

# WOMEN and MISSIONS

JANUARY, 1926

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## The Big Enterprise of National Missions

By William R. King

Dr. King is one of the two secretaries of the Division of General Promotion of the Board of National Missions.

**T**HE work of the Board of National Missions is more extensive and comprehensive than the church realizes. It is the largest board of the Presbyterian denomination. It is one of the largest mission boards in the United States or in the world, of any denomination. While we do not want to boast of its bigness, nor depend upon mere size, which unfortunately we Americans are too prone to do, it is essential that every Presbyterian should know the facts about the cause of National Missions and the board which is representing the church in this cause. I want, therefore, to give some facts about the field, the force, the finances, and the faith of the Board of National Missions.

### THE FIELD OF NATIONAL MISSIONS

For the first time in the history of American Presbyterianism are we able to say that the field is co-extensive with the nation. The Board is carrying on some form of missionary work in every state of the Union, in Alaska, and in the West Indies. The field falls naturally into two general divisions:

#### THE COUNTRY FIELD

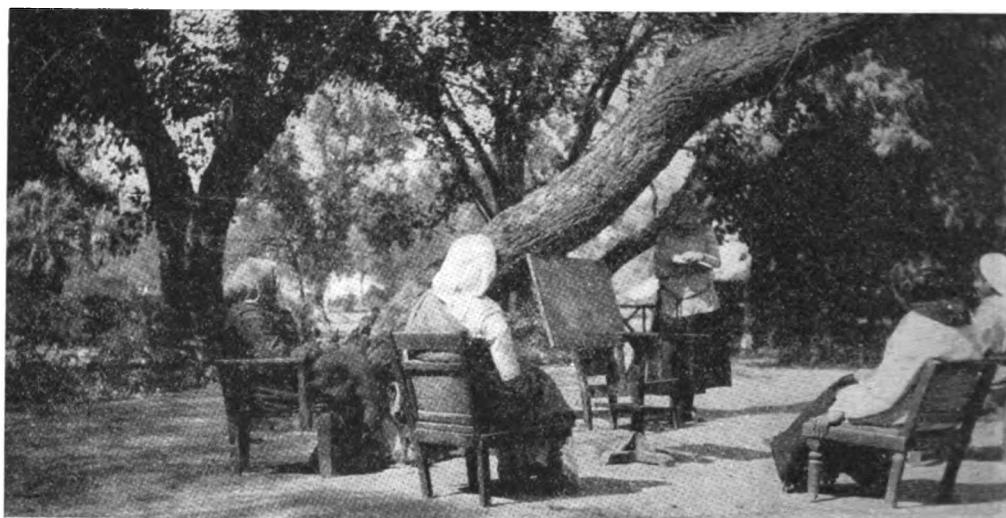
More than 51,400,000 people live in the country sections of the United States. Of these 31,000,000 people live on farms. In 33 states more than half of the population live in the country. In nine states more than three-quarters of the population live in the country. All states south of Ohio and the Potomac and two states west of the Mississippi are predominantly rural. The Institute

of Social and Religious Survey says there are 73,230 different communities in town and country. These have 101,000 churches, but there are 10,000 communities that have no church of any kind. In 34,000 communities there are churches, but no resident pastors. In 16,000 are churches with part-time pastors. Only 16% of our rural population is enrolled in churches, and one-quarter of these are non-resident or inactive.

The country presents to the church a great challenge—the challenge of unreached communities and unsaved multitudes. The new day in America calls for a new approach to the country problem and a more vigorous effort to plant and strengthen the country church.

#### THE CITY FIELD

For the first time in the history of this country, the city comes to the front and claims the majority of our population—52% of our people living in the cities. There are 68 cities of over 100,000, with a total population of 27,000,000. This is a new thing in America. In 1800 there were only six cities in the United States with over 8,000 people. In fact, the big city is a new thing in the world. London is 2,000 years old, but four-fifths of its population have been added during the last century. Paris has increased fourfold in the last 100 years. Petrograd has multiplied threefold in the last 75 years. Apparently this growth of the big city cannot be stopped. From the days of Justinian and earlier, laws against the growth of the big city have



AN OUTDOOR COLLEGE CLASS IN INDIA

## Foreign Missions Month

By Margaret E. Hodge

First Vice-President of the Board of Foreign Missions

“ALVINO LOPEZ, who lived near Tapachula, Mexico, was threatened with death if he should continue to hold to the Protestant faith. One night he was shot and killed from ambush as he opened the door of his home. A memorial service was held there by the little congregation of twenty people. Afterwards they gathered at the Tapachula chapel on horseback, and took a solemn oath with uplifted hands to be true to the Protestant faith, to preach the gospel, and, in memory of their fallen comrade, to win others to Christ. They kept this pledge, and in the eighteen intervening months, in the face of persecution and threat of death, brought 132 individuals into the church. Such a spirit is invincible.”

This incident, told by Secretary W. Reginald Wheeler in his book, *Modern Missions in Mexico*, shows that our church is caring for a living work and not a mere budget.

The month of January is designated as the special time to consider our overseas responsibility in four continents. The newest, and perhaps the least familiar, is

that of cooperation with our Protestant fellow-Christians in Europe. Many church buildings were destroyed during the war, and as three-quarters of the Protestants there are in financial distress, they can do little towards rehabilitation. Their work has suffered; that of non-evangelicals has been strengthened; Protestantism on the continent is in grave danger. Yet remarkable revivals have occurred and thousands are coming to Christ. One of their great needs is for ministers to train these new converts, and our gifts of money—and perhaps quite as much our sympathy and prayers—have greatly heartened them.

The foreign missions enterprise has never encountered greater difficulties than those before it to-day, even though its encouragements are also greater. The Christian attitude towards race relations, “the rising tide of nationalism,” the relations of missions to governments are forced upon our thinking. It is the duty not only of the small group of men and women on the Board of Foreign Missions, but of every member of the church to be intelligent on all these matters.

In the old days the non-Christian governments, and sometimes Christian governments also, opposed the missionaries. But now Christian missions are recognized in every land as having accomplished great philanthropic and educational results, and new problems are arising. We are bringing western culture and ideals, we have at times confused civilization with Christianity, we have gone to Latin America and the Orient with an air of superiority which has given them ground to use Job's sarcasm and say to us, "No doubt ye are the people and wisdom shall die with you. But I have understanding as well as you, I am not inferior to you." If there ever was a time when such an attitude could be ignored, it is long past, and if we are to win, we must conciliate. We must acknowledge our sin in appealing to war instead of to the method of arbitration which China has practised for over 4000 years. (Until her contact with the West she held a soldier in low esteem.) We must realize how our hurry and "efficiency" and brusqueness unfavorably impress those who practise the gentle arts of courtesy in Japan and Latin America and elsewhere. We must constantly study Paul's sermon on Mars Hill and emulate him in his readiness to see what is good in other cultures and religions, as well as in his boldness in holding up Christ in all His fulness as the only hope of the world.

Through all these years we have been urging the Chinese students to think; we have taught love of country; we have told of the abundant life in Christ. But many in China have considered that Christ belongs to the West, that we are trying to denationalize them. Are we westerners altogether free from blame for such deductions? Have we pointed to western civilization as the highest type and as the inevitable result of Christianity? In the light of the past ten years can we blame them for saying they prefer their own religion, without also blaming ourselves (not the missionaries) for giving them the opportunity to say that "Christianity has been tried and found wanting"? Shall we not rather set ourselves to prove that "Christianity has been found difficult and has not been

tried" except by individuals, many of whom live in the Orient as well as in the Occident? Surely when a non-Christian Indian says that "Christ is the only person who is bidding for the loyalty of the world," he is consciously or unconsciously quoting Christ Himself: "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me."

And how He is being lifted up by our representatives in all parts of the world, to maharajah and to sweeper, to those who live in hourly fear of spirits, to those who in their pride of learning say that there is no God, to the rich and the poor, to the self-satisfied and the despised, to women and children for whom their own religion has nothing of comfort, to the leper, the factory worker, to all who are in bodily and in spiritual need. In the beginning of our work, all this had to be done by foreigners with imperfect command of their language and no understanding of their way of thinking. But today, in addition to the 1589 American Presbyterian men and women, there are thousands of trained full time nationals and many more thousands who are giving part time to this blessed work. The foreign and indigenous staff in one hospital, by a well worked out plan, has established twenty-four churches in the last three years, won 625 new Christians and has largely financed this program.

Not many years ago, it was death for a Moslem to openly confess Christ in Syria or Persia and most of the work had to be done by indirect methods. Today they are accessible to direct preaching and there are many churches with members who are converts from Mohammedanism.

This is the year in which North America is studying Latin America. It is a wonderful opportunity to really become acquainted with its charm of scenery, its economic possibilities, its cultured people, its neglected Indians, its need of the living Christ, its strong evangelical church and the way in which we may cooperate with it in taking Him to that continent. Within the last year we Presbyterians have again had brought home to us the fact that we have the responsibility of evangelizing Colombia and Venezuela and are doing it so poorly

that we ought to invite other denominations to help or else do a better piece of work ourselves. And in the other Latin America countries we do pitifully little.

The critical war situation in Syria and the crisis in China demand constant prayers. We should give constructive thinking to the problems involved and use our influence that China may have fair treatment in the revision of treaties. Siam, our sole Presbyterian responsibility, has fewer missionaries now than in 1921, largely due to death and resignations because of health breakdown. And these deaths and breakdowns could be ameliorated if there were a sufficient force to prevent overwork. Yet the Siamese Church is assuming increasing



By Mrs. R. G. Coonradt

MATCH BOXES BY THE THOUSANDS

responsibility for evangelizing Siam and for foreign missions work, as the story of the Yunnan mission vividly illustrates. Equally urgent calls come from other countries, but at present there are not enough qualified young men and women to meet these calls.

In May the Board of Foreign Missions reported to the General Assembly that "it had paid all its bills and was \$1,000,000 short," to use the vivid phraseology of one of the secretaries. This meant that the work already undertaken was being maintained, but that practically no expansion of any sort could be undertaken as the Board did not feel warranted in authorizing anything but the bare necessities unless the money was actually in hand. The share of the

total budget apportioned to the women and young people was met, but *only one synodical society in the whole United States paid its full apportionment.* The gifts from the synodicals were supplemented by interest on invested funds and similar resources, instead of using these gifts to help with the needs which normal growth calls for. Because the Board "was short \$1,000,000," some of the missionaries continued to live in unsanitary houses for which high rent was being paid, in houses owned by the Board that were not in proper repair; evangelists who were greatly needed were not engaged; children and young people were turned away from all our schools, and every other kind of advance was halted. Seventy-five new missionaries were sent out, yet the missionary force at the beginning of this year was actually eleven less than the year before, owing to deaths, honorable retirement and other losses.

A slowing up of the work like this can happen for one year without serious results, but to continue over any length of time would be fatal. Therefore, during this month the church is urged to bend its efforts towards realizing the total budget and to *remit promptly* in order to avoid further payment of interest on borrowed money. For example, at the end of the first quarter of this fiscal year, the women and young people were \$74,000 short of their first quarterly payment. In July and August the Board of Foreign Missions borrowed \$74,000. *The interest on that amount was enough to support a missionary for six months.*

There are certain definite suggestions to follow during the month of January:

*As members of Woman's Missionary Organizations:* 1. To plan for the full and prompt payment of the last quarter's gifts, remembering that this means not only the budget of the local society, but that the strong must help the weak and that each one has real responsibility for the budgets of presbyterial and synodical societies. 2. To give toward the work of the Board rather than in response to special appeals. If the women had given in this way last year, they would doubtless have met their whole apportionment. These gifts to the missionaries and for their

work are truly needed, but the groups of missionaries have themselves decided that what is in the budget of the Board is the most essential for the whole work. Many societies have turned aside from the most important to that of secondary importance. 3. To know what missionaries and stations we are supporting and what their work is, so as to give as partners in the business and not simply "to raise money." 4. To discharge the special responsibility of the women in helping the young people to understand these points and to intelligently accept their share of the work rather than to give blindly and under compulsion.

*As members of the Church:* To help in every possible way the pastor and session in their plans for bringing foreign missions before the church and in making special gifts to *lift the level*. A special leaflet is prepared for the women's organizations showing just how they can cooperate. If the pastor happens not to have received his material, suggest that he write to the district office or to the Board for the packet of helps.

Last, and most important, is the need of prayer. It is interesting to go back to India in 1858 and read the first call for the Week of Prayer issued by our Mission, just after the close of the mutiny and at the time of the wonderful revivals in the United States. The call

ends: "That all God's people of every name and nation, of every continent and island, be cordially and earnestly invited to unite with us in the petition that God would now pour out His Spirit upon all



TWO YOUNG PERSIA MISSIONARIES AT  
THANKSGIVING DINNER  
DOROTHY ANN COCHRAN AND  
CHRISTY WILSON, JR.

flesh so that all the ends of the earth might see His salvation."

Women who have been studying *Prayer and Missions* have had brought anew to their minds God's faithfulness in response to prayer; and so the Board of Foreign Missions is today particularly emphasizing Christ's command, "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest."

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## Curiosity in China

A YEAR ago, Mr. Harry A. Franck, the well-known traveler and writer, arranged an itinerating trip with Rev. H. G. Romig, of Tengkhsien, Shantung. They wheelbarrowed together through the sacred land of Mencius, and in Mr. Franck's book, *Wanderings in North China*, in the chapter entitled "Itinerating in Shantung," there is a correct and picturesque description of itinerating as seen by an onlooker with insight and splendid powers of observation. Mr. Franck says:

"Itinerating missionaries in China can scarcely avoid living up to the Biblical injunction to 'Suffer little children to come,' for the first appearance at the edge of town is the signal for a flocking from all directions, not merely of all the boys and girls who are not restrained but of a generous collection of men of all ages and even some of the women.

"It is not of course to the advantage of the missionary to drive off the crowds that gather about him, for he has come to China for the purpose mainly of addressing crowds, and every tendency towards exclusiveness is so much setback to his chosen work. Naturally, too, it is not fitting in the guest of an itinerating missionary to throw cups of tea or mud bricks in the faces of the compact mob through which may be scattered some of the host's converts, however strong the temptation may become. During all our stay in Chung-Hsin-Dien, therefore, we were like kings at a levee—if we are to believe that kings were ever so thickly attended during the exchange of their nighties for their breeches. . . . To be stared at unbrokenly hour after hour by a motionless throng becomes at times the most exasperating of experiences."