it had an annual income in the region of £15,000), became responsible for the BMS's single women missionaries (after a one-off cash payment to the WMA for increased expenses), and continued to select mission candidates. It relinquished a measure of its governing power, opting for a larger voice in the BMS, and it assigned its mission buildings to the BMS.[161] The WMA became fully integrated into the BMS in 1921.

The Baptist Zenana Mission, as an organisation committed to the evangelisation of women, never deviated from its path. From its founding, it placed women at the centre of the mission effort, constructing them both as proper targets for evangelisation and as the means of that evangelisation. Its commitment to systematized work in India and China, as well as its acceptance of marital gender roles, meant that it supported single women as its agents. While failing to address the potential of married women to contribute to mission work, it secured a career for a number of devout, educated single women in an environment that provided them with challenges as well as the opportunity for personal fulfilment. As a mission of women

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[159] Minutes of Meeting of Committee, 24 April 1914. BMS General Committee Minute Book, Vol. 12 (1914), p. 92.

[160] BMS Report 1915-16, p. 190.

[161] Minutes of the General Committee Vol 12, (1914), pp. 64-65.

to women, the BZM kept itself rigidly separate from the BMS; it was only the far-reaching changes to mission practice and ideology brought about by the Edinburgh Conference which prompted the BZM's union with the BMS. Even so, the BZM ethos of separation did not vanish with the 1921 amalgamation. Emily Kemp noted, "We have now reached another crucial point, when we are to be merged into the parent society. If we are not to be *sub*-merged we must strain every nerve, and the young generation must take up the task."[162] The members of the BZM contested opportunities available to Baptist women, using notions of women's mission to secure a place on the mission field. Having established Eastern women as their expertise, they remained unchallenged in their speciality, and continued to give voice to a woman-centred ideology even after their full incorporation into the BMS.

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[162] E.G. Kemp, *op. cit.*, p. 116. Emphasis in original.

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The Deliverer



[See "The Birth of Self-Denial," next page.

Chapter Four. "Conquests for God, for The Army, for woman, for the oppressed and lost": the Warrior-Women of the Salvation Army

The organisation which began life as an open-air meeting under a tent on a Quaker burial ground in East London had, by the twentieth century, colonised not only Britain but the world. The agents of this transformation were the 8,000 plus officers of the worldwide Salvation Army who, clad in its distinctive uniform, aimed to "preach the gospel to every living creature." The Army's high visibility, fundamentalist theology, and simple yet compelling services had initially frightened observers such as Frances Power Cobbe and Cardinal Manning. By the early twentieth century, the Army was an established institution, whose structure and work still attracted criticism. Lady Colin Campbell castigated the Army's apparent complacency, and viewed it as an enormous con.[1] Helen Bosanquet savaged the Army's programmes of social service and accused it both of being indiscriminate in its relief and of biting off more than it could chew.[2] Yet it also had the power to attract significant allies: W.T. Stead of the *Pall Mall Gazette* was an important friend in the last two decades of the nineteenth century. Sir Henry Rider Haggard, novelist, magistrate, and landowner, wrote sympathetically about the results of the Army's *Darkest England* scheme.[3] Cambridge-educated Edmund Garrett, a cousin of Millicent Garrett Fawcett, felt obligated to help defend the Salvation Army from

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[1] Lady Colin Campbell, *A Woman's Walks*, Eveleigh Nash (1903), pp. 231, 232.

[2] Helen Bosanquet, *Social Work in London, 1869-1912*, with an introduction by C.S. Yeo, Harvester Press, Brighton (1973), first published by John Murray (1914), pp. 345-348.

[3] Henry Rider Haggard, *Regeneration. Being an Account of the Social Work of the Salvation Army in Great Britain*, Longmans, Green and Co. (1910).

hostile crowds at Eastbourne in 1891.[4] Even George Bernard Shaw could find a good word for the Army in the preface to *Major Barbara* (1905), although he was careful to locate the Army within the flawed capitalist order:

> Yet in the poorest corner of this soul-destroying Christendom vitality suddenly begins to germinate again. Joyousness, a sacred gift long dethroned by the hellish laughter of derision and obscenity, rises like a flood miraculously out of the fetid dust and mud of the slums; rousing marches and dithyrambs rise to the heavens from people among whom the depressing noise called "sacred music" is a standing joke; a Flag with Blood and Fire on it is unfurled, not in murderous rancor, but because fire is beautiful and blood a vital and splendid red; Fear, which we flatter by calling Self, vanishes; and transfigured men and women carry their gospel through a transfigured world, calling their leader General, themselves captains and brigadiers, and their whole body an Army: praying, but praying only for refreshment, for strength to fight, and for needful MONEY (a notable sign, that) preaching, but not preaching submission; daring ill-usage and abuse, but not putting up with more of it than is inevitable; and practising what the world will let them practise, including soap and water, color and music. There is danger in such activity; and where there is danger there is hope.[5]

The Army arrested the attention of contemporaries as it paraded its brand of transformative Christianity through the streets, sold its magazines in pubs, and grappled with sinners, praying with them quite literally at the drum-head. What was unusual about this Army was the astonishing opportunities it offered to women. From its earliest days, women shared the platform with men, preaching and praying (women speakers did not appear before the Baptist Union until 1889). About half of all Army officers were women. Initially, these "Hallelujah lasses" would have been untrained converts sent to proclaim the Army's message. As the Army grew, more systematic training in theology and in social work became available and women's work became

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[4] E.T. Cook, *Edmund Garrett. A Memoir*, Edward Arnold (1909), pp. 50-54.

[5] George Bernard Shaw, *Collected Plays with their Prefaces*, Vol III, Max Reinhardt, The Bodley Head (1971) - first published as a collected edition 1930, pp. 39-40.

divided between the "purely evangelistic" work of corps command and the exercise of "womanly" talents in the rescue of prostitutes and of "raising" women in general. Both offered fulfilling careers and both found justification in the life and ideas of Catherine Booth, the Army's co-founder. Her example, as mother, theologian, and preacher, was widely respected. This chapter looks at the appeal of Army officership to women and concentrates on the institution of "women's work for women," growing in the 1880s, as Army practice. As the period progressed, Salvationist women and men attempted to live out an ideal of family life based on the exemplary lives of William and Catherine Booth and in accordance with the Army's marriage vows. In direct contradiction to Salvationist intentions, however, marriage for many women meant the cessation of meaningful work for their Army. Army precepts on the rearing of children (influenced by Catherine Booth), difficulties in sharing Army appointments, and the realities of officers' salaries combined to narrow the range of opportunities for married women. For the women who followed Catherine Booth to the colours, fortunes were mixed.

I. The legacy of Catherine Booth (1829-1890)

> Yes, a Warrior lays down her sword. She was a Warrior of the Cross, a Warrior-Woman, a Warrior-Wife, a Warrior-Mother. ... Standing as we do to-day, by the side of a soldier's grave, let us give to God, the only, all-sufficient Strength of her life, the everlasting praise. He called her from her mother's womb, He touched her lips, and sent her to a rebellious people. He gave us, her children in all lands, to her for an inheritance, and gave her to us for a mother in Israel. It is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes. ... Magnify the Lord for her life of conquest.[6]

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[6] From the address at Catherine Booth's graveside, printed in *War Cry*, 11 October 1890, p. 9.

First, and supreme, in the Army's roll of salvation warrior-women, stands Catherine Booth. As "Mrs General Booth", the "Army Mother", or in the words of Frances Power Cobbe, who viewed the Salvation Army with a critical eye, "the soul of whatever is best in the movement", she was the example and exponent of sanctified womanhood and the role model for all Army women.[7] Her influence in her own time was far-reaching, whether as one of Olive Anderson's mid-Victorian "lady preachers" or as the prime publicist and theologian of the Salvation Army. To many contemporaries, she was their "mother in Israel", the means of their conversion. Catherine Booth occupied a unique place in the Army's history: as General Booth's wife, as the mother of many eminent officers, and as a theologian dedicated to expanding the boundaries of women's ministry to include preaching. Catherine Booth made some of these identities herself, while others were projected back onto her life by her successors, as they attempted to place her life in the context of Army history. Even today the process is incomplete: modern-day Salvationists are reclaiming and reassessing her ideas and example in the face of twentieth-century problems.[8] It is, appropriately, with her impact on the Army that we must begin. What kind of example did Catherine Booth set, and how did it allow other Salvationist women to follow her lead in winning conquests "for God, for The Army, for woman, for the oppressed and lost"?

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[7] *Contemporary Review*, XLII, August 1882, p. 184. Pamela Walker notes that Catherine Booth did serve as an example for Army women, but that the style adopted by the "Hallelujah Lasses" differed radically from Catherine's orderly discourse. Pamela Walker, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

[8] Clifford D. Kew, ed., *Catherine Booth - her continuing relevance*, Salvation Army International Headquarters (1990).

Early life and the influence of holiness teaching

Of the five children of John and Sarah Mumford, only two survived infancy--Catherine and her younger brother John. John Mumford senior was a Methodist lay-preacher and coach-builder. Although he lacked formal qualifications, his ministry was both popular and well-respected. Sarah, a convert from the Church of England and John Mumford's social superior, married him despite the protests of her father.[9] It was a love match between two Methodists. Sarah found John's religious fervour and convictions attractive. The family relocated to Boston, Lincolnshire in 1834 where John Mumford carried on his trade of coach-building. He became involved in the temperance movement and was active in its promotion in the Boston area.[10] Catherine grew up reading the movement's literature.

Sarah Mumford had definite ideas, grounded in her religious principles, about the proper way to bring up and educate her children. Catherine's only playmate was her brother John; she was not allowed to associate with other children. Similarly, her mother regarded French as morally contaminating. But the young Catherine developed an early mastery of English. Under her mother's tutelage, Catherine read the Bible from cover to cover eight times before the age of twelve.[11] Her deep attachment to revivalist Methodism, which would ultimately result in her expulsion from the Wesleyan Connexion and form the blueprint for the practices of the Salvation Army,

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[9] Olive Anderson, *op. cit.*, p. 471 and n.12.

[10] Frederick de Latour Booth-Tucker, *The Life of Catherine Booth*, The Salvation Army [1892], p. 16.

[11] *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.

mirrored her mother's taste. As the only daughter, and a precocious child, Catherine identified with her mother's strong personality.

While in Boston, Catherine and her mother experienced a crisis. John Mumford had lost interest in preaching and temperance work. He began pursuing "worldly things."[12] This spiritual tragedy united mother and daughter. Catherine would become "her mother's chief companion and comforter."[13] Her father and brother (who left for the United States at age 16) were prodigals to be pitied and prayed for, and were spiritually an example to be avoided. It was some thirty years after John Mumford abandoned active Methodism, that the preaching of his daughter would bring him back into the fold.[14] Her father's backsliding had an important effect on Catherine. She determined that she could not be "yoked with an unbeliever." She knew, as confidante and spiritual equal, of her mother's misery and prayers on behalf of her father. It was not a situation she wished to find herself in. When, in 1844, a cousin attempted to court her she rejected his advances on the grounds that he had not been converted.[15] When her father abandoned Methodism, the Mumford family became divided into factions: the men as non-practising Christians, and the women as earnest church members.

If the first tragedy of her youth was her father's loss of faith, the second was her own serious illness. After only two years at school, Catherine was diagnosed with curvature of the spine in 1843 and compelled to rest. Invalidity undoubtedly affected

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[12] *Ibid.*, p. 15.

[13] *Ibid.*, p. 3.

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 15.

[15] *Ibid.*, p. 31.

Catherine's outlook and opportunities. Historians of women have recognised that illness could often be a defence mechanism to be invoked when a woman wanted to withdraw from the claims of family or society.[16] For Catherine, it proved the determining factor in her spiritual development. She had been brought up by her mother to believe in God, yet she lacked an effective conversion experience. Her knowledge of divine love and of salvation had come gradually, almost imperceptibly. Then, in 1845, Catherine decided to go out and actively seek what she lacked. After weeks of unhappiness and fervent prayer, she believed herself truly converted at age 16.[17] This euphoria was short-lived. The seriousness of her condition again led her to doubt whether she was truly saved. Catherine developed a real fear of dying unregenerate at a time in her life when dying seemed like a definite possibility. She kept a diary briefly in 1847-48. At the time, she was displaying symptoms of consumption and in constant pain. She confided on 28 November 1847:

> Oh, for mighty faith! I believe the Lord is willing and able to save me to the uttermost. I believe the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin. And yet there seems something in the way to prevent me from fully entering in. But to-day I believe at times I have had tastes of perfect love. Oh, that these may be droppings before an overwhelming shower of grace.[18]

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[16] Donald R. Allen, "Florence Nightingale: Toward a Psychohistorical Interpretation", in Raymond G. Herbert, ed., *Florence Nightingale: Saint, Reformer or Rebel?*, Robert E. Kreiger Publishing Co, Malabar, Florida (1981), pp. 79-80.

[17] Booth-Tucker, *op. cit.*, pp. 32-34.

[18] Quoted in Booth-Tucker, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

As Maxwell Ryan describes her situation, "she could not rest until she had received the certainty of salvation and knew beyond the shadow of a doubt that here sins were forgiven and she was assured of Heaven."[19] In her illness, those shadows remained.

This troubled early life may account for the appeal of holiness teaching to Catherine Booth. Chick Yuill has argued that Phoebe Palmer, the American holiness advocate whose ministry Catherine later defended, had a profound influence on her. Palmer's main emphasis was not on the state of the soul after it had been sanctified but on providing a guide to achieving the goal.[20] The possibility of a "victory over sin" struck a chord in Catherine's questing, questioning soul. It was only after she was a married woman with a young and increasing family that she experienced her "second blessing" (1861) and her internal spiritual turmoil, abetted by illness, may be said to have ended. Catherine Booth's struggle to attain holiness appears to be rooted less in the movement's "feminised" trappings described by Anderson - extrovert emotionalism, stress on the purity of heart, and the subjugation of self-will to God's will - than with her need to be assured of her salvation.[21] As will be seen, Catherine Booth's theology diverged from Phoebe Palmer's in one significant way: Catherine Booth rejected any conditions on women's preaching. She argued for women's ministry not in terms of women's sexual difference, rather, she emphasised their fundamental spiritual equality. Given these strongly-held beliefs, it seems unlikely that "feminised" religion would attract Catherine Booth. Instead, her attraction to holiness teaching

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[19] Maxwell Ryan, "Prepare to meet your God," in Kew, *op. cit.*, p. 149.

[20] Chick Yuill, "Restoring the Image," in Kew, *op. cit.*, p. 61. Palmer's popular work, *The Way of Holiness*, was published in England in 1856.

[21] Anderson, *op. cit.*, p. 477.

could be more usefully rooted in Methodist traditions of the perfectibility of the soul.[22]

If the experience of physical pain and anxiety shaped Catherine's spiritual priorities, it also affected her opportunities for education. As she was required to spend long periods of time keeping still for her health, school was effectively ruled out. But her delicate condition also ruled out domestic chores. The physical inactivity prescribed for her benefit spurred her to exercise her mind. Her son-in-law and biographer characterised her illness, although accompanied by much pain and suffering, as providential because it enabled Catherine to prepare herself for her life-long vocation.[23] Her (medically sanctioned) bedridden condition allowed her to satisfy her voracious appetite for reading, and to read widely in the subjects she wished to study - religion and theology. Her somewhat lopsided education was shaped by her own desire for theological knowledge and expertise - an ambition no doubt fostered by her mother.[24] She proved a hardworking student. The fluency with which Mrs Booth could cite the Bible in support of her arguments, whether for female preaching or against the double standard, stems from her careful study as a girl and young woman. She became convinced that there was no scriptural justification for the exclusion of women from the ministry. Indeed, throughout her life, she maintained that women were neither morally nor naturally inferior to men. She

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[22] David Bebbington, *Evangelicalism*, pp. 153-155.

[23] "No doubt there was a divine purpose in this illness, for it was during the next few years of comparative retirement from the ordinary duties of life that she acquired the extensive knowledge of church history and theology which proved so useful in later years, and for the prosecution of which her multitudinous duties would otherwise have left her no time."; Booth-Tucker, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

[24] Christine Parkin, "A woman's place?", in Kew, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

publicly articulated her belief in sexual equality in 1853, when she addressed a letter to Dr David Thomas, pastor of the Congregational Church she was then attending, admonishing him that his sermon of the past Sunday deprecated women. Her estimation of women's moral nature and of their spiritual equality led her to deeply resent the double standard.[25]

Justifying women's preaching

As a young married woman, Catherine Booth had defended Phoebe Palmer's ministry against the charges of Revd A.A. Rees. At this point Catherine herself had not yet spoken in a public assembly for worship; instead, she turned her attention to an analysis of the texts most often cited against women's ministry, much as her Primitive Methodist forebear, Hugh Bourne, had done fifty years earlier after being expelled by the Wesleyans.[26] Such scriptural arguments would arise again in the Anglican Church, as church feminists pressed for the opening of the priesthood to women.[27]

Palmer and others legitimised the practice of female preaching in the revival of the 1860s, when Mrs Booth came of age as a preacher, by acknowledging its special character:

> To Mrs Palmer and her circle the ministry of women had a unique eschatological significance. Not for them the claim that Christ had made sex irrelevant; for them female ministry was valuable precisely because it was female. They may thus perhaps more aptly be compared not with those nineteenth-century feminists who believed in identical

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[25] *Ibid.*, p. 11.

[26] Dale Johnson, *Women in English Religion*, The Edwin Mellen Press, Toronto (1983), pp. 91-92.

[27] Heeney, *op. cit.*, chapter 6.

> treatment for men and women, but with the hyper-feminists active in the early twentieth century who preached the superiority of women.[28]

In short, for pre-millennialists, female preaching was a symbol of the last days, a sign of the presence of the Holy Spirit, with revolutionary potential.[29] In the revival of the 1860s, such promise remained unfulfilled; Olive Anderson argues that female preaching was accepted during the revival <u>because</u> it stressed those aspects of religion - emotion, purity, "perfect love" - which were held to be areas of women's spiritual expertise.[30]

The position of Catherine Booth, and by extension of the Salvation Army, was much more complicated. Her argument made three main points: women were "naturally" fitted for public ministry, biblical prescriptions had been misinterpreted, especially those passages relating to teaching, and that the power of the Holy Spirit could be given to women as well as men.[31] Catherine Booth did not attack the domestic order or idealised nature of women; instead, she argued vigorously that the ministry of the Gospel did not contradict women's nature:

> The first and most Common objection urged against the public exercise of women is that they are unnatural & unfeminine. Many labour under the very great but common mistake of confounding nature with custom. ... God has given to women a graceful form and attitude, winning manners, persuasive speech and, above all, a finely-toned emotional nature, all of which appear to us eminent natural qualifications for public speaking.[32]

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[28] Olive Anderson, *op. cit.*, p. 480.

[29] *Ibid.* Pamela Walker, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

[30] Olive Anderson, *op. cit.*, p. 476.

[31] Parkin, in Kew, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

[32] Catherine Booth, typescript "Women and The Ministry" (Female Ministry - File 1), no date, held at the Salvation Army International Heritage Centre, p. 1. Hereafter

Catherine claimed that, in divine service, women lost none of their essential characteristics. Instead, a woman's qualities, her divine inheritance, were magnified:

> As a labourer in the gospel her position is much higher than in any other public capacity. She is at once shielded from all coarse and unrefined influences and associations, her very vocation tending to exalt and refine all the tenderest and most womanly instincts of her nature.[33]

Catherine's celebration of sexual difference was enshrined in the Army's *Orders and Regulations*. William Booth wrote, "It must be borne in mind that woman has talents which are not possessed by man, and not to call them into action means the everlasting loss of the blessing they would have bestowed upon the world."[34]

Catherine devoted most of her pamphlet to the discussion of her second point. She set out to prove that biblical prohibitions had been taken out of context, especially the right of women to teach which she considered crucial. This right was held "independently of any man-made restrictions"[35] and was due women as equal constituents of the church[36]. In her interpretation of I Corinthians 11:4-5 (regarding the covering of heads), she argued that both men and women may pray and prophesy, but women must keep their heads covered when doing so firstly because women were placed in subjection to man by God and secondly, because of the customs of the Jews, Greeks and Romans.[37] She extended this reasoning to I Corinthians 14:34-35 (the

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"Women and Ministry".

[33] "Women and Ministry," p. 3.

[34] Quoted in the *War Cry*, 11 April 1908, p. 13.

[35] "Women and Ministry," p. 20.

[36] *Ibid.*, p. 14.

[37] *Ibid.*, p. 5.

order for women to keep silence in the churches), saying that what is forbidden is for women to usurp men's authority, to be "domineering".[38] In acknowledging that women were different from men and indeed subordinate to them in the divine order, she never makes clear precisely how women were to usurp men's spiritual authority, as her argument on teaching shows.

Was it acceptable, she asked, that a Christian wife should be prohibited from instructing her husband in the faith? Her answer was an emphatic no. Both Catherine and, later, the Army had a horror of "being yoked with an unbeliever."[39] In Army discipline, this took the form of Headquarters approval before officers could marry. Unlike the seventeenth-century sects, the Army held that separation from an ungodly partner was not an option.[40] It encouraged couples to persevere together in faith, although in practice this usually meant the woman was to persevere with her husband. One unnamed woman, who left her husband because he mistreated her, evinced a changed attitude after conversion. "So far she is ignorant as to her husband's whereabouts, but should he turn up and wish her to return, she is prepared to take up her cross ... ."[41] It was the responsibility of the godly partner to convert the ungodly one, although the Army offered its assistance through visits and "personal dealing" with the unconverted spouse. The Army's Enquiry Bureau sought for missing persons, using the corps network to recover information and reunite families.

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[38] *Ibid.*, pp. 10, 13.

[39] Booth-Tucker, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

[40] Keith Thomas, *op. cit.*, pp. 49-51.

[41] *The Deliverer*, March 1894, p. 140. For an example of a fictional tale of cadet converting her family see *War Cry*, Christmas Supplement, 24 December 1887, p. 20.

In Catherine Booth's interpretation, the biblical evidence which proved her point best was that Mary Magdalene taught the disciples the most important lesson Christianity had to teach - the reality of the resurrection. In describing Mary's divine commission, Catherine highlights the loyalty and devotion of a woman whose faith surpassed that of the Apostles, whose epistles formed the main prohibitions against women's preaching:

> How could it be that our Lord chose a woman for this honour? One reason might be that the male disciples were all missing at the time. They all forsook Him and fled. But woman was there, as she had ever been, ready to minister to her risen, as to her dying, Lord.[42]

In doing this, she was deliberately attempting to distance herself from the arguments of Palmer who, in regarding women's preaching as acceptable only under the aegis of the Holy Spirit, made the practice seem exceptional. In rejecting the pre-millennialist construction of female ministry as a sign of the last days, neither did she fully embrace a post-millennialist stance. In Olive Anderson's model, post-millennialists were much more likely to disregard gender, believing ministry to be preserve of both sexes begun at the Pentecost, whereas for the pre-millennialists, the sex/gender identity of the preacher was important as the fulfilment of prophecy.[43] Major Malen, defending the Army in its early days, clearly expresses its post-millennial tendencies:

> When the Salvation Army's operations in various parts of England began to attract attention, the preaching of young women was especially noticed. With many this formed an objection to the new evangelistic movement. Yet the promise of the Spirit was, "It shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out my Spirit UPON ALL FLESH; and your sons AND YOUR DAUGHTERS SHALL PROPHESY." Upon ALL FLESH, all kinds of people, the Spirit was to be poured, and DAUGHTERS, young women, as well as

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[42] "Women and Ministry," p. 17.

[43] Olive Anderson, *op. cit.*, p. 480.

> sons, were, by His gracious inspiration (using the word in its simple meaning), to prophesy and preach. This was the promise, the fulfilment of which was begun on the day of Pentecost, as the Apostle Peter declared, and will be carried on until the Lord comes for His true Church.[44]

In her estimation of her own ministry, Catherine did not see herself in exceptional terms. She did not regard herself as one of the weak who confounded the mighty, a mere channel for a power greater than herself.[45] Her own addresses were carefully planned exercises in exposition. She straddled the ideological ground between pre- and post-millennialists, believing in women's ministry on the grounds that it complemented the ministry of men, but not that it was exceptional in any way. She readily admitted that it would be wrong for women to usurp undue authority over men; Catherine was a strong believer in the Christian ideal of marriage set out in Corinthians - wives should obey their husbands, but husbands should love their wives with Christlike devotion.[46]

Catherine Booth did not challenge notions of women's emotional superiority or of their difference from men, but she did not completely align herself with Palmer's labelling of women's preaching as "special". Nor did she deny the will of the Spirit to qualify women to preach.[47] In Army practice, women's preaching was not regarded as exceptional and was not assumed to be <u>directly</u> inspired by the Spirit. Instead, the Spirit worked at certain times in a woman's (as in a man's) life - especially during conversion and holiness and when sought in prayer. Many women

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[44] *War Cry*, 29 May 1880, p. 1.

[45] Pamela Walker, *op. cit.*, pp. 46-47.

[46] "Women and Ministry," p. 12-13.

[47] *Ibid.*, p. 19.

found this baptism of the Spirit empowering, giving them the courage to speak in public or leave their families. The Spirit's leadings were sometimes sensational. Several of the Booth children are recorded preaching in rags or sackcloth and ashes (Bramwell once from his coffin) in response to guidance received in their prayers.[48] Nowhere in Army literature is the suggestion that women, because of their supposed greater spirituality, are mere vessels for divine power, although such power, when claimed, enhanced their ministry. The ministry of Army women was active, not passive, although the power of its holy women stemmed, as with men, from salvation and sanctification.

Building the Booth partnership

In the same diary in which she cried out for spiritual awakening, Catherine Mumford mused on her future husband.

> He must be a sincere Christian; not a nominal one or a mere church member, but truly converted to God. He should be a man of sense--I could never respect a fool, or one much weaker mentally than myself. I will never marry a man who is not a total abstainer, and this from conviction and not merely to pacify me. He should perhaps be a minister. I could be most useful to God as a minister's wife. He should be dark, tall and for preference called William.[49]

Catherine had a good understanding of the opportunities available to a woman interested in religion. The heyday of Methodist women preachers had passed; at any rate, she would have been unwilling to place herself in the same category as these

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[48] *War Cry*, 23 January 1897, p. 7; 20 February 1897, p. 6; 30 December 1899, p. 2.

[49] Quoted in Jenty Fairbank, *William and Catherine Booth: God's Soldiers*, Hodder & Stoughton (1974), p. 43.

women who were uneducated, boisterous and of a lower social class than herself.[50] The second evangelical awakening, of which the Salvation Army was a lasting product, had not begun. A practical woman, she determined that her best chance of claiming some religious authority was to marry a minister, someone who shared her beliefs. Her opportunities for service otherwise were limited. To a Protestant, High Church sisterhoods were unacceptable; evangelical Anglican deaconess orders made their appearance too late to affect her decision (the earliest of these, the Mildmay Institute, was founded in 1860 by which time Catherine had married). Nonconformists were notoriously slow in setting up deaconess institutions. The Wesleyan Methodist "Sisters of the People" was organised in 1887 under Dorothea Price Hughes; the Baptist Deaconess Home and Mission did not open until 1890.[51]

Marrying a minister invariably meant marrying into the ministry. The wives of clergymen and pastors were expected to be visible in their communities and had certain social responsibilities. They nursed the sick, taught children and sometimes adults as well, and visited their husband's flock. They could undertake prayer meetings and had a certain amount of freedom to enter areas normally closed to respectable women.[52] It could provide an intelligent woman with spiritually

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[50] Deborah Valenze, *op. cit.*, pp. 277-8; O. Anderson, *op. cit.*, pp. 470-72; for a class-based analysis of Catherine's preaching style see Walker, *op. cit.*, 46-47.

[51] Martha Vicinus, *Independent Women*, p. 58; J.H.Y. Briggs, *English Baptists*, p. 287.

[52] Jean Baubérot, "The Protestant Woman", in Geneviève Fraisse and Michelle Perrot, eds., *A History of Women in the West. IV. Emerging Feminism from Revolution to World War*, Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA (1993), pp. 201-202.

meaningful work to do as well as an acknowledged space in which to operate. It is possible to view marriage in this context as a positive choice.[53]

The choice of a partner was crucial, both from a romantic and a practical angle. On being a minister's wife, her son-in-law wrote, "she believed it was her privilege to share his counsels, her duty to watch over his soul, and her pleasure to partake in his labours."[54] Catherine had a good understanding of the strain and anxiety produced when the initial shared interests, tastes, and goals which had united a wife and husband disappeared. John Mumford's backsliding had injured both his wife and daughter. Catherine had no intention of finding herself so alienated - long before Beatrice Webb, Catherine Mumford demanded a working partnership.

When she met William Booth in 1851, she had found a kindred spirit. William, a convert to the Wesleyans from the Church of England, had joined the Reformers because of his commitment to revivalist preaching. He lacked formal theological training, but was an impressive and successful preacher. Although not yet a teetotaller, he abstained from all alcohol not prescribed for medicinal purposes. On religious and moral grounds, he fitted Catherine's criteria very well. The tall, dark, and handsome William of her diary lacked only one quality; when Catherine met him, he did not believe in the fundamental equality of men and women. Instead, and in common with most Victorians, he preferred to ascribe intellectual superiority to men and emotional superiority to women.[55] In a letter written to Catherine before their marriage, he expressed a surprising ambivalence towards female preaching: "I cannot

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[53] For an example in the missionary context, see Grimshaw, *op. cit.*, p. 513.

[54] Booth-Tucker, *op. cit.*, p. 82.

[55] *Ibid.*, p. 82.

see anything to make me for one moment alter my opinion ... I would not stop a woman from preaching ... I would not encourage one to begin ... I would not stay you Although I should not like it."[56] Early in their courtship, William Booth found Catherine to be a woman of learning as well as an earnest Christian. Her beliefs and attitudes were grounded in scripture and she was ready and able to argue her case. Her example as much as her arguments convinced William to reassess his opinions about women. It was widely acknowledged in Army circles that Mrs Booth was responsible for the position of women in the Salvation Army.[57]

Once harmonised on this issue, the partnership between William Booth and Catherine Mumford can be truly said to have begun. Even before their marriage in 1855 Catherine fulfilled what she perceived to be her part of the bargain. Exasperated with the Reformers, in 1852 she attempted to get him a ministerial post with the Congregationalists. This fell through when William voiced doctrinal objections.[58] The Reformers ultimately assigned William to their Spalding circuit from November 1852. During this difficult separation they traded love letters, Catherine sending along sermons in outline form for William to deliver.[59] They were both still searching for a denomination which embodied Wesleyan principles, but without restrictive church government. Catherine had dissociated herself from the Reformers and was attending the local Congregational chapel. In 1854, William Booth joined the Methodist New

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[56] Quoted in Mrs Commissioner Bramwell Tripp's pamphlet dated 14 September 1975, p. 5. "Female Ministry, File Number 1", International Heritage Centre, Salvation Army.

[57] *War Cry*, November 1891, p. 79; *War Cry*, 20 April 1912, pp. 9-10.

[58] Booth-Tucker, *op. cit.*, pp. 70-73.

[59] *Ibid.*, p. 87.

Connexion believing he had found the right combination of enthusiasm and church order at last. At its 1855 conference, he was appointed an evangelist. Having finally found some security and stability, William and Catherine married. Until 1857, they conducted revivals together in the Connexion, William preaching and Catherine leading the prayer.[60] The conference ordained William in 1858 and assigned him to their Gateshead circuit. It was here that Catherine found her voice.

As a minister's wife, she was doing all of the things expected of her, looking after the children (their third child, Catherine, was born in 1858), finding time for systematic house-to-house visiting in the poorer districts, and being a prominent church member.[61] At Gateshead, she came into contact with the ministry of Phoebe Palmer, then travelling the country with her husband. This exposure was significant in several ways: it brought Catherine Booth into contact with holiness teaching, which had a profound effect on her spiritual state; it crystallised her opinions about the ministry of women, articulated in her pamphlet *Female Teaching* (1859); and the example of Palmer as a woman preacher would encourage Catherine to expand her activities. Like so many Hallelujah Lasses after her, Catherine Booth found that the pursuit and possession of holiness empowered her to speak. She began hesitatingly in 1860 in William's pulpit, then she filled his engagements across the circuit when William was ill, continued as an independent revivalist with William from 1862-65, and when William took over the East London Christian Mission in 1865, she

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[60] Robert Sandall, *The History of The Salvation Army. vol I: 1865-1878*, Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd. (1947), Chapter 2, especially p. 8.

[61] Sandall, *History*, volume I, p. 8; Fairbank, *William and Catherine Booth*, p. 48.

continued as a holiness preacher much in demand at resort towns and in drawing room meetings.

Combining preaching and motherhood

Of the eight children of William and Catherine Booth, the eldest, Bramwell, was 22 when the Salvation Army was formed in 1878; Lucy, the youngest, was 10. Catherine had progressed from a Methodist circuit minister's wife, fulfilling the usual round of duties, to a sought-after holiness preacher in her own right, addressing large drawing-room meetings and filling halls at fashionable resorts. To this work was now added the addresses she gave solely on behalf of the Salvation Army. A long weekend in Salisbury in 1880 saw Mrs Booth addressing the soldiers of the "brave 33rd" corps on Thursday, speaking in Barnard's Cross Mission Hall on Friday, and preaching on "Faith" on Sunday.[62] She provided a visible and successful example of a working mother. Maria Kerry, Home Secretary of the BZM, used the life of Catherine Booth as an example when condemning the insularity of some Christian women. "One is very much struck," she wrote, "in the life of the saintly Catherine Booth to notice how devoted she was to her children, and yet how she carried on her larger ministry at the same time, trusting that God would watch over her dear ones while she was doing His work."[63] Catherine Booth had a distinctly less sentimental view. She believed strongly that motherhood was a vocation and that children were given to parents on trust from God.[64] This did not mean, however, that they were

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[62] *War Cry*, 31 January 1880, p. 3.

[63] *Baptist Zenana Mission Magazine*, September 1908, p. 197.

[64] Jean James, "Training ... Christians from Babyhood", in Kew, *op. cit.*, pp. 89, 98.

one's only priority. Catherine loved her children, but, as she wrote in *Aggressive Christianity*, "if, as Jesus Christ says, His interests require me to sacrifice these precious and beloved ones of my soul [her family], then I shall sacrifice them ... I shall lay them on His altar to promote His glory."[65] Like her mother, she preferred to teach her children at home, with perhaps a short stint at school.[66] She fully expected, as in the biblical story of Abraham and Isaac, to go through the motions of the commanded sacrifice to find her children restored to her. Catherine embraced traditional notions of maternal love and duty, but subverted them by arguing that a higher authority had commanded her out of the house. In practical terms, however, she was only able to put her convictions into force because she had William's cooperation and was able to employ domestic help.[67]

Her example was a powerful one in Army circles. *The Deliverer* wrote of her, "in a life of unwearying and equally-divided care for private and public duties, Mrs Booth has effectually and for ever contradicted the popular idea that a woman, if wife and mother, must be that and that alone."[68] The Salvation Army institutionalised the call of God over family duty. Catherine Booth provided an early example of the potentialities this offered to women. She effectively fused the private authority of

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[65] Reprinted in *The Deliverer*, August 1890, p. 25.

[66] For Catherine's opinions on school, see Booth-Tucker, *op. cit.*, pp.24-25; Fairbank, *William and Catherine Booth*, p. 70.

[67] They had at least one maid at the Gateshead circuit, and Fairbank mentions both a cook and a governess in the family. Fairbank, *William and Catherine Booth*, pp. 48, 98. The Booths' income derived from a trust set up by Samuel Morley and other "interested friends" to keep the family from pecuniary anxiety. This income could fluctuate if members withdrew their contributions over disagreements with William Booth. Their annual income is not known. Sandall, *History*, Vol. I., pp. 44, 232.

[68] *The Deliverer*, November 1890, p. 69.

"mother" with the public authority of a prophet. Her daughters and daughters-in-law followed her example. Cornelie Booth, mother of three, shared joint command of Australia with her husband, the Booths' youngest son, Herbert. Her success was attributed by *The Deliverer* to her "mother nature." "That is, probably, which [sic] gives her such marvellous influence and power in her work," it declared, "... as she leans over platform or pulpit with love and pity in every tone and every gesture, they feel gathered up, drawn near, and her love opens the way in their despairing souls for Christ and Salvation."[69] Salvationist motherhood and motherly influence, then, was not to be exercised within the confines of the home, but in the open-air mission, slum post, and large public hall.

Probably the most visible woman leader of the Salvation Army in England, apart from Catherine Booth herself, was her daughter-in-law Florence, head of the Women's Social Work and wife of the Booths' eldest son, Bramwell, the Chief-of-Staff. Florence was a ready example for women wishing to combine Salvationism with a young family. Less than one month after the birth of her fifth daughter, she returned to work at Central Offices. The May 1899 *Deliverer* highlighted Florence's dual role. It showed Florence Booth "in the following phases of her work". The five areas presented were her work at Rescue Headquarters and International Headquarters, preaching from the Regent Hall platform, addressing a Rescue Home meeting, and, lastly, at home with her children.

Catherine Booth was more than a wife to the General and the mother of prominent officers. The official history of the Salvation Army has a chapter entitled "The Preparation of William and Catherine Booth" attempting to place their early

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[69] *The Deliverer*, August 1898, p. 21.

years in a certain religious context.[70] Events and opportunities played a role in making the founders of the Salvation Army what they were. Although the official history concentrates on William's preparation, the same is true for Catherine. Her contribution to the Army was both substantial and significant. From her exhaustive study of the Bible came a commitment to women's equality and a stern anti-sacramentalism. From her sickbed came the conviction that personal holiness was both attainable and desirable. From her youth, a desire for revivalist preaching and advocacy of teetotalism. All of these became hallmarks of the Salvation Army. Previous accounts tend to de-emphasise Catherine's role in the creation of the Army; it was, after all, William who was employed to preach at the East London Christian Mission.[71] Catherine had her hands full with six young children (and pregnant with the seventh) and a career of her own as a holiness preacher. The Army grew out of the Christian Mission, and Catherine did not generally take part in its day-to-day running. Her part in forming the Army's ideology, though, was far from negligible. As the leading woman speaker, writer, and advocate for the Army, her example pervaded its discourse and formed part of a cohesive structure which idealised the Salvation Army as a family.

II. The Example of the Booth Women

William, writing in the *War Cry* after Catherine's death, paid tribute to his wife's influence:

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[70] Sandall, *History*, volume I, chapter 2.

[71] See, for example, Sandall, *History*, vol. I.

She was the *Army Mother*. This relationship, almost universally recognized, had grown up like so much of the Army without any set arrangement or design. Other religious organizations cannot be said to have a Mother; their guides and authorities are all *Fathers*. The Salvation Army has, of God's great mercy and wisdom, and we think through His own leading and inspiration, felt its need of the more tender, feminine side of human character, as well as the more robust and masculine element ... .[72]

The masculine and feminine elements in the Army were personified by William and Catherine Booth. William, the General, stood at the head of a hierarchy of officers and soldiers; he was the patriarch of a great spiritual Army/family. Catherine, the Army Mother, was placed in a somewhat unclear relation to the rest of the hierarchy. She never held an Army rank (although her daughters would), nor did she undertake active command in one of the Army's departments. *The Deliverer*, the journal of the Rescue (later Women's Social) Work, adopted her as their Leader.[73] Having been involved with the Midnight Meeting movement[74], Catherine was a supporter of the work and an active campaigner against the double standard, an ideological leader. She never directly superintended the Rescue Work itself. William was the practical leader, the one at the head of the procession of tambourines and trumpets, the highest authority in the Army. This was much more socially acceptable than for Catherine to undertake the duties of the Generalship. William fitted accepted gendered and indeed, Protestant, notions of religious authority, he was male and ordained (if self-taught). Catherine's style, also in accordance with notions of propriety, was different. She preached according to a schedule of engagements, usually at meetings held

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[72] Quoted in Sandall, *History*, Vol. I, p. 145.

[73] *The Deliverer*, November 1890, p. 69.

[74] Sandall, *History* Volume III, p. 193.

indoors.[75] She did not, and could not, claim outright public space for herself in the same way that William could.

Catherine's anomalous position apart from and above the Army's governing hierarchy gave her a certain emblematic significance. In 1889, when Mrs Booth lay dying at the Army's Rest Home in Clacton-on-Sea, the Staff Council (of which she was a member) resolved to have its concluding meeting at her bedside. A delegation of eighteen of the Army's most senior officers made what can only be described as a pilgrimage to visit her. The report of the visit in the *War Cry* gives an indication of the level of emotion and the strength of feelings towards Catherine Booth. Many wept openly; Colonel McKie and Commissioner Carleton were unable to speak. When the meeting finished, each officer filed out, "having an opportunity to touch her hand and receive a personal word of blessing."[76] One present remarked, "I verily believe if any one of us who were in that room by that bedside ever leaves The Salvation Army, he will lose his last hope of heaven."[77] In 1891 and 1892 special services were held to commemorate her life, using her favourite hymns and extracts from her works.[78] Catherine Booth, both in life and in death, was a larger-than-life figure in Army circles to be revered, loved, and respected.

This quality was to a certain extent shared by her children, two of whom would become Generals themselves. The article "Our Mayflower" praised the abilities

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[75] For Catherine's demeanour when preaching, see Olive Anderson, *op. cit.*, pp. 471-473.

[76] *War Cry*, 7 December 1889, p. 9.

[77] *Ibid.*

[78] *The Deliverer*, November 1891, p. 79; *War Cry*, 31 October 1891, pp.2-3.

of the Booth women but quickly followed this praise by stating that all women in the Christian Mission were deemed equal:

> It was the intention of the General and Mrs Booth that in the Christian Mission men and women should be on an equality. This many considered absurd and impossible. True, Mrs Booth herself was quickly taking the place of the first woman preacher of England, but then she WAS Mrs Booth; true, also, Miss Catherine displayed remarkable powers of thought and expression, but then she WAS Miss Catherine, ordinary women were quite different!
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> Not so thought the General, and at the Annual Conference of 1874 he gave the women an equal share in the proceedings with the men, the sisters' experience and judgment being, he ruled, every bit as valuable as the brothers'![79]

In practice, however, there was a certain honour in being a Booth in the context of the Salvation Army. Contemporaries made slurs about alleged Booth family privileges, accusing the family of milking the organisation.[80] The three Booth sons-in-law legally added Booth to their surnames, Emma's husband, for example, becoming Frederick Booth-Tucker. Undoubtedly, the children of William and Catherine felt that they had to live up to the promise of their name. They were raised to be servants of God and instruments of conversion. Catherine could say, with a measure of pride, "I believe that they are all wholly given up to God. I always said that no one of my children should ever go into the priest's office for a bit of bread!"[81] From their childhood preaching games, the Booth children were encouraged to follow their parents' path, first as revivalists, and then as officers in the Salvation Army. It would

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[79] *All the World*, July 1897, p. 327. In "Female Ministry" file.

[80] Henry Rider Haggard felt compelled to insist that General Booth "has taken nothing and never took anything from the Army." He was equally confident that the family would not divide up the Army's assets and vanish, once General Booth was dead. Henry Rider Haggard, *Regeneration*, pp. 7-8, 10.

[81] *War Cry*, 7 December 1889, p. 9.

be almost impossible for any of their children to have contemplated another destiny. Places were prepared and titles invented. Emma was called the Consul and, after her work in France and Switzerland, Catherine was dubbed La Maréchale. Eva, before taking command of Canada, was the only Salvationist to hold the rank of Field Commissioner. The most clear-cut example was Bramwell, his father's assistant in the Christian Mission, he became the Army's Chief of Staff and William's nominated successor to the Generalship. All of the Booth children, with the exception of Marian whose sight was permanently damaged by smallpox when she was age 7, would hold significant positions in the Army.

The high-profile lives of the Booth daughters and daughters-in-law were an encouragement and example for other women soldiers and officers, Florence Booth especially as the head of the Rescue Work and wife of the second General. Their courage and determination provided front-page news for the *War Cry*. For instance, after Catherine Booth the younger was arrested for preaching in Switzerland, the *War Cry* lauded her as a heroine with the headline: "She preferred to obey God Rather than Man!"[82] However, when one looks at senior appointments in the Army, one is struck by how few women there are if the names of Booth are removed. In 1894, a letter was published in the *War Cry* to celebrate William Booth's conversion fifty years earlier. Of the twenty signatures, five are women. Of the five women, three were Booths--Emma, Eva, and Florence.[83] The Booth women held a higher proportion of offices (3/5) than the Booth men did (1/5). Of the men's signatures (15), three were Booth men--Bramwell, Frederick Booth-Tucker, and Emmanuel Hellberg

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[82] *War Cry*, 6 October 1883, p. 1.

[83] *War Cry*, 24 March 1894, p. 8.

who married Lucy Booth later the same year. Despite, or perhaps because of, the well-known conquests by Catherine Booth and her daughters other Army women found themselves marginalised.

The work of the Army was gradually changing as it adopted more and more programmes aimed at preventing poverty and sin. 1890 marked a turning point in the history of the Salvation Army. It was the year of Catherine Booth's death and the launch of the "Darkest England" scheme, an ambitious programme of social reform, rehabilitation and reclamation. Much of this work was a continuation of social work already practised by the Army, as was the case with the Rescue Work. Some of it, like the emigration bureau, was new. One important effect of the scheme was the distinguishing of evangelism from social work and the further subdivision of social work into men's and women's departments, recognised by the Army as a "new departure".[84] A special women's work was institutionalized by the Army, under the command of Florence Booth, with far-reaching effects on opportunities for women officers and soldiers.

III. Raising Women from "Moral Mud": the Rescue and Women's Social Work

Sporadic efforts at rescuing prostitutes from the moral evil of their trade were made in the days of the Christian Mission. But the Mission, at least in its early days, was ill-equipped to manage social work of any kind. Hampered by lack of funds and without a defined leadership structure, it managed to hold services for worship and

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[84] Jenty Fairbank, *Booth's Boots: The beginnings of Salvation Army Social Work*, (1983), p. 7.

conversion, but could hardly support a new departure.[85] More systematic efforts were made by Elizabeth Cottrill, a baker's wife, who began lodging converted prostitutes in her own home and running a one-woman labour bureau in an attempt to find respectable employment for them. In 1884, Mrs Cottrill's work was given the seal of approval by the Army. Initially, Bramwell Booth took charge of it; within weeks responsibility was passed to his wife, Florence, then aged twenty-three.[86] She would remain at its head until 1912, when Bramwell became General. In 1918, the Women's Social Work (which incorporated the Rescue Work) had 700 women officers attached to it and its own headquarters with a staff of about forty women officers; thirty years earlier it had 70.[87]

The Rescue Work was formally inaugurated as Army policy in 1885, as part of the "New National Scheme for the Deliverance of Unprotected Girls and the Rescue of the Fallen."[88] The Booth family was intimately involved in the pressure brought to bear on the government to raise the age of consent: Bramwell collaborated with W.T. Stead of the *Pall Mall Gazette* to publicise, in the most graphic manner, the dangers such "unprotected girls" faced. The result of their efforts, the sensational revelations of "The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon", and the resulting court case, occupied national attention. The publicity surrounding the "purchase" of Eliza Armstrong established the credibility of the Army in defining social problems and

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[85] See Sandall, *History*, vol. I, chapter 14.

[86] Fairbank, *Booth's Boots*, pp. 11-16.

[87] *War Cry*, 16 November 1918, p. 3; *War Cry*, 23 June 1888, p. 8. Henry Rider Haggard, *op. cit.*, p. 96.

[88] *War Cry*, 8 August 1885, pp. 1-2. The bill to raise the age of consent to 16 was passed just under a week later, on 14 August.

proposing solutions, as well as putting the Rescue Work to the fore of the Army's agenda.[89] Catherine Booth was strongly identified with this crusade. In its service, she wrote to the Prime Minister and Queen Victoria, and shared the platform with Josephine Butler.[90] The petition presented by the Army to Parliament is evidence of the influence of her ideas, especially its fourth point, which demanded equality before the law. If it were a crime for a woman to solicit men, the reverse should also be true.[91] Catherine's battle against the double standard of morality continued as Army practice. Officers "planted at every street-corner" were responsible for rescuing the women, but also for reproving the men.[92]

With the Rescue Work established as a priority, it grew rapidly. In 1885 it had a staff of four. Three years later, a staff of 70 ran 10 Rescue Homes housing 212 women.[93] Special training was instituted for Rescue officers in 1888 with the establishment of a separate training home at the Army's training complex at Clapton. In 1889, its own magazine, *The Deliverer*, appeared. The Army had taken a significant step: it had endorsed women's work for women and provided a separate female hierarchy to govern it. The work would be further extended under the Darkest England scheme as the Women's Social Work, made separate by a deed signed in 1891 from the purely evangelistic work of the Army.

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[89] Walker, *op. cit.*, pp. 151-152.

[90] *War Cry*, 18 July 1885, p. 1.

[91] Sandall, *History*, Vol. III, p. 36.

[92] *War Cry*, 23 June 1888, p. 8; *The Deliverer*, July 1892, p. 8.; *War Cry*, 18 May 1901, pp. 8-9.

[93] Walker, *op. cit.*, p. 152.

Growth of the Rescue/Women's Social Work

> We make no secret of the fact that a Rescue Officer's life is no easy one, and wish to make it known that none who are not prepared to endure hardness need apply, for, involving as it does, ceaseless toil for the souls and bodies of these outcast ones, hours of discouragement and darkness, hand-to-hand conflicts with the devil and sin in its most awful forms, only those possessed of quenchless love divine, and an undaunted faith in God, will be able to stand firm ... .[94]

Although the Women's Social Work was formally separated from the Army's evangelistic labours, it was in fact an extension of them. William Booth wrote, "only red-hot religion will save these girls, only red-hot Salvation Officers will rescue them, and therefore a Rescue Officer, before everything else, must be a *Salvationist*."[95] It was not in any sense an easy option. It was not an escape from the public work of Army processions and meetings. Rescue officers could expect to find themselves at one of London's two midnight posts in Piccadilly or King's Cross, actively seeking to take women into their care, and remonstrating with the men in the area.[96] Florence Booth wrote:

> For, Rescue Work, in order to be effective, must not be limited to the narrow line that the word generally indicates, namely, to the mere offering of a home to these outcasts, that they may escape from immoral surroundings and cease to live in open immorality. It must also deal with the question on the side of the male offenders, and, further, must be fitted to assist the reform of both sexes during their subsequent career.[97]

To meet this need, a Help and Enquiry Department was set up to locate fathers who had deserted their children and, if necessary, take them to court to provide

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[94] *The Deliverer*, 1 January 1890, p. 91.

[95] *The Deliverer*, 1 July 1889, p. 7. (The first issue of the magazine).

[96] Fairbank, *Booth's Boots*, pp. 22-23.

[97] *The Deliverer*, July 1892, p 8.

maintenance for mother and child.[98] An account of the daily tasks of the Scottish Rescue Secretary gives a flavour of the varied nature of the work. Her time was spent counselling backsliders, checking financial accounts, attending prayer meetings, and, of course, spending two or three hours on the streets from midnight.[99] Over the period, rescue work declined in importance in the face of other social reform agencies - maternity homes, industrial homes, receiving homes - yet, in 1910, the Army still maintained one midnight post in Piccadilly.[100]

At the heart of this enthusiasm and dedication was the idea that prostitutes, and other women deemed to have "fallen," such as alcoholics, were worth saving. This followed from the Army's emphasis on holiness. While many Magdalen homes believed in "rescuing" prostitutes, few believed that a woman, once fallen, could ever be truly rehabilitated. This was a consequence of the gendering of morality which was commonplace in the late Victorian period. Women were on a moral pedestal compared to men, but once they had fallen, they could never regain that pre-eminence. Henry Rider Haggard referred to the low state of the "confirmed female drunkard" by saying "it is generally supposed to be rather more easy to pass a camel through the eye of a needle than to reclaim [one of these women]."[101] Salvationists did not rebel against common notions of women as moral creatures. Instead, they maintained that just as a drunkard could be cleansed of his desire for alcohol, a prostitute could be restored to womanhood by the experience of salvation and holiness. Although for

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[98] *The Deliverer*, 1 January 1890, pp. 87-88. Henry Rider Haggard, *op. cit.*, p. 91.

[99] *The Deliverer*, September 1893, pp. 33-36.

[100] Fairbank, *Booth's Boots*, p. 26; Henry Rider Haggard, *op. cit.*, pp. 143-144.

[101] Henry Rider Haggard, *op. cit.*, p. 99.

women resident in the Army maternity home, Ann Higginbotham has argued that the stress was more on remembering the sin in an attempt to try not to repeat it.[102] This might well have been the case for the unconverted, but the Army placed great faith in the cleansing power of a "full salvation." Rider Haggard marvelled at the Army's philosophy of curing alcoholics, calling it a "miracle" in the presence of a men's Social Work Colonel.

> 'Quite so,' answered the Colonel, calmly ... it <u>is</u> a miracle; that is our belief. These men cannot change and purify themselves, their vices are instantaneously, permanently, and miraculously removed by the Power and the Grace of God. This is the truth, and nothing more wonderful can be conceived.[103]

William Booth, in introducing the National Scheme, elaborated the principles by which girls would be rescued. First, the power of salvation would break the hold of their "old habits"; second:

> *The Opening of the door* to a full restoration to a respectable position in society and a life of usefulness. Every girl will be shown how she can start afresh with a clean slate, with the prospect not only of having all the dark past forgiven, but also forgotten, and her feet put on a ladder leading to a higher platform of happiness and goodness than - in many cases - she had ever hoped to reach.[104]

Florence Booth echoed her father-in-law's pronouncements when asked how the Women's Social Work managed to be so successful in redeeming "this vast coterie of moral and social wreckage." She replied:

> The salvation of the whole woman is our aim. It is only by the power of God that we succeed in destroying the chief cause of the women's

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[102] Ann R. Higginbotham, "Respectable Sinners: Salvation Army Rescue Work with Unmarried Mothers, 1884-1914," in Gail Malmgreen, ed., *Religion in the Lives of English Women 1760-1930*, Croom Helm (1986), p. 224.

[103] Henry Rider Haggard, *op. cit.*, p. 186.

[104] *War Cry*, 8 August 1885, p. 1.

> misery. ... Yes; salvation from sin, from temper, lying, and pride; salvation through faith in the Blood of the Lamb; salvation by the power of the Holy Ghost--salvation. ... A very large proportion of them become Soldiers.[105]

Some, at least, of the 70 Rescue Officers active in 1888 had come from the same class they were trying to save.[106] Rebecca Jarrett, the Salvationist who assisted Stead in purchasing Eliza Armstrong for the "Maiden Tribute" articles, had formerly worked as a procurer.

Because the Army believed that prostitutes could be saved and fully rehabilitated, they were determined not to emulate the methods of other rescue organisations. When Florence was appointed to head the Rescue Work, she admitted that she did not know a lot about the subject. She visited other Magdalen homes to observe their regimes. She did not like what she found. "Bolts and bars, bare, dismal rooms, high walls, no occupation but that of laundry work, seemed to explain this discouragement. I could not imagine myself becoming any better for a long stay in similar circumstances."[107] She did not approve of forcing women to wear coarse penitent's clothing and was against laundry work because of its association with punishment.[108] Under Florence's leadership, the Women's Social Work endeavoured to provide a comfortable, homelike atmosphere with opportunities for useful work. Bookbinding and knitting were undertaken, as was stitching gospel texts for sale. The steam laundry that Florence Booth so detested was eventually introduced although not

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[105] *War Cry*, 18 May 1901, p. 9.

[106] *War Cry*, 23 June 1888, p. 8.

[107] Quoted in Fairbank, *Booth's Boots*, p. 16.

[108] *War Cry*, 21 July 1888, p. 6.

solely for its penitential value. Of the initial twenty-four workers at the Women's Social Laundry, eight were local widows or women who would otherwise have no other form of employment. The remaining sixteen were rescue cases who lived at a nearby Army Rescue Home.[109] The rationale for this must have been at least partly financial.[110] In *Darkest England and the Way Out*, William Booth envisaged social programmes which would not pauperise, and which would be self-sustaining. This ideal was rarely attained, but proved a powerful stimulus. On the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Women's Social Work (1909), it had an annual turnover of some £53,500. It was claimed that during 1909, the 2,610 women who passed through its 59 Rescue Homes contributed £14,000 towards the maintenance of the work, either by needlework or through the payment of a nominal rent during their stay.[111]

Women also figured prominently in the Slum Work. This work grew out of the "Cellar, Gutter and Garret Brigade" of women cadets from the Training Home who instituted, in 1884, regular visits to the Seven Dials district with the express purpose of nursing the sick and cleaning people's homes. Women pioneered and sustained this work and it became identified with them. Men did participate, as in the case of a male Slum Officer who, visiting a drunken man, tidied his room and made some tea. This incident, recorded by Major Cooke, prompted him to comment, "our Slum Officers, whether lads or lasses, get hold of the people, by looking after their bodies and assisting in their work when possible."[112] The lasses, in their long white aprons,

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[109] *War Cry*, "Social News Supplement", 7 May 1892, p. 8.

[110] Sandall, *History*, Vol. III., p. 192.

[111] *War Cry*, 13 November 1909, p. 3.

[112] *The Deliverer*, June 1891, pp. 187-188.

embroidered "Slum Saviour", predominated. In 1889, the eighty slum officers at work in London were "chiefly women."[113] Two years later, the Slum Work was reorganised to increase cadet involvement. Each Slum corps was transferred to the nearest garrison. A Slum Officer was appointed to live in the garrison and have at her command a number of Cadets and one of the corps' brigades to assist her in all public meetings she held. In addition, twenty Slum Homes were to be opened in London. In these Homes, a Slum Officer and Cadet would reside. Their task was not to hold meetings like the Slum Officer attached to the garrison, but to live a life of service to the population around them as Slum Sisters. The report of the reorganisation appealed for ten men officers to join the Slum Work.[114]

Placing a male Slum Officer in charge of a garrison of male cadets did nothing to alter the picture of a slum worker as a woman. *The Deliverer*'s "Model Slum Post", which was scrupulously clean, was one staffed entirely by women who preached in the open-air, nursed the sick, and dedicated (the Army form of christening) new-born babies.[115] It was perceived, even by those who undertook it, as work centred on reforming the domestic circle. When the work was again reorganised in 1899 to incorporate a special slum training centre, women soldiers were encouraged to take up the work in addition to their regular corps duties. They had a "special fitness for

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[113] *The Deliverer*, 15 September 1889, p. 26.

[114] *War Cry*, 28 February 1891, p. 3.

[115] *The Deliverer*, August 1894, p. 18.

Slum Work."[116] By 1905, the London Slum Division had sixty Officers, all women; during 1906, 93,131 slum families received Army visits.[117]

By the twentieth century, the Women's Social Work was a nationwide organisation boasting a plethora of agencies to assist women. They operated 17 Receiving and Industrial homes, located in major cities around the country (including Belfast); women-only shelters in London, Edinburgh, Cardiff, Glasgow, Dundee, and Bristol; a midnight post in London; an Inebriates' Home, Maternity Hospital, and Children's Home in London; as well as the 42 slum posts operating in London and in provincial cities.[118] It kept a watching brief on the white slave traffic, although without the public fervour of the 1885 campaign.[119] It continued Catherine Booth's work to raise the standing of women in law, to prevent men from taking advantage of vulnerable women, and maintained her opposition to the moral double standard. *The Deliverer* ran a series of articles in 1896 on laws affecting women covering marriage, divorce, the Criminal Law Amendment Act, Factory Acts, mistress/maid relations, and temperance. Mrs Staff-Captain Stott urged an extension of protective legislation to cover "the rate of payment for work, [and] home-workers." To ensure compliance, she advocated an increase in the number of inspectors who would be empowered to investigate "domestic workshops" and have the power to visit a site

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[116] *War Cry*, 21 January 1899, p. 1. Emphasis in original.

[117] *War Cry*, 13 May 1905, p. 3; *Sketches of the Salvation Army Social Work*, Salvation Army Printing Works, St Albans (1906), p. 96 (no page numbering in original).

[118] *Sketches of the Salvation Army Social Work*, p. 99. No page numbering in original.

[119] Henry Rider Haggard, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

without prior notice.[120] Colonel Adelaide Cox made five suggestions to improve the protection the Criminal Law Amendment Act gave to women which included the abolition of the statute of limitations for victims' testimony, more rigorous checking of men's stories, an increase in punishment for "fathers, employers and guardians who abuse their trust", and the provision of assistance for pregnant women who had been deserted.[121] The magazine also highlighted the reestablishment of "state vice" in India.[122]

The work of the Women's Social had outgrown its rather humble and informal beginnings and developed into a specialised branch of Army effort, whose officers received ten months' training, often in addition to the standard cadet course.[123] With the institution of the Women's Social Work, the Army had a mechanism to appeal to women as women, and a specific, although varied, career to offer them. Women were bound by a "tie of sex" which meant that only women could really help each other.

> Hoary masculine wisdom gives place in affliction, demanding that women minister to women. Many men (to their inextinguishable shame) ruin women; but how many men have ever been able to raise a woman out of the moral mud up to purity and peace?
>
> No; women--only women--are used by God to work such a miracle. Sympathy, patience, and long-suffering hope and love are wedded in **A Good Woman's Nature**. ...
>
> Oh, sisters! will you live your lives to please yourselves, and let them pass you on their way to hell? Their injury is *yours*; their sorrows are

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[120] *The Deliverer*, April 1896, p. 149.

[121] *The Deliverer*, March 1896, pp. 134-135.

[122] *The Deliverer*, November 1898, p. 74.

[123] Henry Rider Haggard, *op. cit.*, pp. 115-116.

> *yours*; their pangs of soul and body are *yours*. They are of your blood; they are, they will never cease to be, like you--**Women**.[124]

This attitude had always been present in the Army, surfacing, for instance, during the campaign to raise the age of consent. It was "A Woman's Question", according to the poem on the front page of the *War Cry*: "WOMEN are the proper folks / TO RAISE THIS AGITATION."[125] Certainly, Catherine Booth's justification of women's ministry advocated it both because of women's spiritual equality with men and their social difference from them.[126]

"If you trust your instincts," advised William Booth, "and those instincts are sanctified, very few girls will talk to you for five minutes before you will know whether or not they are what they say they are ...." Booth called it "the gift of discernment of spirits" which he asserted "most women" had.[127] Florence Booth described the Rescue Work saying, "No better opportunity exists for the exercise of a woman's power, for the love of all a woman's heart, than this work amongst her suffering sisters."[128] As head of the Rescue Work and the woman responsible for carving out a place for the Women's Social Work, this may well have been her belief, but Salvationist women overwhelmingly chose an evangelistic path over the social/evangelistic alternative. In 1889, the year after *The Deliverer* reported that the Army had 70 Rescue officers, it gave statistics for the organisation as a whole. Of

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[124] *War Cry*, 2 September 1899, p. 3.

[125] *War Cry*, 28 November 1885, p. 1.

[126] Walker, *op. cit.*, pp. 27-39.

[127] *The Deliverer*, Christmas 1889, p. 69.

[128] *The Deliverer*, Christmas 1891, p. 81.

the 8,240 officers employed in the Army, just under 4,000 were women.[129] Rider Haggard estimated that the Women's Social Work employed 600 women officers in 1910.[130] In 1915, 300 women cadets entered the Army's Training Home; an additional 45 women (13%) began training for the Women's Social Work.[131] Many more women remained "in the field" than elected to work solely among women.

Pamela Walker has argued that the Rescue Work, as a separate women's work, played an important role in guaranteeing a continuing place for women in the Salvation Army. It justified women's religious service by extending it to social work.[132] Yet women's work for the Army, as officer returns show, was overwhelmingly evangelistic. The theology of Catherine Booth emphasised women's spiritual equality and Spirit-given power - which enabled them to preside over mixed meetings - and of women's special characteristics - which fitted them for work amongst women. The Women's Social Work provided a social service career within the Army at a time when women's participation in local government was becoming notable.[133] The Army was not insensible to women's growing opportunities and expanding horizons.[134] If anything, the separate command hierarchy of the Women's Social Work shielded its officers from the dubious blessings of professionalisation. Outside the Army, many women social activists found that, as professional status

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[129] *The Deliverer*, September 1889, p. 26.

[130] Henry Rider Haggard, *op. cit.*, p. 96.

[131] *War Cry*, 16 October 1915, p. 1.

[132] Walker, *op. cit.*, p. 155.

[133] Patricia Hollis, *Ladies Elect*.

[134] *War Cry*, 27 October 1900, p. 4.

increased, women lost control over policy and issues of professional education. The ultimate effect of such a change was to concentrate women in the lower rungs of social service occupations, and the privileging of social policy studies over social work.[135] As an independent branch of Army work, the women of the Social Work raised their own funds and administered their "mission to women" through a female chain-of-command.[136]

IV. The Experience of Women Soldiers and Officers

I'm a soldier and I'm fighting
  In the Army of the Lord,
Of the fight I'll ne'er grow weary
  Till the world is brought to God.

Day by day I'll suffer hardship,
  So that sinners may be saved;
Thieves and drunkards brought to Jesus,
  And with Him their peace be made.

Rest! I cannot while I'm living,
  Fighting I must ever be;
That poor slaves now chained by Satan,
  May in Christ find liberty.

Oh! how soon the days of fighting
  Will for me be o'er and gone
May I fight that Jesus daily,
  Can say to me "Well done, well done!"[137]

This song, attributed to a woman cadet at the Training Home, gives an indication of the attractiveness of the Army to women and their enthusiasm for it. The Army offered a career of varied work of the most important social and spiritual kind. From its foundation as the Christian Mission, women such as evangelist Marian C. Billups and bible-woman Eliza Collingridge were prominent members.[138] On 24

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[135] Jane Lewis, *Women and Social Action*, p. 306.

[136] Higginbotham, in Malmgreen, *op. cit.*, p. 217.

[137] *War Cry*, 8 August 1885, p. 2.

[138] Sandall, *History*, Vol I, chapters 9-11; typescript "Women's Part in the Early Days of the Salvation Army (or Christian Mission)", Female Ministry, File Number 1, International Heritage Centre, London. The Booth's fourth daughter, Marian, was named after Marian Billups.

February 1890, General Booth addressed a letter to Captain Polly Ashton, due to take up her appointment as the Army's first woman Divisional Officer. In preparing her for the duties she would be undertaking as the head of the Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire Division, he wrote:

> I believe that the marvellous blessing which God has been pleased to bestow upon this work, and the honour which he has been pleased to bring to His name, and the thousands of souls that he has led into His Heavenly Kingdom have been largely owing to the selection and training, and sending to the front of the battle, women.[139]

Far from being put off by its military trappings, women officers and soldiers embraced them, showing their desire to live holy lives and die triumphant deaths according to Army principles.

The Editorial Department was a frequent posting for women officers; in 1900 seven of its thirteen staff were women.[140] Otherwise, women were largely absent from positions at International Headquarters. They were, however, concentrated in the Women's Social Work. When the Army promised a woman, "if she becomes an Officer she can count upon the Army's influence to find her a platform, a Corps, or a place in ... the Women's Social Work," it was much more likely that she would be involved in the day-to-day running of a corps, rather than one of the Army's large administrative departments.[141]

Despite the paucity of women in high office, women joined the Army in numbers. As we have seen, roughly half of all the officers in the Army were women.

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[139] William Booth to Polly Ashton, 24 February 1890, "Female Ministry, File Number 1", in the Archives of the International Heritage Centre, London.

[140] *War Cry*, 1 December 1900, p. 6.

[141] *War Cry*, 2 May 1908, p. 3.

Clearly, the chance of securing high office was not a significant factor. The Army was an attractive career for women for several reasons. Firstly, its egalitarian theology validated and encouraged women's work and many found its holiness teaching empowering. Women also responded well to the Army's hierarchical system of government, in which duties were clearly delineated. The Army also offered training opportunities and public work with modest remuneration. This discussion will be confined almost exclusively to the experience of single women officers. Although there were instances of a husband and wife both being candidates for officership, this was rare. Officers tended to join as single people, and then marry a fellow-officer. Mrs Colonel Hay, for example, had "done one Corps" before her marriage.[142] When officers did marry, as we shall see below, the situation was a complicated one.

The adoption of holiness teaching formed a significant part of the Army's sectarian identity. "Fighting Holiness" was necessary to be a successful Army officer and soul-winner.[143] The example of Ensign Polly Young serves to illustrate the change a "fighting holiness" made. She found the knowledge that she was doing the will of God gave her the courage to "rebuke sin of any sort. To speak to people in railway carriages, tram-cars, anywhere, everywhere, without the slightest hesitation of difficulty--a thing I could never do before."[144] Other Army women also found that the possession of a "clean heart" gave them the courage to overcome reticence or fear.

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[142] *War Cry*, 2 July 1898, p. 11.

[143] *The Deliverer*, May 1891, p. 175; October 1893, p. 55; April 1897, p. 342. *War Cry*, 6 April 1895, p. 6; 18 November 1905, p. 5.

[144] *War Cry*, 30 March 1895, p. 3.

A Whitechapel Slum Lieutenant working in the vicinity of the Jack the Ripper murders confessed to being frightened:

> But then I claimed the power of the Lord on my knees, and I've not felt frightened since. ... The Devil has tried to bring danger before me, but it's no use. Glory to God! If I listened to what my friends write I should be bad enough.[145]

She drew a clear distinction between her own state, calm and assured, with that of her non-Salvationist friends. Holiness was an empowering process for Army women because it enabled them to transcend society and its rules, including gender norms. Blanche B. Cox praised the everyday heroism and courage of women Salvationists whether as missionaries in India, speaking from an Army platform, or in the Army's offices. Heroism was not the preserve of men. "In the Salvation War there is neither male nor female--only warriors."[146]

But this transcending power had a price--loyalty to the Army. Polly Ashton experienced "complete assurance that I was in God's way--i.e., doing just what He wanted every moment of the day, and being just where He wanted me to be."[147] Salvationists tended to speak about doing God's will meaning they were going about their duties as officers. In typically sectarian fashion, the Army claimed a monopoly on religious truth.[148] The Army's structure and position of the General were

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[145] *War Cry*, 13 October 1888, p. 4. Also, *War Cry*, 17 July 1897, p. 6 and 23 January 1909, p. 3. Captain Howard, a woman Salvationist, addressed the crowd at the funeral of Annie Riddle, one of the murder victims. *The Deliverer*, August 1889, p. 15. Rescue Headquarters was initially located in Hanbury Street, Whitechapel.

[146] *War Cry*, 12 August 1899, p. 4.

[147] *War Cry*, 30 March 1895, p. 3.

[148] Bryan Wilson, *Religion in Sociological Perspective*, pp. 91-92.

defended as being "in harmony with Divine Law."[149] Obedience to God translated neatly into obedience to the Army. The *War Cry* reported Colonel Case's remarks at the opening of the new training facility for the Women's Social Work:

> God put us where we could do the best and most for Him. She had proved this. When she was called, and offered for India, she was advised by her Officers to leave herself in the hands of God and The Army. She had always wanted to carry Christ and His salvation to India, but she left the matter with the Lord and her leaders, with the result that within two years she was working among the heathen.[150]

The concept of a personal holiness knitted a believer even closer to its religious organisation. Almost weekly an address on holiness appeared in the *War Cry*; Florence Booth held regular holiness meetings. It was never envisioned that anyone could live a holy life outside of the Army. In that sense, the organisation, as the representative of the Divine and the vehicle for retaining holiness, claimed pre-eminence in the lives of all Salvationists. Major Annie Osborne, the Slum Divisional Officer, was transferred to the United States to supervise the American training home under Emma Booth-Tucker. She was loath to leave a work she loved so much, but acquiesced, writing, "knowing the joy of obedience and its power as example, I am glad to go."[151] Women, then, were set free from "worldly" bonds, but constrained to exercise their freedom within Army boundaries.

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[149] *War Cry*, 6 January 1906, p. 3. Rider Haggard reprinted the Army's "Articles of War" (a declaration to be signed by all members) at the back of *Regeneration*, as a means of introducing the reader to Army theology and practice. The second paragraph of the Articles reads, "Believing solemnly that the Salvation Army has been raised up by God, and is sustained and directed by Him, I do here declare my full determination, by God's help, to be a true Soldier." H. Rider Haggard, *op. cit.*, p. 257.

[150] *War Cry*, 26 April 1902, p. 7.

[151] *The Deliverer*, July 1898, p. 14.

The organisation of the Army into officers and soldiers of various ranks helped to delineate women's authority. For instance, all captains, male or female, had certain duties incumbent upon them surrounding the command of a corps. They would have a Lieutenant and the local officers (officers who remained in secular employment) to assist in guiding the soldiers and converting the non-Salvationists. The set structure of ranks in the Army guaranteed place and status to women officers. Their status in turn gave them Army-sanctioned authority. Women responded positively to the assurance of spiritual authority. The report from South Shields by "Happy Polly" and "Hallelujah Lusie" in the early years of the Army epitomises women's enthusiasm.

> After being laid aside for a few weeks, praise God, I am once more enabled to be among my people. ... Grand go at night; thank God our labours were not in vain; nine precious souls stepped into the fountain. Glory be to God, the work is going ahead. We mean to roll the old chariot along.[152]

The Army, with its stated objective of bringing salvation to the masses, was not formulaic in its methods. This allowed women considerable latitude in which to exercise their new-found spiritual authority. Eliza Haynes, when a Lieutenant, shouted invitations to Army meetings in Nottingham with "Happy Eliza" placarded across her back. She was later transferred to Marylebone to repeat these successful tactics.[153] Bramwell Booth recalled a novel method of gaining attention in 1893:

> At Hackney Wick, where there has been the most awful struggle, the two girls a fortnight ago decided to put in practice one of your off-handed suggestions at the recent Council in London. And having one evening put their night-dresses on over the uniform went out, to the immense sensation of the whole population. Result: place crammed

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[152] *War Cry*, 3 April 1880, p. 1.

[153] Sandall, *History*, Vol. II, pp. 16-17.

> with men every night since, 30 souls in the fortnight, 20 of them men. Whole neighbourhood stirred.[154]

Although drawing a crowd was the main preoccupation for Field Officers, other Army activities required independent action. *War Cry* selling, street processions, the Army's annual self-denial week, as well as Bible-study and preparing address for the corps' meetings required highly motivated officers. Women officers repeatedly expressed their satisfaction in the work they were doing. A woman Field Officer, Captain Boy, wrote, "especially has our beloved Army raised a platform of usefulness for women, for [from?] the noble example of our now glorified Army Mother, creating in them ambitions and spiritual ideas."[155] The challenge and attractiveness of officership for women was putting their ideas into practice.

The Army also provided training for its officers to a level that most working-class women would have been unable to secure for themselves. In its early years, the Army had no training institution; suitable converts were ploughed straight back into "the war" as officers. The training of cadets for evangelistic work began in 1880, for the Rescue work in 1889. Cadets spent six months, rising in the early twentieth century to nine months, preparing for their work. A strong practical element was present. In between the two "academic" sessions, cadets spent thirteen weeks attached to a corps. In addition to sharing in its work, they were expected to spend two hours daily in private study and return to the Congress Hall Training Home in Clapton once

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[154] Arch R. Wiggins, *The History of the Salvation Army. Vol 4, 1886-1904*, (1964), p. 187. Also, *War Cry*, 1 July 1893, p. 5.

[155] *War Cry*, 5 January 1895, p. 6. Also, *War Cry*, 2 July 1898, p. 11; 26 April 1902, p. 4; 4 July 1914, p. 19.

per fortnight for a day of lectures and exams.[156] Bible lessons and the doctrines of the Salvation Army were taught side by side with reading and general subjects. Provision was made for individual tuition.[157] It was a practical course, preparing cadets for the duties of officership (running a corps, holding public meetings) while at the same time fitting them with the mental equipment to state the Army's case (tuition in doctrines and governing structure, Bible study). For women who would be lucky to have stayed in school until age 14, this further, intensive training was a golden opportunity.

The Army offered a modest wage. A woman captain's pay of 17 shillings per week in 1916 was an improvement on the wages available to factory workers and domestic servants. The average wage for women in textile factories was 15/5d while women in non-textile occupations could expect to earn 12/6d per week, an amount below the 14-16 shillings social observers estimated a single woman needed to subsist.[158] For lower ranks in the Women's Social Work, salaries were small, but board and lodging was provided. A long-serving Women's Social officer might earn £1 per week, but have to find her own accommodation.[159] However, the Army still subscribed to the belief that women could subsist on less than men although wage

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[156] *War Cry*, 6 February 1897, p. 3. The Congress Hall had originally been a lunatic asylum, bought and converted by the Army for training purposes. It is a good example of the Army's attitude to bricks and mortar - any building was capable of being turned from secular use.

[157] *War Cry*, 12 November 1898, p. 5.

[158] Jane Lewis and David Piachaud, "Women and Poverty in the Twentieth Century," in Catherine Glendinning and Jane Millar, eds., *Women and Poverty in Britain*, Wheatsheaf Books, Brighton (1987), p. 33. Figures from 1906.

[159] Henry Rider Haggard, *op. cit.*, p. 116.

differentials were not huge. A single woman adjutant earned £1 per week, 90% of the wage of 22 shillings paid to her unmarried male counterpart.[160] It has been estimated that, across the spectrum of manual workers, women generally earned less than 50% of the male wage.[161] The work was more varied and interesting than other work available to women.[162] Staff-Captain Jordan spent thirteen years in field service, commanding 25 corps. She was then assigned to the International Training Home. She spent three years there, instructing cadets in the Army's *Orders and Regulations* for Field Officers.[163] At least two women, Mary Wilson and Mrs "Hallelujah Nancy" Starling, served as Envoys. They were charged with holding special revival meetings in a certain area.[164] Most importantly, work done by women did not suffer in status, as in so many other professions. The "feminization" of clerical staff, well under way by the end of the nineteenth century, prompted a downgrading of the work as a whole with a resulting decrease in wages.[165]

Before joining the Army, women often had one last obstacle to overcome--family. If a woman was called to religious work the Army had only one reply - obey the call, or deny it at your soul's peril. Catherine Booth-Clibborn gave the example of Simon and Andrew, "Not one word did He say concerning their father, their family,

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[160] Memorandum by Edward Higgins, 25 July 1916, p. 1. SA Salary File.

[161] Lewis and Piachaud, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

[162] Walker, *op. cit.*, pp. 135-136.

[163] *War Cry*, 4 November 1899, p. 3.

[164] *War Cry*, 23 April 1904, p. 11; 4 December 1909, p. 3.

[165] Laura Levine Frader, "Women in the Industrial Capitalist Economy," Renate Bridenthal, Claudia Koonz, Susan Stuard, eds., *Becoming Visible*, 2nd edition, Hougton Mifflin, Boston (1987), p. 327.

their nets, their boat; but simply, 'Follow Me!'" In her appeal for workers for "poor, dark France", she warned, "... remember that you alone are responsible for yourselves. Your family will not have to answer in your stead before the Judgment Seat."[166] Her sister, Emma, urged "perishing souls, priceless in value, are claiming the supreme consideration of your heart and life. The lesser things of self and home and pleasure fall into their right and secondary places."[167] Their father, General Booth, put it more forcefully still, "... if the world comes in your way," he commanded, "run through it; if there is opposition from your family, run through it; if your neighbours and friends try to stop you, run through them. If the devil comes in the way, run over him. Fight the good fight that you may win the crown."[168]

Army periodicals abounded with stories, some fictional, some the actual experiences of officers, to buttress this point. Always the emphasis was on obedience to God. For instance, before Staff-Captain Catherine Bissmeyer was true to her call and enlisted in the Army, she thought of entering the nursing profession as a compromise between her call and her parents' wishes. *The Deliverer* asserted that her efforts to go into nursing were frustrated by God, who was trying to show her the true nature of the work he wished her to do.[169] As Catherine Booth-Clibborn had explained, a woman was directly responsible for both her deeds and her omissions. "My sisters," pleaded Blanche B. Cox, "... forgive me if I seem to speak hard things ... but I want to say earnestly and simply to you in memory of the approaching

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[166] *The Deliverer*, Christmas 1890, p. 93 - author's emphasis.

[167] *The Deliverer*, June 1897, p. 290.

[168] *The Deliverer*, February 1895, p. 122.

[169] *The Deliverer*, January 1890, p. 108.

Judgment Day, that the VAIN LIGHTS OF MORALITY, RESEARCH, SOCIETY, CULTURE, ETC., in which you now live and rejoice, come but from dips of earth, and will burn through ... .[170] The final line of the poem "To-day" summed up the finality of the penalty for disobedience, "For when you would gladly give up all / It may be eternal night."[171]

Grateful for their conversion and empowered by holiness, many women did break with their families in favour of the lifestyle offered by the Army. Captain Kate Bolton's family disapproved of the Army. When they sent her to church, she would find ways to get to Army meetings. She managed to order a dress made in Army fashion when her mother sent her to buy mourning attire after the death of her uncle.[172] One of the most spectacular and public cases of a girl going into the Army against her family's wishes is analysed in detail by Pamela Walker. The conversion of Ballington Booth's future wife, Maud Charlesworth, to Salvationist beliefs incensed her father, a Church of England clergyman. He mounted a one-man crusade against the Army for "kidnapping" his daughter and robbing her of her respectability. Maud's defiance of paternal authority convinced her father that the Army's methods were no better than those who preyed on innocent girls.[173] It is possible to view this episode, as Walker does, as an indication of the conflicting values of the Army and the middle classes. In such an atmosphere, the "defection" of a woman in direct opposition to

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[170] *The Deliverer*, June 1891, p. 186.

[171] *The Deliverer*, August 1911, p. 171.

[172] *War Cry*, 18 January 1890, p. 3.

[173] Walker, *op. cit.*, pp. 248-253.

her father's wishes serves to illustrate just how far apart the Army's practices were from middle-class norms.

If the structure of the Army, and the position of soldiers in it, is considered as a family unit, personified by William and Catherine Booth and their children, the Army's demands for obedience take on the substance of filial piety. Rescue Homes had their "Mothers" (superintendents). On hearing a report of Army operations in Australia, Catherine Booth asked the reporting officer to "give the Australasian soldiers my love. Tell them I look on and care for them just as for my English children ... ."[174] William Booth signed himself "Your affectionate General" in his letters to soldiers and officers. He was a highly visible father figure of the Army. His portrait adorned its offices. After Catherine's death, members' feelings were strengthened when William made tours of Great Britain, the United States, and more far-flung Army operations. The receptions and farewells he received confirmed the place he held in every Salvationist's heart.

As has been seen when discussing holiness and obedience, to be a member of the Army was to be convinced that the General's rule was both wise and good and that obedience was owed to the organisation. On a more personal level, obedience was owed to the General as the originator of the Army and the patriarch of an international Army family. Maud Charlesworth traded one form of paternal authority (her father) for another (the Army, as governed by the General). She relinquished the role of dutiful daughter only to take it up again. The Army was hardly the amoral stealer of young girls the Reverend Charlesworth made it out to be. It demanded certain codes of behaviour of its daughters as well as their loyalty. Although the substance of her

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[174] *War Cry*, 7 December 1889, p. 9.

choice was not radical, the choice itself was. Maud's decision to ignore her father's orders was validated by the Army only because she then adopted their rules. It would be less supportive in 1895/6 when she and Ballington challenged those rules and its authority. They had been ordered to leave their posting in the United States but refused to go. After an acrimonious exchange of letters, they resigned to start a parallel organisation in America to compete with the Salvation Army.[175]

The Army offered women employment within its multiple and diverse operations provided they adhered to its tenets and accepted its authority. Under the umbrella of holiness teaching, women were empowered for their work. The Army hierarchy guaranteed them a place within the ranks and backed up their authority to carry out their tasks. Its training programme provided practical skills in speaking and running a corps as well as a good grounding in Army doctrine and the Bible. Although few could hope for high office, Army work, which involved changing corps approximately every 6 months, offered an outlet for women's independence and creativity.

V. The Salvation Army, Marriage and Family Life

Colonel Nicol, contributing to a series of articles on English laws affecting women, criticised the "secular" marriages he saw being entered into at all levels of society. Families of the "higher ranks" in England were accused of being mercenary, putting family ambitions first and contracting marriages in "very much the same way as two men will establish a business." The working classes figuratively made their marriages "in the public house;" such unions were doomed to fail as they robbed

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[175] Wiggins, *History*, Volume IV, chapter 11.

marriage of its spirituality.[176] Salvationists viewed the tie of marriage very seriously indeed. Army adherents living with a member of the opposite sex were encouraged to legitimate the relationship by marriage.[177] Members who were living with a partner other than their spouse for whatever reason were prevailed upon to return to their legal husbands or wives.[178]

As part of the Army's reaction against worldly practices, both the form and content of marriage took on increased importance. As a religious ordinance, it was a way of showing the Army's difference from the world. Any building would do for the service, whether Army barracks to large metropolitan hall. It was modelled on Quaker principles in the sense that it was a simple service and that the bride and groom generally addressed the congregation.[179] It differed greatly from Friends' practice in its military style. At Army weddings the bride and groom (as well as any other Salvationists there) would be wearing uniform and the service was conducted literally under the Army's flag. Women officers sometimes wore a white or cream sash across their uniform jackets, with a motto sewn on in red. At the first wedding associated with the Welsh language corps in North Wales, the bride, Captain Kitty Christmas, wore a sash which bore the legend "cysegredig" (consecrated). Mrs Staff-Captain Evans wore one which urged "Cmyri ir Jesus" (Wales for Jesus).[180] Army

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[176] *The Deliverer*, November 1895, p. 74.

[177] *The Deliverer*, August 1895, p. 23.

[178] *The Deliverer*, March 1894, p. 140., and January 1894, p. 108.

[179] As at the marriage of Lieutenant Frances Nicholson to Captain Holden Sampson. *The Deliverer*, March 1892, p. 159.

[180] *War Cry*, 13 July 1889, p. 3.

weddings were designed not only in direct opposition to fashionable church and chapel weddings, but as an event at which souls could be saved. Captain Christmas's wedding was followed by an open-air meeting, at which one person was converted.[181]

Army weddings were distinctive not only in presentation but also in the content of the marriage vows. While promising to love, honour, and obey, each also swore not to hinder the other's work for God and the Army. In keeping with the Army's belief in the equality of women with men, marriage was viewed as a partnership, the purpose of which was the furtherance of the Salvation War. *The Deliverer*, profiling Staff-Captain Duce, noted:

> The Staff-Captain is not alone. Has not been alone for three-and-a-half years. He has an excellent helpmate who specials [undertakes special meetings] with him and helps to brighten cheerless and desolate homes. She has had nearly five years' experience as an officer in the Field, besides a year in the Rescue Work. The maiden name of Mrs Duce was M. Harwood. She was a soldier of the Durham corps.[182]

General Booth, in his letters to Salvationists published as *Religion for Every Day* (1902), encouraged husbands and wives to work together; "a woman is in many respects, remarkably able to advise her husband on the bewildering, secular matters with which he is so often called to deal; and, if he will give her the chance, she will show this ability."[183] The intention was to forge a team who would work together in harness, each according to their abilities, for the benefit of the Army's work. Thus,

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[181] *Ibid.*

[182] *The Deliverer*, July 1893, p. 11.

[183] William Booth, *Letters to Salvationists on Love, Marriage and Home, being Volume II of Religion for Every Day*, The Salvation Army Supplies, Atlanta, GA (1987) first published 1902, p. 112.

when officers of different ranks married, the lower-ranking one took the spouse's higher rank. Field officers would be posted to a joint command and would be promoted together. There was more of a problem with the staff officers as the Army did not require two people for a staff post. Mrs Colonel Hay, the wife of the Army's Field Secretary, had moved to London on his promotion to that office in 1894. It was only in 1898 that she secured an appointment of her own, that of Divisional Officer of the London Slum Corps. She filled the intervening four years by being a "useful soldier" and "active Visiting Sergeant", doing some "specialling" (a meeting or series of meetings in addition to a normal corps' routine, usually by visiting speakers), as well as raising a family.[184]

It should be noted just who was being promoted. Although notionally both husband and wife were recalled to Headquarters, in practice it was Colonel Hay's services that were needed in London. In only a few instances, usually early in the Army's history, are there examples where a married women's activities dictated rank changes and transfers. Captain Caroline Frost, a trained midwife, was transferred from the Channel Islands to London at the request of Florence Booth, who needed Caroline's skills for the Social Work. In this instance, Caroline's husband, Captain William Frost, followed his wife to mainland Britain.[185] Women officers found their duties significantly altered by marriage. Captain Kate Watts (Mrs Colonel Taylor) found her field of work "very different" after marriage.[186] Mrs Brigadier Lucas was,

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[184] *War Cry*, 2 July 1898, p. 11.

[185] Fairbank, *Booth's Boots*, pp. 29-32.

[186] *War Cry*, 13 April 1886, p. 13.

"on the royal road to the most responsible position on the field, when Staff-Captain Lucas, as he then was, diverted her course in another direction."[187]

These diversions did not go unnoticed. The women's page of the *War Cry* voiced a concern that women Salvationists were not getting the recognition they deserved, and indeed, was due them according to the Army's *Orders and Regulations.*

> We are put in the background, says a woman-Salvationist. Any post is good enough for us, and any corner of the platform, yet we do the same work and fill the same positions as successfully (and sometimes a good deal more successfully) than the men who crowd us out.
>
> Many a married man bores the corps or his audiences to exasperation point with his long-winded speeches of emptiness, whilst his wife has to sit silently by, though she may have *something* to say and know *how* to say it. Mister Man ought to be a little oftener at the penitent-form mourning over the (not entirely) "feminine" sin of vanity and vaingloriousness. ...
>
> But, as I have said before, it is our duty to remind him that we are equal in a great deal, and superior in some things, to his lordship [the Army man]. The street urchins have their own translation of the courtly French, "*Place aux dames*"--the boys say, "Ladies first!" Dear brothers in The Army, let there be a little more of the "ladies first" in your behaviour.[188]

However, it was not just that Army men were "crowding out" women. There was a perception that women were not taking full advantage of the opportunities offered them. In "Marriage--Advice for Women," Mark Lerne exhorted married Army women to remember their personal responsibility for their own souls as well as their responsibilities to the Army's work of soul-saving, lest they "sink down to the level of the average married woman of to-day".[189] The *War Cry* reprinted William

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[187] *War Cry*, 13 July 1901, p. 2.

[188] *War Cry*, 11 November 1899, p. 4. See also *War Cry*, 28 February 1895; 26 June 1915, p. 2.

[189] *War Cry*, 6 February 1895, p. 4.

Booth's series, "Woman's Place and Power" in 1915. In it, he expressed satisfaction with the opportunities offered to women thus far, but lamented that women themselves did not make the most of them.

> Let us take more pains to encourage the Women to stand up to the duties of the positions already held. In this respect Woman must do more for herself. She has not always done all she might to maintain the position given her and discharge the duties connected with it.
>
> The old prejudice against Woman doing anything in public, the natural timidity of her nature, or the false feeling that her place is in the background, deter many a one from coming to the front, or from holding steadfastly to the position which she has reached.
>
> Let us pray for these our comrades more, count on them more, love them more.[190]

William Booth had implicitly described the problem as one of gender, although the term would have meant nothing to him. Both men and women, acting out "old prejudices", were hindering women's advancement in the Army. Nowhere is this more clear than when examining the Army's attitudes towards family life when the priorities of managing a home and raising children had to be squared with saving souls.

Training Junior Soldiers

The Salvation Army's provision for children was contentious. Both William and Catherine Booth were believers in child conversion. The Army formalised this belief with special Junior Soldiers' meetings and a periodical directed specifically at children. Mrs Lieutenant-Colonel French, of the North-Western Chief Division of the United States, reported that her daughter, aged about 8 had been "properly saved in a slum meeting" and that her three other children were expected to follow her

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[190] *War Cry*, 26 June 1915, p. 2.

example.[191] At the dedication ceremony for Booth grandchildren Katherine Motee and Olive Emma, both Bramwell and Emma stressed that children's souls should not be ignored.[192] It was a contentious branch of Army work, as many observers were repelled by the notion of children confessing their sins and professing to be saved before they had reached the age of confirmation.[193] As Army practice, it persisted, only losing force in the twentieth century.

The Junior Soldiers' War was the first real effort to organise the children of Army families. Under the command of Major and Mrs Mackenzie, it employed about 100 officers, usually young parents and even some young men. Its objective was to evangelise the children of Salvationists to prevent them becoming "stale" and "formal."[194] Its successor, the Young People's War, offered a wider range of activities--Bible study, Band of Love (in which the child pledged kindness to animals, truthfulness, total abstinence, and daily prayer), as well as the Corps Cadets' Brigade for teenagers. In 1907 there were 11,000 Young Peoples' workers (although a significant proportion of this figure must have been part-time). An appeal for more Salvationists to enter this branch of the work was aimed directly at Army women.[195] Although campaigns such as the Junior Soldiers and Young People's War were meant

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[191] *The Deliverer*, May 1900, p. 164.

[192] *War Cry*, 21 November 1891, p. 5. Also *Phases of Work in the Salvation Army*, p. 8.

[193] See Randall Davidson, *op. cit.*, p. 197.

[194] *War Cry*, 20 October 1888, p. 1.

[195] *War Cry*, 9 February 1907, p. 13.

to be nurturing the next generation of Salvationist officers, this did not disguise the fact that, in the Army, the primary trainer of children was seen to be the mother.[196]

Where did a mother operate? In the home. What was a Salvationist's home to be like? General Booth stressed cleanliness and order as the trademark of the ideal Army home.[197] Dirt, especially in the Slum Work, was taken as evidence of sin. More importantly, cleanliness and order bespoke respectability for the Army. In order for the Army to retain its radical aim of evangelising the lowest in society, often by very disorderly methods, the example of order and rectitude in officers' personal lives was needed to give the Army's activities legitimacy. Along with the training of children, Army women were responsible for maintaining the Army home.[198] A passage from the women's page of the *War Cry* investigated the fictitious service of a woman officer whose life was changed by marriage and motherhood.

> She was merely a wife and a mother with one man's happiness or sorrow in her control, and the making or marring of a son in her power. And, of course, that was "nothing." "He" was able to play the man and take a large place in the Army work, because she bore the home-burden, and never worried or did aught but encourage him. That was nothing, too. Moreover, the neighbors grew fond of the Salvation Army woman, who kept her house and children so neat and clean, having a bright word for everybody, and one family were supposed to go to hear Salvation Army salvation because of her, but she did not know it, so that also was nothing.[199]

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[196] *War Cry*, 10 March 1888, p. 4; 6 February 1895, p. 4; 15 March 1902, p. 4; 8 January 1910, p. 13; 3 July 1911, p. 3; 29 November 1913, p. 3.

[197] *War Cry*, 24 November 1900, p. 9. One of General Booth's letters on "Every-Day Religion."

[198] *War Cry*, 20 October 1900, p. 9. One of Booth's letters on "Every-Day Religion."

[199] *War Cry*, 17 November 1900, p. 4.

For those women removed from the "front lines" of the Salvation war, life at home could seem trivial but was, as the passage makes clear, extremely important. Army women could still contribute to the war by their domestic example, speaking with errand-boys and neighbours.[200]

At the same time, while acknowledging the importance of a well-ordered household, the Army warned against it as an end in itself. Women were encouraged to arrange their household duties so they could attend at least one meeting per week, or to instruct a company of Junior Soldiers.[201] In 1890, Florence Booth introduced the "Women's League" for married Army women. In encouraging women to join the League, she wrote:

> I have thought in connection with this League, not so much of the importance that women should be to the front in public work, as that they should be united in private effort. Our Field Officers are very largely united and organised, but the vast field of usefulness open to women, apart from the public platform, is what had lain so much upon my heart.[202]

Its objects were the training of children, the rescue of fallen girls, and the salvation of young girls. Most importantly, it would provide a network through which Army women, who may have felt isolated in the home, could "fortify each other in seasons of sorrow or trial."[203] The trials could be many: a husband working odd hours or away for periods of time, the rearing of children, housework, a desire to engage in the more public work of the Army, and, because salaries were small, the attempt "to keep

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[200] *War Cry*, 1 February 1902, p. 4; 1 November 1902, p. 4.

[201] *War Cry*, 3 October 1903, p. 4; 22 October 1904, p. 12; 10 December 1904, p. 12.

[202] *War Cry*, 27 December 1890, p. 9.

[203] *Ibid.*

three boys and two girls neatly and comfortably dressed, and their father well fed, on something less than £2 a week."[204]

How did married women Salvationists resolve the contradiction between home and platform? For those without children, opportunities for service could expand considerably. Mrs Commissioner Dowdle never "allowed her husband's candle to do duty for two. ... It was the custom of these warriors to go in separate directions on Sundays, for the purpose of holding meetings at two different corps every week-end."[205] Children complicated the arrangements. Mrs Colonel Hay was fortunate to have a Salvationist servant to look after her three children when she and the Colonel took a weekend speaking engagement together.[206] Mrs Measures, the wife of the Divisional Officer for Dorset, frankly admitted that such assistance was necessary.[207] Mrs Major Orsborn always took two of her children along with her when travelling at weekends.[208] A few women managed to combine marriage, family and high-profile Army work. The *War Cry* praised Mrs Colonel Lawley highly, writing:

> The life of Mrs Lawley is an object-lesson to Staff Officers' wives. That the characteristics of **A Mother and An Officer** may be blended without either suffering by the presence of the other, and with its natural consequence the all-round extension of the kingdom, is

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[204] *War Cry*, 16 November 1901, p. 4; 10 November 1900, p. 4.

[205] *War Cry*, 25 June 1898, p. 3.

[206] *War Cry*, 2 July 1898, p. 11.

[207] *War Cry*, 18 May 1895, p. 5.

[208] *War Cry*, 26 January 1895, p. 7.

> exemplified in the daily doings of the only woman who holds the rank of D.O. in the United Kingdom.[209]

Many clearly found it difficult, and traded the role of partner in their husband's appointments for that of advisor or supporter. Mrs Staff-Captain Bettridge, the wife of a Divisional Officer, assisted her husband with his correspondence when her chores were finished and occasionally filled in at the local corps.[210] Others found time when the mending and darning were finished and the children at school or in bed for sick-visiting, *War Cry* selling, or to attend meetings.[211] By attempting to give some structure and spiritual importance to domestic work to raise the morale of married women officers, the Army seemed to recognise the flaw in its policy of promoting husbands and wives to the same work. Although sharing the same rank as their husbands, they lacked the power to command that came with it. Unless another post could be found, as in the case of Mrs Colonel Hay, high-ranking Salvationist women found themselves doing soldiers' work.

Pamela Walker has argued that in the early years of the Army, Hallelujah Lasses manipulated the term "mother" and imbued it with spiritual authority.[212] This concept of a self-sacrificing and public motherhood authorised the participation of a group of women most of whom were unmarried. But as married Salvationist officers struggled to be good mothers and run an orderly home, their active work for the Army decreased. It was during this period that the pattern for officership was set which

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[209] *War Cry*, 3 November 1894, p. 5.

[210] *War Cry*, 1 June 1895, p. 3.

[211] *War Cry*, 17 November 1894, p. 13; 9 February 1895, p. 4; 12 March 1904, p. 12.

[212] Walker, *op. cit.*, pp. 140-143.

would shape the Army until recent years. Outstanding single women could obtain positions of authority, but married women officers often found it difficult to participate in their husband's appointments. The Army's ideal of husband and wife fighting side by side, based on the successful and productive partnership of William and Catherine Booth, could only be attained if Army couples possessed sufficient levels of income to allow the wife to have a career outside the running of her home. For those struggling to make ends meet, women's unpaid domestic service and ability to recycle old garments and linens proved invaluable.

It is ironic that the Army, as the only religious organisation in Britain that had deliberately incorporated the equality of women with men and women's eligibility for all offices into its foundation deed, should fail to promote significant numbers of single women and, in effect, restrict opportunities for married women. As has been argued above, women who spurned "the world" for the Army had to accept its authority, for it was that authority which gave them officer-status. Women were empowered by holiness teaching, but could only exercise their duties under the umbrella of the Army. If they challenged it, or left the Army, that authority was withdrawn, as with the Booth children who resigned from the Army.

The Army offered women command responsibilities in both its evangelistic and its Social Work. Both were validated by the theology and example of Catherine Booth. The clear delineation of ranks assisted women in wielding authority, as did the Army's theology of sanctification. Although many women did not achieve high office outside the Women's Social Work, the Army still offered a fulfilling career of varied and useful work. Catherine Booth, whose career, while unique, was a powerful

example to other Army women, once answered the question,"Will women dominate the Salvation Army in future?", with the hopeful "We are not afraid if they so do."[213] She would have been disappointed that the Army's system of joint promotions at marriage, intended to benefit women officers, actually limited the amount of active work many could do.

[213] Reprinted in the *War Cry*, 4 July 1914, p. 10.

Chapter Five. Representing Pious Women: Separate Spheres and Women's Nature

> Who can find a virtuous woman? For her price is far above rubies. The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her so that he shall have no need of spoil. She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life. She seeketh wool and flax and worketh willingly with her hands. She is like the merchants' ship: she bringeth her food from afar. She riseth also while it is yet night and giveth meat to her household and a portion to her maidens. She considereth the field and buyeth it: with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard. She girdeth her loins with strength and strengtheneth her arms. She perceiveth that her merchandise is good: her candle goeth not out by night. She layeth her hands to the spindle and her hands hold the distaff. She stretcheth out her hands to the poor: yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy.
>
> She looketh well to the ways of her household and eateth not the bread of idleness. (Proverbs xxxi. 10-20, 27)

For the pious women of nineteenth-century Nonconformity, the implications of a theology which was potentially empowering were weighed against broad approval for women's separate sphere and distinctive characteristics. The good woman of Proverbs was the ruler of her home and its controlling influence. While the domestic stereotype is well-known, by the end of the nineteenth century, women's activities extended well beyond the world of home and children, although none of the women studied in this thesis would have denied the importance of domestic tranquillity. The domestic ideal, then, remained important. Within each denomination, representations of normative femininity abounded in the periodical press. These magazines served a multiplicity of purposes; they were dedicated not only to the articulation of specific theological traditions, but also to issues related to the family, politics, literature and leisure. Looked at through the prism of each church's representations, the picture of the pious domestic woman, for all its conventionality, served a variety of functions. Throughout the period, it remained a potent image of female authority, shaping the terms used to describe women's work and women workers.

In the Society of Friends, the most conventional images of the domestic woman were conveyed in the First Day School lessons printed in *The Friend*. These lessons, aimed at lower-class adherents of the Society, often took the form of expositions of Bible stories. The lesson devoted to the story of Miriam, a prophet and the sister of Aaron and Moses,[1] placed women at the centre of the family, quick to perceive its interests and the pilot of the family's destiny.[2] Gertrude Beck, speaking at a public meeting of the London Adult School Union, stressed the importance of mothers in creating a home and training the children. This sphere gave women "a great part to play in life."[3]

Such influence was constructed as a positive force of national or even international importance. Two pieces written during and just after the Boer War illustrate this point. Anne Richardson, speaking to the Women's Yearly Meeting in 1900 on the subject "Woman's Part in Moral Progress," laid the blame for the Boer War on a colossal failure of women to influence their respective countries for good.

> With women, too, lies the responsibility of creating all that is good or bad. In history, any great act of good or bad has generally had a woman behind it. ... A woman's special functions are cleanliness, purity, and holiness. ... The action of women will largely affect the social attitude amongst us. Again, on war, if effects are traced back, both the Boer wars are attributable to the action of women on both sides. If only they had used their influence rightly, what might not have been the result?[4]

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[1] Exodus xv. 20-21; Numbers xvi. 59, I Chronicles vi. 3. "I brought you up out of Egypt and redeemed you from the land of slavery. I sent Moses to lead you, also Aaron and Miriam." Micah vi. 4.

[2] *The Friend*, 29 June 1900, p. 426.

[3] *The Friend*, 14 October 1892, p. 687. See also *The Friend*, 13 December 1901, p. 826.

[4] *The Friend*, 15 June 1900, pp. 385-86.

The First Day School lesson on Deborah, leader of the Israelites in wartime, reflected on women's service to the nation:

> Whilst we may not shut them [women] from any field of service for which the special gifts of any woman may fit her, yet we recognise that there are some departments of life which are specially adapted for her service, and in which the Christian woman is at her best. ... If few women are called to be political leaders, yet to women is given in a national and peculiar sense the moulding of the national character in the quiet, saintly offices of the home.[5]

In the country generally, moulding national character took on increased importance in a climate of perceived competition from Germany, the United States, and Japan, Britain's economic and imperial rivals. In the face of a falling birth rate and poor health of working-class recruits, brought to the fore by the Boer War, serious concerns were voiced about the "Imperial race," concerns which were projected on to the institution of motherhood. The investigations of the Interdepartmental Committee on Physical Deterioration, which reported in 1904, made fifty-three recommendations which dealt with most aspects of working-class life (unemployment, poor food and housing, and unsanitary conditions). However it was those recommendations concerning the teaching of cooking, hygiene, and child care to working-class girls and women which were taken up and widely discussed.[6] Friends, most of whom were opposed to the Boer War, were not concerned about the supply of potential soldiers

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[5] *The Friend*, 15 January 1904, p. 45. "Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth, was leading Israel at that time. She held court under the Palm of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim, and the Israelites came to her to have their disputes decided. ... 'Very well,' Deborah said, 'I will go with you. But on the expedition you are undertaking, the honour will not be yours for the Lord will hand Sisera over to a woman.' So Deborah went with Barak to Kedesh, where he summoned Zebulun and Naphtali. Ten thousand men followed him, and Deborah also went with him."(Judges iv. 4-5, 9-10)

[6] Anna Davin, "Imperialism and Motherhood," *History Workshop* 5(1978), pp. 12, 27.

to defend the imperial ideal; however, they were affected by the widespread concern for and investigation of working-class child-rearing practices. Both Friends and their imperialist opponents could agree that women were at the heart of the changes they wished to effect to society. Where they differed was in the nature of the change desired. "National character," in Friends' view, would be removed from its militarist and imperialist context.

While women's superiority in the domestic sphere comes through very strongly in First Day School lessons, her participation in activities outside this charmed circle posed a problem. The lesson "Woman's Place and Power" positioned women very firmly as home-makers and good mothers but found it difficult to address other possibilities for women's service: "How far women should enter other spheres is rather outside the range of discussion in an Adult School."[7] The economic realities of working-class women's lives, coupled with middle-class expectations of orderly behaviour, conspired to keep their piety constructed in purely domestic terms. A later lesson was more moderate in tone, and more willing to consider the complementarity of work in the home with other forms of service:

> Home is a woman's kingdom, whatever, her position in it may be. If home is not the better and the happier for her being in it, she is missing the purpose of her creation. If she is not doing her duty there, she need not expect much blessing in her work beyond it. ... Proverbs xxxi has shown us that she has duties outside her home, and home itself will probably not be at its best unless she fulfils them.[8]

In general, however, the ideal advocated for working-class women was faithful service to husband and children, in keeping with the increased attention given by

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[7] *The Friend*, 2 August 1907, p. 518.

[8] *The Friend*, 27 October 1911, p. 698.

middle-class observers to the workings of lower-class family life. The realms of the domestic were also part of the necessary competence ascribed to women members of the Society, women of higher social status than those who attended First Day Schools. With the elevation of motherhood to the level of a ministry, many women Friends found a comfortable and rewarding, if conventional, lifestyle. The obituary of Hannah S. Allen praised her efficient discharge of these responsibilities:

> She became the centre of a large circle of Friends, but it was in the home itself, as wife and mother, that her sterling qualities of heart and mind shone brightest. Her loving nature, good sense and earnest piety, were kept in active operation in the care and management of her boys and girls; she entered into their childish griefs and joys, studied their characters, and trained them to self-control as none but a tender mother could do.[9]

A series on women in local government, published in 1894, emphasised both Quaker women's "kind-hearted sympathy" and their "power for government," the product of Friends' governing structures.[10] Anna Lloyd believed that "it is but natural and appropriate that the knowledge and wisdom they [women] have acquired at home should be made serviceable in public institutions."[11] As Guardians, women Friends could exercise domestic responsibilities - the provisioning of workhouses, overseeing the training of children, caring for the infirm - in what was recognised as the wider sphere.[12] In this respect they differed little from other philanthropic women colonising local government. Local government was also attractive because women Friends had experience in the government of their denomination: "the rural

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[9] *The Friend*, 2 February 1885, p. 30.

[10] *The Friend*, 10 August 1894, p. 511.

[11] *The Friend*, 29 June 1894, p. 421.

[12] *The Friend*, 10 August 1894, p. 512; 3 August 1894, pp. 499-500.

parishes of England will need intelligent competent women who can handle public affairs in no self-seeking or narrow spirit, women who have power for government, and of executive ability in the details of parish life."[13] In local government, women Friends blended their "natural" qualities of womanly sympathy with Quaker traditions of women's participation in church government. However, as has been shown, this participation was itself subject to gendered divisions; even after men and women met jointly in the Yearly Meeting, topics of special interest to women were discussed in separate, women-only, meetings.

As has been seen in the case of the Baptist Zenana Mission, ideas about the complementarity of the sexes and women's proper sphere were used to justify the existence of single women missionaries. Discourses of separation were well-developed within the Baptist denomination. In a series called "Relationships of Life in Light of Christianity," Frederick Charles explained the differences between men and women, boys and girls. Writing about the relationship between husbands and wives, he asserted:

> The gifts with which God has endowed man and woman respectively are peculiar each to each; acting apart, they do not tend to completeness of character. Usually man has the greater strength; his judgment is wider; his will more resolute. Woman's sweetness and amiability of nature are manifest in her deeper affections, her keener perception, and her tenderer sympathies.[14]

This ideal woman, a perfect foil for the more active man, was most often represented in the home, where her sympathies and keen perception would be devoted to the well-being of her family.

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[13] *Ibid.*, p. 511.

[14] *Baptist Magazine* May 1884, p. 213. His conclusions about boys and girls were remarkably similar; *Baptist Magazine*, July 1884, p. 311.

In the Bible, as in life everywhere, the mother is the type of tenderness and self-sacrifice, of wistful, anxious, and unwearied love. A sacred and indissoluble claim is bound up in the words, "She is my mother." The mother's sphere is in the home. She has on her the care of the household, and the training of children. Fathers are occupied in business. They must go to their office or their works, and earn the money which keeps the home going, but the mother's place is in the home itself.[15]

Because leadership was thought of in gendered terms, women could however take the lead - and the public platform - on issues deemed to be within their competence. In 1889 women first appeared as speakers at the Baptist Union annual meeting. Mrs Medley spoke on Church Guilds for young women. The *Baptist Magazine* commented, "the presence of ladies on the platform of the Union is a novelty. Those who had the happiness of listening to Mrs Medley's paper at Bloomsbury Chapel, and to Mrs Bonwick's speech, will be the last to question the wisdom of the innovation and the first to desire that the proceedings on that occasion may at fitting opportunities be followed."[16] The practice was continued at the autumn meeting, when Mrs Dawson Burns spoke on women's work in the church. It would appear that Baptists were willing to give women authority and public space in matters deemed to be "womanly." On the Queen's Road Church Council, women had limited representation; 2 of 10 seats were reserved for them. From 1908, women addressed the annual chapel meeting on "women's work".[17]

The work of Angus and Landels, described in chapter one, in accepting the theological possibility of women's wider ministry, made only a limited impact on the

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[15] *Baptist Magazine*, March 1896, p. 139.

[16] *Baptist Magazine*, June 1889, p. 279.

[17] Binfield, *Pastors and People*, pp. 153-154.

collective Baptist consciousness and did virtually nothing to change attitudes about the peculiar qualities of women. The editor of the *Baptist Magazine* (Revd J.P. Barnett) likened the daughters of the denomination to the "polished corner-stones" of the Psalms, as the unobtrusive and, one might add, silent, supports of the church. Zenana Missionaries met all of Barnett's criteria, including that their work was "less public," as it was strictly a woman-to-woman mission. Even when itinerating in remote districts, Zenana missionaries stressed that they were travelling to spread the message to more women.[18] Isabel Angus, in urging the BZM to itinerate more often, pointed out that although there were three BZM stations where there were no BMS workers, there were <u>twenty</u> BMS stations without the benefit of the BZM.[19] That equated to twenty stations at which women were not hearing the gospel, a blessing they could only receive from another woman.

Just as the BZM, in its beginnings, made use of women's skills at sewing or singing to attract zenana pupils, it made equal use of Baptist beliefs about the nature of women to ensure its acceptability and success. Whether it was women's "swift eye for the hidden secrets of sin" or the complementary relationship between the sexes, the BZM was remarkably in tune with denominational feelings.[20] It thrived on and perpetuated the separation of the sexes. The Revd Howard James wrote of Dorcas that her "womanly inventiveness" earned for her the newly-coined term "woman-disciple" (as the Greek language did not have a word to describe her activities);

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[18] *Missionary Herald*, April 1900, p. 157; *The Herald*, February 1916, p. 51.

[19] *The Herald*, March 1914, p. 32. From the findings of the National Conference on Women's Work in India.

[20] *Quarterly Paper of the Ladies Association for the Support of Zenana Work and Bible Women in India in Connection with the BMS*, July 1881, p. 6.

similarly, Zenana missionaries made the term "woman missionary" a reality within their denomination. "[Dorcas] looked about her with keen eyes, and discovered a sphere of usefulness for herself in her own immediate circle."[21] The missionaries of the BZM, by coopting the languages of womanhood, created a sphere of usefulness for themselves if not in their "immediate circle," then within an accepted area of womanly competence.

William Booth in his writings on "Every-Day Religion" discussed the "natural" desire of women for marriage in terms of their "pre-eminently sympathetic" natures. In the divine economy, women's needs for companionship and protection were met in marriage, as was their divinely-ordained desire for children.[22]

> To ensure the propagation of the race, God has planted certain desires, or appetites in the physical system, which are essential to the continuance of the Race, and the gratification of which, after the plan intended by God is as lawful as that of any other physical appetite. But for the natural craving for food, men would not be at the trouble to seek it, and the Race would become extinct; and but for the desire referred to, such would be the disinclination of woman to face the pains and toils connected with family life, that no more children would be born into the world, and man would die out from the face of the earth.
>
> This maternal instinct is strong in most women. The sacred gift of motherhood, that wonderful passion which carries her without flinching or complaint through years of service and sacrifice for her children, awakes early, and before all earthly things she desires to become the mother of a living child.[23]

For General Booth, the different characteristics of the sexes were part of the natural, God-given order, although he fully acknowledged their spiritual equality.

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[21] *Baptist Magazine*, May 1888, p. 202.

[22] *War Cry*, 13 October 1900, p. 9.

[23] *Ibid.*, p. 10.

Difference could be interpreted as superiority. Maud Charlesworth Booth told a women's demonstration in 1890 that women "were specially gifted by God for spiritual work" and proceeded to give an example of women's remarkable powers of sympathy which, according to the report, brought tears to the eyes of some of her listeners.[24] Her sister-in-law, Emma Booth-Tucker, followed by telling the audience that "woman's heart-devotion powers of endurance equalled, and in many instances excelled, that of men."[25] Writing in 1893, she mused, "Without undue boasting it seems to me that where woman HAS had a chance, she has shone superior to men. She is humbler, tenderer, and more self-sacrificing by nature, and after all, are not these the great essentials for spiritual warfare?"[26] She had stronger words for her sister-in-law, Florence, on her niece's future:

> Anyway, it seems to me that while man has hitherto had almost every chance that time can offer woman's opportunity is yet to come. The Army has done much to pave the way, but after all we have only fringed the possibilities of the future. Who can say but that your daughters and mine may yet be the God-inspired champions of a world-wide awakening, a spiritual revolution.
>
> Well, I am quite prepared to back Katie, Eva and Lucy during the time they have been at it, for good done in the world, with either of our darling noble brothers! And look at Mama! Even beside Papa who would like to say she ranks 2nd?
>
> I am sure I shall never feel I have one too many [daughters]. Only let us train them with the sense of their equality with men. Let us inspire them with the fact that they have a place, a responsibility, an

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[24] *War Cry*, 26 July 1890, p. 12.

[25] *Ibid.*

[26] *The Deliverer*, August 1893, p. 24.

> opportunity 2nd to none, and let us by God's spirit labour courageously to fit them for it![27]

After the General himself, the most prominent commentator on women's natures was Florence Booth, head of the Women's Social Work. As its leader, she was the Army's undisputed authority on women's work for women; most significantly, she was a profound believer in the distinctive qualities of women. When speaking to a women-only audience at the Congress Hall in 1890, Florence summed up:

> Woman's strong side was her religious side, and in the realm of religion she was especially fitted to lead and influence. Women, however, were exposed to a special temptation - to shift responsibility. They had a natural disposition to allow considerations affecting their feelings to unduly influence their judgment. ... God's intention was that sanctified judgment should take the lead of a woman's life - not her emotions. Nothing but a *sanctified will* could carry a woman against her feelings.[28]

Emotions, if not properly controlled, could render a woman useless as an Army worker. Women's emotions allowed her to pity sinners and desire to help them, but it was her sanctified will that gave her the courage to reprove them and the means to lead them to the Army penitent-form.

Florence Booth always stressed spiritual equality: "being a woman, in God's eyes," she told the women of the Congregational Union meeting held at Leeds, "involved no unfitness and no incapacity for His work."[29] While women's characteristics - self-sacrifice and love - and her position as linchpin of the home and trainer of children were powerful weapons for good, Florence was equally sure that

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[27] Letter from Emma Booth-Tucker to Florence Booth dated July 2, 1893. In "Female Ministry" files, Salvation Army Heritage Centre. (Emphasis hers)

[28] *The Deliverer*, 1 April 1890, p. 138.

[29] *War Cry*, 14 October 1905, p. 11. See also *War Cry*, 30 October 1915, p. 2.

her negative qualities - the desire to please, natural timidity - could be appropriated by the devil to keep women silent and prevent them from realising their potential.[30] Her answer was for women to cultivate their positive spiritual qualities while fighting against the negative ones:

> Nor in our desperate effort for souls should any woman who is serving God allow this natural characteristic to hold her back. Force yourself to go and speak to somebody you do not know, and, at least, invite them to the Meetings. Break through your timidity, overcome your weaknesses, and God will triumph in this part of your nature.[31]

In the Army, emotion was not solely the preserve of women. Despite the uniforms and other military stylings, the Salvation Army rejected "muscular Christianity" - sports were seen as a moral danger not just because gambling was viewed as a sin, but because sport itself could become a false idol, diverting one's attention from heavenly things. For men, membership in the Army meant renunciation of typical working-men's pleasures and spaces.[32] Men were however given an opportunity to show strong emotion, pity, and love. Minnie Carpenter described Colonel James Barker as "a man whose heart radiated love so pure that it had about it the charm of unconscious childhood."[33] Carpenter's book, *Three Great Hearts*, took as its theme the love of souls, of the Army, and of their fellow-men shown by three male Army officers.

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[30] *War Cry*, 29 November 1913, p. 3; 30 October 1915, p. 2.

[31] *War Cry*, 30 October 1915, p. 2.

[32] Pamela Walker, *op. cit.*, pp. 72, 83-84.

[33] Minnie Carpenter, *Three Great Hearts*, Salvationist Publishing and Supplies (1921), pp. 160-161.

Florence Booth and the Army were also critical of some aspects of the treatment of women within British society. Women, she felt, were failing to be saved not because of any lack of respect for religion, but because women were not taught to make important decisions.

> The training of women, their upbringing, the laws which affect them, and many of the disabilities that still prevail in the civilized world lead them to be unwilling, and certainly unaccustomed, to take the initiative in the great *decisions* of life. This is our inheritance from the Dark Ages! It was customary in those times for women to leave all the important matters to their men. It is a remnant of the work of sin upon the world, of the time when women were semi-slaves, and when they belonged to the men, body, soul, and spirit.[34]

The Army was keen to appropriate those characteristics of women - the "melting charity, the tender love and sympathy" - which would further the progress of its salvation war.[35] As for "natural" timidity and socially-conditioned inability to take decisions, the Army had one remedy - faith in God. Florence Booth advised: "let me say that God understands your case. He knows that you need a support, some one to trust, and He declares, 'I am with you, and I will help!' Let no one to-day be held back from Salvation and Consecration because they are timid, or weak in themselves."[36] The Army endeavoured to provide the training necessary to allow women to realise the full potential of their natures, both within the Social Work and for the corps-based preaching work of a field officer.

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[34] *War Cry*, 20 October 1915, p. 2.

[35] *War Cry*, 15 February 1908, p. 3.

[36] *War Cry*, 30 October 1915, p. 2.

Religious symbols and representations are difficult to analyse because they possess a variety of meanings on different levels.[37] Caroline Walker Bynum, in an essay on religious symbolism, summarised its multiple meanings:

> It is to suggest that gender-related symbols - symbols that, at one level, signify maleness or female-ness (and symbols never merely signify) - do not simply determine the self-awareness of men and women as gendered nor do they simply reflect cultural assumptions about what it is to be male or female. Gender-related symbols, in their full complexity, may refer to gender in ways that affirm or reverse it, support or question it ... .[38]

Old symbols may acquire new meanings, so what appears to be circumscribing may be liberating. This is most obviously the case in Baptist Zenana Mission ideology and arguments for women's participation in local government. In these cases, representations of women as care-givers within the family (a representation based on women's activities) was writ large onto the needs of a wider community. In the case of local government, both women philanthropists and women's suffragists were insistent that politics required a womanly perspective, although suffrage women expected the reward of the Parliamentary vote in return for their service on local authorities.[39] The Salvation Army promised liberation, through salvation and sanctification, from restrictive worldly bonds. It offered equal work with men in its evangelistic operations, but also made space for the articulation of a distinctive "womanly" response to social problems.

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[37] Caroline Walker Bynum, Stevan Harrell, and Paula Richman, eds., *Gender and Religion: On the Complexity of Symbols*, Beacon Press, Boston (1986), p. 2.

[38] *Ibid.*

[39] Patricia Hollis, *op. cit.*, p. 461-462.

To what extent, then, did notions of the domestic shape women's activities? In the Society of Friends, authority based on women's preeminence in the domestic sphere was claimed by some women and advocated especially for women of the working-class; others cited the "gospel freedom" of the Inner Light in sustaining their wide-ranging ministry. Women Friends moved with relative ease from their Society's meetings for business through philanthropic organisations to local government. In such cases, domestic expertise and womanly qualities were filtered through a much more widespread Quaker concern with the dictates of the individual conscience. It is also true, however, that such a powerful discourse was a key factor in shaping that conscience. Baptist women were less able to claim outright spiritual authority. But the small but growing number of women deacons in individual chapels is evidence of the extent to which activities deemed to be within the sphere of women's competence were being adopted across the denomination. In the Salvation Army, women's "natural" attributes were fashioned, by salvation and sanctification, into the equipment of a valuable soul-winner. Women were able to successfully manipulate seemingly restrictive normative representations, provided that they remained within accepted bounds while challenging the dominant paradigm. This process was inevitably slow-moving, the accumulation of many small movements at the edges of acceptable behaviour. This is best shown in the Baptist example, in which dominant domestic ideologies were projected onto non-Christian peoples to create a need for the evangelisation of women and then appropriated by Christian women as the authorisation for their missionary vocation.

Strangely, the same Baptist organisation which was so successful at manipulating notions of "women" was also the one most limited by its ideology. For

almost fifty years, the separatist rhetoric of the BZM was an advantage, offering an unchallengeable foundation for their overseas mission work. With the sea-change in mission attitudes symbolised by the Edinburgh Conference, such an ideology became outmoded. This was recognised by the BZM itself in its willingness to affiliate to the BMS. In the two other denominations, domestic ideology played a correspondingly less important role. Women in the Society of Friends were well able to form arguments for women's greater inclusion in the political life of the nation both in terms of "womanly" attributes and of their own egalitarian tradition. Their ministry, whether in the family circle or in the meeting-house, was validated by their Society. Similarly, the Salvation Army provided opportunities for women's service which were in tune with gendered notions of service (the Social Work) and those which were a departure from mainstream Christian practice (the evangelistic work).

However, as the Baptist case shows, ideologies were not without their limitations. Salvationist women struggled to conform to a model of Salvationist family life which necessitated women's unpaid labour, while at the same time attempting to live up to their duties as Army officers. For Army women, this was not merely an ideological, but a practical struggle, as they performed a difficult balancing of family budget, care for children, and corps work. In the case of the Society of Friends, it was feared that the *embourgeoisement* of the denomination was hampering women's spoken ministry. Although the decline in women ministers was not as great as was feared, it clearly remained a cause for concern. And, as the debates within the Society over women's suffrage showed, negative perceptions of women quickly surfaced when women were deemed to have overstepped the bounds of acceptable behaviour.

Conclusion

Although women made up the majority of church members in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, they have been largely excluded from conventional denominational accounts. Such accounts, in privileging the experiences of church institutions, ministers, and eminent laymen, have served to perpetuate women's invisibility. Where women are mentioned, it is often in a fragmentary way, with no attempt to contextualise women's experiences as subjects in their own right. This style of church history, however, has been challenged by works, such as Anne Haight's thesis on the holiness connexion, which take extra-denominational bodies as their subject. It has proved easier to explore women's activities in such organisations because their independence from denominational structures allowed women to be more visible. A review of the periodical literature of the Society of Friends, Baptist Union, and Salvation Army has, however, revealed a wide range of women's activities within these structures. This material has indicated that it would be possible to construct denominational histories in which women figure in a meaningful way. Also apparent in the literature were idealised representations of women, in the form of Bible lessons and cautionary tales. The defining power of such stereotypes was limited, however. Within each denomination, these representations of women were reshaped in accordance with theology and tradition. The model of domestic womanhood, although pervasive, was not the sole source of ideas about women and could, at times, be overshadowed by theological imperatives. Within institutions, women sought acceptance and legitimacy in a variety of ways; there was no one path to institutional power for women.

Women Friends waged a highly successful campaign, based on Friends' egalitarian traditions and notions of women's particular contributions, to gain access to the Yearly Meeting and the powerful standing committees of their Society. Yet women Friends, once officially recognised as forming part of the governing body of Quakerism, did not speak in proportion to their numbers. Their victory was largely a moral one - inequality of opportunity was rooted out of the denomination, but did not yield equality of results for many reasons. Women's tradition of speaking on "women's issues" in the Women's Yearly Meeting played a part, as did the numbers of women Friends exercising their social consciences outside their denomination. But it may also be true, as some correspondents to *The Friend* hinted, that women found it difficult to speak in such a large mixed assembly and also that men were dominating the discussions, not out of any conscious intention, but because of the Meetings' traditions. Even after the merging of the Men's and Women's Yearly Meetings, institutional equality remained a contentious issue, as the debates within Friends about women's suffrage demonstrated. In these debates, arguments about women's nature and the nature of Friends' traditions were formulated by both supporters and opponents of women's suffrage.

Baptist Zenana missionaries claimed spiritual and imperial authority over their "Indian sisters," constructing a woman-to-woman mission framed within the domestic milieu. In using the languages of domesticity and separate spheres, the BZM was able to legitimate the desire of many single Baptist women for meaningful spiritual work. By reinforcing the paradigm, however, the BZM ignored the needs of the missionary wife for such work and for the status that accompanied it. These attitudes were mirrored in the wider denomination, as women found status and recognition in areas

of womanly competence. The Baptist Zenana Mission, deeply rooted in separatist discourse, pursued a different institutional strategy. It sought and found recognition within Baptist structures as a women's organisation, doing very specific work. In the London Missionary Society, women's work for women was governed by men (with a ladies committee to assist). The BZM, in maintaining that women knew best what the needs of women and children were, retained its separate organisation until 1920, by which time the whole philosophy of missions was undergoing a change.

Catherine Booth articulated a three-fold argument to legitimate women's preaching. Firstly, women were "naturally" fitted for the exercise of public speaking; secondly, that biblical injunctions had been misinterpreted; and lastly, that women's ministry was "owned by God," who had guaranteed its success. In her thinking, women's ministry was not exceptional in any way. The Army's radical concepts of salvation and sanctification, coupled with a clear hierarchy, helped to delineate women's authority. The formation of the Women's Social Work in 1890 marked the Salvation Army's official acceptance of a specifically "women's work" in addition to the evangelistic careers it offered to women. In adopting such a work, the Army recognised women's greater role in social investigation and social work. As has been seen, women officers, except members of the Booth family, seldom reached the highest ranks of command, but joined the Army, not on the promise of high office, but because it promised meaningful and interesting work. For married women Salvationists, however, their desire to continue in active Army work clashed with the powerful example of the orderly Salvationist home.

In each of these denominations, women were active - active in the sense that they pursued varied work for their churches, and also active in defining the boundaries

of christian womanhood. This activity coexisted with and informed gendered discourses which referred back to Christian traditions. Within denominational institutions, women never merely accepted prevailing notions: these were challenged, extended, and subverted in the context of finding new forms of expression for female piety.

APPENDIX I

The Committee to Consider the Position of Women Friends (1895)

Quarterly Meeting	Men	Women
Bedfordshire	Frank Dymond	Henrietta Brown
Berks & Oxon	William Henry Smith	Elizabeth Ann Smith
Bristol & Somerset	William Stephens Clark	Helen P. Bright Clark
" "	Joseph Storrs Fry	Matilda Sturge
" "	John Morland	Margaret Tanner
Cumberland	George Thompson Carr	Mary Elizabeth Robinson
Derby, Lincoln & Notts	Robert Hutchinson	Catherine Hutchinson
" "		Caroline Mary Longdon
Devon & Cornwall	Richard Reynolds Fox	Caroline Veale
Durham	Jonathan Backhouse Hodgkin	Katherine Jones
"	Thomas Pumphrey	
Essex & Suffolk	Samuel Alexander	Harriet Green
Kent	Robert Dale	Marian Poulter
Lancashire & Cheshire	Thomas Barrow	Isabel Doull Barrow
" "	John Holdsworth	Jane Eliza Brayshaw
" "	William Edward Turner	Ellen Robinson
London & Middlesex	Edmund Wright Brooks	Mary Jane Godlee
" "	George Theodore Crosfield	Lucy Morland
" "	Joseph Lister Godlee	Mary Elizabeth Phillips
" "	William Frederic Wells	Catharine F. Wells
Norfolk, Cambs & Hunts	Joseph Hingston Fox	
Sussex, Surrey & Hants	Albert Joseph Crosfield	Jane Elizabeth Newman
" "	Caleb Rickman Kemp	
Warwick, Leicester & Stafford	Samuel Price	Elizabeth Cadbury
Western	Alfred Brown	Mary Anna Newman
Westmorland	James Herbert Midgley	Mary Snowden Braithwaite
Yorkshire	Joshua Rowntree	Anna Maria Harvey
"	Joseph Rowntree	Amy Jane Thorp

This committee was joined by appointees from the Meeting for Sufferings. They were:

Joseph A. Alexander, William A. Albright, Alfred W. Bennett, Joseph Bevan Braithwaite, Thomas William Marsh, Henry Tuke Mennell, Charles C. Morland, Henry S. Newman, Howard Nicholson, Walter Robson, Isaac Sharp, John S. Rowntree, Metford Warner, Henry Lloyd Wilson.

Source: "Minute Book of the Committee appointed by The Yearly Meeting held in London 1895, to consider the Position of Women Friends in Meetings for Discipline," MS Box $X^3/3^a$

Applications to BZM/WMA to 1920

NAME AND AGE	DATE APP	OCCUPATION	EDUCATION
Gertrude Fletcher (unknown)	1884	daughter-at-home	accomplishments
Margaret Logan (25)	1896	nurse	nurse training
Jessie Smyth (27)	1898	nurse	left sch @14, nurse training
Emily Rossiter (27)	1898	nurse	private school, ? nurse training
Harriette Sifton (22)	1899	d-a-h, Sister of Help	GPDST Notting Hill, Aberystwyth BA
Annie Theobald (25)	1901	unknown	private school til 17
Nina Ottmann, L.M.S. (26)	1902	dispenser w/Dufferin Ass	medical coll & U of Madras
Ethel M. Payne (24)	1902	kindergarten teacher	high school, pupil teacher
Alice Hampton (19)	1902	daughter-at-home	unknown
Alice E. Francis (29)	1903	kindergarten teacher	north london collegiate
Edith Young (25)	1904	doctor	nth london coll, M.B. Bedford College
A. Miriam Young (25)	1905	daughter-at-home	art school, nth london collegiate
Fanny A. Vaughan (21)	1905	daughter-at-home	walthamstow hall
Mary Raw, M.B., B.S. (29)	1906	doctor	private, med school, Burnbank, Durham U
Beatrice James (21)	1906	lady clerk	county sch, shorth/typew academy
Violet Stanford (24)	1907	nurse	Menzies Inst, nurse training
Gwaldus Jones (28)	1907	teacher	private, Bangor/Aber, London B.A.
Amy M. Tuff (25)	1908	teacher	2 years @ Homerton Coll
Minnie Pearson (25)	1909	music teacher	left school 16
Emma Ruth Ellis (28)	1909	nurse	nurse training, YWCA, maternity course
Winifred Fitzhenry (23)	1909	teacher	pupil teacher centre, Stockwell coll
Violet de Rosario (20)	1909	daughter-at-home	2 yrs, Missionary Training Sch, Muttra
Hilda Porteus (23)	1910	teacher	pupil teacher course, 2 yr Stockwell
Elizabeth Fergusson (29)	1911	teacher	pupil teacher, training coll
Margaret Rawson (30)	1911	nurse	teacher in Europe, nurse training
Muriel Hawkins (26)	1912	nurse-Ludhiana Hosp	Mary Datchelor, ? nurse training
Dorothy Curtis (25)	1914	student	LCC, Sorbonne, completing Birkbeck BA
Ethel B. Davies (24)	1915	'art student & teacher'	city school of art, liverpool
Daisy Webb (28)	1915	teacher	pupil teacher, Bristol U (no degree)
Mary Pearson (25)	1915	teacher, not certificated	school til 18, 2yrs pupil teacher
Daisy Knee (25)	1915	teacher, high school	left school 19, Mary Datchelor coll
Jessie Slater (23)	1915	clerk typist	taught at home by father
Mary E. Collett (23)	1916	daughter-at-home, ?teacher	school til 18

Source: Candidate papers, Angus Library

Applications to BZM/WMA to 1920

NAME AND AGE	DATE APP	OCCUPATION	EDUCATION
Dorothy Turner (28)	1916	nurse	2 yrs Westfield Coll, nurse training
Amy M. Smurthwaite (26)	1916	teacher	pupil teacher, Portsmouth coll for teachers
Carrie Hodgkinson (46)	1916	former missionary	taught by widow & daughter of BMS missionary
Edith Chapman (28)	1916	teacher	pupil teachers' school, U of London Day coll
Joyce Collier (23)	1917	teacher	U of Aberdeen, Bedford Coll (no degree)
Constance May (29)	1917	nurse	private school, ?nurse training
Dorothy Milward (22)	1918	teacher	left high school 18
Ruth Wigner (23)	1918	teacher	Datchelor school, 4 terms Froebel Inst
H. Halls (unknown)	1918	nurse	nurse training
Ellen Milledge (23)	1918	bookkeeper	left school 16, Clark's Coll (?clerk's?)
Beatrice Bull (25)	1918	student (ex-dressmaker)	left school 14, Radcliffe Hse for Miss Studs
Catherine Birrell (24)	1918	teacher	2 yrs @ Moray House teacher training coll
F. Marion Watson (25)	1918	student (Carey Hall)	private, high school, Carey Hall (3yr course)
G. Dorothea Ferguson (25)	1918	student (Carey Hall)	private, Bedford Coll, Carey Hall
Edith M. Rugg (29)	1919	showroom assistant	board school til 13, independent reading
Evelyn Allsop (27)	1919	teacher	school til 18, courses to teaching certif
W. Lois Watson, M.A. (25)	1919	student (ex-teacher)	Manchester U, Maria Grey Coll, Carey Hall
L. Nellie Lewis (32)	1919	former missionary	walthamstow hall
Winifred Williams, B.A. (29)	1919	teacher/M.A. candidate	BA Cardiff, research at PRO
Bessie Loosley (22)	1919	teacher	Natl Training School of Cookery (3 yrs)
Adelaide Smith (35)	1919	swimming instructor	left school 12, evening classes
Ethel Scruton (25)	1919	teacher	Univ Coll Reading (3 yrs), evening classes
Hilda Gibbs, B.A. (24)	1919	teacher	Bristol Univ - BA and diploma in education
Alice Wilkinson (24)	1919	teacher	3 yrs Leeds U - no BA but teaching certif
Elsie Walter (31)	1919	teacher	pupil teacher centre, Hartley Univ Coll

Source: Candidate papers, Angus Library

Applications to BZM/WMA to 1920

NAME AND AGE	RESIDENCE	FATHER'S OCC
Gertrude Fletcher (unknown)	Liverpool	alkali works inspector
Margaret Logan (25)	Glasgow	power loom tenter
Jessie Smyth (27)	London/Sunderland	carpenter
Emily Rossiter (27)	London	jeweller
Harriette Sifton (22)	London	asst sec GPO
Annie Theobald (25)	Norwich	unknown
Nina Ottmann, L.M.S. (26)	Berhampore, India	engineer, Indian pub wks
Ethel M. Payne (24)	London	commission agent
Alice Hampton (19)	Agra, India	capt - HM Indian Marine
Alice E. Francis (29)	Reading	civil engineer
Edith Young (25)	Harlow	draper & grocer
A. Miriam Young (25)	Harlow	draper & grocer
Fanny A. Vaughan (21)	Cuttack, India	BMS missionary
Mary Raw, M.B., B.S. (29)	Co. Durham	station-master & RR agent
Beatrice James (21)	Tredegar/Barry Dock	corresponding clerk of Barry RR
Violet Stanford (24)	London	decorator & builder
Gwaldus Jones (28)	Southsea/Anglesey	retired farmer
Amy M. Tuff (25)	Norwich	deceased
Minnie Pearson (25)	Southampton	doctor's dispenser
Emma Ruth Ellis (28)	London	builder & decorator
Winifred Fitzhenry (23)	London	agent Royal London Friendly Soc
Violet de Rosario (20)	Monghyr, India	ret accountant gen office
Hilda Porteus (23)	Bristol	dec, sup, bd of trade, merc marine
Elizabeth Fergusson (29)	Greenock	time keeper in mill
Margaret Rawson (30)	London	boot & shoe manufacturer
Muriel Hawkins (26)	India	public accountant
Dorothy Curtis (25)	London	chief clerk in Met Office
Ethel B. Davies (24)	Liverpool	cotton salesman
Daisy Webb (28)	Chipping Norton	Baptist minister - Rev G.A. Webb
Mary Pearson (25)	Truro	jewellery, optical busines
Daisy Knee (25)	Peterboro/Ipswich	deceased - Baptist minister
Jessie Slater (23)	Riding Mill on Tyne	Baptist minister - Rev P.F. Slater
Mary E. Collett (23)	Edinburgh	Baptist minister - Rev J. Collett

Source: Candidate papers, Angus Library

Applications to BZM/WMA to 1920

NAME AND AGE	RESIDENCE	FATHER'S OCC
Dorothy Turner (28)	Bristol	dentist & chemist
Amy M. Smurthwaite (26)	Smethwick/Bognor	ironmonger
Carrie Hodgkinson (46)	Bengal, India	adopted by Mary Leslie, Sale Inst, Calcutta
Edith Chapman (28)	London	copier in drawing office
Joyce Collier (23)	Grantham/Reading	builder & contractor
Constance May (29)	London/Exeter	ironmonger
Dorothy Milward (22)	Birmingham	former works manager
Ruth Wigner (23)	Surrey/London	senior clerk India Office
H. Halls (unknown)	London	unknown
Ellen Milledge (23)	Surrey	deceased - Baptist minister
Beatrice Bull (25)	London	deceased - 'in business'
Catherine Birrell (24)	Dunfermline	cloth lapper in linen factory
F. Marion Watson (25)	Rochdale	silk manufacturer
G. Dorothea Ferguson (25)	London	retired tea-planter in Ceylon
Edith M. Rugg (29)	Bristol	bootmaker (genteel poverty)
Evelyn Allsop (27)	Bradford	Baptist minister
W. Lois Watson, M.A. (25)	Gt Yarmouth/Rochdale	agent
L. Nellie Lewis (32)	Liverpool/China	BMS missionary Rev G.G. Turner
Winifred Williams, B.A. (29)	London/Cardiff	Baptist minister - Rev John Williams
Bessie Loosley (22)	High Wycombe	house furnisher
Adelaide Smith (35)	Dunfermline	deceased - power loom tenter
Ethel Scruton (25)	Reading	watchmaker & jeweller's assistant
Hilda Gibbs, B.A. (24)	Braintree/Bristol	grocer
Alice Wilkinson (24)	Leeds	pattern dyer
Elsie Walter (31)	W. Worthing	draper

Source: Candidate papers, Angus Library

Applications to BZM/WMA to 1920

NAME AND AGE	FAMILY
Gertrude Fletcher (unknown)	unknown
Margaret Logan (25)	unknown
Jessie Smyth (27)	unknown
Emily Rossiter (27)	unknown
Harriette Sifton (22)	unknown
Annie Theobald (25)	unknown
Nina Ottmann, L.M.S. (26)	unknown
Ethel M. Payne (24)	unknown
Alice Hampton (19)	unknown
Alice E. Francis (29)	unknown
Edith Young (25)	unknown
A. Miriam Young (25)	Sister Edith in BZM
Fanny A. Vaughan (21)	Father BMS
Mary Raw, M.B., B.S. (29)	father taught Sun School
Beatrice James (21)	father Sec Eng Bap Sun Sch of Wales
Violet Stanford (24)	sister in Zenana, Bible & Med Miss
Gwaldus Jones (28)	unknown
Amy M. Tuff (25)	unknown
Minnie Pearson (25)	unknown
Emma Ruth Ellis (28)	unknown
Winifred Fitzhenry (23)	unknown
Violet de Rosario (20)	father in missions after retiring
Hilda Porteus (23)	father a deacon
Elizabeth Fergusson (29)	father a deacon
Margaret Rawson (30)	unknown
Muriel Hawkins (26)	2 uncles Wesleyan ministers
Dorothy Curtis (25)	father friend of BMS sec
Ethel B. Davies (24)	unknown
Daisy Webb (28)	father Baptist minister
Mary Pearson (25)	uncle a Wesleyan minister
Daisy Knee (25)	father Baptist minister
Jessie Slater (23)	father Baptist minister
Mary E. Collett (23)	father Baptist minister

Source: Candidate papers, Angus Library

Applications to BZM/WMA to 1920

NAME AND AGE	FAMILY
Dorothy Turner (28)	friend of Hilda Porteus (BZM)
Amy M. Smurthwaite (26)	unknown
Carrie Hodgkinson (46)	foster mother a missionary
Edith Chapman (28)	father a deacon
Joyce Collier (23)	father sunday school supt
Constance May (29)	unknown
Dorothy Milward (22)	father a deacon
Ruth Wigner (23)	sister in BZM in Cuttack
H. Halls (unknown)	unknown
Ellen Milledge (23)	father Baptist minister
Beatrice Bull (25)	unknown
Catherine Birrell (24)	unknown
F. Marion Watson (25)	'well-known Lancashire Baptist family'
G. Dorothea Ferguson (25)	unknown
Edith M. Rugg (29)	unknown
Evelyn Allsop (27)	father Baptist minister
W. Lois Watson, M.A. (25)	unknown
L. Nellie Lewis (32)	husband Dr John Lewis
Winifred Williams, B.A. (29)	father Baptist minister
Bessie Loosley (22)	unknown
Adelaide Smith (35)	Miss Fletcher supports her desire to go
Ethel Scruton (25)	father organist in church
Hilda Gibbs, B.A. (24)	father a deacon
Alice Wilkinson (24)	unknown
Elsie Walter (31)	missionary friends of family, sister couldn't go

Source: Candidate papers, Angus Library

Applications to BZM/WMA to 1920

NAME AND AGE	FURTHER EDUCATION REQ?
Gertrude Fletcher (unknown)	no
Margaret Logan (25)	maternity course & reading - referred to BMS
Jessie Smyth (27)	no
Emily Rossiter (27)	no
Harriette Sifton (22)	Burnbank Gardens
Annie Theobald (25)	no
Nina Ottmann, L.M.S. (26)	no
Ethel M. Payne (24)	no
Alice Hampton (19)	no
Alice E. Francis (29)	no
Edith Young (25)	no
A. Miriam Young (25)	no
Fanny A. Vaughan (21)	no
Mary Raw, M.B., B.S. (29)	no
Beatrice James (21)	course @ UFC Scotland home
Violet Stanford (24)	no
Gwaldus Jones (28)	no
Amy M. Tuff (25)	no
Minnie Pearson (25)	1 years' training (unspecified)
Emma Ruth Ellis (28)	no
Winifred Fitzhenry (23)	ctte rec Miss Train home, but settle for lang course
Violet de Rosario (20)	no
Hilda Porteus (23)	no
Elizabeth Fergusson (29)	no
Margaret Rawson (30)	no
Muriel Hawkins (26)	no
Dorothy Curtis (25)	no
Ethel B. Davies (24)	no
Daisy Webb (28)	had wanted more, but couldn't afford it
Mary Pearson (25)	training in 1916 & 1918 no travel due to war
Daisy Knee (25)	1 year at Carey Hall
Jessie Slater (23)	2 yrs @ Carey Hall (had to save for it)
Mary E. Collett (23)	3 years at Carey Hall

Source: Candidate papers, Angus Library

Applications to BZM/WMA to 1920

NAME AND AGE	FURTHER EDUCATION REQ?
Dorothy Turner (28)	no (applied 1913, but was ill and failed apothecaries exams)
Amy M. Smurthwaite (26)	1 year (?at Carey Hall)
Carrie Hodgkinson (46)	no
Edith Chapman (28)	no
Joyce Collier (23)	no
Constance May (29)	MMA OK, WMA want her to have 1 year at Carey Hall
Dorothy Milward (22)	1 year at Carey Hall
Ruth Wigner (23)	recommends another year of teaching, then 1 yr Carey Hall
H. Halls (unknown)	no
Ellen Milledge (23)	3 years at Carey Hall
Beatrice Bull (25)	midwife training
Catherine Birrell (24)	2 yrs at UFC Scotland House
F. Marion Watson (25)	no
G. Dorothea Ferguson (25)	one more year at Carey Hall
Edith M. Rugg (29)	1 years' training in Edinburgh
Evelyn Allsop (27)	2 years at Carey Hall
W. Lois Watson, M.A. (25)	no
L. Nellie Lewis (32)	no
Winifred Williams, B.A. (29)	no
Bessie Loosley (22)	'Carey Hall course'
Adelaide Smith (35)	accepted only because Mathewsons' offer to pay training
Ethel Scruton (25)	'course at Carey Hall'
Hilda Gibbs, B.A. (24)	1 year at Carey Hall
Alice Wilkinson (24)	3 years at Carey Hall
Elsie Walter (31)	no

Source: Candidate papers, Angus Library

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