

# World Missionary Conference, 1910

*(To consider Missionary Problems in relation to the Non-Christian World)*

## THE HISTORY AND RECORDS OF THE CONFERENCE

TOGETHER WITH  
ADDRESSES DELIVERED AT THE  
EVENING MEETINGS

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## THE CONTRIBUTION OF HOLLAND AND SCANDINAVIA TO MISSIONS

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*Address delivered in the Assembly Hall on Friday  
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THE task that has been set before me is rather difficult: in twenty minutes to give you a review of the missionary achievements of five countries: Holland, Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Denmark. And I cannot presuppose that many of you know very much of these things before. You members of the great nations are accustomed to reckon with such big measures that we—the small countries and peoples—are likely to disappear before you. Nevertheless it is our glory that we began our mission work a long time before you. Even before America, the white Christian America, was formed, Holland had a great mission, and long before Great Britain awoke the Gospel was proclaimed to the natives of India by Germans and Danes. And if you will kindly listen, I will try to show our kinsmen of the great nations that we exist still, and that we have even now our own allotted share in this the greatest work of all, the work for the salvation of all nations.

### HOLLAND

As the first Protestant naval power, Holland acquired already about the year 1600 large and mighty colonies. Even now that small country, with about five million inhabitants, rules over colonies whose area is sixty times as large,

and whose population is not far from fifty millions. There was from the beginning a tremendous missionary task laid upon the Dutch East India Company, and through its support a widespread work was done. No doubt the outcome was to a great extent only outward forms kept up by force. Still Holland had in the seventeenth century a number of zealous and gifted missionaries. And the proof that the work of old was not in vain is the fact that the progress of later missions has been greatest where they were able to build on the foundations laid by the forefathers.

But when the Rationalism of the eighteenth century ravaged the Church of Holland, the Dutch East India Company not only lost its interest in missions, but became—in the same way as the English East India Company—an antagonist and a hindrance to missions, nay, sad to tell, it forwarded the Mohammedan propaganda, which in the Dutch colonies has gone so far, that now about thirty-five millions are counted as Mohammedans.

Thus the old mission started by the Government, and supported by the Company of Commerce, came to a standstill. But then the living waters broke forth in the congregations in connection with the general missionary revival at the end of the eighteenth century.

Van der Kemp founded the Netherland Missionary Society in 1797 before he went out himself as the famous pioneer of the London Missionary Society in South Africa. Soon a new and better work was taken up in the old field, and especially in Celebes (Minahassa) the Netherland Missionary Society gained a wonderful victory through a number of able workers, above all the Germans, Riedel and Schwarz.

Unfortunately, the Netherland Missionary Society did not succeed in keeping together the missionary forces of Holland. In the beginning the strong denominational party was against the Society, and later, when the Society (about the middle of the nineteenth century) was infected by the liberal theology, the faithful seceded and founded new Societies. This fact has in some ways forwarded the missionary movement in Holland, spreading the interest

in new and wider ranges. But it has injured the work abroad, partly because there could be no unity in the management, partly because the old central society was weakened to such an extent as to be unable to maintain the work in hand. The Netherland Missionary Society was obliged for want of funds to hand over a great part of its work—among other parts the promising field of Minahassa—to the Colonial Church establishment, that was governed without congregational liberty, and had a State School System without any religion.

But in spite of all, the Dutch Mission has reached very considerable results. The number of native Christians in the Dutch colonies has within the last century risen from 60,000 to 478,000 (the 30,000 Roman Catholics not included). Of these 102,000 belong to the (German) Rhenish Mission, but by Holland's own work more than 300,000 natives have been won for Christ, and in the present Dutch mission field the doors are opened for the Gospel almost everywhere, as the heathen seek for a new religion. And most of them prefer Christianity to Islam—nay, even among the Mohammedans a movement is felt towards Christ.

In the home country the Netherland Missionary Society has its stand now wholly on the old foundation of faith, and a voluntary co-operation has begun between the principal missionary organisations. At the same time, public opinion has turned very much in favour of missions, several commercial firms support the work, and no colonial government in the world gives a similar grant to aid missionary purposes, especially the more social part.<sup>1</sup> All the Missionary Societies in Dutch India have united in establishing a missionary consulate, that for some years has with good results taken care of all missionary interests in face of the government. The government has even begun to understand the advantage of leaving to the Missionary Societies the management both of church and school, and steps have been made to repeal the religionless school system in Minahassa and hand over the whole education to the mission.

<sup>1</sup> Three hundred thousand gylde in the year, while the donations to all Missionary Societies in Holland amount to 480,000 gylde.

In concluding these remarks on Holland, I mention only two special features of Dutch missionary methods: first, the great stress laid upon the social aspect of Missions; and secondly, the earnest effort made by Dutch missionaries to penetrate into the intellectual life of the natives by a most thoroughgoing study of their religion and language, in order to form their new life not in a foreign, second-hand way, but as their own mental product. Here is to be remembered the epoch-making work of A. Kruyts on the religion of Animism, and the peculiar Dutch plan of postponing as long as possible the giving of names to the new things, that the people themselves may invent the designation.

#### SCANDINAVIA

On turning to the North, we find in Scandinavia, as in Holland, old missionary traditions. The great king who secured for Sweden the blessings of the Reformation, Gustavus Vasa, was the first Protestant ruler who realised his missionary duty in sending preachers to the heathen in the north of Sweden. And in Denmark and Norway, which then were one kingdom, we find at the beginning of the eighteenth century not less than three considerable missionary undertakings. Thomas von Wesler gave his life's best strength to the Laplanders in the north of Norway. Hans Egede is rightly named the Apostle of Greenland, and has opened the way to all missions among the Eskimos of the Far North. And the King of Denmark sent in 1705 the first Protestant missionary to India, Ziegedealg, the commencement of the Danish-Halle Mission, wherein Germans and Danes, during more than a century, did a great work for South India. The name of C. F. Schwarz, the king-priest of Tanjon, will always shine among the greatest in the history of missions. No doubt to Halle is due the great honour for the spiritual force. But we are in the right to remember, that the white cross of the Danish flag waved over the undertaking just as the same flag, later on, had to defend William Carey in Serampore against English persecution.

But all these things are memories of the past. Since then the greatness of the Scandinavian kingdom has faded, and for a long time the coldness of Rationalism paralysed the strength of the Church. Therefore, we had to begin anew in the north, and only little by little the missionary work was able to extend, as the growing spiritual life in the home awakened the people of God to its missionary duty.

I shall give a short review of each of the Scandinavian countries separately.

#### NORWAY

came first, because the mighty revival connected with the name of H. N. Hauge here first broke up the coldness and death. And although Norway has the smallest population of the three Scandinavian kingdoms, and is considered the least wealthy, Norway is still foremost among the northern missions, with the most solid experience, the greatest results, and the largest contributions from the home base.

It was in 1842 that the Norwegian Missionary Society was founded, and soon after the Norwegians sent their first man, the late Bishop Schreuder, to Africa—probably in accordance with the advice of Moffat—hoping from Natal to reach the Zulus. Here they experienced abundantly the trials of missions. The Zulus boasted of having a shield over their hearts, and wild wars distracted the country and the stations. Nevertheless the steady Norsemen went on, and at the present time have reaped good and solid fruit in Zululand. Nay, the present Norwegian Bishop in Zululand is dreaming great dreams of the Zulus as the people especially called to carry the Gospel right into the heart of Africa.

However, the work in South Africa was in some ways only a preparation for greater things. In Natal the Norwegians felt as neighbours to Madagascar, whose wonderful history of martyrdom had in these years stirred all Christian hearts. And when in 1862 the doors were unexpectedly opened again, the Norwegian Missionary Society heard the call of the Lord to come over and help the brethren there.

The Norwegians began their work in Madagascar unpretentiously, but, alas, were not immediately welcomed by the English missionaries. Besides, they were suspected by the natives, because they were neither English nor French, nor even had a Consul to back them up. But with the boldness of faith the Norwegians answered: "Then the word of God shall be our Consul," and so it has been to this day. Quietly they made their way into the province of Betsileo, and soon the results were visible. During a series of years they had to baptize from 3000 to 5000 heathen a year, and 40,000 children crowded their schools. It was a solemn test of the faith of the Norwegian Society when in 1882 the missionaries wrote back and showed the urgency of so enlarging the work that the yearly expenses would increase from 200,000 to 300,000 kr. But the Norwegians ventured in faith and were not put to shame.

We know all the later tribulations that came upon Madagascar: the French invasion and annexation and the insurrection of the natives, through which 70 Norwegian churches were burned down, together with their glorious Leper Asylums. Jesuit machinations, and lastly the tyranny of French atheism, have put the coping-stone on; but the Norwegian Mission has ridden out the gale with greater strength and less detriment than any other mission in the Island. And it looks as a seal from above on the intelligent, faithful and persevering work: that wonderful revival among the natives in Betsileo, that broke forth at the commencement of this century, proving evidently that the seed of the Kingdom has taken root really and mightily in the soil of Madagascar.

The Norwegian work in Madagascar is their epistle of commendation before the whole world, compared with which the other new mission fields of the Norwegians (*e.g.* in China) are small.

#### SWEDEN

The largest of the Scandinavian countries has not been privileged as its sister-land to the west, Norway, to retain the great bulk of the missionary love of its people within

one Society. The divisions in the spiritual life of Sweden have influenced necessarily also the missionary development

A Swedish Missionary Society was founded in 1835, but it was the Swedish "Evangeliska Fosterlands-Stiftelse" (Evangelical National Society) that first succeeded in arousing the Low Church circles (1865).

Their first and principal field is Eastern Africa on the coast of the Red Sea, where the Swedish Mission has all to itself a mighty field, measuring 16 degrees of latitude by 20 degrees of longitude. It was the veteran missionary Kraxf who gave them the idea of penetrating into the interior to the proud and strong people of the Galas. And with admirable tenacity the Swedes have stuck to their purpose during forty-five years in spite of all sorts of tribulation. Their attempts to make their way into the interior have been checked over and over again. Meanwhile they have got a foothold in the region of Massana, and a solid work has grown up there, aiming also at the revival of the old decayed Ethiopian Church in Abyssinia. At the same time the daybreak draws nigh for their final aim—several young Galas having been baptized. One of them has translated the New Testament into the language of his people, and the Swedes have succeeded in sending a small body of natives into the Gala country, where the first germs of evangelical congregations have shot forth.

From the Swedish National Society seceded later the Swedish Missionary Union, a strong congregationalist movement in Sweden, which began mission work about 1880 in five different countries. But the region which the Lord has made their principal field is the Congo Free State, where Mukimtemay is their head station. The Swedish Congo Mission is well known for its excellent schools with 5000 children, the linguistic merits of some of its men, and the part which its missionaries have taken in the efforts to unveil the atrocities of the Congo Free State Government.

On the other side leaders of the Established Church in Sweden started in 1874 the Swedish Church Mission, which has the merit that "the Swedish Church as a Church" has



been enabled to take its share and get the blessings of mission work. This mission has sent intelligent and earnest men to the Zululand, whence a few heroic pioneers have penetrated right into Rhodesia. And in India it has taken over the older Swedish work, done with solidity and success in connection with the Leipzig Missionary Society, in the regions of the old Trankiba mission.

There are several other Swedish missions which time forbids us to dwell on, but we cannot leave Sweden without mentioning a further point. The people of Sweden that has so glorious a history under the leadership of hero-kings, admired throughout the world, has even in its mission justly acquired the hero-name. I do not think that any other people can show such a percentage of missionary martyrs as the Swedes. In the Red Sea Mission nineteen Swedes have fallen, some the victims of murderers, some of the climate. In the Congo Mission 48 out of 127 (*i.e.* 38 per cent.) have succumbed to the dangerous climate. And in China several Swedes have fallen on various occasions. And lately in the Boxer upheaval of 1900 all the missionaries of a smaller body in Sweden, gathered to conference in Soping, were stoned to death—ten in number. And in many other places a great number of Swedes (partly of the Scandinavian Alliance, partly of the International Missionary Alliance) were, with their wives and children, persecuted, tortured, stoned, and murdered in the most awful way. Among the Western martyrs of the Boxer persecutions no fewer than forty adults and children, or fully one-third of the whole number, were Swedes. And their letters testify still to the courage of faith that was ready to face all sacrifices and sufferings for the Master and for China. What a seed and what promises of the future harvest for Swedish Missions!

#### FINLAND

is the most eastern outpost of Protestantism in Europe. As regards politics we—all the free Protestant peoples—have the most hearty sympathy in the difficulties of the noble Finnish people. As regards Christianity and missions the

Finns stand fully on a level with the three Scandinavian peoples.

The origin of the Finnish Missionary Society is touching. In 1857 Finland celebrated with great solemnity the seventh centenary of the introduction of Christianity into the country. Gratitude for all the blessings thereby bestowed upon the people moved their hearts so deeply that it was felt as a call of God to take part in the great work of missions. A national collection was taken, and next year the Finland Missionary Society was founded.

The Society has a great work in Finland itself, partly for the Jews living in the country, partly for reviving and spreading spiritual life and missionary interest in the Finnish Church. In 1868 it took up its own mission work among the Ambo people, now belonging to German South-West Africa. Here began a sowing in tears, which has lasted till our own days. The people were so unresponsive that in thirteen years not one was baptized. The chiefs caused innumerable troubles, famine devastated the country over and over again, and several missionaries succumbed to their long-continued exertions. Nevertheless, the Finns have persevered with warm praying hearts, and God has blessed their faithfulness. In the first twenty years 200 were baptized, in the next twenty years 2000. The hope of victory shines over the African field, and the society has opened up a new mission in China, while at home the Foreign Missionary Society has grown to be the favourite of the people, supported by low and high, leader of a manifold spiritual activity.

At last I come to my own Fatherland.

#### DENMARK

in spite of its former renown, has been for a long time rather behind in missionary work.

Among the Eskimos of Greenland the Church of Denmark had from the time of H. Egede a missionary task. And this has been accomplished partly by Danes and partly by the Moravians, so far, that Greenland at the end of the nine-

teenth century was considered to be a Christian country, and the Missionary Board of Herrnhut generously handed over their stations and congregations to the Danish Church. It may appear strange that a new missionary problem should have arisen just at the same time.

At the east coast of Greenland, hitherto considered as unpopulated, five to six hundred heathen were discovered in the region of the Polar circle. Immediately Denmark took up this new work (around the station of Angmagssalik), and it is gratifying to learn that not only one-third of the heathen are baptized, but that the purifying and elevating power of the Gospel is evidently known through the whole community.

And yet again, only three years ago, another colony of about two hundred heathen were found in the furthest north, at Cape York, the people lately famous as the helpers both of Cook and of Peary. With warm hearts this task also has been overtaken by the Danes, and last summer two native Greenlanders reached the place and found it the northernmost of all missionary stations in the world. They were received with thankfulness and confidence by the Eskimos, and the last letters tell that the children have begun to read very fluently.

In addition to these very small but interesting things the Danish Missionary Society has (from 1864) found its main field in the region of the old Danish Mission, among the Tamils of South Arcot, where a solid work is quietly growing; and later (from 1892) in the Liaoding peninsula in Manchuria, where the field is very promising in spite of the devastations of mighty wars.

In the north of India the Dane Boerresen, with his German wife and the Norwegian Skrefsrud, started the "Indian Home Mission to the Santals" in 1867, by and by mainly supported from Scandinavia. This is a mission rich in the romance of pioneer work, in miracles of prayer, and in wise national education, and one which has succeeded in planting amid these degraded aboriginal tribes a native Church that bears its missionary fruit already in a spontaneous native mission among other heathen.

There are smaller Danish missions in other places, but

## 228 ADDRESSES AT EVENING MEETINGS

as my time has expired I am only able in conclusion to underline three of the more prominent features of Danish missions.

First, the Danish taste for personal truth, fulness, and spiritual realism, which has shown its worth in missions several times by our fear of formalism on one hand and of vague enthusiasm on the other.

Secondly, the friendly co-operation with other missions. We do not wish, by national or doctrinal singularity, to keep aloof from the bulk of the missionary force, but rather to be loyal to our common cause.

And, thirdly, I mention a feature which is not certainly peculiar to the Danes, but rather a merit of all the small countries I represent, I mean the greater facility we have in obtaining a true understanding with the natives on more equal terms, because we are without any pretension to be the ruling race or nation, and without any temptation to rely on political power—the greater stress being put on using the native languages and developing the new life of the peoples in their own national way.

Mr. Chairman, Christian friends, in the famous picture of Raphael in the Vatican, called the "Disputa," we see the dove of the Holy Ghost flying out over the earth, surrounded by four angels, carrying the four Gospels. I believe that every Christian nation has its own angel, and all the angels of the evangelical peoples have the commission to carry the Gospel to all nations. We, the small peoples, have also our angels ministering in that work. Let us stand together, let us run, let us fly side by side in this most glorious work of all, as servants to, nay, as co-workers with, the Holy Ghost for the salvation of the whole world.