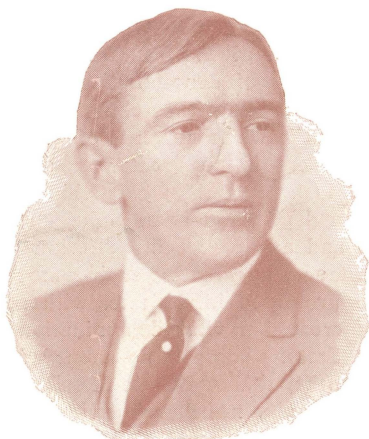


State Missions



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STATE MISSIONS DEFINED.

A GOOD definition is a great thing. We fail in many tasks because the tasks are not clearly defined in our own minds. Once we know exactly what we are to do, it is much easier to do it. The State Mission task has suffered in this way. It is great work, and includes, among other things, planting churches, sustaining the churches, winning the lost, unifying the churches of a given State, fostering the great currents of denominational life in a State, and leading the churches of that State into the wider currents of world conquest. There is no greater or more important task than this; everything in the Kingdom depends at some point on a successful and adequate State Mission policy. For instance, no great sweeping movement can be promoted in a State, without first having created a vital denominational life for the State. There is no agency for doing this other than the State Mission organization. Again, no church can ever come to its highest glory and efficiency without having a vital touch with the World Missionary Currents. There is no agency that proposes to touch all the churches of the State and relate them to the great missionary movements, except the State Mission organization. Furthermore, there are great scopes of territory where evangelization needs greatly to be done, and where churches ought to be planted, but there is no organization that proposes to do that in every State, except the State Mission organ-

ization, and the teeming thousands of city, village and countryside, who are unevangelized, are in a way really dependent upon the State Mission organization for the Gospel Hope. And so, in every direction a vital and vitalizing State Mission policy and organization are indispensable to the best Church and Denominational Life.

II. State Missions Justified.

When Jesus gave His commission to the waiting disciples in the first chapter of Acts, it was made clear to them that they were to begin at Jerusalem and then evangelize "all Judea;" through Samaria to the uttermost parts of the earth was included, and so our city or district work, our state mission work, home mission work and foreign mission work are based on the arrangements pointed out in the scriptures. Let there never be any division of the spirit of missions, the authority for missions and our interest in missions. The division is territorial purely for the sake of convenience and effectiveness in organization. "All Judea" for us means Kentucky. Kentucky Baptists have Scriptural authority for organizing a State-wide Denominational Movement to plant churches and foster the same, to win the lost, to unify the manifold church life, and to relate the many churches in our State to currents of world mission endeavor.

Common sense, as well as the Scriptures, bears out the wisdom of this kind of organization. We need not enter into a discussion of the matter, but the fact remains clear to

all thinking minds that it is nearly impossible to promote denominational activities across State lines. Kentucky does not give to Christian education in Tennessee, neither does South Carolina respond to a movement particularly for churches in Georgia. The philosophy of our American Government is and always has been, and doubtless always will be, that the State is the unit of government. State lines are massive things in the thinking of American people. It is, therefore, good business judgment to take advantage of this phase of patriotism and to harness it up to the Gospel work.

State missions, with emphasis on the "State," not only find scriptural warrant, and warrant in the general organization on lines of common sense in our country, but if more were needed, it finds ample warrant in the experience of our Fathers who have tried it. It can be safely said that no State ever amounts in a denominational way to more than its State mission organization will warrant. Oklahoma has been brought from chaotic nothingness to a splendid organization and effective denominational life in fourteen years by a wise state mission organization and policy. Outside general bodies had been operating in that territory for fifty years or more, to no purpose at all, as far as state denominational life was concerned. The experience of Oklahoma has not been greatly different from that of other states. In every direction there are clear indications that state mission organization and work are more than justified in the experience of our brethren and our fathers who have tried it out.

III. State Missions Illustrated.

We have already instanced the wonderful work in Oklahoma. Secretary Stalcup says that Oklahoma remained chaotic and inefficient as a force in the on-going of the Kingdom until a wise and vigorous state mission organization was effected. Fourteen years ago there was not a single self-supporting church, that had preaching full time, in the Territory. Now the fertile plains are dotted with beautiful and prosperous towns, hundreds of which have preaching for full time, paying their own bills for it, and many other hundreds having preaching for part time, as we do in the older states. Some of the handsomest church buildings in the whole Southland have been put up by Oklahoma churches. Practically all of this great crystalizing movement that brought denominational affairs ahead in Oklahoma is the result of the activity of the State Mission Board.

The same thing in a general way, only upon a much larger scale, has been true in Texas. Outside agencies had been sending their best men to Texas for nearly a hundred years. Kentucky and Georgia and Tennessee and New York and Illinois had all contributed giants of the type of Buckner and Burleson and Carroll. These contributions from other states laid the foundation, to be sure, and furnished much of the personality that brought about the present splendid results in Texas, but when you make full allowance for this, it still remains true that Texas never became great denominationally until the State Mission Board had

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fought out its fight against littleness, and had come out on the main line, with an adequate and vigorous policy and organization.

In Arkansas the same principle finds clear illustration, along several different lines. Up to 1900, although there was a nominal organization, very little had been done to relate the churches of the state to each other and to the wider currents of denominational life. About that date the fight for greatness came on. Through tears and tribulations the State Mission Board, under vigorous leadership, made its way to the vantage points of vision, efficiency and consecration. There followed a period of denominational life and development which was absolutely unprecedented in the history of the State. Then, just a few years ago, for various reasons the State Mission Board relaxed its vigor, shortened its vision and let up on its driving power; since that time everything has been in trouble. Within recent months there are appearances that seem to indicate a renewal of the life and vigor of the central organ. And so both the ups and downs of denominational life in their relation to the state mission organization and policy, are illustrated in the life of this State.

In Louisiana the same thing is going on today. It is not necessary that we multiply instances. The value of a state mission organization and policy that are adequate has been illustrated in practically every state. Right here in Kentucky the illustration is being worked out before our eyes today. The change that has come over the face of things in the past four or five years has been marvelous and gratifying. Perhaps the most gratifying thing about it is its prophetic feature. We now begin to see what we may hope to do.

IV. The Next Things in State Missions.

Clearly there are two things that Kentucky

Baptists must do in the near future. The first one is, we must evangelize the multiplied thousands of Kentucky who are without God and without Hope in the World. There are a million lost souls in Kentucky, and Secretary Powell says that nine tenths of them are pre-disposed toward the Baptists. This indicates not only a splendid opportunity for us, but at the same time an unescapable responsibility. God will hold us responsible in the judgment for these folks who lean our way and are waiting for us to come with the message of life. The teeming masses of our cities and the mountain districts can be reached with the Gospel of Salvation. We have that Gospel. There is, therefore, no excuse admissible, in the sight of Heaven, for our failure to give it to them. Kentucky Baptists must, and I believe they will, get out on the main line of State Mission Endeavor as regards evangelizing the lost and make such records in the next few years as the history of the State has never known before.

The second line of most urgent need at present is Enlistment. If Kentucky Baptists were all enlisted in the service of the Great King we would be irresistible. There are 249,000 white Baptists in the State; 90,000 colored Baptists; and 50,000 general Baptists, who are not at present affiliated with us, making a total of 389,000 Baptists of various sorts in Kentucky. The Methodists, Disciples, Episcopalians and Presbyterians, of all kinds, including the Cumberland, number 291,000; the Roman Catholics number a little less than 100,000. So, the Baptists are nearly as numerous as all other denominations put together. If that mighty force could be once aroused to its own power and all phases of its power consecrated to the services of Jesus Christ and lost humanity, it would not take a month to revolutionize the life of the whole State of Kentucky.

Some counties have one thousand more Baptists than they have voters. In one of

these counties the Census Reports show a larger amount of money invested in fire-arms than agricultural implements, and this is supposed to be an agricultural county. A Judge in one of these said in public testimony in a meeting, "Ten years ago, before your missionary came to this County, I could not get a jury to try the average case justly, according to law and testimony. Thank God, the work of your Missionary has changed this all up, and I am now a free man, able to do justice, and administer the law among my neighbors on the basis of equity." A church in one of these districts about twenty years ago was a Mission Station of our State Board; last year it gave as much as any other church in the whole State of Kentucky to the general denominational work; and so, the State 'round, illustrations might be multiplied showing the absolute necessity for a vigorous campaign of Enlistment. If Kentucky Baptists should average fifty cents a piece a year for State Missions, Secretary Powell and his corps of workers would change the whole face of things in a short while. The forces that make for enlistment among us at the present time are the Sunday School work, the B. Y. P. U. work, the Laymen's Movement, the Enlistment Department of the Board's work, and the appeal of the lost in every land that comes direct to the individual Christian heart. All these forces are being utilized by our State Mission Board. Things are getting better all along the line; the prospects are brightening every day. Some day Kentucky Baptists will arouse themselves and put on the beautiful garments of their strength, and go out to valiant warfare under the banner of Prince Immanuel; and when they do, the whole earth will tremble to the music of their martial tread. God speed the day.

The Board needs fifty thousand dollars this year for State work, which is a little more than twenty cents apiece for us. Let us blush and pay it.