



# Women in Missions and Social Justice Ministries

WOMEN IN CHRISTIAN HISTORY

MRCC FALL '21



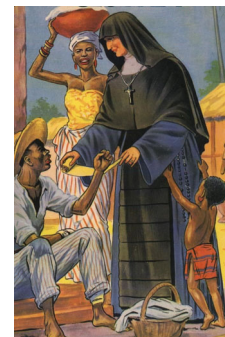
1



Sor Jerónima  
(1555-1630)  
Philippines



Marie de l'Incarnation  
(1599-1672)  
New France/Canada



Anne-Marie Javouhey  
(1779-1851)  
Senegal

## *Pioneer Catholic Missionaries*

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2



## Second Great Awakening (1800-1850)

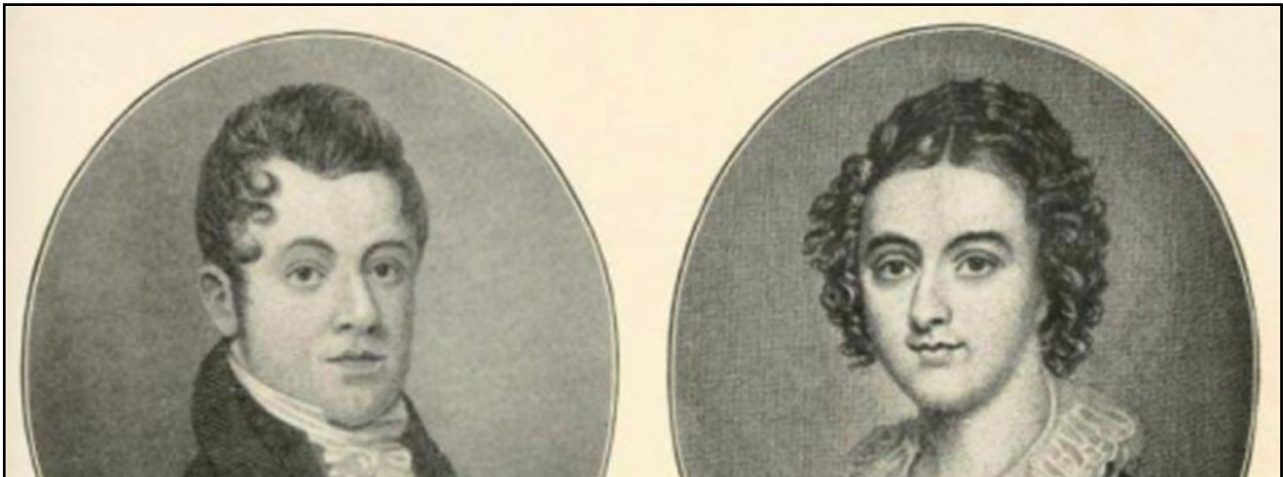


### CANE RIDGE REVIVAL

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Sketch by an artist of an opening phase of the revival held at Cane Ridge, Bourbon County, Ken-

3



## Protestant Missionary Wives

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4

## Missiology of the Christian Home

- Wives saw homemaking as a form of Christian witness
  - "By interpreting family life as a mission agency, the mission wives sacralized the myriad activities that ate up their strength and their days" (Robert, "Evangelist or Homemaker?" 10)
- "Mother's Unions"



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5

*Narcissa Prentiss Whitman  
(1808-1847)*

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6



Meta Chestnutt  
(1863-1948)

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7

## Women's Missionary Societies

- Woman's Union Missionary Society (1861)
  - Interdenominational mission's sending board
  - Purpose: "to send out and maintain single women as Bible-readers and teachers, and to raise up native female laborers in heathen lands"
- Woman's Foreign Missionary Society (1869)
  - Methodist
  - Focused on humanitarian work of education and healthcare
  - By 1903, it had 265 missionaries working in India, China, Japan, Korea, Africa, Bulgaria, Italy, South America, Mexico, and the Philippines, by means of women's colleges, high schools, seminaries, hospitals, dispensaries, day schools, and "settlement work"
- Christian Women's Board of Missions (1874)
  - Restorationists
- Women's Missionary Union (1888)
  - Baptist
  - Largest Protestant missions organization for women



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8



Adele Marion Fielde  
(1839-1916)

9




## “Bible Women”

- Local women in Asia and Africa who were hired and trained by women's boards and paid a modest wage to distribute Bibles and tracts from village to village
  - Began as an urban mission in London slums in 1857
  - Formed the Female Education Society (FES)
- “The role of Bible woman was the first independent ministry role available to Christian women in Asia and Africa” (Robert, *Christian Mission*)
- By 1900, there were 40 training schools in China, 30 in India; by 1910, nearly 6,000 Bible women globally

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10



## Adele Fielde

"I have journeyed seven weary months over tempestuous seas and in strange lands to meet my beloved and I found his grave with the grass upon it seven months old. I have come to my house; it is left unto me desolate. While I stood holding out my hand for a cup of happiness, one of fearful bitterness was pressed violently to my lips. I looked joyful to Providence and it turned upon me a face of inexpressible darkness. And because I believe in God I have been able to endure it."

*(Baptist Missionary Magazine)*

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11



## Lottie Moon (1840-1912)

"What women have a right to demand is perfect equality."

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12

## Sarah Andrews (1893-1961)



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13

## Ethnocentrism

- Difficult to distinguish 19<sup>th</sup> century missions and colonialism
- Tendency to view Western culture as superior
- "White savior complex"



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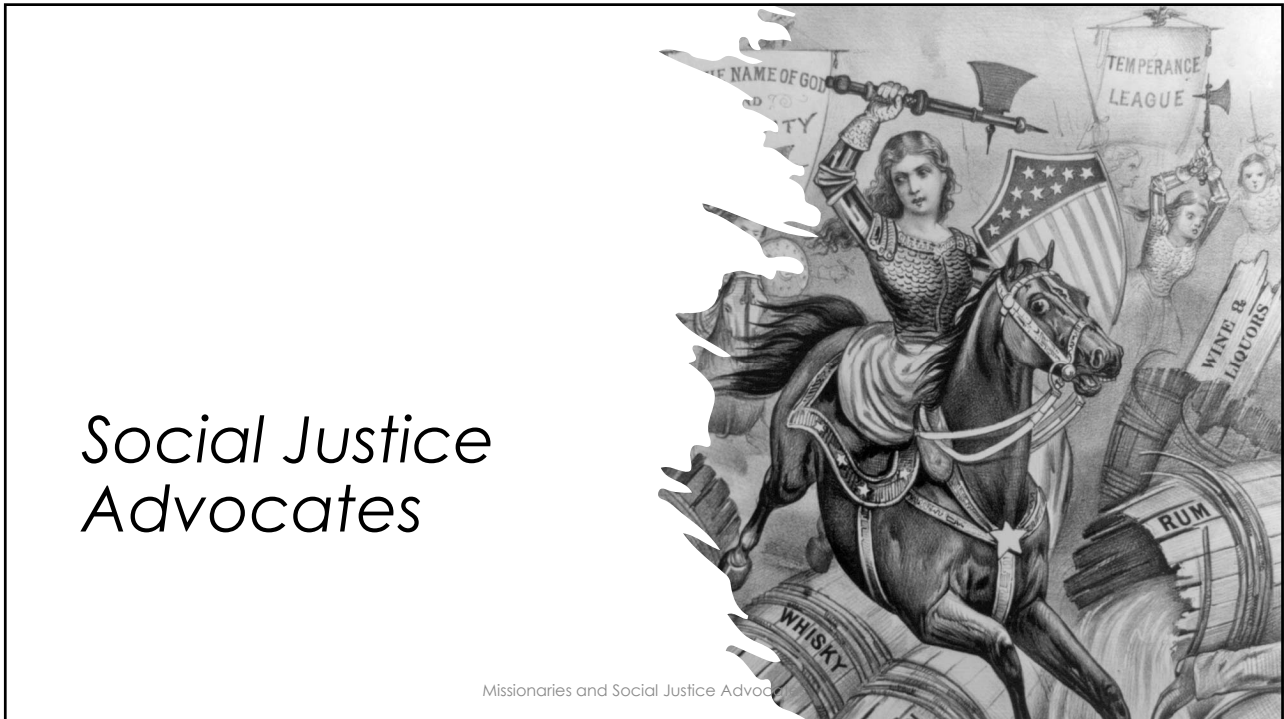
14



## Supporting Women's Rights

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15



## Social Justice Advocates

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16





## The 19<sup>th</sup> Century

- Race-Based Slavery and Colonialism
- Industrialization and Urbanization
- Women as Moral Leaders

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17

## “Cult of True Womanhood”

- Idea about women which developed in the Victorian Era (late 19<sup>th</sup> cen.) among white middle-class Protestants
- True women possessed four virtues:
  - Piety – religious practice and morality
  - Purity – virginity to be preserved until marriage
  - Domesticity – proper place was in home
  - Submissiveness - obedient “as children” to husband
- Home “taught” femininity and sheltered it because women were thought too mentally and physically weak to leave



Evangelicals and Gender

18



## Elizabeth Ann Seton (1774-1821)

- Founded Sisters of Charity, first American order of nuns
- First U.S.-born person canonized as a saint

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## St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic School

Edmond, OK



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20




## Catholic Sisters

"In addition to their major work of teaching and nursing, nuns ran child-care facilities, orphanages, mental institutions, settlement houses, residences for working women and for single mothers, and homes for delinquent girls. Nuns oversaw an empire of interlocking institutions that constituted Catholic social services in most U.S. cities and towns." (Braude, *Sisters and Saints*, 72-73)

In 1900, sisters operated 3,811 schools, 663 academies for girls, and 265 hospitals

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21



## Betsy Fry (1780-1845)

PRISON REFORMER AND SOCIAL ACTIVIST

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22




## Kaiserswerth Union (1836)

- Inspired by Betsy Fry, Lutheran pastor Theodor Fliedner founded Kaiserswerth Diakonie, a hospital and deaconess training center
  - Young women learned both theology and nursing skills
  - Deaconesses took temporary vows to care for the sick and impoverished
- Florence Nightingale trained there in the 1852
- By 1864, there were 30 motherhouses and 1,600 deaconesses worldwide.
- By the middle of the 20th century, there were over 35,000 deaconesses serving in parishes, schools, hospitals, and prisons throughout the world.

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23



## Florence Nightingale (1820-1910)

- English social reformer, statistician and the founder of modern nursing
  - Improved healthcare in Britain
  - Hunger relief in India
  - Abolished prostitution laws
  - Helped women in the workforce
- Chose celibacy to serve sick
- Founded first secular nursing school
  - Intense personal devotion to Christ
  - Advocate for religious tolerance
  - Universalist

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24

## Women and Abolition

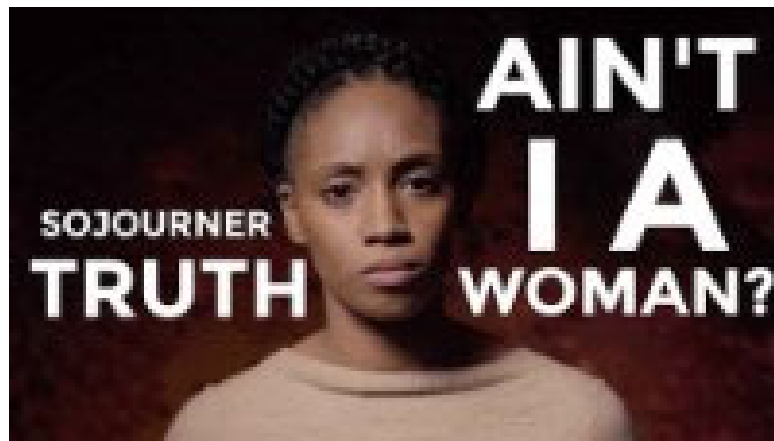
By the 1840s, black and white women served as antislavery lecturers, editors, fundraisers and organizers. Slaveholders fumed at women's activism. The southern literary messenger referred to abolitionist women as "politicians in petticoats" who needlessly stirred up trouble on the slavery issue.

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25

## Sojourner Truth (1797-1893)



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26

## Angelina and Sarah Grimké (1800-1870)

ABOLITIONISTS AND WOMEN'S  
RIGHTS ACTIVISTS

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27

## Grimké Sisters

"I know you do not make the laws, but I also know that you are the wives and mothers, the sisters and daughters of those who do; and if you really suppose you can do nothing to overthrow slavery, you are greatly mistaken."

*Appeal to the Christian  
Women of the South (1836)*

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28

## Ida B. Wells (1862-1931)

- Investigative journalist and Civil Rights Leader
- Documented lynchings and sexual assaults



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29



## Temperance Movement

- Urbanization and Industrialization increased alcoholism, which was disproportionately bad for women and children
  - In most states, women had no rights to custody of children
  - All property, including wages, belonged to husbands
- Women's Christian Temperance Union (1873)
  - Began in Ohio when women showed up in saloons to pray and sing
  - "Good morning, destroyer of men's souls."

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30

## Carrie Nation (1846-1911)

- "Hatchet Granny"
- Temperance leader
- She described herself as "a bulldog running along at the feet of Jesus, barking at what He doesn't like"



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31

## Frances Willard (1839-1898)


- President of the WCTU
- Situated temperance work in larger social context
- Advocated for 8-hour workdays, free public education and school lunches, women's higher ed and suffrage, welfare programs for poor, laws against child abuse and rape



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32





## Settlement House Movement

- Social movement that began in 1880s and peaked in the 1920s
- Brought together rich and poor by settling middle-class volunteers in poor urban neighborhoods
- Houses provided services such as daycare, English classes, education, and healthcare



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33



## Hull House

- Hull House, founded in 1889 by Jane Addams and Ellen Starr
- Served European immigrants with social, educative, and artistic programs

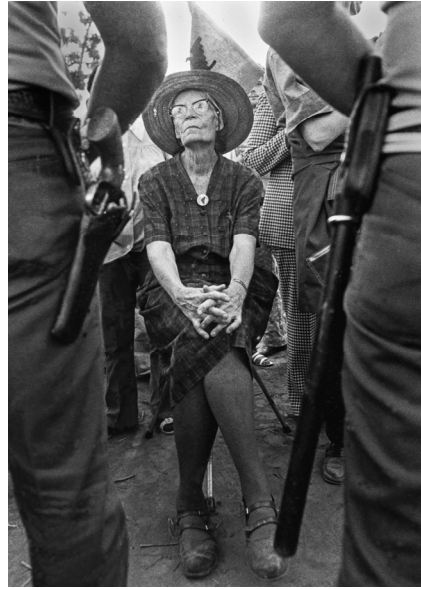


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34

## Dorothy Day (1887-1980)

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35

## Women and the Bible



- Women began responding to arguments against women's rights based in traditional interpretations of scripture
  - Suffragist and abolitionist **Lucretia Mott** become an expert at disarming men who used Scripture against her.
  - At the National Women's Rights Conventions of 1852, and 1854, she publicly debated men
- In 1849, Mott wrote *Discourse on Woman* which discussed Adam and Eve, the activities of various women who appear in the Bible, and argued that the Bible supported woman's right to speak aloud her spiritual beliefs.
  - Rev. Henry Grew told the 1854 convention audience that the Bible proved men were naturally superior to women.
  - Mott responded: "It is not Christianity, but priestcraft that has subjected woman as we find her. The Church and State have been united, and it is well for us to see it so."

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36

