

THE FOREIGN MISSIONS CONFERENCE OF NORTH AMERICA

A Review of Its Fiftieth Annual Report

By REV. J. G. VOS

Together with

DEDICATION OF THE UNITED CHURCH
IN MANCHURIA

By Rose A. Huston

and

GOVERNMENT CONTROL OF THE CHURCH
IN MANCHURIA

By Rev. J. G. Vos

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INTRODUCTION

The author of this fine analysis of conditions within the Foreign Missions Conference of North America was himself a missionary under the Reformed Presbyterian (Covenanter) Church (as also is Miss Rose A. Huston) for ten years, or until his repatriation was required by war conditions. Mr. Vos served his church in Manchuria and speaks authoritatively, therefore, concerning the conditions on this field.

Mr. Vos is a graduate of Princeton University and of Princeton Theological Seminary, and also spent a year at the Reformed Presbyterian Seminary in Pittsburgh. While home on missionary furlough he did postgraduate work in Westminster Seminary, in Philadelphia, for which he received the degree of Th.M.

The challenging fact of this message which needs to be faced by every evangelical Christian in America is that the Foreign Missions Conference is being leavened with the same corruption of the faith of the church that has been shown to exist in every one of these super church agencies. Under the leadership of the Federal Council of Churches, it is now proposed that eight of these agencies be welded into one National Council of Christian Churches. In view of this revealed apostasy in the most important testimony of the church to her Lord—that which carries the gospel to the uttermost parts of the earth—there can be no reasonable doubt that this super church organization will spell the final entry of the Protestant Church of America into the great Inclusivist Church of the end of this age.

Every denominational unit of American Protestantism is faced with a choice which may well be that of her final destiny.

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She may do one of two things: first, she may join this In-clusivist Church and thus be swept away in the tide of modern-ism which is engulfing the churches of America; or second, she may elect to separate herself unto her Lord and be willing, if need be, to stand alone and apart with Him against all the world. The Christian has always been faced with such a choice. But now as never before that choice must be made in terms of the various units of the Church of Christ. Many of them have already made that choice. As Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick has declared in his infamous words: "We modernists . . . have already largely won the battle we started to win . . . fundamentalism is still with us, but mostly in the backwaters. The future of the churches, if we will have it so, is in the hands of modernism."

The question United Presbyterians, and every other church that is still evangelical, must face is: "Am I willing to stay in the backwater of faith with Christ?" Let every true child of God recognize this issue in its overwhelming importance, and then let him stand in the courts of his church and be no longer silent. The time has come when silence will give consent, and we shall be found denying the Lord who bought us.

Alexander Fraser.

THE FOREIGN MISSIONS CONFERENCE OF N. A.

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By REV. J. G. VOS

Missionary to Manchuria under the Reformed Presbyterian Church

The Foreign Missions Conference of North America is an association of foreign mission boards and societies with head-quarters in the United States and Canada. Some 102 boards and societies are constitutional members of the Conference, while 21 others hold an affiliated relationship. The Conference is one of the major organizations to be included in the proposed National Council of Churches. Thus it will be seen that the Foreign Missions Conference is an important and influential organization. The China Inland Mission is perhaps the only one of the really large foreign mission agencies of North America that does not hold membership in the Conference.

The Jubilee Meeting of the Foreign Missions Conference was held January 3-7, 1944, at Chicago. Following this meet- ing, the Fiftieth Annual Report of the Conference was pub- lished in the form of a 309 page book. Listed among the boards and societies which hold constitutional membership are several agencies whose unorthodoxy, from the standpoint of evangelical Christianity, is so widely recognized that it is a matter of some surprise to find them listed. Among these, mention may be made of the General Conference of Seventh-Day Adventists, the Universalist International Church Extension Board, the Association of Universalist Women, the Yale-in-China Asso- ciation, Inc., the International Committee of Y. M. C. A.'s, and the National Board of the Y. W. C. A. of the U. S., Foreign Division.

The Committee of Reference and Counsel

A subsidiary of the Foreign Missions Conference is its Committee of Reference and Counsel, which is incorporated under the laws of New York. Twenty-one members of this Committee are elected by the Foreign Missions Conference, and in addition to these, there are ten chairmen or vice-chairmen of "Representative Committees" on various fields and phases of foreign mission work who ex-officio hold membership in the Committee of Reference and Counsel. *This incorporated Committee, together with the "Representative Committees," does the main work of the Foreign Missions Conference and is the real policy-making body of the organization.* An executive committee of the Committee of Reference and Counsel consists of fourteen members.

The Foreign Missions Conference holds constituent membership in the International Missionary Council, the great ecumenical missionary organization whose liberal tendencies have been well known since the Jerusalem and Madras Conferences of 1928 and 1938. (The faith of the Madras Conference was reported in the September, 1944, "*News-Letter*." Ed.) The Committee of Reference and Counsel is represented jointly with the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America on the Church Committee for Overseas Relief and Reconstruction and on the Church Committee for China Relief; it is represented jointly with six other agencies in the Inter-Council Field Department; with four other agencies in the Interseminary Movement; and with Union Theological Seminary (New York) in the Missionary Research Library.

The Report of the Jubilee Meeting of the Foreign Missions Conference makes dreary reading for a believer in historic supernatural Christianity. Its 300-odd pages are largely filled with detailed information and discussion concerning complicated organizations and super-organizations, together with addresses and reports on foreign missions and related subjects which breathe the vague atmosphere of modern religious liberalism. *There is practically nothing in the entire volume that is really*

distinctive of historic supernatural Christianity. A devotional address by Dr. Robert E. Speer, entitled "Earthen Vessels" (pages 73-77) seems to be the exception that proves the rule. Dr. Speer's address, which speaks of the Gospel as supernatural and affirms faith in the Incarnation, seems to the reviewer the only article in the volume that really rings true to orthodox Christianity. Mention may also be made of a letter from a Student Volunteer, quoted on page 175 in an article on the Student Volunteer Movement, which speaks of "Jesus who hung on the cross for our sins". Apart from these and possibly one or two other altogether minor exceptions, the Jubilee Report is a barren desert from the standpoint of historic Christianity. Indeed what is omitted from the Report is more significant than what is included.

Emphasis Upon the Mechanics of Organization

Throughout the book, where the emphasis is not on the ideology of Liberalism, it is on organization, co-operation and what might be called the mere mechanics of missionary work. Nowhere, except as noted above, do we find anything approaching an adequate presentation of the supernatural divine grace which is the real energy back of truly Christian foreign missions. Everywhere there seems to be a kind of tacit assumption that organization, co-operation and mechanics can accomplish the missionary task, provided only that we can achieve a sufficient quantity and quality of organization, co-operation and mechanics. Someone has spoken of this mental attitude as "the great American delusion that motion is progress." The present reviewer believes that this attitude, which seems to him to pervade the volume like a mist, is basically false. The Christian Church during the period of its greatest purity and power, the apostolic and post-apostolic age, possessed nothing in any way comparable to the complex interlocking organizations and super-organizations of modern Protestantism, yet it conquered the Roman Empire in three centuries and in the face of bitter persecution. Of course organization, co-operation and mechanics are not wrong in themselves; the wrong consists in emphasizing

and pushing these things apart from any adequate realization that the real power in Christianity is the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit. This emphasis on organization tends to produce the unconscious assumption that the power is inherent in these human activities.

The Faith Proclaimed at the Jubilee Meeting

The Jubilee Meeting was opened with a devotional service conducted by the Rev. Rolland W. Schloerb, D.D., pastor of Hyde Park Baptist Church, Chicago. Dr. Schloerb spoke on "Foundation Stones for World Christianity" (pages 13-15). He gave three quotations, each of which, he said, "calls attention to a foundation stone upon which our faith in Christian missions is built." Quoting from Charles E. Jefferson, Dr. Schloerb presents the first "*foundation stone*" as consisting of two parts, namely the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man. The quotation goes on to say that "these are the two fundamental doctrines of Jesus. If men could only comprehend them, old things would pass away, and all things would become new."

Dr. Schloerb continues: "*The second rock* upon which our faith in Christian missions is built is the ethic of our religion. This is the ethic of altruism and service to those in need." This is illustrated by a quotation from the well-known modernist Albert Schweitzer, author of "The Quest of the Historical Jesus." "*A third foundation stone* for a faith in Christian missions," continues Dr. Schloerb, "is the conviction that our religion begins at home but it does not stay at home." This is followed by a quotation of Romans 1:8-15 in the Goodspeed version.

It is obvious that Dr. Schloerb's opening address is thorough Modernism. Christ Himself, His divine person and finished work, is the real foundation stone of truly Christian missions. Why should anyone talk about "faith in Christian missions"? Our faith should be faith in God and Christ and the Holy Spirit, not faith in missions. Although rightly regarded as the fruit of Christian faith, Christian missions cannot in any sense

be the object of Christian faith. The Fatherhood of God, the Brotherhood of Man, the ethic of altruism, the conviction that religion does not stay at home—what miserable, lifeless chaff to offer people in place of the divine Redeemer of the Scriptures as the foundation of world Christianity! And to say that if men could only comprehend the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man "old things would pass away, and all things would become new" is an almost shocking misuse of the words of 2 Cor. 5:17, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." For there is a vast difference between *being in Christ*, as meant by the Apostle Paul, and *comprehending the Fatherhood of God and Brotherhood of Man*, as meant by Drs. Jefferson and Schloerb. Moreover these two shibboleths of Liberalism, in the religious meaning intended by the Liberals, are simply false doctrines. It is true of course that as God is the Creator of all men He can in a certain sense be called the Father of all, and as the human race is a biological unity there is a certain sense in which all men can be called brothers; but such usage is entirely different from the religious connotation given to these terms by the Liberals. It has been well said, "Human brotherhood, apart from faith in Christ, is the brotherhood of Cain and Abel."

This barren Modernism, devoid of anything that could offend the most thorough Unitarian, was placed before the delegates at the opening session in place of real spiritual nourishment from the Scriptures. And it must be added that practically all of the rest of the volume is quite in keeping with the tone of this opening address.

What is the Missionary Purpose

In an address entitled "The Missionary Purpose and the Whole of Life" Arthur T. Mosher, missionary to India of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. (Northern) raises the question "What is the missionary purpose" and presents the following answer:

"One thing it is not, is to send missionaries from Christian

North America and Europe to non-Christian lands. Such a concept is untenable, both because today there are Christians in almost every country on earth and because there is much that is non-Christian in North America and Europe. . . . What, then, is it? I would like to submit that there is a distinctive task within the church which calls for a separate organization. This is the task which the churches entrust to their boards of foreign missions, and for which they meet for counsel in the Foreign Missions Conference of North America. The nature of this missionary task is (1) provision for fellowship between Christians of different cultures, and (2) provision for re-allocating the resources of experience and personnel of Christians, so that the world Christian fellowship shall be able to marshal its resources at the points of earth where it faces major opportunities. In other words, if we were to make the title of the Foreign Missions Conference of North America really descriptive of the distinctive contribution which the churches have a right to expect from it, we would not call it the Foreign Missions Conference, but we would call it the 'Conference on World Fellowship and Re-Allocation of Resources of the Churches of Christ in North America'." (Pages 82, 83.)

Here is a careful definition of the nature of the missionary task, which does not even mention the primary obligation to preach the Gospel to every creature. Our Lord's Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20) presents, without any vague, high-sounding talk about "world fellowship and re-allocation of resources," the *real* nature of the missionary task of the Christian Church.

Mr. Mosher states further:

"One of the lingering attitudes of a colonial era in missions, which we claim to have abandoned, is to be found in the way in which we still occasionally speak of the boards of foreign missions of our denominations as having a responsibility to their donors, and therefore having a responsibility for the way in which resources American Christians contribute are utilized abroad." (Page 84.)

This statement strikes the reviewer as amazing. The position which Mr. Mosher calls a lingering attitude of a colonial era in missions is actually the only position that is consistent with conscientious Christian stewardship. Every Christian is ac-

countable to God for the use of his money. It is a Christian's duty to contribute only to such missionary agencies as he has reason to believe are true to the Scriptures. A mission board which receives contributions and bequests from the members of a particular denomination is in a position of trust, and if such money is used for objects out of harmony with the doctrinal standards of the denomination, the board is guilty of a breach of trust. Or is it also a lingering attitude of a colonial era in missions to maintain that the great doctrines of the Westminster Confession of Faith, for example, are as true in India and China as in England and America? *For what Mr. Mosher is advocating is that money contributed by American Christian people be turned over to native Christian groups in mission lands to use as they see fit, with no strings attached and no questions asked.* But certainly the church member who contributes to foreign missions in obedience to Christ's Great Commission has the right to assurance that the money will be utilized to fulfill that Commission and not otherwise. The church member who contributes has the right to insist that the money be used only for the support of personnel and institutions that are of sound faith and actually furthering the cause of the Gospel. This is a moral obligation which cannot rightly be avoided. Besides, is a foreign mission board the servant or the master of the church member in the pew? Must the contributing church member simply hand over the money and ask no questions for conscience' sake?

Modernistic Resolution Adopted by the Conference

The modernistic character of the Foreign Missions Conference is brought out in a statement found in "A Message to Christians from the Jubilee Meeting," adopted by the Conference, which reads:

"We must learn to surmount as Christians the world's low standard of values producing the glaring advertisements and degrading caricatures which stigmatize whole peoples and do violence to our faith in the brotherhood of man under the fatherhood of God." (Page 143.)

Here the false doctrines of the universal Fatherhood of God and Brotherhood of Man are found, not in an address by an individual speaker, but in a "message" formally adopted by the Foreign Missions Conference as a whole. Nor was this "message" adopted hastily without consideration, for the Minutes (page 257) inform us that the "message" was presented as a recommendation from the Committee on International Relations and World Peace for adoption by the Conference, after which it was discussed, amended, and finally adopted. *Whether any of the delegates voted against this unorthodox statement we are not told*, but at any rate a majority, at least, of the delegates must have approved of the "message" in the form in which it was adopted.

What is Evangelism

The general vagueness of Liberalism is brought out in an address entitled "Our Hope for the Future" by Ralph E. Diffendorfer, Executive Secretary, Division of Foreign Missions, Board of Missions and Church Extension of the Methodist Church. Mr. Diffendorfer raises the question of whether or not work done for human welfare is evangelism: "Our folly has been that the Christian world has been divided on whether good deeds are evangelism or not. Events now force us to think afresh the relation of 'uplift' to evangelism." (Page 54.) Apparently Mr. Diffendorfer thinks that good deeds *are* evangelism. But if so, he is seriously mistaken, for *evangelism* means *proclaiming the Good News*, and this means proclaiming a message concerning the death of Jesus Christ, namely, that Christ died to save sinners. Good deeds—medical treatment for the sick, for example—may indeed be used as an effective method of gaining a hearing for the Gospel; and good deeds are certainly a proper fruit of the acceptance of the Gospel. But good deeds are not and cannot be *evangelism*, for evangelism is necessarily a message concerning the death of Jesus Christ. In recent years there has been a good deal of foolish talk on some mission fields about "industrial evangelism," "agricultural evangelism," and the like. The reviewer does not mean to imply that these medical, in-

dustrial and agricultural activities cannot be legitimate occupations of foreign missionaries, but only that they are not forms of *evangelism*, but by-products or side-lines. When Modernists speak of "evangelism," as they often do, orthodox Christians should not jump to the conclusion that they mean evangelism in the strict, old-time sense of preaching the Gospel of salvation to lost sinners. For in the vocabulary of Liberalism "evangelism" covers a multitude of activities.

Stark modernism appears in an address on "The Church and Suffering Europe" by Tracy Strong, General Secretary of World's Committee and of War Prisoners' Aid of the Y. M. C. A. Mr. Strong says: "Man in Europe stands forth in all his social nakedness. His stark brutality rivals his gentle kindness. Cruelty and camaraderie walk hand in hand. Man is evil. Man is good. He is a son of Satan and a child of God." (Page 17.) Here we have presented one of the cardinal doctrines of Liberalism—the doctrine that human nature is a composite of good and evil. The Scriptures, of course, teach that the "natural" man, the man who is not born again of the Holy Spirit, is *wholly evil*; "they that are in the flesh cannot please God" (Rom. 8:8). The Bible teaches the doctrine of the total depravity of the natural man. According to Scripture, man is *either* a son of Satan *or* a child of God, not as Mr. Strong states it, "a son of Satan *and* a child of God."

Communism Justified

A little later in his address Mr. Strong quotes, with apparent approval, some statements of Dr. Visser t'Hooft, General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, which are quite favorable to the communism of Soviet Russia:

"But now that millions have been uprooted, that the respect for the rights of individual men has been so deeply undermined and the use of violence has become a matter of course, the resistance against communism has been greatly weakened. From the point of view of the masses Russia seems to present the advantages of totalitarianism without presenting its disadvantages. For it seems to offer social security and equality without distinguishing between master and subject races. And

it seems to use its violent political methods for the sake of the many and not for the sake of the few." (Pages 18, 19.)

The reviewer wonders what proportion of the delegates at the Jubilee Meeting agreed with these opinions quoted by Mr. Strong.

Efforts Toward Church Union

For a number of years it has been apparent that both the International Missionary Council and the Foreign Missions Conference of North America have been working in the direction of general organic church union. It is perhaps not without significance that one of the two closing messages of the Jubilee Meeting was brought by Dr. E. Stanley Jones, the well-known Methodist missionary and advocate of church union. Dr. Jones' message is not included in the printed Report. But that the Foreign Missions Conference looks forward to organic union of the various denominations is clear from a statement printed on the back cover of the 1943-44 issue of "Christian World Facts," published by the Conference "for the use of ministers and lay leaders". The statement referred to is as follows: "While denominational distinctions will only slowly be erased, there is increasing need for a more immediate determination to unify and co-ordinate plans and projects in the World Mission of the Church. The purpose of the Conference is to promote co-operative study, investigation and undertaking in this World Mission." Here it seems to be simply assumed as an axiom that "denominational distinctions" are going to "be erased," albeit "only slowly." This attitude toward the question of organic union appears in the Jubilee Report in an address entitled "Our Greatest Weaknesses" by F. M. Potter, Secretary and Treasurer of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Reformed Church in America ("Dutch" Reformed. Ed.). After stating that "the first great weakness in this field which is probably in the minds of all of us is the divided nature of the church which has been built up in the countries to which we have sent our missionaries," and adding that there is danger of this subject becoming a mere pious platitude, Mr. Potter says:

"I plead only for constant prayerful consideration of this question as a live vital issue. The ringing message of the representatives of the Younger Churches at Madras should be repeated again and again, not lost to sight in a conference report. It was the unanimous expression of the representatives of the Younger Churches in the section discussing the question, and the Conference took the following solemn action: 'That in view of the evident leading of God and the supreme urgency of the call for organic union on the part of the Younger Churches, the Older Churches take this to heart with the utmost seriousness in the fields of prayer, thought and action'." (Page 43.)

What shall we think of this tide toward organic union of denominations on the foreign mission fields? Certainly it is the product of doctrinal indifferentism. Missionaries who have accepted certain doctrinal standards professed by their home churches come to regard these as having a certain value, no doubt, here in America, but as something to lay on the shelf, if not actually on the rubbish heap, when they come to presenting Christianity to non-Christian people on foreign mission fields. Mr. Potter himself exemplifies this attitude when he says:

"... some may attach such importance to certain doctrines on which we have agreed to disagree that they will feel that it is only right that denominational lines should be perpetuated in mission lands. But I believe most of us will at any rate have at least a feeling of wistful regret that we did not somehow find the way to bring the Master in whom we all believe to those who did not know him, without at the same time continuing lines of division meaningful, perhaps, to us, but confusing to those whose historical and cultural background is altogether different." (Pages 42, 43.)

Church Union Fostered Principally by Liberals

In considering this matter the reviewer would like to suggest, first of all, that perhaps one reason why the "Younger Churches" are so eager for organic union is because missionaries of more or less liberal tendencies have fostered this idea and have failed to preach and teach faithfully the doctrines held to be true by their denominations. And it will be realized that at the bottom *this is the result of lack of conviction either of the*

truth of those doctrines, or of their importance. Certainly religious truth is neither local nor racial. If the Westminster Confession of Faith, for example, is true in Pittsburgh it is equally true in Tokyo, Shanghai and Calcutta. The missionary who has solemnly vowed acceptance of the doctrines of that Confession of Faith, and then fails to teach and preach those doctrines in their integrity on the foreign field, is guilty of a breach of the trust involved in his acceptance of those doctrines at his ordination.

The reviewer was for ten years a missionary among the Chinese in Manchuria, and in his work there endeavored to preach and teach the system of doctrine set forth in the Westminster standards, and found that Chinese Christians can accept and hold that system of doctrine intelligently, and that where they have come to do so there is not only none of that eagerness for organic union to which Mr. Potter refers, but on the contrary there is a real awareness, on the part of Chinese Christians, of the dangers and pitfalls of organic union on a "least common denominator" doctrinal basis such as that represented, for example, by the "Church of Christ in China."

In the second place, the reviewer would like to point out that in China, at least, the demand on the part of many Chinese Christians for organic union is paralleled by the exactly opposite tendency of extreme sectarianism of a purely indigenous character. Many thousands of Chinese Christians have become dissatisfied with the deadness and liberalism of "regular" churches and have entered fanatical sects of purely Chinese origin such as the "Little Flock" and the "Spiritual Grace Society." While these sects certainly preach error, still they hold the fundamental truths of supernatural Christianity, and they have what many of the "regular" churches lack, namely a positive, clear-cut doctrinal position which is firmly believed in and boldly proclaimed by their membership. And if the remaining denominational churches of China finally enter a united church, there is likely to be a great increase in the number and membership of indigenous Christian sects. *For union on a basis*

of disregard of doctrinal differences cannot be permanent if real spiritual life remains in the church; it will break up and new divisions will occur.

Acceptance of Japanese Government Dominance

We have considered the general character and tendencies of the Foreign Missions Conference as shown by the Report of the Jubilee Meeting. It remains to show the deplorable unsoundness of the Conference with respect to the burning question of compliance on the part of Christian people with the sinful demands of totalitarian Japan.

The principal facts about these demands on the part of Japan are quite well known to American Christians who have taken the trouble to study the matter. They may be summarized as follows:

(1) For years the great majority of Japanese Christians have been performing the ritual acts of Shinto worship required of them by the government, including bowing toward Shinto shrines and war monuments, toward the Emperor's portrait, in the direction of the imperial palace, and toward the east, the direction from which the rising sun appears. *Though these acts, in their context in the Shinto system, are plainly idolatrous in character, Japanese Christians have justified their conduct on the basis of government statements that the rites are patriotic and non-religious in character.*

(2) In 1939 the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Korea yielded to Japanese pressure and passed a resolution sanctioning obeisance at Shinto shrines. This was followed by a threat by the Moderator to discipline any church members who might refuse to bow at the shrines, stating that such members would be guilty of "a regretful act that is in opposition to the will of the Lord." Thus the minority of faithful Christians in the Presbyterian Church of Korea were subjected to persecution by the church as well as by the government.

(3) In 1939 an ordinance "for the control of religious temples and preachers" became effective in Manchuria, which utterly destroyed religious liberty, reduced the church to bond-

age to the totalitarian state, and required churches and preachers to apply for and obtain licenses from the State, thereby making the very existence of the church as a religious body contingent upon the express permission of government officials and virtually recognizing the emperor as the head of the church. Quite a number of things, including preaching against "local customs," are forbidden by this ordinance under penalty of fine, imprisonment or revocation of license.

(4) In 1940 the "Religious Bodies Law" became effective in Japan. This is an iniquitous totalitarian law similar to the Manchurian ordinance just described. It makes the State supreme in the sphere of religion and reduces the Church to servile bondage to the totalitarian authorities.

(5) In 1941, under government pressure, thirty-four Protestant denominations of Japan were merged into a shrine-worshipping, government-controlled and licensed union "Japan Christian Church."

(6) In 1942 a similar church union, also under government pressure, took place in Manchuria.

(7) Since April 1, 1943, all Christian churches in Manchuria have been required by law to have a miniature Shinto shrine in their place of worship and to perform Shinto rites as a part of every public service.

That totalitarian, emperor-worshipping Japan should enact such laws and make such demands upon Christian churches is not surprising. The surprising thing is that the overwhelming majority of Christian leaders in Japan, Korea and Manchuria complied with the demands instead of electing to refuse compliance and suffer for Christ's sake. Even more astonishing is the fact that the prevailing sentiment among missionaries in these fields favored compliance in order to avoid persecution; and most amazing of all is the fact that large and important foreign mission boards in America either expressed positive approval of such compliance on the part of the Japanese, Korean and Manchurian churches, or at least have refrained from expressing disapproval and breaking off fellowship with

the Oriental churches that have followed the broad way of compromise.

Thus it has come to pass that while in Japan, Korea and Manchuria there has been a deplorable wholesale lapse into compromise with polytheism and extreme Erastianism (submitting to government control) on the part of the churches recognized by the Japanese government and by the major American foreign mission boards, this shameful apostasy has been very neatly and carefully "hushed up" in America, with the result that the average church member who supports foreign missions has not even heard of it. *The mission boards are going right on as if everything were all right in the Oriental churches. While the war has broken communications for the time being, the mission boards have no idea of breaking off fellowship with the apostate churches, but on the contrary intend to resume relations with them as soon as peace returns.*

This Apostasy Accepted by Foreign Missions Conference

Since the whole is equal to the sum of its parts, it is perhaps not surprising that the Foreign Missions Conference should follow the lead of the major boards in playing this game of "make believe" about the condition of the churches of Japan, Korea and Manchuria. This first became obvious in the 1942 issue of "Christian World Facts," published by the Conference. Although that issue discussed the Far Eastern situation in several articles, it afforded not the slightest hint that any apostasy had taken place or that there had been any significant change in the churches. On the contrary, the issue contained statements favorable to Japan's religious policy. An article by a secretary of the American Bible Society stated that it was expected that distribution of the Scriptures could continue in spite of the war "since Christianity is one of the recognized religions of Japan," thus alluding favorably to the status of Christianity under the iniquitous and totalitarian "Religious Bodies Law" of Japan. An article entitled "They Came on the Gripsholm" by A. K. Reischauer, stated that "There has been little or no interference with the churches, Christian schools and other in-

stitutions in Japan. All this work is going on." Speaking of Korea, Mr. Reischauer continued: "The government does not exactly seek to suppress Korean Christianity but attempts through various forms of pressure to make Korean Christians over into loyal citizens of Japan. There are good reasons to believe that in spite of this pressure the church will keep true to the essentials of the Faith." This is the view held by Mr. Reischauer (and published broadcast by the Foreign Missions Conference) of a church which has authoritatively sanctioned obeisance at the shrines of a pagan system. "Christian World Facts" affords no suggestion, even, that in these Oriental churches monotheism itself is in peril if not already lost.

Turning to the Jubilee Report, we find that it goes far beyond the 1942 issue of "Christian World Facts" in misrepresenting the real state of affairs in Japan, Korea and Manchuria. First of all, in the Report of the Committee of Reference and Counsel, the 1942 church union in Manchuria, which was wholly the result of government pressure, is spoken of quite favorably and without any suggestion that any unfaithfulness to Christ was involved on the part of the churches which complied with the Japanese demands: (See "Dedication of the United Church in Manchuria" in this issue. Ed.)

"In the case of Manchuria, where Japan is in actual control, all the non-Roman churches have been united in one church, Presbyterian in pattern as to worship, sacraments and ministry. The church is organized in nine geographical divisions with a Chinese minister in charge of each. These nine leaders, together with a friendly and influential Japanese Presbyterian minister in the capital, comprise the central board of the church." (Page 208.)

This statement omits all mention of the relevant facts that the united church is a shrine-worshipping, emperor-worshipping "puppet" church officially under government control. It also omits to mention the very significant fact that since April 1, 1943, all "recognized" churches in Manchuria have been required by law to have a Shinto shrine in their place of worship

and to perform rites of Shinto worship as part of their public services.

Similarly, in an address entitled "Our Greatest Weaknesses," F. M. Potter, Secretary of the Foreign Mission Board of the ("Dutch") Reformed Church in America, praises the infamous 1941 church union of Japan, which was brought about by government pressure and in the interests of totalitarianism. Mr. Potter says: "... I wonder whether our hearts have not burned within us as we have seen church union achieved in Japan when the decision was taken out of our hands, and now we are practically compelled to do our planning unitedly as we look to future relationships with that Church of Christ in Japan." (Page 43.) It does not seem to occur to Mr. Potter that it may be morally wrong to hold future relationships with a church that has done what the united church in Japan has done. It is hard to see how even the most zealous advocate of organic union can speak favorably of a union accomplished by the power of a pagan, totalitarian State, as that in Japan was accomplished. Yet the fact is that Mr. Potter does speak favorably of it.

The Japan Committee Recognizes the Totalitarian Church

Under the heading "Forward Steps now being Taken. II. East Asia," Lloyd S. Ruland, Secretary of the Foreign Department of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A., speaks as follows: "The Japan Committee, recognizing the new United Church in Japan, at a meeting in February, 1943, adopted a resolution that the relationships of the Christian movement in North America to the Christian movement in Japan should be conducted co-operatively rather than through individual boards and missions" (page 63). Thus an important committee of the Foreign Missions Conference took official action recognizing the new totalitarian church set-up in Japan and looking forward to holding relations with that church in the future.

The Report of the Committee of Reference and Counsel, summarizing the missionary situation in Japanese-occupied

China, makes the following statement: "The entire situation is one which gives all Christian friends of China real concern but is by no means hopeless. Chinese intangible opposition and covert resistance may be counted on to preserve the essentials of the faith, and we must trust God to preserve the Christian movement through this trying period" (page 209). Here again we find the same strangely tolerant attitude toward the unsound ethics of those Oriental churches that have complied with Japan's demands concerning church union. "Intangible opposition and covert resistance" are thoroughly characteristic of the Chinese character and psychology, which always avoids a head-on clash with anything if possible. But *"intangible opposition and covert resistance" are utterly unsound from the standpoint of Christian ethics, for these terms imply external compliance with the Japanese demands while undercover ways and means are sought for avoiding the full consequences of such compliance.* Christianity did not survive two hundred years of persecution on the part of Imperial Rome by "intangible opposition and covert resistance." The early Christians simply said "No!" when confronted with demands which they could not conscientiously accept. Many thousands suffered martyrdom, but the Christians still said "No!" and "the blood of the martyrs became the seed of the Church." And at last Christianity overcame the persecuting power of Rome. But this word "No" is not in the vocabulary of the leaders of the Japanese, Korean and Manchurian churches; they say "Yes" to totalitarian Japan, and then our missionary statesmen in America say that "intangible opposition and covert resistance may be counted on to preserve the essentials of the faith." May God raise up in the Orient a leader like Martin Niemöller, who will say "No!" to Japan's totalitarian demands upon the Christian Church, and provide real leadership for the Christian people in those lands who wish to serve God without compromise. For we may rest assured that there are many more than seven thousand who have not bowed their knee to Baal, nor kissed his image. It is with these faithful but obscure

Christians, and not with the compromising leaders of the large "recognized" churches, that the future of real Christianity in Eastern Asia lies.

Oriental Psychology

We shall now consider what the reviewer regards as the most harmful material, dealing with the churches of Eastern Asia, in the entire Jubilee Report. This forms a part of an address entitled "The Light Shines on in Eastern Asia," by William Axling, missionary to Japan of the Northern Baptist Convention. In order to get it adequately before us, we shall quote three paragraphs from page 165:

"True there have been changes and readjustments, but in such days as these when history is being made, epochal changes and major readjustments are inevitable. Moreover we must remember that the Oriental mind and psychological makeup is characterized by a flexibility and power of accommodation and adaptation of which we of the West are incapable. Our thought and patterns and reactions are so deeply grooved by tradition and so denominationally channelled that they are largely frozen. They are thrown into a hard and fixed mold.

"We must remember also that our Oriental brethren have a genius for conserving values in ways that to the uninitiated seem to involve compromise and surrender. For them, however, there is absolutely no compromise and no surrender involved. On the contrary it is high strategy in their fight to conserve the highest values.

"We must also remember that the strategy of our Oriental brethren is not that of frontal attack but of indirect maneuvering. We go in for frontal attacks and head-on collisions. That is not the Oriental way. The history of these nations roots back 2,000 or 2,500 years into the past. And they have learned a lot during these long, long centuries. They have learned things that we need to learn. They have learned for instance that time is a great ally. They have learned that time is the greatest solver of tangled problems. They know that time and the stars in their courses and God himself are fighting their battle and they are willing to wait and take indirect routes as long as they can maneuver toward their goal."

In considering these three paragraphs, the reader should keep in mind the background of Oriental churches worshipping

at Shinto shrines, yielding to Japanese pressure that denominations be united and controlled by the totalitarian government, and in general complying with any and every demand in the sphere of religion made by the Japanese authorities. In the judgment of the reviewer Mr. Axling's presentation of the Oriental psychology and ethics cannot be excelled. He has exactly understood and set forth the kind of thinking by which these Oriental Christian leaders *rationalize and justify their compliance with one sinful Japanese demand after another*. But Mr. Axling *approves* of this Oriental psychology and ethics! It is only "to the uninitiated" that these Oriental ways "seem to involve compromise and surrender"!

"Let Us Do Evil, That Good May Come"?

Now the flat rejection of moral evil, the clear-cut "No" in the face of sinful demands, which Mr. Axling represents as a western "pattern" or "reaction" "deeply grooved by tradition," is in reality simply the ethics of the Word of God. The reviewer would like to suggest that Mr. Axling read Hebrews 11:32-38 and then consider how those verses would have to be re-written if the heroes of faith there referred to had followed the Oriental "strategy of indirect maneuvering":

"Others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, they were tempted, they were slain with the sword: they went about in sheep-skins, in goat-skins; being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated (of whom the world was not worthy) . . ."

Daniel, of course, would never have been thrown into the lions' den, nor his three companions into the burning fiery furnace. Nor would the early Christians have been made living torches to light the Roman arena, for they would have realized that "time is a great ally," and while escaping martyrdom by laying their grain of incense on the altar before the image of Caesar, they would be counting on time and the stars in their courses and God himself to fight their battle! But after all,

what is this "strategy of indirect maneuvering" but the age-old, corrupt, pagan ethics of "doing evil that good may come"? It is certainly characteristic of the Oriental psychology; but it is more than that; it is characteristic of "the natural man" regardless of race or nationality. And Christ died to save men from this corrupt and sinful kind of ethics and to redeem them for a life of righteousness and moral rectitude. What a pity that a Christian missionary, addressing the Foreign Missions Conference of North America, should set forth what is perhaps the greatest vice and weakness of Oriental Christians, and not only justify it but actually laud it as a virtue, saying that "they have learned things that we need to learn."

Mr. Axling tells us that Oriental Christians are "willing to wait and take indirect routes as long as they can maneuver toward their goal." He assumes, of course, that they really are maneuvering toward a goal and not drifting toward a whirlpool. But the reviewer ventures to predict that the "goal" will turn out to be a tragic one, for unless God in his mercy intervenes to check present tendencies, the "recognized" churches of Eastern Asia will continue slipping steadily into a merger of Christianity and paganism, a syncretistic hybrid religion in which paganism will certainly be supreme. Nor is this merely a subjective opinion, for it is substantiated by a considerable body of evidence . . . For example, a Japanese Christian writer, Takeda Kohei, in a book entitled "Japan, the Land of the Gods and Christianity," has spoken as follows:

"For the Christian, when he believes in the unseen God, the Lord of Heaven and Earth, besides the Emperor, does his feeling toward the Emperor change? No change ought to arise. It cannot arise, for His Imperial Majesty's direct descent from the Sun-Goddess is a strictly historical fact, and though besides the Emperor he believes in God the Spirit, the sacredness of the Emperor is not thereby injured (violated) in the slightest degree." ("The Spiritual Issues of the War," No. 246, published by British Information Services, 30 Rockefeller Plaza, New York 20, N. Y.)

We shall bring our consideration of the Foreign Missions

Conference to a close with a quotation from the 1943-44 issue of "Christian World Facts," of which over 32,000 copies were printed by the Conference. It is found on page 51 and is taken from a poem by Dwight Bradley in the Inter-Church Hymnal:

What is Worship?

"It is the soul searching for its counterpart.
It is a thirsty land crying out for rain.
It is a candle in the act of being kindled.
It is a drop in quest of the ocean.
It is the voice in the night calling for help.
It is a sheep lost in the wilderness pleading for rescue by the Good Shepherd.
It is the same sheep nestling in the arms of the Rescuer.
It is the prodigal son, running to his Father.
It is a soul standing in awe before the mystery of the Universe.
It is a poet enthralled by the beauty of a sunrise.
It is a workman pausing a moment to listen to a strain of music.
It is a hungry heart seeking for love.
It is Time flowing into Eternity.
It is my little self engulfed in the Universal Self.
It is a man climbing the altar stairs to God."

The reviewer would suggest that this poem is a specimen of vaguely pantheistic mysticism and that it has more in common with Buddhism than with Christianity. Why was it selected for publication in "Christian World Facts" by the Foreign Missions Conference of North America? Let the reader judge.

DEDICATION OF THE UNITED CHURCH IN MANCHURIA

By ROSE A. HUSTON

In 1942, when the local organization of the new united church was completed in Tsitsihar, the names of the churches uniting were published, and the Reformed Presbyterian Church was not on the official list, being regarded as simply non-existent because never licensed by the government. Our workers were holding meetings and going about their work as usual, with no interference from the government except by means of espionage, which they largely ignored. As they went about the city, people constantly showed surprise that they were still at work, it having been published and commonly reported that the Covenanter Church was "huang-la," that is "busted."

Although this new united church in Manchuria is lauded as a great achievement by certain church leaders, particularly some who are able to rationalize participation in the rites of Shinto worship so that they can claim it does not involve compromise or violation of conscience, nevertheless many intellectually and spiritually able persons hold that this church union was brought about at the "suggestion" or compulsion of political authority, that the chief gain was to the Japanese government, and that the result is "a Christianity thoroughly Japanized and a church farther from the Christian goal than ever before." And with this verdict many are wholly in agreement.

We had repeatedly been urged to join the united church, in order to save our church, to guarantee to ourselves the privilege of preaching the wonderful salvation of Jesus, to avoid persecution, and because to stay out would be a rebuke and loss of face to other churches that were going in. One spy assured our evangelists that they need not worry about their salaries in view of the curtailment of funds from America, for

the government would give them all they needed. Pastors (both Manchurian and Japanese), elders, prominent Christians and some public officials urged us and our workers to join the united church, but in spite of this pressure all remained faithful to their convictions. The last argument of one missionary for joining the new church was, "After all, the Emperor is not a man-made image of God." He forgot the first commandment.

While we were interned, before we left Manchuria, a celebration of dedication of this great church union was held at Tsitsihar. An eye-witness report of the meeting of the committee on arrangements for the celebration may be of interest. Our workers went to the meeting, not as members, but to learn what they could about this new organization. From them we received a first-hand report of the proceedings.

The committee was made up of pastors, elders, evangelists and prominent Christians from all the churches in the city except our own, six or seven denominations being represented. The first act of the chairman was to read the Emperor's Rescript, which commands the observance of the rites of Shinto worship. After the reading, the next act was to obey the divine emperor's command, *which act was performed by all members of the committee*. The business in hand was to prepare a program for the celebration the following week. The first number, by imperial command, was the reading of the Rescript, followed by the performance of the Shinto rites. After these were duly recorded, it was proposed that devotional exercises follow after the manner of Christian churches. They tried to choose a hymn, but none seemed suitable to sing just after worshipping the Japanese divinities, so they decided to omit the singing. Then they had the same difficulty in choosing a selection from the Bible. So it seemed best to have only a prayer, but no one of the group was willing to make the prayer. Worshipping two different gods at the same meeting was likely to produce complications!

One enthusiastic church leader had a bright idea. He said, "Brethren, we are in a very difficult situation. I perceive that in this matter we must *wan ch'uan li k'ai Shen* (wholly depart

from God). I suggest that we simply omit all of this, and be rid of this dilemma." This was hailed as an excellent solution, and they were proceeding to the next item when a young man just out of Bible School objected, "We can't do this thing! We can't leave God out! Isn't this a Christian church? Isn't this a union of Christian churches? We can't omit the worship of God without committing a great sin!" So they reconsidered the matter, and again finding no suitable hymn, the leading pastor said, "I'll write a hymn." He also consented to make a prayer. So this sin of omission was avoided, but no mention was made of the sin of worshipping another god in the face of Him who said "Thou shalt have no other gods before me."

The meeting of dedication consisted of their polytheistic worship, followed by speeches that noticeably lacked any Christian character or doctrine, being pure propaganda against the United Nations. And so the Tsitsihar branch of the new united church was off to a great start! Not long after this, notices were sent out to churches in the union (the Covenanter Church not being in the union, and so regarded as non-existent by the government, received no notice) in which they were informed that for the year beginning April 1, 1942, churches were free to do as they wished about having a Shinto Shrine in their place of worship, but after March 31, 1943, every church must install a Shinto Shrine and perform the rites of Shinto worship at the beginning of every church service. The comment of a missionary, whose church had entered the union, was: "I fear the church will suffer if they do not conform!"

The Covenanter Mission and church in Manchuria never entered the union, and never applied for or obtained government "permits" to preach. Two evangelists did resign largely because of fear of consequences of preaching without government "permits," but others continued to preach in spite of the danger of their position. One congregation disbanded entirely, rather than submit to being closed by the government, or forced into the united church. Another church had been three times ordered closed by the highest authorities of the Manchurian

government, but was still holding services, largely because of the courage and convictions of the spy who had been set to watch over the affairs of the Christians, and *was later converted himself*. No doubt there were some Manchurian Covenanters who, under constant pressure from members of other churches, government spies and others, might be willing to compromise, but very few, to our knowledge, had done so.

GOVERNMENT CONTROL OF THE CHURCH IN MANCHURIA

When these claims of the Japanese to supremacy in the sphere of religion came up, about 1938 and in the following years, the missionary body in Manchuria (with which I am best acquainted) was immediately divided on the question of compliance with the demands that the churches apply for *permits to exist*. Perhaps 4 or 5% of the missionaries said, "It is wrong in principle," and refused to sign up or comply with the law in any way. The other 95% were also divided among themselves. Some went so far as actually to rejoice over the new law for the control of the church. They said, "Now the Japanese are going to give us a regular legal status which will protect us from arbitrary action by local officials." Others said, in effect, "The requirements of this law are a nuisance; they are a burden to us; but apart from that there is no reason why we should not comply." Still others said, "We ought to comply to gain and

retain the good-will of the Japanese. After all, this is only a technicality; what they want is only a formal, technical control of the church; they do not intend to implement this by actual control." Some said, "We will comply with this demand, more or less against our conscience and better judgment, in order to keep the door open for preaching the Gospel; but when the Japanese come around with another demand, asking us to worship at the shrines, then we will refuse to comply." When the dead-line came, about 95% of the churches, missionaries and native Christian leaders complied, signed up, and accepted government licenses issued by the Japanese officially "permitting" them to exist and carry on religious work. About 5% or so refused, and hence were regarded by the Japanese as law-breakers, and, indeed, actually *non-existent* churches, because not licensed by the government. Among those that refused were the Orthodox Presbyterians, the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions, the Covenanters, and (for a time) the American Southern Baptists and Canadian Regular Baptists. Although the compromising churches freely predicted our early liquidation, God greatly blessed our testimony, and up to the time when our last Covenanter missionaries were repatriated (summer 1942) our Covenanter churches in Manchuria, with one exception, were still open and preaching the Gospel in spite of the wrath of the Japanese authorities. I mean they were open and carrying on *without having compromised* or acted against conscience. This rather irritated some of the compromisers (perhaps their conscience hurt them some) and in the end it had a rather humorous result. When the Japanese sent orders to all churches to put up a Shinto shrine in their church buildings and worship it by April 1, 1943, the Covenanter Churches, being regarded as legally non-existent, did not get any orders to do these things, while those who held government licenses got their orders!

J. G. Vos.

Japan's Latest Blow Against Christianity

The following information was reported by the Associated Press, September 23rd:

New York, September 23—(AP)—The Japanese Government has ordered the dissolution of "all existing federated church organizations" to facilitate the creation within a week of a Government-controlled, Government-financed wartime patriotic religious society designed to "increase the fighting strength of the people through religious fervor," a Domei broadcast said today.

"Religious teachers throughout Japan representing thirteen Shinto, twenty-eight Buddhist and two Christian sects" have been instructed to organize the new society by September 30, according to the broadcast, which was recorded by the Federal Communications Commission.

Harushige Ninomiya, Japanese Minister of Education, will head the society.

(We wonder whether the leaders of the united church in Japan, which the Foreign Missions Conference's Committee has recognized, have complied with this latest demand as they did with previous ones, and whether the Foreign Missions Conference and major mission boards with interests in Japan will rationalize and condone such compliance as they have previous betrayals in Japan. Ed.)