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TRAINING WOMEN FOR CITY, HOME AND FOREIGN MISSIONARY SERVICE

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The phrase "missionary service" has acquired a new content of late. We of the first two decades of this amazing new century have found ourselves under the sudden compulsion of expanding the term, of stretching its boundaries, so to speak, to include something other than its original sense. It has come to mean more than world evangelization. It means world redemption. The gospel must be carried afar to remote frontiers and on to the farthest heathendom; but it must also be carried down into the heart of both old and new civilizations.

City missions? It has to do with rescue halls, to be sure, and mission Sunday schools and street preaching. But engaging in these activities it finds itself face to face with dance halls and poverty and neglected children. It must join hands with charity organizations and health departments, with legal aid societies and public school teachers. And bravely engaging in efforts to remove those conditions which hinder evangelization, it comes on to factories and franchises, to ward politics and civil service commissions.

A strange experience many a city missionary is having. He started out aglow with the glory of carrying the shining evangel. He finds himself wading in the murk and filth of city corruption. The practical side of one's idealism leads on to these homely activities. But pausing one day to look up a moment from his task, the city missionary with joy unspeakable catches a vision of the goal of his efforts, larger and fairer than his earlier dream—that city beautiful where the child is as safe in "street land" as in the sacred enclosure of his mother's arms; where youth sings and plays in purity; where motherhood is lifted to high levels, and manhood performs its work with strength and power.

So also with Home Missions. It started out to carry the Gospel to Indians and immigrants, to mountaineers and people out on the rim of the world. It finds itself involved in rural life problems, in immigrant assimilation projects and the bitter questions of industrial relationships. Here again the task is larger than our dreams. It looks toward the building on the foundations of our polyglot population of a new and better race. It means the working together of native and newcomer to solve our problems of

physical welfare and to rear aloft a spiritual structure which shall be an adequate home base for world influence.

And Foreign Missions—it is as one of our missionary statesmen has said, making two blades of grass grow where one grew before. It is the development under Christian guidance of a holier industrialism than the older civilizations have witnessed. It is, moreover, the captivating of all that mystical oriental life with the ideals of Jesus that together we and they may build up on this earth the Kingdom of God.

It develops then that missionary service as we must now interpret it, is incomparably greater than mere evangelization. It is, to paraphrase Professor Rauschenbusch's striking title, Christianizing the world order.

Is the task too great for our undertaking? A generation ago the church was startled by the slogan of the Student Volunteers, "The evangelization of the world in this generation." For a moment we stopped to question its possibility; then with a courage which must seem to the Creator to justify His experiment on this planet, Christian young people set themselves to the task, and its accomplishment goes forward under our very eyes. Shall we then fear the extension of the task for which our generation calls?

Providentially we have reinforcements. Quietly and unostentatiously there has appeared on the scene of our church life the "disciplined might" of a strong new womanhood. A fairer day has dawned for women. They are no longer hidden away within the enclosure of their four home walls. They are out in the strong wind of world affairs. And as if with a sense of the responsibility which their new position brings, they are seeking for opportunity to serve. What other significance have the women's clubs, with their quick reaching out from the study of literature and art to an interest, actively expressed, in community and world welfare—women organizing, "white hand outstretched to hand unused to holding." The church has the easy task of capturing this eager energy, this socio-religious enthusiasm for her use in kingdom building. And the church is beginning to do that very thing. She is calling to her help hundreds of her finest young women. She is showing them the greatness of the waiting work and asking them to equip themselves to serve. Here then is the *raison d'être* of the woman's training school.

Four definite things this training should bring to the women who would enter missionary service. First, a conception of life in harmony with the views which are proving so intellectually sat-

isfying—a conception of life as process. Would not many of the difficulties which disturb church workers be solved, could those workers conceive of life as does the scientist, as do increasingly, of course, lay thinkers also? And something more. The process must be seen to involve the possibility both of progression and retrogression. We must teach our students that if process is to be uniform progress, human intelligence must consciously make it such. The world may—we believe will—even if left alone, move out toward the light, slowly and painfully perhaps, and with many a backward step—just as quite without the aid of conscious will, it has moved up from protoplasm to highly organized forms. But it may be pushed out with ever increasing momentum if human hands lay hold of the task. And the little palms of women laid alongside of strong men's hands will help out of proportion to the strength added. In such terms we must teach our women missionaries to think.

Again the woman's training school should bring to its students information; information of the Bible, its long, all but age-hidden origin; and its contents, rich granaries of human material; of Christianity with its roots back in the soil of a primitively democratic Judaism and its top in the sky of a universal brotherhood; of sociology including social origins, the gradual working out of social relationships, the conscious direction of social processes on toward the goal of a perfect society; of psychology and all the related subjects pertaining to the development of the child as a conscious and responsible human being; especially of home economics, woman's new-old sphere, the scientific treatment of tasks which were of old done willy-nilly with little conception of their spiritual significance.

Further, the school must give to its students that opportunity for actual practical work, that real touch upon life itself which will best equip them for their future service. Most of our training schools are situated in large cities. They look out over city roofs. The currents of city life flow past and through them. Paths lead out from their doors to organized uplift agencies and on to city streets and slums. The city is the laboratory where students work under scientific direction. "Friendly visiting" for the organized charity, investigating for the child welfare society, direction of children on the playground, follow-up work for the prison association—what insight into life and its mystic processes do such experiences bring! This insight, this knowledge of life, the missionary will surely need, whether her work be in city or country,

on the far frontier or at the heart of heathendom. Moreover, it is not without significance that many of the social workers are women—women of course, of recognized skill and efficiency. It is to be hoped that in working temporarily under the direction of these social workers our missionary candidates will come to a stronger realization of the part that women may play, of the special use to which women's gifts may be put in serving the race.

Finally and especially, those who are to engage effectively in world tasks must be given vision. Much of missionary service is inevitably dull and prosaic. The missionary dare not be over fastidious—a thousand sordid tasks fall to her hands. She must believe so thoroughly in her Cause that the smallest contribution will be considered a holy service. She must be carried on by a great enthusiasm. She must be following not a will-o-the-wisp but the very Gleam itself. How shall this be unless, somehow, she be given a vision of the end toward which her work moves? Here is the highest function of those who train—to lift the curtain which hangs about the work-a-day world and reveal the vistas that lie out beyond; to make concrete and real the "divine, far-off event;" to visualize for the student "that eternal kingdom which is to be the outcome of all our shadowed endeavors and twilight strivings, the justification of all our hopes and dreams."

It will be readily understood that this task of missionary-making requires something of physical equipment—adequate buildings with dormitories and classrooms and gymnasium, with libraries and laboratories. Here as throughout all of life the physical is the basis of the spiritual. Careful organization there must be also, with such provision for specialization as the new duties of the church require.

But something above equipment and organization there must be if woman's training schools would accomplish their real purpose. And that overplus must reside in the teachers, the personalities that really make the school. They must be women—presumably the teachers in women's schools will be women—trained in the best universities, to be sure. But down below the training there must be that basis of character and personality of devotion and spiritual passion which alone truly qualifies them for their tasks. Life impinging upon life leaves its ineradicable impress. The glorious torch is passed on from teacher to pupil who in turn runs eagerly forward with the precious light.