

The Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. was the first Protestant denomination in the United States to organize a missions committee at the national level. In 1802, the General Assembly appointed seven members to the initial Standing Committee of Missions. As Americans moved westward in the early nineteenth century, “planting and cherishing among [people on the frontier] the seeds of genuine piety” became a particular goal of the committee and the PCUSA as a whole. The committee’s work in coordinating, supervising, and publicizing Presbyterian missionary enterprises also enabled the denomination to expand mission work among Native Americans and African Americans.

The success of the committee and subsequent growth in mission work led to the organization of a permanent Board of Missions in 1815 and a separate Board of Foreign Missions in 1837. Through the years, the Board of Foreign Missions established Presbyterian mission stations in various places including Africa, China, India, Korea, and South America. In the United States, Presbyterian mission work continued to expand and included the organization of Sunday Schools, settlement houses, and outreach to immigrant populations. From age to age, Presbyterian mission work has touched the lives of people throughout the United States and the world.

Cover Image:

Cover of Board of National Missions Sesquicentennial Anniversary Booklet, 1952. Board of National Missions Records, RG 111, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, PA.

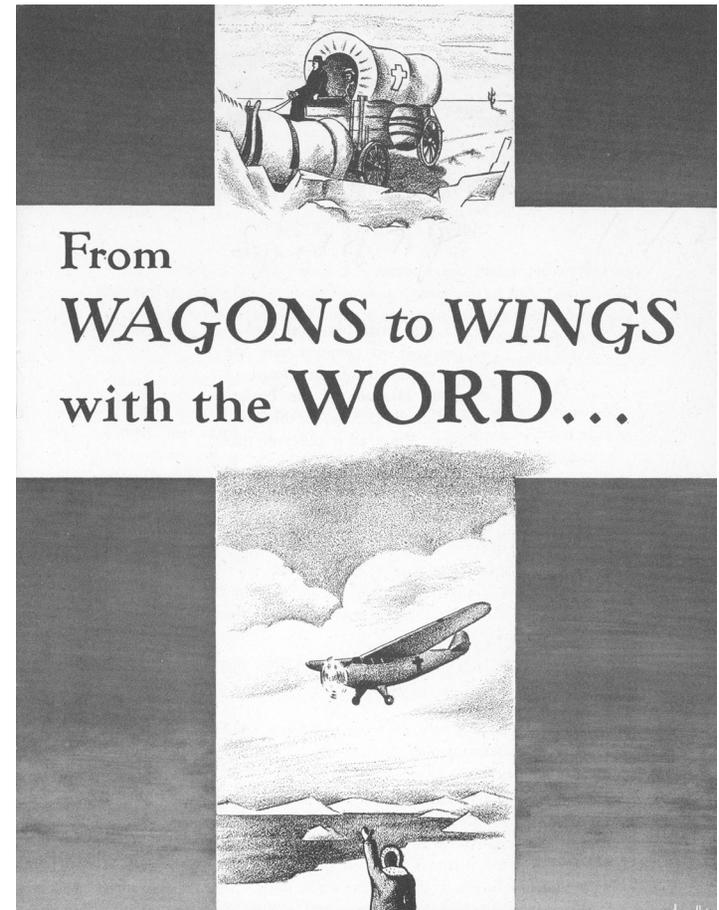
Quotation:

Unpublished history, “Standing Committee of Missions,” c. 1827.



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“From Age to Age”: The Spirit of Missionary Enterprise



“If there is a single trait which serves to give to the Presbyterian Church in the United States a distinct character it is that of a Spirit of Missionary Enterprise which it has possessed from its very origin.”