

MEN AND RELIGION

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Men and Religion by Fayette L. Thompson & John R. Mott

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FAYETTE L. THOMPSON & JOHN R. MOTT

MEN AND RELIGION

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GEORGE L. ROBINSON, GRAHAM
TAYLOR, FRED B. SMITH.

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INTRODUCTION

A MOVEMENT founded on and developed in prayer, plans for which are being sanely and carefully developed on a very extensive and thorough scale by men prominent in the business, social and religious life of two nations, who represent also great organizations of Christian men of different points of view; a movement whose main objective is greatly to increase the active membership of men and boys in the Christian churches of this continent—such is the Men and Religion Forward Movement. *Whence did it arise?* Invitations were sent out by the Religious Work Department of the International Committee of Young Men's Christian Associations for a conference to discuss suggestions concerning "a forward movement in behalf of the religious life of the young men and boys of North America." Forty-one men representing specially the International Committee and the various Church Brotherhoods spent May 18, 1910, in prayer and conference at the Hotel Manhattan, New York. J. G. Cannon, President of the Fourth National Bank, New York, acted as chairman. During the day it developed that three different religious organizations had been considering, each independently, some such plan. The result of the conference was a resolution to under-

take "a forward movement in behalf of the religious life of the men and boys of North America." The chairman was asked to name a representative committee of eleven "to seek the endorsement of this campaign by all appropriate bodies and their effective coöperation in its promotion; and, as soon as they deem wise, to create and set in operation the necessary executive organization." At the call of the chairman this committee of eleven spent Aug. 22, 1910, in prayer and conference at the International Hotel, Niagara Falls, N. Y. The chief matters discussed were the appointment of a National General Committee to have charge of the movement, a name for the movement, and preparations for a conference to be held at Buffalo, Oct. 25 and 26, 1910.

At the Buffalo Conference, Oct. 25 and 26, 262 delegates were present, from seventy-two cities in the United States and Canada. The majority of the delegates had been sent officially by religious organizations of men in the various cities represented. After the plans proposed had been carefully outlined and discussed, at the close of the second day, a general committee (called the Committee of Ninety-seven) was elected. After the close of the conference the representatives of the general committee who were present met and organized. An executive committee of twenty-five was appointed, consisting of one executive officer from each of the participating organizations, the remainder being appointed by the chairman. Mr. J. G. Cannon was elected chairman; Charles Thompson, Minneapolis, Minn., vice-chairman; James H. Post,

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Brooklyn, N. Y., treasurer; Hubert Carleton, Boston, Mass., secretary; and Fred B. Smith, New York, campaign leader. "Men and Religion Forward Movement" was chosen as the official name. It was decided to locate the permanent headquarters in New York City, and authority was given to select the necessary executive and clerical staff. Arrangements were made for a later conference in Chicago. The names of members of the general executive committee and the list of the organizations represented will be found at the end of this volume.

What are the plans thus far? First, ninety cities of the United States and Canada will be selected. In each of these there will be a long period of thorough preparation, by prayer and most aggressive work, directed by a local committee of a hundred citizens working in conjunction with the national general committee. Then an eight-day campaign will be inaugurated in each city, during which teams of leaders specially trained in methods of appealing to men, in methods of Bible study, and in individual evangelism of the sanest kind, in boys' work and in social service, will visit the city. They will assist in every phase of the work, addressing great meetings of every kind for men and boys, holding conferences for workers and giving inspiration, direction and advice as to organization and methods of continuing the work and conserving the results. The Christian forces and organizations in each city, along with the men who have been won, will then organize and carry on a somewhat similar campaign on a smaller scale in from eight to