

Annie

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Long ago, most of the leadership and work in the field of missions was done by men. Some men felt as though women should not be really involved in heading up areas of the mission program. But in the 1800's, many women in the South began to support the work of missionaries.

On May 14, 1888, Baptist women from 12 states met in Richmond, Virginia, and formed what became known as the Women's Missionary Union, also called Women's Missionary Society.

The women at this gathering elected Annie Armstrong (1859-1938) as the corresponding secretary. But she was far more than the title suggests. She was actually the executive director.

The Baltimore native had already served in many areas of mission work. Annie worked with different missionary groups and helped in ministering to Native Americans, Chinese Americans, African Americans, and indigent families.

She wrote letters – lots of them, including 18,000 in one year. She refused to take a salary from the WMU for 18 years. The busy lady traveled thousands of miles, visiting churches and encouraging people to help in the work of missions. She urged people to help the missions effort through prayer and giving. In 1895 the women of WMU helped establish the annual Easter offering for missions. It was later named the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering. Over one billion dollars has been raised through the offering. About 5,000 Christian workers receive support from these funds.

A large church in an American city has a place honoring men who have done great things in God's service. Those recognized are from the days of the early church to modern times.

It is time to add the names of women who have also been faithful servants. Annie Armstrong's name would be a good place to begin.

Sources: North American Mission Board, Christian History Institute, Wikipedia