

CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION WORK IN AMERICAN COLLEGES.

International Committee of
Young Men's Christian Associations,
Cor. 4th Ave. and 23d St., New York.

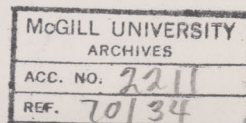
COLLEGE DEPARTMENT,
Princeton, N. J., January, 1880.

The past three years have been marked by an unusual amount of organized Christian effort among the students of a large number of Colleges throughout this country and Canada. A combined movement is in progress under the auspices of the International Committee of Young Men's Christian Associations, in which over seventy colleges are now enlisted, and the number is constantly increasing. The work depends so entirely upon the prayers and sympathies of the Church, and is so intimately related to all departments of evangelical work, that some statements concerning its origin, object, methods and results, should be presented to the Christian public.

I. ORIGIN. The movement is an outgrowth of the revival which occurred in Princeton College in connection with the Day of Prayer for Colleges in 1876; although no definite steps were taken toward its prosecution until a year later. The revival gave a great impulse to the spiritual activity of the Philadelphian Society, (the Religious Association in College,) one of the results of which was the connection of that body with the International Organization of Young Men's Christian Associations. Another result was a deep conviction among members of the Society, of the incomparable importance of the consecration of College Students to consistent Christian living and earnest personal effort towards securing the salvation of their unconverted fellows. It was also believed that very much would be accomplished in this direction if Colleges generally were united upon some basis which would promote the spiritual life of individual Associations, and lead to the formation of new ones. Moved by these feelings, the Society issued a circular to about 200 Colleges, urging the foregoing considerations, and suggesting the benefits which would flow from the interchange of opinions and experience in Conventions, and requesting each College to send delegates to the approaching International Convention at Louisville, Ky., in June, 1877. In response to the circular, twenty-five students attended the Convention, and after prayerful deliberation, formed a plan of united effort, and entrusted the prosecution of the work to the International Committee.

II. THE OBJECT sought to be realized by this movement, is the formation of Associations in the Colleges of the United states and Canada, which shall carry on in a thoroughly systematic manner the following kinds of work :

1. Regular devotional meetings for Bible study, prayer and conference.
2. Individual effort by which Christian students will at the very beginning of their college course be led to take an open stand for Christ, and will be helped in maintaining the same; also the exerting of such personal influences upon the unconverted as will lead to their salvation while in College.
3. Such work as is necessary in the neighborhood of the college among Sunday schools, prayer meetings, &c.
4. The development and maintenance of a live interest in behalf of Home and Foreign Missions, by means of regular Missionary Meetings.



Recent inquiries have elicited the following information :

Number of Colleges in the U. S. and Canada, exclusive of Roman Catholic institutions,	350
Number of Students,	60,000
Number of Professing Christians, not exceeding	25,000
Number of Christians connected with various kinds of religious societies, (possibly)	8,000

In consideration of the vast and far-reaching influence of this class of men, what grander work can be undertaken than that which has for its object their thorough consecration to the Lord Jesus Christ and the advancement of His cause.

III. METHODS OF WORK. If the above kinds of work are prosecuted successfully there must be thorough system. If associations to any considerable extent are organized and maintained in their efficiency there must be some permanent agency devoted to this purpose. Accordingly the Conference of Students recommended the appointment of a Secretary to serve as a medium of communication among colleges, and between Colleges and the International Committee. It is his business to acquaint himself with the needs of individual colleges and college associations; correspond with and visit colleges; present to students the suggestions developed by Conferences; organize new associations, and stimulate existing organizations; secure the attendance of students at conventions both State and International, and endeavor to impress upon students in every possible way the importance of Christian living and Christian work. The International Committee responded to the request of the Conference, elected a member to whom was entrusted special oversight of the work and appointed a College Secretary who has in connection with his studies prosecuted the work during the past two years upon the following plan :

1. *Correspondence* has been opened by the Secretary with about 350 colleges, and questions have been asked and answered bearing upon the work, Many colleges have corresponded with one another, and altogether not less than 3,000 letters have been written during the two years concerning this great cause.

2. *Publication.* The *College Bulletin*, a four page periodical, published monthly by the Secretary, containing items of religious news from colleges, and practical suggestions concerning the organization and maintenance of the work, has been circulated among the colleges of the United States and Canada, six copies being sent to each. In addition to this the *Watchman*, the national paper of Young Men's Christian Associations, and many other religious papers of the various evangelical denominations have opened their columns for the publication of information relating to the work.

3. *Conventions.* The attendance of over 300 students representing at least 60 colleges, has been secured at 20 Conventions. The sole object which brought them together was the consideration of this one question "What can we do to promote the cause of Christ in College?" The influences which have been communicated to colleges by these conventions have been most fruitful in imparting enthusiasm to the work and supplying practical information with which the enthusiasm can be sustained.

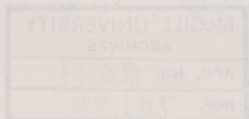
4. *Visitation by the Secretary.* Experience has proven this to be the feature of the work attended with the most immediate and satisfactory results. In fact, it is believed to be indispensable to its successful prosecution. The surest way to secure the coöperation of students in this cause, is to present to them such statements concerning its nature and object, as can only be done by personal contact. Accordingly, the Secretary has, in addition to meeting with students in 14 Conventions, visited upwards of 50 Colleges. The plan pursued in these visits is to meet students individually and collectively, acquaint them thoroughly with the progress of the work in general, and aid them in their special work by such suggestions as are constantly being developed by experience and observation. Difficulties and discouragements incident to the work, are dealt with, and fresh courage is often imparted by a little influence from the outside.

IV. RESULTS. The very appropriate question in the minds of many is, What has been accomplished by this expenditure of time and effort?

1. Associations now exist in 70 Colleges, 42 of which have been organized since the inauguration of the work two years ago.

2. The older associations have been greatly revived and strengthened.

3. The importance of Christian life and work has commanded the attention of students as never before.



4. The value of united prayer has been realized in a marked degree.
5. Far more personal work is done than formerly. Committees are appointed by the College Associations to seek out students just entering College, to give them a Christian greeting, and invite them to identify themselves with Christian men. In this way many a student's heart is won at a time when he is easily approached and readily moved. The parents of students may be thus assured that in institutions where the Association exists, their sons will find a band of Christian students ready to help them in their College life.
6. An impulse has been given to Bible study, and classes for this purpose are rapidly multiplying.
7. Monthly meetings in the interest of Missions have been and are being established. For this special feature of the work we request most earnest prayer. The Missionary movement in this country originated among college students, and the revival of this work for which the Church is looking and praying, will in all probability, come from the same quarter.
8. Revivals of religion have occurred in many colleges as a direct result of association work. We would be cautious in making numerical statements about such a matter, but we feel that for the encouragement of the twenty five students who when inaugurating this work said, "This movement will pay if it results in the salvation of but one student," as well as for the encouragement of the 2,500 students now connected with the seventy College Associations, it is right to state that over 500 conversions have been reported during the past two years from colleges where Associations exist.

The above statements are presented with the hope that this agency which God has raised up in answer to the prayers of past years will strengthen the faith of the Church to ask for far greater things in the future.

L. D. WISHARD, *Secretary of the College Work.*

WM. LIBBEY, JR., *College Member of the International Committee.*

The undersigned having become acquainted with the facts contained in the above circular, are convinced of the importance of sustaining this work among the Colleges, and cordially approve the presentation of it to the beneficence of those interested in the cause.

JAMES McCOSH, President of Princeton College.
 JULIUS H. SEELYE, President of Amherst College.
 HOWARD CROSBY, Chancellor of the University of the City of New York.
 W. C. CATTELL, President of Lafayette College.
 W. H. CAMPBELL, President of Rutgers College.
 CYRUS D. FOSS, President of Wesleyan University.

THEO. L. CUYLER,
 RICHARD S. STORRS,
 LYMAN H. ATWATER,
 THOMAS ARMITAGE,
 ROSWELL D. HITCHCOCK,
 O. H. TIFFANY.

A. A. HODGE,
 WM. M. TAYLOR,
 W. HENRY GREEN,
 CHARLES H. FOWLER,
 DANIEL D. DEMAREST,

Principal Dawson

My Dear Sir,

At the request of a
Conference lately held in Princeton
I am sending this circular to a number of
persons, whose endorsement is specially desired.

I sincerely hope that your signature
may be added to those already
obtained.

In behalf of the Conference
I am very respectfully yours,

J. D. Richard,

Princeton N. J.

July 30. 80