

M. H. R.
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THE UNITED OFFERING

The United Offering is the outcome of the Woman's Auxiliary, so I will begin at the fountain head. In 1871 Miss Mary Emery formulated plans for systematic work among the women of the church. These plans were submitted to the Board of Missions, and they were approved and adopted without any change. In January, 1872, the Board of Missions became our sponsor, and we received our name "The Woman's Auxiliary to the Board of Missions." We are not an independent organization, we are simply *Auxiliary*, a *Help* to the Board.

For several years, little was heard of it—indeed, those who had begun work, did not fully realize its growth; but Diocesan branches were organized, and in October, 1883, the officers of these branches met together for the first time. The service was held in the Church of the Epiphany, Philadelphia. Bishop Kinsolving of Texas was Rector. The offering that morning was \$37.50. Three years later we met in Chicago. The service was held in Grace Church. The Bishop said he had never administered the Holy Communion to so large a body of women. The offering was \$82.71.

It was during the next three years that a *United Offering* was suggested. A member of the Auxiliary in the Diocese of Pittsburgh urged all who expected to be present at the next Triennial Meeting to lay aside gifts during those three years, that each one could go to that service with so large a *personal* offering that our *United* offerings might be given to the Board of Missions for some definite work in the Mission field. About a month before our meeting we learned that a church was needed in Alaska, and a missionary (a woman) was needed in Japan. This would require an outlay of \$2,000. Our service was held in the Church of the Holy Communion, New York City; afterward we adjourned to a Hall near by. There are a number of of-

ficers in the different Dioceses who can remember with me our disappointment when we heard that the offering was a little over \$400. Not one woman was satisfied; additional gifts were made and at noon we had about \$700. When the meeting was opened that afternoon Miss Emery came to the front of the platform holding a slip of paper in her hand. She said: "I have here a cheque for \$1,000, given by a member who does not want her name known. Would it be possible to raise the amount received this morning to another thousand?" *Would it? It was raised*, and that afternoon we sent to the Board of Missions \$2,000. One thousand built our first church in Alaska, at Anzik on the Yukon River, where the Rev. Mr. Chapman has ministered for over twenty years. The other \$1,000 sent Miss Lisa Lovell of St. Thomas' Church, New York, to Japan—our first United Offering Missionary. Miss Lovell died a little more than a year ago after nineteen years of consecrated work in Japan.

October, 1889, marked our first United Offering. On the 6th of January, the church observes the Feast of the Epiphany—"We have seen His Star in the East, and are come to worship Him, and they brought gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh." These three wise men came to worship the King, bringing gifts. *That was the first United Offering on record.* Ours came nineteen hundred years later—but is it not well for us to remember that when the wise men came to worship their King, they brought with them gifts, showing that an *offering* was part of their *worship*. Three years later when we met in Baltimore the United Offering was \$20,000. This was given to the Enrolment Fund. Several years previous, a prominent layman had estimated, that if every male communicant in the church should enroll his name, with a pledge of \$5, for each succeeding three years, they would go to the General Convention with a mil-

lion dollars. In October, 1892, the Enrolment Fund had reached \$150,000. Our United Offering of \$20,000 was given to that fund. Now the little blue boxes came to the front. These little messengers were sent out into every branch of the Woman's Auxiliary and it was hoped they would find the way into the home of every woman of the church. In October, 1895, we met in Minnesota. The service was held in Christ Church, St. Paul, of which Bishop Gilbert was Rector. After the service, we adjourned to a Presbyterian Church, the largest in the city, which was kindly offered to us for that day. You may imagine our anxiety as to the outcome or income of the little blue boxes. It seemed ages before Dr. Langford made his appearance, and holding up his hand for silence, announced an offering of \$56,000! In an instant every woman was on her feet, and we sang with grateful voices "Praise God from whom all blessings flow." In giving the amount of the different United Offerings I state in round numbers the thousands, but in this case, the first venture of the blue boxes, I want them to have the credit of every cent; the offering that morning was \$56,198.35. The income of this paid the first three years of Bishop Brooke's Episcopate; one year that of the Bishop of Salina, and for the last fifteen years has paid the salary of Bishop Rowe; and this will continue as long as Alaska is a Missionary jurisdiction.

Three years later in Washington, the little blue boxes were still in evidence. Our offering was \$84,000. This was given for woman's work. Fifty United Offering workers were sent out that year. In 1901, the first meeting in the new century, the service was held in Grace Church, San Francisco, the offering being \$107,000. This is known as the Bishops' offering, because it was divided equally among the Missionary Bishops, an equal part for the colored commission of which Bishop Dudley was in

charge. This money was given to the Missionary Bishops each to use his share as would best help him in his work. Churches, Hospitals, School and Rectories were built. The day after the service in Grace Church, a committee of seven was appointed, of which the writer had the honor of being a member. We met in a room in the Palace Hotel to determine the object of the next United Offering. It was unanimously voted that the offering of 1904 be applied to the "training, sending out, and support of women workers, and the care of them when sick or disabled, and a sum not exceeding \$5,000 to be set apart for a building suitable for woman's work."

In October, 1904, we met in Trinity Church, Boston; the offering was \$150,000. Three years later, October, 1907, at Richmond, the object of the offering the same, but a sum not exceeding \$10,000 to be set aside for buildings for woman's work, the offering was \$224,000. Three years later in Cincinnati, the object the same, but a sum not exceeding \$15,000 to be set aside for buildings in the mission field, the offering was \$243,000. Going back to 1883, when the offering was \$37.50 it had grown to \$82.71, then \$2,000, \$20,000, \$56,000, \$84,000, \$107,000, \$150,000, \$224,000, \$243,000. We have been studying this winter a little book, called "Japan Advancing, Whither?" Don't you think it would be interesting to take up the study of this little open book, "The United Offering Advancing, Whither?"

And what has it done? It sent out the first United Offering Missionary to Japan, it built our first church in Alaska, at Anzik, on the Yukon River; it paid salaries of Bishops Brooke, Griswold and Rowe. It enabled the Missionary Bishops to build churches, hospitals, schools and rectories; it built the house at Sendai, Japan, for training native Christian women as Bible readers; it enlarged and made all necessary improvements on St. Hilda's school, Hankow. It built the new dormitory for girls at St. Augustine's school, Raleigh. Four offerings were for woman's work, and of these offerings \$25,000 was set apart for buildings in the mission field. In one year, it sent out fifty United Offering workers, and during the past twenty years it has paid the salaries of 1,414 missionaries. If we were business men, we would be apt to say, "Does it pay?" But I will only ask each one of you, "Has it been worth while?" M. H. R.

(Remainder next month)