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News and Notes

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Co-ordination in Church and Mission Activities. *

I have chosen to speak on the need for more co-operation and co-ordination in the work of Church and Mission, because it is at this point that a great lack has been most evident in India.

ONE of the compelling reasons for closer co-operation, as I see it, is waste—waste of effort, lost opportunities, and failure to make wise use of the available resources. If I dwell for a time on this theme, it is that I may help you to see some of the unfortunate results attending such neglect, and then offer some constructive suggestions for your consideration.

I. (a) In an assembly of this character I may be excused if I speak first of the fact that we, as missionaries, (I use this term in the broadest sense) often fail to co-operate among ourselves as we might and as we should. I am thinking at the moment of the work of an ordinary Mission station and of the workers of one and the same Mission; but what I have to say applies with even greater force to workers of different missions in the same town or city.

For instance, frequently no attempt is made to co-ordinate the work of men with that of women, and *vice versa*. Openings made by the one, through preaching and teaching, are not taken advantage of by the other; in fact, it is not uncommon to find that the activities of the one are quite unknown to the other.

One sees this, for example, in the work of schools and colleges in places where *zanana* workers, as a part of their regular task, are visiting homes in the city. Christian members of the staffs in these institutions have to do daily with a number of Muslim pupils, and in

* A paper read at the Conference of Missionaries to Muslims, New Delhi,

this way access to their homes is a possibility. Meanwhile, entrance to just such homes would be welcomed by the women evangelists, but too often they are unaware of the contacts already made in the class-room.

Why should zanana workers be left to visit other houses, when the homes of these pupils are already accessible? And why should they not be supplied with a list of the residences from which such students are drawn?

Another question presses—how can members of the staffs of our schools and colleges be in a position rightly to appreciate the spiritual needs of their students when they themselves are ignorant of the atmosphere and environment of their pupils' home-life?

Consider some actual situations—Here is a widow who pours forth to a zanana visitor the story of her shameless son—a college student—who, despite her protests and those of his young wife, persists in bringing a prostitute into the house. Enquiries reveal that he attends a Christian college and that he speaks highly of his Professor, to whose house he goes for tea and tennis. Now, how is it possible for that teacher to bring the right influence to bear on this lad, when ignorant of the life he leads at home?

And here is a girl under-graduate—a day-boarder, who returns to her home each evening. Her elder sister, who has passed through the same college, still lives with the family, but is sent out each night, by her father, to earn the wages of shame. When remonstrated with the man brazenly claimed that he had the right to do this, since he had spent so much on her education. Ought that student's teachers—Christians—to have been ignorant of what was going on in their pupil's home? Yet such was the case.

At this point I wish to suggest, quite seriously, that we men have not, even yet, sufficiently recognized the place and worth of women in this exacting enterprise. Our strategy has been faulty, or, for want of any, we have repeatedly failed to bring into right relationship these two sides of our operations.

It was a general, Sir Robert Scallon—a man who professed himself keenly interested in the work of missions—who once said that, had he to do with the disposition of the Christian forces in the Mission Field, he would greatly augment the number of zanana workers and, therewith, enfilade the trenches. In other words, he would make it his policy to concentrate—to a much greater extent than we are in the habit of doing—on the homes of the people, because, it is there that the main strength of resistance is found.

And surely there is another good reason why we should seek to establish contacts with the home. It is no part of our purpose, nor of our commission, that we should disrupt the family; nevertheless, our present policy, too often makes disruption inevitable. It would seem to be the most natural and most Christ-like thing that, while men seek to win the son, and through him the father, women should

make friends with the women of the house, so that the entire family might be brought to know and accept Christ.

(b) I now pass to consider these mission agencies in relation to the indigenous Church.

No one acquainted with the facts would claim that, at last, these forces are effectively co-operating in a forward movement of evangelism. The situation is still influenced by the policy of a century, according to which the work of preaching has been the primary and peculiar task of the paid agency of foreign boards. The Church has grown accustomed to Mission routine and is largely unaware, or slow to acknowledge, that she has an obligation to fulfil in this respect.

All now recognize that the Church in India, as a potential factor in evangelization, has been too long neglected. Missionaries in the past have not always sought the co-operation of members of the Church with the result that the Church has not felt a concern to care for the missionaries' converts. And, indeed, we cannot reasonably expect that Church to care for the harvest, which takes no part in toiling for it.

The conclusion of a close observer amongst us holds good: "If evangelistic work among Muslims is to be left chiefly to a paid agency we will continue to see a dead, cold Church freezing out the spiritual babes brought to her by the missionary".

Only last month a case was brought to our notice of an enthusiastic young missionary with a Bible Class of 15 promising Muslim students, who, when he brought them with him to a gathering of the Church, was told by an elder that on no account could they be allowed to attend. Call it prejudice, lack of vision—what you will—there it is, a stumbling-block in the Church which has to be overcome.

II. It is an easy transition from what has just been said to the observation that the Church is unconcerned about these matters largely because she is uninformed. And in the circumstances, it is expecting too much to demand that she manifest more enthusiasm for the spiritual welfare of Muslims. She doesn't know what exactly constitutes their need. And can we blame her? It is still generally true that it is the foreign missionary who, through study and association, has knowledge of the need of Muslims, not the members of the Church. And until recently missionaries have not felt it much of an obligation to share what they know with members of the Church.

But we are assuming too much if we suppose that all missionaries, in positions where knowledge of this kind should be a prime requisite, are in possession of the necessary information. Believe me, there are some in their third and fourth term of service who just don't tackle Muslims because they don't know how to start about it.

There was the case of a principal of a Christian girls' high school, with 25 years service to her credit, who admitted that she had never visited a Muslim home, and would be unable, if she did, to engage the inmates in religious conversation. She had never made a study of Islam and was ignorant of Muslim faith and practice. That is by no means an isolated case. Surely it is no wonder that the pupils of such teachers pass on to college and into life with a similar lack of knowledge and acquaintance. One has heard of a teacher who passed in turn, from a Christian boarding school, to a high school, and thence to a Training College, and when at last she took a post as a teacher in a mission school containing a number of Muslim girls of good family, she had to confess that through all that time she had actually met but few Muslims, and those mostly servants or vegetable sellers!

Another girl met Muslims for the first time in an Arts College. These under-graduates of another faith seemed in every way as good as herself, she said—enlightened, devout, friendly. They assured her that they believed in and held in high regard all the prophets, including Jesus; and then challenged her with the question, "But you don't really believe that God had a son, do you?" The girl simply didn't know how to meet the question.

Some Christian women will tell you that, on principle, they do not attempt to meet with Muslims because their husbands do not wish them to do so.

The case is not altogether dissimilar with the men. Granted that, in the nature of the case, they make more contacts with Muslims than the women do, nevertheless you will find that few venture to engage Muslims in conversation on the essentials of the Christian faith. I suggest to you that this, again, is not very surprising. The position in the Church out here may not unfairly be compared with what we find among the members of our Churches in the West. Bring an average member of a Church in the West face to face with a Jew, and observe the reaction. This much he knows—that the typical Jew rejects the messiahship of our Lord, denies His divinity and disdains His death. It may be prejudice, it may be hate,—or it may be fear—but your average Christian in the West will think twice before he ventures to speak about Christ to a Jew.

It is not unlike that with most of our fellow-members in the Church in India. They know that back of the Muslim's professed regard for Christ there is deep denial of His Sonship and His Crucifixion, and utter repudiation of any Atonement for sin—and, quite frankly, vis-a-vis the Muslim they have'nt a well-thought-out answer for the faith that is in them.

III. These facts reveal a need that can, and should be met—it is to inform our fellow Christians in the younger Churches of the spiritual needs of Muslims, and so draw them into partnership with us in the work of evangelism.

(a) I suggest that we begin with our senior scholars. It ought to be possible for those in charge of our schools to arrange for simple talks to be given to the elder boys and girls, on the faith and practice of Muslims. It will be from among these Christian children that future members of Christ's Church will be drawn, and it will be from these that some will be called to the service of the Gospel. Would it not be wise to prepare the way for God's call to them, while young, through a presentation to them of the needs of others?

If you ask how I propose to go about the matter, I would remind you that there are now to be found, scattered throughout India, hundreds of Christian workers, Indian as well as European, who in recent years have experienced a new concern for the spiritual welfare of Muslims, just because they have themselves received courses of instruction on the religion of Islam and on the way to present the Christian message to Muslims. (I refer, of course, to the instruction classes of the Henry Martyn School of Islamic Studies).

I feel sure that many of these people would welcome an invitation from those in charge of our schools to give very simple talks on this subject to their senior pupils.

(b) Students in our Christian colleges also stand in need of what help we can give them in this respect. They meet Muslims of equal age, but on unequal terms, inasmuch as these lads of an alien faith are only too ready to extol Islam and criticise Christianity.

Their need, as well as that of their Christian tutors, was clearly discerned by the Lindsay Commission in 1931, in its Report on Christian Higher Education in India.

I quote this wise recommendation from their published findings:

"We advise those Colleges which have a considerable number of Muslim students.....to detail, if possible, at least one member of their Staffs for special Islamic study (at The Henry Martyn School)" p. 317; and in particular—

"To all the Punjab Colleges we recommend all practicable co-operation with the Henry Martyn School, at Lahore".
P. 330.

I regret to say that these recommendations have been more honoured in the breach than in the observance.

(c) Finally, I turn to consider what can be done in, and for, and through the indigenous Church.

We have had occasion to speak of the Church as cold and unconcerned in the matter of the evangelization of Muslims. How may this state of things be remedied?

Here, too, I ask you seriously to consider the possibilities of an organized campaign for the instruction and enlightenment of the members of our Churches regarding their Muslim neighbours. I am confident that no Church will resent such a step, and that many of our Church leaders will gladly welcome it.

In this connection it is profitable to consider the Churches out here in the light of what we know of the means used among the Churches at the Home Base to give their members information about the progress and problems of work abroad. It is a regular part of the policy of the home administration of every Mission Board to employ its missionaries, while on furlough, for deputation work among the Churches. We from the West know full well how much the pastors and members of those Churches depend on these periodic visits, and what they owe to them in sustaining interest and in gaining fresh vision. And it is on these occasions that eager young souls hear, in the missionary address, God's call to them to serve His cause abroad.

Is it not high time that we recognize that what the Church in these Eastern lands now need is just such help as that—together with a fresh baptism of God's Holy Spirit?

If we believe—and who does not?—that it is to be in and through the indigenous Church that Christ is going to win to His cause those who are now without, should not we, who are specially privileged, go to the Church humbly offering to share with her both our knowledge of this need, and our concern to have it met?

One can readily understand and sympathize with the timidity which members of our Churches must feel at the very suggestion that they should witness for Christ before Muslims—yet it is the unknown of which most of us are afraid. Let them once get the measure of Islam—let them once have the needs of Muslims laid upon their hearts, through prayer and the yearning of God's Holy Spirit within them, and we may with confidence look for glad offers of voluntary service.

Already this is happening. There are devoted men and women in our Churches who, through the presentation of a definite need, have heard God's call, and they are going out alongside missionaries in twos and threes in the bonds of the Gospel. How much wiser, how much more blessed it is to say "Come", than "Go".

L. BEVAN JONES.

NOTES FROM DISCUSSION ON THE ABOVE PAPER.

Mr. S. A. Morrison, Cairo. If we are seeking to win individuals only, we can go on as we are. But if we want to win the family, the group, and the village, then we must have men's and women's work co-ordinated.

In the hospital the men's and women's sides need to be co-ordinated. The women workers should get into touch with the women relatives of the men patients, and the men workers with the men relatives of the women patients. In following up the patients it is better to concentrate on a district where there are several patients than to try to reach all.

The co-operation of all other workers on the station should be sought, *e.g.*, evangelists, elder girls in school. Institutions tend to be self-contained. Will not that continue to be the case until the *Church* becomes the *centre* of evangelism?

There is the problem of paid evangelists. The Scotch Mission has abolished them. The Bishop of Dornakal said there should not be any. Bishop Pickett said that paid workers should co-operate with voluntary workers. This is an intermediate stage.

Training in evangelism is necessary, but it should be congregational. Groups could meet to discuss how to reach the Muslim, how to conduct meetings, etc. In Cairo an attempt is being made to reach the Muslims through a nucleus of Christians. Fortnightly training classes are held for about forty young Copts who do village work. When we want to speak to others about our faith we realize how little we know about it, and how much we need the Spirit of God. Work along these lines is one way of vitalizing the Church, and of solving the problem of the convert—for if the group win him they will love him.

Three things must be learned :—the way a Muslim thinks ; the great difference between Muslim religious vocabulary and Christian vocabulary ; and the best method of presenting Christian truths.

Rev. W. Sutherland, N. Panjab, remarked that, in the matter of follow-up work, we can learn something from the persistent way in which business firms, when once they have had dealings with you, follow you round with advertisements of goods they have for sale.

Bishop Thompson, Iran. Iran is, apparently, more advanced in the development of the indigenous Church. All nationals are engaged by the diocese—*i.e.*, by the Church and not by the Mission. Grants from home are given to the Church. The missionary goes to the Church for a grant. Policy is decided by the Church. This is putting the emphasis in the right place. The Church Council is responsible for the evangelistic work in that area. The missionary works for the diocese, under the Church. The Council members are chiefly Iranis, elected by the Church. No English person is on it, unless the Pastor happens to be English, or unless elected. The centre of gravity is changing from the Mission to the Church. There are very few paid evangelists. A Guild of voluntary evangelists is being organized.

K. G.

OUR THANKS ARE DUE TO Miss Greenfield, of Medak, Nizam's Dominions, for her efficient editing of this little paper during the past six months. She was present at the Delhi Conference and so was able to give us first-hand reports on the papers and discussions. We wish her a happy and restful furlough.

FOR PRAISE AND PRAYER.

- PRAISE** for God's guidance and blessing in the work of the Arabian Mission, now celebrating its arrival at *The Golden Milestone*.
- PRAY** that the challenge outlined in "*Whither Arabia?*" * by Dr. Harold Storm, may be taken up seriously by the Church in the west.
- PRAY** for a Prayer-Conference for the world of Islam, which Drs. Zwemer and Cantine hope to convene during these weeks.

[* Reviews of *The Golden Milestone*, and *Whither Arabia?* have had to be held over till next month.]

NOTICE.

Any notification of change of address, names of new members or remittance of subscriptions etc., should be sent to the Superintendent, Orissa Mission Press, Cuttack, India, and *not* to the Secretary of the League. The annual subscription to the League is Rs. 2-0-0 (English 3s. od.).

Matters of interest to members of the League, items of news and requests for prayer should be sent (if possible, early in the month) to the Honorary Secretary :—

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