

and as the tendency is on the increase, it is important that some aspects, at least, of the general question should be clearly stated. We think it advisable, therefore, to print one or two letters written by the General Secretary in reply to communications of the kind referred to. The first is in reply to a letter setting forth a desire to form a mission band in connection with a Sunday School, and asking for information as to method of organization, and how to make the band meetings interesting and useful:—

DEAR BROTHER,—There is a general understanding among us that every Sunday School is, or ought to be, a branch of our General Missionary Society. Of course there are many schools that have no definite organization on this line, and there are others in which mission bands or circles have been organized, as is now proposed in your school. As to course of procedure, I would suggest that the names of all the scholars who are willing to join the band should be secured. Then let these be called together, at a suitable time, and officers appointed. It will be just as well, and will increase the interest, if the officers are selected from among the scholars, but in such case I think the pastor of the church, the superintendent of the Sunday School, or some experienced teacher should be honorary president, so as to keep the organization under wise and judicious control. Regular meetings of the band might be held, say once a month, and a committee appointed, with some of the teachers included, to provide a programme for each meeting, in which, of course, the missionary element should greatly predominate. It is found useful in some places to induce some of the older scholars to read up and prepare brief papers referring to particular mission fields, or the work of some noted missionary. The object in all this is to supply interesting missionary information, so that our young people may grow up with an intelligent interest in this great work. In regard to finances, a small membership fee, easily within the reach of even the poorest scholar, should be agreed upon, and additional funds could be raised in various ways. In some places an occasional "missionary concert," which means an evening of missionary readings, singing, etc., is given. In other cases missionary boxes, or mite-boxes, are used; in still others, what is known as the "Blake" system of collecting, is adopted. Books for this purpose can be obtained from the Mission Rooms; I will send you a sample copy by this mail. Permit me to advise that whatever is done by your Mission Band be done through regular channels. That is, let their contributions pass through the regular fund, so that due credit may be given them in our annual report, and the largest amount of good be accomplished with the money. From long observation and experience in this matter we see the importance of impressing upon the thought of our young people that the Methodist Church is not merely a series of congregations or Sunday Schools, each independent of the others, and working on its own account; but that all are part of a great Connexion working for a common end.

Yours faithfully,

A. SUTHERLAND.

The next letter received we print in full, omitting name and place, as it was not designed for publication:—

REV. DR. SUTHERLAND,  
Toronto, Ont.

DEAR SIR,—The Sunday School of which I am a member has collected a small sum of money for missionary purposes. We

have not yet decided how we shall spend it. Personally, rather than turn it over to the General Missionary Fund of the Church, I would like to send it to some individual missionary or band of missionaries from whom we could get an acknowledgment, and perhaps some account of how the money is applied. Not that it would be more wisely spent in that way, but I believe the pupils of the school would feel more interested in their offerings if they knew just where and how they are doing good. I have spoken for myself only, but I think the school will agree with me. Now, it would please and oblige me very much if you would send me the addresses of some workers in the foreign field to whom a post office order could be sent. Would be glad to have several addresses of missionaries in different parts of the world, so that the school could have a choice if it is decided to expend the money in this way. Any suggestions you might wish to make would be thankfully received. Hoping you can oblige us without inconvenience on your part, I remain,  
Yours respectfully,

To this the General Secretary replied as follows:—

DEAR SIR.—Your letter of the 28th ultimo contains several points of importance, and I have delayed replying for a few days that I might speak more fully. I assume that the Sunday School of which you speak is a Methodist school. Now it is an understanding with us that every Methodist school is a branch of our Missionary Society; and this at once starts the question whether a school or its officers can so control missionary moneys that have been raised as to donate them to any particular missionary or mission without reference to the General Missionary Board. If this right is conceded to a Sunday School, it certainly could not be denied to a circuit, and if the principle is once admitted, the entire destruction or frittering away of our income is only a question of time. To the General Board is intrusted by the General Conference the oversight of all our mission work, the selection of new fields, and the distribution of the money raised according to the needs of the work. The Board is in possession of a great deal of information which individuals, or Sunday Schools, or circuits, cannot have, and therefore is in a better position to judge where missionary money can be applied to the best advantage. Another very important point is this: the strength of Methodism lies in the fact that it is a Connexion, not merely a number of independent congregations, and anything which tends to weaken the connexional bond should be avoided. It is very desirable, therefore, that our Sunday School children, who will constitute the bulk of the future membership of the Church, should be trained in harmony with this connexional idea, and thus be led to realize that they are part of a great organization, and not of a mere local independent institution. Respecting missionaries sent into the foreign field, their stipends are fixed by the General Board. If particular Sunday Schools assume the right to make donations to some of these missionaries, you will see at once that it creates an inequality which, in the end, may cause dissatisfaction and friction between the missionaries themselves. Perhaps what is meant is that the donation from your Sunday School should form a part of the stipend authorized in some particular instance by the General Board of Missions, but in that case the funds would have to pass through the general treasury, inasmuch as we cannot recognize or give credit for moneys which we have not received. In a number of instances, during the past fifteen or twenty years, particular Sunday Schools have requested that their contributions might go toward the support of some particular mission or branch of our work, and to this we have not objected, although I do not think it is the best way. We have found in every case that, after contributing to a particular mission for a few years, the Sunday School becomes tired of it, and wants to take up something else. As to receiving