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CHANGES IN MISSIONARY POLICY ENTAILED
IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF
AN INDIGENOUS CHINESE CHURCH

By

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A Thesis

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for
THE DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF SACRED THEOLOGY
in
The Biblical Seminary in New York

New York, N.Y.
April 1946

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

A. The Statement of the Problem

At the outbreak of hostilities in the Pacific Area between Japan and the United Nations, Western Missionaries in the Occupied Area of China were forced to leave their stations and were interned as enemy nationals. Throughout that section, the Chinese ministry was then placed in charge of mission properties and of missionary programs in which they previously had largely held merely a secondary position.

During the emergency of these war years, the native leaders have carried on valiantly. With the coming of peace and the possibility of the missionaries' returning to their field of labor, the question arises as to the status of the native ministry in the readjustments that will take place. Can the missionary possibly ask the national to step aside and allow the Westerner to reassume the dominant place in leadership, or will the missionary, and the national leader as well, work out an adjustment whereby they will be co-workers in the task of building the Church of Christ in China, which will in every respect be indigenous. A missionary speaking in a recent missions conference said, "Since Pearl Harbor the Chinese Church has

been forced on her own.... she should continue so."¹

The indigenous church has long been the goal of every ideal missionary program. The differences have been as to how long the church should be subsidized from abroad and how the subsidy should be terminated. The present situation has presented mission boards with a problem, the only answer to which is a strong native church, with the nationals in the dominant place of leadership, rather than the missionary.

"The only solution of the exceedingly difficult problem that can be offered is that if the great purpose of missions be accepted as that of founding a native Christian Church, most of the major difficulties will ultimately find their own solution."²

What then are the adjustments necessary to bring this about, and how is the transition to be made?

B. Definition of Terms and Delimitation of the Problem

"What is really meant.... is that to be indigenous, Christianity shall become so rooted among a people that they shall feel it to be their own, and not something alien."³ For the purpose of this study, however, the "indigenous church" will be defined as that native organ-

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1. Report of China Planning Committee, Berkeley, California, September 25, 1944
2. Monroe, Paul: China A Nation in Evolution, p. 330
3. Latourette, K.S.: "Indigenous Christianity in the Light of History", Int'l Review of Missions, 1940, p. 429

ization which is to meet the spiritual needs of the people. While there are other human needs to which the Church must minister, yet the spiritual is the primary need with which the Church is concerned. This need having been met, the Church will express itself in Christian service to meet the universal needs of humanity. Therefore this study will be limited to the establishment, maintenance and extension of a native organization designed to meet this primary need.

In any discussion of the indigenous church, the term "self-support" inevitably figures largely. The fact that there are several definitions as to what constitutes self-support, tends to lead to misunderstanding in such a discussion. While the national church's assumption of the complete support of the whole program of the mission is the ideal, yet in this study the term "self-support" will have reference to the meeting of local parish expenses.

Among missionaries and those associated with the work of missions there are certain terms employed which though meaningful to those using them, are void of significant connotation to others. The terms "younger" and "older" churches mean respectively, the church being established on the mission field, and that one which is sending the personnel and the means to establish it. Similarly, "the church" has reference to the body of

believers in China, and "the mission" connotes the organization which the Western Churches have set up to nurture the native church. Furthermore, the term "institutions" has reference to all phases of mission work which can not be described as contributing directly to evangelism and pastoral care, and thus would include medical, social and educational work.

C. Method of Procedure

After dealing with the need of a change in mission policy, the writer proposes to suggest three basic changes in mission policy which are considered essential foundation-stones in the construction of an indigenous church: (1) The change of attitude which will be necessary on the part of both the missionary personnel and that of the national as well. (2) The change of program which the new approach will necessitate. In this will be considered the training of leaders, the administration of the church, and the church in action. (3) The adjustment in relationship between the church and the mission. In this the matter of self-support and financial policy will figure largely, but there will also be considered the function of institutions which the mission has established, and the mission's policy toward ownership of property.

The first of the above changes is one which mission boards can and should instigate; the others are of a character which necessitates the full cooperation of the nationals in order to be worked out completely. While suggestions can be made, they are obviously subject to approval of and alteration by, the native church.

D. Sources

It is the purpose of this study to discover from experiments conducted in the Orient, the method best suited to the establishment of a practical self-subsistent organization rather than a complex transplantation from the Occident.

The source of this material will be largely from contemporary writing in periodicals, although all available books on mission policy will be consulted. Throughout the study the author will use extensively the reports of the China Planning Committee and the conferences they have conducted in many large cities in America, under the auspices of the Foreign Missions Conference. Likewise, missionary methods worked out in Korea will serve as a model in making suggestions for the field in China.

Furthermore, the writer will draw upon his term of service in North China as a missionary under the board of The Oriental Missionary Society. Interviews with

recently-returned missionaries will serve to determine the current nature of the problem and the steps that are being taken to meet it.

Chapter I

HISTORICAL STATEMENT
OF
MISSION POLICY IN CHINA

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OF
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A. Introduction

Protestant missionary work has been done in China for 138 years. During most of this time Christianity has faced active opposition from both the government and the people as well. Today, reports from China indicate the success with which Christian missions have met in that country, in spite of the opposition. However, it does not follow that mission policy has always been of the best, for had the policy been better, the results might have been greater. In order, then, to see ways in which that policy can be improved, it is necessary first to look at the broad outline of mission policy that has been employed.

B. The Missionary Goal of an Indigenous Church

The goal toward which every mission board is working is that of a self-sustaining church which "rooted in obedience to Christ, spontaneously uses forms of thought and modes of action natural and familiar in its own environment."¹ It must be a church which has the vitality to cause Christianity to be accepted fully into the life of the people and thus be able to maintain itself apart from foreign aid.

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1. The World Mission of the Church Int'l Missy. Council, Madras, 1938 p.26

1. A Self-propagating Church

The first requirement of such a church is that it achieve the ability to perpetuate itself. This must include a sense of responsibility of the church for its own people and a practical program of evangelism.¹

2. A Self-governing Church

The full autonomy of such a church is assured only when the power to rule its own affairs is granted to it. Thus the church will not only select and train its own leaders, but also have the complete responsibility for the direction of each phase of its work.²

3. A Self-supporting Church

To be truly indigenous, the church must be able to maintain itself financially. While this is not the only criterion of an indigenous church, yet it is an integral phase of it.

C. The Relation of the Missionary to the Church

The ideal of the missionary is so to build a native church that his presence as a foreign overseer will be unnecessary. Therefore, to ascertain the degree of indigenization to which the native church in China

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1. Clark, C.A. : The Nevius Plan of Mission Work in Korea
p. 42

2. Latourette, K.S., op.cit., p. 440

has attained, it is necessary to enquire as to the place which the missionary holds in the church, and also as to his attitude toward Chinese nationals and the possibility of their assuming the place of leadership.

1. The Place of the Missionary in the Church.

In the early days of missionary work in China, missionaries made their contacts primarily among the less-educated class, and those Chinese leaders whom they gathered about them were in most cases, not independent thinkers, but rather those who served the missionary as obedient servants.¹ For this reason the missionary from the beginning held a dominant place in the directing of affairs, and it was for this reason also, that the Christian Church in China is the only one of the religions of foreign origin for which the Chinese reserve the designation "foreign religion".²

a. A Trustee of the Mission. Analysing the position of the missionary, one notes that he has been first of all a Trustee. He has entered into the work with a real feeling of responsibility. The work was the work of his church, his denomination, or his mission board, and he was their official representative. To them

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1. Lew, Timothy Tingfang: "Problems of Chinese Christian Leadership: A Preliminary Psychological Study" in Int'l Review of Missions, 1922, p. 218
2. Cheng, C.Y., "Church in China", Int'l Review of Missions 1923, p. 371

he was responsible for the money spent, for the time and energy he put into the work, and ultimately for the success of the work.¹

b. A Director of the Church. To those Chinese leaders who served under the missionary as "helpers", however, he was recognized as a Director.² The average missionary was given a great deal of responsibility in the mission, after the completion of the prescribed course of language study. Due to the expansion of the work, and to the shortage of experienced missionaries, he was given a position far beyond his years of experience. Almost invariably the Chinese leader took orders from the missionary, whether he was young or old, new or veteran.³ He was usually taken into full partnership with a senior missionary, or in some cases sent to look after a sub-station by himself. "When he is with the senior missionary he is one of the ruling princes. When he is alone at a sub-station, he is monarch of the station. His word usually carries."⁴

An American historian⁵ describes the situation of a few years ago as being that of "an efficient American

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1. Lew, T.T., op.cit., p. 218

2. Cf. Cheng, C.Y. : "Church in China", Int'l Review of Missions, 1923, p. 372, 374

3. Lew, T.T., op.cit., p. 217

4. Ibid.

5. It is significant that to determine the position of the missionary in the church, one has to look either to the writings of Chinese leaders, or to the unbiased

administrator running the institution with a high hand; giving little consideration to the feelings of his assistants and subordinates, because entirely unaware of them."¹ The same writer goes on to make the accusation, not mentioned by other authorities, that criticism was made by the Chinese that the missionary for the most part was unwilling to gather about him men of equal caliber with himself, but made use of only second or third-rate men.²

c. Progress in Change. Much of the above situation existed prior to 1927, during that period when missionaries in general were considered by the Chinese to be the "spearhead of imperialism".³ As a reaction to this period, there occurred in 1927 the Communist uprising which was essentially anti-foreign in its aims. The demand was for national and racial equality.⁴ The result of these anti-foreign outbreaks, riots, etc., was the instigation of wide-spread reforms as regards mission policy and the status of the missionary.⁵

The South China (Kwantung) Church organized under the title of a Divisional Council of the Church of

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writings of secular historians; missionaries have seemingly been reluctant to admit that they have held such a dominant place in the church.

1. Monroe, op.cit., p. 321

2. Ibid., p. 319

3. Ibid, p. 330, also cf. Lew, p. 213

4. Monroe, p. 319

5. "Chinese Christian Autonomy", Chinese Recorder, 1926
pgs. 14-21

Christ in China recommended that all missionaries be loaned by the mission to the church, their salaries being paid by the mission as formerly.¹ This placed the responsibility for the direction of the church, the disbursement of funds, and the general government of both national leaders and missionaries, in the hands of the native church.

In the North Fukien area, the American Board has transferred to the Foochow Congregational Church the responsibility of administering all the work of the mission, with the same financial arrangements mentioned above. Requests for missionary reinforcements have been made to the Board by the church itself.² The American Baptist Foreign Missions Society in Swatow is another example of such a merging of the mission and the Chinese Church.³

2. The Attitude of the Missionary toward the Chinese Nationals

The attitude of missions, and of missionaries also, towards the church has been largely influenced by the attitude that the non-missionary Westerner has toward the Oriental. Most Foreigners have not lived in China long who have not developed a "white-man's supremacy"

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1. McNeur, G.H., "Chinese Christian Autonomy", Chinese Recorder, 1926, p. 14-21
2. Warnshuis, A.L., "Changes in Missionary Policies and Methods in China" Int'l Review of Missions, 1928, p.307
3. Ibid., p. 308

complex---an outgrowth of the extra-territoriality rights which the Westerner has in former years enjoyed there.

"...Foreign residents in China have given little attention to the psychology of the Chinese or to what the Chinese were thinking, having their mind set, rather, on making the Chinese agree with what the Foreigner thought."¹

To a large extent this attitude has been carried over by the missionary, although in a modified form. In recent years, as will be seen below, this attitude has undergone considerable change.

a. Attitude of Proprietorship. An analysis of the missionary's attitude shows first of all, that he feels that he is proprietor of something. He feels, whether consciously or otherwise, that he is "something like the manager of a firm with so many hired employees."² The idea of the word "helper" has been so brought before the native worker, that he has not dared to take any initiative without that initiative having been approved by the missionary.³

This sense of proprietorship is strengthened very often by the fact that the missionary must make appeals to the home constituency for funds. Until the policy of representative church government was adopted,

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1. Monroe, op.cit., p. 315
2. Lew, op.cit., p. 218
3. Ibid., p. 218

it was the practice to make the appointments of Chinese workers somewhat after the fashion of a secret meeting of a Board of Directors.¹

b. Attitude of Superiority. An outgrowth of the attitude of proprietorship was the tendency to be domineering, which resulted in a feeling of superiority.² A Chinese leader, concerned over the relatively small number of native leaders who remained in the employ of the missionaries, interviewed a number of his fellow-countrymen. The predominant note which ran through all of the answers was that "the Chinese Christian workers often find it difficult to work in the Christian missions under the missionaries."³

Another Chinese leader, writing in 1925, anticipated distrust on the part of missionaries for those native leaders who would be put in places of responsibility, fearing that they would lower the standards. "There will be an uneasiness on the part of leaders (missionary) to occupy secondary places in the church."⁴

Yet another Chinese writer gets at the very base of the matter when he says that the reason why missionaries

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1. Lew, op. cit., p. 219
2. Ibid., p. 213
3. Chao, T.C., "The Indigenous Church", Chinese Recorder, August, 1925, p. 502
4. Cheng, C.Y., "The Church in China", Int'l Review of Missions, 1923, p. 372

have had the idea of superiority over the Chinese in general, was because they "avowedly believed in such a statement as that no man anywhere who does not believe in Jesus Christ can possibly do anything that is really good."¹

When the missionaries were forced to evacuate China in 1927, one of the most prominent Christians was asked if he thought the missionaries ought to leave China. His answer was: "Many of them. Those who want to dominate; those who have the white man's superiority complex; those who are not willing to trust us ought to remain away now that they have gone."²

c. Progress in the Correction of this Attitude. The reforms which took place after 1927 largely did away with the attitude of superiority, and began the increasing spirit of cooperation on an equal status between the missionary and the native leader.³ However, as recent as 1944 a missionary conference observed that,

"Even with the sharp acceleration of devolution which followed 1927, there is a good deal of mopping up still to be done, and the lingering smoke of foreign and missionary domination in some places probably conceals fire."⁴

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1. Cheng, op.cit., p. 372
2. Monroe, op.cit., p. 318
3. It is the view of the writer, based on personal observations in China, that these reforms have been generalities to which the missionary has acquiesced, but that have not basically altered his thinking. There is a residue of these attitudes which needs to be extirpated.
4. China Planning Committee, Conference in Philadelphia, September, 1944

D. The Organization of the Church

The conditions and situations which prevailed when missionary work was first begun in China have in many respects changed, and so it is natural that the organization of the work of the church should likewise have been changed. Since the work of the church is divided into the training of leaders, the administration of the church, and the work of evangelism, that which has been done in each of these phases of the organization will be considered in that order.

1. In the Training of Leaders for the Church.

It was the hope a few years ago that the large number of Chinese who were being educated abroad would go back to their own country and form the nucleus of Christian leadership. Some real leaders did come from this group known as "returned students", but in general, they became too far separated from the body of the nation. "As in every nation, the real leaders of China must be trained in schools on its own soil."¹

For a number of years there has been a continuing difference of opinion among mission leaders in China as to the type of academic training that should be given

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1. Speer, Robert, Report on India and Persia, p. 25

to ministerial students.¹ In the early years it was thought that such training was not necessary, for the emphasis was upon the practical training which the "student" received from itinerating with the missionary. This training was later broadened to the establishment of Bible Schools, and later still, was made to include Theological Seminaries.

a. Practical Training. The demand for a large number of leaders for the expanding work of the church made necessary the pressing into service of men who had not had an extensive education, but who had been under the tutelage of the missionary for several years, and were zealous in their witness for the Lord.² Exponents of this plan in a Missionary Conference in 1890 emphasized the practical aspects of apprenticeship over against "scholasticism" in theological education.³

b. Bible School and Seminary Training. Following the turn of the century, even those who favored the plan of practical training realised that such a ministry needed a thorough grounding in the Bible as well as in evangelistic work. The Centenary Missionary Conference of 1907 passed the following resolution:

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1. Cf. Leger, S.H., Education of Christian Ministers in China, pgs. 1-40

2. Leger, Ibid., p. 14

3. Ibid, p. 26

"Resolved: That in view of the great need of men for purely evangelistic work, the Conference would strongly urge, where not already existing, the establishment in every mission in China, of schools in which men may obtain such a knowledge of the Scriptures, and such a training in preaching and practical work as shall equip them to labor as evangelists in distinction from pastors and teachers."¹

Thus was emphasized the place of the Bible Schools in the training of Christian leaders in China.

Beginning with the Edinburgh Conference in 1910, there was increasing agitation for a better trained ministry, on the basis that leaders were too few, and for the most part were unequal to the task.² Following the Revolution in 1913 there was an even greater emphasis placed upon the need of higher education for theological students, with the view to training ministers who would attract and win the leaders of New China.³

With the above trend, there came a renewed impetus to the movement of many mission boards to unite their efforts in union theological seminaries, and by 1922 there were union seminaries in practically all of the large cities or centers of China.⁴ In this union movement it

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1. Leger, op.cit., p. 28, quoting the Report of the Centenary Missionary Conference, p. 550
2. Ibid., p. 24
3. Cf. Leger, p. 24 in regard to the Mott Conferences of 1913. For detailed report, cf. "Findings of Continuation Committee Conferences Held in Asia", New York, 1913, p. 153,ff.
4. Cf. Leger, p. 35. It is of special interest to friends of Biblical Seminary, that the Nanking Union Theological Seminary was founded as a result of the visit to

must also be noted that liberal tendencies became so dominant that the conservative missionaries organized a protest-group known as the Bible Union of China, in 1920,¹ and the cleavage has persisted even to recent years. The criticism of theological education had been that graduates were out of touch with their people; unfortunately, to that criticism of "impractical" was now added that of "liberal."

2. In the Administration of the Church

The direction of the work of the church has in the past been largely in the hands of the missionary, and has consisted in his locating in a large center, and hiring evangelistic workers to do the actual field work.² He has himself not done extensive itineration.

The strategy has been to center the activity in the cities or at least in the hsien³ cities where the mission station is located. As is true in many of the mission fields, the mission is anchored in the cities by virtue of the fact that they were first occupied by missionaries, and there is where the general headquarters almost invariably is located. This has put an urban pat-

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China of Dr. W.W.White in 1910, when it was decided to form the school after the general plan of the Bible Teacher's Training School in New York City.

1. Leger, op.cit., p. 36
2. Clark, op.cit., p. 43
3. "county-seat" cities

tern upon the program of extending the Gospel witness into the rural sections of the country.¹

3. The Extension of the Church

The practice has been to expect the church to grow from the inside outward; from the city to the market-town, and from the market-town to the village. However, it is to be observed that the tide of human life flows from the country to the city, and as a consequence, expansion of the church has taken place in the hsien cities and market-towns, but has not become firmly rooted in the villages.²

Furthermore, it is a lamentable fact that evangelism in the real sense of the word has been practically eliminated, following upon the visit of the Laymen's Fact Finding Commission, which recommended an emphasis upon education and social uplift, rather than evangelism.³

There is a strong desire that each Christian be a personal

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1. Davis, J.M., "The Problem of Aid to the Younger Churches" Int'l Review of Missions, 1944, p. 130
2. Felton, R.A., The Rural Church in China, p. 13
3. An illustration of this took place in the city of Peiping when the Oriental Missionary Society sought to do evangelistic work in a town where another mission in years past had stationed a Chinese pastor. The work was now defunct, but objection was made to any other mission operating there, since it was their purpose to again engage in evangelism there soon. Upon being pressed for a description of the nature of that evangelistic work, it was disclosed that they intended to open a two-week phonetic class.

worker in his community, but there is little plan to assist him in being such.¹ Wherever there are evangelical pastors, groups of believers are organized into evangelistic bands to carry the witness to their fellow-countrymen. However, organized programs of evangelism are in general, pitifully few.

E. The Relationship of Church and Mission

The major item for consideration in the relationship of the church and the mission is always that of finance, although there are other matters which demand attention, such as the operation of institutions and the ownership of property.

1. As Regards Finance

That all mission boards believe the church is capable of becoming indigenous, there is no doubt, for surely no mission board would continue to send missionaries if it knew clearly that the enterprise must be a perpetually subsidized project. The two chief plans that are used to accomplish this are opposed to each other in that they start from opposite ends. Should there be a period of tutelage under the Foreigner, during which time the embryo church is to be supported by foreign funds, or should the churches founded by the missionaries maintain

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1. Clark, op.cit., p. 43

themselves financially and rule their own affairs under leaders chosen by themselves?

a. The Plan for Progressive Self-support. Doubtless due to the dire poverty of China, it has been felt necessary for the older churches in the homeland to make large subsidies to the younger churches of the mission field.¹ Thus, by far the major part of the mission boards have adopted the plan of gradual devolution, or the program whereby the place of responsibility and leadership is passed on to the nationals.

The key to this plan is that as the local church expands, it shall increasingly assume a small percentage of its own support. In the meantime it is the policy of this plan to transfer all financial responsibility to the church, so that the grants of the mission board are expended under the direction of committees, in which missionaries may or may not be represented. The North Kiangsi Mission of the Presbyterian Board is one of those missions which has adopted this plan, but with a definite program to achieve complete self-support in a limited space of time. This program is a modified form of the Nevius Plan used in Korea,² to which reference will be made repeatedly in this study.

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1. The World Mission of the Church, p. 67

2. Warnshuis, A.L. "Changes in Missionary Policy and Methods in China", Int'l Review of Missions, 1928, p. 310

b. The Plan for Immediate Self-support. Far less in number are those mission boards who have felt that indigenization should be built from the ground up, rather than be imposed from above. Under this plan the missionary does extensive itinerant evangelism, and seeks to lay upon believers the responsibility of personal evangelism. Each organized group selects its own unpaid leaders and has a voice in the choice of the paid minister who pastors a circuit of such groups.

From the very outset, these groups are not only self-governing but also self-supporting, since no foreign funds are provided either to purchase property or to subsidize the pastoring of churches.¹ This principle was first applied in Korea, where the plan met with astounding success,² and has subsequently been used by several mission groups in China.³

2. As Regards Institutions

It has been the policy of missions to found institutions such as hospitals, secular schools, orphanages, homes for the blind, etc., and to retain the control of the same in the hands of the mission. In fact,

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1. Clark, op.cit., p. 43

2. Cf. Chapter IV of this thesis, and also, cf. Clark, p. 312-325 for statistics.

3. Cf. "Evolution of Devolution", Chinese Recorder, 1926, p. 718; also, Rowlands, W.F., "Indigenous Ideals in Practice", Int'l Review of Missions, 1932, p. 14,15

no less an authority than Dr. Latourette feels that institutions have been overdeveloped:

"It is here that Protestant foreign missions of the past century and a half have come nearest to failure. We have built many institutions and initiated numerous movements. However, we have erected schools and hospitals quite beyond the capacity of the struggling young churches to support."¹

3. As Regards Ownership of Property

As is true in regard to institutions, property is practically all owned by the mission, with the exception of those missions which have adopted some form of the plan for immediate self-support. Under such a plan, all property except that for institutional purposes is purchased by the local church.² However, following upon the reforms of 1927, there is at least one instance of a mission loaning or leasing to the churches the property which it needed.³

F. Summary

In order for the Chinese Christian Church to be truly indigenous it must be self-propagating, self-governing and self-supporting----an ideal shared by all mission boards. However, in practice, missionaries in

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1. Latourette, K.S., "A Suggestion toward a Re-orientation of Mission Policy", Int'l Review of Missions, 1934, p.410
2. "Evolution of Devolution", Chinese Recorder, 1926, p. 718
3. Warnshuis, op.cit., p. 310

the past have allowed themselves to adopt the arrogance which the white man in the Orient shows to the Chinese, thus discouraging the achievement of the goal. Since 1927, when the trend toward devolution began, much has been done to give the Chinese a more dominant place in the church, which has likewise altered the superior attitude of the missionary. There remains, however, much to be desired in this regard.

Two general plans have been employed to bring about the indigenization of the church in China. The first is that which seeks to grant gradual autonomy and likewise gradually reduce foreign subsidy. The other plan is that which advocates granting the church self-government at the very outset and also proposes that the church begin immediately to subscribe its own share of support.

CHAPTER II

THE CHANGE OF ATTITUDE BASIC TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN INDIGENOUS CHURCH

CHAPTER II

THE CHANGE OF ATTITUDE BASIC TO THE ESTABLISH- MENT OF AN INDIGENOUS CHURCH

A. Introduction

As to the method of building the indigenous church in China there seems to be as many theories as there are missions. However, there is one thing upon which practically all boards today are agreed, namely, the need for leadership by the nationals themselves, with an accompanying maximum of self-government.¹

This unanimity has not always been so evident, as was seen above, for the criticism of the Foreigner has been that he has been reluctant to gather competent national leaders about him.² Perhaps this criticism is unjust, for in his zeal to build a church, which in its life and teachings would be free from elements incompatible with the doctrine and practice of the Universal Church, the missionary may rather have felt the need of retaining for himself the dominant place of leadership.³

B. The Pre-eminent Place of the National

Whatever the reason was for the missionary's attitude in the past, the heroic stand which the national

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1. Latourette, op.cit., p. 440

2. Monroe, op.cit., p. 319

3. The World Mission of the Church, p. 25

leaders have made during the enemy occupation of their country has earned not only the respect of the missionary, but the right to leadership and responsibility in the church. A mission leader in a Missionary Conference recently said, "When we return we must be careful not to impair the leadership and responsibility which the Chinese have assumed."¹

One incidental but yet significant indication of the trend toward this change in attitude is the growing use of the term "national" to replace that of "native" ---the thought being that a "native ministry" speaks of inferiority.

1. The Advantages of this Leadership

That it would be advantageous to have nationals in the place of leadership is obvious from several standpoints. Their knowledge of the customs and the language of their own people makes for economy, but more than that, it is the efficient way of taking the gospel message to China. Missionaries can learn the customs and the language after years of observation and study, but they scarcely ever reach the peak of efficiency of the natives in this regard.

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1. Reports of the China Planning Committee, from The Foreign Missions Conference, --Conference in Pasadena, California, September 1944

Whether they become proficient in the language and acquainted with the customs or not, the fact of the natural race barrier still exists, which is a deterrent to those Chinese outside of the church. The national, because of his understanding of his people can couch the gospel in terms which makes an approach virtually impossible for the Foreigner to emulate.

Not only is national leadership advantageous in the field of evangelism, but also in the administration of the church, and for the same reasons. In the recognizing of leadership in other nationals, in the directing and encouraging of other fellow-leaders, and in the disciplining of those who do not measure up to the standards of the Christian ministry, the national leader is indispensable, and therefore should have accorded to him the prominent place of responsible leadership.

2. The Effectiveness of this Leadership

Perhaps the effectiveness of Chinese leadership is not so easily discerned in China because of the real dearth of Chinese Christian leaders.¹ The reason for this, among others, is the lack of emphasis upon leadership training in the past; consequently this com-

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1. China Planning Committee, Conference in Toronto, October, 1944

prises one of the outstanding problems confronting the cause of Christ in China today.¹

a. Results in an Expanded Church. During the initial period of leadership training, growth and expansion is slow; there is little to report to home constituencies. However, once the nucleus of national leaders has been trained, rapid expansion takes place, for the national is far more effective as an evangelist or as a pastor than the missionary can hope to be.

Individual mission stations and in some instances a mission in a whole section or province has adopted this emphasis upon national leadership, and with astounding success. Perhaps the best study of this, however, can be made in regard to the Presbyterian Church in Korea, where the situation and problems are not unlike those found in China. So impressive has been the result of this program that the China Planning Committee of the Foreign Missions Council specifically recommended it to both the China missionaries and the Chinese nationals as well, for their consideration in preparation for the re-opening of mission work in that country.²

The plan of missionary endeavour which has been followed there is that originated by Dr. John L. Nevius.

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1. China Planning Committee, Toronto, October, 1944
2. China Planning Committee, Conference in Nashville, Tennessee, September, 1944

Dr. Nevius, who was a missionary in China, was opposed by his colleagues who felt the plan impractical, while missionaries in Korea whole-heartedly accepted the plan and put it into practice.¹ One phase of this program is the plan of self-government, with nationals as leaders in the local church organization, from which lay-leaders are chosen for training. From these in turn are chosen those who receive additional training to serve as pastors of one or more churches, and who with more training and experience may become district and provincial superintendents.²

The results of mission work in Korea speak for the effectiveness of the plan. Protestant mission work began in Korea in 1884, but it was not until 1907 that Dr. Nevius' plan was adopted by the Presbyterian Mission. In 1912 there was not only a general assembly, but also seven subsidiary presbyteries. In that year, the Korean Church which was now not only self-governing but completely self-supporting, sent three young Korean theological graduates to China to serve as missionaries to the Chinese. The Church was now also doing home mission work, as well as missionary work among Koreans in Japan.³

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1. Clark, op.cit., p. 17

2. Ibid., p. 42

3. Clark, C.A., "The Nevius Methods", Int'l Review of Missions, April, 1935, p. 229

In 1933 the Presbyterian Mission had grown until it could justifiably boast 2,700 churches, pastored by 456 Korean pastors, with only 93 men missionaries serving as directors of districts.¹

If it be argued that results of mission work in Korea are not valid proof that similar effectiveness would be evidenced in China, Dr. Charles Clark, who has written extensively on the Nevius methods, would cite the example of the three young men sent to China by the Korean Church. The Shantung synod allocated to the young men three or four churches in a field which had been worked by seven different denominations for over 60 years, during which time the customary subsidy plan had been employed. Western missionaries had been in the place of leadership; little or no lay preaching was done, and when a layman did preach, he expected to be paid for it.

After trying in vain to incite lay leaders to voluntary Christian witness, the three young men wrote back to the Korean Church asking for funds to subsidize 20 Chinese preachers. However, it was insisted upon by the Korean Church, that Korean methods be employed. How effective has been the plan in China, after the trying years of transition to the new method, is shown in the

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1. Clark, C.A., "The Nevius Methods", Int'l Review of Missions, 1935, p. 235

statistics which were published in 1933. In 1920 there were 416 baptised Christians and a total of 515 adherents; in 1933 there were 1,041 baptised Christians and 1,324 adherents---a gain of 15%, and approximately 12% annually for the 13 years. "Even Korea has not maintained that rate for the same years."¹

b. Builds a Permanent Organization. Not only is the leadership of the national effective in expanding the church, but the organization which is thus built is a permanent one. In the recurring uprisings and wars which have taken place in China, missionaries have had to flee. Where native leadership was strong, the witness has been carried on uninterruptedly, which cannot be said of those churches which were dependent upon the Foreigner for leadership.

During the present conflict missionaries have been repatriated from sections of Occupied China to report that evangelistic and medical work has been maintained even though the missionaries have not been able to carry on their normal duties. This has been made possible only because the mission leaders in 1941 were willing to devolve responsibility upon their Chinese leaders. "The foresight of foreign missionaries who had already reorgan-

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1. Clark, C.A., "The Nevius Methods" Int'l Review of Missions, 1935, p. 232

ized their hospitals with Chinese staffs in full control, has borne much fruit."¹

One missionary organization² which began its work in Japan and later branched out to Korea and then to China, has had as its immediate goal a trained national ministry which in turn would establish a strong native church. In Japan this resulted in a church which in 1922 became completely self-governing and self-supporting, with a constituency of approximately 100,000. Just prior to the outbreak of the war in the Pacific, in 1940, the Korean Church took a similar step in assuming complete self-support and government.

Both of these churches have undergone extreme religious persecution in the present war³ but through it all have proved faithful, and now under the protection of Allied armies are gathering again in their churches.⁴ Without a doubt the fact that the church was under national leadership was a very real contributing factor in its being able to maintain its identity in these war years.

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1. "China", Editorial Survey, Int'l Review of Missions, January 1945, p. 17
2. The Oriental Missionary Society
3. U. P. Dispatch from Tokio, The Philadelphia Inquirer, October 8, 1945
4. National leaders' letters, dated Seoul, Korea, September, 1945

C. The Subordinate Place of the Missionary

With this emphasis upon leadership by the nationals, the question naturally arises, "What of the missionary?" Mission Conferences have recently been held in many of the large cities of the United States, in which Chinese leaders and missionaries have both taken part. One thought that has been emphasized repeatedly is that China will need and welcome all missionaries to assist in the resumption and development of mission work there.¹

In several of these Regional Conferences the resolution has been specifically made that all missionary effort must be dominated by the thought that "missionaries must decrease, and the Chinese increase."² In this regard it is the view of some that the abrogation of unequal international treaties will result in raising the standing of missionaries in the esteem of the Chinese Christians.³

With few exceptions, Conference members agreed that mission boards should send new missionaries only as they are requested by the Chinese Church.⁴ It is empha-

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1. China Planning Committee--Conference in Minneapolis, September, 1944
2. Ibid.
3. China Planning Committee--Conference in Nashville, September 14, 1944
4. Report to the China Planning Committee--A Digest of Conference Reports, p. 25

sized that post-war missionary work must be church-centered, rather than mission-centered; all of the missionary's suggestions are for the Chinese Christians to endorse or reject.

1. The Need of Missionary Confidence in Native Leadership.

For many years missionaries as well as others have been committed to the position that it is right that the Christian Church should become naturalized in the country where it is founded. While indigenization is the objective, independence in the sense of self-sufficiency is not to be desired. A Chinese leader writes concerning this:

"While we are eager to see the Chinese Church bear its own responsibility and to become free from the overshadowing influence of the mission, we do not wish to see the Church in China develop a spirit of 'China for the Chinese'."¹

The one way in which this tendency can be prevented is for the missionary to manifest a sincere confidence in the leadership of the national. That he will be a good leader whether the missionary recognizes him as such or not is evident in these years of the national ministry being thrust into the place of responsibility. However, if the transition is to be made with the least

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1. Cheng, C.Y., "Chinese Christian Independence" in The Chinese Recorder, June 1922, p. 390.

friction, the missionary must take the initiative. Bishop Cheng, quoted above, continues, "In the last analysis the possibility of success depends upon the attitude of individuals toward one another".¹

The result of the recognition of national leadership will be the mutual confidence so essential to the building of the Church of Christ in China. Gone will be the idea of Western imperialism and the white man's superiority complex; gone will be the suspicion of discrimination and arrogance.

"The attainment of this great object is not dependent merely upon the attitude of our missionary friends. We Chinese Christians have at least an equally important part to play in the attainment of this goal. ...Let us put ourselves under the burden and develop it along the lines that will be at once fully in keeping with the spirit of God, and at the same time in line with all that is good, true and beautiful in our nation."²

2. The Need for Cooperation with this Leadership.

With the national vested with the authority of leadership, not in name only but in actuality, specifically what is to be the contribution of the missionary? From China, both in writing and by word of mouth, have come intimations that missionaries will no longer be wanted or needed as administrators.³ The missionary's

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1. Cheng, C.Y., op.cit., p. 390

2. Ibid., p. 389

3. Report to China Planning Committee--Digest of Conference Reports, p. 23

great responsibility will be to cooperate whole-heartedly with national leadership.

The inclination of most missionaries will be to want to serve in the capacity of an adviser to the national leader. However, in the past the Westerner has been too prone to offer advice, and as result has been described by Chinese leaders as being "cock-sure".¹ The missionary may or may not be asked for advice; he must not proffer it unasked.

Chinese leaders resent the title of "adviser" being given to the missionary and would substitute rather the word "comrade"²; perhaps our word for it would be "co-laborer". As co-workers in the great cause of bringing Christ to the nations, each would learn from the other; each would contribute to the efficiency of the other. In so doing, the missionary will more closely associate himself with the thought stream of the Chinese mind, thus removing the criticism that missionaries in general have been outside the main current of Chinese national life.³

However, the Chinese make it very plain that the greatest contribution that the missionary can make is

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1. Report to the China Planning Committee, p. 23
2. Ibid., p. 23
3. China Planning Committee--Conference in Philadelphia
September 9, 1944

his spiritual life. This is essential even where strong indigenous leadership has been developed, to make possible warm human relationships between the older churches of the West and the younger churches of China.¹

As to his specific tasks, there can be (1) direct evangelism in cooperation with the Chinese evangelists, (2) participation in the training of Chinese workers for service in the church, (3) contribution to inspirational, worship, and other special services, (4) the giving of a clear witness to the high ideals of the Christian faith, in Christian character building, etc., and (5) the setting of an example in spirituality through the power of his own close walk with God.² "As a rule, a missionary's usefulness is to be measured by his capacity to impart spiritual gifts."³

"We welcome men and women who come to China with the definite understanding in mind that they come to help rather than to dominate, to learn as well as to teach, to be friends rather than to be leaders, to be sympathetic and not dogmatic. Such yoke-fellows and many of them are more needed in China today than ever before. On behalf of the Chinese Church we appeal to such men and women to 'come over and help us'."⁴

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1. The World Mission of the Church, p. 142
2. Box, Ernest, "The Missionary in the Self-governing Church", The Chinese Recorder, Dec., 1920, p. 855
3. Clark, C.A., The Nevius Plan of Mission Work in Korea, p. 121
4. Cheng, C.Y., "Church in China", Int'l Review of Missions 1923, p. 384,5

D. Summary

In order to build a Chinese Church which is thoroughly indigenous, it is essential that there first of all be a change of attitude on the part of the missionary and the national leader as well. In view of the faithful witness which the national has maintained throughout the war years, the missionary must recognize both the advantages and the effectiveness of national leadership, and be ready to accord to him the pre-eminent place in plans for post-war mission work. The missionary's assuming a subordinate place will express confidence in the national, and in so doing will dissipate any lingering vestige of foreign domination in the church, thus laying the groundwork for mutual understanding and confidence. If the missionary is willing to readjust to the situation, he will be able to have a very vital part in the building of the Church of Christ in China, as a co-laborer with the national leader. As has always been true, his greatest contribution will be the example of his life--- a close walk with God.

CHAPTER III

THE CHANGE OF PROGRAM INVOLVED IN DEVELOPING AN INDIGENOUS CHURCH

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THE CHANGE OF PROGRAM INVOLVED IN DEVELOPING AN INDIGENOUS CHURCH

A. Introduction

When the missionaries return to the field they are not going to find circumstances so completely revolutionized that they will have to discard all of the old methods of missionary work, but the fact does remain that the situation will demand revision of many of those methods. The war has done much to prepare the way for a new era of leadership by the nationals, and for independence from foreign subsidy and domination. Many congregations long accustomed to such subsidy have learned the possibilities of self-help, and have developed new concepts of the responsibility of members in building the church.

The urge to relieve distress and to help put the churches back on their feet will be almost overwhelming, but to do so prematurely would "tend to seal up these new fountains of energy and place the church in its pre-war status of dependence upon the mission".¹ For this reason it is the view of some that there should be a period of transition fixed, possibly of several years, before

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1. Davis, J. Merle, "The Problem of Aid to the Younger Churches", Int'l Review of Missions, 1944, p. 128

definite reconstruction should begin.¹ This interim period would give time for mutual adjustments to take place, and also, for the finding and training of the national leaders upon whom the responsibility of self-government must devolve.

Before much can be done in the way of increasing the autonomy of the church there will have to be considerable training and education given to the nationals to equip them for the place of responsibility. In this respect it is essential to take cognizance of the problem of providing well trained men for the supervision of districts and of provinces, and at the same time providing adequately trained men who will be satisfied in the less-remunerative but equally-important rural charge.

Having provided the back-log of well trained nationals to take the places of leadership in the church, there are then the problems of organization and administration of the churches, both rural and urban. Accompanying this is the problem of how best to put the church to work witnessing for Christ. The consideration of these problems takes in the scope implied by the terms self-government and self-propagation.

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1. Davis, J. Merle, op. cit., p. 128

B. The Training of Nationals for Leadership

All mission groups are agreed on the importance of training immediately a large number of leaders for the church, and this need takes priority over practically all else in post-war reconstruction.¹

From several sources have come reports of dissatisfaction as regards the present system of training nationals for the ministry. One leader feels that the Mission Colleges are at fault because so very few of their graduates go into the ministry. They have made the same mistake as the American liberal colleges, that of "entrusting their religious responsibility exclusively to extra-curricular interests".²

Some of the criticism comes from opposite points of view. It was reported at the Madras Council that the need was for a highly-trained ministry as being essential to the well-being of the church.³ On the other hand, those who have the responsibility of the rural church, which after all is the largest proportion of the church, feel that the need is rather that of training men who will be content to find in the rural church the realization of

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1. China Planning Committee, Conference in Nashville, September, 1944
2. Davis, J.M., Christian Movement in China, p. 57
3. World Mission of the Church, p. 67

their life's work.¹ In North China there is a relatively large church membership, almost entirely rural. It has been the experience of those in charge of the rural work there to observe that men who have received extensive training are reluctant to settle down in a rural charge permanently. After they have had a few years of rural experience the best and most forceful of the pastors begin looking for wider spheres and more tolerable circumstances, found generally in city or county-seat charges.²

The problem resolves itself into whether the Western system of theological training should be adopted, or whether a new system of training should be devised which would be better adapted to the needs of the people. The former system is essentially that of assigning leaders to the churches from the top, by giving theological training to the upper-class young men, and then placing them in rural churches. The latter method would be that of developing leadership beginning from the bottom and working up to the top, by giving additional training as ability is manifested, and as the opportunity for greater service arises.

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1. Editorial, "Evolution of Devolution", Chinese Recorder 1926, p. 658-63
2. Ibid., p. 663

It must be remembered that the population of China is overwhelmingly rural. One estimate places the rural population at seventy-nine percent, with an approximate average density of farm population of 1,500 per square mile.¹ The average education for these masses is so low as to be practically nil. It can readily be seen that it is not necessary to send to such a rural community a man extremely well trained in theology and the other sciences, but rather one who is closer to their way of life, and who can be more closely associated with them. This problem also has economic implications, which will be considered later.

In this connection it is pertinent to note that in the Missions Conferences that have been held in the various cities of the United States, the committee has stressed the training of Christian leaders in post-war China as being of paramount importance, and specifically recommended that a study be made of the plan used so successfully in Korea, in this regard.² The Nevius Plan, with adaptations to the conditions in China, will serve largely as the basis for the discussion of the following sections.

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1. Felton, R.A., The Rural Church in China, p.1
2. China Planning Committee, Conference in Nashville, September, 1944

1. Local Phonetics Classes

One ordinarily thinks of a Christian as being able to read and understand his Bible. In some of the Oriental countries the missionaries can start Christian education with that pre-supposition, but in China less than one-half of the men and only two per-cent of the women can read even a common letter.¹ For this reason the church must carry on a literacy program along with the program of evangelism and pastoral care of the flock.

It is the general policy of the missions to employ for this literacy work men who are chosen for their Christian character and knowledge of the Scriptures, as well as their knowledge of teaching the phonetic script.² In this way, probationers are taught to read and write, along with their study of the Bible and church indoctrination.

Since there is no alphabet in the Chinese language, a system of phonetic characters has been devised by means of which one can write out the sounds of a Chinese syllable. These phonetic signs are printed vertically beside the regular Chinese characters, enabling the learner to sound out any particular character, although

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1. Felton, op.cit., p. 4

2. Rowlands, W.F., "Indigenous Ideals in Practice",
London Mission, p. 8

he must look to the context of familiar words to know the meaning of the sound.

By this system an adult can learn the phonetic alphabet in just a few days, and be able to read his New Testament soon thereafter. In this way the Phonetics Classes are the very basis of Bible instruction, and in fact, of all training that is given to the leaders-to-be, and for this reason is an integral part of the over-all evangelistic program of the church.¹

2. Believers' Bible Classes

The Bible Class system is at the very heart of the Korean Church, and it is around this that all the other aspects of the Nevius Plan center. The need of such a plan of Bible study is very apparent in China, for the only comparable program which the China Church has, is the Sunday School, and it is the comment of many that the rural Sunday School is easily the weakest link in the chain.² The whole Christian program in China is largely one of preaching, rather than teaching.

The instruction of Korean inquirers and believers is done in these Bible Classes by local lay-leaders, since they know the local conditions best, and are versatile in

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1. Rowlands, op.cit., p. 12

2. Felton, op.cit., p. 23

the vernacular dialect which the majority of the people speak. It is readily granted that many of the teachers may prove to be faulty in their methods, and deficient in their knowledge, but at least they are far in advance of those whom they are teaching.¹

In the previous chapter reference was made to a group of Korean young men who were sent to China to do missionary work there, using the principles of the Nevius Plan. In 1921, just a few years after they began the work of re-making the field allocated to them, sixteen district classes and one Leader's Training Class had been established, besides a Bible Institute where seventeen men and fifty-three women came and studied at their own expense for a period of one month each year.² It bears repetition here that mission work in Korea is done under conditions very similar to those in other fields of the Orient, and the results are not due to any more favorable conditions found there.³ The Bible Class system of Korea has worked in at least one section of China, and has produced not only self-government, but also self-support.⁴

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1. Clark, C.A., The Nevius Plan for Mission Work, p. 32
2. Clark, C.A., "The Nevius Methods", Int'l Review of Missions, 1935, p. 233
3. Ibid., p. 229
4. Ibid., p. 233

3. Lay Leader's Training Classes

In addition to the teaching that is always going on in the local churches, there is also the need of District Classes, where the Leaders of the local groups gather either in the Mission Station or in some other central place, for intensive Bible training, that these Leaders may go back to their local church and teach others. These classes are held usually in the Winter when the farmers can better leave their work for a period of six weeks to two months. In Korea it has been the practice to expect the learners to pay all of their expense both for travel and for their board while they are studying. Supposedly this would discourage some from attending the classes, but the attendance would certainly not indicate such.

One of the reasons why the Classes are well attended is the prestige that accompanies being appointed a Leader; if one fails to attend the Training Classes, there is the danger that he may have to forfeit the coveted place of leadership. As the Classes increased in size from two hundred to five hundred and then to a thousand in attendance, it became increasingly evident that it was the only way in which the limited number of missionaries and national leaders could possibly minister to the people---through the trained Lay Leaders.¹

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1. Clark, op.cit., p. 126

A number of results accrue from the use of these Bible Classes, the most important of which is the fact that the whole church undergoes training in the Word of God. Also, the classes afford the means of developing qualities of leadership. "It is in these classes that our Christian workers are first trained and developed.... and appointed to the work."¹

By the application of this plan in China, a large number of moderately-well trained men could be provided to lead that great host of churches which now are visited only occasionally by an itinerant pastor. It would mean that each Leader would be a witness in circumstances where he should be at his best---in his own community, and at no expense to the local church.

4. Bible Training Institutes

✓ It is the view of not a few that a curriculum patterned after theological courses in the West is not necessarily well-fitted to the need of pastors, preachers, and evangelistic workers in the Orient.² There is the great danger that other studies will crowd out the fundamental one, which is an understanding of the Bible and the ability to use it as a tool. "There was almost unanimous

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1. Clark, op.cit., p. 125

2. China Planning Committee, Digest of Conference Reports, p. 13

agreement among those evangelistic workers who expressed judgments that there is, and probably will be, a continuing need for theological schools below the grade of theological colleges."¹

"As to the special training for rural pastors, we question the assumption that the rural church requires of its pastors the same long years of training and the same highly technical courses as men receive who are to serve city churches, because the rural churches and congregations are growing at a rate with which the output of fully trained ministers cannot keep pace; their members have a far lower average ratio of literacy and of schooling than the city churches and the basic needs of the rural parish include vital matters that are outside the concept and scope of much of our theological education."²

When a local church has reached the place numerically where it can support a full-time pastor, it is quite naturally going to call one. However, the salary which it can afford to pay will only be sufficient for a worker to live on the standard of the common people. In the light of the Oriental attitude toward a scholar, one who has spent six or seven years in study beyond Middle School (High School), is not long content to remain in such humble surroundings.

Therefore the need is evident for a training which will provide these maturing churches with suitable

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1. China Planning Committee, Digest of Conference Reports, p. 13
2. Davis, J.M., "Problem of Aid to the Younger Churches", Int'l Review of Missions, 1944, p. 132

leadership. In Korea and in China as well, a number of these Bible Institutes have been established, which provide two or three years' training for men who have only had Junior Middle School education. Upon graduation these men are able to find full expression for their abilities and talents in the growing rural church. "The rural field is not a stepping stone to a city church. It is a great and rewarding end in itself."¹

5. Bible Seminaries

As it was intimated in the above section, the criticism of theological graduates has been that they have been out of touch with their people, due to the academic emphasis rather than the practical. The result has been that Seminaries have looked down upon Bible Schools, and Bible Schools have been critical of the Seminaries. Happily, there are those who have felt that it was not an "either or" proposition, but "both and".² These have voiced the need of two different types of ministry and the corresponding need of two different types of theological training.

Dr. Nevius has been unjustly criticised by his colleague, Dr. Mateer³ and others⁴ that he did not favor

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1. Davis, J.M., op.cit., p. 131
2. Leger, op.cit., p. 28
3. Clark, op.cit., p. 49
4. Leger, op.cit., p. 14

a trained ministry. To quote Dr. Nevius himself:

"In the early stages of the work, high literary and theological qualifications are not indispensable. The essential prerequisite is sincere and earnest piety. As the native Christians increase in knowledge, the churches require pastors of a more thorough training, and the higher the better."¹

That there is a real need for such well-trained men is self-evident. The inclusion of seminary training in the leadership training program of course presupposes college education, either in a State or Church supported school. These men upon graduation would quite naturally fit into pastorates where the people are more highly educated and where the work of the church is farther progressed.

In Korea the plan was early adopted of making the Seminary students meet their expenses of travel, board, and other school items. Since in most cases the men were married and had family responsibilities, a plan was devised whereby the churches or the circuits to which they ministered as helpers or assistants paid their salaries for the full year, and then released them for three and a half months of each year for their study in the Seminary. Under this plan the student is held under contract by the church or the circuit to serve as pastor, after his ordin-

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1. Clark, op.cit., p. 49, quoting Dr. Nevius in Planting and Development of Mission Churches, p. 32

ation, at a salary which the local church is able to pay.¹

C. The Administration of the Church under the
Leadership of Nationals

The great underlying problem in establishing an indigenous church is that of how to organize the church so as to lead naturally not only to self-government, but to self-support as well. The ecclesiastical machinery of the West will work as long as there are missionaries to operate it, and foreign funds to subsidize it, but that is not the ideal. Real indigenization can only proceed from a well-devised plan which takes into account the geography of the land, the economic situation, and the availability of Christian workers.

1. In Rural Churches

A major point which must be borne in mind continually is that the problem is pre-eminently, although of course not entirely a rural problem. To be successful, the program of the mission must therefore be adapted to the rural situation. It is cited that the Adventist Church, by fashioning its educational and evangelistic program to the conditions of the country, has been the

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1. Clark, op.cit., p. 140

fastest growing missionary church in a number of mission fields.¹

To be a force in a rural community, a church must be identified with it; it must not be a city church set down in the country. It must have a ministry that is conditioned by its environment, and this can be realised only as the pastor identifies himself with his people, in sharing with them at least in some aspect, the basic forms of livelihood by which his people support themselves.²

a. The Village Church as the Basis of Operation.

Varying estimates place the population of China as being from seventy to eighty per-cent rural, and generally agree that there are in the neighborhood of one million villages in China. An incomplete survey of churches indicates that there is an average of one church to every hundred villages, with an average membership of 35.³ The field for work in China's villages is a vast one indeed.

As was seen above, it was the expectation that village churches would be organized as branch churches; as outgrowths of the churches in the market-towns and cities. In Korea, however, the opposite plan has been

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1. Davis, J.M., "The Preparation of Missionaries for the Post-war Era", Int'l Review of Missions, 1944, p. 243
2. Davis, J.M., "The Problem of Aid to the Younger Churches" Int'l Review of Missions, 1944, p. 131
3. China Planning Committee, Philadelphia Conference, September, 1944

followed, where the emphasis has largely been on the village church. "A comparison of various countries in the Orient shows that in so far as the church became a village institution it became more influential in the total life of the people, and also had a more rapid growth."¹

The reason for this is seen in the fact that the roots of almost everyone in China are embedded deep in some rural village. One might be employed in some large city, and appear very urbane, but he speaks of "home" as being that little village where his family resides. For this reason city population is much less stable than that of the villages, which accounts for the fact that village people, in general, are far more interested in the church than are city families.

Dr. Francis Wei, president of Hua Chung University, speaking at a recent missions conference,² gave a vivid description of what he called a "cell of Christian living" in a Chinese community. The plan which he set forth could be applied in either an urban or a rural community, but he in particular had reference to a smaller town or village. He urged very strongly that the cell should expand as it grows; that the little group of

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1. Felton, op.cit., p. 13

2. Meeting of the Foreign Missions Conference, New York City, November 16, 1945

believers should first of all meet in their own homes, rather than have the mission build a large chapel for the small group.¹ As the group increases in size until it is too large to meet in the home, let them secure the use of the local primary school or some other public building. Recruiting the members on Saturdays to make the building ready for Sunday morning worship enables them to feel that they are making a real contribution to the work of the church.

Any discussion of the village church must necessarily take into consideration the matter of providing leadership to pastor the flock. The scarcity of fully-trained Christian workers, as well as the inability of the group to support the full-time pastor, presents a very real problem, the answer to which is a well-trained laity.

"For a long time to come the average local congregations will be unable to support full-time pastors, unless these are of a low grade of training and experience. Consequently, the development of trained lay leadership is a prime necessity in post-war planning."²

A study of the use of laity in the church program takes one naturally to the Presbyterian Church plan

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1. Dr. Wei gave as the excuse for building elaborate church structures in rural communities, the usual answer that "This is my Father's house". However, he said that the reaction of the Chinese is that "If this is His house, while I have to live in a slum district, I wonder if He is my Father!"
2. China Planning Committee, Digest of Conference Reports, p. 7

in Korea,¹ and also to the English Methodist plan in China, where in both places extensive use of lay preachers has been made. In Korea it has been the policy to appoint or elect unordained elders who hold office for one year, but who can be re-appointed or re-elected. These men are to all intents and purposes the pastors of the little groups, except that they do not administer the sacraments. These men work under the supervision of the missionary in charge, to run all the affairs of the church. Some of them voluntarily take charge of the worship services, while others have charge of the financial affairs. Along side of these men there is trained a class of women who do for the women of the congregations much the same sort of work that is done for the men by these elders.²

The English Methodist Church has likewise used lay preachers extensively, and it is apparently the use of such that has made that mission excel in village work, which fact was revealed in a three-province survey made before the war.³

Dr. Wei, referred to above, likewise suggested that the responsibility for the pastoral care of the group be placed in the hands of a group of men who would alter-

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1. China Planning Committee, Digest of Conference Reports, p. 7, also Felton, p. 17
2. Cf. Clark, op.cit., pgs. 30, 130, 131
3. Felton, op.cit., p. 15f

nate in conducting the services. However, it was his suggestion that these laymen be ordained as part-time ministers. Of course underlying such a use of laity is the well-organized program of training which was described in the earlier part of this chapter.

b. The Market-town Circuit as the Unit of Organization. Since the leadership of the village churches, in the beginning at least, rests with trained laymen, it is necessary that supervision be very close. Accordingly, the idea of the circuit has been adopted in many areas¹ and has met with varied criticism. One writer for a survey says, "The circuit system is hopeless. A resident preacher and family are essential for growth and power in the church or community."² However, another writer puts the problem very clearly, "A resident preacher is the best plan, but financial conditions forbid this in all churches. Where there is no resident preacher, the supervising pastor must go often to keep up the interest of the members."³

For the best results, it has been found that the circuit must not be too large. In most places the need is met by the use of the natural circuit composed of the market-town area. By this is meant the natural grouping

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1. Price, Frank W., The Rural Church in China--A Survey Report, p. 7.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

of villages about the central market-town, with the radius of not over five or six English miles. Thus the circuit follows the lines of natural community-loyalty, rather than the boundaries of artificial political allegiance.

In China it has proved practical, because of the centrality of location, to have the supervising pastor live in the market-town, but have the responsibility of nurturing the out-lying groups. In Korea the plan has been that the missionary in charge of a number of circuits has visited each local church twice a year, in addition to the regular visits of the national leader in charge.¹ In one section of China, nearly two-thirds of the churches are supervised by missionaries, and the remainder by Chinese superintendents. The average church is visited about four times a year, by missionary and Chinese supervisors,² which would seem to indicate that the supervision has not been as close as it should have been.

As the church-group increases in size and vitality, the number of such groups in a circuit is decreased, until the point is reached where the local church can call its own pastor. This plan is not only that used in Korea, but has been used by the London Missionary Society in China,³ as well as by practically every group which

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1. Price, op.cit., p. 6

2. Ibid.

3. Rowlands, W.F., "Indigenous Ideals in Practice", World Dominion, 1932, p. 9ff

seeks immediate indigenization.¹

2. In Urban Churches

The city churches, by the very nature of the fact that they are generally larger groups, made up of individuals whose incomes are relatively higher, have on the average been better able to attain self-support and also self-government. Because the work of the city church has not presented such a problem, very little has been written on the subject. It has been recognized, however, that the city church program is weak, and therefore presents a post-war opportunity and challenge greater than ever before.² It is urged that the mission should not endow the city church with a fine building and splendid equipment. "There are 'white elephants' dotted over China as monuments to such prematurely grandiose schemes for city churches."³

D. A New Emphasis upon Evangelism

One of the encouraging aspects of the missionary enterprise today is the tendency to re-emphasize the place of evangelism in the program of the church. It is recognized that the fundamental task of all Christians is that

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1. Davis, op.cit., p. 133

2. China Planning Committee--Digest of Reports, p. 8

3. Ibid.

of evangelism.¹ Quite naturally there are differing views as to just what constitutes evangelism, but it is significant that the need itself is realized.

In a recent Missionary Conference² where the theme of the discussion was "The Centrality of the Church", it was realized by the majority of missionaries present, that in many parts of China, missions have laid stress upon the running of mission institutions such as hospitals, schools, etc., to the minimizing of stress upon the church itself. It is in this connection that Dr. Latourette makes the recommendation that,

"We shall need to give more attention to evangelism, not so much to extending methods now in use but to fresh study of what is meant by Christian evangelism for our day, and fresh efforts and methods of bringing the Gospel to our contemporaries."³

1. Personal Evangelism

One of the cardinal principles of the Nevius Plan has been that of insisting that every Christian be an evangelist. "Expect every man, woman and child in the congregation to be at the same time a learner from some one better informed and a teacher of any one less informed with whom they come in contact."⁴ If the person cannot preach or give public testimony, he can at least sell gospel por-

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1. China Planning Committee, Digest of Reports, p. 11
2. Foreign Missions Conference, New York, Nov. 16, 1945
3. Latourette, K.S., "A Suggestion toward a Reorientation of Mission Policy"; Int'l Review of Missions, 1934, p.43
4. Clark, op.cit., p. 30

tions, and bear personal testimony to his neighbor.

The importance of personal evangelism in China is shown in the results of a survey that was conducted in North China¹ in which the question was put to Chinese pastors, "What lead you to become a Christian?" Seventh on the list of answers to that question was the matter of preaching, but first was that of personal contact. One of the factors contributing to the great revival movement which swept the Shantung field of the Presbyterian Church in the late twenties, was the fact that believers began witnessing to the power of God. "Even the women, long held in check by propriety and custom, became vocal."²

2. Local Laymen's Evangelistic Bands

Under the Nevius Plan, men or women who seem to develop a gift for working with non-believers are sent out for periods of time to do evangelistic work in areas adjacent to that in which the church is located. Dr. Felton, writing on the Church in China says, "The Church in Korea has grown largely by the use of evangelistic bands. Probably no other plan would be of such great help to the extension of the Gospel throughout the Orient as similar bands in every church."³

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1. Dr. Rowland Cross, reporting at The Foreign Missions Conference, New York City, November 16, 1945
2. The Growing Church, Vol. II, The Madras Series, p.240
3. Felton, op.cit., p. 47

It is estimated that three out of every four rural churches were started as the result of an existing church branching out in this way.¹ After two or three visits of a Gospel team, a group of listeners is developed, and perhaps a few accept Christ. A room in the home of some interested listener is set aside for weekly meetings, and gradually is laid the foundation for another church.

3. Itinerant Evangelistic Bands

The above-mentioned types of evangelism is that which is carried on by the church, and is done almost entirely on a voluntary basis, with the possible exception of "rice money" being provided for expenses on the road. There is the need also of systematic extensive evangelism, which when followed up with an intensive teaching ministry, extends the work of the church in unreached areas. Due to the very nature of this work, it can never be expected that it should be self-supporting, and therefore should be undertaken as one of the mission's contributions to the expansion of the church.

One of the most interesting experiments in this type of evangelism is that made in China conducted by The London Missionary Society. As a result of a large grant by a British layman, the Mission has been able to set up

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1. Felton, op.cit., p. 16

a number of mobile evangelistic groups, who are engaged in the task of "church planting".¹ After staying in a market-town for a period of twelve to eighteen months, the band moves on to a new location, leaving in its wake a church which from the very beginning is indigenous. The evangelistic program of the Oriental Missionary Society is essentially the same, but has not been conducting the work in China for as many years as the London Society.

Another phase of evangelism is that termed "Tent Evangelism", and has been successfully conducted by the China Inland Mission in South Hopei province.² Many other missions are adopting plans similar to that of the C.I.M.³

4. Radio Evangelism

Radio broadcasting, in the years prior to the Japanese invasion of China, was being used more and more effectively in presenting the message of the Gospel to the people of cities and the larger of the hsien cities. The limitation placed upon this type of evangelism is the lack of electricity in the smaller cities and towns. True, some "crystal" receiving sets are used, but these are not practical beyond a few miles of the city limits, due to the fact that the broadcasting stations are not as yet very powerful.

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1. Evangelism, Vol. III, Madras Series, p. 150 ff
2. Ibid., p. 143f
3. Ibid., p. 147

The pioneer in Christian broadcasting in China is Mr. K. S. Lee, who organized an association in Shanghai in 1933. It is managed by a Christian group, and is entirely self-supporting. This is the most powerful of the Christian broadcasting stations in China.¹

A similar association was operating in Peiping as the North China Christian Broadcasting Association. Christian broadcasts were also emanating from Wuhan, Shaohing, Tsinan and Hongkong, as well as from some of the interior cities. It is readily evident that Christian broadcasting presents a real opportunity to the church as a post-war means of evangelism.

E. Summary

After every crisis in China in the last fifty years, missionaries have gone back to China expecting to find a "New China" in which all of the old methods and ideas would be obsolete, only to find ultimately that much of the old could be adapted to the new conditions. Missionaries returning to China now will find many changes which they will have to make, which may be improvements upon the methods used heretofore.

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1. Evangelism, Vol. III, Madras Series, p. 140 ff

Of first priority will be that of integrating the problem of education and training of leaders so that a wealth of Christian leaders will be available to meet the needs of the expanding church. This must include not only theological training, but also a training which will provide many well-trained laymen who will voluntarily do the work of pastoring local groups of believers until they can call a full-time minister. In most cases this will mean training the whole church, from which candidates for lay-leadership training will emerge.

The problem of the Church in China is almost entirely that of the country church, since the population of China is overwhelmingly rural. The unit of group-loyalty outside of the family, is that of the village, which makes apparent the need of centering the church in the villages rather than in market-towns and the smaller cities. With the extension of the church into the villages, it is immediately obvious that there is a tremendous need for well-trained laity to shepherd these flocks. The next step in organizing the program of the church is to group these village churches in a circuit which can be supervised by either a missionary or an ordained Chinese pastor.

The organization of the church having been completed, the next problem is that of putting it to work. The fundamental task of Christians is that of witnessing

for Christ, which is the basis of evangelism. The growing church is characterized by the zeal of its members in witnessing to others of what Christ means to them, either individually in private conversation, or collectively in lay evangelistic teams. Beside this, the church and the mission must engage in systematic evangelism which will result in expansion in unevangelized areas.

The task of the mission is made very explicit in the Great Commission of our Lord, namely, to train disciples, to establish the Church of Christ, and to extend the witness of Christ to "every creature".

CHAPTER IV

THE ADJUSTMENT IN RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE INDIGENOUS CHURCH AND THE MISSION

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THE INDIGENOUS CHURCH AND THE MISSION

A. Introduction

"Do you know of any missionary movement in Christian history in which the Gospel of Christ was carried by a people of low economic standards to a group living on a higher economic level?" This question asked of a missionary writer,¹ serves to illustrate the basic theme of this chapter. With the possible exception of the Christian slaves who took the gospel witness to their Roman masters, every "sending church" of Christian history has been on a higher economic level. Particularly has this been true of the missionary enterprise in the 19th and 20th centuries, when large sums have been appropriated for foreign missionary work. It is only natural that the National Church and the mission should have to make certain adjustments before the church can truly be called indigenous.

After the church is established in the mission field, there is the task of training a national leadership which will be capable of self-government and also of

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1. The Economic Basis of the Church, Madras Series, Vol. V, p. 25

leading the church in its witness for Christ so that it can be self-propagating. Having thus achieved two of the three goals of an indigenous church, there remains the attainment of self-support for the National Church. While this constitutes the major part of the adjustments between church and mission, it is by no means all of them. Decision must also be made as to who will control and support the work of institutions. Furthermore, a policy must be decided upon as regards the ownership of property used in the service of the church.

B. Changes in Financial Policy

Involved in Self-support

There have been very few missionary conferences in the past fifty years where the subject of self-support has not come up for discussion, which is proof in itself that the subject constitutes one of the major problems, if not the major problem of the missionary enterprise. A missionary to Japan writes, "Nine-tenths of the failures in successful fellowship between missionaries and native Christians have come from financial relations."¹ Another missionary speaking in a New York conference said, "On a fair estimate, three-fourths of all the problems which

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1. Clark, op.cit., p. 58

now beset our work arise out of the use of foreign money to pay native preachers."¹ Thus it is increasingly apparent that the problem of self-support is basic to many of the problems of missions.

However, there is by no means unanimity among missionaries as to the relative importance of self-support. Some feel that entirely too much emphasis has been laid upon self-support as a necessary preliminary to self-government.² Nevertheless, the war and the resultant isolation of many churches from mission boards and from mission funds has proved the possibility of self-help, so that all missionaries must recognize the need of a readjustment of financial policy in the post-war era.³

To many from Western lands, it might seem strange that so much emphasis is placed on self-support, when it is a well-known fact that the Oriental peoples are far less able to finance the Christian witness than are we of the Occident. It would appear to be the efficient thing to muster all the material and human resources of the West to extend the Kingdom of God in the Orient, and that to ask them to contribute anything out of their meagre earnings would be un-Christlike. However, it is the convic-

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1. Clark, op.cit., p. 58
2. The World Mission of the Church, p. 142
3. Davis, J.M., "Missionaries for the Post-war Era",
Int'l Review of Missions, 1944, p. 245

tion of many that in order for the church to be truly indigenous, it must be self-supporting. Writing in this regard, one missionary says, "There is nothing more certain than that the missionary who fails to train his converts in all that makes for sturdy independence, is exposing his work to the prospect of ultimate failure."¹

One thing which impedes discussion of this subject is the fact that there is no unified understanding of just what is meant by the term "self-support". Of fifteen missions reporting in the China survey for the Madras Council,² eleven consider a church self-supporting which pays its pastor's salary and its own operating expenses. Two other missions would include the maintenance of all local evangelism, while two more would add the support of the general work of the church. None of the missions would include within the scope of the term, the maintenance of institutional work, such as educational or medical activities. While the third definition is obviously the ideal toward which missions are working, yet because the first definition is the most basic of the three, it is accepted as the meaning of the term "self-support" in this section.

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1. Griffith, J.C., "Self-Support", Chinese Recorder, 1925, p. 795
2. Economic Basis of the Church, p. 298, also cf. p. 266

1. Chinese Economic and Psychological Hindrances to Self-support.

Before considering the basis of self-support, or plans for achieving it, it is worthwhile to look briefly at the economic and psychological background which accounts for the difficulties involved in the solution of the problem.

a. The Standard of Living. A factor with which any advocate of self-support must reckon is that the average Chinese lives on a standard which is barely above the subsistence level. The Chinese farmer is not only oppressed by heavy taxes, but is at times subjected to demands by roving bands of war lords, and furthermore, can expect a natural calamity such as drought or flood once in every five years.¹ The term "marginal farmer" best describes his condition, for when a crop is poor, or is a failure, the family suddenly falls below the subsistence level.² Only one farmer in five has any savings.

One of the main causes for indebtedness outside of crop failure is the observance of special family days.

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1. Hubbard, Hugh, "Christian Approach to the Chinese Village", Int'l Review of Missions, 1939, p. 240.

2. A Chinese proverb describes the situation thus:
"To feed a family of five,
A farmer must work like an animal,
But to feed a family of six---
Even a flogged animal will not work."

The cost of a wedding, a funeral or a dowry is more than a man's wages for an entire year,¹ and in most cases becomes a life-time debt. The reason for their willingness to make such expenditure is found in the family loyalty. If these expensive customs could be altered, it would mean the possibility of additional means of revenue for the Church, but the fact that the customs are grounded in family loyalty makes difficult such a change.

b. The Traditional Oriental Attitude towards Religious People. The idea of giving to support the Christian ministry is entirely strange to Chinese thinking, since holy men and priests of oriental religions do not receive salaries. They are supported by their religious order, which usually has large land holdings from which it gets its revenue.² When Buddhist monks are engaged to say masses in the home, they are not paid, for then they would sink to the level of a paid mourner.³ This accounts for the fact that it has in the past proved difficult to urge congregations to pay their pastors; to do so is to make him a hireling.

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1. Felton, The Rural Church of the Far East, p.8
2. The Economic Basis of the Church, p. 140 ff.
3. Lacy, Carleton: "Self-support in the Chinese Church", Int'l Review of Missions, 1938, p. 247

Another mental attitude of the Chinese people with which the Christian leader must deal is the question of what the donor can expect from the Church in return for his gift. When a Chinese subscribes to a temple sacrifice or festival he knows he will get a return on his gift---some of the food or the decorations offered in the temple, plus the publicity which goes with his having made the donation. When the Christian makes a gift to the "general fund", or to support his pastor who is getting several times his own salary, he is dubious as to just what he can expect in return.

In connection with giving to non-Christian religious practices, it is found that the average non-Christian family spends \$6.88 (local currency) each year, which is compared to \$2.76 of the average Christian family.¹ The long family tradition of giving to temple expenses is one factor in this difference, but the fact remains that the average Chinese does not see a material return from his gift, and so has no enthusiasm or feeling of responsibility in giving to it.² Here again is a source of revenue which the Church has so far been unable to tap, and can only do so as it makes itself indispensable in the community. "A piece of work that is worth supporting

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1. Economic Basis of the Church, p. 322
2. Ibid.

will be supported."¹

c. The Evils of Foreign Subsidy for Mission Churches. When the missionary comes into this community of low economic standards, he is looked upon "not so much as an exponent of a new religion, as a possible source of personal economic improvement".² For a Chinese to obtain employment as a servant in a missionary residence is to enjoy a rare sense of security not only for himself, but also for his relatives who are dependent upon him for support.

It takes very little imagination to visualize what effect upon the economic system of a community the influx of Christian missionaries has had. The use of mission funds to employ nationals for evangelistic work has only added misunderstanding to the confusion, by creating the impression that Christians were such only for monetary reasons.³

The use of subsidies in mission work often tends to vitiate both the giver and the receiver by the intrusion of the attitude of condescension, and as has been suggested before,⁴ leads to domination.⁵ One writer is

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1. Dr. Francis Wei, at Foreign Missions Conference in New York City, November 16, 1945.

2. The Economic Basis of the Church, p. 29

3. Ibid., p. 33

4. Cf. Chapter I of this thesis.

5. The World Mission of the Church, p. 101

of the opinion that the use of subsidy tends to weaken rather than strengthen the Church. "At best it is a time-serving method, and should be restricted in its use to the earlier stages of church development, and safeguarded by more stringent conditions than now generally obtain."¹

In the attempt to remove the stigma of being a foreign institution, it has been the policy in recent years to give to the Chinese Church full control over the funds that are to be used in the support of the Church. In so doing, autonomy is granted to the Church, but such is still not indigenization. Indeed it is the view of one writer that to give Chinese leaders control of funds in which they have not had part in raising, is to invite atrophy of the very qualities the mission is seeking to develop.² It is likely to encourage careless use of these funds which are to them huge amounts of money, so that when foreign support is withdrawn they will be discouraged from attempting great things with the smaller amounts which the Chinese Church is able to raise.

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1. Wilcox, F.C. "Western Money and Chinese Churches", Chinese Recorder, 1926, p. 567
2. Baird, K.A. "Should the Missionary Go with the Mission Property?", Chinese Recorder, p.570, 1926

2. Stewardship as the Basis of Self-support.

To overcome the handicaps and hindrances enumerated above, is the task of missionary and national leader alike. One of the outstanding examples of how a national church caught the vision of self-support and put it into practice, is found in the Protestant churches of Korea. The secret to the spiritual and financial strength of the church there has been the application of the principles of stewardship and systematic giving.¹

a. The Scriptural Plan of Christian Stewardship.

By the means of the extensive Bible Classes conducted in Korea, the church is a Bible-studying church. They have learned what it means to dedicate self completely to God, and likewise have been taught the principles of the Christian's responsibility in stewardship of time. It is little wonder, then, that when they read the injunction of the Apostle Paul in I Corinthians 16:2,² they are immediately enthusiastic about putting it into practice.³

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1. The Economic Basis of the Church, p. 234
2. "Upon the first day of the week, let each one of you lay by him in store, as he may prosper, that no collections be made when I come."
3. As an illustration of how in their thinking this idea of stewardship is based on Scripture, Dr. Blair cites an instance where a tax for benevolences was levied upon church members by an assembly board. The tax amounted to 30 sen per member (7 cents), but because the idea of taxation was contrary to the New Testament teaching, it was voted down. Cf. Economic Basis of the Church, p.255

"It is clear that the perennial emphasis put upon Bible study has had more to do with proper giving in the Korean Church than all our efforts toward systematic contribution. The fundamental conviction as to stewardship responsibilities was already deeply planted in the hearts of the great mass of believers before we ever began promoting the stewardship principle as the basis for systematic giving."¹

The advantages of this approach in encouraging self-support are self-evident. Possibly nothing is so distressing for a spiritually minded pastor than the task of continually dunning his people for his salary. The Scriptural teaching on stewardship enables him to present his appeal on the basis of church finance being a central Christian duty toward God. "Stewardship is the handmaid of self-support."²

It is a lamentable fact that in the Chinese rural church, as a whole, there is little sentiment in favor of tithing.³ However, this fact does not prove conclusively that tithing could not become an institution in the Chinese Church, for there are outstanding examples to the contrary. The Pentecostal and the Adventist Churches, as well as some of the older churches⁴ which stress

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1. The Economic Basis of the Church, Madras Series, Vol. V, page 236
2. Ibid., p. 239
3. In the survey for the Madras Council, 30 of the 54 churches reporting said that they were attempting to educate their members on stewardship, but most of them admitted failure. Cf. Economic Basis of the Church, p. 323. Also, Cf. Felton, op.cit., p. 28
4. In the Free Methodist Mission at Kaifeng, it is reported that even in the midst of the hardships of war-time,

tithing, have no problem of self-support.¹ It would appear, then, that the lack of enthusiasm for tithing is traceable to the failure of the mission to stress stewardship teaching.

b. Methods for Encouraging Stewardship. The principles of stewardship having been accepted, there then remains the task of suggesting methods which may be used to aid the believers in tithing their income.

First of all, the pastor is confronted with the problem of how to encourage systematic giving, even if the gift is small. In Korea the missionaries labored over the problem of providing an adaptation of the duplex envelope system used in Western churches. However, it was soon realised that the use of even the cheapest materials made the cost of 52 envelopes more than the amount which some of the poorer Christians could be expected to give in the course of the year.²

The difficulty in Korea was solved by the use of thin paper wrappers which were printed and bound in a pad. These proved inexpensive and practical, and are used

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many of their churches are becoming self-supporting. This spontaneous movement is largely traceable to the vision which one national leader has had of tithing being the responsibility of Christians.

1. Davis, J.M., "Problem of Aid to the Younger Churches", Int'l Review of Missions, 1944, p. 134
2. The Economic Basis of the Church, p. 242

extensively in Korea today. In China, systematic giving has been encouraged by means of small paper or cheap cloth bags. The individual's name is on each bag, and week after week, he places his offering in the bag, which he then puts in the collection plate as it is passed.

Since the major part of church members have practically no cash with which to make their gifts, it has proved beneficial to conduct "harvest home festivals" in which produce is brought into the church. A variation on this is the use of the Lord's acre plan, by which the proceeds of a part of one's property is dedicated to the Lord. Some rural churches have been able to rent or purchase a small tract of land, which the members of the local church farm in their spare time, as their contribution to the support of the church. The encouragement of small home industries enables the members of the church to make regular gifts, even in the "slack" seasons when there is no income from the farm.

Another means of encouraging consistent giving to the support of the church is the adaptation of some of the indigenous ways of giving. In this group would fall special thank-offerings, first-fruits, and the honoring of family and community festivals. These ways of giving are commonly practised by non-Christians, but are discontinued after baptism.¹

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1. The World Mission of the Church, p. 100

3. Plans for Achieving Self-support.

Gone are the days of argumentation as to the relative value of self-support; the discussion today centers around how it can best be achieved. Many and varied are the plans that have been suggested, but in general they fall into two classifications: those that advocate a gradual reduction of the foreign subsidy, and those who favor an immediate elimination of the subsidy.

a. The Program of Gradual Reduction of Subsidy.

Under this program, the churches which are to receive aid from the mission should be paid from a central fund to which all the local churches contribute, whether they be self-supporting or subsidized. All help which the mission gives, likewise goes through this fund, and is administered by the central committee. It is the purpose of the plan that such subsidy shall be given on a diminishing scale.¹

As a variation of this plan, one mission matches dollar for dollar that which the local church pays. Thus, if the crops are good and the people pay more, the mission pays more; if a drought hits the parish, the mission subsidy is decreased.² Another mission allows the pastor to stay in his parish for the proportion of the year for

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1. The World Mission of the Church, p. 100

2. Felton, op.cit., p. 27

which the local church can pay his salary.¹ Presumably the pastor itinerates during the rest of the year.

That self-support is increasing in China is an incontestable fact.² Felton makes the estimate that the number of self-supporting churches is "probably between ten and twenty percent".³ However, it is also a well known fact that in some places the plan for an annual percentage reduction in foreign subsidy has failed completely. This has been due to the fact that the plan has been modified or held in abeyance because of unpredictable famines, bandit scourges or some other financial difficulty.⁴

One of the reasons why this plan has encountered difficulties in some places is that the artificial scale of salaries adopted under mission subsidy makes impossible any appreciable advance toward self-support. During the years when expenses were being met with foreign funds, the church saw no reason to object; under the subsidy-reduction plan, they disclaim either the power or the duty of meeting the salary scale which the mission has established.⁵

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1. Felton, op.cit., p. 27
2. The World Mission of the Church, p. 100
3. Felton, op. cit., p. 27
4. Lacy, Carleton, "Self-support in the Chinese Church", Int'l Review of Missions, 1938, p. 246
5. Griffith, J.C., "Self-support" Chinese Recorder, 1925 p. 797

Recent writers in periodicals have stressed the fact that the plan is not functioning as effectively as it might, and are urging that more drastic curtailments in subsidy be made.¹

"The surveys show that the Younger Churches could do more to support themselves than they are now doing. There are latent resources in the environment which they have not yet learned to use. The capacity of the members to give has not yet been exhausted. In some congregations the financial burden is borne by a few who are tithers, while other members pay nothing. Any form of mission subsidy that does for the Younger Churches what they can do for themselves and thus prevents them from making a larger use of local resources is a mistaken kindness that hinders their growth and should be avoided."²

To enable the churches to accelerate their program of subsidy reduction, the suggestion is made that a group of villages supporting several pastors in local churches, reorganize themselves into a circuit which could be served by one or two itinerant pastors.³ Under this plan mission subsidy would be continued for a time, but full self-support would be realized at a much earlier date.

Another suggestion comes from a Chinese minister speaking in a missionary conference in America. He would

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1. Cf. McLeish, Alexander, "Complexities of Self-support", Int'l Review of Missions, 1943, p. 136
2. Wasson, A.W., "The Support of the Younger Churches", Int'l Review of Missions, 1943, p. 134, referring to a series of studies being made by Mr. J. Merle Davis under the International Missionary Council.
3. The World Mission of the Church, p. 100

encourage rural pastors to assume part-time work during the week, thus enabling them to be partly self-supporting, and partly-supported by the congregation.¹ Many times, however, when the minister begins to devote himself to part-time secular work, it soon occupies the major part of his time.² Nevertheless, this suggestion of the Chinese minister is reinforced by the view of a missionary in a similar conference:

"Personally, I am convinced that the minister should not live either in whole or in part, from foreign money. If the church can not, or will not, adequately support him, let it be understood that it is ethical and proper to supplement his income with another occupation. The Chinese will work it out in the long run....and on a Chinese pattern."³

b. The Program of Immediate Elimination of Subsidy. The suggestion of this radical change in policy was first made by Dr. John Nevius in his work in Shantung, and it was this phase of the "Nevius Plan" to which his colleague, Dr. Mateer, took exception.⁴ Before looking

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1. China Planning Committee, digest of reports, p. 9
2. In the writer's experience he contacted one Chinese pastor who began to sell medicines to supplement his salary. Soon the business took so much of his time that he had to neglect his pastoral duties. When his people objected, he offered to preach for them with no salary, but with the privilege of retaining the church buildings as his residence and place of business. At first the church was glad to accept the offer, but later were forced to ask for his resignation, because the church was deteriorating.
3. China Planning Committee, digest of reports, p. 6
4. Cf. Chapter I of this thesis.

at the adaptations of this plan which have appeared in China in more recent years, it is best to determine the basic principles of the plan as they were worked out in the proving ground of Korea.

Probably the thing for which the Nevius Plan is best known is the fact that no foreign funds are provided for the support of pastors of single churches. However, the basic principle of the self-support phase of the plan, is personal missionary evangelism with wide itineration.¹ With the missionary travels at least one trained native Helper. Each group of believers, as soon as it is formed begins to pay towards the support of the Helper. As soon as a number of such groups are established, they are organized into a circuit, with a Helper as the itinerant pastor, his salary being paid by the circuit. As the groups grow stronger, the circuit is divided, and then subdivided, until each group is a self-sustaining unit with its own pastor.

As a corollary to the above, it is stated that the rental of all buildings used by the groups is to be provided by the group itself.² Under this is also included the incidental expenses of light, heat and general upkeep.

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1. Clark, op.cit., p. 42

2. The Economic Basis of the Church, p. 234

In China as far back as 1932, a missionary wrote of a financial plan which is essentially the same as that used in Korea.¹ He very definitely advocated a change from the plan of subsidization to one of self-support, with initial grants-in-aid to infant churches in circuits.

Another mission which has instigated a plan of setting up self-supporting churches is that of the London Missionary Society.² The evangelism done by this Society is that by evangelistic bands, which remain in the center until the self-supporting church is fully established.

The Independent Church of Tsinan is an example of the financial as well as spiritual life that can be expected from the indigenous Church in China.³ In 1926 they dedicated new buildings which had been erected at a cost of over \$72,000 (local currency), all of which had been subscribed by Chinese donors.

Perhaps the most fitting climax to these examples of how the plan of self-support has worked in China would be the mission work done in China by the Presbyterian Church of Korea.⁴ Mission work was begun there in 1912.

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1. Main, W.A., "Plan for Self-support", The China Christian Advocate, November, 1932
2. Cf. Chapter III of this thesis.
3. "The Independent Church of Tsinan" (Editorial), Chinese Recorder, 1926, p. 463
4. Clark, C.A., "The Nevius Methods", Int'l Review of Missions, 1935, p. 233, also, Cf. Chapter II of this thesis.

By 1920, although no regular offerings were being made for the support of district expenses, yet a total of \$1,030 was given. In 1933, \$673 was raised for new district buildings and \$1,870 was given for evangelism---- in addition to which nine congregations had built their own church buildings.

c. A Suggested Plan for Inaugurating a Self-support Program. In Korea where the work was in its very infancy, it was comparatively easy to launch the Nevius Plan of self-support, but where the old methods of subsidizing the national church have been employed, real difficulties are encountered. Where the missions have assumed responsibilities towards their workers, such pledges can not be ignored, and in changing to the new program, can not be forgotten.

The first step in initiating the program is to require such congregations as are financially able to support a pastor, to do so at once. A church that can not assume self-support should join with another church or churches, to form a circuit that shall be able to support itself. It was the suggestion of Dr. Nevius that any pastors left over after such a re-arrangement, might be made evangelists to non-Christians in unevangelized regions.¹

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1. Clark, C.A., The Nevius Plan of Mission Work in Korea, p. 41

4. Necessity of Missionary Unity as Regards Self-support.

Getting a whole mission to adhere consistently to a self-support plan is a difficult matter; it is so very easy to slip back into the less-troublesome policy of subsidization. To put across the program it is first of all necessary to have a group of missionaries who as a unit believe in the principle, and covenant to apply it courageously. One missionary who either secretly or indirectly gives subsidy in any form, can break down the entire developing system.¹ Clark says that in Korea even today "every new missionary who arrives on the field.... is tried out by many of his parishoners to see what they can get out of him."²

C. The Function of Institutions in the National Church

There is considerable difference of opinion on the part of missionaries as to whether educational and medical work constitutes an integral part of the work of the national church. Some feel that the missions can keep the control of these institutions, without infringing on the rights of the Chinese Church at all.³ Others feel

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1. Clark, op.cit., p. 272

2. Ibid.

3. "Evolution of Devolution" (A Symposium), Chinese Recorder, 1926, p. 716

that educational and philanthropic work is a fundamental part of the Christian witness, and should be carried on by the nationals. However, even they favor a gradual transfer of control.¹ Dr. Latourette, while urging the missions to build up the church to the point where it can take over the control of institutions, yet feels that it is impossible to make that change now.²

Even in Korea, where the church has more of an indigenous character than in any other country of the Orient, little has been done to turn institutions over to the church. Some Bible Institute buildings and equipment has been turned over to the church, but that is about the extent of devolution of institutional work.³ The large Severance Union Hospital and Medical College in Seoul has property valued at approximately a million dollars. It is felt that this is entirely too great a responsibility for the church to assume as yet.⁴

Dr. Francis Wei, president of Hua Chung University says that Christian colleges cannot be expected to be self-supporting for years to come.⁵ However, in regard

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1. "Evolution of Devolution", p. 716
2. Latourette, K.S., "A Suggestion toward Re-orientation of Mission Policy", Int'l Review of Missions, 1934, p.410
3. Clark, op.cit., p. 233
4. Ibid., p. 237
5. At Foreign Missions Conference, New York City, November 16, 1945.

to hospitals, the English Baptist Church in Shantung reports that in one place 82% and in another, 65% of the local running expenses are met by the Chinese.¹

Thus it would appear that while the ideal in self-support is to have the church assume full responsibility for the institutions, yet the fact remains that in the foreseeable future the church is not going to be equal to it. This, however, is no reflection on the church; when it is financially able, it will most certainly desire to meet its responsibility. In the meantime, the need for institutions is as great, if not greater than ever, and until the church can assume control, the responsibility for operation must be in the hands of the mission.

D. Mission Policy in Regard to Ownership of Property

When missionaries return to China following this war, it is generally agreed that they are going to face greatly altered conditions.² One of the reasons for this, aside from the changes which the ravages of war have wrought, is the fact that the legal status of Foreigners has been altered by the abrogation of Extraterritoriality Rights. The Foreigner will now be subject to Chinese

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1. "Evolution of Devolution", p. 718

2. China Planning Committee, Conference in Columbus, Ohio, October, 1944, p. 3

law and Chinese courts. All property titles can be challenged.¹ This fact, coupled with the forced² signing over of property to the Chinese Church under Japanese occupation, makes the formulation of a concrete policy in regard to property, practically impossible.

1. Church Buildings.

Under the Nevius Plan it is customary to expect the local church to provide its own place of meeting, and several missions in China have likewise adhered to this policy.³

"They meet first today, as in the period before 1901, in some one's house; then when the congregation gets too large for that, a nearby thatch dwelling is bought and the partitions torn out to make one large room. Later a church building may be erected especially, and so on. At each stage the congregation is able to erect as much of a plant as it needs, so there is no need of subsidies."⁴

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1. China Planning Committee, Conference in Columbus, Ohio October, 1944, p. 3
2. In 1941, all mission leaders in the city of Peiping were "invited" by the Japanese military to a tea given in a local hotel. The men were forcibly retained there until they agreed to sign over all mission property to the Japanese-sponsored Church Federation. Presumably this same procedure was followed in other parts of Occupied China. (Missionary Interview) Also, Cf. China Planning Committee, Pasadena, California, September, 1944, p. 2
3. The English Baptist Church in Shantung, The Presbyterian Church of Korea (Shantung), The London Missionary Society, and also Cf. Griffith, J.C., "Self-support", Chinese Recorder, December 1925, p. 794-800.
4. Clark, op.cit., p. 129

Dr. Wei, in discussing his plan for the "Four-Center Church" consisting of four "cells"¹ of growth and development in the church, says "Don't build first; meet in the local primary school if the home is too small."² He feels that if the laity is properly trained, when the church becomes large enough to need a building, it will build it without mission aid.

2. Missionary Residences.

In Missionary Conferences here in America, it appears that there is general agreement that the mission compound is a symbol of spiritual isolation, and so should be abolished.³ The missionary home must be more simply built than most of the residences heretofore. The reason for this is not so much because of the effect upon the Christians, although that is involved, but rather because of the effect upon the general public. "Missionary compounds are ecclesiastical concessions, and they have no more place in the new China than have the other foreign concessions."⁴

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1. The Cell of Christian Living, The Cell of Social Service, The Cell of Christian Education, The Cell of Christian Fellowship.
2. Foreign Missions Conference, New York City, November 16, 1945
3. China Planning Committee, Berkeley, California, September, 1944
4. Ibid., digest of reports, p. 22

In general, the recommendation is that if the compounds have been destroyed in the course of the war, they should not be rebuilt; if they have not been destroyed, they should be shared with the Chinese leaders. "The outlay for missionaries' residences should be in modest ratio to the expenditures for the major needs of reconstruction and rehabilitation of the Christian program."¹

D. Summary

The basic problem which remains to be solved after the autonomy of the national church has been assured, is that of its relationship with the mission. Quite naturally, the major part of this question has to do with the financial arrangements for the support of the church. However, the function of institutions, and the policy regarding ownership of property are also included in this adjustment of relationship.

The economic situation in China, with its very low standard of living is doubtless the greatest obstacle in the way of self-support. Coupled with this is the lack of any tradition for the support of religious workers, which accounts in part for the lack of enthusiasm for self-support. Furthermore, the lavish use of foreign

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1. China Planning Committee, Conference at Richmond, Va., September, 1944

funds in China on the part of the missions has contributed in a large measure to the lackadaisical attitude.

The only substantial basis on which to build a program of self-support is that of Christian stewardship as taught in Scripture. Only as believers are taught to dedicate not only self, but also time and means, can an adequate appeal be made for self-support. Methods of encouraging systematic giving can be employed, such as the use of the envelope system, and the giving of produce rather than money.

There are two plans for the termination of subsidy: gradual and immediate. The former plan has been employed generally in China, and in some places has resulted in consistent reduction of foreign subsidy, but its own advocates confess that the plan is not functioning as it had been intended. The latter plan is that which purposes to demand self-support from the very time a new group of believers is organized. The circuit of believer-groups is visited regularly by a mission-paid evangelist until the groups become large enough to support their own pastor.

How soon the institutions which the mission has set up in China, can be turned over to the church is indeed problematical. At least there is little possibility that such a transfer of control can be made in the near future. This is undoubtedly the last step in the devolu-

tion of responsibility upon the national church, and by no means should be done until the church is completely indigenous, and able to assume the responsibility.

In the plan being considered in this thesis, there is no problem regarding the ownership of church property, for that is definitely in the hands of the nationals from the moment of organization as a local church. In view of the need of missionaries' aligning themselves more completely with the people of China, it is recommended that missionary residences be built along simpler lines, and if built in compounds, that the compounds be shared with Chinese co-workers.

CHAPTER V

GENERAL SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

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A. Re-statement of the Problem

The aim of every missionary enterprise is to produce in its respective field a national church which will be self-propagating, self-governing, and self-supporting. While much progress has been made in China toward this goal, yet it is apparent that such a church has not yet taken shape. However, the events of the past few years have clearly shown the possibility of developing a truly indigenous church. The Christian Nationals of China have evidenced their ability to assume leadership, and have been responsible for the maintenance of the Christian witness during the war years. As the missionaries resume their work in China, the problem is how to adjust to the situation so as to encourage the development of indigenization. Essentially what are the changes in missionary policy which will be involved?

B. Summary

The first change in mission policy which is necessary to make possible the establishment of an indigenous church is the adjustment of attitude. This must find expression first in the missionary's attitude toward the

national leader, and as a result of that, it is hoped that there will result a change in the national's attitude toward the missionary. The missionary must assume the attitude of co-labourer with the Chinese National leader.

Another change in mission policy that will be involved in developing an indigenous church is the adjustment of the mission program to the new situation. This change in policy has a three-fold implication: (1) the training of nationals for leadership, (2) the administration of the churches, and (3) the work of evangelism.

The part which the missionary plays in the mission program must necessarily be decreasingly pre-eminent, and in order for the national to take the missionary's place, leaders must be recruited and trained to assume the places of responsibility in the national church. After the nationals have been trained for leadership, there is the need of accomodating the program of the mission to the unique situations and circumstances of China so that the church can be efficiently administrated by the national leaders. Under the leadership of the nationals, the responsibility of the church is witnessing, which must be expressed not only in personal evangelism but also in an organized endeavor to take the message to the unevangelized.

A still further change in mission policy should be that of adjustment in relationship between the National Church and the Mission Boards. In the change of program mentioned above, the church is made autonomous in government and also independent in sustaining itself spiritually---in other words, self-governing and self-propagating. In this adjustment of relationship between the church and the mission, the matter of financial independence figures largely. Until self-support is achieved, the church cannot be said to be truly indigenous.

Although there are numerous obstacles to any program of self-support, yet it has been clearly shown in several parts of the Orient that it can be achieved if the program is built to fit the ability of the people and is adhered to strictly.

C. Conclusion

The first three chapters of this thesis contain less controversial material than does the last chapter. It is quite prevalent knowledge that the attitude of the Westerner toward the Oriental has not been all that it should have been; that there must be a change in this attitude in order to produce the church for which all are working; and that an adjustment of program is essential,

---although some might take exception to some of the changes in program which have been suggested.

The chapter dealing with the change in financial policy is, however, highly controversial. Moreover, it is this very fact which has made that chapter the unique contribution of this thesis to the life-work of the writer. The comparatively brief missionary experience of the writer, corroborated by the results of this study, has convinced him that self-support is the determining factor in indigenization. If this is true, then the achievement of self-support in turn dictates the nature of the mission program which alone can lead to self-support.

The indigenous church, then, must be thought of not in terms of medical, educational or social institutions, but rather in terms of the local rural parish. With the achievement of not only self-government and self-propagation, but also self-support, the National Church is then ready to assume its responsibility in regard to institutions. Even in this, however, the guiding principle must be: establish only those institutions for which it is reasonable to expect the National Church to be able to assume responsibility.

Let the missions therefore spend a far greater share of their energy and resources upon rural evangelism and the building up there of indigenous local parishes.

Let the work of education, and in fact the work of all institutions, be considered but the process of "pump-priming"---for only as we train leaders who will in turn win and train other leaders, can the witness of the Lord Jesus Christ be established in the hearts of men and women of China. This purpose must be kept dominant, and all other phases of Christian service, however worthwhile and needful though they may be, must hold a secondary place.

As to the practicality of this philosophy and program of missions, the writer needs only to point to the already mentioned results which this approach has seen in China, and even more so, in Korea. If the results of less than a half-century of labor there have been so phenomenal, how limitless can be the expectations of the years of golden opportunity that lie ahead in China!

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