

## **Transnational and Transcultural Pioneer Women Missionaries**

Clementina Rowe Butler played a crucial role in the planting of the American Methodist work in two continents, Asia and Latin America. Clementina and William Butler sailed for India in 1856 and following the Sepoy Mutiny established orphanages for children. Before returning to the U.S. in 1865 they had established the India Mission Conference. Once back in the states Butler spoke with Congregationalist and Methodist women to raise support for sending single women missionaries. These efforts resulted in the founding of the Women's Foreign Mission Society and the sending of Dr. Clara Swain and Isabella Thoburn, whom respectively established the first medical mission and school for girls in Asia.

With an opening for Protestant work in Mexico, Clementina and her husband left for her second international mission placement in Mexico in 1873 where they purchased several properties and established Methodist mission work. The groundbreaking impact that Clementina Butler, Clara Swain and Isabella Thoburn had on Protestant mission work and the establishment of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society was unprecedented for their time. This paper will examine the transnational mission work of these three women missionaries and argue three main points: 1. The work among women and girls made the Methodist Protestant work relevant for these respective countries, 2. Their work was transnational and transcultural across three continents, and lastly, 3. That the opening of the Women's Foreign Mission Society along with the legacy of these women opened the door for generations of single women missionaries that has traversed national boundaries.

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