

Evangelism in Africa: Correspondence of the Board of Foreign Missions, 1835-1910

Diaries, letters and other first-person accounts track missionary efforts across a continent

Date Range: 1835-1910

Content: 39,986 pages

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The 19th century has been described as the “Great Century” of Protestant missions, when the Gospel was sent to more people than ever before. The Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America was an active participant in this expansion, bringing Christian teachings to four continents.

Presbyterian mission work in Africa began in 1833 and throughout the century expanded to several areas of the continent, including Liberia, Spanish Guinea, Corsica, Ogowe, Gabon and the Cameroon.

Christian missionaries directed their attention to unexplored regions; their activities had an impact on the political, economic, educational and social reforms 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.

Evangelism in Africa: Correspondence of the Board of Foreign Missions, 1835-1910 supports research in religious studies, African studies, women’s studies, international affairs and anthropology. Letters that served as reports from the field describe the indigenous peoples and cultures, tribal factionalism, cultural differences and mores, and the many problems and achievements of the work.

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Evangelism in Africa: Correspondence of the Board of Foreign Missions, 1835-1910

The personal nature of some of the letters provide a means of investigating missionary psychology and motivations. Even quantitative approaches should prove fruitful – the letters contain a wealth of statistical information on mission church and school membership and on financial and other matters.

Create dissertations and other papers with topics including:

- Christianity and its “civilizing” mission
- Muslim-Christian beliefs
- Missionary activities and political, economic, educational and social reforms
- Witchcraft
- Development of medical care and hospitals
- Social and political mission of the Presbyterian Church
- Political development of Liberia
- Missionary strategy for evangelism

At a time of changing attitudes toward women in society, the board missionaries brought their own concepts of ideal Christian womanhood. They demanded radical changes in the gender roles of the African people. The collection can therefore also serve as a source for women’s history and the history of the relationships between the sexes.

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Monrovia March 4/ 1853.

Hon. Walter Lowrie,

I wrote to you in Dec. last to go by a colonization vessel that was then here which I supposed would sail direct for the U.S. but have learned since the vessel went to S. America, consequently my letters have lain in the Col. Society's Store until the present time, which delay I much regret. Every opportunity for sending letters to friends this year has been left frequent than most any other year since I have been on this part of the coast.

Enclosed is a List of the Scholars in my School for 1852 & 1853 their ages are given in the Catalogue.

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List of the Members of the 1st Presbyterian Church, Monrovia, Liberia, W. A. April 15/53

- 1 Daniel B. Warner - licenced preacher - Elder
- 2 Benj^r V. R. James - Elder
- 3 Rachel Eiden - Widow of Rev. J. Eiden
- 4 Jane Drayton - Very-old Widow - infirm
- 5 Lucinda Whitfield - Sick and long infirm
- 6 Hannah Wright - Middle-aged - Married
- 7 Sarah Forsyth do
- 8 Susan Carol do
- 9 Richard S. Stryker - Young man - Much promise
- 10 Jane Strouder - Old and infirm
- 11 Dorothy Cary - Middle-age - Married
- 12 Mary S. Schust - Widow Middle-age

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<p>268. B. V. R. James March 14, 1853</p> <p>269. D. A. Wilson March 14, 1853</p> <p>270. J. M. Priest March 23, 1853</p> <p>272. Ann Priest April 13, 1853</p> <p>273. B. V. R. James April 1853</p> <p>274. A. D. Wilson April 14, 1853</p>	<p>: Board letter Jan 27 - Account of local activities</p> <p>: Urgent call for another man - Makes decisions all alone now - Opposed at times by those affected - Report on local work - Scholarships assigned</p> <p>: Contrasts Presbyterian program with that of Methodists - Need for funds for an outreach for Emigrants arriving</p> <p>: Greenville - Need for a girls school</p> <p>: List of church members - Monrovia</p> <p>: Illness of Mrs. Wilson - Plans</p>
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