

# Home Mission Paragraphs

THE HOME MISSION

TOPIC FOR JUNE, 1913

## The Pacific Coast

Alaska

Washington and Oregon

California

SOMEONE has said that if the Pilgrim Fathers had landed at San Diego instead of Plymouth Rock it is questionable whether bleak New England would ever have been settled. Happily history is not an accident. New England was settled and its civilization has been the determining factor in the history of the Republic. The Pacific region was reserved for a time and a stage in our civilization when new forces are called into play. Without irrigation Southern California is a barren waste; under irrigation's magic it becomes a second and a better Eden. It remains for the spiritual forces of our civilization to preserve the Edenic charm of that vast region of the West which new methods and movements are adding to the national domain.

**Cordova harbor**, Alaska, is 20 degrees of latitude nearer the North Pole than Vladivostok, or about 1400 miles. The former is free of ice the year 'round while all the world knows the troubles Russia suffers from ice in the latter. Terrible frosts cut off Siberia from the approach of commerce during much of the year, and are such a handicap to the whole Russian Empire that the Czar is ready to resort to almost any extremity of war and conquest to gain an open harbor. Such harbors as Cordova, open the year 'round, must make the development of the amazing resources of interior Alaska only the question of a short time. The reason for these mild winters on the coast of Alaska is well understood. The so-called Japan current in the sea is constantly washing the shores with streams from the tropics.

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**Alaska** is such a great country that when one tells the truth about one section, he is at once elected to the Ananias Club by another writing from a point two or three thousand miles away, but still in Alaska.

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**The Eskimo** of Alaska usually do not know their ages, but it is not because they cannot count. Rather is it because there is no practical use in knowing ages. With no written language there is no history; so no dates are preserved. The man of but average intelligence counts as high as 500. "Five is one arm, ten the top, fifteen the across, and twenty a whole man, counting fingers and toes."

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**The transition** from a primitive civilization to modern is perilous at best; it is specially so when it comes in the life-time of a single generation. The noted explorer whose story has filled the newspaper with tales of "white Eskimo" has observed the peril and has strongly advocated "leaving them alone." It is better, he thinks, to let them live on their present contented life, meager and narrow as it is, rather than subject them to the risks of civilization.

He who came "that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly" might reach a different conclusion. But there can be no question on any one's part that the perils are great and that a true Christian civilization will do its utmost to carry a bewildered primitive people through the dangers. That our civilization has not done so successfully is manifest in the case of the natives of Southeastern Alaska where terrible diseases, formerly unknown among them are weakening if not decimating the race.

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**Among natives** farther north the success has scarcely been better: "In accepting Christianity and putting off the old man for the new, they have literally put away all their old customs which are interesting only to the ethnologist. At Point Barrow, farthest north, there are but two real underground houses left, and the people now live in cheap imitations of the white man's house. These are not so well ventilated, are damper and more crowded. As a result there is much more sickness than there used to be. The so-called higher civilization has taught the Eskimo to want all of its luxuries, but has given them no way to increase the income to meet the greater demands. Now substitutes for whalebone have reduced the price to about a dollar a pound when it used to bring seven, and there will be more suffering in the future than in a real famine year of the past, for there were always seal, but now they want beef and mutton in nice red tin cans."

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**Barrow** has always demanded a pastor-physician, a combination of offices which is not without distinguished prototype in One who preached the Gospel and "healed their sick."

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**A sensational** announcement would appear in the *Barrow Times*—if such a sheet were published, or could even be imagined. It would astonish and elate the populace with the assurance that henceforth that metropolis is to enjoy

three mails each winter in addition to the one in the summer. For the past ten years there have been but two. Before that dependence was placed on the one each summer—some summers. Winter mails come by reindeer or dog team, the summer by ship.

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**Fifty miles** out from Cordova, Alaska, on the new railroad is one of the world's great natural wonders. Miles and Childs glaciers, not far apart on opposite sides of the Copper River, discharge their ice into the river. These glaciers are extremely active during the summer months, moving forward four to eight feet daily, and discharging their bergs into the river with great spectacular effect. Tourists are beginning to understand the privilege of an easy access to the world's largest active glaciers, and many have visited these in the past two years. A trip to this place is now as easily accomplished, and as comfortably, as to Niagara Falls or to the Grand Canon.

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**While Cordova** is primarily a commercial city it is in the midst of a mineral country. The immediate future of this place however, depends upon the action of Congress in the coal matter. It is immaterial to the great mass of Alaskans whether a leasing system is adopted or some other method authorized, but it is of vital interest that the coal should be unlocked in some way. The development of the gold and copper mines of the territory depends to a great extent upon an abundance of cheap fuel. With the greatest deposits of both anthracite and bituminous coal in the United States at our very doors we are compelled to pay twelve to eighteen dollars per ton for a poor quality of foreign coal shipped from British Columbia and Australia. The railway which was built with the intention of reaching the coal deposits is using California oil for fuel. The injustice of this unreasonable delay has been very irritating to the spirits of the hardy pioneers who have braved the hardships of a frontier life in an honest desire to develop

the resources of the wilderness. They have not received the honest treatment and encouragement which the government has always extended to other new countries in the making.

They are still hopeful, however, that after six years of continued investigation by almost every department of the government, some measures will soon be proposed that will meet the approval of Congress and settle the coal question in such a way as to permit the coal to be mined. If this is done Cordova will immediately experience a revival of business prosperity and a steady growth in population. Among the people who will come there will be found a goodly number of Christian people whose religion is genuine enough to stand transportation and temptation; they will find a church home awaiting them, and a hearty welcome, and a field of activity without limit.

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**The Presbytery** of Wenatchee (Washington) has recently passed the fourth anniversary of its organization, during which time it has grown from ten churches to twenty-two, from 523 communicants to 1,075, from \$9,000 raised for all purposes in 1908 to over \$18,000 this last year. With very few exceptions the churches have grouped with them outstations where regular services are maintained so that the number of preaching points in the Presbytery totals forty. Petitions for organization are presented at almost every meeting of the Presbytery as railroad extension and reclamation projects are developing the country and attracting many settlers.

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**So far as** we have been able to learn there is not a field occupied by the Presbyterian church in this large Presbytery (Wenatchee) where ours was not the pioneer organization. This is an even higher average than that of the Synod of Washington within whose bounds 90% of the churches are the pioneer organizations in their respective fields.

**Two strong churches** are located, at Wenatchee, almost the geographical centre of the state, and at Cashmere, in a beautiful valley said to be a wonderful reproduction of the famous old-world vale of that name. These cities are at opposite ends of the far-famed Wenatchee Valley the home of the big red apple, where dollars grow on trees, and from which 4,000 cars of choice fruit were shipped this last season. Both towns are "dry" and exceedingly prosperous. This, the youngest Presbytery of the Northwest, has a splendid band of home missionaries. In no part of the state is there greater development in immediate prospect or a greater opportunity for our beloved church.

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**Ten counties** of the Golden State (California) are oil-producing with a yield per month of almost 8,000,000 barrels. Of the state's total output, estimated for 1912, of 84,000,000 barrels, the fields in the two counties of Kern and Fresno, a portion of the territory of the Presbytery of San Joaquin, yield 87% or over 73,000,000 barrels. To gain an idea of the growth of this industry in California we need only to know that in 1892, twenty years ago, the output from the whole state was but 385,049 barrels, and that in 1902 it was only 14,356,910 barrels. Yet this colossal industry is in its infancy, as the oil territory widens and the output is ever on the increase with the price at present on the up grade. There are approximately twenty thousand men upon the pay rolls.

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**The work is needy** beyond all telling in the California oil fields. Masses remain almost untouched by the church. The society of these great communities is unfavorable to religion. Home life with its refinements is almost entirely absent. Men, men, multitudes of men meet your gaze everywhere—untouched, unreached men. The possibility for definite service is great. The writer knows of a friendly contest in our West Side Church, five miles from town, where in a few weeks the Young People's Society had 400

members enrolled, and they still have 100 on the roll. Armies of men are interlocked with enormous resources and live under abnormal conditions. Think of combined communities in the oil industry in our own Presbytery with an aggregate population of some 20,000, with but eleven small churches, including Roman Catholic, with accommodations for less than 2,000 people, and the need is apparent. Is not many a worthy son of worthy parents upon this great field, exposed to temptations (hidden from sight, if existing, in their home towns), worth the strenuous effort of our great Presbyterian Church to rescue and save? Education is as efficient here as elsewhere, the buildings are as costly and the equipment is as perfect. Shall the Church of Jesus Christ lag behind and lose out or shall she triumph here as is her right?

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**From Petersburg, Alaska:** Two hundred people attended our Christmas exercises in the church, about three-quarters being men, most of whom would have been down in the saloons if they had not been with us. The band helped furnish the music. . . . If your seismograph notes any special disturbance you may know that it is at the "Devil's Thumb" on the Alaskan Coast. That "Thumb" is 9,127 feet long. Naturally, when a thumb as long as that shakes, there is a seismic disturbance somewhere.

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**In the forests** of Washington 25,000 men are at work, and in the evening when the ax and saw have ceased to wake the echoes of the vast recesses, these men sit down in God's first and greatest temple without a messenger of the Gospel of Redeeming Love. About 3,000 of these men have services every six weeks, around the Gray's Harbor country where the Presbytery of Olympia has a commissioned lumber camp missionary. The remaining 22,000 men are deprived of services of any kind. Standing on a pulpit which took one thousand years to build, and surrounded by pillars of spruce and cedar 200 feet high, which seem to support the very

dome of heaven itself, a missionary could deliver the news of redemption to sixty men each evening for nearly 500 evenings and never repeat his message to a single soul.

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**The Indians** in California are responsive to missionary effort. They listen with deep attention to the Gospel message and come long distances to hear it. They love to sing. They are devout and fluent in public prayer. In four of our Presbyterian missions we have organized churches with Indian elders and a growing membership. The work has been remarkably successful. In two years from its inception the church membership has grown to about one hundred and twenty-five. These missions need better equipment, suitable literature for the young people who read English, gospel hymn-books, Bibles, and especially better and more buildings for school and church purposes. Some of them need additional workers. All need the support and prayers of the whole church. The work is interesting and promising, and we must believe that the souls of these children of nature are precious in the sight of the Lord.

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**Nearly all** the Hoopa Indians of Northwestern California have a technical tendency, being self-taught by the great teachers, patience and experience. Some are good wood-workmen and construct their own houses; others do blacksmithing and shoemaking of the neatest designs. The women engage in dressmaking and basket weaving, the latter being a very remunerative occupation.

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**A few of the more advanced Indians** have herds of cattle, hogs and sheep, often reaching great numbers, which are usually consumed at the home market for individual family use or sold to the Government. Many tons of hay are annually sold by the Indians at a good price and they need not hesitate to take their stand among the white brethren. A decade ago very

few buggies or spring wagons could be seen in the valley; now it is only the exceptional family that has not one or both of these luxuries. In like manner the homes are constantly improving and a two-story modern house with a piano in the parlor is no rare thing. Flower gardens, rose bushes, and ferns often bedeck and beautify the front yards and walks. They all dress in the latest becoming style with none of the gaudy colors or flashing ribbons often seen among the Indians.

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**Sumpter, Oregon**, is a small town of about 600 people. It is a distributing point for quite a large section of mining camps in the Blue Mountains. In its booming days it had a population of 4,000 with 27 saloons. With the present population it has had seven saloons and two groceries. Recently three saloons have dropped out of business, and the town needs to be still much smaller before it can become a very great deal better. Sumpter derives its financial support largely from the mining business. "The mountains are round about" Sumpter, and there is gold in the mountains. The miner who digs for the gold generally receives good wages. But he does not always "spend his money for that which is bread." The miners need a Sky Pilot—a man who can stay a day or two with the lone prospector, or a week or more at the camps where there are large numbers of men working in the mines and mills. The Pilot could steer many of the boys over the dangerous rocks where so many make shipwreck.

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**The foreign born population** of the State of Washington, exclusive of the Orientals, is 250,000, or about one-fifth the whole number in the state. They are divided among thirty different nationalities, with numbers ranging from about 500 Portuguese to 40,000 Canadian born. The Scandinavians predominate, there being 70,000 in all, with 30,000 Germans, 15,000 Italians, 12,000 Russians, 15,000 Austrians, and about

50,000 from the British Isles. Agents are in the East arranging for the transportation of large numbers more as soon as the Panama Canal is open for traffic; 100,000 or more, it is estimated, will come to the Northwest in the next two years.

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**The question of employment** and support for these populations in Washington is a serious one. They are well scattered and in some measure participate in all the industries of the state. The larger portion of them are in the fisheries, on the farms, in the mines and in the mill and lumber industries. There are twenty-three nationalities employed in the Roslyn mines, in a town of 4,000. The Italians, Austrians and the British predominate. The Scandinavian people are in large numbers in scattered farming communities and in the fishing industries, with a good many also in the mill towns and the lumber camps. The German people are not so exclusive but are well assimilated in the life and business of native born Americans. With the larger number, however, the foreign born population already in Washington, and the sudden influx in anticipation, the problem of work and support and contentment is growing more complex.

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**This problem of labor** involves the problem of spiritual needs. A happy, contented, industrious people are more readily reached with the Gospel, and especially when in sufficient numbers to make organized effort possible. The mining towns are largely Catholic and the Catholic Church is doing little for them. The mill towns are better cared for but the lumber camps are woefully neglected. The danger is that the evangelical churches will not be able to meet the emergencies arising in this problem and that our foreign brethren will fall in with our commercial and social and political ways to the neglect of the spiritual, and so to their great harm and wrong.

**The ancient prophecy** that the desert should be made to blossom as the rose is being fulfilled in Oregon. Rapidly she is building up the old "waste places" where for ages the rabbits, gophers and coyotes have tenanted the sagebrush plains. Either under the supervision of the Government Reclamation Service, or under private companies, engineers conduct the water from its ancient channels to the land which is then offered to home-seekers, generally in small tracts. From being a "waste and howling wilderness" these acres are transformed into a "Garden of the Lord." No other lands yield such increase. No other place offers such certainty of crops. No other land is farmed like the irrigated land, and when once the farmer learns to irrigate seldom does he wish to return to the land of clouds and rain. The irrigated "ranch" makes a strong appeal to the business or professional man who wishes to "get back to the land." It follows that in no other farming community is there such a high average of intelligence and consequent desire for mental and moral training and activity.

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**From the church's standpoint** where a given field is valuable in proportion to its future prospects as a power in its community and a contributor to benevolent objects, the irrigation project presents the best opportunity for the activities of our benevolent boards. On the other hand, perhaps no other field is more sorely in need of their help during the "lean" years when there is much labor and little return for it because of the newness of the land, and also because of the many failures which necessarily accompany the determination of what are the best crops in a given locality.

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**The irrigation projects** scattered widely over the west are much alike in the problems that they present to the winner of souls. The people farm intensively. They must be taught to worship in the same manner or their lives will become warped. Nothing but the gospel

will keep them from working on the Sabbath and becoming wholly immersed in the business of "getting rich." Sodom and Babylon flourished in "well-watered plains" and Moses invoked the plagues on a people spoiled by prosperity. These people need help because many of them have spent their all in getting the land alone, and are obliged to live as best they may until developments begin to pay, which, in the case of an apple orchard, is several years. When the building of a church confronts them, the most liberal giving on the part of the first-comers will not build a church suitable to the needs of a rapidly growing community, and comparison with other projects enables one to compute with fair accuracy what the population of the town and community will ultimately be.

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SOME HOME BOARD STATISTICS FOR 1913  
(For the Year 1912-13)

Number of churches aided by the Board..	1,847
Number of missionaries, including 68 Cuban, Porto Rican, Mexican and In- dian Helpers.....	1,750
Number of missionary teachers.....	404
Sunday Schools organized.....	275
Number of Sunday Schools.....	1,381
Churches having reached self-support.....	52
Churches organized.....	113

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Congregational offerings from the churches of the synods of Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Ohio and in several scattered Presbyteries elsewhere, designed for the general work of Home Missions, should be sent to the treasurer of the Home Mission Committee of the Presbytery. In Wisconsin, Michigan, Kansas and West Virginia they should be sent to the synodical treasurer. (For Michigan and Kansas, the treasurer of the Board is also the synodical treasurer.) In other territory such funds not for synodical or presbyterial self-support should be sent direct to Harvey C. Olin, Treasurer of the Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A., 156 Fifth Avenue, New York City.

Copies of this leaflet and other Home Mission literature may be had on application to the Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A., 156 Fifth Avenue, New York City.

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