

## An Open Letter

*To Epworth Leagues, Christian Endeavor Societies, Young People's Associations, Mission Circles and Mission Bands in the Methodist Church.*

DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS AND FELLOW-WORKERS :

At a Convention of Young People's Societies, held in Toronto last summer, a disposition was evinced to take part in the great missionary work of the Church, and it was proposed to do this by seeking affiliation with the Woman's Missionary Society. While this proposal was under consideration, it was pointed out that a formal affiliation would require legislation by the General Conference, and that, in the meantime, it would be better to devise, by mutual consultation, some line of action that will meet the case until the next General Conference is held. Accordingly a meeting of representatives of all the societies concerned was held in the Board Room, Wesley Buildings, Toronto, on the 3rd inst., at which the following persons were present: Rev. Dr. Carman, A. Sutherland, Hon. J. C. Aikins, and J. J. Maclaren, Q.C., representing the General Missionary Society; Mesdames Williams, Briggs and Willmott, representing the Woman's Missionary Society; Rev. W. H. Withrow, D.D., representing the Epworth Leagues; and Rev. A. M. Phillips, B.D., R. W. Dillon, Miss McGuffin, and — Moore, representing the Young People's Association. After long and careful consideration of the whole question, it was resolved to prepare and publish an open letter for the information of all our Young People's Societies, Leagues, Bands and Circles, and to invite their cordial and hearty co-operation with what is recommended. The letter, as finally adopted, is as follows:

In view of the fact that the Epworth Leagues, Christian Endeavor Societies, and other Young People's Societies of the Methodist Church have evinced a desire to enter practically, as well as educationally, into missionary work; and in view of the further fact that the General Missionary Society and the Woman's Missionary Society are the only missionary organizations recognized by the Discipline of our Church, it is deemed most important that the Leagues and other Young People's Societies should work in harmony with these existing organizations, and thus, while preventing confusion, prepare themselves for the responsibilities of the future, when the control of the great missionary interests of the Church shall pass into their hands.

And inasmuch as the General Missionary Society has, in the past, derived an important item in its income from the efforts of juvenile collectors and contributors of both sexes, chiefly through the agency of the Sabbath Schools, while the Woman's Missionary Society has received considerable aid from Mission Circles and Bands, it is desirable that some arrangement be made whereby each society may receive, in growing measure, the help derived from the young people in the past. But as the formal affiliation of Leagues or Young People's Societies, as such, with either of the existing Missionary Societies, is something which requires legislative action by the General Conference, and no such action can be had before September, 1894, the following is agreed to by representatives of the General Missionary Board, the Executive of the Woman's Missionary Society, and the Young People's Association, as the basis of a *modus vivendi*, pending necessary legislation by the next General Conference:—

We earnestly and affectionately recommend a loyal recognition by all our Young People's Societies, by whatever name they are called, of the following facts and principles:—

1. That the Methodist Church is a Connexion, not a series of isolated and independent congregations, and its great work can best be conserved and promoted by uniting the efforts of the whole body rather than by independent effort by each congregation or society separately, and that anything which tends to weaken the Connexional bond should be studiously avoided.

2. That the General Missionary Society and the Woman's Missionary Society are entitled to the loyal support of the whole Church, not only because they cover the entire ground of legitimate missionary effort, but also because, as already pointed out, they are the only missionary organizations recognized by the Discipline of the Church.

3. That regularly constituted Missionary Boards, whose duty it is to make themselves acquainted with all the facts, and who yearly review, in the most careful manner, the whole mission field of the Church, must be better qualified to judge of the needs of the work, and to administer missionary funds in an economical way, than any local society can be, whose range of information is necessarily limited, and confined, it may be, to a single mission.

Admitting the soundness of the foregoing principles, how can the Young People's Societies most effectively aid the great missionary work of the Church, and at the same time leave the constituencies to which the two Missionary Societies appeal for support virtually unchanged?

Touching this wide question we advise:—

1. That no change be sought in the relation of the Sunday Schools, that relation being already defined by Discipline.

2. That Mission Bands and Circles that have been or may be organized, be continued where practicable, their relation being understood to be with the Woman's Missionary Society.

3. That where there is an Epworth League, Christian Endeavor Society, or other Young People's Association, and a Mission Band or Circle is merged in the larger Society, it is recommended that a missionary Committee be appointed to superintend the missionary efforts of the League or Society, and all missionary moneys raised by the League or Society as such (that is, moneys raised otherwise than through the Sunday School or direct contributions by individual members to the General Missionary Society or the Woman's Missionary Society), be divided between the two Missionary Societies of the Church, in such proportion as may be considered equitable.

NOTE.—It should be a uniform principle of action that special donations of missionary money by Leagues, etc., shall in no case be permitted to reduce the regular yearly givings of individuals to the funds of the General or the Woman's Missionary Societies.

4. That all Leagues and Societies be earnestly recommended to make provision for the wide circulation of such missionary literature as may be supplied by either of the Missionary Societies.

5. We strongly recommend that in each League or other Young People's Society a missionary meeting be held at least once a month, to be devoted to prayer and the giving of missionary information, by means of addresses, readings, recitations, etc.

*Resolved*,—That the foregoing be published as widely as possible for the information of Epworth Leagues, Christian Endeavor Societies, Mission Bands, Mission Circles, and other Young People's Societies in the Methodist Church.

[See article on another page entitled "An Important Matter."]

## Against Opium.

THE Chinese Methodists of Shantung have sent a petition to Queen Victoria to stop the opium traffic. It is written on pure white satin, and is only one of many such petitions, and shows clearly the attitude of the native Church toward the accursed thing. It is as follows:

We, the members of the Methodist Episcopal Church on Shantung District, see all around us evidences of the destructiveness of this deadly drug, and the large number of people who are being slowly but surely poisoned by opium.