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PRESENT POSSIBILITIES OF CO- OPERATION IN THE MISSION FIELD

SINCE my return from Asia, where I visited the mission fields having in them three-fourths of the inhabitants of the non-Christian world, I have been asked repeatedly to make some statement regarding the impressions left on my mind, but have refrained from doing so until I had had the opportunity of reporting to the Continuation Committee and the missionary boards, and of reflecting more at length upon the many facts which pressed upon me during the crowded months of the journey. One of the outstanding impressions made upon me, especially in the series of twenty-one conferences of leaders over which I presided, was that of the urgent necessity of closer co-operation on the part of all the Christian forces if they are to meet successfully the present unprecedented situation throughout the Asiatic continent. At this time it is not my purpose to deal with the principles and limitations in co-operation but to fix attention on several aspects of the missionary enterprise which particularly demand co-operative consideration and action.

It is desirable that the different missionary forces or agencies co-operate in the work of securing a comprehensive

When articles are an expression of the policy or views of the Continuation Committee, or of the conclusions reached by any of its Special Committees, this fact will be made clear. In all other instances the writer of the paper is alone responsible for the opinions expressed.

survey of the field. We did not go far in any one of the conferences without discovering that we did not know enough. It became evident in the discussion of each subject that we did not know the facts with sufficient fullness and accuracy. It is not strange, therefore, that each one of the twenty-one conferences voted unanimously in favour of a thoroughly scientific, united survey of the field and work in the area represented. There was also agreement that such surveys should be made periodically, the general period mentioned being once every ten years, although some urged that the interval between surveys should not exceed five years. A truly comprehensive survey is essential before any adequate plan for occupation, or in fact the most statesmanlike action in other directions, can be determined. It will be recognized that such a gathering, arrangement and interpretation of the facts as is here called for, if it is to be complete and satisfactory, can best, if not only, be accomplished by co-operative effort. The assistance of the Continuation Committee through its special committee on Survey and Occupation will be indispensable—by helping to secure and coach suitable men to conduct the surveys, by placing at the disposal of the Committee on Survey in a given field the lessons of experience of similar committees in other fields, by standardizing the surveys in different fields to such an extent as may be desirable, and by bringing the results of the surveys to the attention of those who should be most interested. In some countries it will be best to begin by conducting a model survey of one province, or district, or city; in others it may be wiser to plan at once for a complete survey of the whole country.

Co-operative consideration on the part of the various Christian bodies at work in a particular country is essential in order to determine more clearly than has ever been done what is meant by the adequate occupation of a field. There are few subjects on which there is more confusion of thought than on this one. Often members of the same

missionary society, or even missionaries of the same society living at a common mission station, were found to hold diametrically opposite views on the subject. It is not so surprising to find leaders of different missions and communions holding quite widely differing views on certain aspects of the problem of occupation. Now, if we do not know where we want to go we are not so likely to arrive at our destination. Personally I do not expect that all the societies, or even all the missionaries of the same society, will come to agree exactly on what is meant by the adequate occupation of a field; but I do confidently believe that as a result of co-operative consideration, that is, of concerted investigation and discussion, we shall reduce the number of theories or plans of occupation to two, three or possibly four. This will be a great gain over the present confusion. Even though we find that the views and policies of occupation which certain groups of workers hold must be radically different, it will be advantageous to know it that we may plan more intelligently. The possibilities of misunderstanding and friction will be reduced, and the fields concerned are much more likely to be occupied. To facilitate clearer thinking and a much more nearly common understanding on the subject, it will be well that conferences be held of missionaries on the field and of representatives of boards at home, also that there be careful writing on the principles which should guide as to occupation and distribution, and on the proper application of these principles.

The completely unoccupied fields and the virtually unoccupied fields of the non-Christian world challenge and require the united consideration of all the Churches. It seems highly incongruous and startling that so many centuries after Christ rose from the dead and initiated the world-wide missionary movement, it should be possible for a body of Christian leaders to assemble, as was the case at Edinburgh, and be confronted with facts showing so many areas totally destitute of the gospel agents and

agencies. This situation is all the more alarming at a time when there are so many genuine Christians in the world that they might easily and fully give to all men now living the opportunity to learn of the living Christ. Different reasons might be given to explain why there are still so many completely unoccupied fields, but is not the chief reason the fact that no one has been made responsible to press the facts and claims of the world's unoccupation upon the brain, conscience and will of Christendom? What is everybody's business is nobody's business. Therefore, let it be stated reverently, God has had no adequate opportunity to impress the facts upon the Church. The united surveys which have been proposed must not be regarded as ends in themselves. The Continuation Committee Conferences in Asia were impatient on this point. They desired that the information be brought to the attention of the home Churches and societies with reference to securing action. The impression was received in the conferences that only a small minority of the missionary societies have definite and recognized plans for occupying their respective fields. Moreover, it was most disappointing to find how few had concerned themselves with the matter of evolving a united plan for occupying the whole country. The time has come when the missionary societies should collectively or through the Continuation Committee make it clear and emphatic that it is their fixed and unalterable purpose to stand for the planting of pure Christianity in every part of the non-Christian world. It is undoubtedly the will of God that the whole field be occupied, and, however great and difficult the task, there are resources available in Jesus Christ and His Church sufficient to make possible the accomplishment of His perfect will.

Experience on many mission fields emphasizes the value of co-operation in the work of evangelization. The conferences brought out clearly the fact that the most powerful and fruitful evangelistic efforts have been those

in which the various missions and Christian agencies united for this purpose. In different lands the delegates agreed on plans calling for concentration evangelistic campaigns in great centres of population, and, in some cases, over wider areas. In Japan there was unanimous action, at the suggestion of the Japanese Christian leaders, in favour of a three years' nation-wide campaign. It is expected that all Churches and agencies will participate, each being free to co-operate in the ways which it deems most effective. The leaders in Japan desire the special co-operation of the missionary societies and the Continuation Committee at home in helping to select and send out able apologetic lecturers, wise evangelists and recognized authorities on methods of evangelization. It is of first importance that Christian leaders in Europe and America recognize that the present is one of the days of God's visitation in Asia, and that it is pre-eminently the time for us to bring to bear our united power in intercession and in every other way which the trusted workers at the front may indicate. The statements of the Bishop of Madras and those in the findings of the Indian conferences regarding the marvellous opportunity presented just now by the mass movements in India to influence for Christ literally tens of millions who will otherwise be absorbed by Hinduism and Mohammedanism, are, in my judgment, understatements and not exaggerations. If this be true, the situation calls for a far closer co-ordination and co-operation of the Christian forces that we may not miss the day of our visitation.

Contrary to the popular impression the present opportunity in Japan is absolutely unprecedented. At the conference held there last April I put two questions both to the Japanese Christian leaders and to the missionaries : 'Are the educated classes as accessible now as they were in the eighties, the time when Japan might have been made a Christian nation had the opportunity been seized ?' In answering, all agreed that the educated classes are fully

as accessible now as they were then. The second question was, 'Are the masses as accessible and responsive now as they were then?' All the Japanese workers and all but two of the missionaries agreed that they are more accessible and responsive now than at that time. This fact is not generally known in the West. As the pendulum swings more rapidly in Japan than in most countries, it is a fact of large and urgent significance. Only prompt and concerted effort on the part of all societies related to this field will avail. Far more vast and quite as urgent is the evangelistic opportunity presented to-day in China. During my three previous visits to China within the last twenty years I found nothing approaching in ripeness for evangelistic effort the fields visited in that land last year. In South China, in North China, in East China and in the heart of China, the fields among government students as well as among other classes were dead ripe unto harvest. The Confucian reaction which has set in has not seriously contracted the opportunity; in fact it is serving the great advantage of compelling men to count the cost more thoroughly. It is an idle dream to think of meeting such a colossal situation as that presented by the evangelistic opportunity in virtually every province of China and in the Chinese colonies by anything less than union in plan and effort on the part of Christ's messengers.

In every field there is a clamant demand for a much larger number of able native Christian workers and leaders. In fact, nothing short of an army of well-qualified sons and daughters of the soil will suffice to meet the demands of the Church. What is the secret of obtaining them? While the mission schools and colleges constitute the principal recruiting ground, the agency which has proved itself most effective in influencing young men and young women to devote their lives to Christian service is the Student Christian Movement. This has been shown conclusively by the Student Volunteer Movement in North America, the British Isles, Australasia and South Africa

and in certain parts of the Continent. Recently the same plan has been tried in China where during the last five years the Student Volunteer Movement has led more Chinese students to decide to enter the ministry than have been secured in as many decades before in that country, and also more than have been secured in the other non-Christian countries during the same half decade. This is a co-operative or interdenominational movement. There is something which can be secured through *esprit de corps*, through consciousness of unity and of strength of numbers, through common purpose and fellowship, and through the spirit of propaganda, which cannot be obtained in any other way. The missionary societies of the West, therefore, should seek to strengthen the hands of the rising Student Christian Movements among both the men and the women students, in government as well as in mission schools, by allocating to this service some of their ablest and best adapted missionaries and native workers.

There is a demand for better trained workers as well as for larger numbers. While the rank and file of the prospective native leaders probably had best be educated in the theological and other training institutions of their respective Christian communions, there is a growing belief among missionaries that a selected company of the best of these students should receive advanced or post-graduate training in union theological colleges. To this end the missionaries and native leaders have voted for the establishment of a few really high-grade, union theological institutions, similar to the one recently opened in Bangalore, India. It is believed that in advantages and facilities for training these should rank with, and if possible surpass, the theological seminaries and colleges of Christian lands, thus obviating the necessity, except in very rare cases, of sending young men to Europe or America to complete their theological studies. Without some such provision as this in fields like India, Japan and China there is serious danger that the Church will not have leaders

sufficiently well prepared to command the intellectual confidence and following of the educated classes. In these institutions would be trained men to take charge of the more important city parishes, to serve as teachers in the ordinary theological schools, and to minister to the student class in different communities. As a rule, no one mission will have a sufficient number of young men requiring such advanced training to warrant it in maintaining such a large and able staff of professors as would be needed in a theological institution of this rank and character. Such an enterprise should be a union effort. When deemed necessary, provision could be made by certain Christian bodies or groups of cognate denominations to provide for their own students separate facilities for worship and also for teaching their distinctive doctrines and polity.

Happily there is almost universal agreement among missionary administrators at home, as well as among their representatives abroad, in favour of close co-operation in the establishment and maintenance of union language schools for missionaries on the field. Among the most successful already in operation are those at Lucknow, Nanking and Cairo. Not less than fourteen of these union schools are called for in the findings of the different conferences. A special committee of the Continuation Committee is dealing in a comprehensive manner with the whole subject and in conjunction with the missionaries and the mission boards is seeking to determine the number, location and scope of schools required in the different fields and to work out the best plan for their financial support. It is evident that to ensure their highest efficiency each school will require an able director, a highly-qualified teaching staff and suitable accommodation for residences and for classes. In this connexion the growing importance of the recently constituted Boards of Missionary Preparation of Great Britain and North America should be emphasized. These boards are purely co-operative

enterprises, and as they gradually succeed in uniting the varied and rich experiences of all the missionary societies on the vital problem of the training of missionary candidates, the inevitable result will be a raising of the standard of requirements, and a marked increase in the efficiency of new missionaries. In view of the increasingly exacting demands of the modern missionary career this united emphasis is both timely and prophetic.

The problems and responsibilities of the Church in each non-Christian land suggest the need of some co-operative arrangement by which the influence of the Church in other lands may be brought to bear most helpfully. The special committee on the Church in the Mission Field may possibly best meet this recognized need. It should place at the disposal of the missionaries and the native Christian leaders in each mission field the best experiences of other fields. It should conduct investigations on certain subjects, among them the following: 'How can truly indigenous Churches be developed?' 'What are the tendencies leading to closer co-operation or to separation between the Churches and missionary societies of the West and the rising Churches on the mission field?' 'The economic position and problems of Christianity in the various non-Christian lands.' Such studies could be promoted through the activity of special commissions and also through carefully planned series of papers or magazine articles. Moreover, it will be well here and there, in such fields as China, to hold conferences to discuss these and other questions relating to the development of self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating Churches. Conferences on Faith and Order, such as have been suggested in the findings of some of the gatherings, will also be timely on certain fields.

Everything practicable should be done to strengthen the bonds of union between the new Churches in non-Christian lands and the Church Historic, the Church Universal. This point is one of cardinal importance just

now at the time when independent Churches are springing up on every hand, and when, owing to the growing national spirit, there is danger of the development of Churches in the East which will be separate in aims and sympathies as well as in activities from the Church in the West. In this connexion the importance of the study of church history should be emphasized, among both the missionaries and the native leaders, as well as among the students in theological colleges and Bible schools. This point should be brought to the attention of those who do most to shape the curricula of the training institutions on the field. More of the best works on church history should be translated into the various vernaculars of Asia. Original works in this field of scholarship should be prepared, having in mind the special requirements of the developing Churches in different countries. The fact that many of the native Christian leaders have such a poor historical sense makes it all the more important and necessary that in this and other ways we seek to keep the growing native Churches in closer touch with the great consensus of the continuous Church of all the ages. There could be no greater danger than for native Christianity to become separate from historical, credal, ecumenical, living Christianity.

It may be well for the Continuation Committee to associate with its Committee on the Church in the Mission Field an increasing number of able church historians and of those who have dealt most largely with the problems involved in planting and developing the Christian Church. This committee should also concern itself much with the problem of how best to ensure the spiritual vitality of the native Churches, and how to influence them to realize their missionary responsibility. The collection and dissemination of the most inspiring facts regarding the evangelistic outreach and spiritual achievements of the Church in different parts of the non-Christian world would prove to be most stimulating. A great service may also be rendered from time to time by sending great and inspiring Christian leaders

as visitors to lands where the Church is in special need or is subject to peculiar strain. Such a step taken just now with reference to certain parts of the Orient where an ultra-liberal spirit has recently asserted itself with great power, would be most timely and wise.

The findings in every conference held in Asia reveal the need of a far better co-ordination and a closer co-operation in the educational work. Back of this lies the need of a well thought-out and well understood policy for Christian education. In not one of the twenty-one conferences was a satisfactory answer given to the following question: 'Have you in this area a well thought-out and generally accepted policy of Christian education?' We should not be satisfied until such a policy is formulated and adopted. The help of the Continuation Committee has been requested in order to increase the efficiency of educational missionary work in all its phases and grades. To this end it should, in co-operation with the Boards of Missionary Preparation, take steps to ensure the better training of missionaries who are to engage in educational work. In every field there is a noticeable lack of men trained for this particular work, that is, men who are strictly educationalists and yet thoroughly missionary.

It would be a good plan if the Committee on Christian Education would undertake to issue occasional, if not regular, bulletins, especially with educational missionaries in mind. Such a paper would do much to keep them abreast of the thought on educational problems throughout the world, and would help to raise the standard of efficiency. This committee should serve in every way in its power the missionary education associations on the different fields. This can be done by enabling them to employ expert educational directors or superintendents who would serve the interests of all missions within certain areas. In any effort to increase the efficiency of the educational work, chief emphasis should be given to making it more productive in a truly missionary sense. To accomplish this

greatest result an increase in the staff of educational missionaries is demanded.

On every field there is imperative need of bringing about larger and more practical co-operation between the different missions as to specific educational institutions already established or called for. In several fields the members of the conferences came to unanimous agreement as to the number, and in some cases as to the location, of the Christian colleges and universities required to serve the interests of the Christian Church. The policy embraced not only colleges for men but also for women. It included medical colleges, normal schools, theological institutions, and, in certain cases, secondary schools. The leaders on all these fields very much desire that on the home field representatives of the missionary societies which are chiefly concerned in the different areas be brought together in conference, that they may face the facts and decide what should be done to effect the co-operation so much desired. The co-operation of a committee, constituted as is this Committee on Christian Education in connexion with the Continuation Committee, is greatly needed to help to decide on the best plans of administration of union schools and colleges, and also on the best methods of financing them. Owing to the growth of great government educational systems in all parts of Asia, not only in size, but also in efficiency and influence, Christian missions must greatly expand their educational work and raise the standards. This may involve great expenditure, for expansion and efficiency are costly, but it will result in savings which in the course of the next decade will aggregate millions. It is the deep-seated conviction of all who have thought much on educational missionary problems that we are summoned irresistibly to a united policy and to corporate action, and that the more quickly and strongly the question in its varied and practical aspects is grappled with unitedly by the representatives of the missionary forces, the better it will be for the interests of the Christian Church.

Those who have given most careful study to the question agree that much of the medical missionary work had better be conducted on the basis of co-operation. Thus the convention of the China Medical Missionary Association adopted a policy calling for union in all medical college work in that country and agreed upon the number, location and staff requirements of such colleges. A similar policy has been approved in other Asiatic fields. There is also agreement in nearly every country as to the wisdom of co-operation in the planting and conduct of more of the mission hospitals. The production of text books and other technical literature required by medical workers is obviously a matter which can best be attended to by the different missions in concert.

Even cursory investigation has revealed the fact that possibly no phase of missionary work is so poorly in hand as that dealing with Christian literature. Certainly no other department is suffering more from lack of system and co-operation. The secret of the wonderful results in the translation, revision, circulation and study of the vernacular Bible is due largely to the fact that the home societies and Churches have believed profoundly in such work and have co-operated earnestly in furnishing for it both men and money. Similar interest and co-operation are imperatively demanded with reference to the general Christian literature required on every mission field. Many leaders acknowledge this in theory, but fail to adopt and follow a policy in accord with their theory or ideal. Special attention should be given to working out the problem of the federation or unification of more of the literature societies and activities in India and China, just as has been accomplished recently in Japan where now one comprehensive society serves all the missions and Churches. A policy should be elaborated and adopted by the regular missionary societies which will make possible the employment of able editorial secretaries. These secretaries are needed not so much for authorship as for directorship; that is, to

study the needs of the respective language areas and to discover and enlist capable writers.

Owing to the progress of education in all parts of Asia the literacy of the people is constantly rising. The chief religious systems are manifesting growing literary activity. Anti-Christian literature continues to spread from the West to the East. The native Church is growing in numbers as well as in intelligence. Owing to these and other considerations there is urgent need of much more extensive and serious literary activity both on the part of and on behalf of the Christian Church. There is an imperative demand for new apologists and new apologetic literature to minister to educated non-Christians. The leaders and members of the Churches also require a far larger body of literature by which to enrich and strengthen faith and character and to help to qualify for Christian service. An examination of the Christian books available in the vernacular for the Chinese, Korean, or Japanese pastor or other Christian worker, in contrast with the Christian literature accessible to the average clergyman in England, America, Germany or Holland, would occasion not only surprise but real solicitude. And yet we are looking to these men to build national Churches, to feed the flock, and to wage a triumphant propaganda. From the nature of the case more than nineteen-twentieths of the Christian literature required in Asia can best be produced in co-operation. Moreover, co-operative action is required to ensure its wisest and most economical distribution.

There is special need just now of co-operation with reference to the subject of missionary co-operation itself; that is, there is great need that workers and leaders in the missionary movement, both at home and abroad, make a united or co-operative study of problems and experiences in connexion with co-operation. The movement in the direction of closer co-operation and unity in the enterprise of the world-wide expansion of Christianity is advancing

by leaps and bounds. A study of the volume of findings of the Asia conferences of last year reveals literally hundreds of practical plans or proposals for the drawing together of the forces for common effort. The findings on co-operation, particularly of the three national conferences, constitute a practical, sane and really masterly approach to the problem. This co-operative movement can no more be resisted than can the tides of the sea. Discerning leaders do not wish to resist or to stay it, but they do see the wisdom of guiding it. They desire to make it a helpful and not a dangerous or a weakening process. They recognize that there are perils to be avoided. It is desirable that the representatives of the societies hold from time to time conferences, similar to the one held last January in New York, to review the progress being made in different fields in co-operative missionary enterprises, that they may learn and make available the lessons as to limitations and difficulties involved in this process, and how best to avoid or counteract possible dangers and unsatisfactory experiences.

There is greater need to-day than ever before of relating the limitless power of united intercession to the missionary enterprise. A time of unexampled opportunity and crisis like the present is one of grave danger. There have been times when in certain parts of the world the situation confronting the Church was as serious and as inspiring as it is to-day; but has there ever been a time when simultaneously in so many non-Christian lands the facts of need and opportunity presented such a remarkable appeal to Christendom as now? Nothing short of a marked manifestation of superhuman wisdom, superhuman love and superhuman power can meet this situation. In every conference throughout Asia I was charged by those who have penetrated most deeply into the heart of the problems to press upon the missionary societies the imperative need of more intercession, above all, of united intercession. In no way can those of us who are responsibly

related to the missionary forces better, in fact in no way can we so well, serve the deepest interests of all the societies, missions, and Churches as by multiplying the number of real intercessors, and by focussing the prayers of Christendom upon those great situations, wonderful openings, grave crises, alarming perils and remarkable movements which demand the almighty working of the Spirit of God. This is fundamental and central to everything else we are called upon to do. Far more important and vital than any service we may render in the realm of promoting the science, strategy, efficiency, statesmanship, leadership and unification of the vast and complex missionary enterprise, is that of helping to release the superhuman energies of prayer, and, through uniting in this holy ministry true intercessors of all lands and of all communions, of helping to usher in a new era abounding in signs and wonders characteristic of the working of the Living Christ. We should be on our guard lest we devote a disproportionate amount of time and thought to investigation and discussion and to plans for the utilization of available human forces, and not enough attention to what is immeasurably more important—the relating of what we do personally and corporately to the fountain of divine life and energy. The Christian world has the right to expect from the leaders of the missionary forces not only a more thorough handling of the facts and methods, but also a larger discovery of superhuman resources and a greater irradiation of spiritual power.

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