

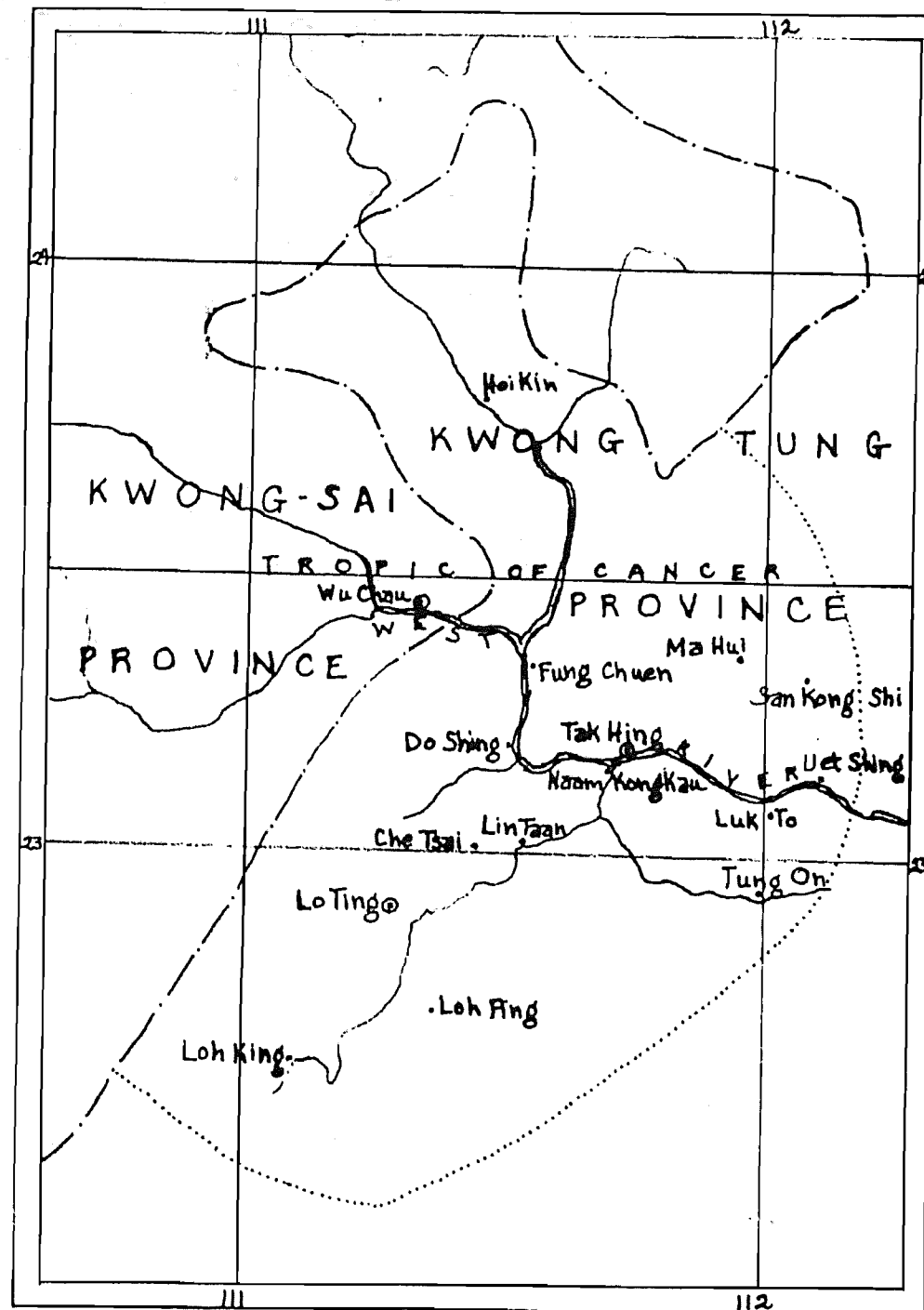
FIFTY YEARS OF  
COVENANTER EVANGELIS M  
IN SOUTH CHINA

Orlena Lynn

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MAP OF THE COVENANTER SOUTH CHINA MISSION FIELD



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## A. Introduction

A tremendous task awaited Rev. and Mrs. A. I. Robb and Rev. and Mrs. Elmer McBurney when they arrived at Canton, China, on December 12, 1895. They were the first Covenanter missionaries to go to China, much time needed to be given to the study of the Chinese language, and it was necessary to find a location for the opening of a new mission field. The road was not easy. They encountered drought and inflation. The work was temporarily suspended because of anti-foreign uprisings. Some of their number were called to lay down their lives for China. Yet, the spirit of these missionaries and of the others who joined them later is expressed in a letter from Miss Jennie Torrence to the home land. "But we know the work is God's, not ours, and He will give all things necessary for the advancement of His work here."

## B. Work Begun (1897-1909)

### 1. Evangelistic Work Started at Tak Hing

The Lord did provide for the needs of these missionaries. Although Rev. and Mrs. A. I. Robb and Rev. and Mrs. Elmer McBurney were the first Covenanter missionaries to China, yet there were missionaries from other churches who provided a home for them until they found a place where they might live. They also proved of great help to these new missionaries in a strange land by assisting them in finding both teachers and helpers, and by taking them on itinerating trips through the neighboring territory.

In April 1896, while on a trip with Rev. Simmons of the Southern Baptist Mission to Kwong Sai Province, Mr. Robb passed through Tak Hing, on the banks of the West River and about one hundred and fifty miles west of Canton. Here they met with much success in selling books to the people who were friendly toward them. The West River, which was soon opened to steamer traffic, provided a good means of communication between Canton and this inland city. Thus, Tak Hing was chosen as the location for the new mission field and work was begun there in September 1897 when a chapel was rented. The chapel was on the main street and served as a preaching center. The missionaries did not yet have living accommodations at Tak Hing, but would preach every day for several weeks to the large crowds who gathered to see the "foreign devils" and then would return to Canton to spend a few days with their families.

The following spring the two missionary families moved to Kowloon, opposite Hong Kong. This move was made because of the poor health of Mrs. McBurney, who they hoped would become better if nearer the sea breezes. However, she continued in ill health, and it was necessary for Rev. and Mrs. McBurney to sail back to the United States on February 25, 1899. This left Rev. and Mrs. Robb alone in China.

The first property in this new mission field was purchased on January 10, 1899. It was a piece of land near the river and about a fifteen minute walk from the center of Tak Hing, and was occupied by an old ancestral temple which was in ruins. Part of this was remodeled and made suitable for a temporary residence, and the remainder was torn down so that the brick might be used to build a wall about the large yard. The work of transforming this property proceeded with a sufficient speed so that it was ready for Mrs. Robb and the baby when they arrived there on May 5th after a four-day trip from Hong Kong. They were the first white woman and child ever to be seen in Tak Hing, so were the subject of much attention from the people.

Rev. Elmer McBurney, separated from his invalid wife whom he left at home, arrived back in China on November 1, 1899. There he undertook the construction of a residence at Tak Hing which would accommodate two families. Meetings for worship were held each evening with the thirty or forty workmen engaged in this task. Also, preaching services were held in the chapel in the city six days each week. Shortly after taking up residence at Tak Hing a man had been secured to assist with the work and then, early in 1900, a Chinese Bible woman had been added to the force.

Although two men and several women became Christians during the first year, no one was received into the church membership. The method was followed of waiting until they should ask to be admitted, which they had not yet done. It was a difficult time for those who became Christians, because they had to withstand the persecution which was taking place at that time. A group had stirred up fear among the people, by making charges against the missionaries and threatening any person who had any associations with them. During this time two women who had been attending the meetings were kept at home and not allowed to leave the house.

### 2. The Boxer Rebellion

During the period from July 1900 until October 1901 the work was suspended because of the Boxer Movement. Emperor Kwang Hsu had inaugurated a reform movement, but it was suppressed by his aunt the Empress Dowager. She followed an anti-foreign policy and encouraged members of a secret society known as the "Boxers" who organized a political crusade the following year, late in 1899. Upon learning that the Government made no strong attempt to protect the Chinese Christians, they undertook to exterminate all Christians from China. They attacked the foreigners as well, killing many of the missionaries along with the converts. Thus, the Covenanter missionaries in this new field were forced to return to the home land. Two days notice was given by the captain of the only steamer remaining on the West River of the last trip to be made, and the United States Consul on the same day ordered all women and children to the coast. So, on July 9th, the missionaries departed

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from Tak Hing, leaving the property in charge of the local magistrate who was very friendly. Later it was learned that on the very day they left one hundred and thirty missionaries were beheaded in another province. Being the next to last family to leave the interior, they could not find rooms in Hong Kong and so went on to Japan. Having waited there for two months and then seeing no prospect of an early return to China, they sailed to the United States, landing in Seattle on October 16, 1900.

When Rev. and Mrs. A. I. Robb sailed from San Francisco on September 12, 1901, following the Boxer Rebellion, it was with reinforcements. With them were Dr. J. Maude George who planned to undertake the medical work and Miss Jennie B. Torrence who had been waiting since the year before to go out as a missionary teacher at Tak Hing. Upon arriving in Tak Hing on October 22nd they found all their property and possessions as they had left them in the hands of the magistrate, except for the bed clothes which had been stolen and the damage which had been done by the rust and the white ants.

The house which had been started by Rev. McBurney was soon completed after their return to China, and Sabbath services were held here for those showing real interest. Also, services were resumed in the chapel on the main street of Tek Hing. Yau Sin Ming, commonly known as "Grandmother Tse", was baptized on March 16, 1902. A woman seventy-five years of age, she was outstanding in that she could read. After almost five years of mission work at Tak Hing, this was the first convert. She became a great help and was of valuable aid in work among the women. On July 6th the four missionaries and the one convert partook of their first communion to be held in the China field.

In accordance with the social standards only women worked among women. Thus, it was Mrs. A. I. Robb who for an hour before the service each Sabbath morning explained the Scriptures to a group of women who, like most of the others, could not read. These women, some of whom were more than seventy years old, would ask Mrs. Robb to teach them to pray. At the women's prayer meeting which she had Thursday afternoons many of them learned of the Word of God for the first time.

Rev. Robb talked with the men after the Sabbath services. Also, he gave cards with Bible verses on them to the young boys who learned Bible verses and could say them for him. He also engaged in the distribution of Gospels. On one occasion of a special Chinese celebration when over five thousand gathered for a parade of the idols the missionaries sold many Gospels and talked to all who listened.

### 3. Arrival of Reinforcements

Soon others came to the China field. Dr. and Mrs. J. M. Wright and Rev. and

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Mrs. J. K. Robb with their son arrived in Hong Kong on the S. S. Doric on October 25, 1902. Dr. Kathryn McBurney and Dr. Jean McBurney came November 24, 1903. Then, October 23, 1904, marked the arrival of Rev. Julius Kempf at the same port. It was necessary to build another dwelling to house two families and a church was erected.

The number of active communicants steadily increased each year from four in 1903 to ninety-eight in 1909. There was the preaching, prayer meetings, and Sabbath School, a week-day meeting for instruction of the women, and Rev. A. I. Robb held a class every evening for Bible study and worship.

The unsanitary conditions which prevailed, the tropical climate to which the missionaries were unaccustomed, and the tropical diseases which were prevalent, but of which medical science knew little at that time, were largely responsible for the four deaths among the missionary force in China within twenty months. The first was Mrs. Ella (A.I.) Robb at Tak Hing on November 16, 1903, followed only two months later <sup>by her</sup> three-year old son, Joe. On September 5, 1904 Dr. J. Maude George, who had only arrived in China less than three years before, was called to give up her life while at the sea shore at Macao. Miss Jennie Torrence, the sister of Mrs. Ella Robb, had taken the children to be with their grandparents in America after the death of their mother. In the fall of 1904, though, she returned to China to open her Girls' School, hoping soon to move into a fine new building. However, she also contracted a tropical disease and went to her heavenly reward on June 26 the next spring. A few months later, December 1, 1905, occurred the first ~~one~~ <sup>Chinese</sup> death of a ~~native~~ Christian.

In spite of the losses interest remained high in the home church. Although four had been called to lay down their lives in China, nine others sailed for China in the fall of 1907, arriving in Tak Hing on October 17th. This missionary party included Rev. and Mrs. W. M. Robb, Rev. and Mrs. R. A. Blair and daughter, Rev. E. C. Mitchell, Dr. Ida M. Scott, Miss Lena Wilson, and Mrs. Janet C. (A.I.) Robb. Then, on December 4th of the next year they received Miss Jennie Dean into their number.

January 21, 1908, was a day of joy in the mission station at Tak Hing. That was the date of the first Christian wedding there.

### 4. Medical Work Begun at Tak Hing

Medical work was begun at Tak Hing when Dr. Maude George, the first medical missionary, reached the field in October 1901. Prior to this time Rev. Robb had effectively used what minor medical aid he could administer to dispel the fears of the people that these foreigners had come to harm rather than to help them. His use of carbolized vasoline, quinine, salts, and one pair of tooth forceps had



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convinced him of the doors to the people which could be opened through medical aid. Thus, it was with thankful welcome that a physician was received on the field.

A dispensary was first opened in one of the downstairs rooms of the Chinese house, included with the first property purchased, where many came to receive treatment. Later it was moved into a room of the new residence and remained there until they had a hospital. Dr. George spoke through an interpreter during those early months in China, dividing her time between a study of the language and rendering medical aid. As long as the dispensary was in the residence building it was possible to keep only an occasional patient in the house.

The medical staff was increased with the arrivals of Dr. J. M. Wright in 1902, Dr. Kathryn McBurney and Dr. Jean McBurney the next year, and Dr. Ida M. Scott in 1907. Miss Anna Robinson, who reached Tak Hing in November 1910, also assisted with the medical work.

A much-needed building was provided in the erection of Gregg Memorial Hospital. This was begun in November 1905 and in fourteen months the main building and the two wings were ready for occupation. In the main building were the offices, waiting rooms, dressing rooms, drug rooms, private wards, operating room, and sterilizing room. The general wards, nurses' rooms, and the room for microscopic work were in the wings. Equally divided into a department for women and a department for men, the building had a bed capacity of forty-four.

In seeking to aid a people who knew little of medical science it was necessary to meet the problems of quackery, superstition, charms, and idol worship. Also, the people were poor and many who needed help could not spare time from earning a living to visit the hospital. Then, too, there were many others who remained very close to their homes and did not want to leave to go to the hospital. In order that some of these needs might be filled, Dr. Jean McBurney took charge of the itinerant work in 1908. Often as much as twenty miles were walked in a single day as the journey was made from one market town to the next dispensing medicines. At each dispensary the Gospel was preached and portions of Scripture and tracts were sold.

Both rich and poor were given treatment at the hospital. Everyone attended the services which were held each morning and evening in the wards. Also, the patients went to the chapel for services on Sabbath. The workers in the hospital were Christians, and while giving the best possible treatment and care to the body of the patient, each sought the salvation of those under his care.

##### 5. Educational Work Opened at Tak Hing

Although Miss Jennie Torrence was prepared to go to China in the fall of 1900 to open a school, her date of sailing was delayed one year because of the Boxer Rebellion. When she did arrive at Tak Hing, she found many anxious for the school

so that they and their children could read about the doctrine. Miss Torrence was to open the first school for girls among 100,000 people. She found strength in the promises, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upraideth not; and it shall be given him" and "whatsoever we ask, we receive of him".

Within a few months after her arrival, while Miss Torrence was yet very busy with her study of the language, the Belle Centre, Ohio, Ladies' Missionary Society pledged the support of one <sup>Chinese</sup> ~~native~~ teacher. It was her plan to secure this first one from the Presbyterian mission. Later Mr. Robb tried to find workers in Canton, but every station not only needed all the workers it had, but also was busy training others.

The rice crops having failed, parents did not have sufficient food and so were offering their children to the mission. Miss Torrence was particularly anxious to have a school building so that she might begin work and take these children into a boarding school.

Then, although plans had been made for the school building which was so greatly needed, the value of building material increased rapidly so that it would cost much more than they had thought. Moreover, following the death of her sister, Miss Torrence had to return to the home land with her sister's children. However, she went back to China in the fall of 1904 intending soon to move into a new building and start the school for girls. Finally, when the building was completed and the school was about to be opened, Miss Torrence was called home and she never saw the opening of the school to which she had given so much.

Mrs. J. M. Wright offered to carry on the work which Miss Torrence had planned. Thus, in the fall of 1905 the Tak Hing "Love the Doctrine" Girls' School was opened. Later Dr. Kathryn McBurney took charge for two years, until her furlough in the spring of 1909, when Mrs. Wright resumed the responsibility. The illness of Mrs. Wright placed the supervision of the Girls' School under Mrs. A. I. Robb in February 1910. Mrs. E. C. Mitchell and Dr. Jean McBurney were also of great help in the school.

The basement of the chapel was used for the first seminary class, started by Mr. A. I. Robb in March 1906. Here the Chinese were trained for evangelistic work. The students spent their vacations in the six out-stations which were opened in market towns of the district. Also, the missionaries made occasional visits to these market towns, and soon there was a growing group of Christians to be found in these places.

Just one year later the Boys' School was started. Property had been secured in the city of Tak Hing and a school building erected for this purpose. The first

class, under the direction of Rev. A. I. Robb, consisted of fourteen pupils. He was relieved two months later by Rev. Kempf who became supervisor of the Boys' School.

Then, in October 1908 Dr. Kathryn McBurney opened the Women's School. The women came here to study and to learn more of the doctrine. They attended daily classes in secular as well as Bible subjects and had a service each day which was conducted by one of the Chinese evangelists.

#### C. Work Organized and Expanded (1909-1921)

##### 1. Organization at Tak Hing

The Tak Hing district in which the Covenanter mission work was begun in China covered a territory of about 3,600 square miles. It lay partly on the south side and partly on the north side of the West River. The Tak Hing district had an estimated population of between one and one-half and two million, with 50,000 in the city of Tak Hing, which was the largest in the district. Following the early years of preparation, much progress was made in organization, especially beginning in 1909. This was possible partly because the public attitude at this time was not really hostile. Also, the political disturbances which were being stirred up had not yet become a hindrance.

Some chapels had been opened in the Tak Hing district even before 1905. In a number of these new centers both school and medical work had been started as well. Stations were opened at Sha Fong, Ma Hui, Tung On, and Che Tsai. Three of these had Chinese preachers all of whom had received their training at the mission Seminary.

The Christians were growing in the faith and many were entering actively into Christian service, and realizing their responsibility toward their fellow men. In face of persecution many showed that they were sincere and willing to endure suffering if necessary to maintain their stand for Christ. When some of the converts were persecuted and threats were made to take their property and even their lives, these Christians remained faithful to the Saviour whom they had accepted.

The converts at Tak Hing had grown not only in faith, but also in number. From the first convert in 1902 the number had grown each successive year to 4, 13, 23, 40, 53, 75, and 98. The time had come for these Chinese Christians to form a congregation. The Synod of 1908 had appointed a Commission to organize a congregation at Tak Hing. Thus, on October 4, 1909, the commission met with the congregation and elected Chung Sik Man, Taam Hei Shing, Dr. J. M. Wright, Chan Tsz King, Leung Mau Hing, Chung On Taai, and Chue Hon Shang as elders. Lei Lin Cheung, Loh Kwan Ying, Mrs. A. I. Robb, Tse Sz Man, and Chan Chi Tung were elected as deacons. The ordination and installation of these officers took place on December 31, 1909, constituting the

official organization of the Tak Hing congregation with seven elders, five deacons, and a membership of one hundred and seventeen.

The enrollment in the Girls' School reached forty, necessitating the provision of additional accommodations in a building originally intended for twenty-five. In October 1910 the Course of Study outlined by the Unification Committee of the Canton educational association was adopted and the up-to-date New National Readers were used in the school. Enrollment in the Boys' School also increased, rising by 1909 to forty-two pupils ranging in age from nine to twenty-nine years. The first seminary graduation took place in February, 1909, with four students having completed the course of study. A second class was started the same year. Within the first two years nine from the Women's School became members of the church. There were many opportunities for service to be rendered by the Bible women who had received the training offered in this school. The first blind pupil who had been taken in joined the group of believers and united with the Tak Hing congregation. Thus, the schools grew and more were added to the number of Christians.

A mission medical association was organized in 1910 with Dr. Ida M. Scott as president and Dr. Kathryn McBurney as the secretary and treasurer. They held regular meetings to discuss medical subjects and to plan the work. That same year the first nurse, Miss Anna Robinson, arrived on the field. A medical school was started to train the Chinese workers, so that in the years to come they might be the ones to carry on the work. During the year ending in the spring of 1911 ninety patients were treated in the Tak Hing hospital, 2,638 at dispensaries, 2,135 during 159 itinerary trips, besides those met at 59 outcalls.

Do Sing in the Tak Hing district and fifteen miles above the city of Tak Hing on the south bank of the West River was entered by missionaries in 1909. The work was in charge of Rev. and Mrs. Mitchell and Dr. Jean McBurney. Rev. and Mrs. E. C. Mitchell moved to the Do Sing station in October, 1910. The first service in the chapel at Do Sing was held November 13th of that same year. Evangelistic, school, and medical work were begun in this center. Work was also started among the lepers on the river bank there. Within six years almost all of them were baptized. Then, in 1916, public feeling against the lepers running high, they were bribed into the middle of the West River with promises of food and then their boats upset, and all were drowned.

##### 2. Expansion to Include Lo Ting

The Lo Ting district, to the south and west of the Tek Hing district, had been occupied for many years by the Christian and Missionary Alliance. However, their center of work was in Kwong Si, the next province to the west, and Lo Ting was their only station in the Kwong Tung province. Thus, in 1913 they asked that the

Reformed Presbyterian Mission take over their work at Lo Ting. They had a chapel which would seat over two hundred, a building used for a girls' school, and an eight-room dwelling, all of which were in good condition. A boys' school had been conducted for some years and more recently a girls' school had been started. The congregation of about one hundred members was evidence of the impact which Christianity had made on this vicinity.

The city of Lo Ting is about forty miles south west from Tak Hing, on a small river which empties into the West River about three miles west of Tak Hing. Being two or three times as large as the first city in which the missionaries began their work and having several very large towns nearby, Lo Ting offered excellent opportunities for expanding the work.

The Reformed Presbyterian Mission took over the Lo Ting district in 1914 and Rev. E. C. Mitchell was in charge of the work there. On October 15th the China Commission of the Reformed Presbyterian Church met in Lo Ting for the election of officers for the new congregation. The elders elected were Lei Ching Chuen, Cheung Tik Chau, Lo Kwok Hing, Taam Tsz Ting, Lo Kam Poh, and E. J. M. Dickson, and the deacons were Chan Chau Shan, Lei Hing Ting, Cheung Man Hin, and Au Chiu Tong. A congregation was organized there on December 25, 1914, with the six elders, four deacons, and seventy-seven members. Seventy-three were received on certificate from the Christian and Missionary Alliance and four were received on confession of their faith and baptized at the December communion.

At Lo Ting a boys' school was started in an old Buddhist temple which was used by the mission without the payment of rent because it was being used for school purposes. The second year Rev. D. R. Taggart succeeded in obtaining an excellent Chinese Christian teacher for full time work in this school. The girls' school, known as "The True Road Girls' School", was under the direction of Miss Ella Margaret Stewart and had an enrollment of fifty-four day and four boarding pupils. An adjoining building was rented, increasing the room capacity from forty to sixty-five. The Chinese teachers from Tak Hing were of great help in the schools at Lo Ting. Meetings were also held for women twice each week. The attendance at these varied considerably.

In Tak Hing the educational program had been centered about boarding schools where the pupils were given work to do so that they might earn their way. The situation was quite different at Lo Ting. Here almost all of those enrolled were day pupils and paid their own tuition. Many of these were from homes which were heathen, but were wealthier than those about Tak Hing. Although there were good Government schools in Lo Ting, the Mission schools were popular and prospered, being the means of bringing the boys and girls to know Christ as their Saviour.

A new building of three stories, a gift of Mrs. R. Redpath of Olathe, Kansas, was erected for the girls of Lo Ting. This school, Redpath's Memorial School, was completed and dedicated December 31, 1919. Before the close of the first year all except four of these girls became believers and asked for baptism, two being held back by their parents. As each girl believed she began praying and working for the salvation of one other girl among her friends. In Miss Rose A. Huston's schools at Tak Hing, too, progress had been made so that by the end of this year every pupil who was old enough was either a member of the congregation or had applied for baptism.

Dr. E. J. M. Dickson was in charge of the medical work at Lo Ting. Within the early months clinic days were increased from one to three and a dispensary set up in the same temple used by the boys' school. During the first five and one-half months at Lo Ting Dr. Dickson had 524 patients, twenty-four outcalls, and performed four operations. The next year he held ninety-eight clinics with 1,065 patients and eleven operations. The number of clinic patients was doubled the following year. A hospital was erected in November 1917, with no expense to the home church, but the burden of the cost being carried by the Chinese and the building dedicated free of debt. Through the following years this hospital continued to be self-supporting. By 1920 the dispensary was reaching over five hundred villages. The medical services reached far and plans were laid to include care for the lepers also. Three acres of land were donated in 1919 for a Leper Asylum. Dr. Dickson followed the policy of impressing upon the Chinese their responsibility for these unfortunate ones of their number and they were to provide for this new work.

The work of organization and expansion was successfully carried on during this period and brought about growth not only in numbers but also in the spiritual life of individuals and of groups. Duties were successfully placed with various committees, bringing about more effective operation in each of the phases of the work. By 1921, in addition to the schools and the two hospitals, there were five ordained ministers and their wives, two single women, five Chinese licentiates, thirteen Christian men evangelists, and five women Bible leaders carrying on work in two organized congregations and thirteen stations with twelve chapels. There were 659 communicants and the thirty-one teachers had an average attendance of 279 at their eleven Sabbath Schools. There were also one Bible class and nine prayer meetings held regularly. The four foreign teachers now had a class of ten theological students in the training school, who in the years to come would themselves be carrying on much of the mission work and reaching out to new stations.



#### D. Work Self-Supporting (1921-1928)

##### 1. Self-Support Plan Adopted

As has been shown, the work at Lo Ting, in a community where there were Christians when that field was taken over from the Christian and Missionary Alliance, the plan of placing as much as possible of the financial support upon the people was followed. This policy was put into practice more and more as soon as it was felt that the people were ready to assume this responsibility. The hospital at Lo Ting had been built by the Chinese and had been self-supporting, the school students paid their own tuition, and the Chinese provided for the Leper Hospital, the first structure being completed in 1924, with the lepers themselves doing the construction work, of whom one had been an experienced builder.

In Tak Hing also the work was gradually becoming more self-supporting. The industry training provided in the schools had enabled many of the students to sell the articles they learned to make and thus pay part of their school expenses. The proportion of the students boarding at the school was greatly reduced. Also, offerings were being given in the congregation there. The policy had been adopted throughout the Mission of opening additional chapels only where the Chinese Christians had the deep desire for a chapel which would prompt them to provide one for themselves. Thus, step by step the Chinese Christians were encouraged to become independent of the Mission in so far as they could as soon as they were ready for it.

The Reformed Presbyterian Mission in China had from the beginning followed the policy carried out by other missions of the executive authority resting with the Mission. The work, too, was almost entirely supported by the home church. The Covenanter missionaries, however, felt that the Chinese Christians should have a share in the responsibility which was rightfully theirs. They sought to get the Chinese to support the work as much as they could. Then, they took a step which was to constitute a major advance in the mission work in South China. The missionaries requested that the administration of the work be transferred to a Council to be composed of the foreign missionaries and representatives of the Chinese Church. Matters regarding the Chinese church would then be dealt with by this council. Also, they proposed to bring the Chinese church to a position of self-support, except for the salaries and expenses of the foreign missionaries. This request was approved by the 1922 Synod of the home church.

There were many problems to be met in establishing this new form of administration. Some of the Chinese were not anxious to assume the financial burdens of their churches and stations. There were those among the workers who had felt secure under the support of the church represented by their missionaries

and now found their faith tested. This sense of insecurity caused a few of the workers to discontinue their services. Some were reluctant to give up their easy nurturing under the missionaries' responsibility. There were cases where teachers were tempted to draw pupils into the school because of the tuition which their enrollment would bring so that they would be more certain of receiving their salary.

It was a period of real testing for the Chinese members of the congregations and the Chinese workers, and a venture of faith on the part of the missionaries. The policy of Chinese participation in administration and of complete self-support meant a sifting in the membership and a limitation of the work to that which was most essential. For the first time since the beginning of the mission there was no increase in the church membership of the South China church, but rather a decrease of three in the year ending the spring of 1923, leaving a roll of 684. However, it was also a time of strengthening and there was an increase again the following year, with the number of communicants rising to 758.

Some of the Chinese refused to give any financial aid and only by the salaried workers was as much as one tenth given. Even with the reduction in the work undertaken the major source of the support was through the tithes of missionaries. Yet the undertaking was not a failure. A large majority of the salaried workers did tithe, and the total Chinese contributions were over twice as large as they had ever been before. The leaders were diligent in teaching the members the duties and privileges of stewardship. Although one teacher left immediately because of the new policy and did all he could to harm the Redpath Girls' School, the enrollment went up to 128, the highest that it had ever been. Many, many members did show their faithfulness and met the test of these new standards set before them. There was not the falling away of members which some had anticipated, but there was the starting of the Chinese church on its road of self-support.

##### 2. Hindrances to the Work

The early 1920's were marked by almost constant conflict among the various political leaders, leaving much of the country with practically no real rule a large portion of the time. This situation provided an opportunity for banditry to become widespread. Much of the South China Mission field was subject to the destruction caused by these armed groups of men. Hundreds of villages were destroyed or burned and thousands of persons killed or held for ransom. Armies frequently passed through the district, but without much fighting.

Dr. Dickson reported:

"Not since the Taiping Rebellion seventy years ago has this province in which



our work is located seen so much unrest, distress and bloodshed as in the year 1923; and not since the Boxer uprising of 1900 have so many of our fellow-workers in Central and North China been brutally assaulted, kidnapped or killed. Our own district has suffered much at the hands of robbers and the frequent conflicts between contending military forces, but we praise His name that in spite of these conditions and the difficulties that attend them, we have been kept in good health and from all harm, and have never had greater opportunity for service. The Lord has dealt with us exceeding graciously and we have great reason to thank Him and take courage."

Rev. Kempf wrote:

"In my nineteen years of missionary service no other year has been so full of real danger, and yet we have not suffered a scratch. No other year has been so full of anxiety for the safety of the lives and property of others (many of whom thrust themselves and their possessions upon us), and yet they suffered nothing of what we feared might be."

Yet, in the face of these days of fear and anxiety there were those Christians who continued in the spread of the Gospel in spite of the difficulties which they encountered. Mr. Chan, who had become a Christian while attending a school in one of the outstations from Lo Ting, at this time entered the most notoriously wicked village of the district. There, at his own expense, he rented a house reported to be haunted by devils, repaired it, and moved in. He supported his family by selling medicine during the week and devoted his time on the Sabbath to preaching the Gospel. Soon he had remodeled an old building into a chapel and within one year invited Rev. R. C. Adams to baptize the twenty-two men and women converts.

Disasters continued during the year 1924-1925. The Tak Hing district had its most destructive flood in many years, seriously damaging the mission property. A smallpox epidemic threatened the Lo Ting district, making it necessary for Dr. Dickson to organize vaccination teams to work throughout that area. Gambling and opium smoking were prevalent, ruining many lives. War and political chaos brought with it thievery, brigandage, murder, and immorality. By 1925 the Communists were making strides in exerting an anti-Christian and anti-foreign influence. In some places attacks were made upon foreigners, but no demonstrations of a serious nature were staged in the Reformed Presbyterian Mission field.

These days which were so difficult and during which the people lived in almost constant terror, proved to be an opportunity for the Mission to witness for Christianity. The people, in their time of anxiety and distress, turned to the Mission and the missionaries for comfort and help. Many refugees crowded into the Mission grounds and the Gospel was presented to all who entered there.

Parents brought their children to the Mission schools that they might be better protected. The hospitals were kept extremely busy caring for the wounded. Even a group of wounded soldiers were taken to the hospital for treatment and they not only paid their entire bill, but also left an extra gift of money to show their appreciation of the service which had been rendered in their behalf.

### 3. China Presbytery Organized

In the midst of strife and turmoil, with the anti-Christian and anti-foreign attitude becoming ever more prevalent in China, the Reformed Presbyterian Church continued to grow in South China. Self-support was but a small part of the goal which the Mission in South China had in view. They were seeking to lead the Chinese Christians into becoming not only a self-supporting, but a self-governing, and a self-propagating church. Other phases of this project were more important than the financial aspect. One step toward self-government had been taken when the Council had been formed whereby the Chinese were represented and given a voice in matters pertaining to the Chinese church, and in the program of evangelism.

They hoped from the Council to move forward and establish a Presbytery. In this foreign missionaries and Chinese workers would cooperate with equal authority. As soon as possible the work would be given over to the Chinese workers and the missionaries would move on to new and unoccupied territories.

The China Commission at its meeting in Tak Hing on March 18, 1925, resolved: "that the Commission present recommendations to the Council urging the need of ordained Chinese ministers and the erection of a Presbytery and that the moderators of the Lo Ting and Tak Hing sessions be appointed a committee to prepare these recommendations."

The Chinese Christians, Mr. Ch'ue Hon Shaang and Mr. Chung On T'aai, were ordained to the ministry. They were the unanimous choice of the Church in China and began their duties immediately following their ordination. Then, on December 14, 1926, the China Presbytery of the Reformed Presbyterian Church was organized and held its first meeting at Lo Ting, South China. The elders to this first meeting of the China Presbytery were Chan Kong Ngai from Tak Hing and Lam Hon Teng from Lo Ting. At the time of organization the Presbytery had four ministers, the two Chinese ministers who were ordained, W. M. Robb and E. C. Mitchell. They also had four unordained men under the care of Presbytery who were engaged in evangelistic work under the Chinese Council. There were three other unordained men preaching and doing evangelistic work who were self-supporting. This new Presbytery had two organized congregations and thirteen mission stations. One of these stations, T'aai P'ing, became a congregation within the first year.

<sup>Chinese</sup>  
The ~~native~~ leaders were reluctant to deal with the problem of discipline among the church members. Sin and scandal in the individual lives of some of those on the roll presented a real problem. In 1928, though, the Chinese leaders did adopt the policy of uprooting that which was harming the congregations and as a result succeeded in purifying and strengthening the church. With an ordained Chinese ministry and the establishment of the Presbytery the Reformed Presbyterian Church in South China was not only on the road of self-support, but also making advances in self-government.

#### E. Summary

The establishment of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in South China met with many difficulties. There was the unrest and anxiety brought on by the revolution of 1911 when the Manchu dynasty was overthrown and the Republic established, by the political chaos of the 1920's, with the overrunning of that section by bands of robbers and the anti-foreign and anti-Christian propaganda which stirred up the people. Within the group of Christians there were those who proved unfaithful. Yet, the results after thirty years of mission work in that land were very encouraging. The missionaries sought to evangelize the Tak Hing district and later the Lo Ting district of the Kwong Tung province in South China through preaching, Bible study classes, itinerant work, offering theological training, schools for boys, girls, and women, and through the hospitals. In each case the primary purpose behind the efforts of these faithful missionaries was that of evangelization of the Chinese.

At first the preaching was the presentation of the gospel truth in the simplest form. They were given the truths of faith and repentance. Later they were impressed with the duties that grew out of the acceptance of the truths they had been taught. As more hearers became interested Bible study classes were started and prayer meetings were held. At times they had large evangelistic meetings.

The itinerant work proved of immeasurable value in reaching many villages of the two districts occupied by the missionaries. This method of reaching the unreached was given more and more attention. Frequently many miles were traveled, often on foot, to visit the outlying villages to which the Gospel had never been taken. The missionaries would make these journeys accompanied by Chinese Christian workers.

It was the common view of the missionaries that the evangelization of this section of China could be carried on effectively only through a trained Chinese ministry. In accord with this the Theological Training School was given a

... ..

and spent the other six months in evangelistic work in many villages throughout the district.

The schools, although offering secular and Bible classes, were maintained primarily for the purpose of winning souls for Christ and of creating an atmosphere which would instill in the students a desire for future Christian service on their own part. Industrial training was also introduced to create in the students a respect for honest work and to provide for them an opportunity to help earn their expenses while in school. Many of the students in the schools did enter active Christian work. The boys' school was a preparatory school for a number of them for entering the Training School. The girls in many cases became Bible women, or teachers in either the Mission schools or government schools, exerting a Christian influence there. Some of the women became Bible teachers and helpers in the Mission or returned to their villages and sought to win their families, friends and neighbors to Christ.

The hospitals were the means of reaching many of the Chinese with the Gospel. Training was given the Chinese for becoming doctors and nurses. All of the assistants were Christians. Patients attended the meetings held in the chapels and services were held in the wards. Evangelistic messages were given at all dispensaries. Many who came to receive medical treatment were won to Christ.

The self-support plan was adopted and the Council formed in which the Chinese were given a voice in the administration. Then a Chinese ministry was established and the China Presbytery was organized. Though still in the early stages of its development, a self-supporting, self-governing, self-propagating church had been started through the Covenanters in South China.

Miss Ella Margaret Stewart, in a letter to the home church, wrote:

"In looking over the work as a whole, you will see that the Chinese are coming forward into places of leadership and responsibility. We praise God for this. However, we feel there is still a place for your missionaries in China. . . . Your missionaries are earnestly seeking to serve, rather than rule, the people with whom we labor in the Lord, remembering that our Master said: 'The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister....!' 'I am in the midst of you as he that serveth' 'A servant is not greater than his Lord, neither one that is sent greater than he that sent him.'"

## Chapter 2 Evangelization in South China Preceding the Japanese Invasion (1928-1937)

### A. Introduction

Dr. Dickson in summarizing the progress of the Covenant Mission in South China during the first thirty years writes:

"Our field in China was entered in 1897, when work began in the city of Tak Hing. The districts of Wat Naam and Wan Fau, on the other side of the West River, were invaded within a few years, and, later still, the district of Fung Tsuen. In 1913, the Christian and Missionary Alliance transferred the Lo Ting district to us. In 1925, Hoi Kin was entered, so that to date we have six districts in which are scattered fifteen groups of over 500 believers. As pastors, leaders, teachers, and physicians, we have thirteen foreign missionaries at present in our China field. There are also about a score of Chinese ~~missionaries~~ <sup>Christians</sup> occupying positions of leadership as pastors, evangelists, teachers, and physicians. The population is estimated at over one million, and, of course, is not yet completely evangelized."

Systematic and regular effort was being made in China to bring the unbeliever to an acceptance of Christ, and the confession of His name. Yet, the work there was not without discouragements. During the first half of 1928 "war clouds hovered in the sky, bandits ravaged the outlying districts, and Lo Ting barely escaped the terrors of a 'Red' uprising -- but the work went on."

### B. Period of Peace

#### 1. Obstacles Removed

In a letter from Tak Hing on December 7, 1928, Mrs. W. M. Robb wrote: "It is just a year ago since our city was filled with 10,000 troops, with distinct communist ideals. Little do we know what turn affairs might take. It was the uprising in Canton that took them away from here with such haste that there was no time for pillaging. We surely praise God for the way He has vouchsafed toward us His keeping power."

The Mission in South China was thus spared further interference from the "Red Russian" activities which had been hindering the work during the preceding two years. Peace had come to this district.

Civil strife had largely ceased and an attempt was made toward reorganization and improvements. The new soldiers were far better trained than those who had previously been in this district. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs even proposed to return mission property occupied by the military to the respective missionaries. This proposal gave the missionaries hope that the government would try to do what was right. They were also encouraged by the fact that the government did not interfere with Christian schools.

On May 5, 1929, four thousand troops entered Tak Hing to the complete



surprise of those living in that city. Five thousand more troops were on their way. They were "Westerners" rebelling against the government in Canton. Although both these soldiers from Kwangsi Province and those from Kwongtung Province passed through the Mission territory a number of times and made several stops in Do Sing, the people did not fear these soldiers as they had the Communists several years before. The blockade cut off transportation on the West River and itinerant work was reduced because of the troop movements, but no damage was done to the Mission property and no one was harmed.

Another obstacle to the work in South China was the bandits, who in large bands raided villages, burning homes, and killing persons. In many districts the repeated raids resulted in the loss of property and land and some villages and markets were burned. Hundreds and even thousands lost their lives at the hands of the robbers. In the western Tung On district almost one hundred villages were destroyed by fire and for four years the people did not dare to return home and repair their houses or plant their fields.

The soldiers did an effective job of rounding up the bandits so that by the spring of 1929 bandits had largely disappeared. Rewards were offered for information concerning any who had been bandits and almost without exception they were executed when they were captured. Because of the danger in one mountain pass during the last five years, travelers had to go miles out of the way. However, soldiers found the cave of bandits, set fire to it and two hundred were either burned or shot as they attempted to escape.

In reviewing the work in South China during 1932, the Rev. J. C. Mitchell said, "Our field is practically free from bandit actions and no wars threatened." Banditry was cleared from the field to the extent that it was no longer a major hindrance to the work. Occasional raids did occur later, though, as is shown in the following: "At the close of Chinese New Year vacation tragedy came to Mr. Taam, one of our Tak Hing language teachers. Robbers attacked his home in a village some twenty miles or so from Tak Hing. The bandits killed three of Taam's relatives and wounded a fourth and took Taam's wife captive. Since that time no sure word has ever come to the husband concerning his wife's fate. A captured bandit told police that in a battle between soldiers and the robber gang ten captive women were killed by gunfire. Mr. Taam does not know whether one of these women was his wife and probably he will never know. Only the fact that Tak Hing government grammar school opens several days earlier than our Bible School saved Taam and his two children from a similar fate. They had just returned from the village when the crime took place."

Another obstacle which was overcome at the close of the 1920's was the strong anti-foreign and anti-Christian sentiment aroused in the people by the Red propaganda. During the years of this movement many Christians suffered persecution and throughout China both Chinese Christians and missionaries lost their lives. The Covenanter missionaries of South China were all kept in safety through this period, and by the end of 1928 the anti-Christian feeling had generally passed away in the South China field.

The President of China, Chiang Kai-shek, was baptized on October 23, 1930. This was a ray of light for the Christians of that land, for even at the time of his baptism the Communists were massacring thousands in the Yangtze Valley, with Christians and missionaries as the special objects of their attacks, and were destroying both mission property and church buildings.

## 2. Field Open to Evangelism

With the removal of such obstacles as the Communists, the bandits, and the anti-foreign and anti-Christian feeling came the opening of the field to evangelism and the ready acceptance of the Gospel. The "Good News" was received eagerly and the Bible Society in Canton reported the best year in Bible sales through South China that they had ever had.

The position of the missionary at this time is depicted in the words of the Reverend E. C. Mitchell that, "The people seem to appreciate the foreign missionary and meet him in a more friendly spirit than I have known since my first arrival in China almost twenty-four years ago."

Gospel teams from Tak Hing found good opportunities in neighboring villages on Sabbath afternoons. The Missionary Committee of the Christian Endeavor Society at Lo Ting promoted such activities as a weekly jail service and other special Sabbath evangelistic meetings in nearby villages, which were received with much interest. On market days there was good attendance at the meetings held. Large audiences gathered for the singing of the Psalms and the preaching of the Word.

New emphasis was given to itinerant evangelism, splendid opportunities were offered for selling gospels and talking to the people. Some of the villages had never been visited by missionaries. Others had groups of Christians who suffered much during the anti-Christian movement of the preceding three years, and had found it necessary to stand alone when it had been impossible for missionaries to meet with them.

Miss Ella Margaret Stewart described the itinerant evangelism in the following manner: "Our work in all these places consisted in holding meetings in chapels and homes, in personal interviews, and in teaching portions of

Scripture and prayer to those interested." During three months she visited twenty-eight villages and towns, twenty of them being the first visit.

In July of the same year Miss Mary Adams reported: "We have visited, in the last three months, more than thirty homes where there has been from ten to sixty listeners in each one. Each of these homes has meant a separate village which has from one hundred to one thousand people in it. Every home has bought some of the gospels or booklets. Of these thirty some villages, more than twenty had never been visited by Christ's messengers. They always want us to come back and teach them more."

Itinerant evangelism was emphasized in order that the multitudes in need of the light and truth might be reached. In places where there was no chapel, meetings were held on the street corners, in temples, in rented buildings, or any suitable place which could be found. When possible the groups were gathered in one of the homes. Hundreds of tracts with simple explanations of the plan of salvation and what it means to be a Christian were left in the hands of all who were willing to receive them.

Plans were also made to follow up these visits. As Miss Mary Adams wrote: "Many have these gospels in their homes, and now we need to go and live in those centers for a month or more, visiting those homes and explaining the truth, and have a center, also, to which they can come for instruction."

### C. Extension of the Work

#### 1. Need for Expansion

As early as 1918 consideration was given to the opening of a new field, since in the Covenanter Mission of South China the Chinese Christians were gradually assuming a greater portion of the responsibility formerly held by the missionaries, and there were sufficient missionaries to extend the work. Investigations were made in Kwongsi and Yunnan Provinces, and, after careful study Yunnan Province was chosen. Accordingly, tentative appointments were made to that province. However, upon learning that the Chinese Foreign Missionary Society planned to enter the same field, the Covenanters did not proceed with their plans.

In 1929, believing that new workers were needed in new fields, some of the China missionaries were of the opinion that it would be wise to place a missionary minister in Canton. Dr. J. M. Wright expressed the following reasons for doing so: "(a) Quite a number of our members are there and should be conserved to the Church; (b) It would give prestige and respect to our work as a whole; (c) Our Church would be represented in the metropolis and center of South China; (d) There is plenty of untouched work in the city; (e) I believe our working in Canton would

be a help to all other missionaries working there."

About the same time the Rev. W. M. Robb expressed his view concerning the extension of activities in this manner: "There are vast reaches which have no Gospel messenger. For instance, there is Manchuria, with a present population of some twenty-five millions, and a prospective population, within a few years, at the rate emigrants are pouring in, of fifty millions. In that wide expanse, the gospel messengers are few, tragically few, separated by hundreds of miles. Perhaps the greatest spiritual stimulus the Covenanter Church could get would be to open a new work in some unoccupied part of the 'regions beyond.'"

The Board of Foreign Missions at their June meeting of 1928 voted to open a new field in northern Japan or Manchuria. Missionaries were ready for this undertaking, but sufficient funds were not available at that time.

Dr. E. J. M. Dickson repeatedly urged expansion as the very life of the "self-support" plan and advocated that a new field be opened on the "self-support" basis. He listed the following reasons for an investigation of the Manchurian field: "First, we have been urged to come to Manchuria by missionaries in the Canadian and Irish and Scotch Churches. In contiguous territory, we have received no such invitation, except on condition that we join the Church of Christ in China. Second, the need in Manchuria is greater. It is a newer country with a rapidly increasing population and is reported to be the most needy field in the Orient. Third, it is much freer from military and political strife, which has held up our work so seriously in recent years in South China. Fourth, it is far enough away so that our old plan of work in South China will not hinder it from being self-supporting from the beginning. Fifth, the climate is much superior to the humid, tropical climate of South China."

The Board of Foreign Missions appointed a committee of missionaries returning to China to stop in Manchuria for a period of six months or a year to investigate conditions there. This proposal was unanimously adopted by the Synod of 1930.

#### 2. Manchuria Station Opened

Dr. and Mrs. E. J. M. Dickson and Betty Jo, Miss Rose Huston, Miss Lillian McCracken, and the Rev. J. G. Vos were scheduled to sail October 2, 1930, from Vancouver on the Empress of Canada of the Canadian Pacific Line, to enter upon the venture into Manchuria. Miss Huston, who was detained by the illness of her sister, and Miss Marian Milligan, fiancée of Mr. Vos, sailed from San Francisco May 20 of the following year on the Chichibu Maru of the N. Y. K. line.

Upon arrival in Manchuria, Mr. Vos had remained in Peiping, North China, to begin his study of the language. Meanwhile, Dr. and Mrs. Dickson and Miss McCracken had proceeded to Harbin, Manchuria. This was a city with half a million

population where they held conferences with other missionaries, made investigations and took exploratory trips to determine the existing conditions. As a result of this survey the following recommendations were made to the Board of Foreign Missions and were adopted by the Synod of 1931:

"First, that our Foreign Mission Board recognize North Manchuria as a mission field of the Covenant Church. Second, that mission work be opened with Tsitsihar and possibly Harbin as centers, as soon as workers now studying have sufficient knowledge of the language, and that areas farther north be invaded as soon as possible."

The method followed in the entering of this new field was that of direct evangelism only. No schools were to be built, no hospital erected, and no church set up. They were not even to employ any Chinese workers to aid in the evangelism, except as converts and adherents saw the need and were willing to support them. The missionaries also lived among the people in the suitable accommodations that could be found, rather than having the church at home build houses for them, as had been done in South China. This was truly a venture of faith.

Dr. and Mrs. Dickson had gone to Manchuria for the inauguration of the work and then returned to the work in South China. In August 1931 the Manchurian missionaries settled in Tsitsihar, a city of 90,000 population, in Heilungkiang Province. There, while continuing to study the language, the missionaries used all the available opportunities for tract and scripture distribution, and had frequent personal interviews. They held classes for adults and children to instruct them in the rudiments of education so that they might be taught the Bible. Later, they held Sabbath Schools, prayer meetings, Bible classes for inquirers, and did some preaching. Leaflets containing the essence of the Gospel, and explaining the purpose and methods of the Mission, were translated into Mandarin. More than 20,000 Gospel tracts were handed out during the early days in that new mission field. The Chinese National Phonetic Script was taught to children so that they could read the Bible. The Psalms and other Scriptures were taught to classes of twenty-five or thirty. Many hundreds of callers, averaging fifteen or twenty daily, included Chinese Christians, Buddhists, Confucianists, Catholics, Mohammedans, Russians-- "White" and "Red", Protestants, Greek Orthodox, Jews, Atheists, Japanese, Manchus and Turks. Christ was preached to all of these through personal conversation.

#### D. Organizational Changes during the Pre-War Period

##### 1. Conversion to Bible Schools

At the time when these brave missionaries were opening a new mission in Manchuria, problems were arising concerning the schools of South China. The purpose of these schools is summed up in a statement from the Report of the Board of Foreign Missions to Synod:

"Our schools have been founded in the conviction that they are direct evangelizing agencies; in the further conviction, too, that they are necessary to train the Chinese workers who shall in time give the Gospel to their own people."

In setting up the schools of South China every effort was made to meet the needs of the people and to provide an efficient instrument in the training of Chinese workers. Recognized schools were established which included many subjects in addition to the Bible study. The missionaries, besides teaching the Bible classes, held classes in arithmetic, English, music, singing, drawing, calisthenics, and needle work.

Although the government was starting many new schools, they were not as yet making provision for the girls on a wide scale. There were many children, even boys, without any school. Thus, the schools of the Mission had been planned to meet the requirements for secular education. In 1928 there were three co-educational schools, at Lo Ting, Tak Hing, and Taai Peng, which were under the direction of the Council. The latter was a new school and the others were in what had formerly been the Boys' School at Tak Hing and the Girls' School at Lo Ting. The schools had Chinese principals, with missionaries supervising as unseen directors.

In addition to the schools for boys and girls there was the Industrial School for women at Tak Hing. Here they had a number of looms for weaving towels, cloth, and other materials. The sale of handkerchiefs made by the women provided an important source of income for the school. This was entirely under Chinese management.

Because of the Nanking government's ban on the teaching of religion in the schools, in 1929 the names of the schools were changed to "places for teaching the true doctrine." However, the curriculum remained the same even though they were not recognized as schools. In answer to the petition by Chinese Christians and missionaries for the repeal of this law the government replied that: "To have elective religious courses in junior and middle schools and to have the privilege of worship in primary schools embody obstacles too difficult to permit granting the request."

The following year, because of the new stringent educational laws, the higher grade work was discontinued at Lo Ting. However, the primary classes were still carried on. The enrollment in the Mission schools was decreasing because



the schools were not registered and thus were not so readily accepted by the community. Also, the government was establishing more schools and some of these had at least one Christian teacher and others who were not antagonistic to Christianity.

At the December 1930 meeting of the Council they adopted the recommendation of the Educational Committee for the conversion of the schools to Bible Schools for pupils fifteen years of age and over. In these they were to offer both classroom work and industrial work. However, the ultimate decision was to be made by the local Education Committee in each station.

Two Bible Schools were started, one at Tak Hing and the other at Lo Ting. In the Lo Ting Bible School the daily program provided five hours for class work, one hour for practical work, and two hours for industrial work. One semester course consisted of Old Testament, Genesis; New Testament, Matthew; Chinese classics, including composition and letter writing; and arithmetic. These were supplemented by weekly classes in Personal Work, Sabbath School Teachers' Training, Music, and Drawing. The school possessed three sewing machines, two stocking machines, and several weaving looms used to teach sewing machine work, stocking machine knitting, and towel weaving.

Six or seven Gospel teams from this school visited in neighboring villages during weekends. Also, during the Chinese New Year there was a vacation of five weeks when the students went in groups throughout the district for direct evangelistic work. This was followed up through correspondence and the supplying of Testaments and other literature. The purpose of these Bible Schools, as stated in the report of the China Presbytery, was "to train Christians who can avail themselves of the opportunity to become stronger in the faith and more efficient witnesses for the Lord."

## 2. Work of Council Assumed by Presbytery

Although the China Presbytery had been organized in 1926, the Council continued to function also. A glimpse of the Council meeting held at Lo Ting, December 31 to January 3, 1929, will serve to illustrate the functions of the Council. The Evangelistic Committee reported the number of new members and inquirers. The Literature Committee then reported on the distribution of Gospels and tracts. Discussions were held on subjects relating to:

"the work that should be done by the evangelists and how to open new chapels; Christians as personal workers among their own people; Bible study and family worship in the home; tithing; keeping the Sabbath; the training of young men for the ministry; the educational and industrial work."

Young men graduating from the Training School were accepted as evangelists. A decision was made concerning the opening of the Training School at Lo Ting the following year. Also, locations of the missionaries were recommended for the next year.

The Council, composed of representatives from the Chinese church and the missionaries, was responsible for all work relative to the Chinese church and the work of evangelism in general. They met each year for a conference, preceded by a Bible Study. Committees on evangelism education, medical work, literature, charity and finance were active throughout the year.

The plan for the development of self-support and self-government on the part of the Chinese church proved to be effective.

"First, it made the Chinese brethren feel that we, as foreigners, did not intend to impose ourselves on China. It caused them to consider just of what value the foreigner was to them, and to look into the prospects of their present and future without the foreigner. It placed authority in their own hands, and enabled them to, more and more, accept responsibility. It encouraged them to give and to control what they gave. It met admirably the disturbed conditions of the times."

Since the Presbytery had been organized for three years and there was a lessening of the need for the governing body which had been its predecessor, at the Council of December 1929 the Chinese proposed that the Presbytery take over all the work being done by the Council. This would exclude unordained missionaries from participation in direction of the work. The Presbytery had held an abnormal position in <sup>that</sup> most of the power resided with the Council.

The Eleventh Annual Council Meeting, preceded by a five-day Bible conference marked another great stepping stone in the development of a self-governing, self-propagating, self-supporting Covenant Church in South China. It was voted to place the management of the church entirely under the Presbytery, abolishing the Council. This became effective December 11, 1933. At this time the Presbytery had five ministers, five congregations, and eleven mission stations. Each of these sixteen different centers had from ten to one hundred and twenty members.

In answer to the question of how the China Presbytery differs from a Covenant church in America, Mr. Boyle has the following to say:

"The differences are not easy to describe because apparent dissimilarity vanishes when we get down to the human factor. The Oriental response to our church forms is not unlike that of the West. Denominational Christian patterns have to a great extent put a stamp on the presbytery quite like the original. The manner of worship was similar. Robert's Rule of order regulated the discussions. Subject matter was, though in a different language, identical with that of an American

presbytery. I scarcely realized that a hemisphere separated me from my own land and people."

### 3. Increased Evangelism through Medical Work

The western medical work in the Covenanter Mission field of South China in 1928 was carried on by two hospitals and seven dispensaries. Dr. Wallace had charge of the Pak Ai hospital at Lo Ting after Dr. Dickson went on furlough, and Dr. Tse Tsz Ying, assisted by Dr. Wong Chan Yau, directed the Metheny Memorial Hospital of Tak Hing, with no foreign physician resident there. The dispensaries, all of which are independent, are in charge of Chinese who had been trained at the Lo Ting hospital. Several of those who were consecrated Christians did definite evangelistic work along with their drug stores and dispensaries.

A view of Dr. Wallace's work at the Lo Ting hospital provides a picture of <sup>was</sup> what entailed in the activities of a missionary doctor. She conducted daily clinics, trained nurses, and cared for both resident and out-patients. She also had the responsibility of keeping up the spiritual atmosphere among both helpers and patients. The hospital always tried to employ Christian helpers so that they might minister to the spiritual as well as to the physical needs of the patients. The nurses frequently made visits to out-lying villages and also rendered aid to the sick in the prison.

All of the medical work was on a self-supporting basis, except for the salaries of missionary doctors and nurses. The use of Western medicine in this section of Kwongtung Province was extended through the training of men nurses in the diagnosis and treatment of many common ailments. It was men thus trained who opened up drug shops in various villages of the district.

At Lo Ting a Medical Society was organized for the promotion of public health and for future education in western medicine. This organization of sixteen members was under the direction of the hospital. At the suggestion of the Chinese one hour was given each week to special united prayer.

Through preaching, the Gospel is carried to the out-patients day by day. The in-patients are reached with the Gospel message not only through personal effort but also through the morning and evening services. In November, 1932, The Lo Ting Hospital completed fifteen years of service, during which fifty thousand patients were treated. During 1932 alone, Dr. Dickson reported 439 patients treated in the hospital and six thousand out-patients. These patients come from all classes, the wealthy, the beggar, the official class and the coolie. Thus, many were reached with the Gospel message through the channel of medical work.

It was the endeavor of the Mission to make the Christian work done in the hospital as effective as possible. To this end a special evangelist visited each interested patient in his own home village. The purpose in this was twofold: firstly, to confirm him in the faith; and secondly, to preach the Gospel to others in his community.

A much-needed and long-desired isolation ward was added to the hospital at Lo Ting in 1935. The addition of a new X-ray machine and of an optical test outfit in 1936 further increased the scope of the work which could be handled.

The medical work at Lo Ting also included care for the lepers. In 1924 a small plot of land had been secured, a three-room mud brick building put up by one who had formerly been a mason before acquiring leprosy, and three lepers were admitted.

It was not until 1932 that the erection of a hospital for lepers which had been started years before was finally carried to completion. The work had of necessity been brought to a standstill because of lack of support and community antagonism in the midst of political upheaval and disturbed condition of the country.

A prominent man of Lo Ting was largely responsible for making it possible to continue the erection of this hospital. This was General Tsai Ting Kai, the leader of the Chinese military forces at Shanghai during the struggle against Japan. In an effort to raise money for the leper work he made a gift of one thousand dollars. Not only was there a building erected to accommodate twenty-four leper men, but also another to accommodate twelve leper women, and a dwelling for the business manager of the leper hospital.

### E. Summary

Dr. Cheng Ching Yi, moderator of the Church of Christ in China suggests four positive benefits which were derived from the anti-Christian and anti-foreign disturbances stirred up by the Communist propaganda which caused so much confusion and difficulty immediately preceding this period:

- "1. The spirit of self-complacency has been greatly reduced.
2. There has been a fresh stimulus to make new adjustments and formulate new policies, as indicated, for example, in the rapid growth of the emphasis on an indigenous Church.
3. Christians have been forced to think for themselves and to re-examine their own faith.
4. The time of testing has sifted out from the Church those whose membership in it did not rest upon any deep spiritual basis."

This great conflict was but one of the many problems faced by the missionaries who went out to build up a Covenant Church in South China. They had to learn a new language, with varying dialects in different localities. The climate was one of intense heat with threats of malaria and fevers of all kinds. Although some are eager to hear, there remain many who are indifferent. Even among those who seem interested there are ones who fall back into sinful ways. A knowledge of the wickedness in America makes the Chinese less willing to receive the "good news". Another hindrance is set up by those who spread false teaching. Greatest of all problems is that of how to reach the millions of persons who are dying without the knowledge of the Saviour.

Yet, in face of the many problems which the missionaries had to meet, they did go to South China and strive to bring the Christian light into the corners of darkness. As channels for reaching the people the Mission conducted primary schools for many years. Later the stress was upon Bible Schools. Hospitals were established at Tak Hing and Lo Ting, with a Leper Hospital also at the latter center. Evangelism was of first importance in all the work. Pastors, evangelists, and Bible women made frequent visits to the out-stations and into new territory. By 1937 the Covenant Mission in South China had three congregations, fourteen mission stations, and 620 members on the roll.

Mrs. Dickson's description of a Sabbath with the missionaries in China, written for a group of "Juniors", gives us a picture of the work there:

"Let us spend a Sabbath there with the missionaries. We must first go to the chapel at 7 o'clock. Then we will go home and eat breakfast about 9. . . Soon after this we can go with Mrs. Kempf, and perhaps Mrs. Boyle, to a children's meeting (in Tak Hing), or with Miss Dean (if we are spending the day in Lo Ting) to visit the women in jail, or with other missionaries or Chinese Christians who go out to invite people to church.

At 11 o'clock there is Sabbath School at the chapels and the preaching service follows at 12. You may either listen to the Chinese minister preach, or if you prefer, you may attend the Junior service which is held in Mrs. Mitchell's home beside the chapel. Many strangers come to the services, men and women with poles over their shoulders on which hang baskets full of sweet potatoes or vegetables. Many of the women will also have babies on their backs. They were passing on their way to market and stopped to listen. They talk out loud, and call to each other, so the Christians often have to ask them to please be quieter. After the meeting is over, a number often stay to discuss what they have heard, and missionaries and Chinese Christians wait and talk with them.

If you come back with us to the hospital, you will find several dozen children and patients have gathered in Dr. Wallace's and Miss Barr's home where they will be taught Bible stories and verses. There are several other Sabbath Schools held in the afternoons, besides meetings held on the streets and out in the country. Dinner or supper, whichever you prefer to call it, for most people eat but two meals a day -- comes about 4:30. And still there are meetings: Young People's first, then services in the chapels, schools, hospital, or dispensaries. Special evangelistic services are held for non-Christians and for Government students. This is really a very incomplete picture of a Sabbath day, for although many hear the Gospel in these meetings, there is much personal discussion with and prayer for those interested. What really counts is when someone says, 'I'll take your Saviour to be my Saviour, too.'"



Chapter 3 The War and Its Effect on Covenanter Evangelization in South China  
(1937-1947)

A. Introduction

As early as 1933 one of the missionaries in South China wrote home that the situation between China and Japan was becoming tense and that the Chinese were expecting a long and bloody conflict but were prepared to sacrifice whatever was necessary to drive the Japanese out of Chinese territory.

By 1936 Japan was rapidly moving troops into northern China. Popular feeling in China against Japan became more intense and more vocal. Japan was demanding more and more territory. Also, that government had forced Chinese authorities to permit extensive smuggling. Finally, they agreed to pay one-eighth of the regular fees, which merely made the smuggling legal.

B. War Comes to China

1. Invasion of the Japanese

Japan did enter China July 7, 1937, and the soldiers fought bitterly near Peiping. Although the Japanese had not declared war on China, they used the air force to kill thousands of people and bomb many buildings of a crowded Chinese city.

Because of these war conditions the State Department ceased issuing passports to China. Thus, the Reverend Julius A. Kempf who had planned to return to China in the fall of 1937 was detained in the home land until the following summer.

In China the consuls were unanimous in their view that no American citizens should stay in China. However, although the coast in South China was blockaded, it seemed unlikely that the Japanese would reach as far as Tak Hing or Lo Ting and so the Covenanter missionaries remained at their stations. It did mean separation of families, however, as Mrs. Boyle kept the baby at Cheung Chau, and Mrs. Mitchell stayed there with them. Women and children from other missions moved there also.

Before the close of 1937 the Japanese were making frequent air raids over Canton and some of the coastal cities near Hong Kong. Many innocent persons were killed in Canton and fishing junks were ruthlessly shot down. The West River was also completely blocked. Tak Hing was full of drafted boys in training.

By early 1938 the war was taking boys from the mission school and some of the Lo Ting Seminary class volunteered to enter the military academy. Luke, one of the boys, enlisted in the army as a private, in order that he might preach Christ to the men in his company. The Whampao Military Academy was moved from Canton to Tak Hing where it remained for most of 1938. Canton was captured October 22nd of that year.

There had been months of air raids preceding the capture of Canton, during which many left the city and moved inland to seek safety in Tak Hing. The hospital became a home for some of these refugees. Within a few weeks during the summer of 1938 the population of Tak Hing increased to three times its normal size.

The presence of the military academy made Tak Hing more susceptible to air raids and so bomb-proof trenches were made throughout the city. There was one near the hospital and another near the girls' school.

However, the first air raid at Tak Hing did not occur until the early summer of 1938, when four bombs were dropped, but no damage was done. Raids over Tak Hing were usually on return trips from those made in Kwangsi Province, rather than a direct target of special raids. Before the year was over, though, four were killed in one of the Tak Hing bombings.

"Mother Lei paused in her midday toil by the side of the pond to wash her hands. She looked up wonderingly at the silver planes roaring across the blue September sky. Suddenly there was a blinding flash and a pain crazed woman ran in circles screaming, 'Save life! Save life!' That night two little children called and cried for a mother who cannot answer."

Lo Ting was free from air raids for a longer time than Tak Hing. However, on February 25, 1939, forty-four bombs were dropped on the main street, killing sixty persons and injuring two hundred others. The Mission school and hospital, which are in the center of the town, were untouched, although bombs fell on all four sides of them.

In June 1939 work was begun in the refugee camp near Lo Ting. The government provided food and shelter for these refugees, but the church met their other needs by rendering medical care and supplying mosquito nets. These were provided through the Chinese Christian committee which aided in dispensing funds contributed by the home church.

The purpose of the work in the refugee camps was not only to meet the physical needs of these people and to alleviate their sufferings, but also to minister to their spiritual hunger. Miss Stewart wrote of her joy when one July morning in 1941 six children of the refugee camp brought the first money they had earned during that vacation to buy Bibles.

Following the fall of Hong Kong in December 1941, there was a great migration of refugees inland to places of greater safety. A number of these went to Lo Ting. Among them were many Christian leaders who proved to be of valuable aid in their cooperation with the work among the refugees.

By early 1943 the refugee camp at Tak Hing had been decreased to a minimum. There were still about sixty women, children, and old men. Some help was given to these through the International Relief Committee.

## 2. Continuation of Work in Face of War

Even in the face of the dangers of war the Covenanter missionaries did not submit to the repeated requests of the United States Consul that they leave China. Rather, they remained in order that they might not only maintain the former work, but also to strengthen the Chinese in this time of great distress and to reach out to the refugees. Miss Stewart expressed the view of the missionaries in saying: "While the Consul keeps writing and advising us to evacuate, we do not expect to leave our work so long as we feel God wants us here. The Consul is not ordering us out, and seems willing to let us stay -- on our own responsibility."

Not only did these missionaries who were on the field remain there, but Miss Jennie Dean, who had been home on furlough, returned to China. Also, the Reverend and Mrs. Lester Kilpatrick went to China for the first time and entered the language school in Cheung Chau. These three sailed from Vancouver on the S. S. Empress of Russia on October 1, 1938.

In November of that year about fourteen bombs, some of which were incendiary, were dropped at the center of the small city of Wan Fau, setting the business district on fire. More than twenty persons were killed and many more were injured. Miss Adams was visiting in the villages at the time and all of the Christians were safe. Yet, on the following Sabbath, which had been set on as the date for communion, the Wan Fau congregation gathered. These people dared to face the danger of coming into this town and in the chapel, the roof of which had been punctured by machine gun bullets or bomb fragments, they commemorated the death of our Lord.

In addition to the continuation of the regular work, there was continued growth in the outreach of the Mission. A seminary class was begun at Lo Ting under the reorganization of the schools which took place in 1938. About the same time one of the teachers of the Lo Ting school was appointed to visit in the country stations and to hold Bible classes there. Thus, those Christians who were isolated in the country stations were provided a greater opportunity to study the Bible.

In the midst of the depression brought on by the war and with danger of being bombed, the Lo Ting congregation sought to raise money for a new church building which they needed. They succeeded in raising nine hundred dollars

national currency. This was forty per cent of the total contributions of the Lo Ting congregation, which were higher than in any previous year. The group of Christians in Chaa Kong the same year, 1941, undertook to prepare their own place of worship.

## 3. New Opportunities Provided

The missionaries were kept particularly busy during these years because the refugees, orphans, and students who had come to the district all provided opportunities for reaching more people with the Gospel. Both the missionaries and the Chinese Christians did all they could to show the love of Christ to these people in great need.

The Number Five War Orphanage with thirty girls and one hundred and sixty-eight boys was stationed at Lo Ting in 1940. This was one of the thirty-six war orphanages throughout Free China which were sponsored by Madame Chiang Kai Shek. Although the non-Christian superintendent and teachers of the orphanage showed little interest, the Mission did feel a responsibility for these children and was able to conduct regular Sabbath School classes as well as making recreational contacts with both the orphans and the teachers. Also, the Mission hospital administered whatever medical aid was needed by the orphans.

After caring for the spiritual needs of these children for more than two years, Miss Dean and Mrs. Wong were saddened to see the Lo Ting Number Five War Orphanage moved in February 1943 to Lok Cheung near the Provincial Capital. The following month the Number Four War Orphanage from Ko Chow spent one week in Lo Ting while on the way to the same place. The Mission used this opportunity for presenting the Gospel to these children.

Shortly after the orphanage left the city of Lo Ting, many students moved in. Besides the three government high schools in that city three other schools travelling "on foot" established themselves in Lo Ting. There were more than three thousand students. The missionaries and Chinese Christian workers spent much of their time on Saturday and Sabbath organizing work among the students. In addition to the Bible classes held at the free hours during the week, they had Sabbath Schools and worship services on Sabbath for the students. Also, Bibles and New Testaments were distributed among them. The chief emphasis was on the Saturday evening Student Fellowship evangelistic meetings. For those students especially interested there was a Saturday afternoon class for inquirers. Then, at all times the Mission was open to any students who wanted to bring their problems, music, English, or friends.

The Mission also sought to meet the needs of the many refugees who came



through the district. In the government camp at Lo Ting there were nearly two hundred civilian war refugees. Through American Covenanter relief money, these were provided with benches, tough grass, and cloth so that they could make needed mosquito nets and grass sandals. The soldiers needed a new pair of grass sandals about twice each month so that the demand for them was heavy and the refugees could contribute to their own support through this trade.

At Tak Hing twenty refugees had been taken in after the fall of Canton. Some had been given rice, and others full support. Then, in June 1939, a government refugee camp was moved to Tak Hing. So, the Mission did not need to take in any more that summer. Only two months later, however, the district or county governments were asked to take over the refugee camps, but the local official of the Tak Hing district refused. The Mission had been holding two meetings and providing medical care for these refugees.

With no one to assume the responsibility for this camp it was about to be closed. Rather than to have all of these people left without support and with no place to go, the Mission yielded to the entreaties of the refugees and in September of 1939 took over the care of these homeless victims of the war. With the refugees they already had and the eighty-one persons, thirty-seven of whom were children, taken from the government camp, there were one hundred, including the two Christians in charge, living in the former chapel and in one ward of the hospital. By making bamboo beds wide enough for two and of the double-decker type, it was possible to provide accommodation for all of these and more if necessary.

These people shared in the work by helping with the cooking, carrying water, sweeping, and gardening. Some raised pigs and goats and had vegetable gardens for their own use. They were taught to make grass sandals. They kept a share of the earnings from these, but deposited at least one-half of the profit for their future needs, such as buying of clothing or to be used in returning home.

As in all phases of the work the Mission sought to meet not only the physical needs but also the spiritual needs of these refugees. Bible classes were held daily, both morning and evening, and were open to all. There was also a regular school for the children. Besides these, a class was held after the evening service for the illiterate women. Many of the refugees accepted Christ, a number of whom were baptized and received into the church, and later returned to their homes as loyal witnesses in their communities. Of the fifty-four refugees at the Mission in 1943 all except two of them confessed their faith in Christ.

In addition to the refugees for whom the Mission had taken on the responsibility of their support, there were many others in and near Tak Hing to whom aid was given. There were two hundred refugees in the city of Tak Hing who received aid and to whom the Chinese Bible women took the Gospel.

There were also eighty boats anchored in the West River near Tak Hing. Those families were a part of the boat population of Canton and had been moved inland by the government, which established a match factory at Tak Hing to provide employment for them. Here was an opportunity for carrying the Gospel to another group, and the missionaries did go out by boat to visit some of them. When the match factory found it necessary to close at times because of the shortage of materials, aid in the form of the distribution of rice was given to these people. The Mission also planned to open a combination day nursery, kindergarten and first grade to care for the small children so that their mothers could work in the factory.

Not only did the missionaries and the Chinese Christians minister to the physical and spiritual needs of the orphans, students, and refugees, but also of the soldiers. Special services were held for the Chinese soldiers who filled the city. Then, when a group of American flyers were stationed near this locality, meetings were held for them also. Thus, as each of these groups came within the reach of the Mission an effort was made to meet their needs for food, medical care, education, trade and recreation and to present Christ to them.

#### 4. Phases of the Work

All phases of the work during this period were, of course, much affected by the war. In general, the regular work was continued with the burden greatly increased by the wider outreach to the various groups entering the district.

Gregg Memorial Hospital in Tak Hing treated more than twelve thousand persons in 1941. Of those over five thousand and seven hundred were war refugees. The proportion of refugees rose, comprising fifty-four per cent of the sixteen thousand patients treated in 1944. Although many were given free treatment the hospital continued to pay its own way and in 1943 had one of its most successful years.

The leper work was also maintained and there were even more lepers taken in. Of the twenty-three inmates in 1944 fifteen were baptized Christians. In all of the medical work the Gospel message was always given along with the bodily healing needed by the patient. In the hospital a Bible woman was of considerable assistance in the services for the in-patients and in having talks with them as well as in the semi-weekly Bible classes conducted for the helpers in the hospital.



She also spoke in the clinic evangelistic services.

In the midst of the unusually heavy load placed upon the hospital by the war conditions the doctors there did not neglect the training of medical assistants who would be greatly needed in the days to come. Two nurses completed their training in 1944 and three new ones were received into the hospital for training.

Other young people who would later assist in the work were being trained in the Bible Schools. The Bible Training School for young women at Tak Hing had two objectives:

"One, to train girls and women to be living epistles of Jesus Christ and to do voluntary Christian work in their own homes and villages; the other, to train women who will be able to devote their whole time to Christian work."

As the Japanese entered South China many of the women and children left the city of Tak Hing to seek refuge in the villages. Under the circumstances it did not seem wise to continue the Bible School for young women and so this was disbanded October 24, 1938, two days after the capture of Canton.

The Bible School and Seminary for young men at Lo Ting was continued. After the heavy bombing of the city in February 1939, however, the classes were moved to a Christian home outside the city wall. Here they maintained a full schedule of classes, including: Old and New Testament, Pastoral Theology, Homiletics, Church History, Religious Education, Chinese Literature, Chinese History, and practical evangelistic work.

The entire school moved to the country for field work during the month of May. They had only two hours of Bible classes and then went to the villages and markets in the afternoons. At night they frequently held meetings in the town. On Sabbath they went to different stations to hold services. Then, in July the students had opportunity for further service as they worked either in their own villages or in one of the mission stations as summer evangelistic assistants.

Gradually the young men were taken into the army. At the December meeting of the South China Presbytery it was voted that the Bible School at Lo Ting be disbanded because of the shortage of students. This took place January 24, 1940.

At the same meeting of Presbytery it was also voted that primary schools be opened at both Tak Hing and Lo Ting. This was now possible because in 1938 Generalissimo Chiang Kai Shek had revoked the law forbidding religious teaching in mission schools. The Tak Hing school opened with one hundred and twenty-four pupils, including forty refugee children, who were not charged fees. The first six grades were provided.

This school could not open as an accredited school in September 1943 since there were not sufficient funds to pay the teachers' salaries which were higher than formerly because of the rise in the cost of living. The Presbytery had shifted the aid which had been given to the school into direct evangelistic work. The fees of the school could not be increased to get more money because the Tak Hing business men had formed a non-Christian free accredited school. Thus, only sub-primary, second and fourth grades were continued in the Tak Hing Mission school. This provided for most of the refugee children and those in other grades attended the free schools in the city.

Other phases of the work continued much the same as before the war. Itinerant evangelism was still carried on, though at times limited. With the cooperation of the Christian jailor a weekly Bible class was held for the men, an evangelistic service for the larger group was conducted on Sabbath, and a weekly meeting was available for the women.

The South China Presbytery continued to meet each year, preceded by a Bible conference, though there was occasion when they made the meetings shorter than usual because of the danger that the roads home might be bombed before they could return. However, there continued to be the regular good representation at these meetings of Presbytery.

One of the developments which grew out of these meetings was the circuit system of shepherding congregations. In this plan a pastor goes to a centrally located congregation for one year of residence. Another development was that of holding a meeting lasting more than one month for the training of evangelists. Also, a new emphasis was placed upon religious training in the homes. Two teachers were appointed for the purpose of giving guidance in this respect. An effort was also made to reach the educated people. To this end a Christian publishing board was organized to preach the Gospel by the printed word. They published a single sheet church paper twice each month for Christians.

Even during the war the church continued to grow. The membership in the South China Presbytery rose from 620 in three congregations and fourteen mission stations at the time of the Japanese invasion into China to a roll of 816 members in three congregations and sixteen mission stations in 1944. There was an increase of eighty-two members during the year ending the spring of 1944.

Bible classes were held in some of the villages. One was held in Taai Peng and then one week was spent there visiting the homes of the Christians. Also, a Bible class was held in Lo Peng as well as nightly evangelistic meetings.

##### 5. Mr. Mitchel Alone on the Field

Only the Reverend J. C. Mitchel remained on the field by the latter part

of 1944, whereas during 1939 there had been thirteen Covenanter missionaries in South China and one home on furlough. Dr. Edna M. Wallace had returned home the previous summer for her regular furlough. Then, their furlough being due, the Reverend and Mrs. E. C. Mitchell arrived in San Francisco March 30, 1939, on the S. S. President Cleveland. The Reverend Lester Kilpatrick and his family arrived at Los Angeles one year later. They had been in the language school at Cheung Chau, preparing for service on the mission field, but because of the illness of Mrs. Kilpatrick had been forced to give up their studies.

Then, in February 1941, it being time for their furloughs, Miss Mary Adams and Mrs. Boyle with her young son, Scott, returned to the United States. The Reverend Sam Boyle remained in China, where he was greatly needed, until someone might be able to take over the work he had been doing.

The Reverend Jesse C. Mitchel resigned his pastorate of the Hebron congregation and in October of that year he arrived in China and the Reverend Sam Boyle, whose furlough was overdue, left the field to be with his wife and child in the United States. When Mr. Mitchel left his wife, son, and daughter in this country and went to China for about eighteen months to relieve Mr. Boyle, he did not know that it would be more than five years before he would be back in this country with his family.

Miss Barr was the next of the missionaries to leave South China. She went to Hong Kong for some needed dental care and was caught there in the fall of Hong Kong in December 1941. Advantage was taken of her training as a registered nurse and she was kept busy treating wounded soldiers. Later she was repatriated and arrived in New York aboard the Gripsholm on August 25th of the following year along with Miss Rose Huston and Miss Lillian McCracken of the Manchuria mission field.

Miss Jennie M. Dean, Miss Ella Margaret Stewart, Dr. Ida Scott, and the Reverend and Mrs. Julius A. Kempf were enabled to stay in China and continue their work until August 1944. Then, they were forced to evacuate, and an unusually long and hazardous journey home followed. They went from Tak Hing to Wuchow by tow boat, on to the air field, flew in a military plane to Kweilin, went on to Kunming, continued by C.N.A.C. to Calcutta, and had a five-day train trip to Bombay. Then, after a thirty-three day trip across the Pacific, they arrived in Los Angeles on November 18.

This left the Reverend Jesse C. Mitchel alone on the field. He remained in order that he might aid in the distribution of relief funds and keep up communication with Tak Hing and Lo Ting. His plan was to stay and to keep ahead of the Japanese. He, too, had to evacuate when the Japanese invaded the area of

the mission. Before doing so, however, he went from Lo Ting to Tak Hing on September 11, 1944, to assist in evacuating the orphans, hospital, refugees, and some of the Chinese Christian workers. The orphanage moved to Lin Taan and the hospital workers went to Lo Ting. Then, having completed this work by daylight of the next day, he had to leave Tak Hing without returning to his station and took the first boat up the river to Wuchow, arriving there on September 15. Then, some American pilots took him to Taam Chue and he went on from there to Liuchow. Next, he proceeded on and two days later, September 28, reached Tushan, which is also in Kweichow Province, on a truck hauling supplies for the United States army, and stayed there nearly two months. Thus:

"stage by stage, largely on foot, at other times by army freight trucks, and with much effort and in all kinds of discomfort, he made his way from city to city -- 100 miles, then 200, then 150, through ice and snow and freezing cold to Pickick in Northwest Kweichow; then nearly 300 miles -- until at last he reached Kunming December 19."

Along the way he saw such sights as that at Wuchow with "thousands of refugees leaving by every road; the river almost filled with launches pulling capacity loads, mostly heading west." Then, at Lau Chow:

"The railroad yards were full of trains, every car loaded with people and goods, even the tops covered with people. Underneath were platforms built across the rods, the men, women and children were riding there."

And, on the way to Tushan:

"From the start each side of the road was lined with refugees. They had wheelbarrows, rickshas, pony carts, oxcarts, man carts and other ways of carrying baggage, old and sick people and children. Scarcely none were riding who could walk. Some had already had to dispose of their clothes, bedding, and sometimes children, to secure food."

While at Tushan Mr. Mitchel taught some classes in the Bethel Bible School. They invited him to continue teaching in the school, but he felt that it was necessary to move on to Kunming to arrange for funds for the field. Two problems faced him concerning the funds. One was the obtaining of the funds from the bank in Kunming and the other was the getting of those funds to the Chinese Christian workers at Lo Ting and Tak Hing.

At Kunming the American Consul wanted Mr. Mitchel to go to India immediately and from there on to this country. He had been instructed to evacuate all United States citizens. However, he did finally consent to permit Mr. Mitchel to remain in China if he could in some way help the army. He sought a position as chaplain, but no permanent openings were available at the time. During the



Christmas holidays, however, he was sent to a rest camp about thirty miles outside of the city.

The Canton Provincial Bank maintained radio communications with their banks in Lo Ting and Tak Hing. Mr. Mitchel found that he could forward funds to the Mission field in this manner. He also was happy to learn, through the bank, that the Japanese had not occupied Lo Ting, but had passed on by the city.

In the early spring of 1945, Mr. Mitchel was sent on a special relief mission lasting about three months, and which involved some danger.

The need for relaying relief funds to the Mission field became increasingly greater. With the invasion by the Japanese armies the Chinese Christians in the South China field were robbed of almost everything: "homes, furnishings, food, crops, animals, farming tools, and seeds for a new crop."

Mr. Mitchel felt the great need for his staying in China so that he could transfer needed funds to the field and could keep in contact with the Chinese Christians. Yet, with no opening available for a chaplaincy in the United States army, it seemed that he would have to leave China as the American Consul had insisted that he do. Then, the British army asked him to do some work for them in the western part of Kwongtung Province, with Lo Ting as headquarters. Under the British Army Aid Group he worked behind the enemy lines, organizing the area so that Allied airmen forced down within or near enemy occupied territory could be successfully rescued. Plans were laid for assisting the flyers through the enemy lines and back to their bases. Assistance was also to be rendered to any Allied refugees who needed to get through the enemy lines. In addition to this, information was to be gathered which would be useful or of a help in any way to the Allied forces.

This work, of course, involved much personal danger to Mr. Mitchel. However, he was glad of the opportunity to be of assistance to the flyers in keeping them from the hands of the enemy and he was thankful that through this means he could be near the Chinese Christians to give them the financial aid and the encouragement which meant so much to them at this time.

He was to have gone from Kunming to Poseh in a plane, but having been delayed by the weather, he rode along with two British officers and some Chinese workers who were traveling in two jeeps with trailers. The road which they had to take was a difficult route even for a jeep. It was through the mountains and in some of the higher parts there were six or eight inches of ice or snow. Then, in other places they had to pass through deep mud. The trip was made in safety, though, with no serious trouble.

After much time spent with arrangements, the trip from Poseh to Lo Ting was

finally made with a battalion of Chinese soldiers and a number of civil officials who were going through the lines. After fifty miles by jeep, they walked for nineteen days in order to reach Lo Ting. However, it took more time than those days of walking to get to their destination, because on occasion they were delayed by the enemy. They had to make a hasty retreat during one whole night to keep from being surrounded by the Japanese. Also, they had to determine the position of the enemy and then make their way past the outposts during the night. It was a hazardous trip, but he was heartily welcomed back to Lo Ting and there found that all of the Christians were safe and none of them had suffered physical harm.

Mr. Mitchel lived there at Lo Ting and wore civilian clothes. In working with the British Army Aid Groups he was also to cooperate with the Official Secret Service, a very secret organization of the United States. His duty was to bring these two groups together, carrying useful information from one to the other so that both organizations could operate more effectively.

The American airmen could not always rely on the Chinese interpreters because many of them were representatives of the China secret service and were spying on Americans. Therefore, Mr. Mitchel was frequently called upon to serve as interpreter. He also drew maps of the topography of the land, and told of locations and numbers of the Japanese for the United States and British forces.

An important task was, of course, the rescuing of airmen who came down in that district and the recovery of any who had been captured by the Japanese. Mr. Mitchel saw one plane losing altitude and, then, nine miles away a man bail out. This young man was on his fiftieth mission, the last before going home to the United States. The flyer, who was on a mission over Canton, had a wonderful sense of direction and knew the ~~area~~<sup>area</sup>. The engine began to get hot because the oil line to the engine had been punctured by a bullet, so that he knew he could not get back. So, according to the instructions he had received, he got away from the West River and came down on the side of a hill. Using a book with English and pointing to the Chinese equivalent, he sought direction from a little Chinese boy. Now knowing how to read, the boy took him to another party. They gathered up the parachute and started out. The man to whom he was brought had been a teacher and could speak a little English. Soon Mr. Mitchel and some others arrived to get the soldier. The Chinese insisted on giving this American young man breakfast before he left, and did all they could to help him.

The Chinese people had been organized to get the Allied men out of where they landed and to safety from the Japanese. Some Chinese lived behind the Japanese lines and rescued the men when the planes came down. They wanted nothing for what they did, and some even gave their lives in this work.



Because of the aid given in this rescue work, some Chinese paid the price of having their villages destroyed.

Mr. Mitchel helped in "contacting, caring for, and returning eleven U. S. airmen who were forced to land in this area." He also helped a group from the United States army who were in that area on duty. Eighteen soldiers were parachuted into the Lo Ting area in July 1945. They had been sent there for the purpose of training the Chinese to help in the disrupting of Japanese communications whenever that was possible. Having been directed to Mr. Mitchel by a Catholic priest, the Protestants of the group made their home with him while in that area. These soldiers helped by giving the parachutes, which had been used in dropping supplies to them, to be made into clothes for the lepers. The high esteem in which they held Mr. Mitchel is shown in their plan to leave \$25,000, American money, with Mr. Mitchel when they left so that he would have enough to keep him in case the war should last for several more years, because the funds which the Foreign Mission Board had sent to him had not gotten through. The war came to a close soon, however, so that this was not necessary.

The year following the departure of the other missionaries had been a very trying one, involving much danger for him. It had meant:

"A walking trip of between three and four hundred miles, making 20 to 25 miles a day through a territory without sufficient food or comfortable places to stay at night, having to pass through enemy held country." It was necessary for him to make his way through enemy lines and keep on the alert for enemy agents, in order to do all he could for the Allied airmen.

Mr. Mitchel endured physical hardships and worked under a mental strain. He was the only Covenanter missionary on the South China field and was separated from his family for over five years. He had difficulty in getting the funds which the Foreign Mission Board had sent to him and the cost of living was fantastically high. Yet, he was thankful that he was enabled to be near the Chinese Christians in South China and to keep in contact with the work there.

All parts of the mission field were affected to some extent by the Japanese entrance into that area in September 1944. In some places, such as Lo Ting, Wan Fau, and Lin Taan, the occupation was only as the armies were passing through, and lasted but five to fifteen days. Other places along the West River, such as Tak Hing and Do Sing, were held as military positions for almost a year.

Although not far from the enemy, Lo Ting was a place of refuge for many individuals as well as for the educational institutions that moved there. There were some Christians among them who were of considerable help in the mission work. Some from Tak Hing also moved to Lo Ting.

Because there was little fighting there, the destruction in Tak Hing was not

equipment and furnishings were removed from the schools, hospital, church and mission residences. Even some of the doors, windows, and flooring were taken.

Although there were some bombings and destruction in the Covenanter Mission field of South China, there was no great suffering as in other parts of China and few war atrocities. People were forced to go as carriers to take away the loot, but most of them got back, though some were never heard of. Only one Christian man did not return and met death at the hands of the Japanese.

The enemy soldiers were not the only ones to bring destruction to this area during this period, for, with conditions as they were, the bandits again became very active. One group of three hundred planned to rob the village and chapel where the orphans from Tak Hing had been moved. They had hoped to get there just before daybreak. When they reached what they thought to be the chapel, they discovered that they were at the wrong place. It would take them another twenty minutes to reach the chapel, which would be too late, so they turned back. Those at the orphanage did not know from what they had been delivered until one year later when the leader of the group was captured and tried on other charges.

The hospital work at Tak Hing was brought to a halt at the time of the invasion by the Japanese, but the hospital at Lo Ting found it possible to continue on.

It became necessary to disband the orphanage because of lack of funds and for the same reason there was a scattering of many of the inmates of the Leper Home. However, as the funds began to get through, the former inmates returned.

Following the cessation of hostilities, Mr. Mitchel was kept very busy aiding the refugees who were returning to their homes near the coast, reopening the hospital at Tak Hing, caring for the orphans who had been taken in by the mission, and distributing food as far as he could to those suffering from the severe famine in that area. With all that was done, the Gospel was presented to those who received aid. Then, the other missionaries having returned to China, the Reverend Jesse C. Mitchel came back to the United States, arriving in San Francisco on January 9, 1947, after more than five years as an ambassador for Christ to the Chinese in their hour of great need.

#### C. Post-war Period in the South China Mission

##### 1. Return of the Missionaries

On June 3, 1946, Dr. Ida Scott, Miss Jennie Dean, Miss Mary Adams, and Miss Ella Margaret Stewart sailed from Galveston, Texas, on a freighter to return to China. Dr. and Mrs. Julius A. Kempf sailed from San Francisco the following month. Arriving in Shanghai, where they had to wait a few days for repairs, they met the four missionaries who had sailed earlier, but who had been left there because of a change in the ship's destination. So, all six of them continued the journey together, arriving in Hong Kong on the General Gordon,

July 30. The following December 16 Miss Jean Barr sailed for China.

Upon arrival at the field they found the houses and other buildings still standing, but badly in need of repair. The scarcity and high cost of material had prevented the beginning of repair work previous to this. Many of their belongings had been preserved for them by the Chinese Christians.

Because of the famine, resulting from the poor yield, the lack of rain, and the necessity for some people to eat their seed rice, many had died of starvation and many more were near death from the same cause.

The lack of food, the very poor diet of those who did have anything to eat, and the war conditions under which they lived brought about much disease among the people and a great need for medical care. Dr. Ida Scott wrote from Pak Oi Hospital at Lo Ting, "I've seen more wretchedness and misery in the past two weeks than in all of my life before."

The large number of deaths caused by the war and the famine had left many children homeless. Some, who were strong enough, were begging on the streets. Others, because of the scarcity of food, were too weak even for this. There were a great many of those orphans to be cared for.

## 2. Relief Work

The magistrate had asked the Mission to take in twenty babies left on the streets. Later he asked them to increase the number to thirty and then to forty. These were small children between the ages of two months and four years. Later they took in one hundred and twenty older boys who were too weak to beg. The Mission also cared for the children of destitute Christian families. The boys were from five to fourteen years of age. Although some had beriberi and many were in a serious condition when taken in with a life expectancy of only one month, all but ten of them were restored to health. When they had been taken from the streets their hair was falling out and their arms were thin, but soon they were strong again and could play and go to school. The magistrate furnished rice provided through the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration for feeding them. Many of these boys had no home or family. In the fall of 1946, one ton of rolled oats was received through the direct China Relief. The children were fed rolled oats and taught the Shorter Catechism.

Food was desperately needed not only by these children cared for by the Mission, but by many others in that district. Hundreds of people could be seen taking their hoes out to the hills and bringing back roots covered with fuzz one-half to three-fourths of an inch thick. They would scrape off the fuzz, put the roots in water for several days, and then fix them for eating. These roots were very hard to digest and had no real food value, but merely alleviated the pangs of hunger. After eating these over a period of time their faces would

become yellow and their feet become swollen. Other food would have to be obtained or they would die.

The soup kitchen helped to save the lives of many persons. In a single district they would be fed for six days. They received rice gruel, consisting of a level palmful of rice and a little dehydrated mutton, once each day. Operated on a similar plan were the milk kitchens. Each week two hundred poor people were given one pint of milk each day for six days. Along with the milk they were each given a vitamin pill, which they soon learned to appreciate. Although this does not seem like much food, even this little tides them over and results in the saving of many lives.

Another important provision in the administering of relief is that of clothes and bedding. The mission had taken on the responsibility of caring for a large number of children -- the babies left on the streets by parents who could not provide food for them, the children of destitute Christian families, and the boys who were too weak and sick to beg. Most of these were clothed only in the barest rags and had no bedding when taken in. Gunny sacks were used on some of the beds. Their needs were met, however, through relief agencies, army supplies, and help from the Covenanters in America. Afghans, blankets, and material were sent to them. Army clothes were taken apart and made into clothes for the children. Garments were knit from the yarn which had been sent to them. The "juniors" in America sent a sewing machine in the fall of 1947 to be used in the making of garments for the Chinese children.

The children under the care of the Mission were very eager to help themselves when given the materials to do so. When the cold weather of the winter of 1946 was drawing near few of them had any shoes to wear. Some of the elder ones took small scraps of cloth and tacked layer upon layer to make cloth soles. Then, they used better cloth for the upper part. Thus, through the coldest part of the winter all had shoes to wear.

Of the one hundred and sixty children, all except thirty of them are in school, in kindergarten and the lower primary. In addition to the regular classes, they have a class in Bible study each day, learn the Shorter Catechism, and have a daily Chapel service. Some of the older children are understanding the meaning of the Gospel and are accepting Christ as their personal Saviour.

## 3. Medical Work

The prevalence of malnutrition brought about much cholera, dysentery, and malaria. During the summer of 1946, free clinics were held in the villages, where treatment was given to an average of ninety persons a day. Upon her return to China, Dr. Scott was heartily welcomed to Lo Ting, where they had been without a doctor. The hospital there had three buildings, one each for men, women, and



contagious diseases. Besides these there was the Leper Hospital. During the first year back in China after the war, there were 366 patients at the hospital, with eighteen confinement cases. The clinic, too, was very active, having received 7,199 patients and having given thousands of treatments.

Later Dr. Scott did return to Tak Hing, taking about thirty-five orphans with her. The equipment having been removed from the Tak Hing hospital during the Japanese invasion, the Boys' School was converted into a hospital. Some medical supplies were received through United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration and International Relief. The hospitals at both Tak Hing and Lo Ting were supported largely <sup>by</sup> sales at low prices of medical supplies. There were also many charity cases.

A little medicine served to help many persons through critical conditions. Thus, the missionaries ministered to the people through preaching, vaccinating and distributing rice. The Gospel was always preached along with the giving of food and injections.

#### D. Summary

The invasion of China by the Japanese brought many problems and many opportunities to the Covenanters missionaries in South China. They sought to bring the Gospel to each new group that moved into the district. Their influence was felt among the refugees who had moved inland from the coast, among the students of the schools which had been set up in that district, and among the orphans of the government orphanage which had been moved to that area. For each of these groups they sought to meet their needs and to present the Gospel.

In spite of repeated urging from the American Consul to leave China, the missionaries remained at their stations until evacuation became necessary in 1944, just before the Japanese occupied that district. Then, only Mr. Mitchell remained in China. Through service to the army he was enabled to remain in China and to be a source of help and encouragement to the Chinese Christians in a time of dire trouble.

The missionaries who returned to China following the war faced a picture of great suffering. The refugees returning to their homes near the coast had lost their possessions and were in need of help. Many were starving because of the severe famine. The lack of food brought about malnutrition, resulting in the prevalence of much sickness. Large numbers of children were either left homeless or their parents were unable to provide food for them.

When those missionaries returned to China after the war, they followed the same policy that they had adopted during the earlier years of the war and that Mr. Mitchell had carried through during the time that he was alone in China.

That is, they sought to meet the needs of the individual, the physical as well as the spiritual. They provided the daily necessities of life, medical care, and education. They felt a responsibility toward each group which came into the district. Of first importance at all times was the use of these channels of rendering service for the presentation of the Gospel.



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#### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

"In her fifty years in China, the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America has used approximately fifty missionaries and their wives, who have served, all told, probably about five hundred man-years, at an expense to the home church of about five hundred thousand dollars."

In September 1897 a chapel was rented in the city of Tak Hing in the Kwangtung Province of South China. There evangelization was begun through the Covenanters in South China. The method used in reaching the people was to meet their needs of the time and to present the Gospel. In meeting the needs of the people the various channels used were made effective in the presentation of the Gospel.

A hospital was erected at Tak Hing. Then, schools were organized for girls, for boys, and for women. A training school was set up to provide instruction for the Chinese so that they could serve their own people as evangelists, Bible women, and ministers. Itinerary work was instigated so that more persons could be reached.

The missionaries had been there five years before the first convert was baptized. Then, seven years later, 1909, a congregation was formed at Tak Hing. The purpose of the mission was to establish a self-supporting, self-governing, self-propagating church. So, in 1923 the self-support plan was adopted and a Council was formed. The Council, a governing body, was composed of both the missionaries and the Chinese Christians. The next step was the organization of a Presbytery in 1926. Both bodies continued to function until December 11, 1933, when the Presbytery assumed the duties of the Council.

There had been growth not only in the development of the church, but also in the extent of the outreach. At the request of another mission, the Lo Ting district was taken over in 1914 and a congregation established there. Another congregation was organized later at Taa Ping, and from time to time mission stations were opened in various parts of the field. As more of the Chinese were trained for Christian leadership they took active parts in the work.

During the war with the Japanese, efforts were centered primarily in the administration of relief to the multitude of persons who had fled to this district from enemy occupied territory. In Christian love they sought to help the refugees, students, and orphans. Following the war they sought

to alleviate the suffering caused by the severe famine experienced in the district.

There were many periods of testing and difficult days to be faced. The Boxer Rebellion in 1900, the Manchu uprising in 1911, the revolution brought on by the Communists in 1926-1928, and the war with the Japanese following their invasion into China in 1937 each brought their trials, but along with these the opportunity for Christian witness.

The missionaries of South China have been faithful in their service. As a result the Chinese now look to the Christian missionaries for friendship, counsel and help. After fifty years of evangelization through the Covenanters in South China, there are today more than eight hundred members in the three congregations and sixteen mission stations.

As one looks to the period following the first fifty years in South China, the situation is encouraging and full of hope. The developments of medical science in the treatment of tropical diseases have greatly lessened the hazards to the health of the missionary. The country of China has a Christian leader. The Chinese themselves are no longer resentful, but rather welcome the missionary.

So far as the work itself is concerned, the hospitals are very active both at Tak Hing and Lo Ting. There is also a Leper Hospital at Lo Ting which is continuing as before the war. The Orphanage and Children's home of about one hundred and sixty children, with a school for all but thirty of them, was established because of the famine. The mission has taken on the responsibility for their education, care, and salvation. These will be kept by the mission and sent out at the age of eighteen or nineteen as Christian leaders and able to support themselves.

Since the war a new station has been opened in Canton. In a building with an open front to the street evangelistic services are held twice a day and four times on Sabbath by the evangelist, Mr. Wong. When Mr. Boyle returned to China at the close of 1947, he took with him a public address system to be used in the carrying on of this work in Canton.

The close of the first fifty years found the Covenanters in South China not only opening new work, but also with four young people in the home land preparing to go to the field within the next year.

In all things the endeavor of the missionaries and the Chinese Christians is to meet the needs of the people and, through this, to present the Gospel. The aim is a self-supporting, self-governing, self-propagating church. Many have come to accept Christ as their personal Saviour through the faithful witness of the Covenanter missionaries in South China.