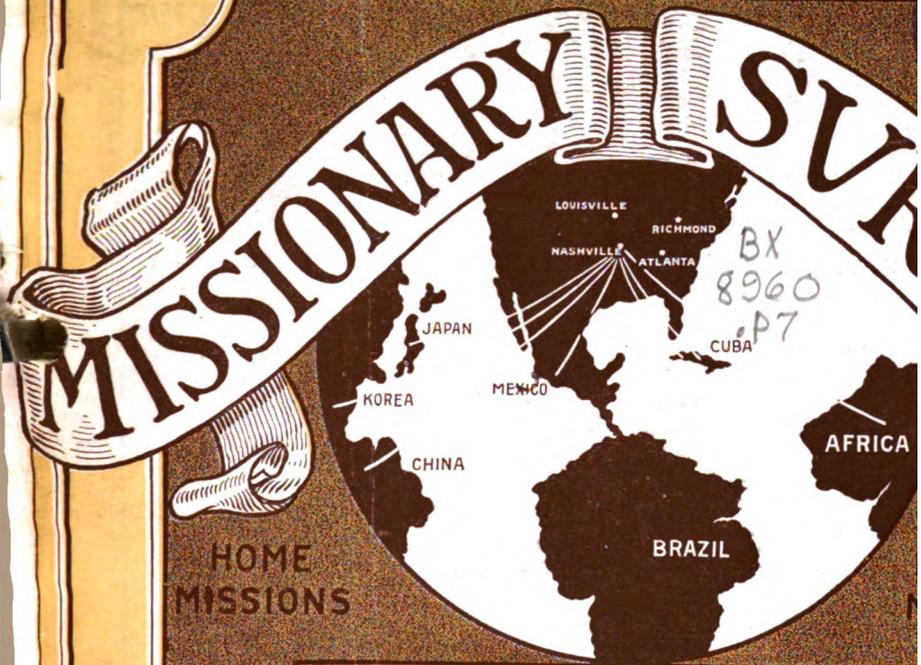


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HOME
MISSIONS

MAY, 1922

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THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN
AT HOME AND ABROAD



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EXTRACTS FROM ANNUAL REPORTS.

S. L. MORRIS

*To the General Assembly in Session
in the First Presbyterian Church,
Charleston, West Virginia.*

In grateful recognition of the divine favor, which has graciously attended the work of the Executive Committee of Home Missions and the faithful ministry of its missionaries, the Annual Report is hereby submitted, containing an epitome of its operations, the enlarging sphere of its service and the splendid results, which have rewarded the sacrificial service of its laborers in the Master's vineyard during the past year.

The Assembly could not do better than to pause in the midst of its proceedings and pay deserved tribute to its devoted servants in nearly a thousands mission fields, scattered throughout its entire bounds, and remember them at a throne of grace, and the cause they serve, in recognition of the fact that largely through their efficient service and enduring toil, our Church under the blessing of God, has for some years lead all the Lord's hosts in percentage of net growth.

Each year is characterized by an individuality of its own. In nature and in providence the divine Lord of all never duplicates. Being unlimited in strength, His hand is not shortened, and being unrestricted in resources, He is able to "supply all of our need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." The past year, which Sir Philip Gibbs designated as the blackest in history, called for large draughts upon the divine supply of grace and strength. The agony of the World War was no severer test than the demoralizing depression in financial circles in recent months, causing panic in the moral world which has not yet terminated—attended by trial of faith and the drifting of many souls upon a sea of doubt unsteadied by ballast and unguided by chart or compass.

Such times of testing naturally affect the spiritual life of the Church. Singularly, however, the reaction is not always the same. Trial drives some away from God others into the everlasting arms. Not yet are we able to take an inventory of spiritual losses or gain and determine which way the balance points.

Financial Assets—The Home Mission Committee shared the experiences of the business world in financial straits and had its season of depression, in which its faith was sorely tested by the compulsion of facing the question of curtailing its operations, or of drifting deeper into debt month by month to maintain the work on the present basis. At other times in its history it had faced moderate indebtedness, but during the past year it mounted to an altitude hitherto un-reached. As it touched the \$100,000 mark, the Committee became sorely apprehensive, realizing that an indebtedness measuring 20 per cent. of its largest annual income was calculated to give it pause. It could not release its missionaries with their dependent families to face want, and so it reached the solution of the matter by continuing to pay salaries to the measure of its credit in the bank—and then suspended work on all unfinished buildings.

By the constant enlargement of the work and by the combination and consolidation of other phases of Home Missions under the jurisdiction of the Executive Committee, its operations now cover eight distinct Departments—most of them corresponding to separate Boards in other denominations—which exhibit the scope of the work and the large responsibility entailed upon the Committee. Unfortunately the provision of the Assembly for this enlarging work does not keep pace with the burden of the work, nor do receipts furnish sufficient income to

meet the growing demands of its operations.

Immigration interrupted by the World war is again a rising tide pouring its floods of all races into our country to mingle with our National life by means of the proverbial "melting pot." They are now popularly called New Americans.

Until recently they segregated themselves in colonies principally in great Northern cities, such as New York and Chicago, but they are now overflowing into the great Southwest and are congregating in our Southern cities. Most of them come with their Continental ideas of the Sabbath, with socialistic principles, and many break away from all connection with the Church. They are divided into three classes: (1.) Those who are bitterly antagonistic to the church and all forms of religion. (2.) Those who are nominally Roman Catholic but indifferent to their obligations, which they imagine they have left behind them in their native land, and give loose rein to their inclinations, subversive of all morality. (3.) Those who have escaped the domination of the priest and are approachable and receptive to the claims of evangelical Christianity.

Scope—In the department of Foreign Speaking People the Executive Committee is conducting missions for ten nationalities, reaching from Maryland to Mexico.

Italian Mission—At Ensley, in the Birmingham district, Miss Haskin, assisted by the Italian helper, is conducting a Mission School for Italians in the midst of a dense population. It has all the usual features of Kindergarten, Sabbath-school, Domestic Science, Club features and Bible instruction. At present the proposition is under consideration of erecting a Chapel for religious worship and placing a native minister in charge.

Cuban—At Tampa, in the Ybor City section, populated chiefly by Cubans, engaged largely in the manufacture of Cigars, we have a mission equipped

with a splendid brick Church and a creditable manse. Rev. Eladio Hernandez, an efficient worker, who returns to Cuba, leaving the Mission in good hands, gives the following account of the year's operations:

"The Sabbath-school has had a good attendance during the year. The church held sixty-five Special Evangelistic Services, and also the Sunday evenings were devoted to Evangelism. Total offerings with that of the Sunday-school, \$638.09.

During the Evangelistic Services forty persons signed cards, two of them have already been received into the church. Three others have been received by letter; and a new elder was elected, ordained and installed.

Brother E. Estevez is now already in charge of the work according to the agreement of the Local Committee. May God bless him abundantly so that this little church may become in the near future a stronghold for the advancement of the Kingdom.

The Lady Helper is doing a fine work with the children of the Sunday School, directing the Sewing Club, holding the Story Hour and superintending the Children's Society of Christian Endeavor."

Syrian Mission, Atlanta, Ga.—Mrs. Stella B. Fleming, Missionary in charge. The work at this Mission has gone on uninterruptedly throughout the year. The Sunday-school attendance has held up better for the past two years than ever before in the history of the mission, and an average attendance of forty-five to fifty has been maintained throughout the year. The kindergarten is also well attended. At least one child from the Mission joined the Central Presbyterian Church during the year.

An interesting development of the work has been a prayer meeting for Americans living in the neighborhood of the Mission, who are not members nor attendants of any church. Mrs. Fleming worked up a neighborhood prayermeeting during the Evangelis-



A Little Syrian Maid

tic Campaign in the spring of 1921, and found many who were entirely out of touch with the church. Such interest was manifested that it has been carried on throughout the year, the attendance varying from ten to thirty-five. One of the regular attendants said she had not been to any kind of a religious service for more than twenty years. The prayermeeting is led each week by an elder

from Central Presbyterian Church, as the Mission is located near this church. It is felt that much good has been accomplished through these meetings, among a class who would otherwise have been unreached by religious influences.

In Louisiana—Considering the number of Nationalities served and the character of the work, the service rendered by the Home Mission Committee in Louisiana is as truly Foreign Missions as if it were conducted in China or Italy. It is ministering to French, Syrian, Italian, Hungarians and Chinese.

Jewish Mission—The chief service rendered by the Home Mission Committee in Maryland is its Mission in the City of Baltimore in behalf of the Jews, jointly supported by the Presbyterians, U. S. A., and U. S. Rev. Paul Berman is in charge, assisted by Rev. S. Birnbaum.

Texas, Mexican—Texas contains over 600,000 Mexicans, and our Church has done by far the most successful work of any denomination among them. Rev. R. D. Campbell gives the following account:

"The Statistical Charts prepared recently by Mr. J. B. Spillman indicate

that the percentage of increase in membership for last year was greater in the Texas-Mexican Presbytery than for any other throughout the Assembly, and that it ranks second only to Indian Presbytery in percentage of candidates for the ministry.

"The calendar year of 1921 has, in a large measure, been one of interruptions and readjustments. Nevertheless, very marked progress has been evident in many lines. The data would seem to indicate a decline in the number of professions of faith, apparently due to the shifting of workers in the middle of the year and the consequent break in their work. These changes, however, are already proving their wisdom. Our force has also been weakened by the untimely death of one minister and the serious physical infirmities of another. On the other hand an evangelistic campaign is being inaugurated which we trust will bring a rich harvest before the close of the Church year.

"There is a manifest improvement in the conception of stewardship of both life and possessions. While the actual contributions may fall behind those of the preceding year, it will be found due to poverty and not to a lack of growth in the grace of liberality. The Mexican laboring element is the first to be forced to idleness when work becomes scarce. While the farming element, with few exceptions, has nothing but debts to show for their year's work. In almost every congregation there are families in actual want or dependent on charity.

"Never before have our churches, as a rule, been so filled with hearers. In numerous instances the seating capacity has proven insufficient. Most of the Sunday-schools have reached the high-water mark in enrollment, while the proficiency in teaching has grown apace through the work of the Normal Classes. A number of additional Women's Auxiliaries have been organized during the year, and the good

women are beginning to dream of a Presbyterial.”

Bohemians—One of the most successful missions ever conducted by the Assembly's Committee is the Bohemian or Czecho-Slovak work near Petersburg, Va., which resulted in the organization and building of a neat brick church. It lent its pastor, Rev. J. A. Kohout for one year to his native country, Czecho-Slovakia where he rendered magnificent service in helping to guide the great movement of the thousands leaving the Roman Catholic and joining the Reformed (Presbyterian) Church—the President of the Republic among the number.

The pastor's absence in Europe did not however interfere with the church life in Virginia. It trained workers for various spheres of service and established other missions for Bohemians near Richmond.

CO-OPERATION

In the widest sense the Assembly's Home Missions is an illustration of co-operative work. It conducts no independent and distinctive missionary operations, notwithstanding, it has a very distinctive task. It relates itself to all the missionary activities of the Church. It promotes and stimulates Local Home Missions by its Publicity Department. It investigates need by personal observation, and through data furnished by Presbytery Chairmen, and supplements the weaker section—or the stronger—upon representations that their task is beyond the ability of the local authorities. It makes an intelligent and sympathetic effort to equalize, by sharing, the burdens of the whole Church. The work accomplished is through Presbyteries and Syn-

ods, and the benefit accrues to the Church in its corporate capacity and denominational life.

Related Agencies—In a more specific sense it bears its proportionate share of financing the expense of the Stewardship Committee and the Woman's Auxiliary. It reiterates its willing testimony to the intrinsic worth of these Agencies, which serve the whole Church and acknowledges its indebtedness to each for increased contributions to the cause of Home Missions.

CONCLUSION.

The Home Mission Council through Synodical representatives, meeting in Montreat in August, speaking in the name of and for the whole Church, put itself on record as to the supreme importance of Home Missions in the following official emphatic and valuable testimony:

“The spirit of Home Missions does not dominate the thought and activities of our Church. While there has been a commendable increase in the interest in Home Missions generally among our people during the last few years, and while the spirit of Home Missions is very strong in a few quarters of the Assembly, yet as a whole this cause has not come into its rightful place. It does not receive the attention and support which it deserves and which the Scriptures and the times demand.

“If our Church is to grow, if the welfare of our Nation is to be preserved, and if the world is to be evangelized, America must be Christianized. This can be accomplished only as we stress the fundamental importance of Home Missions. No other cause should take precedence over it, either in the sympathy and gifts of our people or in the dedication of life to its service.”