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BAPTIST MISSIONS IN THE NEW WORLD ORDER.

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How can we impart the unchangeable gospel to the changing world and gain for the missionary enterprise all the advantages that conditions offer? This is the big missionary problem now on the hands of the churches of Christ and their mission boards. The comparative success of the missionary enterprise and the welfare of the world to generations are contingent upon the solution of this problem.

Perhaps a brief review of some of the elements characteristic of the New World Order, elements indeed which make the new order, may help us to appraise whatever suggestions may be made for the solution of our problem. There is, all will admit, an extraordinariness about the present, whether one considers it to be an omen of good or one of ill. School children have seen changes take place in the world which octogenarians have not hitherto seen, and among these changes are some which are more significant than the remaking of national boundaries, maps and geographies. They affect the fundamental things in the social, political and intellectual life of men, and there is in them the sweep of international-

ism, interracialism and universalism. The intellectual attitude, the moral ideals, the controlling motives and ultimate aims of men are affected. Christian missions must now certainly, and henceforth probably, take account of this changed attitude and new human temper, and I should say must seek to take advantage of these; for we believe that the changes which have formed the new world order make opportunity rather than difficulty for missions. This we believe to be true in particular of Baptist missions. The changes have for the most part been salutary and have tended to produce a more cordial hospitality for the simplicities of religion as expounded in the Baptist message. But of this we can judge better with some of the characteristics of the new world order before us.

I.

What then are some of the marks which provoke speakers and writers everywhere to designate the present as a new world order?

1. There has issued out of the past half dozen years a new realization of a community of human interests. Recent history constitutes a commentary upon such texts as "No man liveth unto himself", "Am I my brother's keeper?" and "Who is my neighbor?" No nation is safe in its indifference to the welfare of any other nation. It has been found that aloofness is impossible to any, that anything which concerns one concerns all. The whole world is affected by the woes or the depravity of any single member of the family of nations. The war has given a new birth to the conviction of racial unity.

It is, however, superficial observation which draws from these facts the conclusion that national distinctions have grown faint while racial unity has grown strong. The truth is that along with racial unity has emerged vigorous national consciousness and self-assertion in

every nation and racial group the world over. There is a new glorying in nationality and the racial family group. There is not the least probability of a great merger, a blend of nations in which the original racial differentials will not be distinguishable. Indeed, it would be difficult to determine whether racial unity or national independence has received a greater impetus from the war. Nevertheless, the fact stands out and cannot be mistaken, that an element of the new world order is a common recognition of a mutualness of interests from which no nation is exempt.

2. A recognition of race obligation is another mark of a new order. There is not only a realization that there is no escape from the consequences of wrong and ill anywhere, but a deep and idealistic concern for the unfortunate everywhere. Men have gone beyond the self-interest which is concerned for the common weal and woe of nations. They have had their moral sensibilities aroused and a new altruism has bloomed on the tree of humanity. There never was such response and outpouring of compassion as has been seen in recent months. This has not been produced by an instinct for self-protection nor the fear of peril. The record-breaking philanthropies are not born of a fearful looking for of judgment, nor practiced as a means of appeasing Fate. They are rather expositions of Paul's words, "I am debtor". A sense of moral responsibility for men everywhere has settled upon true and thoughtful men with a weight that was never experienced before.

3. Another mark of the new world order is a deeper persuasion of the immanence of God. Men called upon God while the battle raged, and somehow there settled in the minds of soldiers on the field, statesmen in Senate chambers, men at their desks and in the shops that God was not very far off. Millions who hitherto were aliens and without God in the world have come to believe that

He is encountered in the affairs of nations, and that we must give account to Him in this world. Some men, like H. G. Wells, have their brains so enmeshed in a net of philosophic cobwebs of their own spinning that they cannot very intelligently describe their new consciousness of God, but many to whom God was before the war but a name for an unreal or vastly distant being, have today a persuasion of His awful immanence. When the preacher talks of Jehovah to these men now his message is not heard as a Norse tale. There is almost terrible realization of God's impending judgments over men and nations who forget Him. They have seen a nation attempt to abrogate the moral code and believe that they have seen God's power and witnessed His judgments. To such henceforth

"Earth is crammed with heaven,
And every common bush aflame with God."

This persuasion is expanding among men and nations.

4. Another element is a new realization of the superiority of evangelical Christianity among the religions of the world and the sects of Christendom. The nations found in the war no other such reliable ally as the evangelical churches and the sufferers from war have no other such friends. It is under the preaching of the gospel and in the atmosphere of worship that we are to find the source and impulse of disinterested service for country and the world. We have witnessed in the momentous years of the war a demonstration of the value of evangelical Christianity upon which historians will in the future certainly dwell. No nation has a dependable like unto an evangelical citizenship. The war has left no question as to the patriotism of such citizens. Roman Catholic Ireland and Roman Catholic Canada have by their behavior during the war brought a reproach upon Romanism which it will never remove by all the camou-

flage of which the papacy is pastmaster, nor by any plausible resolutions which truculent or hoodwinked congressmen may under the influence of Rome's agents get through National Assembly. No nation has a basis of patriotism or high idealism in a consistent Roman Catholic population. This companion fact to the dependableness of evangelical citizenship must be placed with the things which frame up a situation on which men are reaching conclusions which impart distinguishing characteristics to the age.

5. Democracy, the ideal and goal of society, is another mark of the new order. Note that I say, the *goal* of society is democracy. Democracy is a thing hoped for. There have been disillusionments as well as experiments in democracy during the eventful months which have elapsed since October, 1918. The world will never again abandon the ideal of democracy, but sensible men will not, in the light of events, over-idealize concerning it nor think it feasible unduly to hasten its adoption as a form of political life for every nation. Democracy is not a present possibility for all nations and classes, nor is it a panacea for all the ills of any division or class of society. Men must be prepared for democracy and democracy must be reinforced wherever it is put in operation. The world of today gives striking instances of premature and immature experiments in democracy. These facts must be admitted, but they do not demand the abandonment of the ideal, nor the lowering of the standard for a world democracy which shall free men and nations from autocracies and hierarchies in politics and religion. It is simply a statement of irrelevancies when we say that you cannot have a pure religious democracy under a political autocracy, nor have a perfect political democracy with religious hierarchy. Collision in either case is inevitable at certain points. But men have found a political guiding star and they will follow it until difficulties in the way

of democracy are removed and hope of it is fulfilled in state and in religion.

6. The loud insistence upon the rational, spiritual, and practical in religion is another characteristic of the times. The demand is made and sooner or later all religions will have to square to it. Every step in intellectual advancement, attainment in spiritual psychology and the practical humanities adds force to this demand. Nothing in the name of religion will eventually be tolerated which is either irrational, unspiritual or does not "bring forth fruits meet for repentance". No hoary system or venerable sanction will save religion from the crucible. No ecclesiastical system will be able to preserve the lifeless and inefficacious forms which have characterized certain religious movements, however perfect and ornate that system. Religious magic, which is divorced from intelligence and lacks power to produce spiritual results, will be dragged into light which it cannot bear. Only that religion which is validated by transparent spiritual life and commensurate deeds of human service can survive the new day which is breaking everywhere.

II.

These are some of the characteristics of the New World Order. What bearing have they upon missions, and Baptist missions in particular?

Christianity now enters a new competition with all other religions, and evangelical Christianity has strengthened its rivalry with Romanism. The superstitions of heathenism and Romanism alike will suffer under the application of the new standards of judgment which the age has set up for religion. Men have experienced a consciousness of God and have become aware of reality in religion, the necessity for religion, and no substitute or superficiality will satisfy the leaders and exponents of thought henceforth. The souls of men have

had such experiences during the past six years that only the great religious realities can meet their needs. Gradually but certainly, this disposition of mind and heart will permeate the masses everywhere. It has been found, too, that nothing but a righteousness begotten of direct response to the immanent God can guarantee the moral foundation of the world and secure society from other and greater catastrophies. The strength of society and the nation is to be secured through religious vitalization and evangelical Christianity must impart this.

Therefore, to win in the field of missions, evangelical Christianity has only to possess itself of its native power, release itself from all devitalizing accretions of ecclesiastical systems and of mesmeric rites and discharge in full measure its missionary duty. Christianity was endowed at the beginning for service in such an hour as this. Kept in its primitive purity and freedom, it is equal to its new tasks. In making the plea for Christian unity, some writers and speakers have inveighed against transplanting to the mission fields the inheritances from historic controversies, local and national provincialisms. Good advice that, if only it is applied where it is needed; but those who make promiscuous application of it do not show the courage of true seers and prophets. Let the reformer on these lines stand up before the guilty sects and say, "Thou art the denomination". Those denominations which have cherished inheritances from sectarian controversies are partisan ecclesiastical courts and must disrobe themselves of these outworn and mildewed garments. The friends who are raising this call, that provincialisms be discarded, are but repeating the demand which Baptists have made from time immemorial, only these speakers and writers have not had the courage to designate the guilty parties and frankly to give honor to whom honor is due. All the controversy Baptists have ever had with other Christians has been over this very

matter of unscriptural inheritances from periods, localities, parties, historical creeds, customs, and ecclesiasticisms. Let the champion of union and the indigenous church give us credit for anticipating them by ages and for a consistent history, and join us in protest against these, validating their sincerity by abandoning superfluous forms which have in the course of history and controversy attached to them. We desire to see on the mission fields a church unafflicted by accretions from any source; but that which mars a church in China mars it here. A Chinese characteristic attached to a church is quite as indefensible as a British characteristic, Italian characteristic, or American characteristic. To condemn inherited nationalisms in religion and deliberately to go about encouraging others to bequeath to their posterity those of their race or nation is anomalous.

But this is a crucible age, and religion will be tried as by fire. The hearts of men ache for religious certainty and reality, and having learned what it is, they will have nothing else. The threefold test of rationality, spirituality and a practical ministry will reduce Christianity in many quarters to greater simplicity. There is no escaping consequences. The day will declare it.

But what of Baptist missions in the new world order? It is obvious, I think, that not by so much as one count do these facts make any difficulty for Baptists. Some of them make new opportunities for Baptist missions. The field is an open one for Baptists if they are ready to break camp and enter upon a mighty world campaign. The currents of human thought are favorable for the Baptist message. Their faith is the nearest religious counterpart of the demands which the new age is making upon religion. The things which the leaders of men today are insisting upon are in many great matters the very things upon which Baptists have always insisted. No one can more strongly or consistently plead for per-

sonal, intelligent choice in religion, personal and vital experiences of God, spirituality in religion, and a pure democracy, than Baptists, who have proclaimed throughout their history. If these are marks of the new age, then the Baptist message meets the requirements. They have never known any other than self-governing and self-propagating churches. Their appeal has not been to Bunyan or Spurgeon, to history or ecclesiastical court, but to Paul and Jesus, to the divine example and the divine Word. They have admitted the validity of nothing for which there could not be shown a "thus saith the Lord", and they have always been willing to be called before this court of final appeal for an examination of their faith. The new world order brings them their missionary opportunity. The demands which it makes upon religion do not prove embarrassing to intelligent and consistent Baptists. They have no creeds to revise, no autocracies to apologize for, no ecclesiastical system to reform, no mere traditional sins or conventionalities to laden their missionary bark. No man or set of men can champion a greater respect for human personality, absolute amenableness to the voice of God, provide a better guarantee for spiritual religion or advocate a more thoroughgoing democracy than Baptists are now preaching from more than 50,000 pulpits in America and have preached to their fellow men from the first days of the republic, not to mention their witness-bearing to the truth in other lands. To these things they have given their martyrs while yet others were transplanting in America the seeds of old-world controversies against Baptist protest.

III.

But what have Baptists to do to meet the requirements of the times, to justify their contention and demonstrate on the field of missions that their faith is a necessity and a remedy for a world in need? How shall Bap-

tists make use of this new opportunity and set up in the midst of the nations the kingdom of God?

1. They must proclaim their message, and they must do this without timidity and with evangelistic passion. Their simple message contains the richest values of the gospel. These must be imparted to a distraught world with all haste and diligence. In all important elements their message is a counterpart of the needs and the demands which are conspicuous in the new world order. Victory for missions is in the missionary message conditioned only upon the faithfulness and passion with which it is preached and the divine presence which is guaranteed to such loyalty and devotion. Positive preaching and positive preaching only has victories to its credit in any land or age. Any slighting emphasis upon the elementary principles of the gospel, any hesitation to declare the full counsel, whether due to deference or to fear, any attempt to advance under the standard of an interrogation point, will cost Baptists the sublimest opportunity they have ever faced and the sublimest now given to any religious party. If after two thousand years we have no certain, positive missionary message, we are in a pitiful plight. But we have, thank God, for we have the original commission without alterations, additions or accretions. The imperious mandate of the Book and of the times in which we live is, "Preach the Word". With this sword of the Spirit we shall win our victories.

The missionary enterprise includes a multiform work. Christianity is as complex and comprehensive in one land as another. The life of God in the soul expresses itself in a varied human service. It will find channels of blessings for society in China as it has in America. There is nothing which conditions life that will not feel the influence of the divine life begotten by the Word wherever that life takes root in any nation. Of this there can be no question. But the foreign missionary enterprise is

dealing with primary things. It is set for the introduction of the leaven of the gospel into the society of China, India, Africa. To secure the connection of the Christian dynamic with humanity on the mission field is the first and main thing with which the missionary and missionary agency are charged. Whatever is indispensable to this initial work is a part of missionary operations. Those things which lie beyond these requirements, although they belong to a full and complete Christian society, have, to say the very least, secondary claim upon mission boards and missionaries. The gospel is itself a creative and habilitating force in society. A sufficient supply of pure gospel will transform any community, improve sanitation, raise social standards and start up the necessary forms of social service. The missionary on the ground will find his relation to these, but the motive of his going, like the terms of the commission under which he goes, takes these things for granted. They are consequential and not primary. The missionary goes as an evangelist and not as a reformer, but his evangel is transforming, which is far better. Better houses, better clothes, better conditions of life generally spring up along the path which the missionary's feet have trod and along whose borders he has scattered the precious seeds of the gospel. The man who makes it his vocation to call men into fellowship with God will create a clean and wholesome society whether he ever heard of a social club or read a book on sociology. To make these latter things the engaging concern in a missionary's life is to court disaster for the missionary enterprise. This simply is not the scheme which Jesus announced for the missionary enterprise, and hence must fail. The transforming, fertilizing gospel is to be the chief concern of those who seek to save a lost world.

We put it down with deliberation after having studied with some diligence missionary problems at home and

abroad, that if there is cause for alarm anywhere and the success of the missionary enterprise is threatened from any quarter, it is from this, that a few schools from which missionaries are turned out are reticent concerning the message which the mission boards are appointed to promulgate, and which missionaries are commissioned to proclaim. And next to this is the tutoring which substitutes social service, "leadership", and big office administration at home and abroad for the simple evangelistic method of the New Testament. The Baptist denomination cannot meet its missionary obligation and opportunity, nor perpetuate itself through men who have been inoculated with such ideals for missionary service. Wisely, Baptists have always made ample room for independent thought and speech, both in and without the denomination. The day is now too near the noontide for anyone to introduce dark inquisitional methods in dealing with either schools or men; but, if we have a mission, we have a message. I would say a mission because we have a message. Uncertainty, doubt, equivocation, or reticence concerning the fundamental elements of that message and the distinguishing principles of the denomination are neither marks of superior intellectual ability or independence, nor a sign of qualification for service in the new world order. This world order is challenging Baptists and daring them to prove that their message and their method are equal to a great opportunity. We ought not to be cheated out of the complete demonstration that we are making. That any one in responsible denominational position should from unwillingness or whatever cause be reticent about telling what he believes concerning the constituent elements in the Christian missionary message or articles of Baptist faith does not savor of candid dealing with his constituency nor comport with the contention for freedom of speech. The peril is too great for reticence concerning

the missionary message to be popularized as a standard among us. The missionary is a proclaimer. Candor of soul is a mark of his genuineness and worth. Those who deal with young missionaries should reflect that they are to be the bearers of messages of life and the representatives of the missionary conscience of the home constituency. It is men with a message and a conscience for it who will let loose among the nations of the earth revolutionizing, energizing forces and open springs of human ministry. The triumphant and joyful acclaim of one of the first missionaries of this gospel was, "In Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel". The gospel fecundates human souls. The essential elements of that gospel are too few and too unmistakably set forth in the New Testament for anybody to qualify for missionary service who does not know them, believe them, and in conscience avow them.

2. Baptists of the world must find each other and agree upon co-ordinated and concerted effort for the proclamation of their message. We are to deal with a new world order. The challenge and opportunity is universal in magnitude. No single group or organization of Baptists is equal to such a task. The full effort of all at their best and in concert of action will be required to take care of the opportunities which the world offers.

Speaking now to Southern Baptists in particular, I would say that we can neither justify our independence of interdenominational alliance, nor demonstrate the value of a denominational program if we do not set ourselves to a truly great missionary service and seek to co-ordinate the missionary effort of the respective groups of Baptists in all the world. We have by a firm, but for the most part brotherly and dignified, course gained much by declining to be entangled by any of the big, overlapping, extravagant and ineffective organizations. These organizations have crowded us into relief² before the

eyes of the world, and now the world is waiting to see what we will do and what we have to say which is of missionary value to the world. If indeed we have a message, and we covet opportunity for great service, nothing more fortunate could have befallen us, but nothing less than great service is becoming and nothing else will save us from the reproach of men. But again, if we are to render such a service, a Baptist *entente cordiale* is necessary. Doubtless, there will be found many difficulties and discouragements in working out terms and plans of co-operation, but courage and grace under the stress of great emergency and opportunity in missionary service will find a way.

Europe illustrates the necessity for this alliance. The great war has lifted to the eyes of the world and left on our hands a great mission field in Europe. Already important posts are manned by heroes of our faith, but these are insecurely held by these small intrepid companies at different points on the continent. These cannot hold the lines and advance them without our help, and we cannot do it ignoring them. A practical plan must be worked out by the administrative agencies of the denomination here and there by which the combined influence of the Baptists of America and the scattered groups of Baptists in Europe may be centered at imperiled and important positions. There are thrilling possibilities in such an effort. The vision of the whole Baptist brotherhood in concerted action for the promulgation of our missionary message throughout this modern world haunts one day and night, Southern Baptists have no designs upon any group of their brethren anywhere except to reinforce them in effectual witness to the truth with which the denomination is entrusted.

Among the many needs of Europe, the need of the gospel is the greatest. As great as is temporal want among the people of Europe, they need the gospel of

Christ more than philanthropies. The war has not ended war because it has not slain jealousy, suspicion, envy, hate, and greed. The war was the result of an attempt at salvation by education. It proved futile and disastrous. Already the signs are evident that salvation by democracy is equally futile. What is the effective remedy? What can go to the root of moral being and cure such faults as enmity, hate, greed, suspicion? We have the answer, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, they are life", "If the truth shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed". Christ Jesus only is made unto men and nations wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption. Great issues are pending in Europe and great opportunities are afforded American Christianity. Our Baptist family tree is rooted in Europe and we need to recognize our obligation to our brothers who are on the old estate. A recent book by C. H. Robinson tells the story of the conversion of Europe. In its remarkable condensation of a long period of European missionary history, it cites the fact that the conversion of continental peoples was superficial. The author says, "The war demonstrates the truth of the assertion that the conversion of Europe as a whole has been superficial, and that its reconversion is a task that has to be faced by the Christian church." In the collapse of old civilizations we have the failure of human experiments and the token that the world may now get a new start if the right forces can be applied to the moral impulses and powers of men. A beautiful and fruitful humanity may grow out of the pulverized civilizations of Europe. We believe tremendously in the Christian potentialities of Germany if instead of a semi-conversion this wonderful people can be regenerated by the power of God. France, too, may yet furnish missionaries for the evangelical faith as many and as strong as she has furnished Romanism.

American Baptists dare not stand aloof and look with indifference upon religious conditions in Europe. Our brethren there need to hear the shout of comradeship. European Baptists hold in great jealousy a sound evangelicalism. American Baptists can furnish much material aid and by their spirit of brotherliness and evangelistic spirit impassion their European brothers in the task of soul-winning.