How Faith And Feminism Have Changed The World

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INTRODUCTION

Feminism is not a concept usually associated with mission. In fact some regard feminism as incompatible with mission and indeed the Christian faith.[1] The very word makes many feel uncomfortable[2] and recently it has proved politic to eschew the label even while acting and thinking in 'feminist' ways.[3]

Yet the relationship between feminism and mission is important since gender discrimination was and is an issue for women in mission as well as society. Donavan notes how 'most church histories simply ignore women' and 'somehow, unwittingly, we in the church have robbed women of their history', while Lederleitner's study of women in mission leadership from across the globe gives examples of discrimination in contemporary mission.[4] Given the centrality of women in mission history from the early church to the present and their numerical dominance in world Christianity today, awareness of women's issues including feminism, is not only inclusive but critical.[5]

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1 *Women and Twentieth-Century Protestantism*, ed. by Margaret Lamberts Bendroth and Virginia Lieson Brereton (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002), p. xiii. I argue for a Christian feminism distinct from modern secular feminism, for the latter allies itself with stances opposed to biblical Christianity. From the secular feminist viewpoint, some regard the church as a patriarchal and anti-feminist institution which fosters 'the myth of feminine evil'. Mary Daly, 'The Women's Movement: An Exodus Community', *Religious Education*, 67.5 (1972), 327–35 (pp. 328, 332).

2 Karen Offen, 'Defining Feminism: A Comparative Historical Approach', *Signs* 14.1 (1988), 119–57 (p. 119) <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3174664> [Accessed: 11th April 2023].

3 Bendroth and Brereton, p. xiii.

4 Mary S. Donovan, 'Women and Mission: Towards a More Inclusive Historiography', *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church*, 53.4 (1984), 297–305 (pp. 297, 305) <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42974781> [Accessed: 11th April 2023]. Mary T. Lederleitner, *Women in God's Mission: Accepting the Invitation to Serve and Lead* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2018).

5 Dana L. Robert, 'Women in World Mission: Controversies and Challenges from a North American Perspective', *International Review of Mission*, 93.368

One place feminism and mission come together is in the women's foreign missionary movement of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[6] This article argues that this mission enterprise, whilst generally not explicitly feminist, was nonetheless transformative, influencing the acceptance of feminist ideals in various parts of the world. Writing as a woman and an evangelical, and following the historiographical approach highlighted by Francis-Dehqani,[7] I will discuss how women missionaries, their home supporters and the women they served, paradoxically promoted restrictive notions of female behaviour while also contributing to significant feminist change.

Feminism itself is controversial and multi-faceted.[8] Although the term signified women's emancipation when it first came into use in France in the early 1890s, it has come to mean all things to all women.[9] I define it as

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(2009), 50–61 <https://doi-org.ezproxy.lib.gla.ac.uk/10.1111/j.1758-6631.2004.tb00441.x>. Robert discusses the history of women in mission and claims that statistically speaking 'the growth of Christianity in the two-thirds world today should be analysed as a woman's movement'. She goes on to argue for greater gender analysis in mission studies.

6 For further information on the women's missionary movement as part of the broader modern missionary movement see Scott Sunquist, *Understanding Christian Mission: Participation in Suffering and Glory* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Pub. Group, 2013), pp. 86–131.

7 Francis-Dehqani advocates a listening approach to history which recognises personal bias on the part of the historian: 'True objectivity arises from a willingness to let past voices speak on their own terms, while exercising critical judgement based upon candid recognition that empathy and bias will always be part of the project.' Gulnar Eleanor Francis-Dehqani, 'The Gendering of Missionary Imperialism: The Search for an Integrated Methodology', in *Gender, Religion and History: Cross-Cultural Perspectives*, ed. by Ursula King and Tina Beatttie (London: Continuum, 2004), pp. 125–37 (p. 126).

8 Francis-Dehqani, p. 127.

9 Charlotte Riley, 'The History of Feminism: A Look to the Past?', *IPPR Progressive Review*, 24.4 (2018), 292–98 (p. 293) <https://doi-org.ezproxy.lib.gla.ac.uk/10.1111/newe.12068>. According to Offen, the origins of the term 'feminism' are uncertain although it was widely used in France ('*féminisme*') in the early 1890s. There is evidence for its use in Great Britain around 1894–1895 and in the USA by 1910. The term was soon interpreted in different ways as divergent forms of feminism arose, such as integral feminism and radical feminism. See Offen, pp. 126–28. Although anachronistic, I use the term to apply to events before (as well as after) its initial usage since 'no other term adequately conveys the extent or intensity of concern regarding the position of women or the sense of injustice at the oppression many experienced.' Francis-Dehqani, p. 127.

'a movement for the restoration of justice between women and men which recognises distinct female roles'[10] while mission is 'bringing good news, freedom and healing in Jesus' name.'[11]

WOMEN AS GOSPEL-BEARERS

The first women gospel-bearers of the modern missions movement were wives and kin of male missionaries,[12] inspired to serve in distant lands by revivals and awakenings of the eighteenth century and by figures such as William Carey (1761–1834) and Adoniram Judson (1788–1850).[13] Single women like Betsy Stockton (1798–1865) participated from the 1820s[14] and by 1900 female missionaries outnumbered their male counterparts.[15] In a few decades, women had become the major players[16] in one of the greatest expansions of Christianity the world had seen.

Although some see this phenomenon as an early feminist movement[17] or evidence of male-controlled exploitative imperialism,[18] the reality is

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10 My definition develops that of Van Leewen and expands the traditional one of a single focus on equal rights with men, allowing for gender difference. Annelies Knoppers, 'Using the Body to Endorse Meanings about Gender', in *After Eden: Facing the Challenge of Gender Reconciliation*, ed. by Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans, 1993), p. 22.

11 This definition is based on Jesus' description of his own mission in Luke 4:18-21 which quotes Isa. 61:1-2.

12 Jane Haggis, '"A Heart That Has Felt the Love of God and Longs for Others to Know It": Conventions of Gender, Tensions of Self and Constructions of Difference in Offering to Be a Lady Missionary', *Women's History Review*, 7.2 (1998), 171–93 (p. 172) <https://doi.org/10.1080/09612029800200170>. Lesley Orr Macdonald, *A Unique and Glorious Mission: Women and Presbyterianism in Scotland 1830 to 1930* (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers, 2000), p. 105.

13 Sunquist, *Understanding Christian Mission*, 88–89.

14 Tucker, pp. 231–32. Betsy Stockton, a black woman and former slave, was the first recorded single woman missionary from North America. She went to Hawaii in 1823 but was only permitted to go as a maid to a missionary couple. However once in Hawaii she was also able to teach in a school.

15 Robert, 'Women in World Mission: Controversies and Challenges from a North American Perspective', p. 51.

16 The majority of missionary work during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was undertaken by women. Sunquist, p. 109.

17 Janette Hassey, 'A Brief History of Christian Feminism', *Transformation*, 6.2 (1989), 1–5 (p. 4) <https://doi-org.ezproxy.lib.gla.ac.uk/10.1177/026537888900600201>.

18 Francis-Dehqani, p. 128.

a complex mix of factors. While interpreting motives can be problematic, the women gospel-bearers were generally fuelled by faith rather than feminism.[19] Most conformed to the prevailing Victorian idea of separate gender spheres, aspiring to the 'cult of true womanhood' in which women disseminated purity, piety and domesticity not only in their home but in wider society. Forsaking all for foreign lands was therefore not seen as feminist rebellion but rather a fulfilment of Christian female calling, the mission field an empire-wide extension of the domestic realm.[20]

The springboard for the feminine leap from local to global mission was the development of 'Women's Work for Women.'[21] Responding to appeals from missionary wives on the field, the establishment of schools for girls[22] and then 'zenana' missions reaching Indian wives living in seclusion,[23] was something only female missionaries were deemed able to do. The predominantly single missionary workforce was therefore galvanized to serve their indigenous sisters by training them up to be godly wives and mothers,[24] while unconsciously exemplifying a rather contradictory model of independent womanhood.[25]

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19 Elizabeth Prevost, 'Married to the Mission Field: Gender, Christianity, and Professionalization in Britain and Colonial Africa, 1865–1914', *Journal of British Studies* 47, no. 4 (October 2008), p. 798, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25482893> [Accessed 11th April 2023]. See also excerpts from letters in Cathy Ross, *Women with a Mission: Rediscovering Missionary Wives in Early New Zealand* (Auckland, N.Z: Penguin Books, 2006).

20 Michelle Lee-Barnewall, *Neither Complementarian nor Egalitarian: A Kingdom Corrective to the Evangelical Gender Debate* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2016), pp. 20–26.

21 Robert, 'Women in World Mission: Controversies and Challenges from a North American Perspective', p. 56.

22 Margaret E. 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 *Women in the Church*, ed. by W. J. Sheils and Diana Wood, Studies in Church History (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), xxvii, 429–42 (p. 430).

23 *Zenana* missions started off as outreach to wives living in the '*zenana*' of their in-laws' homes but the term came to be synonymous with any work done by female missionaries. Pioneers of this ministry included the Free Church of Scotland Society in Calcutta and later the Church of Scotland Association in Poona. Macdonald, pp. 117–18.

24 Robert, 'Women in World Mission: Controversies and Challenges from a North American Perspective', p. 56.

25 Francis-Dehqani, p. 132.

The paradigms of Victorian femininity were further challenged, albeit unintentionally,[26] as pressing needs on the mission field saw many women branch out into traditional 'male' activities, such as preaching, construction, exploration and itinerant evangelism.[27] Mary Slessor of Calabar (1848–1915) lived among the 'dangerous' Okoyong people, was appointed Vice-Consul of her area and scouted out virgin territory for mission work.[28] Johanna Veenstra (1894–1933) set up a boarding school for young male evangelists in Nigeria and trekked to outlying villages to proclaim the gospel.[29]

This expansion of activity gave many women missionaries a level of freedom and responsibility impossible at home,[30] but theirs was both a liberating and bewildering world.[31] Expected to be feisty mission pioneers yet subordinate helpers[32] to male colleagues sometimes resulted in conflict and hurt. Lottie Moon (1840–1912) complained of the lack of equal rights in field decision-making and moved to another area of China to escape 'the high-handed authority' of her field director.[33] Jane Waterston (1843–1932) stayed in Livingstonia for only six months instead of five years after her supervisor did not acknowledge her superior training and experience plus refused to accept her criticism regarding his harsh treatment of indigenous people.[34]

Yet just as the Bible talks of receiving blessing in giving,[35] the service of the gospel-bearers who sacrificed much for the good of their indigenous sisters,[36] precipitated their own transformation.[37] Women's involvement in foreign missions pushed open doors for women to receive education, not only in the more 'feminine' professions of nursing and teaching but also in theology and medicine. For example Jane Waterston was the first Scotswoman to take a full medical course and qualify for entry on to the Medical Register in 1879 with the intention of serving as a doctor in Central Africa for the Free Church of Scotland, while in 1894 the non-denominational Women's Missionary College was established in Edin-

26 Prevost, p. 798.
27 Macdonald, p. 109.
28 Macdonald, pp. 124–25.
29 Tucker, p. 247.
30 Francis-Dehqani, p. 135.
31 Prevost, p. 824.
32 Haggis, p. 186.
33 Tucker, pp. 236–37.
34 Macdonald, pp. 133–36.
35 Such as in Luke 6:38 and Matt. 20:16.
36 Francis-Dehqani, p. 128.
37 Haggis, pp. 171–72.

burgh.[38] Christian service offered a valid alternative to marriage[39] and women used this freedom to develop new and innovative models of mission, such as Mary Slessor's plan to train indigenous evangelists[40] and the initiative of Mary Elizabeth Wood (1861–1931) to establish China's first public library.[41]

In this way women gospel-bearers became empowered by the gender ideology that also restricted them, their mission-focus making them active agents in the formation of women's history.[42]

WOMEN AS GOSPEL-ACTIVISTS

The women's foreign missions enterprise was made possible by the home-team of gospel-activists who sent female missionaries overseas as their personal representatives.[43] Emboldened by the needs of 'oppressed' indigenous sisters,[44] women worked with sympathetic men to set up church-like missionary societies validated by the cause of women reaching women.[45] British societies like the Female Education Society (1834) and the Edinburgh Ladies' Association for the Advancement of Female Education in India (1837) led the way,[46] with North American denominational mission

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38 Macdonald, pp. 120–21 and 150–51. Haggis, p. 176.

39 Single women were encouraged to remain unmarried and dedicate themselves to mission work although they were free to marry on the mission field should they so choose. Many missionary societies stopped paying a salary to married women and insisted they repay expenses owed if they married within five years of their appointment. Haggis, pp. 174–75.

40 Macdonald, pp. 140–42.

41 Donovan, p. 303.

42 Francis-Dehqani, p. 129.

43 Dana L. Robert, 'The Influence of American Missionary Women on the World Back Home', *Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation*, 12.1 (2002), 59–89 (p. 72) <https://doi.org/10.1525/rac.2002.12.1.59>.

44 'Non-Christian women on the mission field were regarded as oppressed, subjugated, and alienated from their true womanly nature.' Line Nyhagen Predelli, 'Missionary Women and Feminism in Norway, 1906–1910', *Nora: Nordic Journal of Women's Studies*, 9.1 (2001), 37–52 (p. 38) <https://doi.org/10.1080/08038740117109>.

45 Macdonald, pp. 113, 144–46. It was essential to have support from men since early mission societies required their participation both legally and to grant validity to the project.

46 Donaldson outlines the establishment of an early example of a society promoting girls' education, the non-denominational Female Education Society, founded in London in 1834 and running to 1899. Margaret E. Donaldson, 'The Invisible Factor – 19th Century Feminist Evangelical Concern for

societies appearing thirty years later after the Civil War. These societies gathered the support of millions[47] and became the first large-scale grassroots organisations for women[48] as their members focused on missions as the primary church venture they could legitimately pursue.[49]

Although these gospel-activists encountered male opposition and even ridicule,[50] their mission societies generally upheld the status quo regarding a woman's place and were criticized by some for actually being 'mini-brotherhoods' serving men's interests and ideas.[51] Yet they also acted as centres of 'girl-power' in which women gained collective confidence and experience, developing new skills[52] in administration, advocacy and publicity. Missionary publications, which elevated women like Mary Slessor and 'martyr' Harriet Newell (1793–1812) to cult heroine status, captured this emerging dichotomy in the ideal of Christian womanhood by praising the twin missionary qualities of gentle tenderness alongside gutsy courage.[53]

Human Rights', *Journal for the Study of Religion*, 2.2 (1989), 3–15; Donaldson, xxvii. Another example comes from Church of Scotland women who in 1837 set up the Edinburgh Ladies' Association for the Advancement of Female Education in India, after an appeal for help from missionary wife Margaret Wilson who died in 1835. Macdonald, pp. 112–13.

47 Robert, 'The Influence of American Missionary Women on the World Back Home', p. 68. Robert notes that in North America local mission groups were active in the early nineteenth century although regional and national societies were established from the 1860s onwards. Also referring to North America, she adds 'By the twentieth century, approximately three million women were dues-paying members of more than forty women's denominational missionary societies.'

48 Macdonald, p. 110.

49 Robert, 'The Influence of American Missionary Women on the World Back Home', p. 59.

50 It took sixteen years for Southern Baptist women to get the convention to approve the Woman's Missionary Union in 1888. Robert, 'The Influence of American Missionary Women on the World Back Home', p. 69.

51 Daly, p. 331.

52 Robert, 'The Influence of American Missionary Women on the World Back Home', p. 68.

53 Harriet Newell (1793–1812) was the first American missionary of this period to die in service, due to complications after giving birth while at sea. Although she was not martyred as such, she became a saint-like symbol of the missionary enterprise. Robert, 'The Influence of American Missionary Women on the World Back Home', pp. 60–63. Macdonald describes how Mary Slessor became a cult heroine. Macdonald, pp. 159–60.

Glass ceilings were quietly broken in other ways too, particularly in activities such as fund-raising and public speaking. Women's societies made a tremendous financial contribution to foreign missions,[54] supporting hundreds of women missionaries on the field and continually coming up with community fund-raising ideas, from the sponsoring of specific projects to creating handwork for sale.[55] The quest for funds led gospel-activists to do the unthinkable and speak to mixed gatherings. Initially greeted with outrage – a mob burned down the building in which Quaker Angelina Grimké (1805–1879) had spoken in 1837 – female public speaking gradually became more acceptable in the 1840s and 1850s. Yet this came about only because the audience was satisfied with the speakers' 'feminine demeanor,'[56] demonstrating how the women themselves had to negotiate 'an ideological tightrope' in order to fulfil their mission vision.[57]

Many gospel-activists used their newfound female consciousness, skills and self-assurance to play a key role in other female initiatives.[58] Spurred on by a desire for moral reform emanating from the revival movements of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries[59] and enabled by unprecedented middle-class prosperity,[60] numerous Anglo-American women embarked on a series of vigorous campaigns against traditions and practices harmful to the family. Frances Willard (1839–1898) headed up the Women's Christian Temperance Union while groups of Christian women in the USA formed the Anti-Saloon League and visited public houses threatening to hatchet the bars unless the alcohol was poured away. In Britain Josephine Butler (1828–1906) campaigned against the Contagious Diseases Acts which exonerated men and blamed prostitutes for the spread of sexually transmitted disease.[61] Gospel-activists were at the forefront of these movements[62] which won considerable political victories for women's welfare and human rights.

Women's increasing activism in missions also provoked calls for their involvement in church leadership.[63] The presence of female evan-

54 Donovan, p. 304.
55 Macdonald, p. 145.
56 Lee-Barnewall, p. 27.
57 Francis-Dehqani, p. 128.
58 Robert, 'The Influence of American Missionary Women on the World Back Home', p. 69.
59 Elaine Storkey, *What's Right with Feminism?* (London: SPCK, 1989), p. 140.
60 Offen, p. 137. Brumberg, pp. 351–52.
61 Storkey, pp. 139–49.
62 Lee-Barnewall, p. 19.
63 Robert, 'The Influence of American Missionary Women on the World Back Home', p. 68.

gelists employed in England from the early Victorian period[64] as well as renowned women preachers of the 1860s connected to the revivalist movements, such as Phoebe Palmer (1807–1874) and Catherine Booth (1829–1890),[65] also stood as a testament to the efficacy of women's public ministry. Many of these evangelists and preachers explicitly rejected feminist ideas, with Palmer preaching only from the pulpit steps and often refraining from publishing works under her own name.[66] Yet the example of their ministries combined with the powerful model of women missionaries to provide a catalyst towards female ordination. Interestingly, the numbers of ordained women in North America, especially prolific among premillennial churches, reached its peak around the turn of the century, in parallel with the denominational women's missionary movement.[67] Robert also notes how the forced mergers of women's mission societies with male-controlled parent denominations in the 1910s and 1920s instigated campaigns for laity rights and then ordination as women resisted this barrier to mission-involvement.[68]

The link between feminism and mission becomes more obvious in gospel-activists' participation in suffrage campaigns,[69] Maria Stewart (1803–1879) and Sarah Grimké (1792–1873) being prominent examples.[70] In fact, the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848, widely regarded as the origin of the women's rights movement, took place in a Wesleyan Methodist Chapel.[71] However because many Christian women disassociated them-

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64 Donald M. Lewis, '"Lights in Dark Places": Women Evangelists in Early Victorian Britain, 1838–1857', in *Women in the Church*, ed. by W. J. Sheils and Diana Wood, Studies in Church History (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), xxvii, 415–27.

65 Olive Anderson, 'Women Preachers in Mid-Victorian Britain: Some Reflexions on Feminism, Popular Religion and Social Change', *The Historical Journal*, 12.3 (1969), 467–84 <https://doi-org.ezproxy.lib.gla.ac.uk/10.1017/S0018246X0000724X>.

66 Anderson, p. 483.

67 Robert, 'The Influence of American Missionary Women on the World Back Home', p. 71.

68 Robert, 'The Influence of American Missionary Women on the World Back Home', p. 72.

69 Storkey, pp. 143–44.

70 Susan M. Hartman, 'Expanding Feminism's Field and Focus: Activism in the National Council of Churches in the 1960s and 1970s', in *Women and Twentieth-Century Protestantism*, ed. by Margaret Lamberts Bendroth and Virginia Lieson Brereton (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002), pp. 49–69 (p. 49). Maria Stewart was the first American-born woman to defend women's rights in public while Sarah Grimké was active as an abolitionist and feminist.

71 Hassey, p. 4.

selves with overt feminism,[72] some contemporary feminist historiography has tended to discount their contribution to the women's movement.[73] This view is changing with several scholars recognising a bias on the part of past and present historians.[74] Gospel-activists are becoming seen as 'religious feminists' who base their pro-women stance on scripture rather than rights,[75] with a valid place in the broad spectrum of feminist history and thought.[76]

Thus the gospel-activists, inspired by faith and example, discovered female 'self-conscious corporate agency'[77] in their support of missionary women and used this to push back the boundaries of their own world.

WOMEN AS GOSPEL-RECEIVERS

Women missionaries advanced on foreign lands with the express desire of bringing transformation to their indigenous sisters.[78] Ironically, those who were expected to 'exercise a cohesive and unifying influence' at home became 'agents for social change' on the mission field.[79] The politically correct thinkers of today often baulk at the cultural bias and paternalism of some missionaries of the modern missions movement who offered the gospel tied up in the bundle of 'civilisation'.[80] While women were not responsible for setting the colonial agenda, some were indeed guilty of 'feminist imperialism': on one hand identifying with indigenous sisters in their shared inferiority to men while also lording over them as bearers of a 'superior' culture.[81]

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72 Lee-Barnewall, p. 32.

73 Francis-Dehqani, p. 126.

74 Lee-Barnewall, p. 19.

75 Storkey, pp. 133–41. Storkey discusses the origins of both rights-based feminism, stemming from Enlightenment ideas of individual liberty, and scripture-based feminism which stresses dignity and equality plus the need to uphold the rights of others.

76 Offen, p. 138.

77 Macdonald, p. 21.

78 Macdonald, p. 130.

79 Macdonald, p. 107.

80 Brumberg, pp. 349–50. Brumberg shows how some mission society publications promoted cultural stereotypes. Donaldson, p. 9. Donaldson tells how missionaries from the Female Education Society in South Africa tried to prevent their pupils from wearing tribal dress and attending traditional dances.

81 Francis-Dehqani, pp. 131–32.

However missionaries have often been unfairly lumped together with the sins of colonialism and empire.[82] It is unhelpful to regard imperialism in simplistic terms of 'virtuous, idyllic east meets evil, destructive west'[83] and foist contemporary 'enlightened' expectations on nineteenth century missionary figures who cannot speak back.[84] Rather, it should be remembered that many gospel-bearers, such as Scots missionary to India, Annie Small (1857–1945),[85] recognised the failings of their home culture and adapted successfully to their new one, as did Amy Carmichael (1867–1951).[86]

Women gospel-bearers brought real and life-transforming changes to thousands of women, in terms of spiritual life, medical treatment and sense of worth.[87] The recent flourishing of the church in the majority world, particularly among women, is no doubt due in no small part to their ministry. Great strides were also made in education, so much so that in the space of sixty years some Indian women had gone from no schooling to the possibility of attending university, even before women in Scotland had achieved these goals.[88] Many, like Female Education Society teacher Elizabeth Sturrock, empowered the girls in their classroom by training them as monitors and trainee teachers and by taking collections for mission work elsewhere.[89] Lucky pupils were brought to the west and became the first generation of modern women leaders in their own countries, such as Michi Kawai who studied in the US and later founded the YWCA and a girls' school in Japan.[90]

Although women missionaries sometimes spoke up *for* their indigenous sisters instead of *with* them,[91] they prioritised the wellbeing and rights of women and children,[92] fighting against harmful practices, such

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82 Sunquist, pp. 94–98. See Sunquist's useful discussion on mission, colonialism and power.

83 Francis-Dehqani, p. 133.

84 Alan Jacobs, *Breaking Bread with the Dead: Reading the Past in Search of a Tranquil Mind*, 2020, pp. 27–43. See the interesting discussion on 'Table Fellowship' regarding interaction with historical figures in chapter two.

85 Macdonald, pp. 107–8.

86 Tucker, p. 241. Francis-Dehqani, p. 129.

87 Macdonald, p. 131.

88 Macdonald, p. 117.

89 Donaldson, xxvii, pp. 440–41.

90 Robert, 'The Influence of American Missionary Women on the World Back Home', pp. 77–78.

91 Riley, p. 295.

92 Robert, 'Women in World Mission: Controversies and Challenges from a North American Perspective', p. 57.

as twin deaths and wife fattening.[93] In 1906 a clash by Scottish missionaries with people in Kenya over female circumcision eventually resulted in indigenous women asserting their right to stand against this custom in 1922.[94] Many women missionaries influenced both in precept and example.[95] Although they didn't preach feminism, the nature of their ministries acted as a countersign to the rhetoric of separate spheres[96] and impacted the broader social structure of their host cultures.[97]

In this way the women gospel-receivers inherited a legacy of faith and feminist change from their Anglo-American sisters which opened doors for many.[98]

CONCLUSION

Feminism and mission came together in the women's foreign missionary movement as women surpassed boundaries of geography, religion, politics, culture and gender to bring the gospel to their indigenous sisters. While most only whispered the word feminism rather than shouted it, women were both transformed and transformative on the mission field and at home.

'Women's Work for Women' demonstrates the power of a God-anointed women's movement and provides incentive for celebrating the female majority in the world church today. Instead of simply lamenting the 'missing males,' this encourages us to develop holistic mission strategies which realise the 'full liberating potential of the gospel'[99] and empower women to serve shoulder to shoulder alongside their brothers. It also provides a model to reclaim feminism on scriptural grounds and proclaim the revolutionary biblical concepts of dignity, justice and freedom that women have in Christ.

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93 Macdonald, p. 123.

94 Macdonald, pp. 126–27.

95 Donaldson, xxvii, p. 8.

96 Macdonald, p. 109.

97 Donna Downe, 'Confused Missionary Roles – Theirs or Mine?', in *Frontline Women: Negotiating Crosscultural Issues in Ministry*, ed. by Marguerite G. Kraft (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 2003), pp. 101–22 (p. 117).

98 Donaldson, xxvii, p. 441.

99 Robert, 'Women in World Mission: Controversies and Challenges from a North American Perspective', p. 61.