

*The Vision of the Student Missionary
Pioneers Realized by the Students
of the Present Generation*

**An Address delivered at Bradford, Mass., at the
Centenary of the Founding of the American
Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions
October 12, 1910**

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New York: 125 East 27th Street
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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

IN 1810 a company of four students appeared before an interstate Congregational association at Bradford, Mass., urging upon them the desirability of organizing a mission board for the purpose of sending out missionaries to non-Christian countries. The centenary of the organization of the American Board at Bradford, Mass., was celebrated in October, 1910, and a monument marking the site of the church in which the Board was organized was unveiled. Mr. Mott gave the address on that occasion, taking as his subject, "The Vision of the Student Missionary Pioneers Realized by the Students of the Present Generation." It is printed in pamphlet form, in order to make it available for Student Volunteers and their friends.

FENNELL P. TURNER,
General Secretary.

THE great enterprise, the centenary of which we commemorate here to-day, began as a student movement. It has ever preserved a close and sympathetic touch with the student centers of America. It has to a wonderful degree commanded the loyal following and devotion of students. In its present-day policy it is doing possibly more than any other missionary agency to multiply the number of students in different lands and to relate them to the plans of the Kingdom. I appreciate, therefore, deeply the privilege of being present as the representative of the Student Movement. As I come from recent contact with the members of this large and growing Movement, and as I have studied afresh the achievements and spirit of the early bands of student missionary pioneers, I have been profoundly impressed with the fact that

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the spirit which animated the students in those days is still strong and conquering among the students of our day. I find among the students of this generation the same loyalty to the Church of Jesus Christ and the same confidence in the Church which characterized those of that first generation. I find among them the same intercollegiate spirit and conviction as to the importance of united action in advancing the missionary propaganda. I discover among them the same desire to secure the best possible preparation, that they may better discharge their responsibilities as missionary leaders at home and abroad. I find among them the same power of vision, the same responsiveness to their visions and the same contagious heroism which constituted the glory of the early volunteers.

Those student missionary pioneers had visions which they sought to realize, but which they were unable to realize.

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in their day—visions, however, which the students of our day are realizing.

The students of to-day are thus fulfilling the word of the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, "Apart from us they shall not be made perfect." In other words, the students of to-day are helping to usher in the full success of the students of those days. What are some of the visions of those early student missionary bands which are being realized by the students of to-day?

The students of those days had a vision of an intercollegiate missionary movement. In order to realize this vision they conducted a correspondence with students of different colleges. The students of various colleges exchanged visits. Some students left their own colleges and went to study in other colleges in order to spread their missionary ideas. Conditions, however, were not favorable then for the creation and development of such a movement. There were but

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few colleges, and, owing to the poor means of communication, these were comparatively isolated. The intercollegiate consciousness, as we understand it, did not then exist. There was, generally speaking, a low state of religious life in the churches. The Christian forces were not highly and thoroughly organized. In contrast with such a situation, we have to-day in this and nearly every other land a well-developed Christian student movement touching profoundly the life of all the colleges. These national movements are bound together in the World's Student Christian Federation, which includes over two thousand universities and colleges of more than thirty nations, and has a combined membership of one hundred and forty thousand students and professors. A strong and well-developed part of the work among students to-day is the Student Volunteer Movement. Think of that small devoted band of student mission-

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ary pioneers, who came to Bradford a hundred years ago to appeal to the Church, and then think of the four thousand delegates who came together in January, 1910, at Rochester, in the Student Volunteer Convention, from over seven hundred colleges of North America, to consider how they could best serve the Church in extending Christ's Kingdom throughout the whole world in our day.

Think also of the fact that through correspondence and literature the Student Volunteer Movement last year reached over one thousand different institutions; that more than twenty-nine thousand students were studying missions in voluntary mission study circles, under the leadership of an Educational Secretary set aside for that work; and that four hundred and fifty different institutions were visited by Student Volunteer Secretaries sent to them for the purpose of helping them to

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a fuller realization of their personal responsibility for the extension of Christ's Kingdom throughout the world.

Those student missionary pioneers had a vision of well-qualified students going forth in large numbers from the colleges and universities as missionaries to lands where Christ was not known. For example, the object of the Society of Brethren, of Williams College, as set forth in its rules, was to "effect in the persons of its members a mission or missions to the heathen." Only a part of the first little bands of New England students ever reached the mission fields to realize their vision; and at the end of the first full generation but a few scores of North American students had gone out as foreign missionaries. When we remember the ignorance which then prevailed as to the work to be done, the fact that there were so few missionary agencies in that period, the lack of missionary zeal and also of spirituality in the

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churches and the indifference of so many of the leaders of the Church to the sublime claims of Christian missions, it is not surprising that so few Christian students in those days reached the mission fields. Could Mills, Judson, Richards and their associates be here to-day, what would they think as they contemplated the outreach of the Student Volunteer Movement of our generation? Let me remind you that within twenty-four years there have gone out to mission lands, under the auspices of the mission boards of North America, as a direct result of this Movement, nearly five thousand student volunteers. In addition there have gone out from British universities some two thousand more since the Student Volunteer Movement was transplanted to Britain. There should be added hundreds of others who have been recruited for foreign service and who have sailed from Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Holland,

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Germany, Switzerland, France and Scandinavia. Besides all this, the Student Volunteer idea has been transplanted to the schools and colleges of the Levant, India, Ceylon, China and Japan, and their students are offering themselves in large numbers for the evangelization of their own people.

The student missionary pioneers of a century ago had a vision of the Christian forces of America united in a missionary agency of such scope and strength as would make possible the sending forth and maintaining in the non-Christian world of the missionary recruits of the colleges. They willed to accomplish this practical and important end, and it was done. The American Board, called into being as a result of their faith and consecration, has, through all the years, increasingly embodied their vision; but its largest result has been to influence by its example the development of the varied, extensive and efficient mission-

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ary machinery of the North American Churches. So to-day there are literally scores of mission boards in the United States and Canada which maintain, at an expenditure of eleven million dollars per year, thousands of missionaries in all parts of the world.

Those student pioneers for foreign missions had a vision of the speedy evangelization of the world. This vision also was not realized in their generation. Not until the present generation have Christians in any large numbers been able to rally with conviction under such a watchword as "The evangelization of the world in this generation!" But that is the inspiring battle-cry of the Christian students of practically all Christendom. Why has God made the whole world known and accessible in our generation? Why has He provided such extensive and well equipped missionary agencies in our day? Why has He placed such resources at the disposal of the Chris-

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tian Church? Such vast preparations must have been made for some great and beneficent purpose. Everything is ready for a general and determined engagement of the forces of Christendom for the world-wide proclamation of Christ.

Thus the students of the present day are seeing realized the visions which so powerfully commanded the volunteers of that far-distant day. The churches listened to the students here at Bradford a century ago, and they gladly listen to the students of to-day. And what do the students of our time wish to say to the Church? They say to the Church: Enlarge your plans to embrace the whole world. The plans of the Church do not give the impression that it is the dominating purpose of Christian missions to make the Living Christ known to all living men in our day. The time has come when there can no longer be any reasonable excuse for not taking the

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whole world literally into our plan. A half a generation hence it should not be possible to point to one unoccupied field. Even the citadels of the non-Christian world should be taken into the scope of the Church's missionary plan.

The students of to-day say to the Church: Make much larger and more heroic demands on the colleges. We are living in a time when things in the big make the greatest appeal to college men. The facts and forces of material civilization are just now presenting a colossal and dazzling appeal to the student class. There is no doubt whatever that the world-plans of Christ can be so set forth that they will make a superior appeal to conscientious Christian college men. Let the Church show convincingly that she needs the students of our generation, and let her make confident demands on their sacrifice and devotion, and they will not be found wanting. But if she would move the strongest and

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most resolute natures among them, let her appeal to the heroic. The heroic appeal has ever won the heroic response.

Another message which discerning, thoughtful students bring to the Church is this: Help save the colleges themselves by enlisting them more largely in the effort to save the world. Some of the gravest perils of American colleges are the growing habits of luxury and extravagance, and the love of ease and transitory pleasures, a tendency to softness, and the allurements of our material civilization. Nothing less than vast and very difficult and exacting spiritual undertakings will counteract and overcome the spell of such perils and perilous tendencies. The sublime missionary movement can do more than any other one thing to call out and exercise the best energies of the minds and hearts of students.

Whatever communities we fail to cultivate and inspire for missions, let us

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not neglect to lead the students of our day to give expression to their religious convictions and feelings by relating themselves in practical ways to the missionary program of Jesus Christ. We continue to hear much about the need of the moral equivalent of war. The missionary enterprise best meets this evident need.

The students who in increasing numbers are dedicating their lives to the missionary career call upon the Church to afford them a better, a more specific preparation for their life work. They believe that the time has come when the curricula of many of our theological seminaries and Christian colleges should be thoroughly and radically revised with reference to ensuring such preparation for intending missionaries. In far too many institutions the instruction and other facilities afforded are not calculated to give students that true and larger comprehension of the races to which

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they are to minister, of the religions or systems of belief which they must meet, of the present-day statement of Christian message which is to win its way most largely, of the imperial character of the missionary enterprise, of the growing science of the expansion of the Kingdom, of the resources at the disposal of Christ's ambassadors, and of the time in which we live and work—the time of all times. Never was there greater need of able leadership of the aggressive forces of Christianity. And we must admit with candor that our plans and means are not adequately adapted to ensuring such a leadership.

The Christian students of every name to-day as never before say to the Church: Let us continue to work together. They press this point with deep convictions and strong feeling. They insist that they, representatives of all Christian communions which acknowledge the Divine Lordship of Christ,

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have lived together in the never-to-be-forgotten intimacies of school and college life, that they have learned not only to trust and love each other, but also to work together and to see that they are essential to each other. They wish to continue to work together. The students of this generation will not stand for disunion among Christians. They are ready to give themselves with enthusiasm and sacrifice to a great, united campaign.

The students, recognizing the great opportunities, crises, dangers and duties of their day, say to the Church: Help us to seek a new and greater accession of Divine favor. They recognize that far more urgent and fundamental than the need of improved organization and methods, than the need of more comprehensive plans and wiser strategy, than the raising up of a multitude of devoted workers—deeper and more vital than all these, is the need of a larger discovery

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of God and of the conditions of the manifestation of His power, and the need of complying with these conditions. Then they believe we shall witness His wonder works. “Lo, these are but the outskirts of His ways; but the thunder of His mighty deeds who can understand?”

CONCERNING THE STUDENT VOLUNTEER MOVEMENT

The Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions originated at the First Student Conference at Mt. Harmon, Mass., in 1886.

The primary purpose of the Movement is to recruit a sufficient number of Student Volunteer missionary candidates to meet the requirements of the Foreign Mission Boards. Its success in this work is shown by the fact that since its origin 4,784 Student Volunteers have been accepted by the various Mission Boards and sent to the mission field. In the year 1910 the Boards sent out 368 Student Volunteers.

The Movement has also promoted the study of missions by students. Last year over 29,000 students were enrolled in the voluntary classes, thus insuring greater intelligence on the part of those appointed as missionaries as well as those who remain at home.

To carry on the work of the Movement this year a staff of fourteen secretaries is employed. They endeavor to present the missionary message to students by means of correspondence, literature, and by personal visits to the colleges. By far the most effective work is that done by the secretaries when they visit the colleges and come into contact with the stu-

dents personally. Hundreds of students are every year helped through difficult periods by conversations with these secretaries.

Since there are more than 1,000 institutions in all parts of the United States and Canada, the task of reaching all these institutions is very great. The staff of secretaries is inadequate and should be greatly increased.

Additional information concerning the Movement may be secured by writing to Mr. F. P. Turner, General Secretary, 125 East 27th Street, New York City.