

Christians have always been aware of the public meaning of their faith, and American Presbyterians have been quick to respond to the social issues of the day. The story of their struggles, failures, and successes is a piece of the greater story of social justice in our country and in the world. Pictured on our cover are (*lft. to rt., top to btm.*):

Isabella Marshall Graham (1742–1814), educator and philanthropist. Graham was born in Scotland but, impoverished by the death of her husband, immigrated to New York City in 1789, where she established a private school for poor girls. Her daughters married well, and she was soon able to expand her charity missions to destitute and fallen women, to widows, and to orphans. In 1797 she and her daughter Joanna Bethune founded the Society for the Relief of Poor Widows, the first benevolent society in the nation run by women.

William H. Sheppard (1865–1927), missionary, explorer, and defender of human rights. Sheppard was one of the founders of the PCUS Congo Mission in 1890, organizing churches and schools in the remote Kasai region. Shocked by the atrocities being committed against the Congolese by the state-run rubber and ivory monopolies, he and his colleagues began an international campaign to publicize incidents of forced labor, mutilation and murder. So successful were they in mobilizing public opinion that the rubber company sued Sheppard for libel. His trial made him a hero, and his acquittal paved the way for major reforms in the Belgian Congo.

Charles Stelzle (1869–1941), urban missionary and journalist. Stelzle was one of Presbyterianism's most prominent advocates for the Social Gospel. He knew poverty and the trials of the labor movement first hand. Born in New York to German parents, he went to work as a child and was largely self-educated. In 1903, he was appointed superintendent of the PCUSA's newly created Department of Church and Labor, the first American denominational agency formed to deal with such problems. Stelzle organized the influential Labor Temple in New York City and wrote frequently on the plight of the working poor. (*Photo credit: Pirie Mac Donald, New York*).

Donaldina M. Cameron (1869–1968), urban missionary and social crusader. Cameron emigrated from New Zealand to California as a child. In 1900 she became superintendent of a Presbyterian refuge for Chinese women in San Francisco. The destruction of the Chinese-American female slave trade—young girls brought from China to be concubines or simply prostitutes in the USA—became her personal crusade. At considerable risk, she assisted the police in raids on opium dens, brothels, and gambling houses in the San Francisco area and bodily removed the girls to safety. In four decades (1900–1942), Cameron rescued thousands of girls, fought for them in court, educated them, and found them work in their new homeland. (*Photo credit: Anne Donahue, New York*).

“Let Justice Roll Down Like Waters...”

Amos 5: 24

