

COOPERATION AND THE WORLD MISSION

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FOREWORD

THIS book is based on first-hand study of Christian cooperation conducted while on successive journeys of service and investigation in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Pacific island world as well as in the lands of the older Churches in Europe, North America, and Australasia. It reflects also the discussions of international missionary conferences and the studies of commissions of the last three decades, and the light thrown upon the subject by recent correspondence with leading minds of different nationalities, races, communions, and schools of thought related to the world mission of Christianity. The aim has been to bring the treatment into brief compass. To this end the history or evolution of missionary cooperation, showing its remarkable progress and increasing momentum, has been omitted, since this is readily accessible in Volume VIII of the official report of the Edinburgh World Missionary Conference of 1910, in my own paper on international missionary cooperation presented at the Lake Mohonk meeting of the International Missionary Council in 1921, and in subsequent annual surveys in *The International Review of Missions*.

The original plan was to combine with this volume, and as a part of it, an authoritative record of as many missionary cooperative agencies and projects as practicable—their origin, history, constituent bodies, character, scope, direction, and support; but it was finally decided that the objects in view would be best

served by issuing such material in a separate volume for reference purposes. This has been ably accomplished by Charles H. Fahs and Helen E. Davis in a volume just printed entitled, *Conspectus of Cooperative Missionary Enterprises*.

It should be pointed out that, while I am profoundly interested in the subject of the organic union of the Churches, having been identified with the Conference on Faith and Order from the days of the fruitful initiative of Bishop C. H. Brent, it has not been my intention to deal with that vital matter in this treatment. It will be recognized, however, that sound policies of cooperation have done much to facilitate the drawing together of the Christian Churches. These two processes, that of church unity and that of cooperation on the part of Christian bodies, are not antagonistic to each other. The former, as a rule, involves long periods of research and negotiation; the latter may, without any compromise of vital principles, be achieved within a relatively short time.

I would acknowledge with deep gratitude my indebtedness to missionaries, to administrators of mission boards, and to leaders of the Churches throughout the world. It may be of interest to add that the present volume is the last book authorized and published under the auspices of the Institute of Social and Religious Research before the dissolution of that organization.

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I. COOPERATION AT A PARTING OF THE WAYS

THE present grave world situation confronting the Church should cause the leaders of the missionary forces unitedly to restate and replan their work, wherever necessary, so that with available resources the need and opportunity may be far more adequately met. Few seem to have a vivid and profound appreciation of the greatness of our task and of the resources of the powers that oppose us. We are at the beginning of a new era and we fail to recognize as we should the part that anti-religious forces are playing in shaping it. In all parts of the world we are facing common enemies. Never was there a more critical moment. The best men must be mobilized. The wisest strategy must be employed. The materialistic philosophy of the day, the violence of the destructive communistic activity, the powers of paganism and of faiths and systems contrary to the teachings of Christ, the reactionary attitude of so many governments with reference to religious liberty, the perilous subordination of religion to serve the political ends of the totalitarian conception of the state, and the necessity of recasting the prevailing industrial and commercial system so that it will not negative the principles of Christian love and brotherhood nor conduce to international war—all present a challenge to Christ's followers which has never been surpassed in gravity and urgency. In truth we are facing stupendous changes in the whole make-up of

the world, changes as revolutionary as any in the history of mankind.

The future, as far as we can forecast it, seems to be bringing us steadily toward a division of the whole world into two opposing camps—one which can be designated as Christian, though it may be very imperfectly so as yet, and the other definitely to be described as anti-Christian. This alignment became apparent to those gathered at the Jerusalem Meeting of the International Missionary Council in 1928, and it is becoming more and more evident as the years pass that this insight perceived truly. The call, therefore, that the time brings to us all with urgency is a call to stand on the side of Christ against the hostile forces that oppose His Kingdom and that seek to prevent its coming. It is surely required, accordingly, that what is central should have the central place in our plans, and that to its realization all should “with one accord”—as in the first age of Christianity—direct their efforts under the sole Leader.

With such changes taking place, well may we ask ourselves, Are we exerting our maximum influence in the extension and establishment of the Kingdom of God? Have we sufficient workers? Are they adequately qualified? Above all, are we united? Are we able to think, plan, pray, and act in terms of the wholeness and oneness of the task? If Protestant missions continue, as they have been for decades and still so largely are, a disunited complex of separate, individual bands or bodies of missionaries, and of scattered indigenous Churches, working with more

or less varying aims and methods, what hope have we of triumphant success? At such a time duplication of independent effort, or lack of concerted plan, is a criminal waste. Piecemeal application of the cooperative principle is not good enough. Something more radical and far-reaching is necessary to give substantial reality even to the many scattered pieces of helpful cooperation already existing. There is imperative need of a more masterly diagnosis of the situation, of a clear definition of the aims or ends to be realized, and of the program to be carried out.

The Christian forces must unite on a much more comprehensive scale, and this at an accelerated pace, for if we perpetuate the luxury and inefficiency of our divisions, we shall surely miss the day of our visitation and the realization of our largest possibilities. Is there any reason that can stand before the bar of experience, of sound and unselfish judgment, and of sensitive conscience why the Christian forces of to-day should not unite and concentrate as never before on the areas of population and of human relationships which have not been brought under the sway of Christ? Only as we thus transcend our denominational, party, national, and racial boundaries and barriers can we hope to fulfil the mandate of our Lord. Surely a way can be discovered by which, notwithstanding all the admittedly grave difficulties, our different Christian bodies can rise above their separatism and cooperate in a real world expansion of the Christian faith. The time is ripe for a great and striking emphasis upon the Kingdom of God as preached by Jesus Christ—an emphasis which shall

be truly relevant to present-day needs and conditions, which shall dominate all other considerations and incentives, and which shall become contagious and irresistible.

At such a time any failure to coordinate our scattered efforts and to present a united front cannot be in accord with the divine will. The great central motivating fact must be emphasized, as never before, that the governing consideration for undertaking this larger and more vital cooperation is not the present unprecedented crisis, or the still grave economic conditions, but the conviction that Christ wills such larger and closer cooperation for His Church in our day. Of this the convincing evidence is His high-priestly prayer. In praying that His followers across the ages "might be one," the very least He could have meant is that in our conception and practice with reference to the spread of His Kingdom and reign, we might be so at one in our thinking, our fellowship, our planning, our action, and our intercession, that the keenest critic could receive no other impression than that we are presenting a united front to the world-wide need and task of bringing all mankind into vital relation to Him. Thus cooperation must be insisted upon, not on grounds of expediency, but on grounds of unshakable conviction that this is good, and is God's will for His servants.

The clock has struck, the time has come when the leaders and supporters of the missionary societies or boards, the missions, and the Churches should enter wholeheartedly upon the third stage of cooperation. The first stage was the period preceding the World

Missionary Conference at Edinburgh in 1910—the period when experiments were initiated which were ultimately multiplied into a large and increasing number of detached pieces of cooperative effort scattered all over the world. The second stage embraced the years between the Edinburgh conference and the meeting of the International Missionary Council at Jerusalem in 1928—the period which had as its distinctive characteristic the creation and development in many parts of the world of national and international agencies, or councils, for the express purpose of inaugurating and fostering interdenominational, international, and interracial cooperation. Moreover, during this second period cooperative or union projects, largely local or regional in scope, though at times also national, continued to multiply at an almost geometrical rate. The third stage, upon which we entered at Jerusalem in 1928, is the one in which the Christian forces related to the missionary enterprise pool not only knowledge and experience but also plans *in the making*, personalities, funds, names, and, increasingly, administration. It is thus the period in which the implications of cooperation are taken, generally speaking, much more seriously than ever before.

We have reached the critical point, as the Reverend Walter J. Noble with deep insight has pointed out, at which cooperation either must go very much farther, and that soon, or has already gone too far. As he says, "If the years behind us were recognized as preparation for far more rapid progress, they have been well worth while. But if they are to be re-

garded as accomplishment, and not as a preparation and a stimulus for greater things, they have scarcely been worth while." Why delay longer in giving decisive effect to our deepest convictions on this whole subject? It is true that there are difficulties in the way, but these are our salvation. They insure beyond peradventure our counting the cost, and that process is always priceless. For, let it be emphasized, it is the mind of Christ that we count the cost with reference to paying it.

Among discerning leaders there is a decidedly growing sentiment in favor of the adoption by missionary societies, and by the missions and Churches specially concerned, of a policy of dealing cooperatively with specific areas. The present economic crisis has facilitated the adoption of such a policy. It has forced the societies to rethink their work, and now to begin to replan it, so that, with the resources available and such other means as can be secured, we shall do far better work than we are now doing. Societies are coming to see that they must get together to pool all experience, to plan their work as part of a whole, and to carry it on unitedly as contributing to a common end. At times this policy might involve an entire country; again, it might confine itself to a province or other large section or region of a country; and still again, it might be concentrated on a large city, or a city and the immediately surrounding territory. The aim is that the various bodies now serving a given area shall unite in plan and effort to minister to the best possible advantage to the entire area. The scope of the plan

might vary, from the uniting of all the agencies on one phase of the program (for example, the educational work, the medical work, or the rural work), to a union of all bodies to conduct practically the whole range of the program.

The stage that is now being reached in cooperation is also one in which we begin to see the younger Churches taking their separate roads and loosening the ties that bind them to the older Churches that have been fostering them. We must now keep in view the necessity that these young Churches be preserved from isolation and from the dangers that isolation brings. We must, therefore, strengthen the bonds of friendship and intercourse between them, and between them and the older Churches. This must be done not denominationally, but as between provinces of the one Church of Christ. Both the older Churches and the new will profit by this fellowship and the super-nationality of the Church will be manifested.

Happily, cooperation is being increasingly thought of and defined, not in terms of two or three denominational units combining in program and action so much as in terms of all the Christian forces in a given field uniting to serve the entire field. Surely, in every field, large or small, there is great wisdom in coordinating our separate planning to discover where we are and whither we are tending. This will throw valuable light on the wisest plans for enlarged service or retrenchment, for reorganization and, above all, for the use of combined resources. The preliminary stages in preparation for such a concerted program

are: (1) survey; (2) application of standards of measurement which have been generally agreed upon; (3) definite plans based on these facts and standards. These processes will prepare the way for necessary reorganization and realignment of the available forces, as well as for the joint administration of the whole work. National Christian councils and the International Missionary Council should be prepared to place themselves at the service of Churches, missions, and boards to further such policies. Above all discerning and forward-looking leaders of Christian agencies at work in given areas should take prophetic initiative.

A group of British societies have recently undertaken important steps in the series of consultations they have had with reference to a united approach to their work in Bengal and a united plan for its prosecution and administration. Another promising illustration is afforded by the negotiations now in progress between the American boards which are serving the Philippines and the Churches and missions of that country looking toward a joint program and administration. Similar approaches and negotiations are in progress, or in prospect, with reference to other fields large and small. Godfrey E. Phillips of the London Missionary Society has voiced a conviction which, God grant, may prove to have been prophetic: "The next ten years would be well spent if at the end of them the non-Roman missions had a clearly outlined joint program for their enterprise in each of the major fields of their operation." The question may well be raised whether, in the period immediately

before us, mission boards of Europe and North America should not unite in sending out to the fields which they are serving groups of their most statesmanlike representatives to take counsel with the trusted leaders of the Churches and missions with this commanding objective in view.

What is true of whole countries, or of provinces in a given country, is likewise true of all large cities. Because of denominational interests and the inadequately correlated programs of the missions and the Churches, we have failed to minister in any satisfactory, united way to the needs of these metropolitan centers, or of the surrounding country. Such an approach to Shanghai has been seriously proposed. W. W. Lockwood, one of the best informed workers in that city, has expressed clearly with reference to Shanghai what might be urged on behalf of scores of other major cities of Asia, Africa, and Latin America:

"It would seem," he says, "that some organization representing the organized Churches of a city like Shanghai is essential if the Church's program is to be adequately developed. Here, at the present time, perhaps thirty or thirty-five Churches are working independently, knowing little and apparently caring little for the other Churches or for the church movement as a whole. The only union organization is a pastors' union which meets regularly for spiritual fellowship and arranges once each year for union evangelistic services. There is no laymen's organization for the city and no cooperation or exchange of experience among church workers. Such an organization is needed, not to start union projects, perhaps, but to make more effective the work that is being done in each center to represent the Churches as a whole and to unite in tasks which require that the Church as a whole should be represented. One of the great needs to-day is to demonstrate in a few cities in China the possi-

bilities of local cooperation between Church and Church, between mission and mission, between Church and mission, and between local and national organizations. In my opinion this is one of the necessary next steps in cooperation. It is a difficult task, but urgent and necessary."

Very special attention needs to be given to the question of the proper financing of cooperative or union undertakings. Here and there are individual projects in which the financial plan has been carefully worked out and administered through a period of years with gratifying results, but as the number of such pieces of work has multiplied, the matter of support has been handled in a very uneven and unsatisfactory way. It would be difficult to mention even six missionary boards which give evidence of having thought through the whole subject thoroughly as a matter of principle, and which have adopted a settled policy. As a result there is much confusion in thought and practice. Boards are troubled by repeated, detached appeals for financial grants toward all sorts of cooperative enterprises that are of concern to the related missions and Churches, not to mention those which concern the home base.

What is needed in the case of nearly every missionary society is some such action as the following: (1) Let the society, under the guidance of a suitable sub-committee, study the whole subject of the proper financing of cooperative ventures in which the society is or should be unmistakably involved or concerned; and let the society come to a clear conclusion as to which of these things that have a claim on it can best, if not only, be conducted cooperatively. (2) List all