

Canadian Missionary Link.

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WHERE WE STAND.

A number of years have passed since the Women's Foreign Mission Society and the Women's Circles of Ontario were first organized. The majority of the leaders and workers of to-day are not the ones who drew up the constitution of thirty-five years ago and decided the relations that were to exist between the new societies and the already-formed General Board, the General Convention and the individual churches.

It would seem a wise thing, therefore, to review these relationships and define very clearly just where our women's work stands in relation to other bodies.

With our congregational form of church government, each Baptist Church is complete in itself. It calls its own pastor, it conducts its own business, and designates its own money, and no one outside of that church has the right to legislate for it in any way. This being the case, a Convention or Annual Assembly is not necessary in the sense that an annual Presbytery or Synod is necessary to the religious bodies who are governed by these. But for purposes of mutual counsel, for inspiration and information, an annual gathering was convened in the early days, to which each church sent its delegates, appointed by the church, and responsible to the church. As the interests of the denomination increased, as the churches began to give to the different missionary objects, as they wished to have a denominational paper, and so on, it was found to be economy to have some man or body of men through whom the contributions to different objects could be sent and by whom they could be expended to the best advantage. Therefore the churches through their delegates, elected at their annual meeting a certain number of men to deal with the interests of Home Missions, Education, Foreign Missions and so on. It is with the Foreign Mission interest we are now to deal. This particular body of men was called the Foreign Mission Board of the Baptist

Convention of Ontario and Quebec. It is elected by the churches, and is responsible to the churches, reporting to them once a year. Moreover, it is the only Board dealing with Foreign Missions, which is organically related to the churches, and the only one to which the churches as churches, can send their money.

Another point to be remembered here is that it is not a "Men's Board." It is the General Board, the church's Board. The women of the churches have the same voting power in electing delegates as the men,—the delegates themselves may be women or men,—these delegates are the ones who elect the Board, and the Board itself may have women members as well as men. This Board secured from the Government an Act of Incorporation which, among other things, made it possible for the Board to hold property. It is the only Foreign Mission Board in our Convention thus incorporated.

In course of time, it was felt that much help might be given the cause if gifts could be gathered from the women of our churches over and above what they were giving as church members, for work especially among the women and children of our foreign field. So there gathered together a few women, not from any one church, nor delegates from several churches, but simply a number of women with a common desire, who conceived the idea of forming a Society of which the membership fee should be \$1.00 a year and upwards, the money to be handed over to the Foreign Mission Board to be used in their work among women and children. But how were they to command a large support and an increasing membership? They came forward with a proposition that Branch Societies, or Circles, be formed among the women of each church, with the consent of the church. But they needed a central form of government, and so at an annual meeting of the Society, where the Branch Societies were represented by delegates, they elected