

John A. Andrew, III. *Rebuilding the Christian Commonwealth: New England Congregationalists and Foreign Missions, 1800-1830*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1977. Pp. iii, 232, bibliography, appendix, index. \$14.50.

The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM), one of the major proponents abroad of nineteenth century American culture, has only recently received scholarly attention. In his *Protestant America and the Pagan World* (1969), Clinton Phillips wrote individual histories of many of the missions that the ABCFM sponsored throughout the world. John Andrew's *Rebuilding the Christian Commonwealth* is more focused than Phillips' study. In it, Andrew explores the complex set of events which led to the Board's formation, and the importance of the ABCFM to its American supporters. Then, by studying the early years of the Sandwich Island Mission (1819-1830), Andrew assesses the significance of this particular mission and its impact on Hawaiian culture.

Andrew locates the origin of the missionary movement, the so-called Christian Crusade, not in the spirit of disinterested benevolence espoused by Samuel Hopkins, and acknowledged by previous historians as its impetus, but in the social stress and economic fluctuation experienced by early nineteenth century New Englanders. Improvements in transportation, a rise in political and religious factiousness, and emigration to cheaper and more fertile western lands undermined the Congregational Church's stature in New England. Andrew argues that the Church hoped to reassert its authority through the establishment of the ABCFM. The Board's purposes were twofold: first, to Christianize "pagans" abroad, and second, by creating Zion in the Pacific, to suggest an effective alternative to domestic social disorder.

Although the ABCFM was designed to recoup the Church's stature, Andrew does not consider this simply an attempt to turn back the clock. He argues persuasively, for instance, that the ABCFM only achieved financial stability by incorporating organizational techniques spawned by the economic revolution that had altered New England society. He also suggests that the missionaries joined the Christian Crusade for idealistic reasons as well as from a sense of "status anxiety." Andrew refrains, however, from giving specific form to these ideals, a curious omission considering the intellectual nature of New England Congregationalism. For instance, one cannot begin to understand the motivations of Hiram Bingham and Asa Thurston for becoming the pioneer missionaries to Hawai'i without considering the intellectual framework in which they operated. Despite this lapse, Andrew's analysis of the missionary background is important to scholars who wish to understand those who brought Chris-

tianity to the Pacific, and, in this respect, complements Neil Gunson's recent study of the London Missionary Society, *Messengers of Grace* (1978).

Andrew's book is a compelling analysis of the American Protestant missionary movement, but problems arise when he chronicles the initial success and impact of the Sandwich Island Mission. His thesis that these missionaries sought to model Hawai'i in the image of New England is not original; nearly all previous studies of the Mission reach the same conclusion. Standard, too, is his description of the growth of the mission's strength, and of the missionaries' interference in Hawaiian politics and life. Andrew is the first historian to assess the excommunication of Dr. Thomas and Lucia Holman from the mission, and argues that this event indicates the missionaries' intolerance. Certainly the mission's actions are intolerant if judged by twentieth century mores, but these standards cannot fully explain nineteenth century motivations. A more important criticism of *Rebuilding the Christian Commonwealth* is that Andrew, by terminating his study in 1830, avoids discussing the crucial conflict that arose between Catholic and congregational missionaries after that date. This debate had important consequences for Hawaiian society, but most particularly for the Protestant mission. The quarrel between the two religions was resolved by French gunboat diplomacy in the late 1830s, and in the resultant La Place Manifesto, freedom of religious worship was insured. This effectively undermined Calvinist theocracy; the Protestant's dream of establishing a Christian Commonwealth in Hawai'i proved untenable. These limitations imposed on the American Protestant missionary crusade in Hawai'i should have been noted to allow a more complete understanding of the movement's potential. Without this extended analysis, we are left with an incomplete picture of the Christian Crusade. In spite of these problems, John Andrew's book is an able and provocative study of the sources of the ABCFM.

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