

A Life for Young Readers: Ines Piacentini (1875-1961) and the Italian Methodist Press for Children (Carlo Bovolo)

Abstract

Ines Piacentini (1875-1961) was a pivotal figure in the Italian Protestant press for children and youth between the late 19th and mid-20th centuries. As the wife of Carlo Maria Ferreri, a minister of the Italian Methodist Episcopal Church and director of the Methodist typography “La Speranza” in Rome, Piacentini played an influential role in the religious and cultural life of Italian Protestantism. She held significant positions within the youth and women's movements of Italian Evangelicalism, but her contributions as a journalist and editor are particularly noteworthy. Piacentini began her career in the editorial board of *L'Aurora*, a children's magazine published in Rome in the late 19th century. In 1906, she founded and became the director of *Vita Gioconda*, a magazine for young people, with a Methodist background but open to all the readers; she led the periodical through the complex context of the Fascist regime until its closure during World War II. *Vita Gioconda* was more than just a publication; it was a vehicle for fostering an Italian Evangelical identity and culture among the youth. Through her editorial leadership, Piacentini shaped the magazine into a vital resource for the religious education and moral development of young Protestants in Italy. Despite her significant contributions, Piacentini remains a relatively obscure figure in the history of both the press and Italian Protestantism. Her work, however, was fundamental in the construction of a distinct Evangelical culture in Italy, emphasizing the importance of faith, education, and moral values in shaping the next generation. This paper seeks to illustrate Piacentini's role in the Italian Protestant press and underscore her lasting impact on the development of a uniquely Italian Evangelical identity during a transformative period in the nation's history.

Bio

Carlo Bovono is a postdoc researcher at University of Torino (Italy), with a research project dedicated to the Italian Protestant Press for children and youth between 19th and 20th Century. My interests include the relationship between press and religion (especially Italia Catholicism and Protestantism) and the role of sciences in periodical press.