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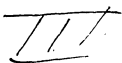
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## THE IMPORTANCE OF MISSION BANDS.



Paper prepared and read by MRS. G. N. JACKSON, at the  
annual meeting of the Manitoba and North-West  
Branch of the W.M.S., May 31st, 1898.



Those who have looked into this subject, the importance of the work is so apparent, that it almost seems superfluous to draw the attention of the representatives of this branch of the W.M.S. to it, and yet we can understand in a measure how it is possible for some of you, who are so actively engaged in auxiliary duties, combined with the multifarious duties of home life and other branches of Christian enterprise, to partially or wholly overlook this phase of our own particular missionary effort; but we hope in this hour to so present our ideas on this subject, that we will all recognize the fact that the Mission Circles and Bands are not secondary to, but of equal importance with, the Auxiliaries.

As is the nursery to the home, so is the Mission Band to the Auxiliary. The mother who willingly neglects the nursery is not worthy of the name, and will most assuredly lose the reward that shall be given to the one who is loving and faithful in her endeavors to train the little ones whom God has entrusted to her care.

The W.M.S. aims specifically to educate, and by the diffusion of missionary literature and by quiet but aggressive means, has already done much to acquaint the women of our churches with the needs of the heathen world in general, but more particularly to the alleviation of the suffering and uplifting of the women and children in those lands, where women are no better than slaves and where "Suffer the little children to come unto Me" has never been heard.

The W.M.S. has also largely taken the initiative in educating the children, as we realize how important it is that they be informed, not only as to the geographical position of India and Africa, China and Japan; but that they may know of the people of these benighted countries, and

bring them to see that the difference that exists in their way of living from that in which we live, is not due to any natural superiority on our part, or inbred inferiority on theirs, but only to this—that they are living in a land of spiritual darkness, we in a land of spiritual light, they without the Gospel, we with the Gospel.

We can arouse the interest and touch the sympathy of the young heart without depressing the spirit, by telling them of the lives of the little ones in those lands, and showing them the striking contrast to their own sweet bright lives ; and all because the fathers and mothers of these benighted children have never heard the sweet story of Jesus and His love.

We must, of course, present these truths in a way they will understand, and we do not for a moment expect them to look at the missionary question in the same way that a theological missionary student will ; but we do believe and know that there are in our mission bands to-day, children who have a keener conception of duty in regard to this matter than many a church member whose

name has adorned the church roll for years, but who is yet able to look you in the face and tell you, "*he or she is not interested in foreign missions;*" and we would to-day, that many of the women of our churches would become as little children, that they might "inherit the kingdom of Heaven."

We will not for a moment give expression to any pessimistic views, because there is no profit to the missionary worker in that line; we rather greatly rejoice that our W.M.S. has connected with it so many Circles and Bands, aggregating a membership of 6,476, scattered over the different branches, and who raised last year \$5,854.53.\* Who can tell what will be the outcome? This large number of young people directly interested, meeting once or twice a month, studying this question, offering the prayers of their young hearts and devising means of raising money, or working along industrial lines, so that the supply committee is kept provided with useful articles of clothing and home comforts for the poor in isolated places in

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\* The returns for 1897-98 are \$6,198.96, an increase of \$344.43.

our own country. Will not these young people be much better prepared to carry on this great work when they come to years of responsibility than we who never had a like privilege in our younger days?

There is no Auxiliary that can afford to do without a Band or Circle, it is just what is needed in many cases to complete the efficacy of your work. I do wish some of you faithful workers who have grown discouraged, because you cannot arouse some of the "women who are at ease," would organize a Mission Band, it may prove, as we have known it to before; the means of reaching the mothers—"A little child shall lead them." The advent of a mite-box brought in by the hands of a little child has more than once been the silent messenger that has spoken to the hearts of the father and mother in the home. We admit that it is not always easy to carry on the work even after organization, but the greater the effort the greater the victory, and as in almost any line in life we will find it true that "where there is a *will* there is a *way*." Surely we can find in the great majority of our churches at least one

consecrated young lady, or one motherly woman, who will spend an hour or two once or twice a month with the children or young ladies, and endeavor by every means in her power to interest and instruct them in this particular branch of Christian work. It will surprise some of you to find how readily children grasp the truth, and how fascinating the study becomes, if presented in a way they can understand and appreciate.

Our constitution very plainly and wisely states that the object of Mission Bands shall be, *primarily*, to develop a missionary spirit ; and, *secondarily*, to raise money to send the Gospel to the heathen. We fear that in many cases this order has been reversed, and the result has been disastrous, because it is like building without a foundation. The reason our Missionary Boards are cramped for funds is, that the missionary spirit is not developed as it ought to be. The missionary spirit is the spirit of love, and love will find its outlet in service, and we cannot serve the missionary cause without money. We regret that it has been found necessary in the past to devise so many schemes for

raising money, as we believe that systematic and proportionate giving is the only right method. Nevertheless, with our young people, who do not carry the purses, there are legitimate ways by which they may earn money, and we have on record many touching instances of the industry and self-denial that has been shown by some of our Band and Circle members that cannot fail to meet the commendation of all who love this cause. However, we wish to emphasize this truth, that the development of the missionary spirit is the great object of our Mission Bands. Our past experience has taught us, that when this has been overlooked, and attempts have been made to stimulate the interest by side issues, such as a round of entertainments, for the raising of money, though the object was obviously good, we have found that the young people, though engrossed for a time with the preparations necessary, soon become weary, the real object having been lost sight of.

We thoroughly appreciate the fact that the ordinary dry missionary meeting is not calculated to touch the sympathies of our young



people, and also that a certain amount of the *social element* must be introduced in all their gatherings, but this must not be given the first place. By all means have public meetings, and make them as bright and attractive as possible; bring all the music and flowers you can, but let all Band meetings be of a missionary character; not necessarily every number on the programme exclusively so, but leave no room for doubt on the part of your audience that the meeting has been held in the interest of missions.

If I leave no other thought with you, I would like to again emphasize this one, *the supreme importance of developing the missionary spirit.*

What is the Missionary Spirit? I confess to you that it is too deep a question for me to answer as I would like, but I believe it to be the spirit of the Master, who came not to be ministered unto, but to minister; the spirit that led Him from the Father's throne to take His place among the children of men, and teach them by the glorious example of His daily life what it means to "love thy neighbor as thyself," the spirit that

showed so unmistakably how to obey the Golden Rule, the *spirit* that counted not His life dear unto Himself, but bowed His head upon Calvary's cross, and enabled Him in all the agony of that hour to pray, "Father, forgive them ; they know not what they do."

I see in the proper understanding of that spirit the solution of all the problems that vex the individual, the social life, and that of the nations. When that spirit enters the heart there is no room for selfishness ; when it pervades the community in which we live it will put to flight envy and all unjust dealing ; when it is rightly apprehended by the Christian people of the world, and the hearts of rulers and those in authority in our Christian lands begin to feel its power, then will Isaiah's prophecy be fulfilled : "They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks ; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more, for the blessed Gospel of Him who came to bring 'peace on earth and good-will to men' shall have free course, and the nations of the world shall

become the nations of our God and His Christ."

It is easy to accept these truths, but we greatly fear too many of us are hiding behind a general responsibility that should be shouldered by the *Church*, forgetting that the Church is *ourselves, your work, my work*, each one of us responsible to the extent of our capability in *working, praying, giving*. This is the only way by which we can spread the missionary spirit, and if our capability will only allow us during the coming year to influence *one little child*, or young lady, or young man, in this glorious work, who knows but that one may take his or her place by the side of those who have left all that has been precious to them in life, that they may carry the glad tidings to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, and be

"Another voice to 'tell it out'  
What great things Thou hast done,  
Another life to live for Thee,  
Another *witness won* ;  
Another faithful soldier  
On our Captain's side enrolled,  
Another heart to read aright  
Thy heart of love untold."

## “WHAT A LITTLE CHILD MAY DO.”

To readers of the “Palm Branch” the story of the life of Herbie Bellamy is not new, but for the benefit of those of who have not yet heard, we would like to again present these facts to prove that a child’s love may be directed toward the missionary cause in a very practical and devoted manner.

In Moose Jaw, North-West Territory, resides a dear little cripple boy, eleven years of age. who is perfectly helpless; who cannot walk, talk, or use his hands, but being wonderfully blessed with a good Christian mother, whose heart is aflame with missionary zeal, and who has touched the heart of her darling boy, until he has become filled with the spirit of missionary needs; he devotes his time to writing (by means of a pointed stick attached to his foot) people’s names and texts of Scripture, which he sells for ten cents a piece, and deposits the money in his missionary box. In this way he earned in three years \$83, which was his first contribution to the Woman’s Missionary Society

a year ago. Since then, by his mother's untiring efforts, the children of the infant class in Moose Jaw have been organized into a "Mission Band," Herbie being the president. The result of their first year's work was the magnificent sum of \$160. They have undertaken the education of a little Japanese boy, named Naotoka San, in the Kanazawa Orphanage.

Surely we are taught that God has chosen the weak things of this world to confound the things that are mighty, and we have in this instance alone a very decided evidence of the way in which "a little child shall lead them." May God still continue to bless the efforts of this dear boy and the members of his Mission Band at Moose Jaw, and may their example stimulate others to interest the children in missionary work.

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