

Pam.  
BV  
25 71  
P43  
c 2

*After Reading, Pass It On.*

# Nation Building

A Review of

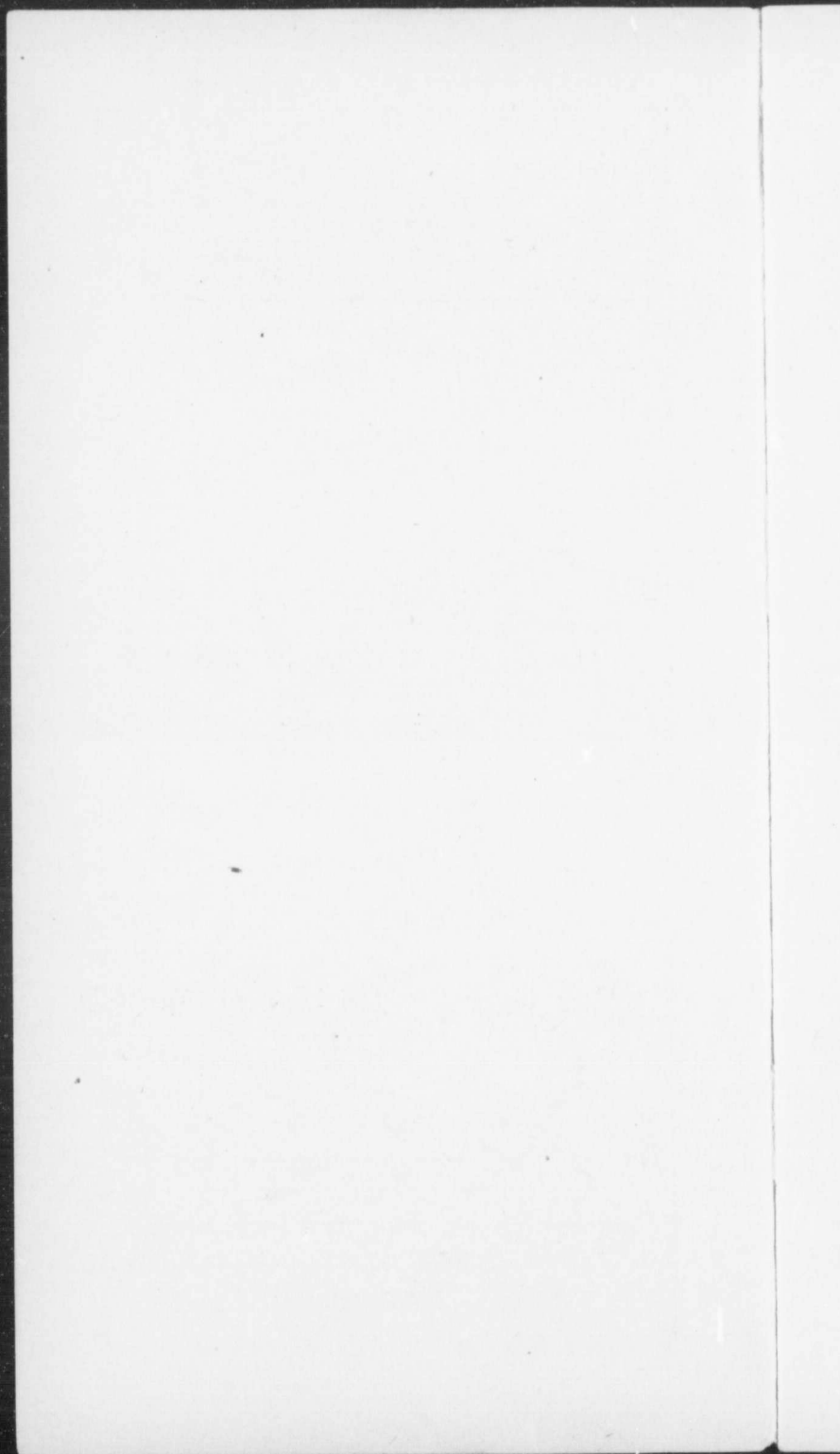
## The Work of Home Missions and Social Service

---

**Rev. George C. Pidgeon D.D.**  
Convener of the Board

---

The Board of Home Missions and Social Service  
Confederation Life Building  
TORONTO



# Nation Building

*Rev. George C. Pidgeon, D.D. Convener,  
The Board of Home Missions and  
Social Service.*

## **Canada's Problem.**

What is Canada's problem to-day? It is the blending of all the peoples within her border into one nation. A nation is more than a number of human beings living within a certain territory and under a certain government. It is a unity. It has a national conscience. It has a spirit or genius peculiarly its own, which distinguishes it from all other peoples. It has traditions which it has received, ideals which it has fought for, and principles on which its laws and its life are based which are indigenous to the soil. Its greatness and power are determined by the moral quality of the people as a whole, and this moral quality is produced by the atmosphere it breathes, the truths it assimilates, and the whole manner and purpose of its life. At present we are a conglomeration—a number of peoples living side by side; there is contact but not community of life. We shall not be a nation until all these diverse elements grow together into a vital unity and the people think and act as one.

## **The Work of Home Missions and Social Service.**

The work of Home Missions and Social Service is a prime factor in building up the nation that is to be, because it contributes elements without which no nation can live. While others think of our resources it thinks of our men. It deals directly with the lives of the people. Its first aim is to form Christ in every individual (Gal. 4:19). The first result of this divine indwelling is that the renewed soul is qualified and inspired to meet to the full his social obligations. Next, Christinity touches each social group as an essential part of its work. It lays the foundation of the family in the law of God, treats it as the social unit and surrounds it with the holiest influences and ideals. The individual is taught his functions as a member of the community; and the place and functions of the community itself are defined. The duties of the State to its citizens and of each citizen to the State are emphasized. In a word, the Church aims to build up the Kingdom of God in the land and to conform every part of our complex modern life to the will of God. How the Home Mission and Social Service enterprise accomplishes this is our subject now.

## **I. Meeting the Need of Canada as a Whole.**

In the first place our Church aims to meet the need of Canada as a whole. Some sects confine their efforts to saving as many individuals as possible from the corrupting mass which they call the world; our aim is to meet the people's whole spiritual need as far as they will accept our service. As one writer puts it: "The world is not a manure heap to fatten the growth of a few saints in holiness; it is a mass for the saints to leaven." We sacrifice and struggle year by year to do this work as thoroughly as it can be done. In this we have the co-operation of other denominations, especially those with whom union is proposed. Over vast areas there is no overlapping by these churches, and, because our energies are not wasted in competition, we are able together to minister to the need of the entire land. Our great method is to establish churches in every community in the land. Wherever men and women live, a congregation of God's worshipping people is organized. This means that God is acknowledged, that his people meet regularly for his worship, and that they are banded together and trained to serve him. This church will be self-perpetuating; it will man and re-man itself from the choicest elements of the community as the years go by;

it will send its representatives out into every part of this land, and into all other lands as the ambassadors of Christ and messengers of His grace. It makes itself the centre of all the work done for the good of the community. Every other benevolent, moral and religious enterprise looks to the Church as the source of its strength. The spirit which the church generates will manifest itself in meeting the higher needs of men in whatever form they may appear.

#### **The Extent of the Work.**

The extent of this work is enormous. This year we are supporting 768 Home Mission fields and 246 augmented charges. Co-operation with the Methodists and Congregationalists guarantees that the above represents not more than half of the actual mission work done by the bodies which soon will form the United Church of Canada.

#### **Masses in the Cities.**

This is only part of our problem. There are masses in the cities to whom the ordinary methods of church work do not appeal. We are seeking to reach these by our social settlements, and in Montreal, Toronto and Winnipeg we have flourishing institutions of this class, and expect to have them established in every congested centre in

Canada as soon as the state of the finances permits a forward movement.

### **The Non-English Speaking.**

There is the need of the non-English speaking immigrant, as yet unacquainted with the customs of the country and unable to adapt himself to its requirements. We are seeking to minister to the needs of such people in every way open to us, and by such ministry to interpret to them the love of the Saviour we preach, and to open their hearts to our message.

For example, the Women's Missionary Society has 7 hospitals at various points in the west and north, with a staff of 3 doctors and 20 nurses maintained at an annual expenditure of \$25,000. They are supporting also 10 deaconesses in the west and in our cities.

They are carrying on an extensive educational work in the west.

Our own Indian tribes have a special claim upon us, and among them we have 4 nurses with 28 teachers and preachers.

In French Canada we have 9 schools in addition to 28 congregations and preaching stations.

### **The Reclaiming of Girls.**

The search for the lost must have a large place in the lives of those who would follow Christ. One form which this must take is ministry to fallen girls.

Such people are more sinned against than sinning, and yet to no class of offenders is more barbarous treatment meted out by society. Every girl who has gone astray should have the door opened to return to a life of usefulness. To meet this need we have 7 rescue homes in different parts of the country, with 18 workers. Seventy to ninety per cent of those received and helped have been permanently restored. These, with similar institutions in other churches, ensure hospitality and help for everyone who will accept it at the Church's hands.

#### **Evangelism.**

An extensive work of Evangelism is being done among the congregations of the country. Missions have been held this year in places, and the results both in the quickening of the Church's life and in converts actually won, are most gratifying.

#### **Social Surveys.**

In the past, social surveys have been made in different country districts and cities. We are giving up the policy of drift in our communities, and are going forward open-eyed to whatever is before us. Excellent results have followed these surveys wherever they have been made, and this type of work needs to be greatly extended.



This is the barest sketch of the work which this board has undertaken. Does it not make clear that we, co-operating with the other denominations negotiating for union, are putting forth a serious and earnest effort to meet the whole religious need of the nation, and to do whatever in us lies to establish the Kingdom of God in our land.

## II. Religious Education.

The Church does its work by preserving the natural increase of its people for Christ and his service. In his work on "Christian Nurture," Dr. Horace Bushnell has a striking chapter on "The Outpopulating power of the Christian Stock." His argument is that if the Church simply *holds it own* its growth will be rapid, even phenomenal. If the children of Christian families are kept in the Church and trained for efficient service, if the organic life of the Church is as vigorous as it ought to be, its own law of natural increase will speedily put it in possession of the world."

"There are two principal modes by which the Kingdom of God among men is to be extended. One is by the process of conversion, and the other by that of family propagation; one by gaining over to the side of faith and piety, the other by the uplifting force

of faith and piety themselves. The former is the grand idea that has taken possession of the Church of our times,—they are going to convert the world. They have taken hold of the promise which so many of the prophets have given out, of a time when the reign of Christ shall be universal, extending to all nations and peoples; and the expectation is that by preaching Christ to all the nations they will finally convert them and bring them over into the gospel fold. What I propose at the present time is to restore, if possible, a juster impression of this great subject to show that conversion over to the Church is not the only way of increase; that God ordains a law of population in it as truly as he does in an earthly kingdom or colony, and by this increase from within, quite as much as by conversion from without, designs to give it, finally, the complete dominion promised. . . . In this view it is to be expected, as the life of Christian piety becomes more extended in the earth, and the spirit of God obtains a living power, in the successive generations, more and more complete, that finally the race itself will be so thoroughly regenerated as to have a genuinely populating power in faith and godliness.”

### **Hold Our Families for Christ.**

Now, the first aim of Home Mission work is to hold our families for Christ and the Church, and to lead them into a living Christian experience and train them for Christian service. Every Christian parent is anxious that those who are his children by nature should be heirs to his spiritual heritage, and in the sacrament of baptism the Church not only receives the vows of the parents, but pledges herself to do all in her power to bring the children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. The church that fails to hold the members of her own families fails in the most important part of her divine commission, for no ingathering from the outside can compensate for their loss. At the same time, while doing this she aims to win as many as possible from the godless world to Christ as Saviour and king.

With this as the Church's aim, one can see at a glance the importance of the Sunday School work, which is carried on by our Church, and which invariably accompanies and sometimes precedes our Home Mission enterprise. The Sabbath School is the Church's right arm for carrying out her part of the baptismal vow, and its service to-day is simply invaluable.

One has only to look at the map to

see how successful this method has been in the extension of Christ's kingdom. During the past century Foreign Missions have been richly blessed, and have secured a foothold for the church in every heathen nation. But in the same period the natural growth of Christian nations has claimed for Christianity the Americas, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Siberia, as well as an immense increase of numbers and strength in the older countries. All these nations are professedly Christian; the law of God is recognized as authoritative, and the progress of Christianity is the ideal at which they aim. Every loyal believer wishes that these nations were more thoroughly Christian than they are, and welcomes any advancement made in that direction, but it is simply a matter of fact that the Kingdom of God is on a foundation in a nation nominally Christian entirely different from what it has in one that does not accept the name of Christ. As far as the movement has been successful it is due to Home Mission and Social Service work, and our aim in Canada is to make our country Christian in heart as well as in name, that the Canadians of the future may be in deed and in truth a people of the living God.

### III. Moral and Social Reform.

The Church fights unceasingly against evil in every form, and strives to bring out the best in the people's life. "Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people." The establishment of right and the overthrow of wrong requires constant effort. The hearts of many desire evil and that continually. The passion for gold and for power drives the strong to injustice. The force behind vice is always the money interest in it. The man who wants to do wrong for the pleasure he finds in it, is not nearly so resolute in maintaining his privilege as that other who wants to make money out of such wrongdoing. Hence, in the fight against sabbath desecration, the curse of drink, the social evil and even gambling, where the highest in the land support a burning wrong for the enormous gains their vested interests bring them, the money power is the real enemy of reform. The strongholds it has built cannot be overthrown until men arise who will make greater sacrifices and efforts for God and humanity than these people will make for the lust of sin and greed for gold. The champions of righteousness must be found in the Church's membership, and the Church must inspire them and stand behind them in the conflict.

### **The Forming of Moral Conviction.**

The Church's first work in this respect is the forming of moral conviction. At the Social Service Congress in Ottawa, Sir Robert Borden cautioned the members against relying too much on legislation. He pointed out that all that legislation can do is to crystalize into law convictions already existing: the first duty of the reformer is to build up those convictions. "You do not know the asset you have in the convictions of a great city," is a remark recently made. The convictions of a great country are a still stronger moral force. Now the Church has been mainly instrumental in forming the convictions already existing, and on many other questions convictions need to be formed and strengthened. They are the great driving force of human life, and where they are lacking the dynamic is gone.

In forming such convictions and applying them to modern life, the utmost importance attaches to voluntary effort. The nation as a whole can follow only the beaten paths. The slowest member of the team determines its pace. The way to higher things must be blazed by those adventurous spirits who see the promised land from the Pisgah-heights of experience long before their people are ready to enter in. The Church gives such leaders the inspiration and opportunity for their work.

### **The Student Pioneers.**

Our Church has produced many of them. There is no finer page in the Church's history than that which records the achievements of Home Mission pioneers in Canada. The first line has always been held by the student missionaries. They have shown courage, initiative, independence, and freedom from hampering prejudices. Mere boys have challenged the customs and institutions which had existed ever since the place came into being, and started a movement against them that resulted in their extermination. The reason for their success was the fact that the only foundation on which any institution can rest in a democratic country is the moral conviction of the people. Turn that against them, and while they may be propped up for a time by various devices, sooner or later they must go. In the positive work of building up the Church they have been not less resourceful and courageous. The foundation of our great Church from the Great Lakes to the Pacific, as well as in many parts of the older provinces, has been laid largely by student missionaries.

### **Missionaries and Moral Reformers.**

The men who followed them have had even harder tasks. They had not only to initiate work, but to carry it through.

It is the long pull which is the severest test, and our men have stood it. A noted scholar from the old land visited our Western Provinces a few years ago. He said that he was greatly impressed by the resources and extent of the country, but more deeply impressed still by the character of our men. He found them not narrow sectarians, but broad-minded church statesmen holding firmly the essentials of the faith and contending for those moral principles on which alone a nation can rest. These men have faced want, opposition, persecution, and what was worse than any, indifference and neglect, forgotten often by the Church that bore them, and yet under the most discouraging circumstances they continued to fight for the ideal, purity of family life, the restoration of the fallen, decency and righteousness in the community. The overturning of every system that preyed on the lives of men and women, the maintenance of the worship of God in places where no temple had ever been erected to his praise—these were their aims and objects. They are the knights of the 19th and 20th centuries, as devoted and loyal as any of the days of chivalry—the real empire builders.

**The Vicarious Life.**

It is the old principle of the vicarious life. Here is a community or a country



where evil is tolerated by officers of the law, and where the people have grown calloused in conscience about its presence among them. Leech-like it has fastened its grip on many a life. Those whom it patronizes in business are determined to maintain it, and anyone opposes it at his peril. How can it ever be driven from a self-governing community? There is only one way. Some person or set of persons take the community's guilt upon them as their own, and struggle against it until it is abolished. They are not guilty of this sin, they are not touched by it, but the fact that it is established in the community to which they belong burns like a fire in their bones, and they cannot be silent. At first they meet only mockery and persecution, but as the time goes on and the facts of the evil become more manifest, one after another comes over to their side until they have a majority, and the victory is theirs. The springs of the moral revival that has swept over Canada were opened in this way. As long as the good people of a community say, "This evil is no concern of ours; let those who have practised it reap what they have sown," there is not a star of hope in their sky. But when the virtuous assume responsibility for what their fellow-citizens do, refuse to be separated

from them even in their guilt, but resolve to struggle with them until they adopt the will of God as their own, the way to the incoming of the Kingdom is open. God works his wonders only through the devoted men and women who maintain his will regardless of the consequences to themselves. Now, the Church's missionaries and other leaders have taken this position wherever the name of Christ has been known, and have followed the Master's footsteps in his vicarious life and suffering. In the Canada of the future, where God's law shall rule, they shall see of the travail of their souls, and be satisfied.

#### **IV. A Potent, Unifying Force in National Life.**

The work of Home Missions and Social Service is one of the most potent unifying forces in Canadian life. A nation is an organism and only such elements as it can assimilate is it safe to receive into the country. An unassimilated mass in the national organism will be as fatal to its life as an indigestible mass in the human body. We are trying on this continent an experiment that has rarely been tried in the history of the race. In former ages men moved in masses. They had to conquer every inch of ground that they occupied. But here we have taken the British constitution, the product of

a thousand years of thought and experience and struggle, and set it up over this vast region and invited men from all the nations of Europe to come under it, and enjoy its privileges. Every individual's rights are guaranteed, no matter what his origin. After a few years residence, and with few qualifications, he is allowed to become a citizen and to take his part in determining the laws and policy under which all must live.

#### **The Problem of the Immigrant.**

With immigrants from the homeland and from the Republic to the south, this system works admirably. The saving element in the situation is that the great majority of our immigrants come from the British Isles and the United States. But the proportions are changing, and the volume of immigration is enormous. When immigration into the United States was at its height they never received in one year more than 1½ per cent of their population. In the years 1912-13 we received new immigration to the extent of 4½ per cent of our population, and in 1913-14, our record year, 5 per cent. Each year saw a larger proportion of these immigrants coming from Central and Southern Europe. When the population of the United States was what ours is now, they received only one immi-

grant for 28 that we received in the last year mentioned. Now, if the problem of the hyphenate is so serious in the United States, how much more serious will it be in Canada unless effective measures are adopted for the assimilation of incoming people?

**Binding the Races Together.**

Wherever our work is established it tends to bind the different races together, and to blend them into one. In Quebec there is no difficulty in recruiting among French Presbyterians; the proportion of their men enlisting is as large as in any section of Canada. The reports of this year, as of past years, show that whenever our work gains a foothold in Quebec and the spirit and the aims of our missionaries are understood, fanaticism disappears, and suspicion and dislike give way to mutual confidence and goodwill.

This tendency is even more pronounced in the west. A strong nationalistic movement has been started in certain sections of our foreign-speaking population, and has been diligently fostered by certain religious leaders. It has made such little headway that it has had to disown its own objects. Against it there has developed a wide Canadianizing movement under the leadership of men identified with our Church. They condemn the

nationalistic spirit as foolish and disloyal. They insist that the future of their people is bound up with the life and progress of Canada as a whole, and that they ought to become thorough Canadians. The whole success of this movement depends on the broad spirit and sound view of truth inculcated by our Church. If we give the different elements in the country an opportunity, they will fuse together. But if racial antagonisms are allowed to develop, this will be impossible. Those who keep the races apart are enemies to the public weal. If the different peoples in our land are brought together a spirit peculiarly their own will kindle among them, and an abiding patriotism will arise. But this must be made possible in the present generation if it is to succeed at all.

#### **Dangers and Possibilities.**

We are facing serious dangers and unrivalled possibilities. It will take the very best that is in us to avert the one and realize the other. Of the forces on which the nation can depend, one of the first is the Church to which we belong, with its noble traditions, its broad outlook and its strong faith. Our work must advance with the growing need, and the successes of the past give little indication of what the demands of the future will be. The entire need must

be met. We neglect any part of it at our peril. The nation is one; disease or weakness in any member affects the whole body. Take, as an illustration, the laws by which we are governed. In a democratic country the laws must represent the average of the people's morality. If below the average there will be a greater weight of public conviction against them than for them, and they must come up. If above the average, there will be a greater weight of sentiment against them than for them, and they must come down. This average will be determined by intensity as well as by numbers; a few earnest people will wield a stronger influence than a multitude of indifferent ones; but somewhere near the average the laws must rest. Any section of the country or class of the people neglected will lower the standard over the whole land. Disease tolerated anywhere will spread everywhere. Human life cannot be kept in separate compartments, sealed against each other. Conditions in the remotest corner influence conditions right to the heart of the nation. Therefore no necessary work must be left undone. Wherever the need appears, and in whatever form, it must be met to the full. What we have done is only the beginning. As soon as possible plans must be formed for work on a far wider

scale. Because, in the period of reconstruction that will follow the war, dangers will be met and demands made more serious by far than anything that the past has brought.