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GLOBAL MISSIONS AND THEOLOGY



This collection documents the broad range of Nineteenth Century religious missionary activities, practices and thought in the United States by reproducing pivotal personal narratives, organizational records, and biographies of the essential leaders, simple missionaries, and churches. This collection includes materials on missionary activities among Native Americans and African Americans, both slaves and freedmen. In addition, it highlights activities in far-flung regions and countries, such as Africa, Fiji and Sandwich Islands, India, China, Southeast Asia, Japan, and Hawaii.

Date Range: 1800-1899

Content: 23,869 images

Source Library: Lost Cause Press

Detailed Description:

In the Nineteenth Century, Christian missionaries directed their attention to unexplored regions, greatly expanding their endeavors. Colonialism brought increased knowledge of Africa and Asia, and the European and American churches extended their work into these areas.

Missionary activities were important in the political, economic, educational and social fabric of many countries. The spreading of medical knowledge, the building of hospitals, missionary schools, the promotion of Western learning, history and international law were some of the examples.

In American churches, the evangelistic impetus of the revival period carried circuit riders to the frontiers. The China trade and the slave trade had introduced Americans to the Far East and Africa, and the churches sent workers to start schools and hospitals as well as to preach in these areas. Prominent in this work were such organizations as the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, the American Presbyterian, the Baptist Burmese Mission, and the Methodist Episcopal Church Missionary Society. Denominational boards, the Salvation Army, other agencies, some of them related to the World Council of Churches, and individuals belonging to such mission-oriented groups as Jehovah's Witnesses and the Mormons continue the work today, that was started in the 19th century.

Religion, especially the dynamics of evangelical Protestantism, played an important role in the expansion and nation-building which occupied Americans in the Nineteenth Century. At the same time, early in the century American Protestants also took their first steps beyond our shores in the foreign missionary movement. For the first two thirds of the century this overseas movement was overshadowed by the focus of most American Protestant groups on the internal planting of churches on the advancing frontier, and on the Civil War. But after mid-century, as Americans looked out on the Pacific from newly acquired and recently settled California, and as the outcome of the Civil War seemed finally to settle the basic issues of slavery and national unity, the foreign missionary movement gathered momentum. By 1900, its expansion was in full bloom, and would continue well into the twentieth century, with its presence on all continents of the globe characterized by a distinctive American mixture of religious and national or "civilizing" purpose.

Publisher's Note: This collection comprises, in its entirety, the Primary Source Media microfilm collection entitled *Literature of Theology and Church History in the United States and Canada, Missions subset*.