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### John R Mott, His Work with the Student Christian Movement to the Founding of the World's Student Christian Federation

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JOHN R. MOTT, HIS WORK WITH THE STUDENT  
CHRISTIAN MOVEMENT TO THE FOUNDING OF  
THE WORLD'S STUDENT CHRISTIAN FEDERATION

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in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Bachelor of Divinity

by  
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June 1956

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

A student Christian movement, in the general sense of the phrase, may reach back to any point in history according to the whims of the author. One may point out student Christian movements within the era of the Old Testament or New Testament. St. Francis has been considered as a product of such a movement. Luther and certain of his contemporaries have also been placed into this category. However, in this present time, the term "student Christian movement" has taken on a more specific meaning. It could be defined as a movement carried on by Christian students for the sake of keeping the believer and seeking the lost. To be more specific we may trace back to the early 1700's and find records which point out that students did gather together for the sake of edifying each other and planning means of bringing Christ to their fellow students. Cotton Mather makes mention of a Student Christian Society already existing in 1706. Harvard definitely had such a Society in the early 1700's. There are records of a Yale Moral Society around the year 1797. These records have been compiled and edited by Henry B. Wright under the title "Two Centuries of Christian Activity at Yale." A list of schools could be men-

tioned that had such Christian student societies.<sup>1</sup> We find the "Society of Inquiry on the Subject of Missions" at Andover Seminary. Similar societies were to be found at Brown and Dartmouth in the early 1800's. However, the most significant of all the student Christian movements and the one referred to by many as the first of the modern student Christian movement is the one begun at Williams College, Connecticut, in the year 1793.<sup>2</sup> It was a stormy night when a group of students including Samuel J. Mills found shelter under a haystack and there vowed themselves to mission work. The evangelistic revival stirred up by these men brought about the formation of "the Society of Brethren." Mills' dream, which was to remain a dream for many more years, was for an inter-collegiate mission society. He hoped for the day when the Christian students of the colleges and universities could work together under a common cause. Although few had the mission zeal of Williams College, yet there were many societies of Christian students to be found in the schools of the 1700's and early 1800's. They were usually organized as simple Bible studies, some sought growth in Christian living, only a few had the lofty goal of mission work. The natural weakness of the movement during its birth

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<sup>1</sup>Clarence P. Shedd, Two Centuries of Student Christian Movements (New York: Association Press, 1934), chaps. I-IV.

<sup>2</sup>Ruth Rouse, The World's Student Christian Federation (London: E.C.M. Press Ltd., 1948), p. 38.

was that it seldom went beyond the doors of the individual school. It was definitely localized with no official inter-collegiate action of any form. But the hopes and dreams of such men as Samuel Mills and their fulfillment was drawing near.

As has been pointed out the study of the student Christian movement could start, depending on the interpretation, at almost any point, anywhere, at any time. As many colleges and universities from which we could watch the development of the present student Christian movement, just as many individuals could be followed. A few of the schools have already been mentioned that could be followed. Some of the outstanding men that might be selected would include the men of the Cambridge Seven, Luther Wishard, S. Mills, J. B. Reynolds, R. Foreman, R. Speer, C. K. Ober, and many others. It is obvious that to follow all the men who influenced the Movement, as to follow all the schools, is beyond our limits. But the name of one man does stand out above the others, the name of Dr. John Raleigh Mott. Through this man it is possible to follow the most influential phase of the growth of the student Christian movement not only in America but in the entire world. It is he who contributed the major portion of time and talents necessary for the culmination of the student Christian movement found in the birth of the World Student Christian Federation. This then becomes the aim: To observe the Christian Student Movement through the early

life of Dr. John R. Mott climaxing at the founding of the World Student Christian Federation, the Reality of a Dream. It must be re-emphasized however that there were many roads separate from each other that could be followed and would also lead to the birth of the World Student Christian Federation. For many had the dream of a student world united under Christ.

Warnings, therefore, are necessary in such a study. One must beware in following the life of one man that the case be neither over nor under stated. It must be realized that many personalities and events were necessary to guide and direct the life of Mott. So also there is the danger since it is impossible to record all the events of a man's life during a given period, that the material will be too subjective and thus show weakness. The choice of highlights, however, is the author's privilege. Yet the course of Mott's life that leads up to the meeting at Vadstena, Sweden, does not allow for much deviation. It is necessary to observe the young man, John Mott, as he enters college both at Upper Iowa University and at Cornell University. For it is at college that Mott first comes into contact with the Intercollegiate Young Men's Christian Association and finds himself a part of the newly born Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions. And it is especially these two movements with which we are concerned, for they are found as charter members of the World Student Christian Federation.

The other charter members do not come directly under the influence of Mott and thus warrant little of our attention.

In order to keep the unity of the work before the eyes of the reader the author shall endeavor to point out in the course of Mott's early life his frequent allusions to the dream of a student world united under the banner of Christ. Why should the student be singled out for such a union? The answer is found in the life of Mott. Mention of this will be found in the concluding chapter. The motive of Dr. Mott was not as one man put it:

An idea generated in any one land will flash through the universities of the world with greater rapidity than through any other section of the world community.<sup>3</sup>

Mott was a Christian, the motive should be self-evident.

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 24.

## CHAPTER II

### BEFORE CORNELL

On the 16th of February in the year 1853, young John S. Mott took Elmira Dodge as his wife and settled near the banks of the Delaware tributary at Livingston Manor, Sullivan County, in the State of New York. The years passed by and on the 25th of May, 1865, a third child was born to the Motts and was named John Raleigh. It was but four months after the birth of John that the family pulled up stakes and moved westward to settle on a farm area in the State of Iowa, only a few miles outside of the little town of Postville. The new farm in this pioneer State offered little success and already in the following year, 1866, father John S. Mott built a house in town and moved in the next year. His knowledge of timber made it possible for him to start a successful lumber business. The business did well and the Mott home never saw want. Their home was always open to the circuit riders and visitors to the local Methodist Church which, in the course of the following years, led to important decisions on the part of the Mott family. An interesting note, taken from the life of little John R. Mott at the age of five years, mentions a Bishop William Taylor accepting the Mott's hospitality. Upon viewing the impressive white beard of the Bishop, little John inquired of his mother

if this was God. However, as the years passed by, young John's interests turned more to the things for which all boys yearn. Outside of learning the lumber business quite well and even given responsibilities in the business, John Mott exhibited his inquisitiveness by intensive study of the railroads of America and could recite every route across the continent. His interest in geography and history was very keen and his handling of detail is shown by his memorizing of all the countries of the world from a world globe given to him by his parents. Although speculative, it can be said that here young Mott is already showing an awareness of the world around him, the world which was soon to be united under the heading of a student Christian union, the reality of a dream. Yet the tendency in Mott to view the world as one unit, which is so basic in his ecumenical approach, is here.

John R. Mott, in later life, made the remark that there was not a great deal of talk about religion in his home. One, however, can only evaluate this remark in the light of Mott's practices. It is quite apparent that Mrs. Mott was a religious woman and quite active in her church. She took three religious periodicals at the time: The Guide to Holiness, The Heathen Woman's Friend, which was a Methodist woman's missionary magazine, and the New York Christian Advocate. The large family Bible was often read by John's mother to the children. It does not seem possible that

religion could be exempt from such a home that entertained the visiting clergy. It certainly was not exempt from their home life after the visit of a Mr. J. W. Dean, then secretary of the Iowa State Committee of the Young Men's Christian Association. Mr. Dean was a Quaker on an evangelistic tour of his State in connection with his work. He arrived in Postville the Winter of 1878-1879 and stayed there for several weeks. During his stay Mr. Dean made many converts into the Christian faith and one of them included Mr. John S. Mott, Sr., who immediately joined the Methodist Episcopal Church.<sup>1</sup> Young John, who was thirteen years of age, also considered himself converted by the evangelist. However, nowhere is much effect on his life attributed to this conversion. Yet the visit of Mr. Dean did place two elements into the life of John which followed and which influenced him throughout his life. They constitute two elements which helped to formulate his great dream and its fulfillment. First of all, it was his first contact with the Young Men's Christian Association, as far as we know. Secondly, it is the first time we are made aware of any particular person who gives young John the ecumenical picture of a society that gathers all men of all denominations into one fellowship. As has already been stated, a hope of a united stu-

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<sup>1</sup>Basil Mathews, John R. Mott, World Citizen (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1934), pp. 1-14.

dent world was to become Mott's dream. Such an ecumenical portrait has now apparently entered in his life. Often one with this view is accused of a lack of religious conviction. However, such an accusation is not here allowable. As a boy in Postville, he appeared quite friendly and open to chats with all the local churches as well as the clergy of the Roman Catholic Church. It is interesting to note that later in life whenever Mott visited Postville, he was invited to speak at a union assembly held at the Lutheran Church, presided by the Lutheran pastor, the prayer spoken by the Presbyterian pastor, the talk by Mott, who was a Methodist, and the benediction given by the Roman Catholic priest. Certainly the dream of a world united under Christ was not new in the world at this time. Even the thought of a world student movement was already in the air in the year 1881 as was seen in a letter from Europe to Mr. Luther Wishard, whom we shall meet later on.<sup>2</sup>

Young John Mott was a boy quick to learn and the Methodist pastor of Postville, Horace E. Warner, a graduate of Cornell, Iowa and Drew Seminary, was quick to see Mott's potentialities and would often stimulate his studies and encourage him to go on to college. The closest college and the one considered by the Mott family was the Upper Iowa

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<sup>2</sup>Clarence P. Shedd, Two Centuries of Student Christian Movements (New York: Association Press, 1934), p. 321.

University at Fayette. Mott entered this Methodist University in the year 1834 at the age of nineteen. Immediately he showed himself a student quite capable of handling his studies as well as many extra circular activities. He joined two of the outstanding college societies. One was the Philomathean, a form of debating club. Mott went through the chairs of this society which contributed much to his future ability in public speaking. Because his main interests were in a political career, Mott became very adept on debating on this his favorite subject and won many prizes. This talent for public speaking is quite recognizable in Mott's success of later life. Without it the birth of the great student movements is doubtful. Some of his speeches at Iowa University were printed and can be found in the school paper "The Collegian." As a part of his preparation for a political life, Mott, who was a stickler for detail, mastered Roberts Rules of Order and learned thoroughly the best procedures of debate. Professor Colegrove spoke highly of Mott while attending the University at Fayette. Although the statements of the professor indicate a voice speaking in retrospect, yet we may get some idea of how Mott was accepted at the college. He considered Mott as one who finished his course with a perfect paper, never unprepared for any of his assignments. As the Professor said, "I was thoroughly con-

vinced that he was destined for greatness."<sup>3</sup> But there was nothing to indicate that this greatness would be in the realm of Christianity.

Those same two elements which were impressed on Mott by Mr. Dean in Postville again find their way into his first year of college at Fayette. First, Mott is again brought under the influence of the Young Men's Christian Association. He became a charter member of the newly organized College Association after making a public profession of his faith which was recorded by Professor Colegrove:

In one of these meetings Mott arose and . . . told us his religious experiences. It was partly confession and partly profession. He had been converted in his home town of Postville a year or two before coming to college, but he had not let any one know it in Fayette, nor taken any part in the religious activities of the college. He now said he was ashamed of this and was determined to live an open, active, religious life in the future. . . . From that time on he was a faithful member of my Sunday School class for young men and a working Christian. Some time afterward a Young Men's Christian Association was organized at the college. Mott was a charter member and one of the most efficient and faithful workers.<sup>4</sup>

However, his participation in these religious organizations do not yet appear as being founded on a deep spiritual conviction. The second element, which is to influence Mott considerably, is his growth in the concept of a united student Christian movement. He was a member of the Alliance of Methodist Students and during his membership he defined the

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<sup>3</sup>Mathews, op. cit., p. 24.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 28.

aims of the Alliance, "to study the Christian Church as a whole and so avoid narrowness."<sup>5</sup> Mott also made it a point to visit the local churches and attend the Roman Catholic mass whenever held in the chapel. The dream of a united student world is beginning to take form, but is not yet a conscious part of Mott. Nor is it apparent that Mott was being consciously influenced by these two elements. He admittedly, in later life, considered his faith extremely superficial at this time. His work with the College Association and the Alliance thus appear based more on the feeling of a moral and ethical obligation than on the faith of a Christian.

Mott's aim was still to enter a political career for he planned to become a lawyer. His father, however, had other dreams. He wanted his son to take over the lumber business as soon as possible. Because Mott wanted to continue studying and the influence of his family was so close, he desired to leave the University at Fayette and continue his study elsewhere, particularly a school that could offer more in his field. He also had the feeling that pressure was being brought to bear on him by the school and others to carry out more religious work. As Mott himself said, he wanted to "get away from the religious influences of the

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 241.

denominational college at Fayette."<sup>6</sup> It appears, then, that many situations were influencing Mott to go to another school. To stress, as some, that Mott wanted to leave simply because Fayette was a denominational school is without reason. True, it was a contributing factor. Toward the end of his first year, he began to inquire of other colleges looking particularly for a larger one than Fayette. The choice finally narrowed down to the University of Michigan and Cornell. Both seemed to have better departments of history and politics. The choice was made. It was Cornell.

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<sup>6</sup>John R. Mott, Addresses and Papers of John R. Mott (New York: Association Press, 1946), III, 4.

## CHAPTER III

### THE INTERCOLLEGIATE Y.M.C.A.

John R. Mott has been introduced to the Y.M.C.A. at the Upper Iowa University. As soon as he enters Cornell, he will again be plunged into the activity of the College Association under the Intercollegiate Y.M.C.A. It therefore becomes necessary at this point to observe the work of the Y.M.C.A., particularly the work of the intercollegiate movement which shall bear such a tremendous influence on the school life and adult life of John Mott.

George Williams, together with eleven fellow clerks in England, formed on June 6, 1844, the beginning of what was to become the Y.M.C.A. They saw a definite need for bringing Christ into the daily lives and occupations of the common man. The newly founded organization immediately became attractive to the young people but it did not include the students. The organization spread in Britain and on December 22, 1851, Boston became the first city in America to form a Y.M.C.A. However, the student was left untouched. Without the help of the Y.M.C.A., the students of Virginia and Michigan Universities met separately to discuss plans for a student Christian association patterned after the Y.M.C.A., yet not a part of it. On October 12, 1858 the first student Y.M.C.A. was formed at Virginia University,

led by the University chaplain, the Rev. Dabney Carr Harrison. These first two college Young Men's Christian Associations formed at Virginia and a few months later at Michigan, took only the name of the Y.M.C.A. and were in no way connected with it. Other colleges began to follow suit and by 1864 a strong faculty supported student Y.M.C.A. was formed at the University of Rochester. Through the years including 1868, many colleges and universities formed similar Student Associations.

Every one of these College Christian Associations were patterned after the Y.M.C.A. but never under its jurisdiction. Often times the individual colleges were not even aware that other schools were carrying out similar projects. Although the name "Young Men's Christian Association" was being spread throughout the country, the organized Y.M.C.A. was not yet ready to incorporate the student life as a part of its work. As for the students themselves, they simply viewed the Y.M.C.A. as a city organization with a good method, an organization that could not be incorporated into college life. However, in the month of February, 1868, a group of students from a New York college requested that their College Association become a part of the Y.M.C.A. confederation. Representatives of both sides met on the twenty-first of the month and established the first student group as an organic part of the Y.M.C.A. though only on the local level. A few other groups did the same thing. Student

interest in the Y.M.C.A. increased and often students were found attending the Y.M.C.A. conventions. The following year, 1869, the Cornell Association was organized by twelve students and also became affiliated with the Y.M.C.A. Although organically incorporated as these few colleges were, there was still no intercollegiate movement among the Christian students.<sup>1</sup>

Why were colleges, on their own initiative, beginning to form such student groups as these? We might better understand by looking at the period of the 1800's. A National consciousness was rising particularly among the colleges. Students were becoming aware of one another. During this period fraternities were organized and intercollegiate sport events were held. The Christian student was also becoming conscious of his brother in other schools. Robert Weidensall and Richard C. Morse were the first full time workers for the Y.M.C.A. in America. It was Weidensall who saw the need of an organized intercollegiate Y.M.C.A. but little was done at the time. Approximately forty colleges had now organized a College Association but still the Y.M.C.A. confederation refrained from taking part. At this time Luther Wishard entered the picture. While at Hanover College in Indiana in 1872, he became very active as a College Associa-

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<sup>1</sup>Clarence P. Shedd, Two Centuries of Student Christian Movements (New York: Association Press, 1934), pp. 92-109.

tion worker. In 1875 he transferred to Princeton and continued to take an active part in that school's Christian society. In 1876 the Princeton society, under the influence of Wishard, had itself incorporated with the Y.M.C.A. At Princeton Wishard met Mr. William Dodge. He had a son attending Princeton at the same time. As one of the most forceful laymen of the Y.M.C.A. in America much could be accomplished if such a man were inspired to inaugurate an intercollegiate movement. Attempting to borrow some coal on a cold Winter night, Wishard accidentally met Mr. Dodge in the room of his son. It was there that the dream of uniting the Christian student through an intercollegiate movement was awakened. Wishard and Dodge discussed it with others and a letter was drafted and sent from Princeton to some two hundred colleges. On June 6, 1877 a convention of the Y.M.C.A. was being held at Louisville. The college groups that had responded to the letter were asked to meet at this convention. Twenty-five colleges responded. The groups met outside of the convention. However, the convention recognized the group and gave some time to Wishard on the convention floor. The plan for establishing an intercollegiate department of the Y.M.C.A. was well received and immediately the convention elected Wishard as the first correspondent secretary of the newly organized department.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid., chap. IX.

Success was inevitable and together with C. K. Ober, the second national student secretary, Wishard developed a well organized national intercollegiate movement. However, it became quite apparent from the start that it could never be an integral part of the general Y.M.C.A. Interests were quite different between the college man and the young working man. These differences were quite evident at the conventions, although they separated the two in the proceedings. Finally, in 1883, the split became more pronounced when separate conferences for the college students were started in Iowa and Wisconsin. Remaining organically a part of the Y.M.C.A., their activities were separate. The summer conferences which were soon to be started for students in 1886 emphasized the split and took the place of the national conferences to some degree.

The intercollegiate movement continued to grow and by the very nature of its work remained interdenominational. It was this united Christian movement, with the emphasis on the word "united," which was to become an influencing factor of Mott's life. As he himself later said:

The Young Men's Christian Association . . . by its interdenominational conferences . . . and by fusing together through its student associations the future leaders of all Christian bodies, has become one of the principal factors making for Christian unity.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>John R. Mott, The Pastor and Modern Missions (New York: Student Volunteer Movement, 1904), p. 30.

In looking at the overall picture of the development of the Y.M.C.A. we see the first Y.M.C.A. being established in Boston in 1851, the first University Y.M.C.A. at Virginia in 1858, although separated from the general Y.M.C.A. By 1877 many more had been organized and in the same year the intercollegiate department of the Y.M.C.A. was formed. The growth continued until 1885 at which time we find 181 college associations affiliated with the Y.M.C.A.<sup>4</sup> So we are brought up to the present. The student Associations have become a tremendous national force and upon entering Cornell John R. Mott will find himself unable to withdraw from it.

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<sup>4</sup>Ruth Rouse, The World's Student Christian Federation (London: S.C.M. Press Ltd., 1948), p. 26.

<sup>1</sup>John R. Mott, Addressing the Nations of John R. Mott (New York: Association Press, 1948), 221, 3.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE FIRST YEAR AT CORNELL UNIVERSITY

At the age of twenty, as a sophomore, John R. Mott entered Cornell University, then a school of eight hundred students. His freshman year was completed at Fayette. The Collegiate Association of Cornell had sent Mott a catalog of the school, and upon his arrival by train that September day of 1865, Association members came to meet him, as they did with all new students, in order that they might get him settled and introduced to students and professors.<sup>1</sup> Mott was taken to White Hall where other students were waiting. White Hall had the rooms used by the University's Christian Association. The senior men of the Association had made it a policy for many years to meet individually the new students and make them feel a little more at home. This policy noticeably struck Mott and in a letter he sent home he remarked to his parents that he had joined the local church and the University Y.M.C.A. within the same day. It cannot be denied that one of his motives was simply to get more acquainted with the new school since he admitted leaving Fayette to get away from the religious influence. Certainly his greatest concern was not the work of the Y.M.C.A. yet

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<sup>1</sup>John R. Mott, Addresses and Papers of John R. Mott (New York: Association Press, 1946), III, 5.

here again its influence becomes a factor in his school life.

Not only had the first influential element appeared again in Mott's life--that is the Y.M.C.A.--but also the second element, the growth toward interdenominational tendencies. Upon joining the Christian Association at Cornell, Mott found that they had rejected the ordinary foundation known as the "Portland Basis" which is strictly Protestant and had instead adopted their own which also allowed Roman Catholic students to enter the Association. The foundation read:

I acknowledge the Lord Jesus Christ as my master and believe on Him as my only Saviour. I promise to abide by the constitution of this Association and to unite with it earnestly in Christian work.<sup>2</sup>

Thus the spirit of a united Christian body continues to play a part in Mott's early life. When he became president of the Cornell Association, he appointed a Roman Catholic student, Mr. Callan, then president of the University Catholic Guild, as Chairman of one of the Association's important committees. Mott himself was often invited to attend the Roman Catholic meetings which he confessed helped much toward his understanding of their Church.

Because of the preservation of many of his letters written home during his school years, much is known about his activities. During the first year at Cornell he appeared

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<sup>2</sup>Basil Mathews, John R. Mott, World Citizen (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1934), p. 240.

very active. His main concerns were his school work and his political career, yet he was far from inactive in the College Association. He was elected by the Association to be one of its delegates at the New York State College Y.M.C.A. convention held at Hamilton College, one hundred miles away. Soon after, in the month of December, he was elected as vice-president of the Association. This was in itself quite unusual for a student's first year. At the same meeting it was decided to publish a monthly Association paper of which mention will be made later. Christmas vacation arrived at which time Mott was to attend the New York convention. While in New York he visited friends and made it apparent that he was still trying to escape religious influences.<sup>3</sup> It would be unfair to title him hypocritical. He was, no doubt, a young man with the Christian faith, yet a man who had doubts and fears; a man who was seeking an answer.

In the following month of January a great event was to take place in the life of Mott, an event which helped to a great extent in patterning his future life, clearing his doubts and answering his questions. Before going into the event, which was a speech by an English Evangelist, it might be well to observe some of the preceding events that led up to it. The famous evangelist, Dwight L. Moody, and his

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<sup>3</sup>Clarence P. Shedd, Two Centuries of Student Christian Movements (New York: Association Press, 1934), p. 294.

companion, Ira D. Sankey, arrived in Britain in 1873, and at this time converted a young student by the name of Henry Drummond, destined as well to become a famous evangelist. In 1882, Moody and Sankey again arrived in England and this time visited Cambridge University. There Moody won over some of the leading oarsmen and cricketers of the nation, including the Studd Brothers and Stanley Smith. This group, together with four others, formed the famous "Cambridge Seven" who were to storm the world with the message of Christ.<sup>4</sup> J. Kynaston Studd, of the "Cambridge Seven," later to become the Lord Mayor of London, and his wife arrived in America in the summer of 1885 to visit Dwight L. Moody at the Northfield Bible conference. While there Luther Wishard and C. K. Ober, the student secretaries of the International Y.M.C.A., suggested that Studd and his wife visit the American universities under their auspices and speak to the College Associations. Moody agreed with the plan and sent a cable to Quintin Hogg in England, head of the London Polytechnic under which Studd was serving. He agreed to allow Studd to conduct a winter tour of America and immediately Studd and his wife were sent on their way to Yale, Harvard, Cornell, and many other universities and colleges of the nation.

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<sup>4</sup>A History of the Ecumenical Movement 1517-1948, edited by Ruth Rouse and Stephen Charles Neill (London: S.P.C.K., 1954), pp. 330-31.

Studd and his wife arrived at Cornell on Thursday, the 14th of January, 1886. There the Old Botanical Lecture Hall was made available to him. The subject of his talk was not announced, but no doubt the students were well aware of who he was and had probably heard of his conversion during Moody's visit in England. The subject matter created no question in the students' minds. However, Mott was very hesitant in deciding whether to hear him or not. As one author reports it, "Torn between the desire to hear Studd and his fear of religious meetings, Mott did not find it easy to decide whether to go or stay away."<sup>5</sup> Whether this be the case or not Mott was hesitant and did arrive late. He was immediately stirred up by the speaker and the next day, Saturday at 2:30, he went to see Studd. Studd suggested that he keep an open mind, free from creedal influence in order that he might find for himself the Christ that demands complete submission. Studd suggested earnest Bible study. They met a few more times until Studd left the following Wednesday. This particular evening during which Mott heard Studd speak was not the only spoke in the wheel which turned his spiritual life, but it is such a contributing factor and Mott, himself, considered it so, that it does warrant some observation. In Mott's own words, his "conversion," as some call it, occurred in this manner:

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<sup>5</sup>Shedd, op. cit., p. 293.

I saw an announcement of a meeting to be addressed by Studd in the Botanical Lecture Hall, and I went late to the meeting. The first three sentences I heard him speak as I got inside the door . . . revolutionized my life. "Seek them not. Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness!" My conscience was aroused. Next day I went down into the ravine to wrestle with it before God. Then I sought out Studd. In all simplicity he gave me that day two words of counsel which have followed me through life. He led me to rivet my eyes on Christ. He led me to form the habit of reading every day from the original writings concerning Jesus.<sup>6</sup>

At the Indianapolis Convention of the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions Mott was pressed to tell the group the story of this great moment in his life. Here he gives us a more detailed account:

No sooner had I taken a seat in the rear of the botanical lecture room, where the meeting was being held, than I heard the speaker give three short sentences which proved to be the turning point in my life. These were the three sentences: "Seekest thou great things for thyself? Seek them not. Seek ye first the Kingdom of God." These words went straight to the springs of my motive life. I have forgotten all else that the speaker said, but on these few words hinged my life investment decision. I went back to my room not to study but to fight. Next morning I went down into the solitude of one of the gorges by the waterfall. At two-thirty I mustered up courage to seek an interview with Studd and found him in his sports clothes bent over his Bible. Studd, in a most discerning and sympathetic way, made me see the reasonableness of consulting for myself the source book of Christianity, the New Testament, and helped me to see the wisdom of using my will to follow the gleam of light leading Christ's way.

The great surrender to Christ as Lord came later. One friend helped me on the way Christward by advising me to forget myself in the service of men in real need--the county jail--and to devote much time that year to

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<sup>6</sup>Mott, op. cit., III, 4.

helping unfortunate, hardened, debased, enslaved men. This experience helped greatly to bring near to me Christ Himself as a reality. In following the advice to give myself to hard, honest study of the original writings or records about Christ, I undertook a somewhat thorough study of the Resurrection. I shall never forget the day when, with the papers containing my notes spread out on the desk and on the faded rag carpet, I was able with St. Thomas to say to Christ with intellectual honesty, "My Lord and my God." I at once wrote to my father who had held for me, an only son, a prosperous business, and told him to dispose of it, for I had seen a vision, that vision of Christ as Lord--and, therefore, the One who alone has the right to determine the investment of one's life.<sup>7</sup>

The decision for the Lord has been made. John Raleigh Mott now views his life as a servant of the Lord. Yet it is very apparent in this quotation of Mott's own words that the so-called "conversion" by Studd was not the big crisis, as some have made it, but more the culmination of a vexing problem that Mott had been bearing for some time. Notice that Mott cries the words of Thomas during his study of the Scripture. He exclaims, "The Lord My God" while he was searching the truth within God's Word. In a letter sent home this point can be illustrated. In the letter Studd is not even mentioned, and Mott shows his decision for the Lord coming from diligent seeking of the truth.

I have glad news for you for your prayers have been answered. The past week has seen a great change in my plans for life. . . . I came to Cornell intending to devote my energies through life to the legal profession and the service of my country; I can truly say that I never was prompted to any other calling than this previous to coming here, but since I have been here I have

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<sup>7</sup>Mathews, op. cit., pp. 35-36.

not been contented with my plans and there has been a constantly increasing impulse in me urging me to devote my whole life and talents to the service of Jesus. I at first warded off this prompting, but it gave me no rest and so for several weeks past I gave up and determined to see where the spirit would impel me.

About the time I decided on this course I became intimate with a young man of my age in the Christian Association who was in the same frame of mind exactly as was I. We had several honest talks on the subject, read some sermons on this line and also the Bible. I also recalled Bishop Simpson's lectures on the call to the ministry. This all took place last term. I did not settle the point so I then went to God in prayer and night after night I implored Him to reveal to me in an unmistakable manner what He would have me do in this world. This term came and my prayer was unanswered; last week opened up and still I was in doubt; last Tuesday noon found me very earnest but yet vacillating. After dinner that day I went up to study with my friend and although we needed every moment to get our lesson something forced us back to the old question; and we did not look at a textbook that afternoon. We talked over the whole matter candidly and coolly, and closely examined each other. I never was so earnest as then in my life; it was the same with Grant, we went right down to the bottom of things and looked at our motives and in silence listened to conscience. Mine would say nothing but "Consecrate yourself to My service." We then went upon our knees and God told me in reply that I must work in His vineyard. . . .

Since that moment I have been free from a great load. . . . And now, dear parent, you who have done so much for me, pray that I may be kept pure in heart and inspired with a love for souls. That your lives may be spared to see me do much for Christ is my prayer.<sup>8</sup>

Mott wrote this letter on Sunday night, January 17th, while Studd was still at Cornell. Why should he write this letter in silence of the Studd visit? It is doubtful that it is because it meant little to him. It is quite possible that

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 36.

Mott wanted his parents to realize that this was his decision and his alone. Thus to make mention of Studd, the evangelist, might stir up doubts in their minds as to the sincerity of his decision. But whether the influence of Studd on Mott be over estimated or not, it may still be classified as a turning point in his life, but not necessarily THE turning point. Many factors contributed to the complete reversal. All of them may be attributed to the work of the Spirit through the Word.

Mott also made an impression on Studd. Before leaving the United States Studd wrote to Richard Morse, the General Secretary of the International Committee of the Young Men's Christian Associations in North America and said,

Of all the students with whom I have come into contact during this tour among the universities, there is one man you have to keep your eye upon as a leader in your work, Mott of Cornell.<sup>9</sup>

Things in general seemed to pick up at Cornell for the rest of the school year. Spring was in the air and a new life seemed to surge through the school. Mott was asked to join a Bible class in the town church and some of his friends suggested that he get out and practice this new life in Christ. He began some intensive work among the local convicts and spent many hours with them in prison following them up after their release. Although the results were

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 34.

meager, Mott does claim some converts. Above all it helped to stabilize Mott's faith. The College Association as a whole also felt the results of the Studd visit. It became a custom to meet every Friday afternoon for one-half hour for a prayer and conference meeting. The membership increased from forty to 150 under the presidency of Grant, a close friend of Mott. In the Spring, the Association came out with its first edition of The Cornell University Christian Association Bulletin. Its principal content was on the Studd visit written by Mott.

So went the first year of Mott's college life at Cornell University. A great decision was made, a decision to give his life to the Lord. It was a decision that was to lead to many more great decisions and events in the course of his life.

## CHAPTER V

### THE MT. HERMON SUMMER CONFERENCE OF 1886

Before the first year at Cornell University can be closed, it is necessary to review some of the incidents that led to the Mt. Hermon Summer Conference that followed the first year. In the history of the student Christian movement this was to be a summer never forgotten. It was to be a summer compared with the great haystack meeting at Williams College. The circumstances that led to the conference are of special importance and of particular interest is the influence which three men had on the coming conference. They are Luther Wishard, Dwight Moody, and a young student by the name of Robert Wilder. The necessity of going into this conference in detail is warranted by the fact that the product of this summer conference was to become one of the major concerns of our subject, John Mott. It was Luther Wishard together with the Dodge family who worked for a student organization within the Y.M.C.A. It was because of the work done by the Princeton University Christian Society, where he was studying, that the inter-collegiate department of the Y.M.C.A. came into existence back in 1877. Wishard was then elected its first traveling secretary. Wishard, like Mott, was a man filled with the dream of a united student world. At the 1881 Y.M.C.A.

convention Wishard received permission to correspond with colleges in the Orient. He also achieved much work which led to unification within the year 1883 with British college groups.<sup>1</sup> This dream of Wishard, the dream which is yet not too clear in Mott, is to become an influential factor in this coming summer conference of 1886.

Before we enter the summer conference itself, we should review the life of another man, namely Dwight L. Moody, the evangelist, and the leader of the already popular general summer Bible Conferences. Already in 1858 Moody was actively engaged in Y.M.C.A. work as the president of the Chicago Association. However, his evangelistic abilities were gaining him much fame. It grew to the point that by 1871 he had to resign from the Association in order to carry out his evangelistic work. Soon after Moody began holding general Bible conferences for Christian workers at Northfield in the Connecticut Valley where he lived. During the summer of 1885 Moody and Wishard accidentally came together at the summer conference. This was the same conference attended by Studd. Wishard suggested to Moody that an all-student conference be held on similar lines as the Christian conferences now being held. It took much persuasion on the part of Wishard. After much hesitation Moody agreed and invita-

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<sup>1</sup>Ruth Rouse, The World's Student Christian Federation (London: S.C.M. Press Ltd., 1948), p. 31.

tions were sent out to the colleges and universities of North America. Moody was more interested in holding a Y.M.C.A. secretary conference but Wishard insisted on a strictly all-student conference. It is strange that Moody should shrink back and hesitate at Wishard's suggestion for a Bible conference for college students.<sup>2</sup> It seems as though Moody disliked holding college sessions because of embarrassment due to his lack of education. Yet he had already held meetings at the large universities of England where he had converted great men like Drummond and the "Cambridge Seven." However, as was already mentioned, Moody accepted Wishard's plan by April of 1886.

The invitations sent out by Wishard to the colleges were quite attractive. They contained a circular which drew a tempting picture of the summer conference putting much emphasis on the recreational facilities which would be present. The accompanying letter was drawn up also very appealing to the college associations.<sup>3</sup> After sending out the invitations Wishard and Ober, his colleague, set out in the Spring to visit the colleges and encourage the associations to send delegates. Ober was assigned to the New York area which

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<sup>2</sup>John R. Mott, Addresses and Papers of John R. Mott (New York: Association Press, 1946), I, 274.

<sup>3</sup>Clarence P. Shedd, Two Centuries of Student Christian Movements (New York: Association Press, 1934), pp. 243-46. This is the text of the letter.

included Cornell University. Upon his arrival at Cornell he met John Mott. A friendship was immediately established and the two worked hard in acquiring ten delegates from Cornell. At the start only one delegate was requested from each college but because all colleges did not respond the number of delegates was increased and Cornell was allowed ten. In a letter written home Mott had said that the invitation to attend the Mt. Hermon conference was referred to him by the members of the Cornell Association, for it was mentioned in the invitation that only one who planned to be at school for at least two more years should be delegated to the conference in order that he might return to carry on the work. Mott's activity in the Association made him the best representative, particularly since he had two more years of school. The significance of this choice is well brought out in the remark,

It staggers one's imagination to picture the significance to the religious and missionary life of the world of the persistence of both Wishard and Ober in securing the attendance of these two students Mott and Wilder from Cornell and Princeton to this first summer student conference.<sup>4</sup>

Immediately the Cornell Association began preparing for the conference. The fifth issue of the Association Bulletin for the month of June had an advance description of the coming conference. In one of the articles Mott portrayed the leader

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 247.

of the conference, Dwight L. Moody, as the greatest man of the century.<sup>5</sup>

Moody planned the conference for approximately four weeks beginning July 7th and ending on August 1st. There were to be but two hours of study in the morning and much recreation in the afternoon. This was in consideration for the students who had just completed a school year. However, this free time was a great asset for the success of the conference. It allowed the students to hold many informal conversations with the important speakers present. The general program for the conference was in this order: At 8:00 a.m. the discussion was to begin, Bible scholars were obtained to give the lectures, much recreation would continue with interspersed conferences, these would culminate with an outdoor sunset meeting. The principal discussions at the conference were on the devotional meeting, the duties of the officers and committees, mission work, the White Cross Army, and the Bible training class. Such a simple and yet effective program as this can hardly be compared with the present detailed conferences and sectional meetings of the Student Volunteer Movement conventions.<sup>6</sup> An hour every morning a small group of young men met with Wishard to discuss methods of how to work with their fellow students. This was another

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<sup>5</sup>Mott, op. cit., III, 8.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 9.

of the informal yet effective groups that made for the success of the conference. As for the group as a whole, there were present students from Dartmouth, Amherst, Yale, Cornell, Randolph, and many others. The gathering totaled 251 men, with 89 schools representing America and Canada.

During the conference Mott took very careful notes and in the afternoon would copy them in ink and underline what he thought the most pertinent with red ink. His copious notes totaled 132 pages. Many of these pages were analyses of the speeches. He devoted much of the book to Moody's Bible talks. The key note of the conference as it is found in Mott's notes was "He that winneth souls is wise." Mott, trying to keep the other nine representatives from Cornell close together, would, at the close of every day, gather them together, discuss the material from his note book, and proceed to form a working policy that could be used at the next school year.

The third man now enters the summer conference picture. His name is Robert Wilder, a name to be remembered throughout the entire student world as one of the great pioneers of the student Christian movement. Great Britain and the Scandinavian countries especially owe much to him. Wilder, like Wishard, was also from Princeton. He was the son of an Indian missionary. In 1883, just three years prior to the summer conference, he, with the help of a few others, began a missionary volunteer movement among the students of Prince-

ton, a movement that sought students desiring to volunteer their lives to Christian missions. By 1886 he had twenty-six signers of the volunteer declaration, twenty-six men who were willing to change the course of their lives and follow in mission fields. He, together with his sister, Grace, often prayed that a wide missionary movement might evolve from the American colleges. Now she was certain that their prayers would be answered at the Mt. Hermon conference.<sup>7</sup>

Grace was herself a signer of a missionary declaration which had been started in 1878 at Mt. Holyoke College. Many historians of the student volunteer movement considered this was the true beginning of its history and not the Mt. Hermon conference. Whatever the case may be, Grace Wilder did become a missionary into India in the footsteps of her father.<sup>8</sup>

When Robert Wilder first arrived at the Mt. Hermon summer conference his immediate concern was to bear his missionary zeal to others. The first two men whom he located with a similar zeal were Tewksbury of Harvard and Clark of Oberlin. As others were located they would gather together for prayer. The conference had hardly started when nineteen

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<sup>7</sup>Rouse, op. cit., p. 35.

<sup>8</sup>Student Missionary Appeal, Addresses at the Third International Convention of the S.V.M. for F.M. held at Cleveland, Ohio, February 23-27, 1898 (New York: S.V.M. or F.M., 1898), p. 310.

missionary minded students were found gathering together each day. Within the last week of the conference this small group went to Dr. Pierson and asked if he would give a talk on missions. Some time later they obtained Dr. Ashmore, a China missionary, to give a talk. However, the powerful talk by Pierson is considered the turning point of the conference. The title of his impressive speech was "All should go and go to all."<sup>9</sup> The missionary's spirit seemed to spread like a fire throughout the entire conference. Wilder seized this situation and urged Moody to allow them to hold a meeting one night which would be led only by students. Under much persuasion Moody consented and Wilder obtained ten of the volunteers of different nationalities and had them speak on the needs of their countries. Three minutes were allowed for each speaker. The impression of these talks on the audience led to it being called "The Meeting of the Ten Nations." However, it was a slight misnomer since three of the boys were simply sons of missionaries in China, India, and Persia. The other seven were a North American, an Indian, a German, a Dane, a Norwegian, a Japanese, an Armenian, and a Siamese. The meeting of the ten nations was extremely effective and led many into prayer that night, Friday, July 23rd. A unified spirit seemed to sweep over the group. A

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<sup>9</sup>Basil Mathews, John R. Mott, World Citizen (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1934), p. 45.

day or so later Wilder was walking to the swimming hole with Mott when he slightly swung the conversation over to missions. Mott evaded any answer then. But during the conversation Wilder mentioned the prayer of him and his sister that one hundred volunteers for mission work would emerge from this conference. That small group of nineteen which was meeting every day under a tree in prayer grew to a size necessitating the old Crossley Recreation Hall for their prayer meetings. By now Mott had joined the group. During their evening meetings, each volunteer would give a testimony as to why he decided to be a missionary. Close to the last night of the summer conference they again met at the old hall and gave their testimonials. Many men were added to the volunteer group that night. Mott gives us a vivid picture of this night:

Man after man arose and told the reason why he had decided to become a volunteer. . . . At the beginning of the Mount Hermon conference less than half a dozen students were expecting to be missionaries. By the last day ninety-nine had decided and had signed a paper that read "We are willing and desirous, God permitting, to become foreign missionaries" . . . and while we were kneeling in that closing period of heart-burning prayer the hundredth man came in and knelt with us.<sup>10</sup>

At the close of the conference four of the volunteers were chosen to act as missionaries among the colleges and universities of North America. They were to plan their visits on the same basis as the famous Cambridge Seven who

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 46.

visited the British Universities. Mott was one of the four chosen. However, he decided it better that he continue his schooling first and carry the message of the summer conference back to the Cornell Association. It has also been noted that family difficulties prevented Mott from joining this missionary deputation to the colleges. Finally only Wilder was able to go on this missionary crusade, but by the Autumn of the year, a young man by the name of Foreman consented to join him. The main problem of this missionary deputation plan was how it would be financed. Wishard, who gave full support to this missionary outgrowth of the Mt. Hermon conference, wired to McWilliams in New York City, an ardent supporter of student movements, who immediately offered all the financial support needed.

The Mt. Hermon conference was by no means the first and only spark of student missions. It was more a flaming of many sparks found in individual missionary societies already present. The Y.M.C.A. had already been aware of their mission obligations. Princeton as was already noted had the declaration system, and if one wishes to stretch it back further he may point back to the missionary spark at Williams College under Samuel J. Mills. Yet no previous student missionary group was of this scope. No other group had such an organizational backing. No other group immediately found itself within an intercollegiate organization that would enable it to spread rapidly throughout the Continent.

Thus from this group of one hundred was to emerge, two years later, the international Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions. This summer conference of 1886 was the first international and interdenominational student Christian conference ever to be held. With the sponsorship of the international committee of the Y.M.C.A. of North America the small group could not fail. In realizing the significance of this conference Mott published his first pamphlet in August, 1889, entitled "The American Student Missionary Uprising," which told in nineteen small pages a story of the Mt. Hermon convention. Who can deny that the tremendous Christian outreach of this group was under the divine guidance of our Lord?

He resigned as president and Mott was temporarily elected into the position until the coming January when he was re-elected for the full term. Under his leadership the College Association continued to grow in membership as well as achievements. He stated:

At the beginning of my junior year I was made president of the Cornell Christian Association. Before the end of the year its membership had grown to 370 as compared with 12 several years earlier and 130 one year earlier. We did a great deal of social service in the slums of Ithaca.

The social work which had already been going on when Mott arrived at Cornell now became more active. The group endeavored to practice their charity throughout the under-priv-

John H. Mott, *Addressess and Letters of John H. Mott* (New York: Association Press, 1948), II, 6.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE SECOND YEAR AT CORNELL

The year of 1885-1886 at Cornell University passed with great decisions on the part of Mott and great events in behalf of the Cornell students. However, the second year is not to pass without its landmarks. Although none of them appear as large as those of the first year, yet they do help to form the growth of a man destined to greater things. The second year appears with its continued zeal for student work on the part of the College Association. At the beginning of the school year Grant resigned as president and Mott was temporarily elected into the position until the coming January when he was reelected for the full term. Under his leadership the College Association continued to grow in number as well as achievements. He states:

At the beginning of my junior year I was made president of the Cornell Christian Association. Before the end of the year its membership had grown to 330 as compared with 32 several years earlier and 130 one year earlier. We did a great deal of social service in the slums of Ithaca.<sup>1</sup>

The social work which had already been going on when Mott arrived at Cornell now became more active. The group endeavored to practice their charity throughout the under-priv-

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<sup>1</sup>John R. Mott, Addresses and Papers of John R. Mott (New York: Association Press, 1946), IV, 6.

ileged areas of the city which harbored their University. They not only worked with the students but also sought to help others. They would send students to hold services at a nearby church. It was here that Mott delivered one of his earliest religious addresses.

Apparently his public speaking training made him known to other churches for he was asked to speak in them as well. No doubt this new Mott who had found Christ had taken on a new zeal in his speaking. He also wanted to know how others spoke of Christ and so he often attended the local church services of the area and took notes on their sermons. He particularly did this at the University chapel. Some time ago Russell Sage gave a large endowment in order that the great preachers of the major denominations might hold services at the University chapel. Often Mott would try to speak personally with the visiting pastors, and learn by the experience of others. His studies of Scripture continued to enrich the religious talks he gave throughout the year. His new religious interests also led him as a member of the Honors Course, to make a study of the religious movements in Europe before the Reformation.<sup>2</sup>

John Mott contributed much to the college association during this year. On January 9th he organized the first

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<sup>2</sup>Galen M. Fisher, John R. Mott--Architect of Co-operation and Unity (New York: Association Press, 1952), p. 38.

missionary meeting. The basis for membership was the answer to the question, "Why should I not go into the foreign field to labor for Christ?" As Mott himself said, this "implies that the claims of the foreign field are a greater burden on one's heart than any other branch of Christian work."<sup>3</sup> No doubt the organization of this missionary group was motivated by the volunteers of the famous Mt. Hermon Conference of the past summer. Mott also contributed to the Association by helping organize a library for them. It is interesting to note that a good number of systematic books of other faiths were present in the collection. In doing this it becomes more and more obvious that to eliminate the word "ecumenical" from Mott's dream is impossible.

Was it proper for a student like Mott to give so much of his time and energy to the Cornell Christian Association? He was now primarily concerned in serving the Lord, and in a letter to his father on October 10th, 1886, Mott showed his deep concern for bringing Christ to the student.

Here where young men, who are to control the thought of the country in days to come, are making decisions for life, how important it is that the cause of Christ should be presented to them.<sup>4</sup>

Yet with this deep regard for carrying the Message of

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<sup>3</sup>Clarence P. Shedd, Two Centuries of Student Christian Movements (New York: Association Press, 1934), p. 297.

<sup>4</sup>Basil Mathews, John R. Mott, World Citizen (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1934), p. 49.

Love to his fellow students, it cannot be assumed that he did not fulfill his obligations and more in his studies. Mott graduated with two Bachelor degrees, he received the Phi Beta Kappa key, and later in life accepted many honorary degrees.

His religious activities on campus were not, however, confined to the Association. His second year finds him working hard with the Methodist Alliance. But Mott also formed a rather strange group called the Cornell Religious Association. It had no connection whatsoever with the Christian Association nor the Methodist Alliance. Anyone who had a sincere interest in religion, honest convictions of his own, and a tolerance for others could join this group. Its purpose was to enlighten one another in regard to the faiths of the world. Among its members were to be found Roman Catholics, Orthodox Catholics, Protestants of many denominations, Jews, Buddhists, and occasionally a Mormon or two whom Mott had never considered Christian.

The College Y.M.C.A. was still his major concern. With its continued growth the pressing need for room became very acute. It was Mott's desire to obtain a separate building on the Cornell campus for the Association, a desire that led to Association buildings started by Mott throughout the world. He wrote a vivid editorial in the Association's Bulletin on the pressing need for a building. It was a plea for help from the school and from outsiders, placing the

responsibility on Christians everywhere. This too was a technique Mott often used to raise sums of money needed for Christian work. He would make the potential contributor feel that should he not give he was slacking his obligations as a Christian. In the February Bulletin article, Mott gave detailed reasons why all should contribute to this building program. At the previous Association meeting a Board of Trustees was set up for the planning of the building. The Board consisted of Professors Tyler, Thurber, Kennedy, and Mott. The Association having voted to erect such a building was caught up in a zeal to get the campaign off to a good start. Two members decided to obtain ten men who would pledge one hundred dollars each and thus set a precedent for others. Mott, a fund raising genius, was able to obtain fifty-four such pledges from the students. He even obtained a five hundred dollar pledge from one of the trustees. Less than three weeks later nearly eight thousand dollars was already pledged. By the time Mott went home for the holidays, the Association had obtained pledges amounting to ten thousand dollars. Then came one of the most uplifting moments of the Association's life. While home Mott received a telegram from a Mr. Barnes, trustee of Cornell and a New York publisher. After hearing of the students' sacrifices he pledged to give forty thousand dollars and later increased that to fifty thousand dollars. This already exceeded the first estimated cost of the new building which was set at forty

thousand dollars. There are, however, some slight discrepancies as to the amount donated by Barnes, but it matters little for now the Association was well assured of having its own building. Mott worked hard throughout the remaining year at Cornell and in the Autumn of 1888, Mott returned to the school to dedicate the new Barnes Hall.

This building plan inaugurated by Mott bears out two significant traits that were to mean much in his later life. First, it shows his ability to raise money. Without this ability the founding of the World Student Christian Federation would have been long delayed. For Mott, money was a very active thing and he often referred to it as the key to the release of positive power. Secondly, it bears out Mott's foresight in visioning the necessity of a building for the success of such an organization. This foresight led to the building of many Y.M.C.A. and S.C.M. buildings around the world. We may also mention a third point. C. K. Ober, the intercollegiate secretary, together with Wishard, came to Cornell by Mott's request. Mott wanted to ask him some questions regarding the building. It was during his visit, at which time he saw the work Mott was doing, that Ober became convinced that Mott's leadership should be used on a national scale.

During this second year growth was by no means restricted to the Cornell Association. Throughout this school year, Wilder had been traveling around the country visiting

many of the college associations under the auspices of the student volunteers of the Mt. Hermon conference. In the year of travel Wilder, Foreman, and others had obtained 2,100 volunteers--1,600 men, and 500 women. The two had obtained 1,500 volunteers and had visited during the school year of 1886-1887, 176 schools. On a Sunday in March the two men arrived at Cornell. After spending two days and holding four meetings on missions they obtained thirty-five volunteers. Thirty-five names were signed on the declaration expressing a desire to do mission work.

Through the work of Wilder and Foreman the summer conference was rapidly becoming known throughout the country. Its success was assured and with the approaching summer the conference was set up at Northfield, near Mt. Hermon. This second student conference was to be held for only two weeks starting on June 15th. Four hundred and fifty delegates arrived with twelve from Cornell. A little misunderstanding was in the air prior to the conference and during it. Many were led to believe that the conference was now only a place to recruit missionaries because of the volunteer movement started the previous year. Wishard, however, wanted to clear up this matter as quickly as possible. He sent out a report that assured all that the conference was for Bible study, how to use it, and how to apply it in the colleges.<sup>5</sup> But not

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<sup>5</sup>Shedd, op. cit., p. 270.

even this misconception was able to hold back the success of the summer conference. Not only had it become nationally famous throughout the past year, it was already on the way to being internationally famous. Wishard, in his travels, had obtained twelve British and Continental students as representatives to the conference. The conference, however, did have its drawbacks. Drummond, the English Evangelist, conducted the conference with the help of Studd. These two men vividly impressed the students present. They were able to fire up their zeal but it was as though little fuel was present to keep it burning. The two men gave the students no organizational methods nor concrete techniques that they could take back to school. But with new associations there is new enthusiasm and it is difficult to burn it out. The future of the conferences was well in hand. With foreigners bringing back the good news and starting up their own conferences, the dreams of Wishard and Mott were beginning to take form.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Ruth Rouse, The World's Student Christian Federation (London: S.C.M. Press Ltd., 1948), p. 36.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE THIRD YEAR AT CORNELL

In entering the third and final year at Cornell University, one finds a strong emphasis being placed on the spiritual life of John Mott.

During my senior year at Cornell I got R. S. Miller, Jr. to join the Association Y.M.C.A. and every Sunday morning the two of us met for an intensive study of the Bible with reference to the Holy Spirit. That year, during lunch hours, I also read through Thomas a Kempis' Imitatis Christi eight times.<sup>1</sup>

The Sunday mornings also included other Bible studies with Association members in his room. This was a period of intense Bible study on the part of Mott. No doubt the spiritual strength which this studying was giving Mott contributed the biggest factor in helping Mott decide in what direction he was to turn at the conclusion of this last school year.

As far as his work in the last year is concerned, one of the more significant events is his December report to the Y.M.C.A. of the condition of the Cornell College Association. As the president of the Association he had taken upon himself to submit a twenty-four page typed report. The report bears out many of the outstanding qualities of Mott such as

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<sup>1</sup>John R. Mott, Addresses and Papers of John R. Mott (New York: Association Press, 1946), IV, 6.

his ability of leadership, organization and administration. In the report it is clear that the second influential element that contributed to the fulfillment of his dream was already concretely formed within his mind--that is his ecumenical tendencies. Mott said that the College Association had now won the respect of the students, the faculty, and the trustees. He went on to say that it had the cooperation of all denominations, and that among the Association denominational lines are entirely forgotten.<sup>2</sup> The necessity of incorporating the work of students in this ecumenical dream is apparent in a jubilant remark made by Mott in a letter home.

The tendency is increasing, especially in non-denominational colleges as Cornell to take religious matters out of the hands of the faculty and leave them to the spontaneous action of student organizations.<sup>3</sup>

However, he also presented the warning in his report that students must beware of losing the spiritual significance of their college Y.M.C.A.

The report continues to state that the Association had grown within his fifteen months as president from one hundred to 406 members. One hundred and thirteen of these members were serving on twenty-seven committees. These committees became extremely effective branches of the Association. In

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid., III, 14-26.

<sup>3</sup>Basil Mathews, John R. Mott, World Citizen (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1934), p. 72.

a letter home, Mott mentioned how pleased he was with the efficiency of the Y.M.C.A. because of this committee system which involved one-fourth of the members. He claimed that now it took but one-half the time to carry out his duties. At the beginning of each term the chairmen would have a special social evening to plan the year's work. The plans always included evangelistic meetings. The plans for the Bible study groups were to use the inductive method instituted by J. P. Reynolds. The missionary band, that volunteer section of the Association, had now grown to thirty-nine members. The report continued to state that the Association was financially healthy and had revised the constitution in order that it might be more effective. The Association bulletin had grown to twenty pages plus four pages of ads. The Y.M.C.A. library was now increased to 153 volumes with one hundred magazines. Special help continued to be offered to the new students. Because of the Association's growth, it was encouraged that the group meet according to their class. Yet in no way did this hinder the Association's efficiency in carrying out its work. Mott also suggested in the report that a full time general secretary be appointed from the student body to work for the College Association. Mott felt that the work was becoming too time consuming and that the president could not both go to school and properly administer his office. Apparently he got this idea of a general secretary from the system already being practised at Yale. In

glancing over this report, it becomes apparent that the activities at Cornell coincided very closely with the suggested activities and discussions at the Mt. Hermon and Northfield summer conferences. Mott had utilized what he had learned from these conferences to its greatest extent. In so doing he became quite familiar with the practical aspects of the intercollegiate endeavors.

This is the closing year at Cornell and because of his outstanding work as a student and as a leader of the College Association, Mott finds himself confronted with many tempting offers. He was offered a traveling scholarship to Europe for a year's work in historical research. Chaperoned by the Librarian, he would be allowed to consult primary sources in the great university cities of Berlin, Bonn, Dresden, Heidelberg, Zurich, Paris, and London. The University offered him a fellowship in philosophy. He was also asked to become the Cornell Association's first full time general secretary, the job he had suggested in the report. The intercollegiate Y.M.C.A. was also interested and sought him as a secretary with C. K. Ober. Wishard, who was secretary with Ober, was about to leave on a tour of Asia. Ober, who had met Mott, desired securing him as an associate during Wishard's absence. However, Mott was seriously considering going on to a theological seminary. Prior to this he gave some thought, though very slight, to an engineering career. It seems as though his first love of a political career had now left the pic-

ture.<sup>4</sup>

On May 5, 1888 he declined the offer as the Cornell Association's secretary and helped to nominate R. S. Miller for the position. Before long he also declined the offers made by Cornell. After declining the scholarship to Europe the desire for entering the Christian ministry was now becoming uppermost in his thoughts. In considering the Christian ministry, he was not too sure what part of Christian work he should really follow. The events which were to follow would help him decide. Mott was scheduled to speak at the New York Association Convention during this last school year. While in New York he visited the president of Drew Seminary in New Jersey and Mr. Field, the editor of a New York periodical. Both of these men suggested that he consider the Cornell fellowship. But there were other plans for Mott. At this convention of fifteen hundred delegates the leaders of the Y.M.C.A. were planning on a critical look at this man Mott who had been suggested to them by many of their influential workers. Wishard, Morse, McBurney, and Webster made it a point to urge Mott to accept the secretaryship of the intercollegiate department together with Ober.

Mott gave the secretaryship serious thought and paints a vivid picture of its offers in a letter to his parents.

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 68.

The College Secretary of the Y.M.C.A. as you know, is going to foreign lands to spend four to six years introducing the Young Men's Christian Association work in foreign colleges. The International Committee of Young Men's Christian Associations of the United States and Canada therefore want to get two young men to take his place in conducting and further introducing the work in the United States and Canada. They got me to stay over a day in New York and gave me a call to one of the places and a fellow named James B. Reynolds of Yale to the other. The work means traveling from college to college spending from three to seven days in each during between seven and eight months of the year. The remaining time you have for yourself. For this they offer me \$1,500 for the first year with all traveling and hotel expenses paid,--and a probability of getting \$2,500 per year in the course of five years if my work is satisfactory. They have given me several months to think the matter over.<sup>5</sup>

Even with this tempting offer, Mott hesitated in his answer, particularly because of the pressing work at Cornell and the desire of his family that he come home. Ober, who was anxious to have him take the position, noticed Mott's delay in answering and immediately went to see him during the latter part of March. But even with Ober's visit Mott remained undecided. As they walked to the train Ober was to board for New York, he suggested that they pray together behind the coal shed of the railroad station. Then Ober said:

Although you cannot see your way clear now to accept our call for life, you might consider it as a call for a year with the thought that this may furnish just the additional light you need for being perfectly trained for your life work.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 69.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 71.

Mott gave this position much thought, and he inquired of his parents through correspondence what they thought of the offer. He had arguments with himself and consulted many others. He prayed fervently over the matter and then, being convinced that he had chosen the right course, he accepted the Intercollegiate secretaryship of the Y.M.C.A. In a letter to his mother he speaks of the struggle he had in deciding what path to follow. When the decision was made to follow Christ and Him alone, he concluded by saying, "It calls to mind what a Saviour has suffered for me--how He has suffered for me--how He has saved me from my sins--how He has called me back from backsliding."<sup>7</sup>

Mott made his decision known to Ober by letter on April 16, 1888. However, he specified certain conditions in accepting this position. First of all, it was to be on a trial basis for one year and that if he found it necessary after that time to continue his studies, he could do so. The second condition was that he would at no time be obligated to raise any money. That these two conditions were quickly forgotten is apparent by the fact that he did remain with the intercollegiate work and did become the most outstanding fund raiser for the Student Christian Movement. It has been ascertained that within his course of life he raised an equivalent of three hundred million dollars. As he himself said,

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid., pp. 39-40.

"I got into it so deep that I have never been able to get out of it."<sup>8</sup> In accepting this position, Mott faces an intercollegiate Y.M.C.A. with an already firm foundation. At this time there is a College Association in three hundred of the approximately twelve hundred existing colleges in the United States and Canada. The total student membership had reached sixteen thousand. That Mott was well qualified and prepared to meet the task is evident in the faith placed on him by the leaders of the movement. Though a young man of only twenty-three years, he shows himself well versed in the methods and purposes of the College Association.

In a letter written home during his senior year Mott elaborated in detail what he considered the functions of a College Association:

- a. To emphasize upon Christian students their duty to look after the spiritual welfare of their fellow-students.
- b. To show the importance of an earnest, intelligent, devout, practical study of the Bible in college.
- c. To train young men in methods of Christian work so that they can go out from college and help in the work of the home churches and associations.
- d. To press upon young men the vast importance of social purity by means of the White Cross movement.
- e. To quicken an interest among young men in the cause of home and foreign missions--leading them to con-

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<sup>8</sup>Ruth Rouse, The World's Student Christian Federation (London: S.C.M. Press Ltd., 1948), p. 49.

secrete their lives to religious work.<sup>9</sup>

As far as his own specific duties as college secretary were concerned, he felt that he would be obligated to spend a few days at each college that he visited, instruct them in the mentioned goals, give them methods of execution, and stimulate their zeal by holding evangelistic meetings. As much as these goals may appear to infringe on the work of the Church, by such a definition we find ourselves making an indictment against the Church itself. Denominations had not met the need of the student. But now the Christian student, as a member of the Universal Church, has taken upon himself to witness to his fellow students through the intercollegiate Student Christian Movement this organization. Mott did not consider the Association a church. In his own words,

The Y.M.C.A. is in no sense a Church. It does not perform what we properly regard as the distinctive functions of the Church. Nor is it a substitute for the Church of Christ. It is not an end in itself, but is tributary to the Church. It does not, when it exists in its true place, in any sense weaken the Church, but rather strengthens its hands. It should never be regarded therefore as a competitor or rival of the Church.<sup>10</sup>

These, then, are the convictions, the methods, and goals that are in the hands of Mott, the new college secretary.

In a sense his third year at Cornell should be closed at this point for Mott is now a career man working full time

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<sup>9</sup>Mathews, op. cit., p. 72.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 440.

for Christ through the Y.M.C.A. Yet because the summer conferences are so linked with the students, and Mott has just graduated from Cornell, we might at this point consider the summer conference of 1888. Immediately upon graduation Mott went straight to the Northfield student conference under Moody's chairmanship. Mott was attending for the first time, not only as a student, but also as the new college secretary. In this capacity, he gave a speech at the conference concerning his work. Although Wishard was not present his influence on this particular conference is greatly felt by the group and helped considerably in widening Mott's view of the student Christian movement. Wishard was in Europe trying to organize a German movement and therefore wanted to forego attending Northfield this year in order that he might follow up contacts made in Europe. Even though he had seen to it that foreign students attended the conference the previous year, he still saw little hope of international relations with them. However, when British S.C.M. leaders said that they were planning to attend the conference of 1888, his dream of an international group was revitalized. Wishard then helped in securing ten British students to attend the conference, such as MacLean of Glasgow, Wilson of Cambridge, Martin of Edinburgh, Bartlet of Oxford, and others, all leaders in the British S.C.M.<sup>11</sup> Seeing these British stu-

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<sup>11</sup>Rouse, op. cit., p. 37.

dents at the conference, Mott's dream also became more vivid. In expression of this, he sent a letter to Professor Burr at Cornell saying that he was convinced that some form of intercollegiate Christian association would soon be formed in Britain and elsewhere although probably not under direct supervision of the Y.M.C.A. Whether organically joined with the Y.M.C.A. or not, Mott was sure that this was a step leading towards the reality of his dream that some day the Christian students would be joined together though they be at the four corners of the world.

Wishard returned to America in August of this year. However, the following month, under the auspices of the world committee of the Y.M.C.A., he began a tour in the Orient. The tour extended from September 18th to April 20th, 1892. The effect of this tour, which will not be discussed in this paper, is quite evident in the observation of Mott's first world tour. The success of Mott's trip would not have reached the goals it did had it not been for the ground work laid by Wishard in these early years. As for Wishard, we will be little concerned with him until he begins the journey with the Motts to Europe in 1895. However, it might be noted that the ecumenical spirit was strong in the air. With Wishard located in the Orient, Reynolds accomplishing the same work in Europe, and Mott beginning his work in America the reality of Mott's dream begins to see its dawn.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE STUDENT VOLUNTEER MOVEMENT FOR FOREIGN MISSIONS

Chronologically we remain at the summer conference of 1888, yet at this point it is necessary to observe the Student Volunteer Movement as it grew from this conference. Since 1886, when the first one hundred volunteers signed the declaration and returned to their respective colleges, many problems arose. They were problems that even jeopardized the efficiency of the intercollegiate movement. The fifty volunteers present at the World Student Conference at Northfield (so named because of the foreigners now participating in the summer conferences) presented the problems which the volunteers faced. For one thing, there was no leadership. Many volunteers were not sure in what manner they should prepare themselves for missionary work. Some began to lose enthusiasm and the pledge simply became a signature on a piece of paper. Another problem was that the volunteers, if there was a good number located at one particular college, began to conflict with the local religious organizations.<sup>1</sup> However, the biggest problem was that a definite split was noticeable between the members of the College As-

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<sup>1</sup>John R. Mott, Addresses and Papers of John R. Mott (New York: Association Press, 1946), I, 7.

sociation and the volunteers. The volunteers were banding separately from their Association and would often break into smaller societies. There was the increasing danger of friction and cross purposes which hampered the efforts of the volunteers as well as the missionary work of the Y.M. C.A. In view of these problems, Wilder, who had already toured the colleges during the school year following the Mt. Hermon conference was now asked to go on another missionary deputation to the colleges in order to help correct these problems. Wilder then became the first secretary of the newly organized Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions which now comes under consideration. C. K. Ober, the intercollegiate secretary, was requested to be chairman by the volunteers and to head the organization of the volunteer movement looking into its possibilities of functions and aims. This simple request on the part of the small group of volunteers at the summer conference of 1888 had far-reaching effects. "On this apparently unimportant decision depended not simply the future work of Mott, but in a very real sense the whole history of the world student Christian movement."<sup>2</sup> Ober immediately drew up some plans of organization which were adopted at the conference. However, Ober recommended to the committee that Mott not only continue his work for the

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<sup>2</sup>Basil Mathews, John R. Mott, World Citizen (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1934), p. 84.

student Y.M.C.A., but also make it a part of his function to establish the volunteer movement as a part of the Association's program. Others, including Cleveland H. Dodge, also recommended that Mott formally organize the movement. He went ahead and drew up a simple organization consisting of a committee of official representatives from the intercollegiate Y.M.C.A. under Mott, the intercollegiate Y.W.C.A. under Nettie S. Dunn, and the Inter-Seminary Missionary Alliance under Wilder, with the corresponding organizations in Canada. Although the Y.W.C.A. will not be discussed, a few facts might be mentioned regarding the Inter-Seminary Missionary Alliance. A group of theological students met for the first time in 1880 in New Brunswick, New Jersey, under Robert Matter of Princeton to form the alliance. There were 250 theological students present. However, through the years it was apparent that this alliance was so related to the S.V.M. that it disbanded and became a part of the Y.M.C.A. theological department in 1898.<sup>3</sup> The reason that the newly formed S.V.M. organization was to be composed of these three groups was obvious. They were all affiliated with the general Y.M.C.A. and volunteers were to be found among each of them. The plan was approved and the official representatives of each group became the executive committee of the

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<sup>3</sup>William Richey Hogg, Ecumenical Foundations (New York: Harper and Bros., 1952), p. 83.

S.V.M. for F.M. Thus a serious split was prevented within the Intercollegiate association without in any way hindering its missionary work. Mott was appointed chairman, an office which he was to hold for some thirty years. As chairman he presided over the first ten great quadrennial conventions of the movement--conventions which, through the years, became one of the most outstanding contributions of the movement. By 1951, some twenty-one thousand volunteers had been sent out into foreign fields.<sup>4</sup>

The beginning of the S.V.M. created many important conceptions particularly in the minds of the outsiders. In each local college the volunteers became the missionary department of the College Association. But they were in no way regarded as a missionary board. Never has the movement sent out a missionary on its own. They considered themselves as a recruiting agency--an agency that guided young men and women in their preparation for missionary work. When the volunteers were ready for action they would submit themselves to the missionary boards usually of their own denominational background. According to Mott, the four-fold purpose of the S.V.M. which he expressed at the convention of 1898 was first to awaken and maintain a mission interest. Throughout the years, however, Mott's emphasis shifted a little in that he

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<sup>4</sup>Galen M. Fisher, John R. Mott-Architect of Co-operation and Unity (New York: Association Press, 1952), pp. 10-11.

began to view more critically the necessity of home missions and other vital Christian service. The second purpose of the S.V.M. was to enroll sufficient numbers to meet the demands of the missionary boards. Again we see throughout the years Mott's viewpoint changing, for after the movement became quite large Mott began to place a heavy emphasis on the quality and the spiritual life of the already present volunteers. The third purpose of the S.V.M. was to help prepare others as missionaries. Not only was the volunteer to prepare himself but in so doing he was to practise his missionary spirit by influencing others into the field. Fourthly, its purpose was that the volunteers help others, already in the ministry, see their obligations in contributing to foreign missions.<sup>5</sup>

The S.V.M. is basically built on the pledge or declaration signed by the student. It was always, therefore, the goal of the student to get others to sign the pledge submitting themselves to mission work. Because of this, such men as Wilder and others, in traveling throughout the universities and colleges, would first seek students who showed an interest in mission work. In turn those students would often become the nucleus for a College Association on the

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<sup>5</sup>Student Missionary Appeal, Addresses at the Third International Convention of the S.V.M. for F.M. held at Cleveland, Ohio, February 23-27, 1898 (New York: S.V.M. for F.M., 1898), p. 43.

campus. The cause and the effect shift. The Student Volunteer Movement was in itself a product of the College Association but the S.V.M. was later also to become the cause of many local Associations. We might recall here that Mott himself, in 1886, had signed this pledge and, as far as can be ascertained, in no way did he consider his work as inter-collegiate secretary in conflict with this pledge. The declaration at the present time reads, "It is my purpose, if God permits, to become a foreign missionary." However, prior to 1892, the declaration read, "I am willing and desirous, God permitting, to become a foreign missionary."<sup>6</sup> The change was brought about because of a misunderstanding. Some interpreted the earlier version to be a rather vague pledge by one who would consider mission work. However, for the majority of the signers, the meaning of the declaration was obvious. It meant a complete devotion to the Christian life. It meant that the student now was to set his life on a new course. Now his life was to be given to full time work for the growth of the Kingdom of God. In this light, Mott was fulfilling his pledge as a volunteer and his future foreign missionary work would suppress any doubts.

Also worthy of consideration is the Watchery which was adopted by the volunteers in 1888. This Watchery "The

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<sup>6</sup>Ruth Rouse, The World's Student Christian Federation (London: S.C.M. Press Ltd., 1948), p. 12.

"Evangelization of the World in This Generation" has, throughout the years, been brought under much criticism, abuse, and misuse. It created many comments both pro and con and was, therefore, officially dropped by all organizations except America prior to 1948. This Watchword became an active ideal in the life of Mott. As he himself expressed:

From the beginning the Movement has insisted that, although the watchword was to be taken as an ideal for the Movement as a whole, the secret of realizing it lay in having a sufficient number . . . of Christians, adopt it as their personal watchword.<sup>7</sup>

Because the Cry led to much misunderstanding, many suggested that it be dropped when the generation passed by and the world was not completely evangelized. To this Mott replied:

The daring watchword of the S.V.M. "The Evangelization of the World in this Generation." The fact that a generation has passed since the watchword was adopted and the world remains unevangelized doesn't affect the value and relevance of it. The ideal is realizable if individual Christians everywhere make it a governing principle of their lives. It emphasizes the urgency of the world's evangelization as a task for living men on behalf of living men.<sup>8</sup>

Certainly the Watchword could not have been defined any better. For a Christian this goal must be one of his obligations. The Watchword became a living force and motivation not only in Mott's life but also in the lives of all those who worked for the intercollegiate Movement. It became a lamp for Mott on his way to realizing the fulfillment of his

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<sup>7</sup>Mott, op. cit., p. 193.

<sup>8</sup>Mathews, op. cit., p. 215.

dream for a united student Christian world. The best way we might view his opinions on this Watchery would be by following excerpts taken from talks and speeches which he had given during his life time.

The Evangelization of the World in this generation found in an article from The Student Volunteer of Great Britain, Jan. 1895.

It is emphatically a watchery, not a prophecy.

It means for us to give every person in the world an opportunity to know Jesus Christ as a personal Savior.

It does not mean the conversion of the world, for the acceptance of Christ rests with the hearer, and not with the speaker.

As far as the activities and direct influence of the individual volunteer are concerned it means within his own lifetime.<sup>9</sup>

As far as the individual is concerned it is his own generation that he seeks to evangelize. Mott went on to say:

"Obviously each generation of Christians must evangelize its own generation of non-Christians if they are ever to be evangelized."<sup>10</sup> He also says: "It does mean that the

Christians of this generation are to give every person of this age an opportunity to accept Jesus Christ."<sup>11</sup> That this could be accomplished is not what Mott is saying. He

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<sup>9</sup>Mott, op. cit., p. 305.

<sup>10</sup>John R. Mott, The Larger Evangelism (New York: Cokesbury Press, 1944), p. 82.

<sup>11</sup>Mott, Addresses and Papers of John R. Mott, I, 18.

pictures it as an ideal and more than an ideal. For Mott it could be argued whether the world could be evangelized in any particular generation. Some call it an ideal, some call it a very possible goal. Mott himself had occasionally, though not often, said that he thought it possible to achieve the evangelization of the world in this generation (1900) and in support of this he makes note of the tremendous missionary work being done throughout the world.<sup>12</sup>

That Mott was being idealistic is open to debate, particularly in view of his already mentioned definitions of the Watchery. In Britain, where the same Watchery was adopted in 1896, the position and definition are in the same manner as in America. They approached their definition, however, more from the doctrinal than from the pragmatic approach. Yet their conclusions were similar.<sup>13</sup> In summing up a definition of the Student Volunteer Movement's Watchword, we might say it means that each generation is responsible for bringing Christ to his own generation. In no sense does it mean a hasty program for the evangelization of the entire world in any particular generation.

Thus we have witnessed the organization of the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions. Its aims have been

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 310.

<sup>13</sup>Tissington Tatlow, The Story of the Student Christian Movement of Great Britain and Ireland (London: S.C.M. Press, 1933), chap. VII.

mentioned and its influence hinted at. It is to become a great force in the growth of the student Christian movement throughout the world. Wherever its volunteers were to go there would be brought with them the background of the American Intercollegiate Christian Association. Within a few years' time, the principles of the S.C.M. were to mushroom throughout the world. The local movements that were to spring up in a nation's colleges were to make the nucleus of a national movement. The national movement would in turn become the nucleus of the World Student Christian Federation which is the reality of Mott's dream.

For the sake of a date, September 1st may be pointed out as the beginning for Mott, the international traveler. His first assignment was to Carleton College in Minnesota. While in this general area he took in Hamline University and Macalester College. Apparently the weather was favorable for Mott then continued northward into the Maritime Provinces of Canada, and made his first stop in Prince of Wales College. In Charlottetown there was an existing Association. However, upon his arrival, thirty of the students gathered

## CHAPTER IX

### THE INTERNATIONAL TRAVELER AND HIS METHODS

Returning to the year 1888, immediately following the Summer Conference, John R. Mott embarked on his extensive travels of the United States and Canada as the college secretary for the Intercollegiate department of the Y.M.C.A. Mott did not take this tour only to lay ground work for the department. This had already been established being in existence already for a good ten years. However, many of the Associations were weak, disjointed, and exceedingly disappointing in their work. In this first year, Mott's extensive traveling brought him to numerous schools. It would be superfluous to give detail accounts. The significant happenings will be brought out as well as his general aims and methods.

For the sake of a date, September 1st may be pointed out as the beginning for Mott, the international traveler. His first assignment was to Carleton College in Minnesota. While in this general area he took in Hamline University and Macalester College. Apparently the weather was favorable for Mott then continued northward into the Maritime Provinces of Canada, and made his first stop in Prince of Wales College. In Charlottetown there was no existing Association. However, upon his arrival, thirty of the students gathered

and, under Mott's influence, immediately decided to organize an Association and agreed to send two delegates to the coming college conference at Wolfville. Mott helped the group to organize a very efficient and extensive plan and within a short time it became a strong Association in the area. He continued on to Dalhousie College in Halifax where there already existed a strong Y.M.C.A. due to the personal interest of the college president. Mott remained in the vicinity in order that he might attend the Wolfville conference. This was to be the first such conference held in the Provinces. Following this conference he continued into Maine and there visited the Colleges of Bowdoin, Bates, Colby, and Maine University. Mott had promised to return to Cornell the Autumn of this year in order to attend the dedication of the just completed college Association building called Barnes Hall. It was quite a landmark for Mott who had laid so much of the ground work for this Association building. It was an encouraging sight and led him to remark in his speech at the dedication that he personally dreamed for the day when all Christian students might be woven together throughout the world. After this edifying incident at Cornell, Mott proceeded with new zeal to visit many more distant colleges that were in need of immediate help lest their Association die. During the Winter, however, it was necessary for him to attend the Y.M.C.A. New York State Convention held at Harlem. This was but the

first of countless conventions which he was to attend and conduct as a worker for the college Y.M.C.A. Conventions were to become a time consuming yet vital part in the activities of Mott. At this particular convention the renowned Y.M.C.A. worker, William E. Dodge, presided. Mott was asked to give a speech and to his embarrassment on a topic with which he was not familiar. His oratorical training saved the day.

With Winter in full swing it became more advantageous that Mott begin some extensive work in the neglected South. He had a personal interest in bringing the national movement into the Southern area. From January until April of 1889 Mott toured the Southern states. This was actually the first time such intensive and systematic concern was given to the South. While he was there he developed a well grounded student Christian movement throughout the states of Virginia, Tennessee, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, and North and South Carolina. His success was exceedingly great as was realized by the attendance and zeal of the state conventions held during his presence. While in Nashville, Mott and Wilder, who joined him at Cumberland University, began to make plans for the coming conference in Knoxville. They had hopes that a strong interest in the S.C.M. would arise from this conference. They prayed earnestly for success. However, at the conference it appeared doomed to failure from the very beginning. The students

who attended showed little enthusiasm for growth. Their spiritual condition seemed low. Mott and Wilder, aware of this coldness, saw little reason to continue the conference. On the last afternoon, with no pressing business, Mott and Wilder began to talk to the students right from the Bible. They had prepared no speeches and gave an extemporaneous exposition of Scripture. They were apparently caught up in their own talks and began to seek decisions from the students. To their amazement such decisions were made. The spirit was caught by the students. The president of the University, becoming aware of this spiritual spark, arranged for the two men to remain for the following Monday at which time they continued their ex corde expositions. The spirit spread. Students became extremely interested in their College work and brought back to their respective schools a new fire.<sup>1</sup> One of the students touched by Mott was a young man by the name of Fletcher Brockman, a student of Vanderbilt University. He was to become one of Mott's closer friends and most able workers in the Southern area. This Knoxville revival might be considered as the beginning of Mott, the evangelist. The practice of holding such revival meetings was to become a strong part in his visits throughout the world--such a strong part that his

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<sup>1</sup>Basil Mathews, John R. Mott, World Citizen (New York: Harper and Bros., 1934), p. 86.

evangelistic abilities will be observed in more detail in a later chapter. This evangelistic trend led to the writing of many spiritual pamphlets by Mott on Christian work, Bible study, prayer, and the like.<sup>2</sup> From Tennessee Mott continued into the states of Mississippi, Alabama, and Georgia, finding the zeal of the Knoxville conference wherever he went.

Chronologically, his first year of work has now been completed. However, in order to view the work of this year without going into the actual visits, we might observe his aims and methods. Throughout the year Mott had become well acquainted with his new position. He has gone through some periods of trial and error and in so doing developed a detailed approach to the colleges and universities visited throughout this year. Ober probably knew when he asked Mott to take the position for one year that at its completion he would not want to resign. So it was that after acquiring this insight of the local college associations Mott felt that he should continue working with the Intercollegiate Department. The incident that tipped the scale, so to speak, came when Mott read a pamphlet written by Tyler entitled "Prayer for Colleges." At this moment Mott decided to remain in student work and the "one year condition" was

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<sup>2</sup>Ruth Rouse, The World's Student Christian Federation (London: S.C.M. Press Ltd., 1948), p. 50.

forgotten. In later years Mott admittedly said that if this condition had not been offered he probably would not have taken the job since he did not wish to be forced into his life decision.<sup>3</sup>

Some general aims might be observed in Mott's first year of travel. These are, however, aims which he expressed in later years, aims which are viewed in retrospect. His first aim is connected with his dream, the vision of the student world united. In this light, Mott had said:

From 1886 when I had a vision of the world as Christ sees it, I have made every decision in the light of the whole world. Mistakes have been made but they have not been by intention. They were due to high pressure; to lack of true prayer.<sup>4</sup>

A student world united under Christ as Lord of all is more specific. At the 1910 S.V.M. Convention Mott said:

Above all, the college men and college women throughout our whole field must be led to surrender themselves wholly to Jesus Christ as Lord and to let Him determine their life-decisions and dominate them in every relationship.<sup>5</sup>

From his first year of travel to his very last, the dream of a world as Christ sees it remained his greatest objective. For the student the objective was:

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<sup>3</sup>Clarence P. Shedd, Two Centuries of Student Christian Movements (New York: Association Press, 1934), pp. 302-3.

<sup>4</sup>Mathews, op. cit., p. 439.

<sup>5</sup>The Students of North America in Relation to the Non-Christian World. Report of the Executive Committee to the sixth International Convention, Rochester (New York: S.V.M., 1910), p. 20.

to make the universities and colleges strongholds and propagating centers of reasonable, vital, and aggressive Christianity.

To unite the Christian students of the whole world for the purpose of making Christ and His principles regnant in the life and relationships of men and nations.<sup>6</sup>

In viewing his specific aims for this year Mott's task was to preserve and to increase the ties between the Student Volunteer Movement and the Student Christian Movement. It was Mott's obligation to keep before the eyes of the student the fact that the volunteers are not a separate group from the College Association. This he did and may now be considered as the greatest force in keeping the S.V.M. an integral part of the general Student Christian Movement throughout America. His aims also carried over into the organizing and preserving of college associations wherever he visited.

Mott's methods show his deep concern in carrying out these aims. He developed for himself a specific system in approaching each college. He would never be caught visiting a local institution simply for the sake of visiting. His plans were mapped out in detail wherever he went.

At each institution visited he made an exhaustive investigation of the range and special needs of its students. He took nothing for granted with regard to the arrangement of his meetings, going carefully into all the preparation with regard to the contents of the program, the goal at which they were aiming, the character of the chairmanship, and the means taken to

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<sup>6</sup>Mathews, op. cit., p. 442.

invite students. . . . He would isolate himself for personal intensive preparation of his addresses and more informal talks, in particular for private prayer, in the light of what his investigations had revealed. The aim of his addresses was to meet directly the individual and corporate needs of the students before him, and to call out their powers in service of their fellow-undergraduates within the college or the university of the wider student community around them, and so of the world.<sup>7</sup>

Already in the first year Mott realized that the work was beyond the powers of one man. He was, therefore, ever on the alert to find the right man at each college to help carry on the program. He would follow four basic steps, the first was to find the man, then give him a recruiting talk, which was Mott's specialty, instruct him, and finally encourage him with a zeal that would be slow to wither. His method of encouragement sometimes went so far as to have a worker take a tour of other colleges, let him see their results, get a new and wider slant on the work and come back with greater zeal. As far as Mott was concerned, survival of the College Associations depended on the development of leaders that could go beyond their local Association. Certainly Mott could not visit the one thousand colleges and some two hundred thousand students under his care. Even in order to visit the few that he could his visits were cut short. He had to multiply leadership. This demand for leadership was to lead to the development of the deputation

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 81.

plan which will be discussed in detail shortly. In regard to his methods, when Mott traveled down South among the deficient Associations, he would endeavor to have the students at the conferences speak up and tell him their problems and the opportunities that were open to them. He felt that if they saw the problems themselves they would be more interested in solving them than if he would come right out and immediately present to them their problems. He would let no problem remain if at all possible at any particular college. Although little is mentioned, it is apparent that Mott also visited preparatory schools in the college areas. His reason for this was stated in a letter sent home in October of 1889 in which he said that if you capture the boys you will have the future pillars of the College Associations. Because of the success of his unscheduled evangelistic revival down South, he sought to continue this method of approach in the other colleges. In a report sent to the Y.M.C.A. Mott mentioned three specific aims which he sought during his visits.

1. development of an adequate program for students in the great city centers.
2. buildings that would house the activities of the Christian Association in the great university centers.
3. extension of the Movement into the more isolated and scattered sections.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Shedd, op. cit., p. 316.

As Mott was in no way restricted to these particular methods so also his aims shifted continually according to the local situations. He visited hundreds of colleges and was constantly searching for fresh methods and better approaches. One of his biggest contributions to the Movement was his ability to organize. He created a College Association of students, for students, and by students. Whenever possible, he insisted that neither pastors nor teachers were to have any executive power within the Association. This approach was carried out even in the Bible study groups. Neither pastor nor teacher was suggested to conduct a lecture that would take the place of a good Bible study. The students were to be the leaders and were to use the inductive approach whereby they sought out the answers to their problems from Scripture. Consistent to his dream Mott endeavored ever to keep the student mindful of the other colleges and would encourage participation on the joint conferences and conventions. To insure student authority Mott encouraged the creation of the office of general secretary in every college, a full time Association worker. It might be recalled that this office was the position offered him by the Cornell Association. Mott had no pet methods. He endeavored to seek the best approach and was very thorough in his seeking out the better qualified methods. Mott is but a young man of twenty-four and already his talents are influencing the future leaders of the world.

At the conclusion of his first year of work Mott proceeded on to attend the Northfield summer conference of 1889. Because Wishard was now in the Orient most of the executive responsibility for this summer conference was placed on Mott. Immediately his administrative abilities became apparent. Much of the work was delegated to responsible men which made the conference one of the most successful. Five hundred students were present representing some 126 colleges. Fourteen of the students were British, twenty-two were Japanese delegates attending for the first time due to Wishard's work. The conference itself was divided into nine sections of topics discussed by specialists of the fields. The lecture on the practical aspects of the Christian worker was presented by William Blaikie. He put a strong emphasis on athletics which created one of the more humorous incidents of the conference. He rather vigorously tore into Moody, who had a poor physique. He told Moody and others in the same physical condition that they should run at least two or three miles a day. Mott noted that this was the first time any man had dared to talk to Moody as Moody had talked to others. Mott exclaimed: "I may say that Moody has been acting on his suggestions for since the Conference closed, I have seen him run three foot races with girls."<sup>9</sup> Wilder and a friend by the name of Speer

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid., pp. 306-7.

were present to give powerful mission talks. At the conference the customary Northfield letter to the student volunteers throughout the world was drafted by Speer and Mott. This letter became a traditional part of the summer conferences, and has helped to unite spiritually the volunteers throughout the world. A telegram was received at the conference from the Orient sent by the first Japanese conference which was being conducted under Luther Wishard. The telegram was short and asked the conference to join them in "making Jesus King." The impact of this telegram was to be felt as far as the European Continent, and led to the first Scandinavian student conference in 1890. Upon hearing of this telegram the student leaders of the Scandinavian countries were convinced that they too should help in "making Jesus King."<sup>10</sup> This summer conference of 1889 was also to establish the traditional stunt night, a contributing factor to the high morale of the students. The night began when the students pleaded that they be allowed to celebrate the 4th of July and show the Englishmen and Japanese what American patriotism is like.

The enthusiasm and attendance of this conference convinced the department heads that the tremendous growth of the Collegiate Y.M.C.A. not only in the United States and

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<sup>10</sup>Tissington Tatlow, The Story of the Student Christian Movement of Great Britain and Ireland (London: S.C.M. Press, 1933), p. 73.

Canada but also in the world demanded immediate action in acquiring more student leaders. They were able to find additional help occasionally from such men as C. H. Lee, Cornell '89, and Professor F. K. Sanders of Yale, who acted as part-time editor of the now popular intercollegiate periodical, The Intercollegian. However, this rapid geographical growth of the movement demanded more intensive leadership on the part of the students themselves. Such leadership was especially needed within the smaller and more distant colleges which could not always be visited by Mott and the others. This crisis, which could have caused the stagnation of the movement, brought forth the birth of the deputation plan. In the middle of September of this year, Mott, Ober, Lee, the student evangelist, and S. M. Sayford, boarded a small boat to Bakers Island, two miles off the north shore of Massachusetts Bay. There they held a meeting designed to overcome this problem. Their aim was to multiply the leaders within the North American colleges. It was to be based on voluntary deputation work done by trained groups of undergraduates. The plan is worth noting in detail for it brings out Mott's early and significant contribution which helped to assure the Movement's future. The deputation plan was to become the cornerstone of all future growth. The Intercollegian gave a full report of this plan in their May issue of 1890.

During the last month three student gatherings have been held which mark the beginning of a new epoch in the development of the Intercollegiate Young Men's Christian Associations. They have been characterized as intercollegiate deputation conferences and have had as their object the training of a number of strong student deputations for the work of intercollegiate visitation. The plan called for at least one deputation from each American state or Canadian province. Two institutions were to be represented on each deputation. The members of these deputations were to give their time for making several visits each year without pecuniary compensation. Moreover they were to be specially trained for their work.<sup>11</sup>

The report went on to state the six basic aims of the plan.

1. It will wonderfully strengthen the Christian Intercollegiate tie.
2. It will bind the colleges closer and closer to the state and international work.
3. These deputations will be able to do a work which cannot be done by regular paid officials.
4. It will afford an unparalleled opportunity of giving each year to fifty or more of the leading college students of the country a peculiar personal development and experience which, in turn, will influence many of them to give their lives to Christian work.
5. It will enable the international college secretaries, as specialists in the college work, to give, through these deputations, the gist of their experience--to every college Association in the country each year; whereas at present they are unable to touch more than one-fourth of them.
6. It will do much to make possible the extension of the Association movement among the 1,000 and more institutions of America which are to-day without Associations.

The going forth of these students, two by two, to work among their fellow-students marks an emphatic step in

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<sup>11</sup>Mathews, op. cit., p. 357.

advance in the evolution of the college Association idea.<sup>12</sup>

The basic idea for this plan was to make possible the thorough visiting of each College Association every school year. Mott and Ober were convinced that only by such visitation could the local Association adequately carry out its goals. At the present time Mott and Ober were finding themselves visiting but one-fourth of the Associations throughout the year. The plan immediately went into effect and within a short time twenty-eight deputations were formed consisting of over fifty under-graduates who were being trained at special conferences. The students selected were usually the College Association presidents but the general rule was that they be active members of the Association. Most of the students selected had attended the summer conferences and a good number were missionary volunteers. In the conferences which followed the organization of the deputation plan Mott and Ober sought to train the students for more efficient work among the colleges. The first three special conferences already mentioned were held in Albany for the Eastern section, Asheville for the Southern section and Chicago for the Middle West. Each of them had from forty to sixty selected students in attendance for three days. In those three days Mott would establish three

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., pp. 358-59.

basic ideas which would be the goals for the students for that particular year. They were asked to visit as many schools as they could as early in the term as possible. They were, however, restricted to the colleges within their own state and their travels were to be financed by the State Y.M.C.A. When possible the students were to visit in pairs for more effective work. He encouraged them to look for future leaders and try particularly hard to win over the strong college men into a religious calling. Mott especially encouraged the visiting students to emphasize Bible study in the Associations. The deputation plan was quick to become firmly rooted in the life of the intercollegiate movement and so leaders like Mott were capable of giving more time to the administrative work of the Association. Soon after Mott wrote a pamphlet on deputation work which was utilized by the students in carrying out their work.

Even with the establishment of this successful plan Mott soon found himself laden with more work. Ober, his associate, had been asked to help in the neglected field of the Y.M.C.A. general work in North America. He planned on resigning his president status in the Intercollegiate department in the early part of 1890. Because of this turn of events Mott and Ober got together at Chautaugua. Ober suggested that Mott take over completely the student work. Richard C. Morse of the Y.M.C.A. supported Ober's request and the change was recommended to the committee. So at

the early age of twenty-five Mott has complete charge of all intercollegiate work of North America. He was able to acquire the help of J. Campbell White for a short time but the burden of responsibility was upon him. In the early part of 1891, Mott officially became the senior secretary of the student department of the international committee.<sup>13</sup> This is a position which he held until the year 1915.

Upon completing the second year as college secretary during the school year of 1889-1890, Mott began to plan for the student summer conference--that conference which more and more becomes the birthplace of Mott's many dreams. The scene shifts this year from Northfield to Lake Geneva, Wisconsin. During the summer of 1889 Ober and Mott felt that summer conferences like Northfield should also be organized in other parts of the country in order that more students might avail themselves of its opportunities. In the Spring of 1890 the national student committee set up a conference to be held for the Middle West area at Lake Geneva, Wisconsin. Its success was overwhelming and far exceeded the expectations of its creators. One hundred and eight students attended, representing thirteen states and sixty-three schools. Also present were forty-six guests and instructors. This was only the first of many student conferences that

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<sup>13</sup>John R. Mott, Addresses and Papers of John R. Mott (New York: Association Press, 1946), III, xix.

would cater to their own locality. At the Lake Geneva conference Mott expressed his dream of an international organization. As he and Robert Wilder were rowing on the lake they began to speak of the possibility of an international convention for the Student Volunteer Movement that would invite representatives from the entire Continent.<sup>14</sup> The dream was far from being beyond reality. For before six months were to pass it was to come about.

The first International Convention of the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions was held at Cleveland, Ohio, from February 26th to March 1st in 1891. This was one of the biggest milestones in the Movement's young life. But it was only the beginning of the great quadrennials that were to follow, for now, in the mid 1900's, cities throughout the entire world have been host for a quadrennial. The effects which these quadrennial conventions have had on the participating students are manifest in the great zeal and work they have put forth in their own countries. This first convention was attended by six hundred volunteers representing 159 schools. Although in existence officially for only three years, the Volunteer Movement had become highly respected by the denominational missionary

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<sup>14</sup> Christian Students and World Problems, edited by Milton T. Stauffer. Report of the Ninth International Convention of the S.V.M. for F.M., Indianapolis, Ind., December 28, 1923 to January 1, 1924 (New York: S.V.M. for F. M., 1924), p. 47.

societies and thirty-three representatives from such societies were present at this first convention. Also present were thirty missionaries and fifty Christian workers.<sup>15</sup> In the report presented by Mott at the convention he stated that 6,200 students had already signed the pledge as volunteers, and 320 had already gone to foreign fields. Five hundred of the volunteers were from seminaries and we might note that three per cent of the total were Lutherans. One might wonder how such a number could exist without some formal reception of dues or the like, yet the expenses were adequately met by friends, the Y.M.C.A., and by church organizations which had received the aid of the volunteers.<sup>16</sup> It was mentioned in this same committee report that requests had come from Britain and from the Scandinavian countries asking that the Movement send a representative to their countries in order that such a movement might be organized. The report ended with the hope that such a movement might be organized in the countries throughout the world. No doubt Mott could have felt no more elated upon hearing this eager request from the European Continent. Europe was soon to fulfill its own dream for Mott is now to become a Continental traveler.

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 48.

<sup>16</sup>Mott, op. cit., I, 31.

## CHAPTER X

### THE CONTINENTAL TRAVELER

Although it is still a few more years before John R. Mott embarks on his first world wide tour of 1895, which would set into motion the creation of a world student Christian federation, yet it is necessary that Mott now be viewed as a continental traveler crossing the Atlantic for the first time. This is to become significant, not only because it broadened his view of a united student world, but because through these travels he was to meet men who would help considerably in the fulfillment of his dream. In the summer of 1891 Mott crossed the Atlantic for the first time to attend the Amsterdam Convention of the World Alliance of the Young Men's Christian Association whose headquarters are located at Geneva. Mott was sent as a representative of the new American Student Christian Movement.

On his way to Amsterdam Mott made a brief stopover in England and visited Oxford where he met Robert Wilder. While they were walking together on the campus Mott again mentioned to Wilder his hope for a united student organization. These were not idle words for at the coming Amsterdam conference Mott was determined to let others hear of his hope. As far as Wilder was concerned, he was on his way to India arriving in England in July. He visited many of the

colleges of the British Isles and obtained three hundred volunteers. During this particular visit Donald Fraser, the great English leader of the British S.C.M., was much influenced by Wilder. Through Wilder's work in April of 1892 eight English schools met and formed the Student Volunteer Missionary Union. The already existing but small Student Foreign Missionary Union decided to merge with the new group. Such a movement was nothing new in England for, like America, it has a long history of student missionary activities. In the years 1876 and 1877 the Cambridge and Oxford Inter-collegiate Christian unions were already functioning. At Cambridge the C.I.C.C.U. were affectionately known as the "kick yous."<sup>1</sup> The English S.C.M. has a great admiration for Robert Wilder who did so much for their growth. Although Wilder was their first love, Mott also contributed to their success and is held in high esteem.

Upon his arrival at the Amsterdam conference, Mott became acquainted with other men who were quite active in student movements in their respective countries. Two of the men with well known names were Raoul Allier, a professor at Paris University, and a young Swedish scholar by the name of Nathan Söderblom, who was to become the renowned Archbishop of Sweden and contributor to the ecumenical movement.

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<sup>1</sup>Ruth Rouse, The World's Student Christian Federation (London: S.C.M. Press Ltd., 1948), pp. 31, 55.

Mott also saw Karl Fries of Sweden, whom he had met at one of the Northfield conferences, and who was to be one of the founders of the World Student Christian Federation. At Amsterdam Mott was definitely working on his idea of a world student group.<sup>2</sup> Professor Allier, in a later article, referred to the discussions he had with Mott.

Mott and I talked of our common concerns. . . . It seemed to us as clear as day that student Christian associations in all lands should combine their forces to glorify Christ.<sup>3</sup>

Mott was definitely planning to make it a reality. No doubt, witnessing the European activities of the students and the leaders, Mott was greatly encouraged by his first visit to Europe. He gathered a small group together one evening in order that they might talk over the possibilities of founding a union of Christian student societies. Nothing concrete, however, came out of this small meeting, but the more significant fact is that this young man Mott portrays his ambitions and abilities in gathering together such a group of leading men and getting them to view the situation as he saw it. The significance of Amsterdam, then, is not the convention but rather the ground work that was being laid for a great plan.

Mott returned to America and was now more zealous in

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<sup>2</sup>Galen M. Fisher, John R. Mott--Architect of Co-operation and Unity (New York: Association Press, 1952), p. 22.

<sup>3</sup>Rouse, op. cit., p. 52.

his work knowing that the student leaders of the world were behind him. But apparently time and maturation are yet necessary before fruition. A few more years are to pass before the dream of unity can be accomplished. The S.V.M. organizations were about the closest to having a unified front before the world, but even so, more work was necessary. The inspiration of more men was needed in Europe and Asia. Men like Wishard, Wilder, Reynolds, and Mott had to continue their work in their respective areas of the world. Particularly in America Mott had to lay more of a foundation, and also embark on another trip to England before he could start the tour of 1895, that led to the world union. In looking at this period from approximately the summer of 1891 to the summer of 1894 we find little that is spectacular other than the fact that it is a period of steady growth so necessary for a good foundation. Mott's output of energy and talent in this period is amazing. If this be the case one might wonder how the next few years could pass with seemingly little of significance to be observed in Mott's life. This becomes very apparent when we examine, for example, the school year of 1890-1891 through Mott's report to the Y.M.C.A. Seven months were spent in visiting fifty-four institutions in fifteen states. Two months were spent in preparation and in attending conventions and conferences. One month was taken up in traveling alone. Days would be spent in helping the local Associations, trying to establish

new ones, and helping the weaker ones get on their feet.<sup>4</sup> His field during this year was particularly in New England, Pennsylvania, and the Southern states. One might conclude that Mott's work was superficial if the results had not been so tremendous. Particularly if one should view Mott's intensive visits within a two-week period. One of his busier two-week periods consisted of visits to eleven College Associations, three Y.M.C.A. organizations, two Seminaries, and seven city Associations. But the results were just as phenomenal as his outreach. Bible class attendance increased tremendously. Through his evangelistic meetings, many were led to Christ and many pledged their lives to Christian work.

To record all the statistics and reports of Mott's many trips and stop-overs in America during this period would be useless. However, some of the highlights of his visits will be mentioned more for the sake of continuity, to create a feeling for the magnitude of his work, and to have a stepping stone to the reality of his dream. First then we enter the Northfield Conference of 1891 attended by a large number of students including many from Europe and Asia. One of the more significant events at this conference, as far as the work of Mott is concerned, is that Brockman

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<sup>4</sup>John R. Mott, Addresses and Papers of John R. Mott (New York: Association Press, 1946), III, 31.

of Vanderbilt University, already mentioned, became a full-time worker and traveling secretary for the Southern states. At the conference Brockman was urging that help be given to the Southern area. He said that the zeal sparked by Mott and Wilder was running cold and needed new fire. Moody, in his rather blunt manner, asked Brockman why he shouldn't be the man for the job. Without any question he took it upon himself to carry on pioneer work in the Southern schools while Mott concentrated more in the Northern area.

The last half of the year 1891 saw Mott working primarily in the Eastern states and in Canada. In the report for the school year of 1891-92 Mott mentioned covering 31,000 miles attending all but one College Association in Canada. Five months of this year were given to conferences and conventions which were now the very backbone of the associations. He gave more and more time in planning the summer conferences which took up some six weeks of his summer. Even while traveling Mott was not one to sit viewing the scenery. Pencil and paper were ever in his hand as he jotted down new ideas and plans. In this year he put out a series of pamphlets which concerned themselves with the basic problems and functions of the college association.<sup>5</sup> The deputation plan was being highly endorsed in many of the states where it had been tried, and, there-

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., pp. 33-37.

fore, its conferences began to take more of his time.

Few Associations throughout the country were being neglected. Brockman was in the South, Campbell White continued to help in the Southwest, and Mott was concentrating on the Northern areas of the East and Middle West. This, however, leaves the West Coast as a comparatively virgin field and so at the end of 1891 Mott headed for Southern California. Christmas Day found him in Santa Barbara. Five years had passed since the West Coast was officially visited by an Association member. The West therefore was by no means without the influence of the Y.M.C.A. and its Intercollegiate department. Ground work had already been laid in California before Mott arrived, but the existing Associations were generally weak and had very little spiritual emphasis. Although the oldest of the California Associations was at the University of California at Berkeley, it also appeared to be one of the weaker ones. The strongest Association that Mott found was at Stanford, Palo Alto, which found a warm spot in Mott's heart. He often referred to this Association and pointed out his admiration for the school.<sup>6</sup> Before Mott left the area twenty-four College Associations were well on their way.

The period of 1892-1893 saw Mott covering almost the identical amount of territory, some thirty thousand miles.

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 123.

Four months were spent visiting the colleges particularly of the far West. Another four months were given to twenty-one conventions and with the added deputation and summer conferences, Mott was well occupied in their preparation.<sup>7</sup> However, one of the more significant events of this time happened at the Northfield summer conference of 1892. It was here that the Student Volunteer Movement of America met with the same movement of Great Britain. Though not joined organically, by their very identical purposes they were one group. They worked together and planned together. They became as one and brought to the eyes of all witnesses the first signs of birth for a world student union. It was at this conference that the S.V.M. changed the wording of its declaration, previously mentioned, from "I am willing and desirous, God permitting" to "It is my purpose, if God permit." The significance of this change, "God permitting" to "if God permit" was for the sake of clarity. Now it was to be understood that the one who signs this declaration really intends to work towards becoming a missionary. If the Spirit should prevent this his pledge should not be regarded as broken. The change of wording placed a greater stress on the sincerity of the individual and his desire to give his life to mission work. The change of wording and the many consultations which preceded this change apparently

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid., pp. 37-39.

influenced Mott, for henceforth he began to put a stronger stress on the internal organization of the S.V.M. His emphasis was no longer on getting more new volunteers but rather in seeing to it that those who had already signed would be better prepared as missionaries. The emphasis had shifted then from quantity to quality. Ever since this shift in the thinking of the S.V.M. it has placed more and more attention on other fields besides foreign missions, now becoming concerned over missions in the home, in the city, as well as in medical missions.

Although the year 1893 was considered by Mott as the year of greatest overall growth in the collegiate Y.M.C.A. yet the highlights of the year are exceedingly dim. It is an overall growth, a mass of enthusiasm spreading throughout the world. The College Association's foundation had been laid and the building was now showing. But the world wide picture, in Mott's estimation, was less than he thought it should be. He reported that in this year there were less than fifty groups of Christian students throughout the foreign Christian missions doing mission study and mission work. But it was for Mott to overcome this deficiency. Throughout the year he continued touring the country with the same zeal and with greater experience, and his biggest success was the establishment of a College Association at the University of Chicago. As the year continued Mott was still bringing into the colleges the message of Jesus, and

if he could not visit the college the pamphlets which he continued to write for the Association were sure to be found there. He continued to push himself in order that he might visit as many schools as possible. Personal visitation was to him necessary for the Association's life. In this way he could feel the pulse of the Association. He could become sensitive to its weaknesses and conscious of its strength, and thus make an Association stronger and unified under one cause.

One of the more significant growths of this period of 1891 to 1894 is the summer conferences to which Mott gave much of his efforts. The summer conferences had started out as a simple Y.M.C.A. Bible training session under D. L. Moody. In 1886 students entered the picture and immediately the Volunteer Movement became a part of it, although the conference was never exclusively for the movement. In the earlier conferences, the students always found the lecturers available for "bull sessions" in the outdoors and under the trees of Northfield. They always seemed willing to discuss their topics at leisure and the students would be able to dispel their many doubts. The conferences were longer and gave more time for personal fellowship. But as the years passed and the conferences as well as the Volunteer Movement grew, missionary institutions were organized in connection with the summer conferences for the sake of training the volunteers. This was followed by a great deal of

expansion, and with foreign students attending these conferences it became necessary that they be organized in greater detail. This growth had its drawbacks and created such changes as shorter periods, detailed activity and eventually less time for personal contact.

Because of its tremendous appeal the conferences could not be restricted to Northfield although to this day it remains the home base. Conferences began to branch out and were organized in foreign countries as well as in America. Outside of America they were begun in Great Britain, Scandinavia, Germany, Japan, and Ceylon. In 1892 another extension was created similar to the Lake Geneva summer conference already mentioned. The second extension was down South at Knoxville, Tennessee, which soon became known as the Blue Ridge Conference. Its founding was no doubt due to the influence of Brockman. In the following year similar conferences were founded in Asheville, North Carolina, and on the Pacific Coast as Pacific Grove, California. Although the summer conferences were branching out they did not become entities within themselves. Leaders of the areas would visit the summer conferences outside their own in order to give and to receive new methods. The conferences usually lasted consecutively from late May into July, and Mott was often found attending all of them.

Even though conferences were being organized in Europe and Asia, there was still the appeal for the foreigners to

attend the conference at Northfield. Reynolds, who had spent three years in Europe, influenced many European students and professors to attend the Northfield conference.<sup>8</sup> Söderblom was an invited guest to the conference of 1890 and at that time met Mott. Other great leaders to attend the student conferences were such men as Karl Fries of Sweden, Fritz Mockert of Germany, whom we shall meet later, Count Shimamura of Japan, J. H. Maclean of Scotland, and Donald Fraser. That these conferences were visited by such men as these points out why the Student Christian Movement was well under way throughout the world.<sup>9</sup>

As the years passed Mott had an increased share in the preparation and participation of the summer conferences. The summer of 1893 was particularly crammed with summer schools at which Mott participated, but his hard work paid off. Moody was not able to conduct the Northfield conference of 1893 due to an evangelistic program in Chicago during the Fair. Although Drummond was to be present at the student conference the entire responsibility was placed on Mott. Knowing Moody's methods well Mott was able to make a very successful conference. To Mott, a young man of twenty-eight years, this was, as he said, the greatest responsibil-

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid., II, 162.

<sup>9</sup>Basil Mathews, John R. Mott, World Citizen (New York: Harper and Bros., 1934), p. 121.

ity he had yet had. The experience from carrying such responsibilities as these was but the ground work for greater things ahead.

The S.V.M. was affected with the same growth. Since the summer conferences were not restricted to volunteers and the volunteers themselves were quite able now to stand on their organizational feet, the S.V.M. established its own convention. The first, already mentioned, was held in 1891. The second great Quadrennial Convention is about to take place in Detroit from February 28th to March 4th of 1894. It is necessary that this convention be observed a little more in detail than the first since it has, to some extent, reached maturity. On the scene we find a very effective chairman in the person of John R. Mott. His successful leadership at this convention is particularly noteworthy since there were 1,082 students present representing some 294 schools. Mott's thoroughness was outstanding. He organized the convention right down to the smallest detail. Even the ushers had explicit duties to perform during the day. Nothing was forgotten and every little note was jotted down in his notebook to be sure that he would forget nothing. Each speech made by anyone on the floor was allowed a certain amount of time according to Mott's schedule. To go over the limit would bring Mott to his feet and make it very apparent that the speaker was to conclude. His approach was stern yet often times humorous. Because of his

leadership Mott became a highly respected person from this time on by many who had not yet become acquainted with him. As chairman he gave a few speeches, one in particular was entitled "Three years of Progress" in which he gave a summary of the S.V.M. work since the last convention. He particularly noted the growth of the movement throughout the South and the West. In pointing out the effectiveness of the S.V.M. Mott used the example of a Seminary with a local volunteer movement and one without. He pointed out that the number of missionaries coming from the seminary without the movement was considerably lower than that from the other seminary. The validity of his example may be questioned. The number of missionaries that were now in the field numbered 686. Because of its growth there was a definite financial need which was the occasion for another speech on an appeal for funds, one of Mott's proficient talents.<sup>10</sup> The convention shows quite a contrast from the first one. It was taking on the form of a more modern convention with many sectional conferences held. To point out the work in which the movement was engaged we might look at the topics discussed in these sectionals. They were on educational evangelism, the medical mission, women's work,

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<sup>10</sup> The Student Missionary Enterprise, edited by Max Wood Moorhead. Addresses and Discussions of the Second International Convention of the S.V.M. for F.M. (Boston: Press of T. O. Metcalf and Co., 1894), pp. 1-3.

special foreign fields, a conference for instructors at the institutions, a special conference on the evangelism for Jews, a young people's society conference and another on the work of the volunteer in the Y.M.C.A. and Y.W.C.A. One of the greater assets of the movement was the periodical called The Student Volunteer which had just started publication the year before the Convention. It was acknowledged at the Convention as a most useful agency for keeping in touch with the volunteers who ordinarily were not often visited by a traveling secretary. Mott personally had contributed many articles in the periodical.

At the Convention some serious problems were mentioned that needed immediate attention. The first was how to keep the isolated volunteer interested in mission work. Some of the smaller colleges did not have an Association and if a student of such a college signed the pledge he often found himself without any personal support from the movement. It was here that the periodical was of particular service. It was certainly impossible for all the colleges in the United States and Canada to be visited in one school year, although five traveling secretaries were now working full time. The spiritual life of the volunteers was a second concern, and it was encouraged that all volunteers edify one another that they might remain strong in their calling. In connection with this problem, Mott encouraged a greater participation in the Day of Prayer on each campus. He suggested that

they get Speer's booklet titled "Prayer and Missions." He particularly encouraged the use of the Cycle of Prayer, a plan which encouraged private prayer on the part of each volunteer. Financial difficulties again created a problem among the volunteers. It was apparent that a number of volunteers, ready to go into the field, would face mission societies not financially capable of sending them. Thus it was encouraged that the Volunteer Movement itself find new ways of gaining funds. Another problem was the continuing misconception on the part of some of the wording of the pledge. This problem has already been mentioned. A statistical problem also arose. Due to the lack of organization in the first few years, the names of many volunteers were lost and it was estimated that some 3,200 volunteers were unaccounted for. The need for more active members as traveling workers and officers in the movement was a continuous problem. Yet beyond these problems the movement could point to their success in terms of 630 missionaries in foreign fields.<sup>11</sup>

The Student Volunteer Missionary Union of Great Britain was also represented at the Convention by Donald Fraser, its secretary. That the two movements of America and Great Britain should be working together so intimately is most encouraging as an early manifestation of a united student

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<sup>11</sup>Mott, op. cit., I, 38-51.

world. At the Convention Fraser spoke on the origin of the British Movement giving much credit to Foreman and Wilder. Wishard, who had now returned from his trip to the Orient, gave a report on the Student Christian and Volunteer Movement in the non-Christian lands.

At the Convention Mott conversed with Fraser quite often. At one time Fraser invited Mott to come to Great Britain as soon as possible and help the growth of the S.G.M. there. Mott took up the request and with the backing of the Y.M.C.A. he went on to Britain that May, 1894, and remained throughout June and July. Fraser had set up a plan for him to visit characteristic student groups in the four parts of Britain. However, upon his arrival Mott sidestepped his plans in order that he might attend the Y.M.C.A. World Alliance Jubilee Meeting being held in London. There he again crossed the paths of the great student leaders of Europe. He saw Allier of Paris, Karl Fries of Sweden, and met Count J. Moltke of Denmark. With such an opportunity he spoke to these men again of a possible student federation in the near future. Mott was convinced that such a federation was soon to evolve.

During his travels in Great Britain Mott also attended a student conference held at Keswick on the northern part of the English Lake District, from July 30th to August 3rd. The Conference was under the auspices of the S.V.M.U. and has been called the first comprehensive intervarsity student

conference ever held in Great Britain. Two hundred and fifty students attended, representing thirty schools. Some of the outstanding students were Maclean of Glasgow, who became a famous Indian missionary and Williamson of Edinburgh, who enters the picture more prominently in the coming year. Many foreign leaders were present as well. There were two German students, Mockert and Siemsen of Berlin, who also shall become more prominent in achieving Mott's dream the following year. South Africa was represented by Hunter who had carried the Volunteer Movement into that Continent. The program at Keswick was quite detailed and showed the apparent influence of the American summer conferences. The day began with a prayer meeting at 7:00 a.m. There was a missionary institute at 9:00 a.m., a Bible class led by Speer of America at 10:00 a.m., a conference on Christian work in colleges at 11:00 a.m. The afternoons were free for recreational purposes and informal gatherings and at 6:00 p.m. the conference continued. Seven p.m. was a public platform meeting and at 9:00 p.m. a delegation meeting.<sup>12</sup> At the Conference the organizationally-minded Mott helped this volunteer union to set up what was to become the British College Christian Union. The newly organized union was to be composed of all Christian students, volunteer and otherwise. It opened before Mott the possibility of an international

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 290.

organization. With Britain and America already nationally established and other European countries well on their way, Mott's hopes soared to greater heights. In discussions held with Donald Fraser, Mott began to speak with a more crystallized idea of a student world fellowship. Mott was also considered a delegate from America with Speer, and contributed much to the Keswick Convention. He continued to show himself as the evangelist and using the S.V.M.'s Watchcry as the basis for his spiritual talks, he was instrumental in many students coming forward to make a decision for Christ. In summarizing his contributions, Tatlow, the British S.C.M. historian, said that "A warm tribute is paid to Mr. Mott."<sup>13</sup>

The tour planned by Fraser included such outstanding universities as Dublin, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Oxford, Cambridge, Wales, and many others. At each one Mott received a most cordial welcome. He would immediately get down to his specific work and hold a conference with the officers. In his touring Mott used a very detailed questionnaire he had worked up for getting at the root of the problems in the local student Association. Although his main purpose was to help the movement in Britain iron out its wrinkles, Mott was quite impressed by the extent of college infiltration the British S.V.M.U. had reached. Although it was organized

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<sup>13</sup>Rouse, op. cit., p. 59.

but two years ago, it was now active in fifty-seven colleges with seven hundred volunteers. In Mott's estimation the S.V.M.U. outclassed the American S.V.M. in that it did better work among the women colleges. They had a stronger hold on medical students, they had more volunteers in the foremost universities than America did--twenty in Oxford, and fifty-eight in Cambridge--and already ten per cent of the volunteers had sailed to foreign lands. He also felt that there was a greater esprit de corps among the British S.V.M. men.<sup>14</sup>

In these visits, Mott continually made mention of a world union. For now he felt himself possessing a closer understanding of the student Christian movement throughout the world. Its pulse had become his own heartbeat. As the movement grows throughout the world so Mott grew, and as Mott increased in experience and insights so the students received its benefits.

In closing this chapter we might review some of the methods that Mott had utilized within the last several years. It might be well to keep in mind that we are viewing the work of a man not yet in his thirties. His methods have shifted for his work has shifted. Mott had been doing less personal visiting. Although he continued to attend the important conferences and conventions, he apparently

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<sup>14</sup>Mott, op. cit., I, 289.

was putting more time behind the desk in planning and writing. That he could do this is credited to the many outstanding leaders found that could help in visitation. It is during this period that he produced a series of student movement pamphlets. The pamphlets covered every important aspect of student Christian work and because the source was from Mott's own experiences they gave tested and successful methods, concrete ways in overcoming individual and society problems. One of his more outstanding pamphlets of this period is "Individual work for Individuals." In his writing, as in his active work, Mott continued to stress heavily the necessity of spiritual growth. He would constantly stress the importance of a Bible study movement within the colleges, and to this end Mott and Burroughs wrote a pamphlet entitled "Movement for more curriculum Bible study." His outreach to the students through periodicals increased and because of his contributions such periodicals as the Young Man's Era printed in Chicago and The Student Volunteer became the most widely received magazines in the College Association.

Mott's philosophy, which was definitely carried into practice, stressed the necessity of personally visiting the students; to come face to face with the individual and thus work for permanent and lasting decisions on the part of the student. Even though Mott was finding his time limited as far as personal visits were concerned, this aim was ever

before him. He was convinced that the only way that a student could be gained for the Association and especially for Christ was to talk to him as a person. To this end he gave some practical methods on how the student might gain his fellow classmate. He stipulated five plans of approach. First, get the students of the first year class, for then they were most susceptible to religion. Secondly, personally observe the Day of Prayer, which often led to good recruiting. Thirdly, obtain outstanding pastors and professors to give lectures that might lead to a spiritual awakening on the campus. Fourth, set up a series of meetings under the direction of a full time worker who was familiar with students in order that the student might immediately become a part of the Association. Fifth, to emphasize the importance of the workers Bible training class which often led to Christ.<sup>15</sup> Mott, the man of many talents in the field of organization and administration, was also convinced that the only way to keep things alive was to demand a continual re-examination both on the part of the individual and on the part of the organization, local and national.

However, Mott's methods were constantly visualized as an aid in achieving his one hope of a unified world.

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid., II, 531.

The very genius and purpose of a Christian Association, like that of its Lord, should be to unite all real disciples of Jesus Christ without reference to their denominational affiliations, wealth, fraternity connections, athletic reputation, intellectual standing, or life-plans. There are problems in connection with the moral and religious life of nearly every institution which cannot be solved unless all right thinking Christian men sink their minor differences and unite for this definite purpose.<sup>16</sup>

His concessions to minor differences cannot be viewed as those of a man who denied Christ nor rejected Scripture as His Word. This was Mott's dream, and though his methods in achieving this dream might be rejected by other Christian bodies, yet his goal for a unified world under Christ cannot be denied as a most God-pleasing one. Mott was not the only one with such a vision. It had already been mentioned that Wishard had expressed the same hope. Reynolds, while working in Europe, was aware of this hope. But it took a man like Mott to make it a reality. In this year of 1894 Mott was seized with the thought that now was the time for a world wide union of Christian students.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>Mathews, op. cit., p. 103.

<sup>17</sup>Mott, op. cit., II, 162.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE BIRTH OF THE WORLD'S STUDENT CHRISTIAN FEDERATION

The last step towards the development of an organization that would bind the Christian students throughout the entire world had now been reached. We are brought to the apex of all that had been hoped for in the hearts of men such as John R. Mott. The dawn has broken over the horizon and the dream of a young man is soon to become real.

Before returning to America that summer of 1894, Mott received some invitations from a few European countries requesting that he return to help them form a national organization out of the Christian student movement that had been sweeping across their country. Even upon his arrival in America Mott received more invitations of a similar nature. Before long he had six invitations from countries throughout the world requesting that he place his experience at their disposal. Great Britain, Germany, Scandinavia, and Switzerland all requested that Mott attend their coming national student conferences. India requested that he conduct a campaign to promote student interest in the Christian movement, and Japan asked that he visit in the early part of 1896 in order that he might develop its student work.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>John R. Mott, Strategic Points in the World's Conquest (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1897), p. 9.

It is strange that all these invitations should have been received within a period of just two months. Stranger yet that there was no connection whatsoever between any of these invitations. As far as it is known not one of the countries was aware that the other country was making a similar request.

Upon viewing these invitations Mott, together with his advisers, was convinced that here God was in action. They were certain that their Lord had seen fit to do greater things through the Student Christian Movement. With this certainty they planned a two-year tour on the basis of the invitations. However, Mott wanted more than just a tour and sought permission from the Intercollegiate Department to plan the tour with the hope of organizing a world federation as a result. The Foreign Department also approved and suggested that Wishard go with Mott as a representative of the foreign students, particularly since he was better acquainted with them. Mott's work was cut out for him and the year ahead saw the need for elaborate preparation. During the Winter of 1894-1895 Mott spent most of his time making plans for the trip and for a world federation.

However, this school year was not spent simply in planning the trip. Mott continued his regular work, visiting schools and attending conferences. He continued to be the man working for Christ and not only for an organization, whether it be local or world-wide. His life was lived for

Jesus and his hope was that others might also place their life into His hands. In the early part of 1895 Mott visited his alma mater, Cornell, and on a Sunday he gave a talk at the Sage Chapel. Mott spoke as the evangelist he was and sought to persuade the listeners to make a decision to give their lives to Christ and to mission work. It was at this particular visit that the Rev. Helen I. Root, editor of a mission magazine, made her decision to follow Christ. That God works in various ways and by various means is quite evident in this case. Helen Root accidentally saw the Phi Beta Kappa key that Mott was wearing, and, although at the time had no plans of hearing him speak, turned to a friend and said, "He must have brains, let's hear him."<sup>2</sup>

Throughout the year Mott gave serious thought to the formation of a world union. He wanted to be sure that no detail was overlooked, and approached it from every angle in order that the best methods would be used. He decided that no national organization should be forced to unite under the International Y.M.C.A.--that would definitely be a drawback. It was necessary that the Christian students organize in a manner of their own choice, one that they would consider the best for their own national organization.

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<sup>2</sup>Basil Mathews, John R. Mott, World Citizen (New York: Harper and Bros., 1934), p. 339.

Only in this way could a national organization be strong and take personal pride in its growth. Through autonomous associations free from any international ties Mott was sure that a simpler and more effective international federation could be formed. If the Y.M.C.A. would hinder the development of any national group he was determined not to introduce it.<sup>3</sup> Mott also wanted to be sure that his plans and aims would be acceptable to others and so he carried on a good deal of correspondence with the British S.C.M. leaders. Agreement was reached on both sides of the Atlantic. That a European country such as Britain already had a strong national organization was quite an asset to the plans for a world federation.

In the course of the year Mott made a decision that was to change, in many respects, his way of living. He decided that since these plans and the opportunity to serve students across the world were not directly a part of the work of the committee which he was serving, he would give up his salary and raise funds for his work in other ways. One would certainly think that the International Y.M.C.A. would have continued his support, yet it is true that often there was no connection between the Y.M.C.A. and the Student Christian Movement. In fact, as they grew they became more

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<sup>3</sup>Ruth Rouse, The World's Student Christian Federation (London: S.C.M. Press Ltd., 1948), p. 54.

and more separate. This decision would naturally incur a tremendous burden for Mott to acquire his funds for travel. But we are also reminded that Mott said he would not force any national movement to be bound under the Y.M.C.A. By freeing himself financially from the Y.M.C.A. he would have a freer hand in the decisions made. He would feel no obligation to force any movement to participate with the Y.M.C.A. Neither was Mott worried about how he would raise the funds for his work. Mott's money raising abilities contributed greatly to the success of his early work. We cannot pass on without making mention of this ability. He had no problem whatsoever in approaching any Christian man or woman for financial help. To Mott this was not only a privilege but a duty for all Christians. He could quickly show people their obligation in supporting the Lord's work. Most international organizations have a hard time in obtaining enough funds from their national groups and in turn the national groups have their difficulties in getting the local groups to reach their own budgets. With Mott's talents this became no problem. He could go to outside resources and tap them to the fullest. In the early life of the student movements it was Mott who often saved them from disaster. Even upon his retirement he continued to direct monies to the treasuries of the organizations. It has been estimated that for the Intercollegiate Y.M.C.A. alone he raised several thousand dollars each year. For the Student

Volunteer Movement he raised even more in view of the tremendous quadrennial conventions which they had. Without going into much detail on how Mott's abilities in this line have affected the establishment and growth of the S.C.M. throughout the world, we might observe one incident that portrays it very well. Cleveland Dodge had just introduced Mott to Andrew Carnegie.

"I have brought you a man whom you ought to know," said Dodge and introduced Dr. Mott with some high compliments. "What has he got to say to us?" said Mr. Carnegie. Dr. Mott plunged straight into a statement about the large and rapidly increasing number of foreign students, their perils and possibilities, and stressed the urgent importance of meeting their needs. . . . Mott outlined his scheme to locate strong men at great university centers from Tokyo to New York. . . . He ended by hoping that Mr. Carnegie might make a gift of \$10,000 a year for at least two or three years. . . . Carnegie said that if Mr. Dodge would make such a sum he would do so. The deal was made. On the way back to Dodge's home they met Mr. George Perkins and related what had happened. "That's talking some" he said; "if you have got Carnegie to come across there must be something in the proposition . . . I will give you another \$10,000"--the following night Mott was sitting beside Mr. William Sloane at a committee meeting of the Union League Club and narrated the above story. "Let me add \$8,000 to that" Mr. Sloane said.<sup>4</sup>

At times Mott did not even have to persuade or suggest. Upon his return from his first world-wide tour a woman, quite impressed by his work, immediately gave a large sum of money to the Y.M.C.A. to be used for the newly organized federation. Two other donors immediately followed her with

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<sup>4</sup>Mathews, op. cit., pp. 414-15.

a sum of money that would keep Mott free of any personal financial worry. One incident is reported in which a person insisted that Mott give him the bill for all of his traveling, and he would be insulted if he didn't. So Mott was now free to work without any financial restrictions. The future of a world federation was completely in his hands.

Mott, with his wife and Wishard, boarded the boat, Etruria, in New York on the 20th of July and arrived at Liverpool, England, on the 28th, 1895. He immediately proceeded to attend the Keswick conference which was to begin on the 29th of the month. The conference represented the S.V.M.U. and the newly organized British College Christian Union. These unions were now quite representative of the Christian students throughout the British Isles, and the S.V.M.U. was to be found in eighty colleges, consisting of 955 volunteers with 136 of them already out in the field. The B.C.C.U. had already been established at forty-seven of the colleges.

At Keswick Mott, together with the British leaders, sketched out in greater detail plans for a world student Christian federation. It is interesting to note here that one British historian neglected to mention Mott as attending this conference and attributed the planning of the world federation to the British movement. That it was Mott's initiative, however, cannot be denied. Certainly if he were

not present the plans would not have been formed.<sup>5</sup> In discussing the plans at Keswick, Fries of Sweden was suggested as the first chairman of the federation, no doubt because Fries was closer to the European movement as a whole and was not a part of the English movement. That the world federation was not organized in Britain at this time was according to plan. Mott and the British leaders thought it best not to form the federation until more national organizations could be brought together from the Continent. First they thought it would be a greater incentive for other national organizations to join as charter members. Secondly, there was the German fear of the Anglo-Saxon that might hinder their movement taking part if only England and America were the charter members. Thirdly, no well founded national organization was to be found in any other country. That any country would not participate was beyond Mott's thinking. The main question which he would put before any national organization was:

If it be profitable for the Christian students of any one university or college to associate . . . if it be highly desirable to band together the various Christian organizations of any one country in order to make them more helpful . . . would it not be most advantageous to unite in a great federation the national intercollegiate movements of the whole world?<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Tissington Tatlow, The Story of the Student Christian Movement of Great Britain and Ireland (London: S.C.M. Press, 1933), p. 67.

<sup>6</sup>Mott, op. cit., pp. 16-17.

After clearing a few difficulties, the B.C.C.U. appointed J. Rutter Williamson to accompany Mott and represent the British movement. It might be noted that Williamson was already quite familiar with this S.V.M. work and had previously attended the Northfield conference.

They arrived in Germany the 8th of August and immediately went to the German S.C.M. convention which was being held at Gross Almerode near Cassel. However, before stepping into this conference a little background of the German S.C.M. might be observed. Germany had been considered the "student land par excellence."<sup>7</sup> Early in the 1800's there was a definite student awakening throughout Germany as there was in America. The emphasis, however, was not on missions but on Bible study. These study societies spread and to some extent banded together. Such figures as Graf Pückler and Freiherr von Starch had been working with the Y.M.C.A. in the Continent. Both also came to America to attend some of the conventions and the Northfield summer conference. Through their work and the work of others the Bible circles grew and by 1889 the Bible Circle Secretaries' Union was organized with Fritz Mockert as its traveling secretary. It might be recalled that Wishard spent the summer of 1888 in Germany and with the help of Pückler and Mockert started a strong German S.C.M. Mockert's work in the following years

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<sup>7</sup>Rouse, op. cit., p. 41.

brought about the first national student conference in Germany which was held at Niesky, a Moravian settlement. Only twenty were present, but each year the group grew until this year, 1895, the National Student Christian Alliance was officially organized in Gross Almerode. Unfortunately, many years later when Hitler became dictator the Christian Alliance was forced to disband.

The country was well represented at the Gross Almerode Conference with one hundred men present representing two-thirds of the universities in the country. Although the German S.C.M. was built on a different foundation it had now reached the point where it could fit in well with the S.C.M. of America and Britain. However, this was a critical time and it took a good deal of persuasive talking on the part of Mott and others to convince the German group of the necessity of having a world federation of Christian students. The greatest obstacle he had to overcome was their leader, Count Pückler. His voice was the authority of the movement and he had no desire whatsoever to have the movement go beyond the national boundaries. That this was a selfish motive does not do justice to the devout Christian man. His fear was towards the Anglo-Saxons, that their movements might exert too strong an influence in the proposed federation.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>John R. Mott, Addresses and Papers of John R. Mott (New York: Association Press, 1946), II, 163.

He was afraid that should Germany or any other national movement affiliate itself with this dominating Anglo-Saxon religion they would soon become subservient. However, Mott very tactfully sought to avoid this issue and stressed more the necessity of having a united federation. In five addresses given at the conference Mott endeavored to show them the advantages of a united student effort and the weaknesses that were apparent in their present national group. He felt that their greatest weakness was a lack of spiritual life, and that Germany needed a spiritual awakening. The second weakness he pointed out was that they were poorly organized. Their scope of work was very narrow and the students themselves had no part in the management of the movement. We become well aware that these are issues which Mott had been strongly stressing in America. The spiritual life was the most essential to Mott. To be poorly organized, as far as Mott was concerned, was a detriment to spiritual growth. Because the Christian life must be felt everywhere, narrowness in one's work was therefore also a hindrance to spiritual growth. That students should have no part in the management was contrary to Mott's picture of a student association. In the following days of the conference Mott continued to press the German group urging them to adopt a more comprehensive purpose in their work. Pückler was finally won over and the entire conference quickly swung over to support of the international effort.

Even at the conference the spiritual awakening which Mott sought was already becoming apparent. Towards the close a young student of jurisprudence, Dr. J. Siemson, was authorized by the German S.C.A. to represent it and to accompany Mott, Williamson and Wishard to Sweden. On the final day the conference closed in a new spirit and with a greater view. As Mott observed, "The delegates sang as only Germans can sing 'Ein Feste Burg ist Unser Gott.'"<sup>9</sup> Again the formation of the federation was deliberately delayed. They felt it wise to hold back until they had attended the Scandinavian conference and give them a chance to take part in its organization. From Germany Mott, Wishard, Williamson, and Siemson continued on to Vadstena, Sweden.

The Scandinavian S.C.M. has a much shorter history than the others. Neither was it as strong nor as effective as its counterparts in Germany and England. Historians like to place the beginning at a very dramatic point. It began when the Northfield Conference of 1889 received the telegram from Japan asking that they join in "making Jesus King." Rev. Eckhoff of Norway read the telegram and was deeply impressed. If Japan could have such a national Christian spirit as this, why not his own Scandinavian countries. In 1890 representatives of the four countries met at Hillerd,

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 331.

Denmark, to form the Scandinavian Student Meeting With a Christian Programme. Their second meeting was held in Horten, Norway, in 1892. Now it was Sweden's turn to be host and planned to hold the conference from August 13th to the 19th of 1895 in Vadstena.

Dr. Karl Fries had asked that he be allowed to arrange for the meeting, and while attending a Y.M.C.A. conference at Vadstena he noticed a castle on the outskirts of the town and thought that it would be an ideal place for students to meet. Fries began making preparations for the conference in the old castle located near the shores of Lake Wetteren. It had been built by Gustavus Vasa some three hundred years before, and since it was Government property Fries had to obtain permission to use it. He got it from Prince Bernadotte, a friend of the Y.M.C.A. movement; however, there were strings attached and many restrictions were placed on the use of the castle. It is an interesting little story in itself, all the trouble Fries had in order to obtain the castle and make it compatible for the conference. For example, one of the restrictions placed by the Government was that no lights could be used within the castle walls, probably because of the danger of fire. But Fries was not one to be defeated. It was beautiful in the evening to see the lights hanging on the outside of the castle walls shining through the open windows and reflecting in the moat below. For bedding Fries went to a doctor friend who was in the

process of building a hospital, and acquired enough beds for the students. There, in a sixteenth century royal castle, student representatives from Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and Finland met for their third conference. Some two hundred delegates were present, students, instructors, and pastors. The Finns were not represented in great number. They had to come secretly since Russia opposed any alliance with students under different flags.

At the Scandinavian Conference Mott sought to help make their organization more united and efficient. The alliance which they had was one in name only. They had no joint efforts which they carried out in the years between the conferences. Little international work was done in gaining students for the movement. Immorality and a definite lack of spiritual life was prevalent throughout the Scandinavian colleges. Mott felt that these conditions could be greatly remedied through the help of the Scandinavian Student Christian Movement if they would have some form of permanent continuing committee with definite plans and methods. He suggested that they set up a plan for inter-visitation, and went on to tell them methods which he had found most effective.<sup>10</sup>

During the conference the students also heard the plans for a world federation. With little hesitation they over-

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., pp. 464-66.

whelmingly accepted the invitation and appointed Fries of Sweden and Eckhoff of Norway to help in its founding. Upon receiving their support the six men went into closed sessions during the last part of the Scandinavian Conference. In room sixty-three, a cloistral room high in the castle, the six men met for four long sessions presided by Fries.<sup>11</sup> In the eyes of the world it was but a small and apparently insignificant meeting going on in this small room. Its effects, however, were to be far reaching, for six men were laying down plans that could unite the Christian students throughout the whole world. In this light it becomes a momentous meeting.

Each man present represented a large national organization. John R. Mott was there representing the entire North American Student Christian Movement which was now composed of the Intercollegiate Y.M.C.A., the S.V.M. for F.M., and the Inter-Seminary Missionary Alliance.

Wishard was present representing the S.C.M. in the mission lands throughout the world. In 1889 the Y.M.C.A. formed its foreign mission department and when Wishard returned from his tour in 1892 he was made its secretary. In reality Wishard was representing the Christian students college in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Islands of the Sea. Its official name is the Student Christian Movement in Lands

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 164.

Without National Organization. It is an extremely flexible group. As the S.C.M. would flourish in any one of the non-Christian countries and become organized on a national scale they would no longer be included under this mission department. Only a few years later India, Ceylon, China, Japan, and Africa were to merge into separate national organizations through the efforts of Wishard, Fraser, Wilder, and Mott.

Williamson represented the S.C.M. of Great Britain. In contrast to the American movement the British movement developed more so from the volunteer movement. Williamson, in representing the B.C.C.U., was also representing the only national student group that had women branches consisting of some two hundred to three hundred women. This was to present a minor problem but the women's place in the world federation was not decided at this conference. The Y.W.C.A. was already organized in America but it was not connected with the Intercollegiate Movement.

Siemson represented the German Student Christian Alliance, and Fries and Eckhoff represented the Scandinavian movement. Fries has already been mentioned often. He had attended the Northfield Conferences in earlier years and had contributed much to the general S.C.M. work. Pastor Martin Eckhoff was the president of the Norwegian Student Missionary Union which had been started at Christiania in 1881.

This small meeting of six men started quite simply.

It was opened with prayer, and Mott then continued with a preliminary statement on the steps that had led up to this meeting. In his persuasive manner he showed that this meeting in Vadstena was the logical step in the growth of the S.C.M. throughout the world. All were convinced that such a federation must be formed and officially gave it the name, "The World's Student Christian Federation." The name itself was nothing new for by simply substituting "federation" to "conference" we have the name already given to the summer conferences in America. The next step was the drafting of a constitution. An outline had already been worked out at Keswick but more had to be done with it. It was decided that the constitution be temporary and not ratified as official until the first general committee meeting which was planned for 1897 in America.<sup>12</sup>

This was the general outline of their meeting. Their object was direct: "To unite the student Christian world for Christ's sake." As Mott very ably put it, "It is nothing less than the uniting of the Christian forces of all universities and colleges in the great work of winning the students of the world for Christ."<sup>13</sup>

In order to carry out this aim the small group sought to form a constitution that would be firm enough and yet

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 4.

capable of expansion. They were constantly aware that they would be confronting Christian students who would have loyalties outside of Protestantism, and they wanted to be sure that the basis for membership into the W.S.C.F. would be broad enough to admit all Christian faiths including the Orthodox and Roman Catholic. This very basic part of the Federation was in the future to open doors into the Orthodox church which were never before entered. By this decision on the part of these six men Mott would in the future be capable of ecumenical achievements never before realized.

In a report letter Mott mentioned the objectives agreed upon by the men as the basis of the W.S.C.F. constitution.

1. To unite student Christian movements throughout the world.
2. To collect information regarding the religious condition of the students of all lands.
3. To promote the following lines of activity: (a) To lead students to become disciples of Jesus Christ as only Saviour and as God. (b) To deepen the spiritual life of students. (c) To enlist students in the work of extending the Kingdom of Christ throughout the whole world.<sup>14</sup>

In the present constitution of the W.S.C.F. under Article 2, "Objectives," there is little difference from the original set down at Vadstena.

At first glance the organization may appear quite

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<sup>14</sup>Mathews, op. cit., p. 107.

loose and open to all who sought entrance. On the contrary, for the sake of the newly formed Federation's sustained health the group set up a very strict policy for admitting new members into the Federation. A careful and personal examination was to be given any national group which sought entrance.

Only those movements can be federated which combine a national or international group of colleges, and which in their aims and work are in full harmony with the objectives of the Federation.<sup>15</sup>

A three-point guide was set up in helping to prepare other student movements that wished to affiliate with the Federation. First, the movement must comprise a group of universities. Secondly, its objectives should be in harmony with those of the Federation. Third, it should afford evidence of stability. This made a permanent supervisory committee necessary.<sup>16</sup> It is evident from these principles that not every university which had Christian students could become a part of the Federation. Even certain national student movements would not be able to reach these standards. This was not meant to keep them out, and by the continued work of Mott and others their standards would be raised enabling them to join the Federation. A provision was made for those organizations which were not able to affiliate

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<sup>15</sup>Mott, Addresses and Papers of John R. Mott, II, 4.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 165.

immediately. Corresponding membership was available to all organizations that sought membership.

The Federation was in no sense to be dictatorial. The power was to come from the national associations, and for this reason one of the basic principles established at Vadstena was that wherever possible, whether it be in foreign missions or in Christian lands, members of the Federation's General Committee and corresponding members must be natives of the countries which they represent. Not even a missionary on furlough or any other person connected with a foreign S.C.M. but not a native of that country could officially represent that group. This principle was well established and paid off in a greater interest on the part of the countries involved.<sup>17</sup>

Although autonomous, the national movements would, through the Federation, have the means of carrying out work never before possible. One thing that helped to keep a unified morale was the establishment of the universal Day of Prayer, already in practice within the S.V.M. Mott was so convinced of the power of prayer that he sought the incorporation of the Day of Prayer into the W.S.C.F., and the first call for prayer was set for sometime in February, 1898. This Day of Prayer had meant much to Mott in the past. It was a day in which Christian students throughout the whole

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<sup>17</sup>Rouse, op. cit., p. 87.

world would concentrate on their work at large, praying for its spiritual and physical growth. It was a day in which the local colleges set up programs inviting all outsiders to join them, and through it students throughout the whole world could gather spiritually as one in prayer seeking guidance in their work.

To Mott the formation of the Federation was the joining of principles he had used in the formation of many Associations. He expressed this in the following eight points which he considered the guiding principles of the W.S.C.F.

1. The recognition of the supremacy and the universality of the Lord Jesus Christ and of His work as the only sufficient Savior.
2. The interdenominational and interconfessional character of the Federation.
3. The independence, individuality, and autonomy of each national movement.
4. The interdependence and mutual obligations of all the movements in it.
5. The principle of not governing or seeking to control the constituent movements or interfere with their policies. Its relation to them is purely advisory and inspirational.
6. The maintenance of a non-political character, although it is profoundly concerned with strengthening national life and likewise with bringing all social and international and inter-racial relations under the rule of Christ.
7. The purpose to be in all its constituent parts truly democratic in government and representation and to emphasize student initiative.
8. Consideration of and action upon program and acti-

vities from a world point of view.<sup>18</sup>

If one were not acquainted with the motto of the W.S.G.F. he could upon examination of its principles, quickly become aware of it. Jesus' words recorded in John 17:21, "that they all may be one," is the hope of the Federation, and they officially recognize it as their motto; "Ut Omnes Unum Sint."

The six men set up a very simple executive plan for the supervision of the Federation. A general committee of two persons from each national federation was to become the Federation's executive branch. Its first meeting would be held in America in 1897. The officers of the Federation were elected as follows: Dr. Karl Fries, chairman; Dr. Johannes Siemson, vice-chairman; Mr. John R. Mott, general secretary; Dr. J. Williamson, corresponding secretary; and Mr. Luther Wishard, treasurer. Since Mott was planning to continue his world tour, he was requested to represent the Federation as their general secretary wherever he would visit. Before departing from Vadstena, Mott expressed what he was to do for the Federation during the rest of his tour.

My work for the Federation will be: to seek to establish and then federate the student movements of India, Japan, and possibly China; to appoint corresponding members in nearly all the countries which do not have student movements; to collect information regarding the religious condition of the students of all lands, and

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<sup>18</sup>Mathews, op. cit., pp. 118-19.

to render a report on the investigation.<sup>19</sup>

At the conclusion of the fourth session in the Vadstena castle the small meeting was closed with prayer. The W.S.C.F. had finally been organized and Mott's dream had become a reality.

How is this newly organized Federation seen in the eyes of its founder and in the eyes of others? As for its founder this was the realization of a dream. Little did he realize that he was to become the fulfillment of his own prophecy. Many years before he said in prayer, "God grant that Cornell may give birth to some religious movement that will touch the outside world."<sup>20</sup> Mott is the man who came out of Cornell and went on to develop a federation that would unite the Christian students of the entire world. In Mott's own estimation of the importance of this small meeting at Vadstena, Sweden, he drew this picture,

Never since the Wartburg sheltered the great German reformer while he was translating the Bible for the common people has a medieval castle served a purpose fraught with larger blessing to all mankind. . . . Days of intense and prayerful discussion resulted in the formation of the World's Student Christian Federation, and in the unanimous adoption of its constitution.<sup>21</sup>

It was a momentous part in Mott's life. It was more to him

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<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 108.

<sup>20</sup>Clarence P. Shedd, Two Centuries of Student Christian Movements (New York: Association Press, 1934), p. 299.

<sup>21</sup>Mott, Strategic Points in the World's Conquest, pp. 15-17.

than many have realized. For Mott probably saw more in that Federation than any of the other founders. He sent a report letter from Constantinople that same year of 1895, and already expressed his amazing insight and vision of what the W.S.C.F. could accomplish. He spoke of things in this report that no other would dare speak concerning such a young Federation. His expectations were tremendous, but in the light of his insight they were quite understandable. He pictured possibilities for the Federation as though they were bound to happen. He spoke as though it was inevitable that the founding of such a Federation as this would lead to the fulfillment of its aims. In this report written soon after the Vadstena meeting, Mott claimed the Federation to be the work of God and said:

1. It makes possible for the first time a thorough and comprehensive study of the religious state of the students of the whole world.
2. It will enable us to grapple successfully with the problem of the spiritual welfare of the large numbers of foreign students in different countries.
3. It places the stronger members of the Federation where they can be more helpful to the weak members.
4. It will facilitate the introduction of organized Christian work into some of the most difficult unoccupied student fields. Though the Federation has existed but a few weeks, I have already in my work in France, Italy, Hungary and Switzerland realized the practical value of this point . . . it will prove even more helpful in certain fields in the East.
5. It will be a clearing house for the best ideas wrought out in the experience of Christian student organizations in all lands.

6. New plans and policies may be projected speedily and effectively throughout the whole student world.
7. The Federation will be a great unifying force. By its conferences, visitation and publications, it will do much to unify the plans and methods of work amongst students of different countries. More important, it will inevitably unite in spirit as never before the students of the world. And in doing this it will be achieving a yet more significant result--the hastening of the answer to our Lord's prayer, "That they may all be one." We read and hear much about Christian union. Surely there has been spiritual union of Christendom than the World's Student Christian Federation which unites in common purpose and work the coming leaders of Church and State in all lands.<sup>22</sup>

It is certainly amazing that he could view so much within such a short time, and yet it cannot be denied that the Federation has met the expectations of its founder.

But how have others evaluated the birth of the Federation? In looking at what others have said we see that their evaluations are usually not as lofty as Mott's. But its greatness could not be denied and it had to be acknowledged as "an achievement which may, all things considered, be regarded as his greatest creative work."<sup>23</sup> The creative genius of John Mott is seen in the tremendous scope which he outlined for the Federation. It became the very means by which one Christian student might be directly associated with another in any country of the world. The historian and worker in the W.S.C.F., Ruth Rouse, defines the W.S.C.F. as:

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<sup>22</sup>Rouse, op. cit., pp. 63-64.

<sup>23</sup>Mathews, op. cit., p. 101.

that movement which aims at a Christian Association in every university and college, a national student movement in every country, linked together in a world student Christian organization.<sup>24</sup>

In our day the tremendous sweep of the W.S.C.F. is lost to some extent by our modern familiarity with such world movements. The founding of the Federation can best be approached in the light of its period. It was something new as far as Christian students were concerned. Robert C. Mackie pointed this out in saying,

The founders of the Federation created something new in the university world. We accept international student organizations as if they had always existed, but the Federation for many years stood alone. We accept the mingling of students from different Christian confessions and denominations, as if they were a natural outcome of Christianity, but the Federation struck out on a comparatively untrodden ecumenical path, and continually broke new ground. We accept the methods of conferences and study circles, as if Christians had always worked that way, but the Federation was a pioneer.<sup>25</sup>

Even the idea of a world federation of students was so novel at the time that some had called it fantastic. The whole project was a venture in an untried field.<sup>26</sup>

Because it does seem fantastic for such an organization to be formed at this time and to have such objectives as it did many expressed inevitable dangers. Mott, himself, was aware of the dangers. It was evident that each country

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<sup>24</sup>Rouse, op. cit., p. 23.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>26</sup>Mathews, op. cit., p. 430.

would be isolated from the other in much of its work. And because of this isolation joint sympathy and cooperation would be weak. He knew that within such an international Federation there would be the creation of national and racial jealousies but he saw little danger from denominational jealousy. In order to overcome these dangers Mott saw the necessity of continued and extensive personal contacts on the national level and therefore the necessity of acquiring, as soon as possible, national leaders that could give their full time to the work of their countries' S.C.M. But other fears were present. It was expressed that the Federation would never be more than a name. By the very nature of its scope it could never have any real practical value. After Mott completed his first world tour this fear was quickly banished. There was also the fear of over-centralization, that the Federation would become too strong within itself and thus govern instead of serve. This, of course, is a fear within any similar organization. A fear, however, that has its merits, yet a fear that can be dispelled by proper leadership and democratic process. But most of the fears and dangers were groundless. They could be overcome because there was a strong will behind it, not only the will of its founders, but the will within the Christian student. Fisher expressed this thought when he said: "The Christian youth . . . of all lands will participate in a religious federation if they are given worthwhile

tasks to do and are allowed national autonomy."<sup>27</sup>

In the eyes of the S.C.M. the Federation's greatest contribution was its unity, the apparently partial fulfillment of Christ's will that all may be one. The theological implications of such a philosophy are quite evident, yet this is the thinking of many, which is often referred to as "The American Way," that one cannot work effectively if one does not work with others. Divided we fall, united we can succeed. Dr. Roswell Hitchcock went even further in stating his unionistic philosophy. To him the W.S.G.F. is a "mitigation of the deplorable effect of our too-disintegrated Protestantism."<sup>28</sup> That this is what Christ means in the words found in John 17:21 is not completely true, but that this is the approach taken by many in the S.C.M. is quite apparent. Mott himself expressed that the chief significance of the Federation is in its unifying power. Through the Federation the methods, efforts and dreams of the Christian students in the whole world are united. As Shedd, the contemporary historian of the S.C.M. in America, has said, "Its most striking evidence of God's leadership was to be found in its inclusiveness."<sup>29</sup> Apparently the W.S.G.F.,

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<sup>27</sup>Galen M. Fisher, John R. Mott--Architect of Co-operation and Unity (New York: Association Press, 1952), p. 135.

<sup>28</sup>Shedd, op. cit., p. 356.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid.

in the eyes of many, is successful simply because it has united the S.C.M. We cannot, as is apparent from the principles set down by Mott, place this motive upon his dreams. True, he dreamed for a united world and has now seen its reality in the W.S.C.F. But for Mott the union was not an end but simply the means through which Christ may more effectively be brought into the world.

The Federation was organized to see to it that the Christian students throughout the world would unite and would carry out their ultimate purpose as Christians. Every local association throughout the world could come in touch with the students of different universities and different races through the work of their own secretaries. Such continued personal visitation was encouraged by the Federation's executive committee. It was not going to be a name only. It was determined to be an active influence within each individual of each College Association. As Hogg said: "It is above all practical, demanding action and service."<sup>30</sup>

However one might evaluate this Federation, in the eyes of Mott--it was the reality of a dream. This has become a climax in his early life. He has seen a hope become sure. John R. Mott has reached the point where he could say with his Lord, "That all may be one," and know that he knew that

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<sup>30</sup>William Richey Hogg, Ecumenical Foundations (New York: Harper and Bros., 1952), p. 31. For an evaluation by Hogg see pp. 88-97.

for the Lord to speak is for the Lord to do. God is active and if His will be that all may be one then it will be expressed in the lives of His children. Jesus has expressed His will, so let it be.

We have endeavored to observe the development of the Student Christian Movement through the life of Dr. John H. Mott to the founding of the World's Student Christian Federation. In short we have viewed the feasibility of a dream. Although our subject has ended with the formation of this Federation in 1895 yet it might be well to view in brief the remaining part of Mott's world-wide tour. In so doing, we might see some of the advanced methods which he used and also watch this new organization take form and become alive in the nations throughout the world by the efforts of this tour. In this connection, it might be well to remember that Mott is now officially connected with three major organizations, the World's Student Christian Federation, the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions, and the Intercollegiate Young Men's Christian Association. Wherever he goes he must consider the aims of these organizations and take them into account in whatever he does.

Upon leaving Vedatene, it was much easier to gain members for the Federation and to influence national groups than it would be to their advantage to participate in it. Because the Federation was now organized Mott could point back to it and say to any national movements that this is

## CHAPTER XII

### FROM VADSTENA TO WILLIAMSTOWN

We have endeavored to observe the development of the Student Christian Movement through the life of Dr. John R. Mott to the founding of The World's Student Christian Federation. In short we have viewed the reality of a dream. Although our subject has ended with the formation of this Federation in 1895 yet it might be well to view in brief the remaining part of Mott's world-wide tour. In so doing, we might see some of the advanced methods which he used and also watch this new organization take form and become alive in the nations throughout the world by the efforts of this tour. In this connection, it might be well to remember that Mott is now officially connected with three major organizations, the World's Student Christian Federation, the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions, and the Intercollegiate Young Men's Christian Association. Wherever he goes he must consider the aims of these organizations and take them into account in whatever he does.

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an international organization which can serve them. Before the tour was over Mott had brought into active participation as many more student movements as were charter members.

From Vadstena Mott proceeded on to Norway and then back to England and into the European Continent visiting France and Italy. On the 23rd of September he arrived at Switzerland to attend a conference at Ste. Croix.<sup>1</sup> This particular conference might be observed in detail since it shows how Mott utilized the formation of the W.S.C.F. in gaining other national groups to cooperate. His visit to Switzerland was not by chance. Mott met a Mr. Ernest Favre from Switzerland in London during 1894. He told Favre of the S.C.M. in America. Quite impressed, Favre decided to do what he could in starting such a movement throughout the colleges of Switzerland. In just a year's time he had organized a large enough group to hold a conference at Ste. Croix from September 23rd to the 26th. All but one of the universities were represented. At this conference Mott told the group about the S.C.M. work that had been done in other countries. He then outlined an effective plan for organizations within the local universities. Third he developed a simple plan for a national organization in Switzerland. Upon their enthusiastic acceptance Mott requested that they appoint a corresponding

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<sup>1</sup>John R. Mott, Strategic Points in the World's Conquest (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1897), p. 215.

member to the W.S.C.F. These four steps which Mott used in gaining the support of the Swiss movement were to become the basic methods used throughout his world tour.<sup>2</sup> His persuasive manner and talents were capable of developing a loosely organized college association into a national movement that could participate with the W.S.C.F. all within the time of one convention. This same approach led him to acquire leaders from the national movements in France, Italy, and Bulgaria and helped him to gain support in Austria and Hungary.

As has been stated many times before Mott's primary goal was not only to unite the student world but to unite it under Christ. Because of this goal Mott carried on the work of an evangelist as he traveled throughout the world. At Cornell Mott made a decision not for the Y.M.C.A. but for Jesus. To him the first aim of the Federation was to bring Christ to the student. This necessitated evangelistic meetings at any school he would enter. Mott first stepped forward as an evangelist at the intercollegiate conference held many years before at the University of Tennessee. Now it had become a part of his procedure. He went to great lengths in preparing for a successful evangelistic service in the schools. His preparation, his delivery, and his

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<sup>2</sup>John R. Mott, Addresses and Papers of John R. Mott (New York: Association Press, 1946), II, 501.

follow-up work might, in many respects, be compared to the modern evangelists of our day. Mott preached to a decision and would seek the help of the local churches to follow up on those who made that decision. His sermons were simple, direct, and often times blunt when necessary. He spoke to the leader as well as to the student. Because he was a man with a logical mind, he did not utilize nor play on the emotions. His argument was convincing and his theme was always "hope" for the person who found himself in need of salvation. His sermons were far from pious platitudes. He went straight to the problem within the heart of the student before him regardless of nationality or race. To this end, Mott would learn the different religions of the countries he was to visit in order that he might more intelligently present Christ as the hope of the world. He continued to hold evangelistic meetings throughout his entire tour, and his success in Asia was exceptional. For the next thirty years Mott made it a rule to conduct at least one evangelistic campaign on a college campus every year. Thus he united the students, more specifically, he united the students under Christ.

Dwight L. Moody, Henry Drummond, and John R. Mott were all great evangelists to students, but out of the three, only Mott made world-wide evangelism an instrument for promoting the ecumenical movement.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Galen M. Fisher, John R. Mott--Architect of Co-operation and Unity (New York: Association Press, 1952), p. 155.

In the month of October, 1895, Mott arrived at Roberts College in Constantinople. There he met Armenian, Greek Orthodox, and Bulgarian students, and immediately proceeded to organize some of them into a College Association. However, his stay was not long. At this particular time the Armenians were being persecuted and slaughtered in the streets. That Mott did work with the Orthodox is quite significant since the W.S.C.F. charter members were all Protestant. But the door was left open to any other Christian confession. This flexibility of the W.S.C.F. constitution enabled Mott to organize other Orthodox students throughout the area including the Bosphorus, Beirut, and Jerusalem. He continued on his journey to a college in the Nile Valley where he organized a small group of ten students. Visiting whatever colleges he could on the way he proceeded on to Ceylon where there was already a good Student Association. Here Mott met Wilder and together they began to prepare for the big India campaign. Twelve rather weak Associations were found in India but they made it possible for Mott and Wilder to begin organizing a national group. For three months they toiled in the area and finally held a national convention at Madras where the S.C.M. of India and Ceylon was officially organized. Meeting the standards of the W.S.C.F. this national organization became the first to be affiliated with the Federation. In India we are also made aware that Mott is still working for the S.V.M. Declaration

cards could be found in his pocket and whenever one made the decision to give his life to Christ in missions another card would be signed. One of the more outstanding signatures obtained was from a Dr. Chitambar who was to become a Methodist bishop.

When Mott first left America in 1895 he had no plans of going into the Southern Hemisphere but a group of men in England urged him to visit Australia. In Norway, he received the same request. Mott sent letters to Australia and New Zealand to check on the situation. He received answers while in India with the urgent plea that they be visited. The British S.V.M.U. immediately cabled Mott and said that they would carry the added expense if he would visit Australia and New Zealand. They immediately forwarded two hundred pounds.<sup>4</sup> Upon his arrival in Australia, knowing not a person, he went to a Presbyterian service in Adelaide. He talked with the minister who in turn sent him to the Chief Justice of Southern Australia. He welcomed Mott very cordially and invited him to lecture at the University. Mott had gotten his foot in and continued to visit the colleges throughout Australia and New Zealand. In a short time a national movement was organized with representatives for the W.S.C.F.

From Sydney Mott continued on to Hong Kong in the Autumn

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<sup>4</sup>Mott, Addresses and Papers of John R. Mott, II, 263.

of 1896. Soon he was able to organize a special conference in Shanghai due to the previous work of many missionaries and Wishard. Twenty-two out of the twenty-seven Chinese Associations sent representatives to the conference. It was here that the S.V.M. of the Y.M.C.A. in China was officially organized. It may seem strange to hear of missionary volunteers in a mission country like China, but there were already seventy-seven Chinese volunteers working among their own people.

Mott proceeded to Japan in November. Here again Wishard's work was apparent. In 1889 Wishard had held the first student conference similar to Northfield at Doshisha, from which came the famous telegram "make Jesus King."<sup>5</sup> However, because there was little follow-up work done Mott had a difficult time in reviving the Associations. He spent twelve weeks in Japan and, although succeeding, he felt that this was the most difficult country in which he had tried to organize a national Association that could affiliate with the W.S.C.F.

Before ending our summary of Mott's world wide tour one particular point should be mentioned. Forty-three College Associations were found throughout Asia already in 1892. Mott was not the ground breaker. He was the builder.

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<sup>5</sup>Ruth Rouse, The World's Student Christian Federation (London: S.C.M. Press Ltd., 1948), p. 44.

Although many of these Associations were extremely weak they did exist and Mott had something on which to work. Wishard had established the majority of these forty-three, but if it had not been for Mott's return they would have disappeared in a short time. Because of his work they were likely to remain as well.

On February 25, 1897, Mott left Honolulu for the American Continent. From March 5th to April 2nd he continued across the Continent attending some minor meetings until his arrival in New York.<sup>6</sup> The magnitude of this first world trip is evident in reviewing the general statistics. It was twenty-two months long covering some sixty thousand miles. His visits to 144 universities in twenty-four countries resulted in the organizing of seventy Student Christian Unions.<sup>7</sup> The World Student Christian Federation, not even a year old, could now boast the following record: nine hundred College Associations with forty-five thousand student members, ten organized national student movements, thirty-eight secretaries giving their full time to the work, and twenty-one buildings valued at eighty thousand pounds.<sup>8</sup> Wherever Mott went throughout his tour he left the impression of the Federation.

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<sup>6</sup>Mott, Strategic Points in the World's Conquest, p. 218.

<sup>7</sup>Mott, Addresses and Papers of John E. Mott, II, 9-13.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 35.

The General Committee of the W.S.C.F. had planned to meet in America in 1897, and it was decided to hold the conference at Williamstown, Mass. In July, the five original members of the Federation plus the added five new members sent their representatives to the meeting. The new National Associations are the Intercollegiate Y.M.C.A. of India and Ceylon, the Australasian Student Christian Union, the S.C.A. of South Africa, the College Y.M.C.A. of China, and the Student Y.M.C.U. of Japan. Also present at the conference were representatives from Holland, France and Switzerland.<sup>9</sup> Fries was not able to attend the meeting and so Ibuka of Japan presided as the vice chairman. From then on the vice president of the W.S.C.F. has been an Asiatic. The conference itself was not particularly colorful. It did root more firmly the constitution of the Federation and make more clear its aims and methods. Mott was also asked to accept the position of general secretary.

This has been the beginning of a Federation that was to place an indelible mark on the future generations of the world. Its advance in America is particularly noteworthy, as it gave a greater prestige to the local College Associations. Many of the student denominational organizations began to seek affiliation with the Federation, and in order to make this possible the Federation decided to organize a

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<sup>9</sup>Rouse, op. cit., p. 71.

committee in the United States made up of representatives of the denominational groups that could meet the requirements of the Federation. These denominational College Associations, together with the Student Y.M.C.A., Y.W.C.A., the S.V.M., and the Inter-Seminary Missionary Alliance, became what is now known as the United Student Christian Council, the official representative of the Federation in the United States of America.<sup>10</sup>

The tremendous strain of the past ten years was terrific on John Mott. He had not been too conscious of physical discipline and ever since his graduation from Cornell he had been working under a tremendous strain of responsibility. He could not go on at this speed and it resulted in a collapse from a near nervous breakdown in 1898. This was a shock to the man who had planned so much for the future. It led him to ask in despair, "Was this the end of it?"<sup>11</sup> It was not the end and his recovery found a man with the same zeal but with a more scheduled plan for his daily living. His every day was planned to allow for the utmost in work, yet also the necessary requirements for leisure. Mott was not finished, his work had just begun. The founding of the W.S.C.F.

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<sup>10</sup> A History of the Ecumenical Movement 1517-1948, edited by Ruth Rouse and Stephen Charles Neill (London: S.P.C.K., 1954), p. 607.

<sup>11</sup> Basil Mathews, John R. Mott, World Citizen (New York: Harper and Bros., 1934), p. 382.

was only the beginning and often times referred to as the beginning of the World Council of Churches. The student who was persuaded to give his life to Christ while in the S.C.M. would be the man who will give his life for one world united under Christ.

Why did Holt put such a heavy emphasis on working with the student? What was it that led him to give the greater part of his life to joining the Christian student with one another? Many singular reasons may be illustrated. It is quite apparent that to Holt the student was of primary importance. As Fisher points out,

One of the basic policies which have guided Holt throughout his career is the primary importance of capturing the university students of all lands for the Christian cause.<sup>1</sup>

Not only was the student of primary importance, the student had a particular need of which Holt was well aware. The Christian student was not united for more effective work. As we have said, this is in itself a judgment upon the Church. This, of course, depends from what viewpoint the question is observed. Nevertheless, to Holt the Christian student at the campus had been neglected. He was not able to feel his Church within the boundaries of his school. This need was uppermost in Holt's thought and mind. And so he gave his life to develop the S.C.M. as far as possible,

<sup>1</sup>William H. Fisher, *John S. Holt—Architect of the Student Christian Movement* (New York: Association Press, 1934), pp. 175-76.

## CHAPTER XIII

### CONCLUSION

In conclusion we might again pose the question from the introduction. Why did Mott put such a heavy emphasis on working with the student? What was it that led him to give the greater part of his life to joining the Christian student with one another? Many singular reasons may be illustrated. It is quite apparent that to Mott the student was of primary importance. As Fisher points out,

One of the basic policies which have guided Mott throughout his career is the primary importance of capturing the university students of all lands for the Christian cause.<sup>1</sup>

Not only was the student of primary importance, the student had a particular need of which Mott was well aware. The Christian student was not united for more effective work. As some have said, this is in itself a judgment upon the Church. This, of course, depends from what viewpoint the question is observed. Nevertheless, to Mott the Christian student on the campus had been neglected. Seldom was he able to feel his Church within the boundaries of his school. This need was uppermost in Mott's heart and mind. And so he gave his life to develop the S.C.M. as far as possible,

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<sup>1</sup>Galen M. Fisher, John R. Mott--Architect of Co-operation and Unity (New York: Association Press, 1952), pp. 175-76.

and his boundary was the world. Under God's hand, the S.C.M. found early success, and it has also become a tremendous influence on the ecumenical movement of the present day. The university student in working through the S.C.M. was apart from his denominational church. He was bound by its convictions but not its organization, and could therefore break into an untried field. The students' mistakes were his own. He was responsible for the errors committed in developing such a movement. And yet through such mistakes came success, and their success was often times taken up by the Church. The S.C.M. had, through trial and error, established means which later were to become the basis for the great ecumenical movement throughout the world.

Should Mott have worked exclusively with students as he did? Should he have restricted himself to the men and women found only on the college campus? Some have criticized that the rural and the industrial youth have been neglected because of this. They criticized Mott for restricting himself to the intellectual elite. As one grandfather of a student working in the S.C.M. remarked, "At the time of Jesus there were also scholars but it was not among them that Jesus recruited the first disciples!"<sup>2</sup> How would it have turned out if Mott worked with other classes of people outside of the student during these early years?

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 176.

Would he have been a success and would his talents have been utilized to their fullest?

He made great contributions to the entire Association movement in America, but he was an expert only in the work among students, and never fully understood the city Associations.<sup>3</sup>

This criticism, of course, is unfair. It would have been humanly impossible for Mott to carry out his work throughout all age levels. His interest was with the student and he cannot be condemned for it. His hope was in the student. To him the student Federation incubates the future leaders of the Church, and as students they worked, not outside of the Church, but hand in hand with their Church. By working with the student Mott was working with the future Christian leaders of the world. The S.V.M. was entirely for the purpose of making Church leaders of the student. The students banded together for the purpose of training themselves that they might be placed into the mission work of the Church. They became the future ministers of the world. Student Volunteer Movement groups throughout the world offered the Church many names that were to be heard on the lips of the people. At the great ecumenical conferences which Mott attended in later years, he would see the faces of men and women whom he had known as student leaders in the W.S.C.F. They had been at school studying in their

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 180.

fields of interest but the Call came and could not be refused. They too had learned as students the need of the world for Christ. They came to know "the terrible tragedy of Christian separatism,"<sup>4</sup> and were thus led to stay in the Christian work as men and women. In this sense then the Intercollege Y.M.C.A. and the S.C.M. may be considered the fathers of the World Council of Churches. Consider this incident in the life of William Temple.

the production of ecumenical leaders . . . the greatest service which the World's Student Christian Federation has rendered to Christian unity is the friendship it has promoted among men and women who were after to become leaders in the world-wide interest of the Church. It was as one of the ushers of the Edinburgh Conference in 1910 that William Temple first touched the ecumenical movement. But this was only the first of many similar contacts. More than once after he had come to his high place in ecumenical leadership he publicly acknowledged his debt to the student movement.<sup>5</sup>

Why shouldn't Mott work with the student? He saw their need, and he was aware that through them would be found the future leaders of the church. It was in this field that Mott's talent lay. Mott could in vivid words convey the Christian message and could convince the believer of the necessity for working united to the further glory of His Kingdom.

He early demonstrated his ability to interpret the essentials of the Christian faith and life in a way

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<sup>4</sup>Basil Mathews, John R. Mott, World Citizen (New York: Harper and Bros., 1934), p. 239.

<sup>5</sup>Fisher, op. cit., p. 24.

that led students by scores and hundreds to make decision to understand and follow in the way of Jesus.<sup>6</sup>

Mott was able to give to the student talents that reached near genius. His abilities in so many fields enabled him to create from a small handful of students a strong national organization. God had selected a man capable of many things, yet not capable of himself but through the Grace of his Lord. The talents placed in his hands enabled him to carry out a work for the student and for Christ that none other before had been able to do.

few men, if any, in the history of the Church, have had such an unusual combination of gifts: statesman and evangelist; administrator, organizer and spiritual teacher; preacher and writer.<sup>7</sup>

Mott was a combination of a dignified, commanding presence, deep religious faith, evangelistic zeal, ability to see promise and ability in youth, vision, courage, tact, administrative ability, power over public assemblies, convincing speech.<sup>8</sup>

These are not attributes heaped on a man without reason.

Each of these words were well chosen in describing Dr. John R. Mott.

As far as Mott was concerned his dream had become real. We have followed that dream and have seen it take form in the founding of The World's Student Christian Federation.

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<sup>6</sup>Clarence P. Shedd, Two Centuries of Student Christian Movements (New York: Association Press, 1934), p. 315.

<sup>7</sup>Fisher, op. cit., p. 148.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 356.

We have followed the path of one man who, because of his great work on such a world wide scale, led to the reception of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1946. The Lord had given much to His servant, and in complete realization that to whom much is given much shall be required, Mott gave his life.

In conclusion, then, we might close with a short quotation written in 1922 by an Indian worker in the Young Men's Christian Association. It brings out so simply in one sentence what this project, in all its pages, has endeavored to reveal. The Indian worker said that he "looks up to Dr. Mott as gifted with an overwhelming power to lead the students of all lands to consider the claims of God on their lives."<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 96.

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