

The Women of Glenmary and FOCIS: A Modern-Day Version of “Fotched-On” Women?
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Introduction

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, many educated, white, middle/upper-middle-class women ventured to the Southern Mountain region, to initiate or to work at rural settlements. Benefactors of the women’s movement which saw the establishment of a number of colleges for women, especially in the Northeast, the educated women sought an outlet for their talents and interests.¹ “Uplift” long had been part of the tradition of the mainstream Protestant religions to which most of the women subscribed, and in the latter part of the nineteenth century, uplift came to be incorporated into the social gospel movement which sought to apply Christian principles of charity to a viciously competitive, capitalist society which seemed to care little for the downtrodden.² Traditional piety associated with “woman’s sphere,” legitimized her reform-minded activities which could be seen as an extension of mothering.³

In the immediate post-Civil War South, benevolent work had focused on the freed slaves, but by the 1880s and 1890s, the white, Northern philanthropists who supported Southern benevolent work tired of the freedman—whom modern science portrayed as belonging to a race by nature the mental and physical inferior to the white race—and directed their attention (and their money) to the rediscovered white, “Anglo-Saxon” inhabitants of the mountain South.⁴ Thus many “fotched-on” women (that is, women from afar) ventured to the Southern Mountains to find meaning in their lives by “civilizing” the natives. Many of the women, no doubt, also felt an obligation to save the souls of Appalachians, whom they perceived to have only a rudimentary knowledge of Christianity.⁵

The reform movements of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries may have been predominantly Protestant in terms of their origins and participants, but Protestant women were not the only ones who participated in benevolent work. Catholic laywomen joined the temperance movement, and many became active participants in what has been called the “Catholic social gospel,” the counterpart to the Protestant version.⁶ The Catholic religious tradition of good works was strong: it ascribed to women religious (sisters) the roles of caring for the sick, poor, and neglected of society. By 1900 there were approximately 46,000 women in sisterhoods in the United States. By 1920, close to 90,000 women religious worked in American schools, hospitals, and social service institutions.⁷ The Church did not, however, send settlement workers to the Southern Mountains, mainly because it focused on ministering to newly-arrived immigrants in Northern urban areas, and neglected the small parishes of the Appalachian region.⁸

Origins and Early Work of the Glenmary Missions

The presence of the Catholic Church in Southern Appalachia dates back to the late eighteenth century, when priests from Maryland journeyed to north-central Kentucky around 1785.⁹ But in Appalachia, Catholics always were a minority ill-served by an American hierarchy more concerned with towns and cities than with rural areas. In the latter part of the nineteenth century, the immigration to the region of eastern and southern European miners gave the church ethnic diversity, even if it also encouraged Protestants to identify Catholicism with foreignness. In the period between 1910 and 1935, the dioceses of Wheeling, Nashville, and

Cincinnati exhibited a strong missionary spirit which encouraged to establish mountain missions throughout the Southern Mountains.¹⁰

The missionary work carried on by the above-mentioned dioceses only convinced some in the Church of how great was the need for mission work in the rural regions of the nation. William Howard Bishop, a priest in the Archdiocese of Baltimore-Washington, was a leader in the rural Church during the 1920s and 1930s.¹¹ Dissatisfied with the Church's neglect of rural America, in 1936 Bishop set forth a plan for a rural mission society of Catholic brothers who would concentrate their activities in weak, rural dioceses, and in rural areas predominantly populated by non-Catholics. Bishop thought that the Church had focused on the cities to the detriment of the rural areas, which he categorized as "a missionary field." He viewed the rural areas as strongholds of family values and sources for future generations of Catholics. The overcrowded cities, by contrast, rapidly had become meccas for the proselytizers of birth control and Communism, both of which threatened the moral law of the Church. The Church of the future, Bishop predicted, "must throw as much of her initiative into the country as into the cities, if she is to ward against an early decline and insure herself a harvest of souls in America."¹²

Bishop wanted the Church to reach out to the most disadvantaged of rural America—the sharecropper, the mountaineer, and the Negro. Bishop warned readers of the *Catholic Rural Life Bulletin* that communism and socialism were making inroads among the sharecroppers and Negroes.¹³ But he also believed that to serve the disadvantaged was to serve God. Views he expressed later in a 1946 publication sent to Glenmary communities, are illustrative of his convictions:

Love the poor, the sick and the helpless, and attend to them. They are God's influentials. They are his aristocrats. He loves them. If you are known in your community as the

contact for all the poor and unfortunate . . . you could not have a more honorable title on earth or one that would make you more welcome in the courts of heaven.¹⁴

Bishop's proposed home mission society found a sponsor in 1937, when the Archbishop of Cincinnati endorsed the priest's plan, and invited him to begin his new society in the Cincinnati archdiocese. Bishop moved to the city in 1937 and began the work of making his home mission society a reality. The brothers were to be established in rural parishes first, to be followed by sisters, who were to help the brothers in parish work, but who were also to engage in mission activities. By the late 1940s, the Glenmary Missioners had reached into rural areas, including Appalachia, as Catholics had not done in previous years. The order established rural parishes in Southwest Virginia in Big Stone Gap, Norton and St. Paul; in western North Carolina in Murphy, Sylva, and Bryson City; in southern Ohio in West Portsmouth and Otway; and in eastern Kentucky in Sunfish. From these parishes, the brothers set up missions in the surrounding regions.¹⁵

In October, 1941, Dorothy Hendershot, a nurse from Grand Rapids, Michigan, joined Gertrude Kimmick, Newport, Kentucky native who had been serving as Bishop's secretary at the order's house in Glendale, Ohio. Hendershot and Kimmick were lay volunteers in a nascent community of women religious. The early work of Hendershot, Kimmick, and others was rather limiting, as they devoted much time and effort to cooking, cleaning, and laundering for the men's community. The title "Home Missioners' Women's Auxiliary," adopted in 1942 by the women, aptly reflects the type of work the women did in those early years.¹⁶ But soon the women had their own mission, which enabled them to do benevolent and missionary work. In the summer of 1944, Kimmick, Joan Wade, and Opal Simon ventured to western Kentucky for their first

mission outreach. They worked in both black and white communities, teaching Bible classes and helping the poor who needed assistance. The sisters performed very simple and practical acts of kindness, ranging from tending to the sick to buying groceries for those who were homebound.¹⁷

From 1941 until 1952, when the Glenmary sisters received recognition as a Catholic sisterhood under the jurisdiction of Archbishop Karl J. Alter of Cincinnati, women performed home mission work in rural regions, and in cities with large populations of rural migrants.¹⁸ Once recognized as an order, the sisters then had to initiate formal religious education for those already in the order, as well as for any prospective novitiates. This meant that women in the field had to return to undergo a year of “spiritual formation,” that is, a more traditional convent-style training. For many sisters, the formal religious education seemed ill-suited to the work they were doing in the slums of such cities as Chicago and Dayton, or the out-of-the way communities of Kentucky, Virginia, and Tennessee.¹⁹ By 1952 the Glenmarys already had worked for 11 years as independent and practical missionaries who sought to serve the Church and Christ through improving the lives of people on earth.

The Glenmary sisters were unique in the Church of the 1950s. Most women religious lived in convents and worked in parochial schools or Catholic hospitals and social service organizations. Many went to the schools and hospitals as young, fresh from the novitiate, undereducated sisters. The movement to ensure higher educations for sisters who taught and nursed began as early as 1941 with the publication of Sister Bertrand Meyer’s doctoral dissertation, *The Education of the Sisters*, and continued into the early 1950s by activists in the National Catholic Education Association’s Sister Formation Conference.²⁰ This is not to say that Glenmary missionaries had no need for education—as a matter of fact, in the mid-1960s, the order decided that sisters should get college degrees before venturing to their missions—but

rather, it is to point out that while in the early 1950s the Glenmarys served in areas where Catholics were few and where sisters were unknown, they had to work hard to gain the acceptance of people in the community. To gain this acceptance meant living with the people, not apart from them, as is common in convent living arrangements.²¹

The work of the Glenmary sisters varied, depending on whether they lived in an urban or rural area. In the Uptown area of Chicago, for instance, the sisters tried to help Appalachian migrants adjust to city life, perhaps by steering families through the maze of social service offices, or perhaps by tutoring children who found it difficult to adjust to city schools. The sisters also simply were friends to the migrants, willing to listen to their problems, and to share joyous moments.²²

In Appalachia the Glenmary women settled in small communities which had few Catholics, so that most of their interaction was with non-Catholics. The sisters made it a practice to make home visits to find out what the local people wanted and needed, and how the sisters could help achieve their goals. Monica Appleby's account of her work in Big Stone Gap, Virginia, in the late 1950s and early 1960s, is illustrative of the mission of Glenmary, and in some respects is a microcosm of the order's evolution. From 1955 to 1959, she trained as Sister Mary Monica in the town of St. Paul, on the edge of Wise and Russell counties in Virginia. In 1959 the order sent her to the Holy Cross Center in nearby Big Stone Gap, Virginia. The mission of the Holy Cross Center, directed by Sister Mary Joseph, was to help the poor and to serve the Catholic parish. But as Appleby related, "Since there were so few Catholics and a great many people who were experiencing hard times, we spent much of our time interacting with non-Catholics."²³

The women at the Holy Cross Center taught Bible classes for children who came to the center, and they invited local people to the center for different events. But mainly, the Glenmary missionaries went *out to* the people, visiting their homes to get acquainted and to find out what the people wanted and needed the most. The sisters learned to listen to the people. While they did the “traditional” work of the nun in the Catholic parish—wash and iron altar linens, prepare the altar for mass etc,—they were the most untraditional of nuns. They lived among the people they worked with, and were always “on call,” so to speak. When the sisters in Norton, for instance, finished their day’s work, they retreated to the convent. They remained separated—in a sense aloof—from the people of the community. The Norton nuns retained an omniscient aura. By contrast, the Holy Cross sisters, in Appleby’s words, “were unschooled . . . young and energetic, and we were making it up as we went along.”²⁴

As the 1950s faded into the 1960s, Sister Monica, like other Glenmary sisters, became more attuned to the needs of the local people, and became more involved with programs designed to empower the poor through economic assistance, or through job and leadership training programs. Sister Monica became part of the War on Poverty through her work with Community Action Programs. She also served as a youth representative on the board of the Council for the Southern Mountains, and worked with the Appalachian Volunteers, federal VISTA workers who were funded through the council. The work of the War on Poverty years was both rewarding and frustrating. While Sister Monica and other Glenmary nuns were able to help many people, and to make important organizational connections not only in Southwest Virginia, but in other areas of Southern Appalachia, they also learned that many local elites liked things the way they were, and had no interest in ending poverty or empowering the poor.²⁵

The sixties was a decade which saw many secular institutions in the United States shaken, if not transformed, by idealistic reformers. Certainly, the Glenmary sisters felt the influence of the decade, as demonstrated by Sister Monica's involvement with War on Poverty programs, the Council on the Southern Mountains, and grassroots organizations demonstrates. But social activist and reform movements within the Catholic Church were important influence, too. Within the American Catholic Church, various reform groups operated under the rubric of "Catholic Action," a Vatican-sanctioned network which promoted the participation of the laity in the apostolate (mission) of the hierarchy. In the United States, however, Catholic Action often functioned without the benefit of clergy, and often eschewed conversion entirely for social activism. Although at this point it is not clear how many of the Glenmarys participated in Catholic Action programs, it is probable that a good number were like Sister Monica, influenced at some point in their youth by Catholic Action organizations which especially appealed to women.²⁶

No discussion of reform in the Church during the 1960s can ignore the defining event of the decade, Second Vatican Council. Opened by Pope John XXIII in October, 1962, the council met for two months at a time for the next four years. The council aimed to renew and revitalize a church which increasingly suffered from alienation not only between the hierarchy and the laity, but also between the hierarchy and the priests, sisters, and brothers who served at the parish level. While socioeconomic issues were especially important in Latin America, Asia, and Africa, they were not unimportant in western, industrial nations. The United States, some European nations (Belgium, for instance), and a number of Latin American countries were fertile ground for such reformist movements as Catholic Action and the Grail. Moreover,

movements within the Church contributed to radicalizing clergy and religious orders. From 1930 to 1960, for instance, the Church underwent a theological and liturgical revival which laid the groundwork in Latin America for the liberation theology movement. Women religious, too, were changing. This was especially true in the United States, where the 1950s and 1960s were decades of activism and reform. The Sister Formation Council, established in 1954, and the Conference of Major Superiors of Women, founded in 1956, changed the ways sisters lived, and challenged the relationship of sisters to the patriarchal hierarchy of the Church.²⁷

The decrees and other documents which Vatican II produced over its four-year existence reflected the reformist, perhaps even revolutionary, spirit of the council. The documents also energized and encouraged laity, clergy, and religious orders who sought to make the Church relevant to the lives of all Catholics, especially the poor and oppressed. *Gaudium et spes*, issued in 1965, emphasized the special responsibility of Christians towards those who are poor and afflicted. It also noted the increasing gap between the rich and the poor, and recognized that wider distribution of economic power was crucial to empowering the poor.²⁸ Other decrees emphasized the renewal and modernization of the religious life; the importance of ecumenism and dialogue with Catholics and non-Catholics; and the necessity of renewing the missionary activity of the Church. Pope John XXII's 1963 encyclical, *Pacem en terris*, fit with the ecumenical spirit of the council.²⁹

The Glenmary Crisis

By the mid-1960s, the Glenmary Sisters had distinguished themselves as a non-convent, missionary order. Their life-style did not adhere to the regimentation of the convent, which prescribed when to rise in the morning, when to pray, when to eat meals, and when to retire at night. The nature of the Glenmary ministry dictated that the sisters often had to be gone from

their residence for periods of time, and so it seemed impractical for them to abide by an array of requirements for daily living. The sisters' independence also applied to their relationship to the male hierarchy of the Catholic Church. While Archbishop Alter served as the order's "protector," Mother General Mary Catherine was the real leader of the order. But the very qualities which distinguished the Glenmary sisters, by 1965 were contributing to pulling apart the order. Some questioned the direction of the order, noting that the founder's vision was of rural mission work, not of work in the cities. Many, if not most, of the sisters enjoyed the non-contemplative, action-oriented nature of the order, but some thought that the contemplative aspect of religious life was not appreciated or respected by a number of the women. Many sisters enjoyed the independence from the male hierarchy, yet others accepted the hierarchy as part of the church's structure, and did not think that it infringed upon the order's mission.³⁰ As Monica Appleby observed, "The dynamics that pushed us to leave Glenmary and start FOCIS involved both the institutional male-dominated hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church and our personal differences within the community."³¹

The crisis began in September, 1965, when Archbishop Alter, who only two years earlier had authorized the Glenmary sisters to wear experimental habits, and to work in secular agencies, issued directives which placed disciplinary controls upon the sisters' daily lives, including restrictions on contact with lay persons. Alter's directives also called on the sisters to conform more strictly to rules on religious life, as contained in Canon (Church) Law. Many sisters considered Alter's directives both as contrary to the missionary spirit of the order, and in violation of the spirit of Vatican II. Moreover, many suspected that the directives simply provided a way for the male establishment to control the independent women of Glenmary.³²

Vatican II's decree directing religious orders to undergo renewal and revival of their work, contributed to the next stage of the Glenmary crisis. Throughout the Church, religious orders had been convening chapter meetings to reassess their work. The Glenmary members had held a chapter in 1965, at which they discussed many questions vital to the order's mission, including the nature of the order's apostolate, what habit the sisters were to wear, and how decisions were to be made in the order. The following year, the Sacred Congregation of the Religious at Rome, the authority over all religious orders in the Church, directed orders to hold special chapters in which they were to re-examine their work in light of the visions of their founders, and the demands of the modern world.³³ At a special pre-chapter meeting held in November, 1966, delegates elected by the membership devised a four-unit approach which reflected the streams of work within the order. The units included the following: 1) a mission devoted to Appalachian people, in both rural Appalachia, and urban cities which were home to migrants; 2) an experimental unit in which sisters would live in small groups in both rural and urban areas, and would provide services suitable to their talents, so long as these services were valuable to the Church; 3) a mission-team unit to work in both town and country; and 4) a contemplative unit, which combined action and prayer, but which placed greater emphasis on the latter. The full membership was to vote on a plan of action at the chapter meeting of December, 1966 -January, 1967.³⁴

At the full chapter meeting, a majority voted to concentrate the order's work on the Appalachian mission. In accordance with the wishes of the founder, Father Bishop, the sisters' apostolate was to focus on a rural area, where Catholic influence was minimal. The Glenmarys' new approach "proposed a regional effort of Glenmary Sisters to be an effective group in a corporate approach to mission life and work, in the Appalachian portions of Virginia, West

Virginia, Tennessee and Kentucky.” A regional board, designed to oversee the Appalachian work, was to report to a full board of the order, which in turn would report to the Archbishop of Cincinnati.³⁵

The Glenmary plan provoked a two-staged crisis. First, a group of 15 sisters disagreed with the focus on Appalachia to the exclusion of other missions. This group, championed by Maureen O’Connor, supported the experimental unit approach. Accordingly, 15 sisters, including O’Connor, left the order in March, 1967. Second, Archbishop Alter found the plan unacceptable. The sisters had ignored his previous directives about adhering to Canon Law on the life of the religious. While the chapter plan incorporated reporting to the Archbishop, it obviously considered the regional and full executive boards as the real heads of the order. Alter thus asked the Sacred Congregation for the Religious in Rome to appoint a special religious assistant to “guide the community in acceptable lines of formation.”³⁶

In response to Alter’s recommendation, Cardinal Antoniutti, prefect of the Sacred Congregation, in March issued a letter which appointed Franciscan priest, Father Sylvan Becker, as “special assistant” to the Glenmary sisters. Becker’s role was to give counsel to the sisters on the administration of the order, on observance of religious discipline, and on financial matters.³⁷ News of Antoniutti’s appointment apparently did not reach the order until May. Correspondence among Glenmary members reveals that many desired to remain in the order, but wanted to feel free to carry on their apostolate as historically they had been doing since the 1940s. In late June, a number (it is not clear how many) of the sisters met at Fayetteville, Ohio to debate the status of the order. They promulgated a series of recommendations concerning a change of status within the Church and the Glenmary order. The order itself was to be called

“Federation of Glenmary Communities,” while the unit desiring to do work within the Appalachian region would be referred to as the “regional community.” An interim board consisting of representatives from the federation, a representative(s) of the federation of Glenmary communities, the present Superior General of Council of the Home Mission Sisters would rule on matters of mutual concern to the two organizations.³⁸ Apparently, the strains between the two groups were too severe to warrant compromise, and at the end of July, Mother Superior Mary Catherine; second in command, Sister Marie Cirillo; the four sisters on the governing council, and 45 others sisters left the order to continue their mission work as lay persons.³⁹

FOCIS in Appalachia, 1967 to the Present

The motivations for the sisters’ break with the Glenmary order are many, and include the fervent desire to remain in the Appalachian region to carry on their ministry. Currents of reform in the Church, including Vatican II and the reform efforts of women religious played an important part in inculcating the spirit of reform in the hearts and minds of the sisters. The spirit of the order’s founder and the history of the order affected the members, too. From its inception, the Glenmary sisters were rebels, independent of mind and spirit. The order fostered an individualism—and an unintentional feminism-- which was unusual for a religious order of nuns. As Margaret Gregg put it: “The Glenmary Sisters group had interest in us as individuals . . . They wanted to learn about you. . . . Years later I learned an expression by Mary Daly, ‘that women need to experience their own experience.’ I was beginning to see the implication of that.”⁴⁰

Although the former Glenmary nuns wanted to be free to use their talents in the ways which best served God and their constituencies, the women realized they needed a structure of

some sort for their new organization. By the fall of 1967, they had written a constitution which provided for an executive board, regional boards, dues payment, and the like. The new group aimed to “build a community of members with a capacity for giving ourselves in a life of service, integration, and dedication.” Although “Appalachia” is not mentioned in the final constitution and by-laws, it is prominently mentioned in other founding documents of the new organization. Throughout these documents it is apparent that while the Christian spirit of love and service pervaded FOCIS, religious norms for the new group were relatively unimportant.⁴¹

In 1967 the group printed a poster which succinctly stated the purpose of the new organization. The poster specified that the target area for member’s work was to be Appalachia. Just as the constitution stressed the importance of community, so did the poster: “FOCIS is an open-ended community of people who are doing. . . . Within a particular FOCIS region members make history together because they are responsible for the development and evolution of the human community in a particular time and place.”⁴²

The founding documents of FOCIS reveal a tension between individual and community, and their comparative worth and importance in the impending work of organization. Community—be it the human community or the basic Christian community discussed by liberation theologians—assumes a central importance to the group. Even the name, Federation of Communities in Service, points to the importance of community. Oddly, for an organization whose heritage included ministering to the spirit and worth of individuals, it was not the individual who received attention in the founding documents of the order, but rather, the community which the FOCIS member served through her work with community residents.⁴³ Although the founding documents did not explicitly link God and community, ideas later

expressed by Marie Cirillo no doubt reflect the views of other FOCIS members. She believed that within a community, members shared God by sharing self with all in the community. Teaching, acting, and preaching provided a “setting for acknowledging God’s presence among us—in community.”⁴⁴

The work of FOCIS evolved over time to encompass grassroots, regional, and outside (that is, outside Appalachia) organizations. Upon its founding, however, the group used its Glenmary work as a starting point. FOCIS first set up four regions to work within: Virginia-West Virginia; Tennessee; Chicago (including Milwaukee and Detroit); and Cincinnati. The social service, church work, benevolent work, and nursing which members did as Glenmarys were to continue, as were other services offered less frequently by the sisters (e.g. specialized research and directing art or drama programs.)⁴⁵

As FOCIS developed, it came to concentrate on Appalachia exclusively, and it came to serve as a secular reform group motivated by Christian principles. FOCIS projects encompassed many types of work, but they all had in common the goal of empowering community members to take control of their lives, whether through economic advancement or the enhanced understanding of self and community which came from artistic endeavors.

The myriad projects of FOCIS are too numerous to discuss in detail, but three projects serve to illustrate the breadth of the FOCIS approach. The first is the 1969 “Discovery, Expression, Communication: An Arts Approach to the Problems of Appalachia.” In the summer of 1969, FOCIS members conducted projects in a number of locales in Southwest Virginia and East Tennessee, among them Clear Fork Valley, Tennessee and Wise County, Virginia. Arts activities varied and included silk-screening, music lessons, pottery-making, telling stories, acting in and producing plays, dancing, and puppet shows. The arts approach essentially was a

heuristic device used to help individuals to discover their inner resources, to increase self-worth, and to learn self-expression, in order to facilitate communication with other members of the community. Both the person-to-person communication, and the group interaction fostered by an arts program were thought to be keys to encouraging community members to define and prioritize those issues and problems most in need of immediate action.⁴⁶

A much different project took shape in Clear Fork Valley in Tennessee. There Marie Cirillo founded the Woodland Community Trust in 1981. With the help of the Regional Land Trust for Appalachian Communities, Cirillo acquired 60 acres of land on Rose's Creek, behind her home. The goal was to encourage residents to stay in Clear Fork by helping those in need of improved housing to build new homes on the land, and by helping impoverished residents to build houses on the land, too. Cirillo initiated the program in response to the problem of land shortage caused by control of huge amounts of land by corporate interests.⁴⁷

The "Bread and Chicken House," a workers' cooperative started by women who were part of the Mountain People's Work, a craft group in Big Stone Gap, provides an example of the type of economic enterprise initiated by FOCIS members, and of the ability of members to cross racial and class lines in their organizing endeavors. Catherine Rumschlag, the former Mother Superior of the Glenmarys, and five women (four of whom were in the craft group) established the restaurant on March 11, 1971. Two of the women were African-American, and the five came from town, country, and coal camp. For start-up, FOCIS loaned the restaurant \$2,000, and during the first year of operation the Campaign for Human Development loaned the business \$10,000. According to Rumschlag, although the restaurant seldom payed more than minimum wage, "there usually was a good spirit among the workers." The Bread and Chicken House

stayed in operation for 17 years, with three of the founders remaining with the organization for the duration.⁴⁸

FOCIS still thrives, and its 30 or so members continue to participate in advocacy and development work in the Southern Appalachian region. Working primarily, though not exclusively, with women's organizations, FOCIS members have helped residents of Southern Appalachia to find ways to achieve economic self-sufficiency, to find self-awareness through art, and to improve their lives with better health care. Their legacy perhaps is two-fold: it endures in the lives of the people changed by the advocacy and benevolent work of FOCIS women, and it endures in the process and approach to ministry and reform practiced by the women of Glenmary and FOCIS. In a 1992 letter to Marie Cirillo, Monica Appleby encapsulated the history and legacy of FOCIS:

I believe that as a community we have already died together and risen together. We rose together in a new, unexpected way. It may not be repeated the same way by who ever comes next but I think there are some patterns, themes worth noting that others can learn from, and we can, too.⁴⁹

Were the Glenmary and FOCIS Women Modern-Day Versions of Fetched-On Women?

The 1969 report on the summer arts program sponsored by FOCIS described the women as “inside-outsiders, residents of Appalachia who have come from other places. With this identity they live as neighbor, friend, interested citizen, professional worker and community participant.”⁵⁰

That description could be applied to the settlement school fetched-on women, who also were “inside-outsiders” who had come from afar. But the settlement workers were not really *of* the communities they lived in; they tended to be aloof from the community, like the convent nuns who did their work among community persons during the day, and retired to the convent at night.

By contrast, the Glenmary and FOCIS women *were* of the communities in which they lived. They lived among their neighbors, enduring the same socioeconomic circumstances as those which afflicted native Appalachians.

Other factors differentiate the Glenmary/FOCIS women from their earlier brethren in reform. The two most important distinctions center on socioeconomic class structure and values, and on religion and ministry. As David Whisnant explains in *All That Is Native and Fine*, some of the settlement schools had connections to the very corporations which were exploiting the people and resources of the mountain region. At Hindman, for instance, May Stone's father, an official of the reactionary, land-grabbing, Louisville and Nashville Railroad, sat on the school's advisory board.⁵¹ Connections to wealth, and hence to the power structure and its ethos, were not unusual among the settlement workers. Hindman founder Katherine Pettit, for example, was acquainted with a number of members of the wealthy Breckinridge family of Kentucky. Maybe such connections did not necessarily translate into direct participation in the exploitation of people and resources, but they often indicated a tendency to sympathize with the mind set, values, and life style of the upper classes, and a reluctance to challenge the basis for the socioeconomic class structure which oppressed the people of the mountain region.

The women of Glenmary/FOCIS had no connections or sympathies with the upper classes. By contrast, their ministry was to the poor and downtrodden, and concentrated on ways to empower the poor so that they could challenge the *status quo*. On the community level, the Glenmary and FOCIS women worked to create a Christian community whose values were antithetical to those of the wealthy.

The greatest difference between the “fotched-on” women of the settlement school movement and the Glenmary/FCCIS women lay perhaps in the relationship between religion and reform. Any missionary or evangelical movement presupposes a superiority of one religion over another. This is as true of the missionary Glenmary Catholics, as it is of the settlement school, mainline Protestants. The settlement school women seemed to be convinced that the mountain residents were barely Christian, and that not only were they in desperate need of religious education, but they were in dire need of changing their religious customs. The Protestant women’s views made them more likely to be what Whisnant refers to as agents of cultural intervention, in secular, as well as religious, customs. While the Catholic women’s mission presupposed evangelical work, quickly it became apparent that they pushed conversion to the background and concentrated on a ministry of good works which saw God in community. The Glenmary/FOCIS women, then, worked with the people of Appalachia to help “save” them by empowering them.

Endnotes

1. David Whisnant, *All That Is Native and Fine. The Politics of Culture in an American Region* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1983), p. 33. Allen Davis, *Spearheads for Reform: The Social Settlements and the Progressive Movement, 1890-1914* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), discusses the “settlement impulse” in Chapter 2 (pp. 26-39). In chapter 3, Davis analyzes the relationship among the settlement, the public school, and progressive education (pp. 40-83). Barbara Solomon, *In the Company of Educated Women* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), writes on the history of higher education for women.

2. Robert Wiebe, *The Search for Order, 1877-1920* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967),

pp. 207-08. In his forward to Jess Stoddart’s edited version of the journals of May Stone and Katherine Pettit, Loyal Jones points to the importance of the convergence at century’s end of three reform movements: Progressive, Social Gospel, and Social Settlement. All three movements, in some way, sought to rectify social and economic equality in the United States of the Gilded Age. See: Stoddart, ed., *The Quare Women’s Journals: May Stone and Katherine Pettit’s Summers in the Kentucky Mountains and the Founding of the Hindman Settlement School* (Ashland, KY: The Jesse Stuart Foundation, 1997), pp. 11-13. On the settlement house in the South, consult Milton Speizman, “The Movement of the Settlement House Idea in to the South,” *Southwestern Social Science Quarterly*, 44(December, 1963), 237-46.

3. Karen Tice writes about maternalism and cultural politics in the Southern Mountain region in “School-Work and Mother-work: The Interplay of Maternalism and Cultural Politics in the Educational Narratives of Kentucky Settlement Workers, 1910-1930,” *Journal of Appalachian Studies*, 4(Fall 1998), 191-224. In her book, *Creating a Female Dominion in American Reform, 1890-1935* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), Robyn Muncy investigates how women came to control policy-making in the Children’s Bureau of the federal Department of Labor. Women gained control in an area long thought to be in her “sphere”—mothering and raising children.

4. Henry D. Shapiro, *Appalachia on Our Mind. The Southern Mountaineers in the American Consiousness, 1870-1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1978), pp. 35-43. Ideas about race, and about the innate superiority of one race over another, dominated science, and social science, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. For hereditarian thought, see Mark Haller, *Eugenics. Hereditarian Attitudes in American Thought* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1963). Stephen Jay Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man* (New York: Norton, 1981), discusses craniometry and hereditarian views of intelligence.

5. As David Whisnant notes, the roster of fotched on women is a long one. The most well-known are: Katherine Pettit, May Stone, Lucy Furman, and Ethel deLong of Hindman Settlement School, Knott County, Kentucky; Olive Dame Campbell of John C. Campbell Folk Sschool, Brasstown, North Carolina; Susan G. Chester of the Log Cabin Settlement in Asheville; and

Frances Goodrich of Allandale, near Asheville. The fictional treatments of Furman and John Fox, Jr. helped to popularize the work of the fofched-on women. See Whisnant, "Second-Level Appalachian History: Another Look at Some Fofched-On Women," *Appalachian Journal*, 9(Winter-Spring, 1982), 118-20. Also consult Cratis D. Williams, "The Southerner Mountaineer in Fact and Fiction," Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1961, pp. 1144-1201.

After the Civil War, the influx of "strange" (Southern and Eastern European) immigrants, large numbers of whom were Catholic, convinced many in the WASP-dominated press that "foreign" and "Catholic" were synonyms. See: Lou F. McNeil, "Catholic Mission and Evangelization," in Bill J. Leonard, ed., *Christianity in Appalachia. Profiles in Regional Pluralism* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1999), p. 267. On nativism, consult Ray Allen Billington, *The Protestant Crusade* (New York: MacMillan, 1952). It should be noted that the turn of the century Protestantism which was the preferred religion of the fofched-on women also contained within it a distinct bias against Roman Catholicism, the religion of most of the Southern and Eastern European immigrant slum-dwellers of the burgeoning American cities of the Midwest and Northeast. Anti-Catholicism of course was nothing new to American society, having been present from the colonial period, and having reached a crescendo during the 1840s high tide of Irish immigration to the United States.

6. Debra Campbell, "Reformers and Activists," in *American Catholic Women, A Historical Explanation*, ed., Karen Kennelly (New York: MacMillan, 1989), pp. 153-54, 158-60.

7. Carol K. Coburn and Martha Smith, *Spirited Lives. How Nuns Shaped Catholic Culture and American Life, 1836-1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), p. 2.

8. McNeil, "Catholic Mission and Evangelization," pp. 269-70.

9. Thomas Stritch, *The Catholic Church in Tennessee: The Sesquicentennial Story* (Nashville: The Catholic Center, 1987), pp. 27-28.

10. *Ibid.*, pp. 270-73.

11. Christopher J. Kauffman, *Mission to Rural America: The Story of W. Howard Bishop, Founder of Glenmary* (New York/Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1991), Chapter 5, pp. 75-103, discusses Bishop's rural work.

12. Bishop, "A Plan for An American Society of Catholic Home Missions to Operate in the Rural Sections of the United States," *The Ecclesiastical Review*, 94(April 1936) [tenth series, vol. 4], 337, 339-42. See also Bishop's 1937 address to the Fifteenth Convention of the National Catholic Rural Life Convention, "The Organization of Catholic Resources for Missionary Effort in the Hinterland," in *Moving Beyond Confined Circles: The Home Mission Writings of*

William Howard Bishop, ed., Lou McNeil (Atlanta: Glenmary Research Center, 1990), pp. 21-27. Consult Kauffman, *Mission to Rural America*, pp. 105-33, for detailed discussion of the origins of the Home Missioners.

13. Kauffman, *Mission to Rural America*, p. 146.

14. *Kinship*, 30(Fall/Winter 1990), p. 5, *Federation of Communities in Service [FOCIS] Records*, Box 5, Archives of Appalachia, East Tennessee State University.

15. McNeil, "Catholic Mission and Evangelization," p. 270.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 4.

17. *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.

18. McNeil, "Catholic Mission and Evangelization," pp. 270-71; and Maureen O'Connor, "The Glenmary Crisis," p. 18, article, *FOCIS Records*, Box 4,

19. O'Connor, "Glenmary Crisis," p. 18.

20. Michael Novak, "The New Nuns," *The Saturday Evening Post*, undated, p. 67, *FOCIS Records*, Oversize Folder 9.

21. O'Connor, "Glenmary Crisis," p. 18.

22. *Kinship*, 6(Summer 1967), pp. 1, 5, Box 4, *FOCIS Records*; and Novak, "The New Nuns," p. 26.

23. Monica Kelly Appleby, "A Baptism by Immersion in Big Stone Gap: From South Side Chicago to Southern Appalachia," in *Christianity in Appalachia*, p. 280.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 286.

25. *Ibid.*, pp. 286-87.

26. Campbell, "Reformers and Activists," pp. 178-79. Campbell discusses other influential Catholic reform groups in which women played significant, including leadership, roles. Among these were Catholic Worker, the Grail, and Friendship House. Catholic Worker is perhaps the most renown of the three. Founded by Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin in 1933, Catholic Worker represents the origins of Catholic radicalism in the United States. On Catholic Worker, see Mel Piehl, *Breaking Bread. The Catholic Worker and the Origin of Catholic Radicalism in America* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982).

27. Campbell, "Reformers and Activists," pp. 177-79; Deane William Ferne, *Third World Liberation Theologies: An Introductory Survey* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1986), pp. 6-7;

and Mary Jo Weaver, *New Catholic Women: a Contemporary Challenge to Traditional Religious Authority* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1985), pp. 82-84.

28. Ferne, *Third World Liberation Theologies*, p. 7.

29. Eduard Schillebeeckx, *The Real Achievement of Vatican II* (Herder and Herder, 1967), pp. 33-34; 46-47 and Charles A. Meconis, *With Clumsy Grace: The American Catholic Left, 1961-1975* (New York: Seabury Press, 1979), p. 6.

30. Appleby, "A Baptism by Immersion," p. 295; O'Connor, "Glenmary Crisis," p. 20; and letter to Sister Mary Catherine and Sisters, probably from Sister Rosemary, dated "Friday after the Ascension," 1967, *FOCIS Records*, Box 5.

31. Appleby, "Women and Revolutionary Relations: Community-Building in Appalachia," in Barbara Ellen Smith, ed., *Neither Separate Nor Equal: Women, Race, and Class in the South* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1999), p. 172.

32. Kauffman, *Mission to Rural America*, p. 247; O'Connor, "Glenmary Crisis," p. 20; and Art Winter, "Glenmarys Down to 15; 50 Leave for Lay Work," *National Catholic Reporter*, August 2, 1967, np, in *FOCIS Records*, Box 7.

33. Appleby, "Baptism by Immersion," pp. 293-94.

34. O'Connor, "Glenmary Crisis," p. 22.

35. "Proposed: An Experiment in a Regional Approach to Mission," January, 1967, *FOCIS Records*, Box 5. It is not clear how the plan divided the Appalachian region. It appears that the provisions for an executive board for the full order, left room for other types of work.

36. Kauffman, *Mission to Rural America*, p. 248.

37. O'Connor, "Glenmary Crisis," p. 23; Kauffman, *Mission to Rural America*, p. 23; and Appleby, "Baptism by Immersion," p. 295.

38. "Recommendations Approved by the Participants Seeking Change of Status," June 18, 1967, *FOCIS Records*, Box 4.

39. Kauffman, *Mission to Rural America*, p. 248; and Winter, "Glenmarys Down to 15," np.

40. Appleby, "Women and Revolutionary Relations," p. 173. Appleby's essay elaborates on woman-centeredness of FOCIS and Glenmary.

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41. "Official Documents Approved by Board of Directors, Federation of Communities in Service," undated, pp. 3-6, 8, 13, *FOCIS Records*, Box 4; "Glenmary Sisters Form Lay Group," press release, July 28, 1967, *Ibid.*, Box 7; and statement of purpose for FOCIS, *Ibid.*
42. "The 1967 FOCIS Poster. Do You Remember It?" *Ibid.*, Box 4.
43. "Official Documents Approved by Board of Directors, Federation of Communities in Service," pp. 3, 13.
44. Cirillo, Community Theology Study Group survey response, c. 1989-90, *FOCIS Records*, Box 4. Perhaps Monica Appleby described FOCIS best when she wrote to Marie Cirillo in 1992 that the FOCIS members wanted to be a "community of support to each other to do the work they personally found meaningful and right." (Appleby, letter to Cirillo, September 20, 1992, *Ibid.*)
45. Press release, "Glenmary Sisters Form Lay Group," July 28, 1967, *Ibid.*, Box 7. Some of the organizations that FOCIS worked with include the following: Appalachian Community Foundation, Tennessee Valley Authority, Commission on Religion in Appalachia, Appalachian Regional Land Trust, and In Praise of Mountain Women. For an excellent map of the relationships among outside, regional, and local organizations FOCIS members worked with, see Appleby, "Women and Revolutionary Relations," p. 178.
46. "Discovery, Expression, Communication: An Arts Approach to the Problems of Appalachia. Report 1969 Summer Project," *Ibid.*, Box 4.
47. Joyce Schmidlin, "One Who is Making a Difference: Marie Cirillo," research paper, November 29, 1983, *Ibid.*, Box 7; and Fred Brown, "The Miracle at Roses Creek," *Knoxville News-Sentinel*, January 31, 1993, p. E1, *Ibid.*, Oversize Folder 9.
48. Appleby, "Women and Revolutionary Relations," pp. 176-77.
49. Appleby to Cirillo, *FOCIS Records*, Box 4.
50. Appleby, "Women and Revolutionary Relations," p. 172.
51. Whisnant, *All That Is Native and Fine*, pp. 76-77. Olive Dame Campbell, founder of the John C. Campbell Folk School, called the L & N a "regular robber of the poor man." (See p. 77.)