

From Pulpits to Polls: How Female Preachers Birthed the Women's Rights Movement

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Abstract

Women sought the right to share their sacred voices in a variety of situations in the New World. The developing theology of Calvinists in New England churches coupled with the powerful movements of the first and second Great Awakenings gave women permission to speak publicly with unintended consequences. As women began first to share their testimonies of personal salvation and then to hold forth on their own interpretations of scripture a growing sense of empowerment swept through women's collective consciousness. The ultimate result of this preaching/sacred movement was the inevitable birth of the secular women's rights movement. The development and sustaining of the movement relied on women whose first desire was to share the Gospel. In doing so they discovered their voices in all realms.

American evangelical culture suffers from a collective historical amnesia of sorts. The guiding documents of some mainstream denominations rely on an extra-textual bias regarding Saint Paul's instructions that "your women keep silence in the churches" and other verses regarding women's gender-based subservience. This out-of-context stance by some disregards their own history and the history of the women's rights movement as a whole. Some of this historical amnesia resulted from changes in theological positions in some denominations and as a result of changing views of gender in America. This ignorance might find some justification since records seldom recorded women's religious activities. Regardless of the challenges, existing records reveal a diverse body of women who preached, taught and served as pastors and church leaders in America from its earliest days and through two Great Awakenings. Ironically, as women gained political influence and the women's rights movement spread, the voices of female religious leaders grew quieter and quieter. The greater irony lies in that the religious sphere itself birthed the women's movement.

The statesman and writer Alexis de Tocqueville described the consequence of religious life on America observed during his 1830 -1831 trip to the new nation. He wrote in his first volume of *Democracy in America* that, "...from the beginning, politics and religion contracted an alliance which has never been dissolved."¹ Religion impacted the nation directly, "but its indirect influence appears to me to be still

¹ Alexis De Tocqueville, Essential Thinkers Series, De Tocqueville, *Selections from Democracy in America* (New York: CRW, 2005) 179.

more considerable, and it never instructs the Americans more fully in the art of being free than when it says nothing of freedom.”² This positioning of religious influence was unique to America. According to De Tocqueville, “In the United States the sovereign authority is religious...there is no country in the world where the Christian religion retains a greater influence over the souls of men than in America.”³ This religious fascination, well established before De Tocqueville described it, permeated American life and provided opportunities and obstacles for women in particular.

From the earliest days of religious immigrants to the shores of the New World, the churches of New England sought to contain and control the radically dangerous implications of their own theology. While they professed that religious persecution in Europe forced their relocation, their own demands for religious freedom sowed the seeds of egalitarianism as regarded women. Additionally, Puritan Calvinism continued to develop and change as its own internal contradictions became apparent. The emphasis on reading and understanding scripture for oneself required a begrudging acknowledgement that women too shared some degree of spiritual responsibility for their own salvific experiences.⁴ Further, this salvation required not only an intellectual exercise of reason, but resulted from a mystical work of the Holy Spirit which applied to women as well as men. This personal relationship to the Divine opened the door to the possibility that the Spirit might somehow move in new (and uncontrollable) ways.⁵ Thus the Puritans risked a contradiction if they denied the individual’s responsibility for their own salvation. At the same time, their faith forced them to grant women the power that drove the genie out of the bottle – the personal power to build their own faith.

One way that clerical authority sought to maintain the gendered social order was to posit the formulaic nature of the process of preparation and sanctification of the elect which required that women as well as men testify to their spiritual process.⁶ This testimony for women proved difficult for many as at no other time did the church allow such public speaking. Yet it is in this event that some women found the voices they later used to challenge the religious and social hierarchy. The self-discovery of their spiritual voices led inevitably to conflict. Anne Hutchinson served as an important (though certainly not the first or only) case in point.

Hutchinson established her religious authority soon after arriving in America in 1634.⁷ She set up religious meetings, first to include women only, but these soon drew men as well. As her popularity grew and threatened the established Puritan leadership, these authorities brought her to trial. Her remarkable skills as both a speaker and teacher frustrated the court as she defended herself with scripture after scripture. She even boldly declared that should they find against her, God would curse them:

You have power over my body but the Lord Jesus hath power over my body and soul; and assure yourselves thus much, you do as much as in you lies to put the Lord Jesus Christ from you, and if you go on in this course you begin, you will bring a curse upon you and your posterity, and the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.⁸

² De Tocqueville, 183.

³ De Tocqueville, 183.

⁴ Marylyn J. Westerkamp, *Women and Religion in Early America, 1600 – 1850: The Puritan and Evangelical Traditions* (London: Routledge 1999), p. 21.

⁵ Westerkamp, 24.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 21.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 38.

⁸ Anne Hutchinson The Trial, Transcript, http://www.annahutchinson.com/anne_hutchinson_trial_011.htm, 2002 (accessed April 5, 2209)

This claim of direct revelation (especially one that condemned the court) proved too much. The court ordered her banishment and after a reprieve which allowed her to remain until spring, she and about sixty followers moved to a more accepting Rhode Island.⁹ In 1643, she and much of her family died at the hands of a band of Siwanoy Natives. Some have suggested that this may have been at the urging of some Puritan leaders.¹⁰ The threat Hutchinson posed to the established order of the day refused to die with her though.

If Anne Hutchinson represented a threat based on the usurpation of gender roles, the Quakers, a group of neo-Puritan dissenters, threatened the patriarchy with complete social anarchy. Their vision of faith taught that equality before God was literal and this applied not only to the political, but the theological realm. Thus, the continuing revelation, in addition to scripture, was available to all people, who, as beings created in the image of the Divine, held an inner light or spirit. Because all humans possessed this, not only were women as well as men able to receive (and thus transmit) this spiritual revelation, but a separate, educated class of clergy proved unnecessary.¹¹ For a Puritan society invested in social hierarchy and male dominance, this seemed nothing short of blasphemy.

The tradition of Quaker women speaking in mixed-gender assemblies resulted in volumes of writings. The list of female members of the Society of Friends, as Quakers came to be called, was long and well known. Though Quakers continued to function as a sect rather than a mainstream organization, they influenced women outside their own circles by their steadfast commitment to their own beliefs. By the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries they no longer suffered the persecutions heaped upon them by earlier Puritans and served as an incubator of sorts for many of America's social movements, including women's suffrage. Evidence of Quaker theological influence, particularly in terms of acceptance of women's voices in church settings, appeared strongly in the wave of revivals that swept American churches in the eighteenth century.

Unlike the Quakers, the Separates or Strict Congregationalists openly supported lay exhortation during the period of the first Great Awakening only to change positions later.¹² This right extended to female members as well as males as they declared that women could rightly express themselves in the church and share their testimonies of conversion.¹³ The Baptists, who would later merge with some Separates, also allowed the practice. As Catherine Brekus points out, "at least one Baptist Church in Connecticut allowed their female members to testify in public...[they] voted in church meetings, participated in disciplinary decisions and chose new ministers."¹⁴ Despite these egalitarian beginnings, by 1781 the Separates capitulated to the pressure of worldly respectability and "renounced...the once-treasured belief that all members had a right to improve their gifts publicly."¹⁵ No longer could women – or even lay men – exhort publicly in the congregation. So too, the Baptists looked to increase their respectability – read 'power' – and exchanged their original theological understandings of equality for a narrower and more accepted stance that left women voiceless.¹⁶

⁹ Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities, "Mass Moments" at, <http://massmoments.org/moment.cfm?mid=88>, 2009 (accessed April 5, 2009)

¹⁰ "Today in History, July 20,: The Library of Congress, *American Memory*, at <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/today/jul20.html>.

¹¹ Westerkamp, 46.

¹² Brekus, 48.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Brekus, 50.

¹⁵ Ibid., 60.

¹⁶ Ibid.

Beginning in 1734, the revivals of the first Great Awakening spread throughout New England. Jonathon Edwards, one of the most well-known religious figures of the period, wrote of women speaking in promiscuous assemblies during these revivals. He seemed to have been somewhat conflicted over this. On the one hand, he wrote a defense of the revivals as valid works of God despite their often emotive air. Yet, in his work *Some Thoughts Concerning the Revival*, he reiterated the importance of decorum on the part of female participants: writing, "...modesty, or shamefacedness, and reverence towards men, ought to have some place, even in our religious communication one with another."¹⁷

He agreed with the more conservative voices of the day in this regard. Yet Edwards allowed women to speak in assemblies as confirmation of conversion as a necessary part of the revival experience. He assumed that if "religious ecstasy" overcame them then their utterances would not of necessity involve sin.¹⁸ In part, revivalists tolerated these testimonies and accompanying outbursts since it was seen as an emotional – thus feminine – eruption attributable to the work of the Holy Spirit. Despite often less-than-enthusiastic support from *New Lights* – revivalists - and outright opposition from *Old Lights*, – orthodox traditionalists - women in fact continued to speak and preach publicly.

These revival meetings sowed the seeds of a more democratic spirituality in which people of all ranks and stations – including women – found themselves speaking publicly. Such a radical departure from the dour, hierarchically organized typical worship service provided an opportunity for equally radical social change outside the church since the pervasive nature of church influence in the eighteenth century made the two spheres inseparable. Once women tasted the freedom and power of public religious expression, no clergyman could hope to reverse the process. Evangelicalism sowed the seeds and individual women needed only fertilize the field to reap the inevitable harvest.

As the revivals of the Awakening continued in 1741, one such woman, the Congregationalist Sarah Osborn, helped to found and was elected leader of a religious female society.¹⁹ Though she herself never claimed the title of preacher, her teaching sessions drew crowds of hundreds of people of all classes and races to her home. So long as she did not claim authority over men in these assemblies, the ecclesial authorities of her Congregational Church seem satisfied to allow her to continue.²⁰ Osborn appeared content to bow to male authority in matters religious, but authorities apparently called her actions into question during her leadership of the women's groups (which by now could not rightly be called such as they consisted of several groups, including groups of white men, sometimes meeting simultaneously in her home.)

She wrote to her minister, Joseph Fish, that she ministered to the "poor Blacks on Lord's Day Evenings" as no clergy were available or willing to take up the task.²¹ Further, she made clear that the white men

¹⁷ Jonathan Edwards, *Some Thoughts Concerning the Revival*, The Jonathan Edwards Center Yale university, <http://edwards.yale.edu/archive?path=aHR0cDovL2Vkd2FyZHMueWFsZS5lZHUvY2dpLWJpbi9uZXdwGlsby9nZXRvYmplY3QucGw/Yy4zOjYud2plbw==> (accessed March 29, 2009)

¹⁸ Catherine A. Brekus, *Strangers and Pilgrims: Female Preaching in America 1740 – 1845* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998) 47.

¹⁹ Samuel Hopkins and Sarah Osborn, *Memoirs of the Life of Mrs. Sarah Osborn Who Died at Newport, Rhode Island on the Second Day of August 1796 in the Eighty Third Year of Her Age*, p 70. At http://books.google.com/books?id=1mwEAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA96&lpg=PA96&dq=Sarah+Osborn+preacher&source=bl&ots=PfLoPqJE75&sig=E4mvWLn2QD44uCCpjzAFPpEGl-E&hl=en&ei=lxzQsdezA4z8swOW4OShAw&sa=X&oi=book_result&resnum=1&ct=result#PPA70,M1.

²⁰ Brekus, *Strangers and Pilgrims*, 74 – 75.

²¹ Sarah Osborn, Letter from Sarah Osborn to Joseph Fish, March 1767, in "My Resting Reaping Times": Sarah Osborn's Defense of Her "Unfeminine" Activities, 1767", by Mary Beth Norton, In *Signs: Journal of*

gathered there sat not under her tutelage, but that she simply provided the location for their meetings. They occasionally “condescend[ed] to direct part of conversation to me and so far as I bear a part to answer etc. but no other way.”²² A few pages into the letter, having addressed those political concerns, she responded to Fish’ more direct question as to her abilities and strength to carry out the tasks of ministry. Here she skillfully replied that she trusted “...Christ’s strength is made perfect in my weakness and at sometimes am made open to glory even in my infirmities.”²³ Such a response left little for Fish to condemn given the evangelical theology supporting the moving of the Spirit in such matters.

Osborn stood out as one of the most successful women of her day in terms of relatively public, large-scale ministry. She was part of a tradition, including the earlier-mentioned, better known Quaker women who opened the door for other women to enter. This opportunity for female ministry drew women from Europe to America as well.

Such was the case with Dorothy Ripley who, in 1806, stood as the first woman to speak in the U.S. House of Representatives. She traveled to the U.S. from England and wrote of her activities in a series of letters. Ripley ministered among a variety of people including the Native Americans of New York state who she found more receptive than “The white people, whom I have mixed among, [who] are principally dead in trespasses and sins; and have a worse chance of salvation than their neighbouring [sic] brethren, whom they despise.”²⁴ Like Osborn’s experience with black men, Ripley ministered to Native American men without the same taboos against preaching in the presence of white men. Not that this mattered greatly to Ripley, since she sought to spread the word to all people without concern for gender, race or social status.

Seeking the help of friends, she made contact with Thomas Hazard, keeper of the city jail at Bridewell in New York.²⁵ She asked to bring the Gospel to the men imprisoned there, but Hazard thought it “not suitable for a female to see the deplorable creatures there, for it was not decent.”²⁶ Ripley, undaunted, wrote back to the jail keeper that she “had seen human nature debased as much as possible; therefore was prepared for the scene if it were ever so degrading to the mind: and must come there.”²⁷ Her forceful personality persuaded Hazard and he agreed to “make the house as decent as I can” for her visit.²⁸ At Bridewell, she preached to both males and females, staring down the more callous women who derided her until her piety and religious authority moved them to tears. She knelt on the dirty floor of the men’s ward and her humility moved not only the prisoners, but some “Frenchmen” who stood outside the gates to tears.²⁹ This ability to speak to all types of people did not go unnoticed in other circles. Thomas Jefferson experienced her supreme confidence as she confronted him at his private residences in the

Women in Culture and Society, 1976, Vol. 2, No. 2. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. 1976), at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3173475?seq=8>

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Dorothy Ripley, *The Bank of Faith and Works United* (Philadelphia: 1819) in *American Notes: Travels in America, 1750-1920* at The Library of Congress, [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/lhbtn:@field\(DOCID+@lit\(lhbtn02771div4\)\)#027710029](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/lhbtn:@field(DOCID+@lit(lhbtn02771div4))#027710029)

²⁵ Arthur Everett, *Minutes of the Common Council of the City of New York, 1784 - 1831*, (New York: City of New York, 1917), at http://books.google.com/books?id=tisWAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA354&lpg=PA354&dq=Thomas+Hazard+Bridewell&source=bl&ots=jontQpHmN8&sig=MJP46Ras5VZpNDbXiJerhEgiuS8&hl=en&ei=vp3RSbCwJejonQe0mYDOBQ&sa=X&oi=book_result&resnum=1&ct=result#PPA354,M1.

²⁶ Dorothy Ripley, *The Bank of Faith and Works United*, New York, 6th 7th mo. 1805

²⁷ Dorothy Ripley, *The Bank of Faith and Works United*.

²⁸ Dorothy Ripley

²⁹ Ripley, *New York, 6th 7th mo.* 1805.

White House regarding the abolition of slavery.³⁰ Whatever their philosophical differences regarding slavery, religion and female education (all three subjects on which Ripley stood counter to Jefferson,) the President nonetheless welcomed her to the House of Representatives as the first female speaker and certainly the first female *preacher* before that body.³¹ There she “delivered a camp meeting-style exhortation” to Jefferson, his Vice-President Aaron Burr and a large crowd.³²

Ripley would not be the last female to preach before the nation’s leaders. Harriet Livermore, the daughter and granddaughter of congressmen, preached before the House for the first time in January 1827. This would be the first of four sermons she gave, each under a different President.³³ Though derided as a religious fanatic by John Quincy Adams (whose inability to garner a seat in the overcrowded assembly forced him to sit on the steps and may have contributed to a foul mood,) Livermore’s charisma certainly moved at least one woman in the crowd. As Brekus records, “It savored more of inspiration than anything I ever witnessed...And to enjoy the frame of mind which I think she does, I would relinquish the world.”³⁴ The impact of female preachers sometimes inspired other women to heed the same call to public ministry. While the woman quoted above may or may not have “relinquished the world” to preach as Livermore, Sarah Righter Major did. After hearing the “Pilgrim Stranger”, as Livermore was often called, Major converted in 1826 and subsequently sought ordination among the United Church of the Brethren in 1834. The Brethren refused her request, but Major continued preaching nonetheless. (This request was not out of the realm of possibility as the Brethren did not officially ordain women but did approve female preachers. In the case of Lydia Sexton they granted her the position of “approved preacher” in 1851 and bestowed the title “preacher for life.” They later called her as the first female chaplain at the prison in Leavenworth, Kansas.)³⁵

Female preaching was not limited to relatively well-connected white women. Amanda Smith, born into slavery, wrote in her life story, *An Autobiography : the Story of the Lord's Dealings with Mrs. Amanda Smith, the Colored Evangelist : Containing an Account of Her Life Work of Faith, and Her Travels in America, England, Ireland, Scotland, India, and Africa, as an Independent Missionary / Amanda Smith, 1837-1915*, of her travels and ministry to a variety of people in America and abroad.

Smith’s father purchased his own freedom and that of his family when she was still too young to realize the misery of slavery. The family moved to Pennsylvania and Amanda Smith learned to read at a fairly young age. She attended a revival meeting at the age of thirteen and as Miss Mary Blosser approached her, Blosser began praying for the young girl. Smith joined in the prayers and allowed herself to be led to the front of the congregation. There she experienced a spiritual conversion.³⁶ As an adult, Smith

³⁰ Elisa Ann Everson, “Little Labor of Love: The Extraordinary Career of Dorothy Ripley, Female Evangelist in Early America”, Dissertation 2007 at http://etd.gsu.edu/theses/available/etd-04212007-161752/unrestricted/everson_elisa_a_200705_phd.pdf

³¹ “Religion and the Founding of the American Republic”, Section VI. “Religion and the Federal Government, Library of Congress”, <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/religion/rel06-2.html>

³² Ibid.

³³ Catherine Brekus, “Harriet Livermore The Pilgrim Stranger: Female Preaching and Biblical Feminism in Early-Nineteenth-Century America” in *Church History: Studies in Christianity and Culture*, Volume 65, No. 3 (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, September 1996), 389. At <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3169937>.

³⁴ Ibid., 2.

³⁵ Nancy Hardesty, *Women Called to Witness* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press 1999) 83.

³⁶ Amanda Smith, *An Autobiography : the Story of the Lord's Dealings with Mrs. Amanda Smith, the Colored Evangelist : Containing an Account of Her Life Work of Faith, and Her Travels in America, England, Ireland, Scotland, India, and Africa, as an Independent Missionary / Amanda Smith, 1837-1915*. At <http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/smitham/smith.html> (accessed February 2009) 28.

continued to pray for blessings and deeper spiritual understanding. While many women preachers leaned on Galatians 3:28 (There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus³⁷) for comfort and justification of their rights *as women*, Smith was reminded of the verse in a quite different context one day after experiencing a particularly strong blessing. She found herself walking down the streets after a church service freed from her life-long fear of whites.³⁸

As Smith worked to educate herself theologically, she heard a distinct voice tell her to “go preach.” Though she resisted this initially, she soon found herself in Salem, Massachusetts. There she preached for the first time and served as a catalyst for a revival that:

spread for twenty miles around... It went from the colored people to the white people. Sometimes...I could not preach... The... floor would be covered with seekers... How He [God] put His seal on this first work to encourage my heart and establish my faith, that He indeed had chosen, and ordained and sent me... I went on two weeks, day and night...Some of the young men would hire a wagon and go out in the country ten miles and bring in a load, get them converted, and then take them back.³⁹

Despite occasional opposition, Smith continued to preach in America and traveled abroad to great acclaim. The final words of her autobiography spoke of her desire to see other women take up the call to preach, “And especially do I pray...that the Spirit of the Lord may come upon some of the younger women...work for the Master; so that when I have fallen in the battle, and can do no more, they may take up the standard and bear it on.”⁴⁰

Internationally, religious movements thrived as well and these impacted women’s right to speak in pulpits everywhere. In England, John Wesley developed his early faith at the knee of his mother Susanna. Her household prayer sessions sometimes drew two to three hundred fellow villagers.⁴¹ Typical of the time, these prayer meetings resembled church services and in the absence of her husband (and to his consternation,) Susanna often led them.⁴² In spite of this early foundation, John Wesley initially taught that scripture forbade women to preach publicly. Further study of the scriptures and his own experiences of the power of women’s messages – including his own mother’s - changed his mind. He explained that just as Paul made exceptions to his own assertion that women were to remain silent, the work God was doing among his Methodist people was an example of the kind of “extraordinary” circumstance that allowed such a departure from orthodoxy. Thus, “women such as Ann Gilbert, Elizabeth Tonkin Collett, Elizabeth Dickenson, Sarah Mallett Boyce, Margaret Davidson, Mary Harrison, and Mary Woodhouse Holder joined Sarah Crosby and Mary Basanquet Fletcher as ‘speakers of the Word.’”⁴³ The spread of Methodism’s influence provided yet another source of theological strength for women seeking greater opportunity within the realm of faith and a continuing link between the female forebears of pre- and post-revolutionary America.

³⁷ Galatians 3:28, KJV.

³⁸ Ibid., 80.

³⁹ Ibid., 158 – 159.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 505 – 506.

⁴¹ Charles Edward White, *The Beauty of Holiness: Phoebe Palmer as Theologian, Revivalist, Feminist and Humanitarian* (Grand Rapids, MI: Francis Asbury Press, 1986) 188.

⁴² Hardesty, 79.

⁴³ White, *The Beauty of Holiness*, 189.

If the first Great Awakening served as the fertile womb of the women's movement, the second Great Awakening brought it to term and gave it undeniable birth. The revivals of this second movement began as early as 1800 in Kentucky.⁴⁴ This spontaneous outbreak culminated with the revivals of Charles Finney in the 1820s and 1830s. Finney began as a dyed-in-the-wool Calvinist who left law school upon his conversion and entered the St. Lawrence Presbytery in 1823.⁴⁵ Working in Utica in upstate New York, Finney's reputation as a great speaker spread and attracted women whom he allowed to speak publicly. He moved first to Auburn then Troy, New York where a young Elizabeth Cady heard him speak and wrote of his impact on her Calvinist imagination.⁴⁶ In her memoir, *Eighty Years and More: Reminiscences 1815-1897*, Cady relates the power Finney's preaching had. She remarked, "His appearance in the pulpit on these memorable occasions is indelibly impressed on my mind." So troubled was the young Cady by his sermons and her own imagination that her family took her away to Niagara, New York where the entire subject of religion was forbidden.⁴⁷ Eventually Cady did overcome her fears and determined that for her a more rational and less frightening faith must rule.

Charles Finney might not have counted Cady as one of his successes, but he persuaded thousands of others, including droves of women, of the veracity of his teachings. The more traditional churches in New England and the Unitarians and Universalists of upstate New York proved less impressed. They called Finney to answer charges of heresies including, "holding protracted meetings...denouncing settled pastors...preaching in a pungent manner...using colloquial language in the pulpit...hastily admitting converts to church membership...and allowing women to pray and testify in promiscuous assemblies."⁴⁸ The two sides reached compromise on all but one issue: women's right to speak in mixed assemblies. Finney, impervious to the machinations of the religious establishment that sought his compliance, carried on the task of holding revivals in Delaware and Pennsylvania.⁴⁹ In essence, the women's movement within the church won the day's battle.

After a series of moves and his own theological struggles, Finney left the Presbyterians for the more accommodating Congregationalists and the Broadway Tabernacle in New York. From there the Finney family moved to Oberlin, Ohio in 1835, and Finney became a professor of theology.⁵⁰ Oberlin soon gained a reputation as a place where women could exercise their minds as well as their souls. Lucy Stone, a famous American abolitionist and suffragist wrote, "Men came to Oberlin for various reasons, women because they had nowhere else to go."⁵¹

Finney's Oberlin hosted a slew of influential women who impacted the women's movement. Sallie Holley entitled her graduation speech of 1851 "Ideal of Womanhood" in which she advocated for women's right to vote and preach.⁵² A classmate of Stone and Holley, Antoinette Brown completed the theological courses at Oberlin, but failed to receive ordination through the school. Nonetheless, Brown

⁴⁴ Hardesty, 27.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 26.

⁴⁶ Elizabeth Cady Stanton, *Eighty Years and More: Reminiscences 1815-1897*, (New York: T. Fisher Unwin, 1898), digitized at <http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/stanton/years/years.html>.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Hardesty, 29.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 31.

⁵¹ Elinor Rice Hays, *Morning Star: A Biography of Lucy Stone, 1818 - 1893* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1961), 33 in Nancy Hardesty, *Women Called to Witness* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1999) 31.

⁵² John White Chadwick, ed., *A Life for Liberty: Anti-Slavery and Other Letters of Sallie Holley* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1899) 51.

received her ordination in 1853 from the First Congregational Church which “had been Presbyterian, but ‘leading members had become liberalized so much that they withdrew and became congregational.’”⁵³ Brown’s ordination marked the first time a mainstream denomination conferred the honor on a female minister.

Antoinette Brown (later Blackwell) spoke at some of the earliest women’s rights conventions. Circumstances and her spiritual authority made her something of the designated hitter at these gatherings when it came to answering religious critics of the women’s movement especially as regarded women’s right to speak and preach publicly.⁵⁴ At a convention in Syracuse she brought forth a resolution, “That the Bible recognizes the rights, duties and privileges of Woman as a public teacher as every way equal to those of man; that it enjoins upon her no subjection that is not enjoined upon him; and that it truly and practically recognizes neither male nor female in Christ Jesus.”⁵⁵ The motion was tabled due to the controversy related to use of Biblical authority as a justification for women’s rights. Nancy Hardesty in *Women Called to Witness* justifiably called into question the wisdom of this strategy:

One wonders what would have happened if the feminists had instead followed the example of the abolitionists, who built their movement on the conviction that slaveholding was not only a violation of a person’s political rights but morally sinful. What would have happened if nineteenth-century feminists had called patriarchy sin in an age that still believed in the concept of sin? Their reinterpretations of the Bible gave them a base from which to confront misogyny at its roots, but some of them chose to abandon it.⁵⁶

How different from the first convention in Seneca Falls when the women gathered there declared, “He has usurped the prerogative of Jehovah, himself, claiming it is as his right to assign for her a sphere of action, when that belongs to her conscience and her God.”⁵⁷ The two Reverends who wrote the article quoting the grievances declared “the movement excessively silly.”⁵⁸ Yet the prevalence of women who continued to influence the politics of the day proved that the power of women in the pulpit was anything but. Despite the rejection of Brown’s resolution and the growing divisions among women of faith within the women’s movement, women managed to continue the struggle together.

For those who had cut their political teeth in the abolitionist movement, the struggle for their own rights demonstrated a natural progression. Angelina and Sarah Grimké presented a forceful example of the power of early nineteenth century women to combine faith and social action. They fought vocally for the abolition of slavery and came to see that their own rights must be upheld if their abolitionist work were to have any impact.

Angelina wrote to her fiancé, Theodore Weld, “If then we ‘give *no reason for the hope that is in us,*’ that we have *equal rights* with our brethren, how can we expect to be permitted *much longer to exercise those rights?*...If we are to do any good in the Anti Slavery cause, our *right* to labor in it *must* be firmly established.”⁵⁹ Weld himself, another Finney convert, built much of the framework for the abolitionist

⁵³ Hardesty, 79.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 60.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 65 – 66.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 67.

⁵⁷ Rev. G.H. Hulin and Rev. J.A. Avery, eds. “Women’s Rights”, *The Recorder*, August 3, 1848 at <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/treasures/images/vc006198.jpg>.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ A. Grimké to T. Weld and J. G. Whittier, Brookline, Mass., 20 August 1837, Barnes and Dumond, *Letters* 1:428, 429 in Hardesty, 102.

movement through the American Anti-Slavery Society which he headed.⁶⁰ His work in the movement made him perfectly suited to work alongside his activist wife.

When male clergy scolded Sarah Grimké and her sister Angelina for their public anti-slavery statements and accused them out stepping out of their designated “sphere”, an incensed Sarah wrote, “Our views about the duties of men and the duties of women, the sphere of man and the sphere of woman, are mere arbitrary opinions, differing in different ages and countries, and dependent solely on the will and judgment of erring mortals.”⁶¹ The Grimké sister’s response was so powerful that Hardesty declares, “Thus was born the woman’s rights movement.”⁶²

In a series of letters written for the *New England Spectator* in 1837 and collected as *Letters on the Equality of the Sexes and the Condition of Women*, Sarah Grimké pressed her demands for equality for all those in abolitionist movement, including the women who formed its backbone.⁶³ In these she continued to put forth the theological arguments for women’s equality. “In examining this ... I shall depend solely on the bible...because I believe almost every thing[sic] that has been written...has been the result of a misconception of the simple truths revealed in the Scriptures...[because] of the false translation of many passages of Holy Writ.”⁶⁴

The Grimké’s were joined in the abolitionist movement by other prominent speakers and writers who also felt compelled to establish their own rights as women. Among these were Lucretia Coffin Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton. Lucretia Mott spoke prolifically and her sermons and speeches reflected the Quaker bent toward social justice as applicable to all human endeavors. She worked not only in the abolitionist and women’s movements, but fought for school and prison reform as well as the temperance movement.⁶⁵

In an address to the American Equal Rights Association in New York convened May 9th and 10th, 1867, she addressed the power of women in the social movements of the day. “In the Temperance reformation, and in the great reformatory movements of our age, woman’s power has been called into action.” She continued, “They are beginning to see that another state of things is possible for them, and they are beginning to demand their rights.”⁶⁶

If there was any question that those rights also included public religious expression, Mott dispensed with that notion. In Philadelphia on December 17, 1849, Mott delivered her “Discourse on Woman” in which she clarified:

What is she seeking to obtain? Of what rights is she deprived? What privileges are withheld from her? I answer, she asks nothing as favor, but as right, she wants to be acknowledged a moral,

⁶⁰ Theodore Weld, *American Slavery As It Is: Testimony of a Thousand Witnesses* Electronic Edition (New York: The American Anti-Slavery Society, 1839.) At <http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/weld/weld.html>.

⁶¹ Susie C. Stanley, *Holy Boldness: Women Preacher’s Autobiographies and the Sanctified Self* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press 2002), 20.

⁶² Hardesty, 101.

⁶³ Sarah Grimké, *Letters on the Equality of the Sexes Addressed to Mary S. Parker, President of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society* at <http://www.pinn.net/~sunshine/book-sum/Grimké3.html#letter3>.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Beverly Wilson Palmer, ed. *The Lucretia Coffin Mott Papers Project*, Pomona College. At <http://www.mott.pomona.edu/>.

⁶⁶ Dana Greene, ed., *Lucretia Mott: Her Complete Speeches and Sermons* (New York: The Edwin Mellen press 1980) 288.

responsible being. She is seeking not to be governed by laws, in the making of which she has no voice. She is deprived of almost every right in civil society, and is a cypher [sic] in the nation, except in the right of presenting a petition. In religious society her disabilities, as already pointed out, have greatly retarded her progress. Her exclusion from the pulpit or ministry – her duties marked out for her by her equal brother man, subject to creeds, rules, and disciplines made for her by him – this is unworthy of her true dignity.⁶⁷

An original signer of the Declaration of Sentiments from the Seneca Falls convention, Mott herself was not immune to the effects of oppression even within the convocations that sought rights for women. As women and men gathered in Rochester, New York to continue the work for equality, Abigail Bush stood to chair the event. Lucretia Mott along with Elizabeth Cady Stanton initially opposed this first-of-its-kind move as they believed it might jeopardize the progress of the movement. By the end of the first session both converted and Mott thanked Bush for her courage.⁶⁸ For her part, Stanton told Bush, “My only excuse is that woman has been so little accustomed to act in a public capacity that she does not always know what is due to those around her.”⁶⁹

Mott’s friend and cohort, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, worked for women’s rights many years before formally co-founding the National Women’s Suffrage Society with Susan B. Anthony. After her earlier rejection of Finney’s theology she explored what faith meant not only for her personally, but for women in general. The result of that journey was *The Woman’s Bible* published in 1895. In this she presented the more rational faith she neglected to find with Finney in her earlier years. Stanton recognized the power of faith and maintained that because of the influence of religion on women, it was crucial that the movement address religious issues as they pertained to women.⁷⁰ Though she remained clear that religion’s role in securing women’s rights was crucial, she and Susan B. Anthony found themselves increasingly at odds over just what that actually meant. The growing division between them illustrated the dynamic religious tensions associated with the movement.⁷¹

One woman who knew what it meant to serve in a very public role and who was excruciatingly clear about her own faith, Phoebe Palmer, continued to lay the foundation for female power within the churches as a parallel movement during the struggle for women’s political rights. Her focus was the church, but her impact on the movement reached far beyond the church walls.

For Phoebe Palmer, regardless of the acceptance of her own Methodist denomination, the strength of the societal prohibition of women’s public speaking was so strong that she felt compelled to ask God directly to give her a clear indication that such female preaching was acceptable. Writing in her diary in 1848 she described an early occurrence in which she initially refused to attend a service led by a female minister.⁷² She later met the woman privately at a friend’s house. Praying for an open mind, she recalled the Biblical examples of Deborah and Hulda, two Israelite prophetesses described in the Old Testament (Judges 4-5 and 2nd Kings 22 respectively.)⁷³ The meeting further bolstered her confidence and she ultimately concluded that “the church generally had departed from its ‘primitive simplicity’ by limiting the exercise

⁶⁷ Ibid., 154.

⁶⁸ Sally G. McMillen, *Seneca Falls and the Origins of the Women’s Rights Movement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2008) 96.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Maureen Fitzgerald, in the Forward to Elizabeth Cady Stanton, *The Woman’s Bible* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1993) ix.

⁷¹ Ibid., xxvi – xxvii.

⁷² White, *The Beauty of Holiness*, 189.

⁷³ Ibid.

of women's gifts."⁷⁴ Her doubts assuaged, Palmer joined those women already devoted to ministry and grew into a prolific speaker, writer and theologian.

Palmer's background as one of sixteen children from a very religious family gave her the grounding in Biblical knowledge that she later relied upon in leading others. She married Walter Clarke Palmer at the age of nineteen. Mr. Palmer was himself from a strong Methodist family and their shared faith created a marriage of enormous devotion. This devotion was so deep that Walter Palmer continued to list his wife as "co-editor of the *Guide to Holiness* (their religious journal) for at least a year after her death."⁷⁵ The egalitarian nature of their relationship explained why Phoebe Palmer chose a less radical approach to secular women's rights than many of her contemporaries. She determined that scripture still demanded that women submit to their husbands, but maintained that this did not require "male dominance or implied female inequality."⁷⁶ In fact, Palmer went so far as to claim that God withheld his blessings from America because in American households women and men did not share in God's plan of equality and "the responsibilities of marriage were not taken seriously enough."⁷⁷ While she agreed that women should have the right to vote and lent her support to social causes, her views on female equality within the marriage contract may have had an even greater impact as, in her view, the family served as the most important building block of society. While Palmer spoke less overtly of women's rights, her contemporaries made it their mission to secure equality beginning in the church. She counted among those who fell under her influence such social-movement luminaries as Francis Willard and Catherine Booth. A host of women who followed in Palmer's theological footprints penned autobiographies describing their growing sense of empowerment and recognition of their own process of Sanctification. Susie Stanley, in *Holy Boldness: Women Preacher's Autobiographies and the Sanctified Self*, reveals the continuing influence of Palmer through such women as Zilpha Elaw, Julia Foote, and Jarena Lee.⁷⁸ This power to impact women aided others who shared her desire to secure women's place in the pulpit and the polls.

As the social reform movements of the day continued to converge, Antoinette Brown preached to fifty thousand people in September 1853 while that morning the anti-slavery society had met in the same place. Finney's Broadway Tabernacle hosted a women's convention that same week. The next year, having overcome her great fears regarding Charles Finney, Stanton served as president of the seventh National Women's Rights Convention in Finney's church.⁷⁹

While many of these women shared a commitment to abolition, temperance and women's rights, the politics of the day served to divide – and nearly conquer – their aspirations. When the Civil War ended and debate began over the fourteenth and fifteenth amendments, cracks in the movement helped it to fracture into ineffectiveness. As the right to vote clearly fell to males only, some in the movement expressed indignation that they must step back and wait as African American men moved forward in their own quest for equality. The split among the groups fighting for and against immediate inclusion of women's suffrage along with African American suffrage fell along religious lines with the Finneyites willing to wait.⁸⁰

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 5.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 196.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Susie C. Stanley, *Holy Boldness*.

⁷⁹ Hardesty, 106.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 107.

Not all social movements caused such splits. The temperance movement found women particularly suited to its cause in part thanks to the image of female piety advanced by religious tenets. Eliza Thompson, daughter of a Presbyterian minister who served as the first president of the Ohio Temperance Society and mother of a minister who was quickly losing his life to alcoholism took up the cause. At a meeting in the Presbyterian Church, Thompson was elected president of the temperance group and led the group out to local taverns and druggists who sold liquor. At one saloon Thompson knelt “on the floor and led them in prayer. The women’s visits continued steadily for the next three months until their activities were stopped by court injunction.”⁸¹ Whatever injunctions existed in her local church against women speaking, Thompson refused to allow her silence to give tacit approval to the evils of alcohol.

President of the Women’s Christian Temperance Movement (WCTU), Francis Willard fought just as nobly for women’s suffrage. In 1877, none other than Dwight L. Moody asked Willard to join him in his evangelistic efforts in Boston.⁸² Willard recognized the irony that women found a place to use their Christ-given gifts and talents not in the churches, but in the social movements of the day. She called on the churches to bring women back into the ministries to which they were ordained by God.⁸³ Willard wrote several works, among them *Woman in the Pulpit*, an examination of scripture and church tradition which expounded on reasons for inclusion of women in public ministry. In this she penned, “The entrance of woman upon the ministerial vocation will give to humanity just twice the probability of strengthening and comforting speech... Why then should the pulpit be shorn of half its power?”⁸⁴

Willard based her support of the women’s suffrage movement primarily on her hope that if women could vote, they could also influence society and bring about social reform including the prohibition of alcohol.⁸⁵ This calculated risk brought more women into the WCTU, but, “Salon owners and manufacturers and distributors of alcohol denounced female suffrage, knowing that if women could vote, their livelihoods were at risk.”⁸⁶ Thus, even within the more evangelical wing of the movement (as opposed to the liberal wing represented by Stanton) religion sometimes served to divide.

Despite the advances made by women like Willard, the convergence of social movements with female’s right to preach was unsettled. Catherine and William Booth’s Salvation Army which arrived in New York in 1880, served to bring the two together once again, this time with an urban flavor. When the *Australia*, an ocean liner, arrived in New York in March 1880, the Salvationists who stepped onto American shores consisted of seven women and one man.⁸⁷ This gender disparity in favor of women reflected the Army’s more egalitarian theology. While the structure of the organization was hierarchical in terms of military-like roles, these roles were open to women in a way that most denominations manifestly were not.

⁸¹ Hardesty, 124.

⁸² Janette Hassey, *No Time For Silence: Evangelical Women in Public Ministry Around the Turn of the Century* (Grand Rapids, MI: Academie Books 1986), 33.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Francis Willard, *Woman in the Pulpit* (Boston: D Lothrop Company 1888) 49.
http://books.google.com/books?id=hGtJAAAAIAAJ&dq=Francis+Willard+%22Woman+in+the+Pulpit%22&printsec=frontcover&source=bl&ots=-hqJijTHR3&sig=OE2syfRy6UCIBrBxc-rYOKY7EOI&hl=en&ei=60_lSdyPHqi4tgO564WrBA&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=1#PPA49,M1

⁸⁵ Sally G. McMillen, *Seneca Falls and the Origins of the Women’s Right Movement*, (Oxford: University Press, 2008), 196.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Diane Winston, *Red Hot and Righteous: The Urban Religion of the Salvation Army*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999) 10.

The “little mother” of the American Army troops, Maud Booth exemplified the attraction of the group for many women.⁸⁸ Her dissatisfaction with the ‘remote’ Anglicanism of her parents led her to explore the Salvation Army in England. The ability to combine faith and social conscience afforded Booth the opportunity to grasp onto a calling that suited her. New York editorialists treated her storied marriage to Ballington Booth and their arrival in America to take over the American troops as an opportunity to warn the public of the dangers of the radical group. Writing in the *New York Times* in March of 1883, the editor warned, “. . .parents who do not wish their children to become officers in the Salvation Army had better forbid attending meetings in the first instance. The part the Army assigns to women has extraordinary attraction in these times.”⁸⁹ They cautioned further, “They [women] can in every way be the rivals of men, they can take an absolute equal part in the establishment and building up of the new organization. By the side of such experiences as this career opens to them, the ordinary routine of home must appear intolerably dull.”⁹⁰

With the exception of groups like the Salvation Army and more stringently evangelical denominations, as women progressed toward attainment of suffrage, their rights to preach became secondary since theological arguments were no longer needed (or at least were no longer used) to justify women’s political rights. That woman continued to suffer oppression and discrimination in spite of their rights within the voting booth was clear. Yet the very movement that had given women a voice in the first place – that is women’s right to preach – would reverse course in the pulpits of churches that had once welcomed them (however grudgingly.)

As evangelical churches sought respectability and as fundamentalism rose in the 1920s, women lost ground at the altar. Janette Hassey pointed out in her 1986 book *No Time for Silence: Evangelical Women in Public Ministry Around the Turn of the Century*, “By World War II, the *Moody Monthly* [a publication of Moody Bible Institute] articles reflected the new image of God’s ideal woman – no longer the Moody Bible institute graduate who uses all her gifts for the kingdom,” an image Dwight Moody might have pictured when he encouraged Francis Willard to preach with him in Boston.⁹¹ Rather this new world demanded “the submissive, domesticated woman who knows her place.”⁹²

Biblical literalism, adopted as a defense against an ever-more complicated world, pushed Fundamentalists toward stricter readings of previously innocuous texts. This move, combined with the need previous sects also experienced to gain respectability and general societal acceptance, proved lethal to the movement toward a deeper equality outside the polls and inside the pulpits. Hassey asserted, “In the early twentieth century, Fundamentalists tightened the lines around the concept of inerrancy; opposition to women ministers may have been formalized as a by-product.”⁹³ Complicating this issue was the development and spread of dispensational pre-millennialism, the belief that God’s redeemed people will be caught up in the Rapture of the church, saving them from the tribulation described in Revelation. Credited to Englishman John Nelson Darby and later adopted by Moody in the late nineteenth century, this world-view made social reform rather pointless, since the world was destined to end soon with the imminent return of Christ and the continued downward spiral of society into greater and greater sin and corruption.⁹⁴ With

⁸⁸ Winston, *Red Hot and Righteous*, 51.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 50.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ Hassey, 142.

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ B. A. Robinson, *Competing Theories of Eschatology, End Times, and Millennialism*, Ontario Consultants on Religious Tolerance, 2006, at <http://www.religioustolerance.org/millenni.htm>.

Fundamentalist influence growing and no immediate cause to rally women, the need to defend woman's right to preach foundered.

A notable exception to this existed in the Pentecostal/Holiness movement which can be traced directly back to Phoebe Palmer. She took the Methodist principles of Christian perfection with which she was raised and morphed them from Wesley's doctrine into a Holiness movement that spawned the Church of the Nazarene and the Pentecostal movements of the early twentieth century.⁹⁵ This movement took on a life of its own with the spread of smaller groups after the Pentecostal Azusa Street Revival of 1906 – 1909. As part of this movement, female Wesleyan/Holiness preachers encouraged other women to answer the call to ministry. Their autobiographies served as "subversive" documents that "unabashedly exhorted other women to follow their example and step outside the sphere of domesticity."⁹⁶ Their legacy and voices provided a crucial link from today's modern female sacred presence to the nearly-forgotten past rich with women's public prayers and presence in pulpits and prayer meetings. Development of theology in the First Great Awakening surreptitiously empowered women by emphasizing individual responsibility in matters of salvation. Likewise, the Holiness movement of the nineteenth century and the Pentecostal movement it begat provided an emphasis on individual response to the Holy Spirit – which often involved prophesying or preaching - which applied equally to men and women. Thus, this new wave of theological adaptation provided women a crucial haven to weather the Fundamentalist backlash against women preaching.

Women again joined their voices to demand greater equality with the second feminist wave of the 1960s and 1970s, but by then female preaching seemed a non-issue for the more secular movement. Women continued to work in churches and denominations for greater egalitarianism in the pulpit, but it was an issue in a different world. As fewer and fewer historians – including female historians – acknowledged the roots of the women's movement, less association appeared between the two. The modern, politically powerful evangelical church's hostility toward women's rights reflected a return to the clerical attempts to guard against feminist influence. The Southern Baptist Convention's "Faith and Message" document published in 2000 served as but one example of the overt denial of female sacred call stating, "While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by Scripture."⁹⁷ Moody Bible Institute (MBI), founded by the same Dwight Moody who encouraged Francis Willard to preach publicly, now proclaims:

The Institute distinguishes between ministry function and church office. While upholding the necessity of mutual respect and affirmation as those subject to the Word of God, MBI understands that the biblical office of elder/pastor in the early church was gender specific. Therefore it maintains that it is consistent with that understanding of Scripture that those church offices should be limited to the male gender.⁹⁸

While the Institute might conceivably argue that women can still speak publicly, the statement makes clear that MBI's doctrines embed gender differences in its culture and teachings. Such a stance

⁹⁵ Charles Edward White, *Phoebe Palmer and the Development of Pentecostal Pneumatology*, Michael Mattei, ed., Wesley Center for Applied Theology at Northwest Nazarene University, 2000, At http://www.enterhisrest.org/ichabod/phoebe_palmer.pdf

⁹⁶ Stanley, *Holy Boldness*, 211.

⁹⁷ Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention, "The Baptist Faith and Message", Southern Baptist Convention adopted 2000. At <http://www.sbc.net/bfm/bfm2000.asp>.

⁹⁸ "Moody Bible Institute Doctrinal Statement", Moody Bible Institute, at <http://www.moodypublishers.com/Publishers/default.asp?SectionID=E2B7860D3A3D47A3A09FBAD1CB3530AE>.

understandably contributed to the amnesia of Dwight Moody's own positions regarding women. No mention of Dwight Moody's difference was listed on the page related to MBI's history. These two examples illustrate the prevailing attitude toward female empowerment in modern evangelical churches. (Tellingly, Moody's site also presents the doctrinal statement with its adoption date of 1928, but fails to date the addendum that mentions gender disparity. Modern feminists might conceivably portray this as an attempt to lend credibility to their modern stance by presenting it as unchanged.)

Such animosity pushed women in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to look elsewhere for social justice. The result for both the church and modern social justice movements proved inescapable: the loss of the rich history of women in the church and the exercise of their gifts. Thus, while Nancy Hardesty recognized the link between evangelical feminism and the women's movement of the nineteenth century; she failed to go far enough. Catherine Brekus added greatly to the body of knowledge of female preachers and teachers in America's earlier days, but fell short of making the powerful connection between them and the women's suffrage movement. Janette Hassey saw the demise of the women's rights movement with the rise of Fundamentalism, but she limited her work to the end rather than the beginning of the movement.

As historians continue to uncover the link between faith and feminism in the not-so-distant past, the restoration of female preachers to their rightful place as mothers of the women's rights movement may once again seem obvious. In part, this endeavor will require an effort on the part of some feminists who have been shunned by the church to deal with their own biases resulting from this oppressive banishment. As well, churches that seek to deny their own history related to women's former empowerment in the pulpit must deal honestly with their past and wrestle with the concomitant theological questions such a struggle will raise. Such a mutual exercise, while painful, can only benefit women, social movements and the church itself.

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