

**Gleaners in the Holy Land:
Women and the Missionary Press in Victorian Britain**

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<1>Scholars have long mined missionary periodicals as sources for information on British religious, imperial and cultural history. As historical documents these often well-indexed and highly accessible papers prove invaluable. All major Victorian church organizations that engaged in missionary activities had their own periodicals that included several hundred titles in total (Barringer et al.). Periodicals such as the *Female Missionary Intelligencer* (1854-1899), *Daybreak* (1886-1918), and *India's Women* (1881-1957), for example, specifically targeted female audiences and employed women journalists in Britain in order to drum up support for missionary work abroad. Church-based magazines run by organizations including the Church of England, the Quakers, and Methodists published extensive information on missionary work in their pages.

<2>This article explores the question of what the missionary press can offer historians of gender. The significant place held by missionary periodicals in the journalistic landscape suggests that such publications deserve closer examination by scholars.(1) As the titles cited above indicate, women did participate in the production and consumption of missionary periodicals. The following case study of women and the religious press in the pages of the Church Missionary Society's (CMS) flagship journal, the *Gleaner* (1841-1870, 1874-1921) explores how historians might use religious periodicals to better understand women's participation in the gendered world of the Victorian missionary movement. Missionary periodicals brought stories from the mission field home through narrative strategies that cultivated interest in particular projects and recruited participants. As Anna Johnston has noted, editors, writers and church officials of missionary periodicals created new ways of connecting readers to mission projects by using rhetorical and journalistic strategies popular in the mainstream press, such as human interest stories, high-quality illustrations, and serialized stories ("British Missionary" 22-25). In addition, missionary journals, according to Josef Altholz, supplied much of the Victorians' geographical knowledge and "contributed to interest in the Empire" (123).

<3>Regions under informal British influence fared similarly as the Ottoman Empire emerged as a focus of evangelical work during the second half of the nineteenth century. The religious press offered one of the clearest visual and prose representations of the Holy Land as a welcome place particularly suited for women missionaries. The story of British women missionaries animated some of the earliest and most important work on gender and empire after the imperial turn.(2) On

one level, the case of women and the religious press supports these historians' claims that women's representation of their experiences in the mission field reinforced the unequal power relations between colonized and colonizer inherent to the imperial project. The representation of mission work in the Ottoman Empire, however, also complicates this narrative. First, as part of Britain's "informal empire" British imperial claims had only a tangential hold on these mission projects. Second, the region's singular status as the Holy Land offered as many opportunities for women in particular to forge new connections based on claims of kinship with the people and places represented by Victorians as the land of the Bible. Finally, the liminal status of the Ottoman Empire in British imperial thinking put CMS missionaries on less sure footing. Women missionaries thus had to understand the project of conversion and philanthropy in broader terms that had little to do with the concerns of formal empire.

<4>Rather than representing women as mere agents of the civilizing mission, the missionary press demonstrates how women missionaries located themselves as central to the project of organizations like the CMS. The press also shows how women missionaries implicitly challenged gender hierarchies by understanding their importance to the organization as women. In the case of the Near East, the number of women going into the mission field grew steadily making them the significant majority of missionary workers by the late nineteenth century (Tusan 636). This increasing presence garnered the attention of church leaders and the missionary press. Campaigns that supported industrial work schemes, often run by women, further promoted an imagined community that connected those served by the CMS's Mediterranean and Persian missions with readers at home and the missionaries themselves. Articles in periodicals like the *Gleaner* featured stories of missionary adventures that placed women missionaries at the center of a drama that promoted connections between Britons and Eastern Orthodox Christians. At the same time, missionary periodicals offered a vision of evangelical revivalism that included women's voices in some expected and unexpected ways.

The *Gleaner's* New Mission

<5>For the CMS, The Mediterranean Mission, according to one historian writing in 1899, was the organization's "most important new venture" in the early nineteenth century:

From the earliest days of the infant Society, the Committee's eyes had been upon 'the East', that is, those Oriental lands where ancient Christian Churches were living a barely tolerated life under the oppressive rule of the Turk. 'If those Churches,' they said, 'could be brought back to the knowledge and love of the sacred Scripture' might they not become 'efficient instruments of rescuing the Mohammedans from delusion and death?' (Stock 1:38)

The Mission itself, however, had particular difficulty getting off the ground and struggled periodically throughout the nineteenth century for a variety of reasons that included a lack of qualified mission workers and resistance from church and local authorities in the Ottoman Empire. The first three CMS university graduates were sent out to do this work in 1810 and helped establish a press in Malta and numerous Bible societies throughout the Ottoman Empire to serve Eastern Orthodox Christian communities that included the Greeks, Armenians, and Syrians. Significantly, the CMS understood its mission not to remake but to "revive" these

ancient Christian churches by bringing them into the fold of the Protestant faith. Through this effort, they hoped to also “have an effect on the Mohammedan and Heathen World” (Stock 1:222).(3)

<6>The *Gleaner* brought stories of the East home to Victorian readers as a place ripe for missionary intervention. By the late nineteenth century, the growth in the number of women missionaries meant that this new mission field offered new opportunities for women to play a crucial role in this project. Missionaries in particular began to see the Ottoman Empire as fertile ground to spread their message among the Christian minority populations, mainly Greek, Bulgarian, and Armenian.(4) The Anglican CMS project of converting Muslims to Christianity further revived interest in the region as the birthplace of Christianity.(5)

<7>The Victorian embrace of the emerging field of biblical archeology secured the “Holy Land” as a place of religious and scientific exploration that opened up this world to the West in a new way. Britons came to imagine the Ottoman Empire over the course of the nineteenth century, as Nancy Stockdale has suggested, through a set of lenses colored by the popularly held belief in “the region’s singular status as the ‘Holy Land’” (1). This held particular appeal for women missionaries, who saw the region as the birthplace of Christianity, a familiar and thus appropriate place to work.

<8>The religious press proved an ideal space to promote the work of the CMS in regions unfamiliar to its constituencies such as the Mediterranean. The *Gleaner*, as one of over forty CMS publications, served as an organ for the society to promote its mission work. Missionary periodicals, as Althoz has argued, were not published “for the use of missionaries but rather to build up their home base of recruits and contributors” (142). The *Gleaner* was no exception. Establishing a lasting presence in the mission field proved a central concern for the CMS when it started in 1799. Competition with other British and American missionary organizations and a less than enthusiastic endorsement by the Archbishop of Canterbury meant that the CMS had to work hard from the beginning to drum up support among its constituents (Keen 8).

<9>In 1841, the CMS made the *Gleaner* its official organ to promote its mission work. Priced at two pence, the organization gave away many more than it sold of this heavily subsidized chronicle of society reports and records. According to the editor, Eugene Stock, high production costs, dull content, and a general decline in “missionary zeal and interest” led the CMS to drop the periodical in 1870, a move not “lamented by anybody” (Stock “Story” 5). Stock helped revive the *Gleaner* in 1874 as a sixteen page quarto sized “popular magazine” under the guidance of CMS secretary, Rev. Henry Wright. In the place of unreadable reports Stock introduced a “new *Gleaner*,” with illustrations, serialized stories, and a two column format that imitated popular mainstream periodicals. These innovations worked and by the 1890s the monthly circulation reached its peak at 82,000 (Keen 13).

<10>Mission work in the Ottoman Empire emerged as a regular feature in the new *Gleaner*. To engage readers in the Mediterranean project, the paper published stories that defined the Near East in both historical and geographical terms. The lead story in the May 1874 issue introduced the mission to readers in the following way: “It was natural that the eyes of the early Committee

of the Church Missionary Society, surveying the vast fields of labour open before them, should rest with peculiar interest on the lands of the Bible.” These “lands of the Bible” initially included Greece, Turkey, Asia Minor, Syria, Egypt, “and even Abyssinia,” though the CMS soon abandoned its failed efforts in Egypt and Abyssinia. What united these regions was their status as a place where early Christianity originated that now was under Muslim rule and the influence of ancient Eastern Churches “steeped in ignorance and superstition” (“Mediterranean” 1).

<11>In a *Gleaner* article entitled “Missionary News,” the editor argued that readers had a clear duty to see this region as part of the mission work of the CMS: “Was it not one of the most sacred duties of the Reformed Church to send the pure Gospel to the regions from whence it had first come?” (1). This call to action offered readers a reason to see the struggling Mediterranean mission as a centerpiece of CMS work. The lack of success of the mission had nothing to do with either the message or the messenger. Rather, “Hardness of heart, and contempt of God’s work and commandment—these are the characteristic features of both Moslems and so-called Christians in Eastern Lands.” The article’s final appeal offered a prayer for the “Jews, Turks, infidels and heretics” that would draw the lands of the Bible and the people that inhabited it closer to the Protestant faith.

<12>Coverage of the society’s “New Mission to Persia” in May 1876 expanded this view. Like the Mediterranean Mission, the paper represented Persia as the land of the Bible that exemplified Protestant values, “the country of Cyrus, where Daniel and Nehemiah showed how God-fearing men may be wise and trusted statesmen, and where Queen Esther exemplified the power of believing in prayer” (76). This framing of work in the Mediterranean Mission as an effort aimed at bringing back a “corrupted” Christian church to its origins required forging connections between Britons and Eastern Orthodox Christians. The protagonists in this story of the mission were the founder and his wife. Though Rev. Robert Bruce’s interest in Persia dated back to the CMS’s early beginnings, when it translated a version of the Bible into Persian, “the stern law of the Koran, which condemns to death a Mohammedan changing his religion” and a “deficiency in funds” had prevented the CMS from establishing an actual missionary outpost.

<13>It took Bruce’s initiative while on leave from his work in India in 1869 to get the mission started. Bruce found a way to convince hesitant church officials regarding the establishment of this mission by drawing on familiar markers that connected the region geographically and historically to the mission project. Settling in the minority Christian Armenian quarter in Julfa, outside of the historic Persian capital of Ispahan, Bruce argued that he could minister to Orthodox Christians while gaining a foothold among the majority Muslim population. His school for Armenian boys also included some Muslims and his relief during the “Persian famine” of 1871-1872 “bound him more closely than ever to the country” (“New Mission to Persia” 76). By 1876, when the mission was approved, Bruce’s work had expanded the reach of the CMS in the Near East beyond the Mediterranean to Persia.

<14>Bruce’s struggle to gain acceptance of the Persian Mission project meant that he had to use creative ways to drum up support. Bruce appealed to readers by inviting them to travel with him through time and space to “see” the mission for themselves: “Dear readers, will you accompany me on a journey to Persia? You will never understand our Mission till you pay it a

visit” (“Persia” 6). On this “visit” he remaps Persia for his audience in terms of its close relationship with Britain:

I must tell you first there is no such kingdom of Persia. Persia is a misnomer: the Shah calls himself not the Shah of Persia but of Iran. Persia is only a province of Iran and Iran is the same word as Aryan, which reminds us that the Iranians are our near of kin, and like all true Aryans, have great capabilities, so that if they could only be made Christians they would be as noble a race as their cousins the Anglo-Saxons. (“Persia” 6)

This dramatic travel tale invented a Persia for Britons intimately connected to their own story of origins. Even the geography of Persia was drawn closer to British shores through the promise of bringing a vaguely defined “Aryan” people back into the fold as Anglo-Saxon kin. In this reading, the Near East had the potential for redemption through the work of the mission’s faithful.

<15>The Near East came into clearer focus in the coming years through stories that featured the struggles of missionaries serving in the Mediterranean and Persia. Readers could track the progress of missionaries in the Near East in a number of ways. News bulletins serialized the movements and work of missionaries such as Bruce. The column “Epitome of Missionary News” printed monthly tidbits of missionary activities throughout the world. These included mentions of personnel changes such as the appointment of a medical missionary, Mr. E. Hoernle, in Persia in 1878 and details of the needs and day-to-day activities of the mission (“Epitome” September 1878, 109). Persecution of new converts led the CMS to make appeals “to the Persian authorities through the British minister at Tehran” (“Epitome” September 1878, 127). The column also included appeals for funds for 1,500L in subscriptions to the fledgling Special Persian Mission Fund (“Epitome” December 1877, 132). Bruce kept the mission in the news by reporting not only the trials but the progress of his mission building scheme that “was proceeding without interruption” (“Epitome” June 1877, 67). These reports cultivated a sense of familiarity among readers with the distant world of the Near East.

<16>Serialized stories proved another means of bringing this world into focus by offering readers a look at the drama of missionary life through the eyes of the participants. “Mrs. Bruce arrived safely at Julfa, Ispahan, on June 19, after her long and trying journey across Russia, the Caspian Sea, and Persia,” the *Gleaner* announced in its November 1876 issue (Mrs. Bruce, 107). She subsequently published a three part serialized story of her journey entitled, “From London to Ispahan.” Her fifty-five day adventure (“the journey would have only taken forty days, but for detentions at various places”) included familiar ports of call such as Dover, Cologne and Berlin. From there, less well-known geographic markers like the Volga and the Caspian Sea brought Bruce and her traveling companion, another missionary wife, to the Caucasus. Readers then followed her to Tehran, where she was met by “our dear and faithful Armenian pupil, Carapet Zorab” and a host of Armenian and Persian servants whom her husband engaged to carry her parquin to her destination at Julfa (Mrs. Bruce 107).

<17>This “plain and most matter-of-fact narrative” detailing her travels through Europe and the Caucasus to Persia was anything but, and included tales of personal deprivation and physical

danger (Mrs. Bruce, March 1877, 40). These ranged from minor inconveniences like poor lodgings and inedible food to a lame horse that threatened her bodily injury when it overturned her carriage. Most shockingly, her portrait included a detailed portrayal of the stoning and subsequent mutilation of an Armenian Christian because of his faith by a Muslim mob in the streets of Tehran. Bruce's stark representation of the lands over which she traveled and the injustices that she witnessed offered a dramatic portrait of the CMS mission. The final installment of her narrative ended on a hopeful note with the relating of the expansion of "the chapel and other rooms for Mission purposes" to accommodate the growing Armenian congregation (Mrs. Bruce, March 1877, 40).

<18>Other stories of travels in the Near East mapped the region as both a familiar and welcoming land. "A Holiday Among the Mountains of Persia" represented the region as the perfect place for a missionary to take a much-needed rest with his companions. Bruce's successor, Rev. C.H. Stileman's travels through the mountains outside of Julfa reminded him of home: "We could now almost imagine ourselves in Devonshire, as we were in a well-watered, fertile valley everything green around us, with narrow lanes passing between orchards full of ripening apples and plums and other fruit" (122). Another story, "By-Ways of the Pleasant Land" by "A Lady Missionary," told of a picturesque journey taken by a female missionary and her entourage of "native helpers" on the "Sultan's Highway" (4). Lacking geographical specificity, the tale painted a portrait of a not unfamiliar, rugged landscape: "Imagine a brilliant June morning," she invited readers. "The night dews only to quickly roll away from the hills but still hanging here and there in faint white vapour; vineyards in fragrant blossom, green with the bright, fresh verdure of early summer, a western breeze tempering the scorching rays of the sun." With her "medicine case in her saddle bags," she presses forward to her destination, a dangerous but obtainable objective: "Away in the blue distance is our goal, a village truly set on a hill. We climb the giddy zigzag path which leads to it, only too thankful that we can return another way, for how could we ride down that break-neck stair!"

<19>That both this narrative and Bruce's were written by women is significant. These stories suggest that women missionaries, who made up two thirds of foreign missionary workers during this period (Cox 153), could find both adventure and a new home in the Near East.⁽⁶⁾ After 1891, single women missionaries in Persia made up a significantly larger number of missionaries than men, a number that increases when married women are added to it (Francis-Dehqani 94). So successful had women been in the mission field that the *Gleaner* published a poem entitled, "Wanted-Men!" in June of 1897. Women's work in the Persian and Mediterranean Missions received extensive coverage in the *Gleaner*. "Among Moslem Women," "Persia 1894: The Women's Dispensary" and "Women's Work for Women in Egypt and Palestine" chronicled the work of intrepid female missionaries throughout the region. Miss Mary Bird's "Annual Letter" in 1894 described her challenging but ultimately successful medical work along with other female missionaries at Julfa. Resistance from the local Mullahs led to threats on her life but her service to others in the community who had no objection to her presence ultimately, she claimed, made the people "more anxious to hear the gospel" ("The Women's" 56). The perceived success of women in this mission field mirrored that in other fields and by the last quarter of the nineteenth century made the Near East a legitimate place for single women and missionary wives to settle and represent their experiences to the missionary public ("Pictures" 96-100).

<20>Women’s symbolic significance to this project found its clearest articulation in the choice of a female symbol to represent the *Gleaner* soon after its rebirth in 1874 [Figure 1]. The frontispiece contained an image of a woman dressed in dark colored robes carrying wheat gleaned from the fields by the men pictured in the background. Curly black hair peaks out beneath the flowing white scarf that covers her head. Her dark skin and eyebrows highlight European features to complete the portrait and engages the reader through her piercing gaze. The motto under the image reads, “And Ruth said, Let me now go to the field, and glean. And she went, and came, and gleaned in the field.” The Old Testament reference along with the Europeanized image of a woman in eastern dress represented another way of creating cultural commonalities in the face of religious and ethnic difference. By the turn of the century, the image of the woman depicted on the cover of the *Gleaner* had changed to more clearly emphasize the role that the CMS believed Christian minorities would play in helping to convert Muslims. This image depicted an unveiled woman in dress typical of Armenian Christians.

<21>Stories that rewrote indigenous narratives further contributed to this hybrid representation of the Near East. These tales often included a moral that appealed to readers not to see these societies as so distant from their own. For example, the Rev. R.H. Weakley, a missionary at Constantinople contributed “The Cow and the Calf: A Story of Turks and Christians,” a parable translated from a “Native Protestant journal.” The story represented Armenians as a persecuted Christian minority at the hands of a badly-run Turkish state that failed to recognize the property rights of non-Muslim populations. The plea for “equality before the law for all classes” rested in the hands not of a “temporal power” but the spread of Protestant values through missionary work (Weakley 24).

Forging Connections

<22> Even tales of failed missionary efforts helped broaden the connections between the Christian community in Britain and the one the CMS hoped to “revive” in the Near East. The Constantinople Mission had been plagued by difficulties from the beginning. Started in 1818 it was closed three years later “owing to an outbreak of popular fanaticism” and then restarted in 1858 in the wake of the Crimean War only to end again in 1877 (“New Mission” 122). The end of the Russo-Turkish war in 1878 provided new opportunities. The British had played a central role in negotiating the terms of peace and soften the terms of the Treaty of San Stefano of March 1878 in favor of Turkey. When the treaty was rewritten as the Treaty of Berlin in July of 1878, the British government had removed the clause that would have forced Turkey to liberalize its policy regarding the rights of Ottoman Christian minorities. In the wake of these changes, the *Gleaner* reported that “several friends urged upon the CMS the importance of resuming its work in Turkey and Asia Minor, in view of the increased opening of those countries which will probably result from recent political changes” (“Epitome” January 1879, 12). The society decided to focus its work on existing mission stations where it would broaden its focus and minister to both Christian minorities and nomadic and settler Arab populations in Palestine, despite prohibitions against the conversion of Muslims (“New Work” 21). The New Mission Church at Jerusalem, in place of the failed Mission at Constantinople, emerged as the centerpiece of this work in the heart of the Holy Land.

<23>Missionaries worked hard to solicit support for their mission to convert Muslims to the faith. Narratives of the challenge of conversion were often accompanied by stories that offered small encouragements from the field. “Islam and Christian Missions” cast Muslims as intractable: “The Gospel in the Mission Field has no more powerful or bitter foe than Islam” (68). Converts were brutally punished and missionaries who entered Muslim homes were sometimes kicked out. Stories of proselytizing efforts, however, demonstrated an eagerness to draw in Muslim converts just as missionaries had done with Orthodox Christians. “Although we are nearly always well received,” wrote Miss J. Ellis from Cairo, “perhaps I ought to tell also that we have been literally turned out of four houses by the husbands of the women, one of them (a teacher in one of the Government schools) being exceedingly rude, and telling us ‘never to come there again’ but it is a marvel to me, visiting entirely among Moslems as we do, that we are not oftener subject to this kind of treatment” (“Editorial Notes” 6).

<24>The *Gleaner* offered more concrete forms of mapping connections between Britain and the Near East. “A journey to Iran is not so formidable an undertaking as some think it to be,” admonished the Rev. Bruce in his 1894 article, “Persia and the Persia Mission.” Much as his wife had done in her travelogue twenty years earlier, Bruce takes the reader on a journey from London to Iran that ends in familiar territory. In this case, “the Northern Liverpool of Iran”:

Twenty-four hours will take you from London to Berlin and fifty more thence to Odessa. In from three to five days you will cross the Black Sea to Batoum and in thirty-six hours you will get across the Caucasus by train to Baku ... A sail of thirty-six hours, in a good Russian steamer on the Caspian ought to complete the journey and land you at Enzelli, the Northern Liverpool of Iran. (Bruce, “Persia” 3)

A journey that had taken forty-five days, thanks to improvements in railway communication funded in part by British capital, could now be completed in less than ten days. Bruce’s accompanying map entitled, “Mohammedan Lands,” situated the region that much closer to Britain by showing Persia’s proximity to both Europe and India. This geography lesson drew Persia in the middle of British engagements in the East.

<25>A little more than ten years later, another map expanded this notion in the context of the “Moslem Fund Campaign.” “Our needs are so great and urgent that we must seek to enlist the help of all classes,” implored a writer for the “From the Home Field” column (32). The article depicted a square collection box, the “Moslem Box,” decorated with a map that split the world between Christian Europe and the Muslim East [Figure 2]. At the center lay the Near East mission projects of the CMS with tentacles extending to all Muslim-ruled territory: “The ‘octopus’ map which demonstrates very vividly the Moslem Menace, is in itself a powerful plea,” the author concluded (32). With Europe pictured above and India to the far right of the picture, the sketch mapped British interests in the Near East. The pie chart on the opposite side furthered this argument by characterizing the number of people under Christian rule, a number greater augmented by the presence of the British Empire in places like India and East Africa. The Moslem Box provided a visual representation of how the CMS had mapped the world in terms of the Christian/ Muslim divide over the course of the Victorian period. This representation of the

Near East extended beyond the community of readers for the *Gleaner* to those who had the box physically passed to them in church and at CMS meetings.

<26>By the turn of the century these stories and visual representations added up to a portrait of the Ottoman Empire that brought the Near East closer to Britain. Women missionaries and the representation of their experiences in periodicals like the *Gleaner* offered a portrait of a place not unlike home. Despite these efforts, the Near East refused easy incorporation into the larger missionary project of the CMS. Part of the problem was the continued marginal status of both the missions in the region in relation to the British Empire. Unlike Africa and India, two areas that received the majority of CMS attention, the Near East missions continued to struggle for recognition and status. A lack of conversion among Muslims in the region further hampered efforts to put this region at the center of evangelical thinking. The presence of women missionaries who had access to the home thus remained crucial in representing the viability of this project.

<27>The question remains, how significant was this particular representation of the world in Victorian society? Although it is impossible to quantify the effect of CMS efforts on religious and cultural life in the Near East itself, we can identify some of the ways the *Gleaner*'s representation of work in the Ottoman Empire brought the missionary project home. Readers and members of the CMS responded to appeals such as the Moslem Box, funding the mission work of the society and allowing it to continue its work in the region until the mid-twentieth century (Francis-Dehqani 94). Thanks to the efforts of editors like Eugene Stock, who used techniques from the mainstream press to make the *Gleaner* appealing to readers, the periodical itself emerged as a widely circulating and popular missionary publication with a loyal and extensive readership. Equally as significant, women gained access to the homes of Muslim women due to their sex in a way that male missionaries could not. Through these representations, the role of the woman missionary was elevated in its importance to the larger missionary project.

<28>The periodical's importance in creating a community of like-minded readers engaged in a common evangelical purpose found expression in the creation of the Gleaner's Union in 1886. This organization promised to create "a Union of readers of the C.M. Gleaner" where the editor served as "the one link between members and each other" ("Coming" 112). Over 180,000 members enrolled over a twenty-one year period in the 1,117 branches of the Union spread across Britain, India, and "the Colonies." The Gleaner's Union, according to one *Gleaner* contributor, was responsible for spreading the ideals of the society and represented a "powerful body with a world-wide influence" by the turn of the century. Finally, campaigns like the Moslem Box provided a material representation of this vision of the world to those who held, studied, passed, and then contributed to the cause of bringing those areas of the map "under Christian rule" ("Coming" 112). In this project, most assumed that women would play no small role.

Conclusion

<29>The religious press traditionally has not been the first place that gender historians have gone to uncover evidence of women's engagement in the Victorian public sphere. The limitations of

these publications as sources for historians of feminism are all too obvious. As highly mediated sources often run by male editors with content determined by the sex-exclusive world of evangelical organizational politics these periodicals have resisted the feminist gaze. That women appeared so frequently as subjects and representations of the evangelical mission, however, suggests that there is more to these sources than for use as further evidence of the rigidity of Victorian gender roles.

<30>For historians of women and gender, the religious press presents an opportunity to better understand the gendered culture of nineteenth-century print journalism. Periodicals like the *Gleaner* brought news of women's activities in the mission field home to a growing constituency of religious and philanthropically-minded Britons. These stories of women missionaries entering the homes of potential converts to proselytize and engage in charity work schemes made a mission field outside the formal sphere of British influence seem closer to home and thus somehow most appropriately suited for the female missionary.

<31>The story of the *Gleaner* and its representation of female mission work offers only one way of approaching the politics of gender in the religious press. Other possibilities include the study of religious-affiliated periodicals run by women themselves. Women participated in a more direct way in the production of religious periodicals during the nineteenth and early twentieth century through advocacy journalism. Almost two dozen religious and missionary periodicals run for and by women made up part of the women's press in Britain (Tusan, *Women* 245-252). How they crafted an identity for themselves in these publications has the potential to offer another way of understanding the centrality of women and the representation of gender in nineteenth-century journalism.

Acknowledgments: Research for this article was supported by a Curran Fellowship from the Research Society for Victorian Periodicals and a Research Stipend from the College of Liberal Arts at the University of Las Vegas.

Endnotes

- (1) Jane Haggis has recently argued for the important cultural role played by missionary periodicals in creating “affective communities” (691).^(^)
- (2) See for example Burton; Chaudhuri and Strobel; Melman.^(^)
- (3) Kenneth Cragg argues that the CMS believed that working through Eastern Orthodox Christian communities would be “the means, even the *raison d’être*, of reaching Muslims” (126).^(^)
- (4) Missionaries from the United States, Germany and France soon followed. See Huber and Lutkehaus 1-3; Patrick 1; Richter 8-12; Semple 1; West 7-8.^(^)
- (5) See Davis, 3-4; Kuklick 1-2.^(^)
- (6) Susan Thorne has argued that the “foreign mission cause was very probably the largest mass movement of women in nineteenth-century Britain” (94).^(^)

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