THE DAY MISSIONS LIBRARY
CENTENNIAL VOLUME

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THE DAY MISSIONS LIBRARY
CENTENNIAL VOLUME

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A "STeady AIM TowARD Completeness"

Stephen L. Peterson
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Introduction

In 1886, when George Edward Day was seventy-one years of age, Yale's Professor of Hebrew had his teaching load lightened. Some of Day's classes were assigned to William Rainey Harper who had only recently been appointed Woolsey Professor in Yale College. But, two years later, in 1888, Day was appointed Dean of the Divinity School. Once in that office, "old YQ M", as his students had nicknamed him, began to gather books which would found the Day Library. The library itself was established in 1891 and the first printed catalogue appeared in January of 1892-making our observation in this centennial year at least approximately accurate. At least it makes this centenary the unprecedented celebration of the printing of a library catalogue!

Let us recall that in 1891 Yale did not offer instruction in missions and had no plans to appoint a professor in this field. So, we are led to inquire closely what factors influenced Day to create the "Library of Modern-Missions" which was the name he apparently preferred. In pursuing this question, and before traversing the more familiar terrain of Yale and missions consciousness generally near the end of the century, let us visit the earlier life of George Edward Day as he was completing his studies at Yale and launching his career in the late 1830s. As is often the case with persons of abiding influence, the definitive cast they give to the events of their day peradventure reflects deeper issues of personal motivation and commitment. George Edward Day will not disappoint us in this regard.

I. Formative influences in the life of George Edward Day

In 1829, at the age of fourteen, George Edward Day entered Yale College. He graduated in 1833 and spent two years teaching in the New York Institution for the Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb. He
spent the years from 1835 to 1838 as a theological student in the Divinity School. Upon his graduation, he remained at Yale for two additional years as assistant to Professor Gibbs instructing students in Hebrew.

Thus, Day was a theological student at the time when an unheralded yet extraordinary project was underway in the Divinity School. Yale was engaged in educating its first black student, not, however, through the normal channels of tuition paying students. James W. C. Pennington, born into servitude, had "literally walked away from slavery." He was befriended by Arthur Tappan, Simeon Jocelyn, and William Lloyd Garrison and subsequently was called to become the second pastor, and first black pastor, of Temple Street Congregational Church in New Haven. Having taught himself to read, write and to do numbers, he tutored himself in Greek. Once in New Haven he undertook the study of theology as well. At that time it was illegal for Yale to educate Blacks, but Pennington attended theological classes and was tutored by his classmates, who also mediated his questions and shared access to books. In 1839 he was fully certified by the Hartford Association.

Now, we do not have direct evidence that Day was engaged in this educational innovation, but it is difficult to imagine that he was not one of its principal participants. We do know that already by 1836 Day identified himself as an abolitionist. There were barely 100 theological students at Yale during the years that Pennington was being tutored. Many would have been involved directly in the educational program—virtually all would have supported the undertaking if only by their silence in a risky venture. We probably are close to the truth if we see the Divinity School—its students and at least some of its faculty—as a center of abolitionist sentiment and a center of such direct action and service as would have been possible. It is doubtful that Day could have identified himself as an abolitionist and not have been part of these larger enterprises.

Shortly thereafter, Day was engaged in yet another extraordinary event which has received more attention. What has become known as the Amistad affair involved a mutiny on the slave ship Amistad. Apparently the slaves planned to sail the coastal vessel back to Africa. The Coast Guard took the ship into tow; brought it to New Haven, and the crew, all slaves destined for Cuba, were placed in the New Haven jail. Day was designated to tutor these persons in English. Apparently he also preached to them, to the effect that some of them converted to Christianity. Pennington, among others, strove valiantly on behalf of these people and eventually their release was gained. In fact, at least some of the freed Amistad Blacks returned to Africa in 1841. The apparent expectation was that these converts would become missionary pastors in Africa.

We tarry over one other aspect of mid-century Yale. Day assumed pastoral duties in the Union Church and Society of Marlboro, Massachusetts at the end of 1840. Thus, he was still on the Yale faculty when Edward E. Salisbury, Yale's Professor of Arabic and Sanskrit, returned from the Sorbonne deeply impressed with the great European libraries he had visited. Determined that Yale should erect a library befitting a true university, Salisbury promoted the idea and contributed an initial personal gift of $5,000.
Given the speed with which this project was launched—construction began in 1842—support for the new library must have pervaded the university. Indeed, the faculty had long been restless in its call for a college library. That Day knew of these developments we may be assured. That they, either then or subsequently, had an influence on his thinking we may also be assured. In a circular letter dated 1891, drafted by Day as Dean of the Divinity School, he refers to Salisbury's efforts and the contribution of his personal library of Oriental Studies to Yale as the basis of the appeal to found the Missions Library.

To complete this review of the formative years of George Edward Day, we need to backtrack to the two years he spent teaching in the New York Institution for the Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb. In fact we know very little about this experience. Apparently Day had hoped for some other opportunity upon completion of his baccalaureate degree and was keenly disappointed when a teaching post in classics did not materialize. Yet, he put his mind to the work in New York with the result that not once, but twice, he was commissioned to visit similar institutions in Europe to conduct surveys on methods and developments.

After serving pastorates in Marlboro, and then in Puritanism's cathedral church in Northampton, Day was called to the faculty of the Lane Theological Seminary in Cincinnati. We may rightly smile as we recall Yale's connection—through Lyman Beecher—with Lane, as well as Lane's own deep involvement with abolitionism; and the fact that Day's predecessor of Biblical Studies at Lane was, of course, The Rev. Calvin Stowe—husband of "the little lady who made [the] big war!"

In light of our task today we must note only three events in Day's service to Lane. In 1859, the seminary commissioned Day, in his dual capacity as professor and librarian, to travel to Europe for the purpose of acquiring books for the seminary library. This was not exceptional—it was a rather standard practice in the nineteenth century and good libraries continue it to this day although with a wider geographic range! In point of fact, Day earlier had spent several months of theological study in Germany and apparently was well traveled and well spoken in several European countries.

Of more interest to us is the fact that in 1862, Day became the driving force behind the founding of the Theological and Religious Library Association of Cincinnati which Association established a public, non-denominational religious library in that city. Day prepared background documents which indicate that he had a profound knowledge of theological publishing and library service. Day was a contributing member, although we do not know how much of his own money he put into the enterprise. We do note, however, that the library was endowed, and both its funds and its corporate reality continue to this day under the aegis of the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County.

Apparently with tireless energy, in 1863 Day founded the Theological Eclectic, a journal which mediated the best of European and British theology to the American theological and ecclesiastical community.
In 1866, at the age of fifty-one, George Edward Day returned to Yale as Professor of Hebrew. He had pursued advanced theological study on two continents; he had been engaged with distinction in the education of a disabled population; he had pastored two parishes; he had founded a public theological library, and founded a prestigious theological journal. In the issue of his day, he sided with the abolitionists. As President Dwight was laboring to bring the Divinity School to new life, he and Yale must have been honored to attract a person of these sterling credentials to its faculty.

Apart from his writings on pedagogy for the deaf and dumb, Day's scholarship centered on the Hebrew Bible. Without embarrassment then or now, Day should be described as a translator, a mediator, an interpreter, not an originator. In fact, the founding of the Missions Library probably was his most original contribution to scholarship! From 1871 to 1884, he served on the American Committee of Revision, chairing the Old Testament section throughout its existence and serving as secretary to the committee as a whole. He was engaged in other translation work and brought to the English language public Van Oosterzee's Biblical Theology of the Old Testament and a fair portion of Lange's Commentary on the New Testament. He contributed numerous articles to Sir William Smith's Bible Dictionary.

Yet, we should have no illusions about the quality of Day's scholarship. There is ample indication that he was widely and deeply read in languages beyond the normal reach of most scholars of his day. Translation, especially that destined for constant public scrutiny, demands the most meticulous attention to detail.

It is, then, with some surprise that we may accept the attribution of President Dwight, "No scholar in our country was more thoroughly familiar with the past history or the present condition of the great missionary work of the church." As my library colleagues know well, I have lost whatever knack I may once have had for bibliographic drudgery, but I can find no evidence that Day ever wrote a piece on Missions! The Yale catalogues reflect no such writing, not even Day's own catalogue, and such an omission would be an act of extreme humility: nor does his name appear in any of the standard journals publishing missionary material in the latter part of the nineteenth century. His name does not appear in any indexes to publications of the American Board. He did not even have a role in the 1892 meeting of the ABCFM in New Haven! Yet, within four years of his appointment as Dean of the Divinity School, George Edward Day laid all the foundations for the library whose centenary we are celebrating.

There were, of course, certain institutional factors which may have stimulated the founding of the Missions Library. It is, however, difficult to isolate particulars. Yale had no faculty member teaching in missions and such instruction, even informally, did not begin until 1900. Nevertheless, student interest in missions, which had declined in the 1870s, apparently was much revived by the time Day became Dean of the Divinity School. One hundred sixty-two Yale students entered missionary service in the nineteenth century and of these 52 began their service after 1880. When John Mott narrated the founding of the Student Volunteer Movement at Mount Hermon in 1886, he recalled that some 251 students
attended the auspicious conference. Yale was identified as one of five colleges which supplied the largest delegations. Moreover, Yale provided some of the ablest student leadership to the Movement in the persons of Horace T. Pitkin, D. Brewer and George Sherwood Eddy; Frank A. Keller, Henry W. Luce and F.M. Gilbert.

At the least we may say that mission interest, if not actual study, was deeply lodged in the Yale woodwork in the late 1880s and early 1890s.

The other clear institutional factor was the exceptional benefaction of William E. Dodge. Dodge, a Presbyterian layman with no previous association with Yale, was both a commissioner of the American Board and a director of the American Bible Society. Under encouragement of Leonard Bacon, Dodge had given Yale an outstanding collection of Bible translations prepared by missionaries. In fact, this was a gift of all the vernacular versions offered through the American Bible Society. Even if he did not already have an interest in missions, certainly Day, who had devoted so much of his scholarly work to translation, would have been intrigued by these exotic and heroic translation efforts. Indeed, we know that some of the works presented by William Dodge represented the labors of missionary scholars whom Day had trained while they were Yale students.

What ultimately prompted Day to found the missions library? I suggest that his elderly service as Dean of Yale Divinity School called together several deeply seated impulses in his life and these impulses together energized him to leave a lasting mark not only on the school but on the church. Early in his career he committed his energies to the service of two minority populations. In his work with the Amistad prisoners he certainly engaged directly in a type of missionary activity. We see a person whose deep Christian convictions led to active, even courageous, service. Moreover, whatever else he may have been, Day was a bookman and, in fact, a librarian. He witnessed the creation of what now we call Yale University Library. He twice served institutions as librarian and the missions library was indeed the second library he founded. More significantly, he profoundly understood that good learning, good scholarship, good ecclesiastical service must be nurtured by strong libraries. That these understandings were deeply rather than superficially perceived, no doubt owes to his scholarly inclinations to be a translator and mediator rather than an originator. It is not too exaggerated to suggest that scholars who invest themselves in the type of translation work which engaged Day, exercise a special, yet often under-valued, role in scholarship. Theirs almost always is a work that enables and prosers the work of others. This, of course, is the quintessential role of a Dean, and Day stated as much in his 1891 "Proposal."

Then, we are led to the plain statement of Professor Curtis, "[Day’s] earnest hope was that through the influence of this library many young men would be drawn to the foreign field." The Yale theological students may have shown missionary fervor, the gift of William Dodge certainly was suggestive, but the Day Missions Library was the vision, creation and gift of one person. Many and various threads wove the fabric of this man’s life, but as we trace those threads more carefully, the less
is our surprise that he should have left us such a legacy.

II. The library Day founded; the accomplishment of George Edward and Olivia Hotchkiss Day

In 1891, Day issued the call for the founding of the library. This call includes a scope statement and a tentative catalogue of the collection. Nine months later the first printed catalogue was issued. We ask, then, what did this achievement, both directly and indirectly, represent?

In the first place, and quite obviously, the missions library was the personal library of George Edward Day. Day gave his Old Testament books to Yale, but that was not the gift to which his name was attached. We do not know when he began to collect the missions library. Dwight states that this collecting interest represented the fruit of the "latest years of [Day's] life." We do not have the basis on which to form a chronology of Day's activities as Dean, but there is reason to believe he traveled to Europe again in 1888. On that trip he no doubt visited important mission libraries and began to cultivate his collecting interest. To be sure, the missions library had other donors, but, first and foremost, the missions library was the personal library of Professor Day.

Second, Day produced a catalogue of the collection. It was a printed catalogue, which means in today's jargon, it was a distributable catalogue. Ironically, as Day was publishing his catalogue, Yale was establishing its land-locked card catalogue. Now, only with the advent of electronic technology, have we made real progress over the old printed book catalogue!

In his call for the founding of the missions library, Day declared that the scope of the collection would include:

1. History of Modern Missions;
2. Missionary Biography;
3. History and Annual Reports of Missionary Societies;
4. Missionary Periodicals;
5. Works prepared and issued by Missionaries for the use of the natives for whom they labor; and
6. Missions to the Jews.

When Day published the first catalogue, it was organized into four sections:

1. Translations of the Bible, chiefly made by Missionaries;
2. Works on Foreign Missions;
3. Works composed by Missionaries in or on the Vernacular Languages of Various Countries; and
4. Index.

More deliberate examination reveals that the second section included a sub-section for periodicals arranged by country of publication, and a sub-section for missionary reports. The Index provided three additional
access points to the whole: geography, language and topics. It also included a separate section listing: (a) encyclopedias; (b) general histories of the areas under missionary influence; (c) an alphabetical listing of missionary societies, revealing histories of their activity, their annual reports, and their official periodicals. Each of the six numbered issues of the catalogue adheres to the same structure. 37

There are three significant ideas reflected in this collection and the catalogue which describes it. First, it reflects a strong linguistic focus. Bible translations brought into the collection the ancillary material of dictionaries, grammars and general language studies. Furthermore, these technical linguistic tools are supplemented avidly by the materials prepared by missionaries for use in their work with native populations. In effect, the Day Library contains a veritable linguistic laboratory for numerous African and Asian languages. 38

Second, we note the dominant presence of documentary literature. Annual reports, general reports and periodicals formed a major part of this collection from its founding. Over the years these documents have become among the most sought after sources for historians. Their presence alone in this collection justifies the adjective "historical" which formed part of the library's official name.

Third, in his "Prefatory Note" to the fifth (1899) catalogue Day indicates that the library was beginning to acquire Roman Catholic materials. As natural as that may appear to us, we should be reminded that in 1899 the ABCFM was still actively engaged in three fields under its rubric of "Missions in Nominally Christian Lands." 39 Yet, the unequivocal result of Day's foresight is that the missions library now ranks as the strongest resource in North America for both Protestant and Roman Catholic missions. 40

The other two contributions of Day were a building for the library and an endowment to assure its continuity if not its permanence. Of the building, we know very little. Day's will stipulated that it should be a fire-proof structure appended to the standing Divinity Halls. The Day building was not completed until 1912. 41 It was demolished along with the other Elm Street Divinity Buildings in the 1920s to make room for Calhoun College in the reshaping of the Yale-campus. The endowment came in two parts. Day provided a substantial sum in his will and his wife, Olivia Hotchkiss Day, added to this amount in her own will. Surely that admits her to a select group of women who independently sustained Yale University at a time when women were not found in its classrooms or among its instructional officers.

We may assume that in his 87th year, Day rightly began to relax his efforts toward the library. He had retired from Yale in 1895, devoted another seven years to the missions library, and died in 1905.

A year after his death, care of the missions library fell to Harlan P. Beach. The D. Willis James Chair of Missions was established in 1906 and Beach, himself a Yale graduate and former missionary to China, was appointed as its first incumbent. Serving as Librarian of the missions library was part of his
His election was followed in 1915 by the appointment of John Clark Archer first in the field of Missions, but later (1927) as Professor of Comparative Religion. This appointment and the research focus which it represents, is the one important enlargement of the original vision of the Day Library.

At an undetermined date, but certainly before 1920, the Day Library was being organized and classified according to general library practices which then were being adopted in many academic institutions. Part of the Day collection is still classified according to the old schema and this classification replicates the printed catalogues prepared by Day himself with some expansion of the collection in areas such as the home base of missions, and the qualifications and training of missionaries. Archer's field is fully represented with its own section. Nevertheless, the fundamental strengths are regnant. The most fully developed portions of the classification are the sections devoted to missionary reports, and linguistics. Underneath the whole, one sees a persistent geographical orientation to the library.

Beyond these four tangible contributions of Professor and Mrs. Day, we need to recognize two other results of their foresight and benevolence. While Day himself desired these results, it is doubtful he could have realized how important they have become over the past century.

By founding a library before formal instruction began, before a professor was appointed, before a department was formed, he assured that mission studies would be a research discipline. By prosecuting his vision in a university which had only recently begun to offer graduate work, he also assured the fact that mission studies would be a university discipline and not the province of the independent theological schools.

Second, and perhaps of quintessential importance, Day assured that the basic records and documents from the infant years of the newer churches in Africa, Asia, and the Pacific Islands would be preserved for their own historians and theologians. That so many of these records have been preserved in a university which also has vast holdings from the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries means that the whole sweep of evangelicalism is embraced as fully here as anywhere in the world!

That the fundamental scope and the acclaimed quality of the missions library were set by its founder, modified in important detail only by what we may call the Archer caveat, is hot accidental, and no less due to sloth, certainly not for want of resources, nor energy of the discipline. It is, I offer, due to the essential soundness of the original vision, and this chiefly due to the fact that it was to be an historical library, and that set in the midst of the research agenda of a vigorous university.

While subsequent additions and gifts are being chronicled by Paul Stuehrenberg, and these have added strength to strength, none have materially altered or redirected the vision of George Edward Day.
III. The future of the Day Missions Library

What then of the future of this library so deeply planted in the fabric of this university for more than a century. The enterprise it purported to document, at least as it was practiced in the nineteenth century, virtually has come to an end. Certainly the contemporary ecclesiastical heirs of the denominations which so richly nurtured the Day Library have abandoned this older enterprise. And, while Yale alone of the modern secular universities maintains a chair of missions, its name if not its scope, has been changed to include world Christianity. No one of us can remember when last a Yale student was motivated to enter missionary service solely or even significantly by virtue of this library. Yet, I daresay that most of us here today cannot imagine our scholarly futures without the library maintaining its vigor.

Now, it ill behooves a visitor to advise one's hosts on the arrangement of their household; but this occasion would be incomplete without our thinking together about at least possible futures for this renowned collection. In the twenty years that I have been associated with this library, four futures have been discussed or at least brought to the attention of those of us concerned with the Day Library. So I propose a brief review of these possible futures.

Yes; occasionally one hears the proposal that Yale should simply terminate all future development of the Day Library, redirect its not inconsiderable endowment income to other collections and let the collection stand as a historical monument to the past. As such it will continue to have some interest for those researching the particular activities and decades documented in the collection, but the thing itself increasingly would become a relic. While such truncated collections are found in almost every prominent library, including Yale's, this future; which obviously is no future, to my knowledge, has never received serious consideration by university officers. It may be, of course, that the endowments alone have spared the library!

There have been two occasions that I can recall when it was suggested, quite seriously, that the Day Library be sold to some other institution ostensibly more interested in missions, i.e., missionary activity, than is Yale. Now, while this is perhaps the most fanciful of the possible futures, it holds some interesting nuances. Implicit in this suggestion, of course, is the idea that a secular university is not a proper home for a collection which so patently deals with religious activity, particularly persuasive activity. Also implicit in this suggestion is the idea that only religiously committed people might have an interest in studying mission related topics. Perhaps there is even the perverse hint that only religiously committed persons may rightly understand missionary activity.

In any case, I would contend that a secular university is precisely the most appropriate repository for such a collection. In a sense, the record speaks for itself. No ecclesiastical or denominational institution has established a remotely comparable collection devoted to mission study. Its university home has allowed the Day Library to avoid sectarian squabbles. It has allowed the collection to range over
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Catholic as well as Protestant materials. It has become an ecumenical collection, i.e., a collection without ecclesiastical, doctrinal, or geographical limitations. Indirectly, the university's partiality to historical method has encouraged the development of documentary records and these now constitute the backbone of the Day Library. The library has not fallen yet to the sway of ideology, whim or fancy. In short, because this library has its own financial resources, the secular university has left it alone to flourish or decline as it will, in the marketplace of resources and ideas. This spirit, itself curiously kindred to the missionary spirit, has worked to produce the distinguished library which we celebrate today.

Much more, frequently and fervently, one hears suggestions that the focus of the Day Library should be changed. The most serious recommendation in this vein is to shape the library along what might be called institutional lines. More precisely, this might be called the world Christianity model for development of the Day Library collection. The argument is that the nineteenth century missionary movement—the primary strength of the Day Library—ended in the creation of successor or indigenous churches in every continent. Thus, the proper way to continue the Day Library is to build collections documenting these younger churches around the world.

This option has many attractive aspects. It accedes to a type of historical continuity. It would encourage the acquisition of library resources which are all too scarce in North American institutions. Moreover, the world Christianity model fits rather comfortably with much contemporary scholarship. This model also may lay claim to two practical considerations. First, the original collection, gathered both by Day and then Beach and Archer, included not a little non-western church history. Second, the Latourette bequest specifically included non-western church history in the purposes for which the fund could be spent. Thus, today, even though so far as I know the Day Library has not made a self-conscious decision to change its focus and direction, it stands as one of the strongest North American libraries for the study of non-western church history.

Nevertheless, as the fourth option, I would contend that the primary focus of the Day Library should remain precisely on its historic strength, missions. That is, if the world Christianity model represents a type of institutional historical approach, then missions per se might be considered a phenomenological approach to the library. I am suggesting that the collection should continue to focus on missionary activity, on the phenomenon of missionary activity, and sharpen this focus both historically and contemporaneously. There are several reasons for recommending this course.

Christian missionary activity continues. Moreover, not a little contemporary missionary activity is now originating in non-western countries and some of this activity is directed at the heartlands of the older Christendom. In terms of the Day Library, and at the simplest level, this means that there are new documents to be collected. More importantly, it means that proposals for, or critiques of, contemporary western missionary practice must not avoid thorough historical scrutiny. More precisely, modern mission thought requires historical thought and such thought requires libraries such as the Day Library.
Of course, Christianity is not alone among the religions of the world in its missionary tendency or activity. Yet, while not uniquely a Christian activity, missionary activity is a peculiar phenomenon of Christianity. Indeed, most contemporary missiologists would contend that the missionary tendency is one of the fundamental distinguishing characteristics of Christianity. As such, mission study is a critically helpful means of understanding Christianity in comparison both with religions which are not characterized as missionary as well as those that are.

Moreover, and this point is no less pertinent to the other religions which demonstrate a missionary tendency, by virtue of its intrinsic cross-cultural aspects, missionary activity provides an exceptional seam through which we may study certain basic human realities. By purporting to communicate transcendent verities within and across human cultures, mission activity exposes the edges of both transmitting and receiving cultures in fundamental ways. It is this double-edged dimension of mission activity that recently has brought many secular scholars to the Day Library resources.

Now, this point quickly brings to issue two related questions. Should not the Day Library then begin to collect material dealing with missionary activity of other religions? If the Day collection is truly to be a missionary library in the fullest phenomenological sense of the concept, should it not document all religious missionary activity? We might give a tentative affirmative answer to this question, but there are several practical considerations which would affect such a redirection. Nevertheless, let the question be registered and perhaps the registering of it on this occasion will stimulate the disciplined discussion which the question deserves.

Second, does not even a more determined focus on mission activity nevertheless require the Day Library to acquire substantial contemporary material along the lines of the world Christianity collection development model discussed earlier? Here the answer is a qualified yes. As church history documents, mission records must include a wide range of related materials from the cultures in which churches were planted and from the life of those churches themselves. Furthermore, as the younger churches define themselves as missionary churches, a collection of their own missionary documents will require related historical and theological literature. The simple point is that by maintaining a mission focus, the Day Library will have the conceptual basis on which to collect what otherwise would be an overwhelming body of literature.

Finally, an elitist point. By continuing to focus on missions, the Day Library will achieve ever greater distinction as a research resource of the first rank. By its nature, research cannot avoid specialization. But, let us readily admit that the mission specialization which belongs to the Day Library is not narrowly defined. If one looks realistically at the full dimension of mission documentation, if one considers the older documents that are wanting, if one looks particularly at the Roman Catholic materials not found here, we must conclude that the historical task is far from complete. Contemporary mission activity, especially that originating in the non-western world, presents substantial new problems of docu-
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...mentation.

So, I would conclude that the first century of the Day Missions Library, with all of its strength and with all of its achievements, is but prolegomenon to its continuing task. The field it is documenting is still vast, and the activities—the phenomena it is documenting—have scholarly and practical interests far beyond our present mastery. Surely it is the mark of a great library in a great university to encourage at every point the development of a research capacity with such a promising yet open-ended future.

I ask you to join me in congratulating Yale University, its library and its Divinity School for providing and preserving this unequaled and, as yet, unmeasured resource. Let us hope that this occasion will strengthen the university's resolve to pursue "its steady aim toward completeness."

Thank you.

1. The only chair in Missions in the United States at that time was in Cumberland University, Lebanon, Tennessee. See Olav G. Myklebust, The Study of Missions in Theological Education (Oslo: Land Og Kirke, 1955) 2 Vols. American developments are treated in Vol. 1, pp. 360 ff. The second Missions Chair, and a chair which still exists, was established in Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (Louisville) in 1899.

2. See the brochure letter, "To the Friends of Christian Missions," March 19, 1891, seeking support for the founding of the Library of Modern Missions." In this brochure we find the statement, "Such a library, with its grand story, and its steady aim toward completeness, would always be speaking [of the missionary movement]." Copy in Yale Divinity School Library (YDSL), Special Collections, Record Group 92. I wish to thank the Martha Smalley, Archivist of the Divinity School Library and a colleague of many years, for her substantial help in locating numerous documents for this study and for her advice and insight on many points of content.

3. So Bernard Heinz in his "The First Black Student," Yale Alumni Magazine 8-10 (1978). Mr. Heinz has done extensive research on this era of Yale's history. I am grateful to him for helping me unravel many of the details of these sparsely documented events and for his personal friendship.


6. Letter of G. E. Day to his brother Horace, dated Dec. 8, 1836, in the Horace Day Letters, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. G.E.D. also sets out strong arguments against slavery in his diary entry for Dec. 14, 1837. This diary is in the Gad Day Family Papers, Collection No. 1225, Folder 9, Historical Manuscripts and Archives Department, Yale University Library.

7. A student group called the Society for Christian Research was founded in 1825 and remained active through Day's time as a student. The Society had committees dealing with (1) Foreign Missions, (2) Domestic Missions, (3) Correspondence with other Societies, and (4) People of Color. See Henry B. Wright, "Professor Goodrich and the Growth and Outcome of the Revival Movement," in *Two Centuries of Christian Activity at Yale*, edited by James B. Reynolds, Samuel H. Fisher, and Henry B. Wright (New York: Putnam's Sons, 1901). Wright reports the Committee on People of Color early on was committed to anti-slavery reform.


10. Heinz refers to this expectation ("First Black Student," p. 10) and there is evidence of its effectiveness in Professor Curtis' "Memorial Address" offered at Day's funeral (see *In Loving Memory: George Edward Day 1815-1905*, complied by O.H.D. [Olivia Hotchkiss Day], privately printed). Curtis recalls that forty years after the event an African student on his way to Fisk visited New Haven and told Day that his mother had been taught by one of the Amistad prisoners whom Day had instructed. (pp. 7-8).


12. At that time, there were in fact four libraries at Yale. Beside the college library, each of the three undergraduate literary societies, Linonia, Brothers in Unity, and Calliope, had their own not insignificant libraries.
13. Day served as Dean from 1888 to his full retirement in 1895. The circular letter is entitled, "Divinity School of Yale University, March 19, 1891. Library of Modern Missions." 2 pp. A copy is located in YDSL, RG 92.

14. Day served as pastor of Edwards' church from 1848 to 1851.


17. Theological Eclectic was published in Cincinnati by W. Scott, and continued through 1871 in seven volumes. It was superseded by the prestigious Bibliotheca Sacra for which Day served as one of the editors.

18. See Historical Account of the Work of the American Committee of Revision. A copy of this publication in page proofs is located in YDSL RG 34. This record group also contains Day's own minute book of the meetings of the committee, December 7, 1871 - April 22, 1897.


21. In its seven volumes the Theological Eclectic issued only one article related to missions, "Rammohun Roy and the Bramo Sonaj of India," (6:245-281 [1870]). This article appeared originally in the British Quarterly Review for April, 1869.

22. Myklebust refers to a letter from Latourette which indicates some mission instruction was offered in Yale as early as 1899. These practical courses were offered by various staff members, visiting scholars and students themselves. (Vol. 1, p. 377, see also p. 378, note 17).

23. So Henry B. Wright, "Professor Goodrich and the Growth and Outcome of the Revival Movement," in Two Centuries of Christian Activity at Yale. See also Myklebust, Vol. 1, p. 361. Wright reports that there was a fair amount of student interest in missions during the years Day was a Yale student.

25. So Beach, p. 296-297, in Reynolds, Fisher, and Wright. Almost half—76—of the total entered service in the years between 1870-1899, the years which span Day's active service at the Divinity School.


   Included in this volume of addresses delivered at the conference is another statement by Mott, "Conditions at the Mount Hermon Conference which Made Possible the Generation of the Student Volunteer Movement," pp. 55-73.

   See also John R. Mott, History of the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions, (n.p., 1892). Copy in YDSL RG 45.

27. See Beach, p. 294, in Reynolds, Fisher and Wright.

28. Dodge also was an early supporter of Luther Wishard in his founding of the Intercollegiate Young Men's Christian Association Movement of North America and later the World's Student Christian Federation. His son, David Stuart, graduated from Yale College in 1857 and taught in the Syrian Protestant College in Beirut. In the 1830s the elder Dodge formed a metal business with Anson G. Phelps, James Stokes, and D. Willis James—the latter being the founder of the D. Willis James Chair of Missions in Yale.

29. The exact date of this gift is difficult to determine. Dodge died in 1883.

30. See Beach, pp. 298-299, in Reynolds, Fisher, and Wright.


   These six numbers are now usually found bound together. They are paginated separately, but the
bibliographic entries are numbered consecutively. This numbering was used to maintain a volume count and, indeed, there are internal adjustments as errors in counting were discovered.

34. Dwight's "Tribute," In Loving Memory, p. 32.

35. See the 1891 circular letter note about the mission library in Upsala and its holdings as of 1888.

36. Day was never reluctant to acknowledge the many other gifts which added distinction to the young collection. His "Preface" to each catalogue issue records donations from individuals and mission societies in the United States and abroad, including J. Vahl, President of the Danish Missionary Society, James S. Dennis of Princeton Seminary, Miss Elizabeth Clarkson Jay (a descendant of the Huguenot Pierre Jay), Professor Arthur T. Pierson, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (who donated a collection elementary school books prepared around the world by their missionaries). Dr. Edward A., Lawrence, and the British and Foreign Bible Society (which provided a set of Bible translations complementing the earlier gift of William E. Dodge.)

37. Apparently not until 1899 did the Day collection add a catalogue of another missionary library. Entry 6552 of Catalogue No. VI. registers the acquisition of the Catalogue of the Library of the Free Church of Scotland, (Edinburgh: 1891). The Day collection now holds a manuscript catalogue of the Library of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions; with the Libraries of the Various Missions. This manuscript is dated "1832, etc" and was purchased in 1941.


39. In 1871 the ABCFM launched missions in Austria, Italy, Mexico and Spain. By the end of the century only the mission to Italy had been ended.

40. Attention to Roman Catholic materials received a decided boost from the hand of Professor Latourette, conveyed to the University Librarian by Dean Weigle, letter of March 2, 1933 (copy in YDSL RG 92).

41. Curiously enough, the only available photograph of the interior of this building shows artifacts which may still be seen in the present Day Missions Room in Sterling Divinity Quadrangle. (See the brochure of the Department of Missions in YDSL RG 92).

42. See World Missionary Conference 1910, vol. 6, p. 175 for Beach’s discussion of the founding of this chair. Also, vol. 5, pp. 246-249. (YDSL film B2586).
43. Archer himself makes this point in a letter to Dean Luther A. Weigle, January 28, 1931 (Copy in YDSL RG 92). Archer was embroiled in a controversy with the Dean over the administration of the Day Library as the School anticipated the move to its new, and current home, on Prospect Street.

44. See the 1891 brochure, section II.


47. Because the purposes of this lecture are not essentially theological, in setting out these reasons, we will leave untouched the question of mission studies as an empowering paradigm in professional theological education. Nevertheless, at the time of the founding of the Day Library, the field of mission studies was seeking to secure a hold in the theological curriculum. Most often this was under the aegis of practical or—as we would say today—pastoral theology. While there have been attempts to move the discipline to other areas, e.g., theology proper or history—and indeed the Day Library is a historical library, there still is something suggestive and powerful about the link between mission studies and practical theology. It speaks of a tie with human beings in specific contexts, facing very real choices, individuals solving very real problems. Probably it is precisely for this reason that the Day Library is so valued by historians and social scientists.
An address presented to the Advisory Committee of the Strategic Initiative for Scholarship in Missions and International Christianity, November 1, 1991

RESOURCES RELATED TO THE STUDY OF CHRISTIAN MISSIONS AND INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIANITY AT YALE DIVINITY LIBRARY

Paul Stuehrenberg
Librarian
Yale Divinity School

My assignment this evening is to tell you about the rich legacy of resources related to the study of Christian missions and international Christianity at the Yale Divinity Library. It is a privilege to do so, particularly since your interests in furthering the scholarship of Christian missions and international Christianity coincide so well with our interests in collecting and disseminating such scholarship. Many of you, I know, have made considerable use of our collections. For you, what I have to say might seem like preaching to the converted. Others of you may not have had extensive experience with our collections. I am confident that all of you will appreciate the value of the collections I describe.

Almost from its founding Yale has had an intimate connection with Christian missions. The founding fathers of Yale were committed to "the grand errand" of propagating "the blessed reformed Protestant religion in this wilderness," and considered the education of suitable youths a chief means for accomplishing this end. An early example of Yale's commitment to Christian missions is the life and ministry of David Brainerd (1718-1747). Brainerd's missionary work among the Indians was brief, and, in some ways, ineffectual. Yet he was to have great impact upon his contemporaries and upon future generations, chiefly because his journals were edited and published by his father-in-law, Jonathan Edwards. As such he stands as perhaps the best-known of colonial missionaries. (Parenthetically, I would note that the Divinity Library has no less than 25 editions of Brainerd's works, together with some supporting manuscript material.)

Mention the Yale Band in 1991 and people might think of a group of irreverent musicians who entertain the crowds during half-time at Yale football games. In 1829, the Yale Band referred to a group of Yale graduates who took it upon themselves to establish Christianity in the wilds of Illinois. As such they were one manifestation of the interest in missions that established the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions in 1810 and the American Home Missionary Society in 1816.

Yale graduates were to play important roles in both home and foreign missions throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As of 1859 no fewer than fifty-four Yale graduates had served as foreign missionaries, and this at a time when the total number of theological graduates was estimated
at 700. By 1901 the total number of foreign missionaries from Yale was "certainly not under one hundred twenty." Yale graduates played leadership roles in such organizations as the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions, founded in 1886, out of which grew Yale-in-China. While serving as Secretary of the Student Volunteer Movement, Harlan P. Beach, a graduate of Yale and later professor of missions at the Divinity School, was instrumental in the incorporation of missionary education into the curricula of nearly five hundred American colleges and universities.

It was in the context of this late nineteenth century interest in foreign missions that Yale's library resources for missions had their beginnings. George Edward Day served as a professor of Hebrew language and literature at Yale from 1866 to 1891. Upon his retirement he proposed to "Friends of Christian Missions" the establishment of a new library at Yale, which he hoped would become "the most full and complete collection of works of foreign missions in the United States and perhaps in the world." This library was to focus on the history of missions in various countries, missionary biography, the annual reports of missionary societies, periodicals, works prepared by missionaries for the use of the peoples of mission fields, and literature relating to Jewish missions. Also included was related literature in such fields as ethnology, geography, comparative religions and linguistics.

The purpose of this collection was to gather in one place a complete collection of books relating to the missions of all Christian denominations and peoples, both for present use and future historical interest. In addition, Day expected that the existence of such a collection would serve as an inspiration for candidates for the ministry. "Such a library," he said, "with its grand story, and its steady aim toward completeness, would be always speaking." The Day Missions Library has been speaking now for one hundred years. Over this time its focus has changed: Yale is no longer a leading center for the training of missionaries, and so the primary use of the collection is no longer by people studying to be missionaries. Rather, the collection is now used primarily by people such as you, people who study the history of Christian missions and international Christianity.

One sign of this change in focus has been the addition over the years of archival materials. To be sure, we continue to add published materials relating to missions and international Christianity to our collections; indeed, by one estimation one third of our collection is related to missions. In fact, parts of our collections of published materials, such as the missions-related serials, are stronger than those held by any other institution. And we intend to continue to build on such strengths.

Having said that, the manuscripts and archives program currently lends the most distinction to the Day Missions Library. The impetus for this development was the China Records Project, funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities from 1971 to 1976. This Project sought to preserve "the letters, diaries, writings, memorabilia and informal publications produced or collected by Protestant missionaries"
As an illustration of the types of archival resources that are available in the Yale Divinity Library, permit me to use that of the Communist revolution in China and its impact on Christian missions and the indigenization of the Chinese Church. In addition to published materials, the Divinity Library has extensive archival resources documenting this phenomenon, including personal papers, institutional papers and microforms of archival collections held elsewhere. For example, the Steward papers (Record Group 20) include such items as a document prepared by Chinese Christian leaders dated Dec. 4, 1948, appealing for missionaries not to evacuate, but to remain and share "the problems and opportunities of the day's ahead." The document concludes:

We cannot believe that all doors will be closed to Christian witness and service, to medical and relief work, to Christian worship and fellowship, to demonstrations of true Christian faith and love. God will close some doors and open others. ... We pray that some of our missionary brothers and sisters will stand by us and share with us the perils and the promises of this fateful period in China's history.

Another document summarizes messages from Chinese Christians, such as a statement from a Chinese pastor dated Sept. 1949, who said:

There are a lot of people who are patriots who really love their country and they are trying to find the way to save her. Many of them first came to Christianity but they did not find the way there, so they have come to Communism hoping to find a way to save China. So now some stand for both Christianity and Communism. But they will eventually come back to Christianity since Communism will not do for them what they want.

Similar material is included with the correspondence of Dwight W. Edwards (Record Group 12). Also in this collection is a letter which recounts the government campaign in 1952 to eradicate flies and mosquitoes. A resolution of the Yenching Union called on every member to undertake to kill two flies daily, twenty mosquitoes per week, and one rat if possible (no time limit set). The letter states:

Many of the offices have score-cards on the wall, with the daily record of each person in that office. ... Students walk around the campus with fly swatters, and according to the newspaper, children hunt flies down with nets. Do not think, however, that we are yet free of mosquitoes. When we ate supper the other day in a small local restaurant, we got plentifully bitten.

The United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia Archives (Record Group 11) includes such material as lists of faculty members at various Christian schools in China, together with biographical information forms which include photographs. Also included are such items as a translation of "Faculty and students' views and suggestions after President Y.C. Yang's second self-evaluation at general meeting at Soochow University, June 11, 1952." One teacher commented:

He did not disclose his relation with American Imperialistic elements and reactionary government,
so how could he disclose his thoughts? ... He still uses diplomatic excuses and techniques in self-criticism. Very sly!

Another said: "Yang still criticized self from the standpoint of American capitalistic view, and he was not honest. He joined in the student protest against American merchandise very superficially."

The Divinity Library also has documentation of the Chinese Church as it developed under Communism. For example, we have the 1952-1954 issues of the China Bulletin published by the Far Eastern Joint Office of the National Council of Churches. This bulletin contains news summaries designed to keep mission boards and missionaries informed on Christian work in China. It reproduces such documents as the report of the conference that formed the China Three-Self Patriotic Movement in 1954. Our copy was annotated by the missionary Miner Searle Bates.

In addition to papers and correspondence held only at the Divinity Library, we also regularly purchase microform editions of other archival collections. One of these is the International Missionary Council Archives for 1910-1961. This microfiche collection includes correspondence and papers, published and unpublished, relating to China in the revolutionary period and after. It includes documents produced by the Chinese Christian community after the missionaries had left.

Besides to these archival resources, one other category of materials that should be of interest to you is the machine-readable records created in Yale's on-line public catalog for the International Christian Literature Documentation Project, otherwise known as ICLDP. This Project is funded by the Pew Charitable Trust and is administered by the American Theological Library Association. Our part of this Project is the creation of bibliographic records for pamphlets and books which document international Christianity. Magnetic tapes of these records will be sent to ATLA for inclusion in a special missions database as well as to the Research Library Group for inclusion in their national bibliographic database, RLIN...At last count this database included more than 6,000 records, eight of which include the subject heading: Communism and Christianity--China.

What I have attempted to show by this summary is the broad scope of the archival materials held by the Divinity Library. We have documentation for China missions themselves, documents showing the reactions to the Communist revolution by missionaries and Chinese Christians, documents showing the opposition of the Chinese government to missionary influences, and documents showing how the Chinese Church survived. While you are here I would encourage you to visit the Special Collections Department of the Divinity Library, if you have not already done so. I have touched on only a few of the rich resources that are available in this repository. Indeed, we have one of the most comprehensive collections of published and unpublished resources for the study of international Christianity available anywhere in the world. Martha Smalley and her staff will be pleased to discuss with you the resources we have for your particular area of interest.

2. His journals were originally published in two parts in 1746. His personal diary and other papers formed the basis of Edward's biography of Brainerd, entitled *An Account of the Life of the late Rev. David Brainerd, Missionary to the Indians*, published in 1749.


5. Ibid., p. xiii.


In the spring of 1992, two exhibits were prepared to commemorate the centenary of the Day Missions Library:

**Five Centuries of Documentation of the Missionary Enterprise** provided an overview of the resources of the Day Library.
**Missionaries and the African Slave Trade** focused on the library's holdings related to a particular topic.

Martha Lund Smalley  
*Curator of the Day Missions Library*

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**FIVE CENTURIES OF DOCUMENTATION OF THE MISSIONARY ENTERPRISE**

It was the spring of 1891 when George Edward Day sent out his circular to "the Friends of Christian Missions" proposing the establishment of "a special library which it is hoped will become the most full and complete collection of works on Foreign Missions in the United States and perhaps in the world." The late nineteenth century context for Day's proposal was a time of dominance and prestige for Western civilization. Imperialistic expansion was condoned as an altruistic response to increased knowledge of the non-Western world. The rising nationalism of the era provided important motivation for the foreign mission enterprise as the success of American civilization was attributed to its Christian basis. Practical aspects of the late nineteenth century also contributed to the rapid growth of Protestant missions. Because of improved transportation and communication, travel to far corners of the earth was possible as never before.

When the first catalogue of the Foreign Mission Library of the Divinity School of Yale University was published in January 1892, the library contained 1500 volumes. By 1929, the Day Missions Library included nearly 30,000 volumes; 323 monthly serials were received; 500 letters were sent to mission agencies and institutions requesting the donation of their annual reports and important publications. In the ensuing years, the scope and holdings of the library have increased dramatically. The Day Missions Library now includes more than 100,000 volumes as well as extensive archival and manuscript collections. Because of its early origin, the Day Library contains many works which are available nowhere else in the United States. Its holdings document in a thorough way not only institutional histories, but also such topics as the role of women in the missions enterprise, the role of missionaries in portraying non-Western cultures to the home public and the impact of missions on distinctive ethnic groups. Though its strength continues to be in supporting historical study of Protestant mission activity, it now strives to document a wide range of Christian activity and Third World church history.
In commemoration of the centenary of the Day Missions Library, samples of missionary documentation from the past five centuries were displayed in the Day Missions Reading Room. A selection of these works are described below.

From the sixteenth century:

Selections documenting early Catholic missions included a 1571 German work describing Jesuit missions in the New World:


**LETTERE DELL’INDIA ORIENTALE,**

Scritte da Reuerendi Padri della Compagnia di Giesù.

Nelle quali si scopre la grande arte usata da gli iefi, per liberar l’anime degli infidel Indiani dalla potestà del nimico infernale, & ridurle alla nostra santa fede.

Non potuto dimenticare, raccolte in molti luoghi, & correte con diligenza.

CON PRIVILEGIO.

IN VINEGIA. Appresso Antonio Ferrari. MD LXXX.
From the seventeenth century:

Samples from the seventeenth century included a 1615 work describing "De christiana expeditione" of Matteo Ricci, a 1639 Latin treatise on China, and a 1694 attack on Catholic mission activity in India by Michael Geddes, Chancellor of the Cathedral Church of Sarum:

Ricci, Matteo
De christiana expeditione apvd Sinas vscepta, ab Societate Jesu. Ex. p. Mattaei Ricii...
Comentariis. Libri V ... in quibus sinensis regni mores, leges atq. instituta & nouae illius ecclesiae difficillima primordia ... describuntur. Auctore p. Nicolao Trigavtio ...
Augustae Vind elicorum apud C. Mangium. 1615.

Geddes, Michael, 1650?-1713
The history of the Church of Malabar, from the time of its being first discover’d by the Portuguezes in the year 1501. Giving an account of the persecutions and violent methods of the Roman prelates, to reduce them to the subjection of the Church of Rome... London, Printed for S. Smith, and B. Walford, 1694.
From the eighteenth century:
Samples from the eighteenth century traced the early years of Protestant mission work.

**Propagation of the Gospel in the East:**

BEING AN ACCOUNT OF THE SUCCESS OF TWO DANISH MISSIONARIES, LATELY SENT TO THE EAST-INDIES, FOR THE CONVERSION OF THE HEATHENS IN MALABAR.

In several LETTERS to their Correspondents in Europe, CONTAINING A NARRATIVE of their VOYAGE to the Coast of Coromandel, their Settlement at Tranquebar, the Divinity and Philosophy of the Malabarians, their Language and Manners, the Impediments obstructing their Conversion, the several Methods taken by these Missionaries, the wonderful Providences attending them, and the Progress they have already made.

Rendred into English from the High-Dutch: And Dedicated to the Most Honourable Corporation for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts.

PART I.
THE THIRD EDITION.
LONDON: Printed and Sold by Joseph Downing, in Paternoster-Row, 1718.

Ziegenbalg, Bartholomew

Propagation of the Gospel in the East: being an account of the success of two Danish missionaries lately sent to the East-Indies for the conversion of the heathens in Malabar... London, Printed and sold by Joseph Downing, 1718.

Carey, William, 1761-1834.

An enquiry into the obligations of Christians, to use means for the conversion of the heathens. In which the religious state of the different nations of the world, the success of former undertakings, and the practicability of further undertakings, are considered...

Leicester, Printed and sold by Ann Ireland, 1792.
From the nineteenth century

Representing the nineteenth century were books, annual reports, and periodicals which were listed in the first catalogue of the Day Missions Library. George Edward Day, founder of the Day Missions Library, envisioned a collection containing six types of material: the history of missions in various countries, missionary biography, the annual reports of missionary societies, periodicals, works prepared by missionaries for the use of the peoples of mission fields, and literature relating to Jewish missions.

Chapin, Walter
The missionary gazetteer comprising a view of the inhabitants, and a geographical description of the countries and places, where protestant missionaries have labored...
Woodstock, Vermont, Printed by David Watson, 1825.

Wolf, Joseph
Missionary journal and memoir of the Rev. Joseph Wolf, missionary to the Jews. New York, Published by E. Bliss & E. White, 1824.
From the twentieth century
Documents and correspondence relating to the World Missionary Conference held in Edinburgh in 1910 were selected to represent the library's strengths in documenting ecumenical Protestant mission activity.

As described in the Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, "The World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh (1910) was convened as a consultative gathering to study missionary endeavor in the light of the circumstances of the day. It was significant especially for its presentation of the ideal of world evangelization and as a forerunner of the Ecumenical Movement. Through the creation of the International Missionary Council and the opening of Edinburgh House, it also led to much greater cooperation among missionary societies. Some 1200 delegates, representative of many Christian bodies, and some 160 missionary boards or societies, took part. John R. Mott was chairman of the Committee and J. H. Oldham general secretary of the Conference."

A significant result of the Edinburgh Conference was the formation of a Continuation Committee which later developed into the International Missionary Council. Materials from the Mott Papers and from the Library's Historical Records Collection document conferences and meetings sponsored by the Continuation Committee.
MISSIONARIES AND THE AFRICAN SLAVE TRADE

Historians estimate that 9.6 million Africans were introduced to Europe and the New World as slaves between 1510 and 1870. This exhibit sought to draw attention to aspects of the interaction of Christian missionaries with the slave trade.

Catholic missions and the slave trade

There have been two major periods of Christian mission work in Africa. The first began with Portuguese exploration of the west coast of Africa in the late fifteenth century. Catholic orders, including the Capuchins, Dominicans, Jesuits, and Franciscans, sent hundreds of missionaries to Africa between 1470 and 1770. They built churches, sought the religious allegiance of tribal chiefs, and introduced the Christian sacraments. Early Catholic mission efforts were largely under the control of the Portuguese state. Not surprisingly, the missionaries were closely identified with the Portuguese slave traders; mission work was in part financed by proceeds from the slave trade.

A Curious and Exact ACCOUNT
OF A
VOYAGE
TO
CONGO,
In the Years 1666, and 1667.

By the R.R.F.F. Michael Angelo of Gattina, and Denis de Carli of Piacenza, Capuchins, and Apostolick Missioners into the said Kingdom of Congo.

Guattini, Michele Angelo
A curious and exact account of a voyage to Congo, in the years 1666, and 1667. By the R.R.F.F. Michael Angelo of Gattina, and Denis de Carli of Piacenza... [London, 1704]

British historian Richard Gray has recently brought attention to early official documents in the Archives of the Propaganda Fide which condemn the slave trade, but, as he has noted:

The Holy Office could define questions of ethics, but the enforcement of its decisions depended
on clerics and laity whose immediate ecclesiastical, and ultimate political, loyalties lay elsewhere…. In the seventeenth, as in other centuries, the church was not only the church of the poor and the oppressed…. It was also the church of the privileged and of the conquistadores.¹

By the end of the eighteenth century, there were no worshipping congregations resulting from early Catholic mission activity, only the ruins of buildings. Roman Catholic missions in Africa did not begin again until around 1840.

The beginnings of Protestant missions in Africa

European Christians in the seventeenth century found little fault with slavery. Growing opposition to slavery in Britain was closely intertwined with the dramatic rise of Protestant mission societies in the late eighteenth century. The sudden rise of Protestant missionary societies in England during this time period can be attributed in part to the interaction of the prevailing religious climate there with the growing agitation in British society surrounding the slavery issue.

The year 1775 may be considered the turning point in the development of the modern missionary movement, especially in relation to Africa. The context of its birth was the struggle in British society regarding the rights of slave owners and of slaves in England. In 1772 Chief Justice Mansfield gave judgement that a slave-owner did not have the right to remove a slave unwillingly from English soil. The slaves in Britain, perhaps 20,000 or more, were not set free by Lord Mansfield’s judgement, but the propaganda surrounding the public discussion, and the philanthropic work, were primary factors in the birth of the modern missionary movement. Together with the dynamism and the attitudes created by the Evangelical Revival, an environment was produced conducive to the growth of a missionary commitment.²

By the second half of the eighteenth century, England had become the leading slave-trading nation in the world. Slavery had been a part of human civilization for centuries, but there came a both quantitative and qualitative change in the degree of human exploitation now that slavery had been turned into an intercontinental trade by enterprising European nations. Domestic slavery had been relatively more benevolent, and probably would not have disturbed human consciences deeply enough to produce radical social change, but the blatant inhumanity of the slave ship could not help but stir the consciences of many.³ Observations and illustrations in missionary publications served to alert the public in Europe and America to the horrors of the slave trade.

The Sierra Leone settlement

As slaves in Britain and elsewhere were freed, the problem arose as to how and where the ex-slaves should live. One solution was the establishment of a settlement for freed slaves in Africa. Elliott Kendall has written:

The agitation surrounding black slavery in England led directly to the plan to create a "land of freedom in Africa" for freed slaves, and establish a Christian settlement at Sierra Leone. The
scheme launched in 1787, with black and white settlers and chaplains, was the beginning of the modern missionary involvement with Africa. The chaplains called for missionaries to come and begin evangelization of the indigenous people. Additions to the black settlers from N. America and Nova Scotia brought numerous Christians and many denominations. The sons of some local African chiefs were sent to England for education. The missionary encounter with Africa had begun.4

The aims of the directors of the Sierra Leone settlement were to resettle slaves, to educate, to promote agriculture and commerce and to spread the Christian faith. Though the scheme was in large part motivated by the desire to rid England of alarming numbers of destitute black ex-slaves, its founders also saw themselves as trying to fulfill a moral obligation to Africa, to compensate for years of European oppression.

In 1792, more than 1,000 African Americans arrived in Sierra Leone. These were primarily ex-slaves who had been emancipated during the American War of Independence and settled in Nova Scotia. Right from the start the expansion of Christianity in West Africa depended largely on Blacks. It was the Nova Scotian settlers of African descent who ensured that Freetown developed a distinctive Christian culture and who provided the reference group for the colonies of freed slaves.5

Liberia and American missions in Africa

Near Sierra Leone, on the west coast of Africa, Liberia was founded in 1822 as a settlement for free blacks from the United States. Supporters of the organization behind the creation of Liberia, the American Colonization Society, were largely from the Southern states. The colonization movement was controversial and the motives of those supporting it varied widely. Some supported colonization because of a desire to get rid of Negroes already free, for free blacks were widely regarded as inferior beings.... Other colonizers were interested mainly in using black émigrés as instruments of converting heathen Africans to the blessings of Christianity.6

The Amistad incident of 1839 did much to bring Africa and the continuing illegal slave trade into public consciousness in America. It also led to the establishment of the Mendi Mission in West Africa by the American Missionary Association. A group of slaves on the Spanish ship Amistad had mutinied against their captors. Their ship came in time to Long Island Sound and was apprehended there. The blacks were lodged in the New Haven jail until such time as a court case could determine their legal status. During their incarceration, the captives received instruction in English from Prof. George Edward Day, later founder of the Day Missions Library, and several Divinity School students. At length the slaves were declared free. They were returned to Africa in 1842, accompanied by two missionaries, forming the nucleus of the Mendi Mission in West Africa of the American Missionary Association.
East and Central Africa

By the mid-nineteenth century, slave trading on the west coast of Africa had diminished. Britain had abolished the slave trade for British shipping in 1833 and was enforcing the legislation by naval power around Africa. Missionary societies were working toward establishing commerce and education in areas formerly preoccupied by the slave trade. On the east coast of Africa and in its interior, however, the slave trade continued unabated. Scottish missionary David Livingstone did more than any other individual to bring attention to this situation.

In Livingstone’s travels, the atrocities of the internal slave traffic and the obstacles it presented to mission work in Central Africa had so impressed him, that the question of its suppression became "the upper-most idea in his mind." Hitherto his explorations had aimed solely at opening fields for mission work; thenceforth they sought to open up the country to legitimate and productive commerce as a means of superseding the destructive and inhuman traffic in flesh and blood.7

Livingstone and Waller

When Livingstone returned to Britain in 1856, he lectured widely regarding the situation in Africa. His December 1857 lecture in Cambridge, calling upon young university men of England to follow in his footsteps, resulted in the formation of the Universities' Mission to Central Africa. The stated object of the Universities' Mission was to establish stations in Central Africa "which may serve as centres of Christianity and civilization, for the promotion of true religion, agriculture, and lawful commerce, and the ultimate extinction of the slave trade."

Horace Waller went to Africa in 1860 as a lay missionary of the Universities’ Mission to Central Africa. He met Livingstone there in 1861 and formed a friendship with him. Dorothy O. Helly’s book Livingstone’s Legacy: Horace Waller and Victorian Mythmaking explores the way in which Waller, as a spokesman for Livingstone in England and as editor of Livingstone’s Last Journals, helped to shape the Livingstone legacy for posterity.

As Helly writes:

The history of the friendship between David Livingstone and Horace Waller is the history of two
members of the British humanitarian community who devoted their lives to the cause of antislavery in East Africa and, thereby, helped lay the foundations for imperial expansion. By exploring the conjunction of these two lives - one the famed missionary explorer who exposed the expanse and nature of the East Africa slave trade and the other the editor of the posthumous publication of Livingstone's Last Journals, we gain some insight into the dynamics of the antislavery cause in Great Britain and East Africa and its integral relationship to British imperialism. 

Waller served in Africa for three years and returned to England a devoted opponent of the slave trade. He became an active member of the British Anti-slavery Society, lecturing and writing about Africa. Letters and diaries of Waller are contained in the library’s Manuscript Group No. 72.

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4. Kendall, "The Missionary Factor in Africa".
5. Gray, Black Christians and White Missionaries.