

Dr. Jennifer
Wojciechowski

CHRISTIANITY AND SOCIAL REFORM

BIBLICAL PRECEDENT (NOT AN EXHAUSTIVE LIST!)

Learn to do right; seek justice.

Defend the oppressed.

Take up the cause of the fatherless;

plead the case of the widow. (Isaiah 1:17)

“For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.” (Matt 25:35-36)

“Woe to you Pharisees, because you give God a tenth of your mint, rue and all other kinds of garden herbs, but you neglect justice and the love of God. You should have practiced the latter without leaving the former undone. (Luke 11:42)

Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world. (James 1:27)



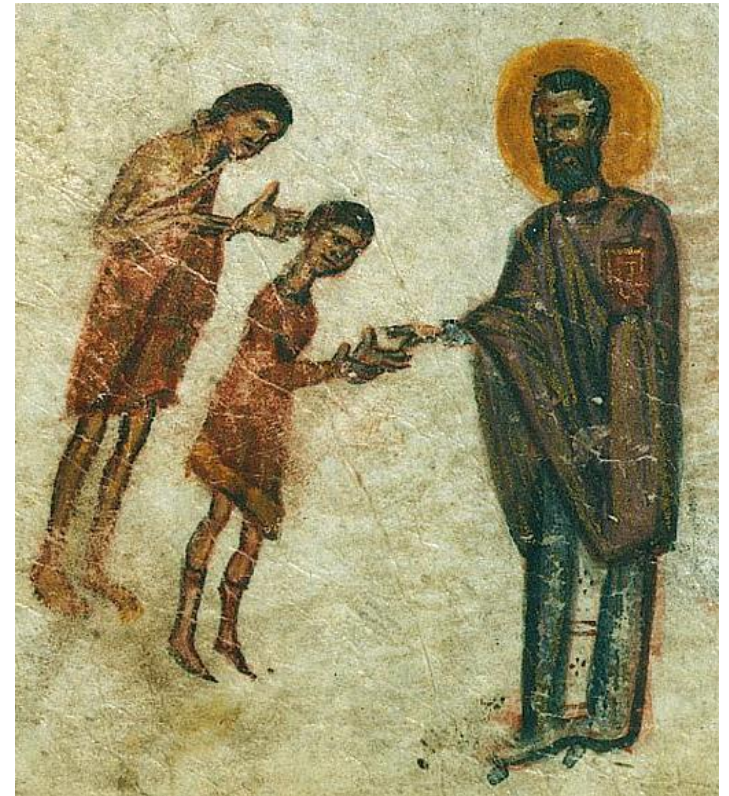
WORKS OF CHRISTIAN CHARITY ARE AS OLD AS...CHRISTIANITY

From the very beginning:

Churches collected alms to help those in need, which priests and deacons distributed to the community.

Deacons and Deaconesses visited the sick.

Widows (which was an official office in the early church) were expected to help those in need—particularly women.



THE ROLE OF
MONASTERIES





SISTERS OF CHARITY AND DEACONESSES

In the 18th and 19th centuries, we see a rise in women's orders participating in works of charity in different ways than before.

BUT CHARITY ISN'T
NECESSARILY SOCIAL
REFORM...



AI HAD THIS TO TELL ME ABOUT SOCIAL REFORM...

Social reform is the process of addressing social issues and working to improve societal conditions. It often involves:

- **Raising awareness:** Using statistical profiles to highlight social injustices and mobilize political participation
- **Reshaping norms:** Changing culturally accepted laws and norms to reflect new cultural paradigms
- **Promoting change:** Working to create a more just and equitable society

THE SECOND GREAT AWAKENING

- While the primary emphasis of the Second Great Awakening was the conversion of souls, a strong secondary aspect was moral reform.
- The nineteenth century becomes a time social perfection.
 - Abolition
 - Temperance
 - Universal Suffrage
 - Female Reform
 - Sabbath Laws
 - Literacy (opening of public schools)





CHRISTIANITY AND ABOLITION

- 1400s: the Portuguese started selling slaves.
- At the beginning of the 1500s, African slaves were brought to the Caribbean.
- In 1619, the first slaves were brought to Jamestown.
- In 1807, both the US and England outlawed the slave trade, but it did not make slavery illegal. There were about 4 million people enslaved in the US at that time. The slave trade would continue until the 1860s in parts of the Caribbean and Brazil.
- In 1833, the English outlawed slavery throughout the British Empire. Probably the biggest name in the fight to end slavery in England was William Wilberforce who was a committed Christian.
- 1861-1865, The American Civil War
- In 1865 the Thirteenth Amendment ended slavery in the US.
- 1888, Brazil abolished slavery. It was the last of the Latin American countries to do so.

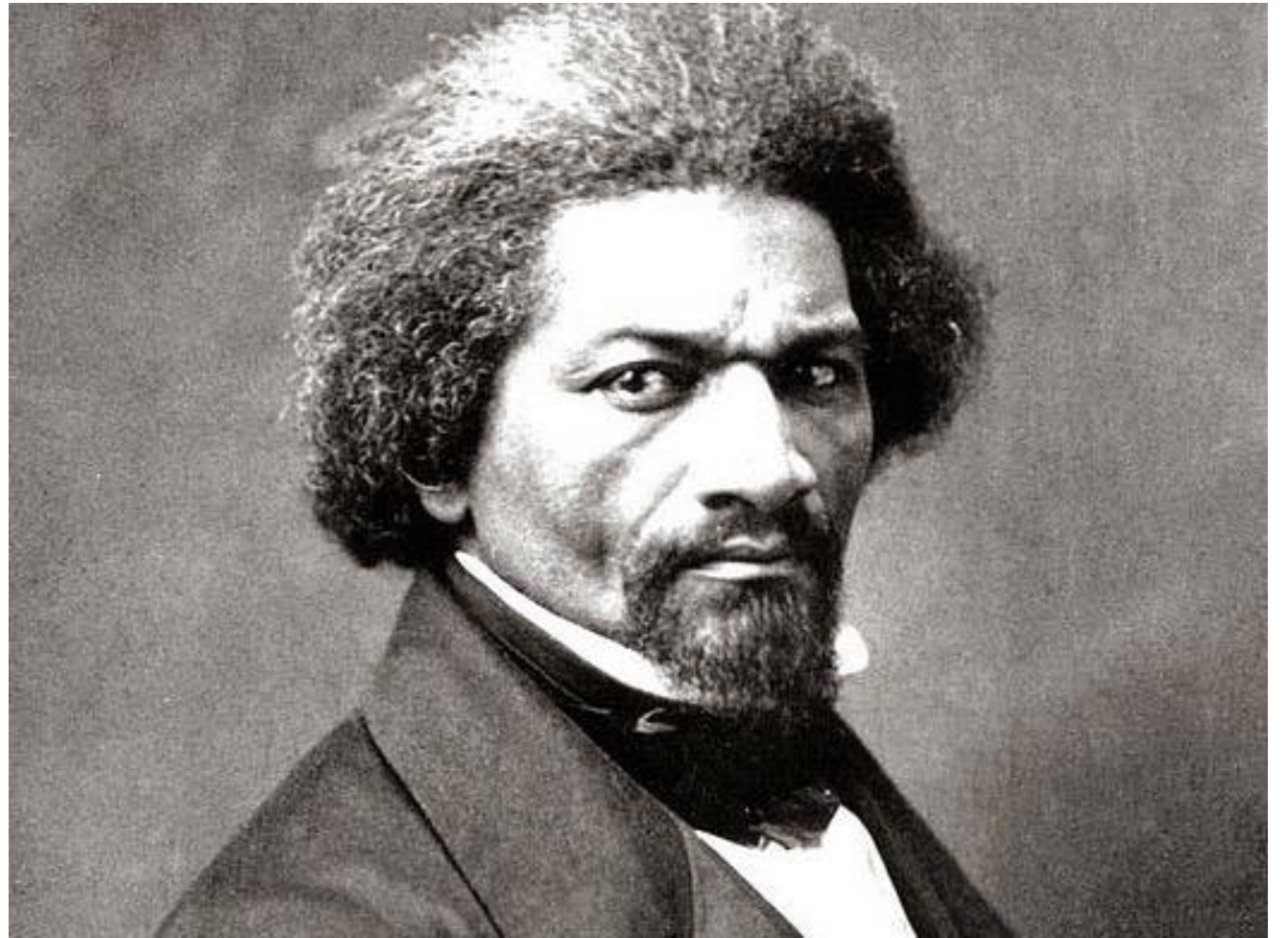


SOJOURNER
TRUTH
WILLIAM
LLOYD
GARRISON

Both were active in
abolition efforts through
the 19th century.

FREDERICK DOUGLASS

1818-1895



HARRIET TUBMAN

1822-1913

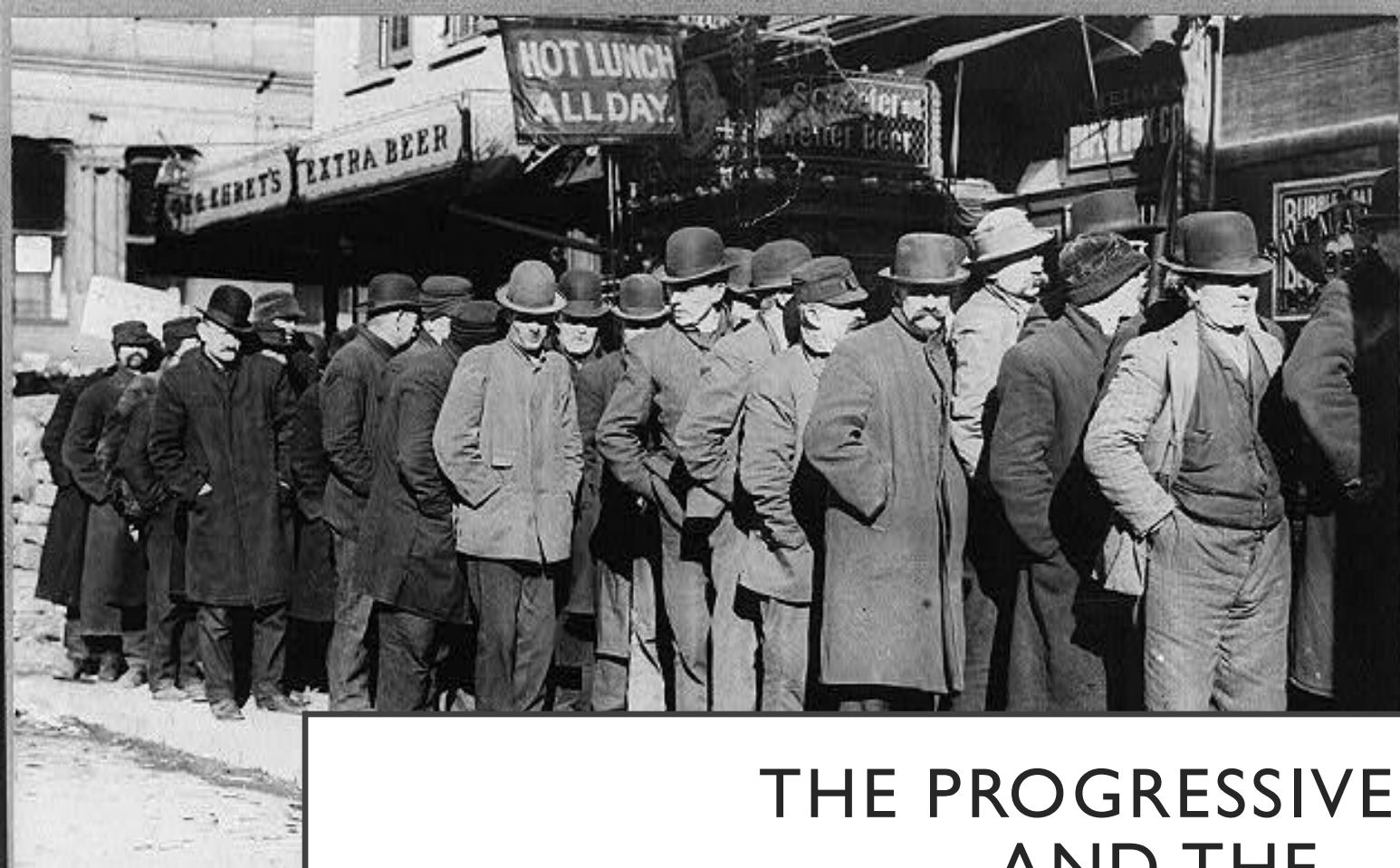
This photo dates from the late 1860s.

She was an abolitionist, advocate of women's rights, and she even opened a home for the aged (not to mention her military service!)





THE WCTU (1874)



THE PROGRESSIVE ERA
AND THE
THE SOCIAL GOSPEL



SETTLEMENT HOUSES

LET'S LOOK
AT A COUPLE
GLOBAL
(AND
MODERN)
INSTANCES...



MOTHERS OF THE PLAZA



WOMEN OF
LIBERIA MASS
ACTION FOR
PEACE
MOVEMENT



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Where in your life have you seen religious groups participating in social change?
2. What types of social justice ministries is your church involved in?
3. How does your Christian faith inform your participation or your financial support of such ministries?

Q & A

