

BULLETIN No. 20

The Challenge of the Native Church

The one great outstanding fact in the history of the Board of Foreign Missions, the past year, is the development of the Native Church. The record of the Native Church for a single year is a distinct challenge to the Home Church.

THIS IS A CHALLENGE OF THE MATERIAL

The contributions from the native sources last year (the larger amount of this coming from the Christian constituency) amounted to nearly \$350,000 gold. Average wage in the various mission fields, less than 20 cents a day. Average wage in the United States, \$1.50. The native contributions on any fair basis of comparison amount to more than two million dollars. Even making due allowance for monies received from non-Christian sources the sum thus contributed is very large. It is amazing that between two and two and a half million dollars should have been received by the Board from native sources.

If we examine in detail the various missions the wonder grows. The West Africa Mission contributed this year nearly \$6,000 gold. Financially it is one of the weakest mission fields in the world. Every church in the West Africa Presbytery is self-supporting. This cannot be said of any presbytery in New York or Pennsylvania, or any other of the great or small synods of our Church. It is said that in his native state all the roots of the African's nature were exhausted in the production of one sterile orchid—the warrior without a conscience. Be it so. The Gospel in West Africa has so changed this sterile orchid, this unproductive, listless, immoral, lazy African that he is willing to give of his substance to build churches, support ministers and to send the Gospel to the regions beyond.

The Korean is far removed, both geographically and racially, from the African. Our fellow Koreans last year raised \$77,000. The wages of a Korean carpenter are 25 cents a day. It is only fair, therefore, to multiply this \$77,000 by at least seven and a half. Here is a total of a half million dollars raised by a people who, according to certain recent authorities, lack initiative, power of self-government; are lazy, servile and incapable of any aggressive action. One stands in wonder at this marvelous exhibition of money consecration on the part of Korean Christians. Nor is this all.

Absence from home and from religious surroundings apparently does not wither the grace of giving in the Korean heart. In the year 1905, 1,033 Koreans—men, women and children—emigrated to Yucatan, Mexico. In this number were four Christians. In the last fiscal year over two hundred and fifty Christians were added to the church roll, and these Koreans recently established a Korean Presbyterian Mission Home in the City of Merida, Mexico. Funds sufficient were raised to bring from Los Angeles, California, two evangelists, all expenses paid. We doubt whether this can be paralleled by any body of emigrants the world over.

Last year the Board of Foreign Missions spent among the Japanese on the Pacific Coast \$6,155. The Japanese gave \$6,425 for the work, yet many cultured and refined American people would debar the Japanese from the country, declaring that the yellow race is inferior to the Anglo-Saxon. The Church's answer is the quality of the Christian character manifested by these strangers during a year when it has not been easy for them to exercise Christian graces in a so-called Christian land.

In 1906, in India, there was formed a National Missionary Society. It was organized by native Christians. It was officered by native Christians. Its aim was to carry the Gospel to the millions of India, to whom as yet no foreign missionary had ministered. Of the three hundred million people in India only a small portion have as yet been reached by the missionary. The native Christians formed this great society to evangelize their own land. During the Week of Prayer last year, when an offering was taken at Ratnagiri, the girls in the Orphan's School had nothing to contribute for this National Missionary Society. They requested that the meat served them once a week—and costing about a rupee—should be omitted for a month. This was done, and the four rupees were sent to the National Missionary Society to aid in evangelizing India's millions. These are not isolated instances. Many more could be cited, all occurring during the past year. They constitute a CHALLENGE TO THE CHURCH AT HOME.

THE CHALLENGE OF SERVICE

The report of the year shows that 946 missionaries were in the employ of the Board; in the previous year there were 948. Yet the ingathering in the churches this year was between 10,400 and 10,500; last year, 10,000. Here is an increase of between forty and fifty per cent., and that with a fewer number of missionaries at work on the field. The native Christian has developed an evangelistic zeal which is a distinct challenge to the Church at home.

The Philippine Mission was established only ten years ago; the number of converts is 10,000. On the Island of Cebu two missionaries and their wives and one medical missionary comprise the total force. Last year 700 members were added to the Church. At ISLOB a new church, numbering hundreds, has risen within a few years—the direct result of the labors of native Christians. It was the zeal of these native Christians, not the labor of the missionary, that founded the church and extended the Kingdom. At ALBAY, on the Island of Luzon, the missionary and his wife have been absent on their furlough during the year. The native Christians have maintained sixteen preaching places, the entire church membership has remained loyal, and numerous unpaid, unsalaried workers have kept the fires of evangelical Christianity burning brightly with only occasional visits from the missionary.

At VALPARAISO, Chile, within a few months more than one hundred persons have come out and openly confessed their faith in Christ. This was not due to any zeal or extra labor performed by the missionary, but so far as can be judged is the direct result of the evangelistic spirit of the men and women who but yesterday were without hope and having no God in the world.

The fact that in Korea 5,400 persons have been baptized during the year is significant, but not half so significant as that 8,000 have been enrolled in the list of catechumens—that is, those who have forsaken their former false faiths and accepted Christ. The missionary in Korea has no time to preach to the unsaved man. His entire time is occupied in training those who have already broken with their past. One can hardly credit the figures, that in a single year the native Christians in Korea, most of whom were without a knowledge of Christ a few years ago, have brought out of darkness into the light more than eight thousand persons. This is a distinct challenge to every Christian in the home land.

It is not, however, numbers alone that mark the growth of the native Church. The additions to the Church in Africa have not been large—less than three hundred. The remarkable fact, however, has been the very large increase in the numbers of those interested in the Gospel. At Elat four years ago the ordinary Sunday congregation was less than eight hundred. On the first Sunday of March, 1909, 2,183 persons were gathered in the new church at Elat. The back of the building had to be entirely removed to accommodate the crowds. What is still more remarkable: In the Sunday-school on that day there were 1,855, of whom 1,018 were women and girls. The de-

velopment of the work among the women and girls is doubly significant. Practically all this growth and the vast increase in the pupils at the station schools and the village schools—all the latter of which are self-supporting—is due to the evangelical zeal and consecration of the African Christian. He not only gives of his money, which is remarkable, but he gives of his service, spending time and strength in leading men to a knowledge of the Gospel.

The record of the year is suggestive in the number of great spiritual awakenings on the foreign field, largely the result of the devotion of the native Church. In Mexico a group of missionaries and of native Christians gathered in an upper room for a season of three days of prayer. Churches and schools throughout the Mexican Mission felt the benign influence of this gathering. Practically every student in the Coyoacan College confessed Christ, and all the girls in the Normal School at Saltillo have accepted Christ as Lord and Master.

Moved by the preaching of a Chinese evangelist, Rev. Ding Li Mei, a group of boys in the junior and senior classes at Wei Hsien College, Shantung, expressed a desire to study for the ministry, many hundreds having been moved by the revival at Wei Hsien.

In NANKING a special series of services under the care of a Canadian missionary, Mr. Goforth, have produced remarkable results. The Chinese erected a large tent accommodating some 1,500 persons, and this tent was filled day after day.

The confession of sins on the part of the native Christians was most striking, especially the statement of those who with tears declared that since finding Christ they had failed to make an effort to lead father, mother, brother or sister to Christ. Where is the parallel of this to be found in any land?

This year the Japanese Christian Church is celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the introduction of Christianity into Japan. The Japanese Church began the celebration not by great meetings and eulogies of leaders, such as Dr. Hepburn, Dr. Brown and Dr. Verbeck, who did so much for Japan in the earlier days of Christianity, but by the gathering of Japanese Christians in convocation, to pray and to plan for an evangelistic campaign whose object, as stated in the meeting, was that by March, 1910, the entire membership of the Japanese Church should be doubled. At the close of these remarkable gatherings a Japanese pastor arose and said: "What we must preach is Christ—the living Christ, Christ incarnate, Christ crucified, Christ dead and buried, Christ risen—the *living* Christ, the only hope of Japan." At this meeting a young Japanese who had spent ten years in China and knew the language offered to go to China as a missionary, and the leaders of this great gathering declared that "As Japan had sent her missionaries to Formosa and to Korea and to Manchuria, so, although the Chinese have been our enemies in war and are hostile in race, we must show that we love them and want them to love our Lord and Master."

When you consider that in Japan to-day there are not more than 50,000, or, on the outside, 100,000 Christians among 50,000,000 people, the foreign mission challenge which the Japanese Christian throws down to the Christian in the home land is most remarkable. It is the challenge of service—a challenge as old as the word of the Master—"By their fruits ye shall know them."

THE CHALLENGE OF THE LIFE

Better than what a man gives or what he does is what he is. The challenge of the life is the final test of the Gospel of Christ. In the great revival sweeping over China, one of the Chinese leaders declared, "It was left for Christianity to show what is meant by a new man, changed in heart as well as in outward appearance."

A few months ago, in the city of SEOUL, Marquis Ito, the Residing General in Korea, gave a dinner to distinguished Koreans, Japanese and Europeans. He delivered an address at the close of the banquet on the theme, "The Reason for My Sympathy with Christianity." It was the life of the Christian Japanese and Korean which profoundly impressed this leading Japanese statesman.

The life of the Christian Chinese has produced a great social uplift. New terms have come into the language, born of Christian life and work. One of the new

words is the term for *an ideal*, mean literally, "The thing you have your eye on." A group of new expressions with the following meanings have come into use, "Society," "reform," "the public good," "protection of life," "to volunteer one's services," "to do a favor."

A distinguished Chinese, not a Christian, said to a missionary, "Your schools are better than our Confucian schools because they *educate* the pupils, developing them both in knowledge and morals, whereas the Chinese practice is to hand out chunks of learning and ethical advice for the pupils to swallow or not as they choose."

One of the new stations opened this year in Korea was at KANG KAI. No missionary has ever permanently resided there until last fall, yet a church of 700 members and a constituency of 2,000 has been gathered. The building of the church was entrusted to native hands. Not one *sen*—one-half of a cent—was found to be wanting. The remarkable thing in connection with the work at Kang Kai was that when the missionary came to reside there the people, rejoicing in the progress of the work, declared that it would not be long ere in their city of 10,000 all would be brought to Christ. "These Koreans," wrote the missionary, "have no other thought than that the entire city will be brought to Christ, and I think God must have put this in their heart." WHAT A CHALLENGE IS THIS? O Korean, great is thy faith! We have not seen such faith, no, not in Christian America!

The first Korean foreign missionary returned this year from the Island of Quelpart to CHAI RYONG and gave a glowing account of his work: At Chai Ryong, which is 16 miles from the railroad, in the cold of winter 916 men enrolled in the Bible class. There are no hotels; the Bible students were crowded in private homes. Early in the evening the crowds in increasing numbers packed the dimly lighted building until it seemed there was not room for the knees, which, unfortunately, could not be left at the door as the shoes were. Most of the teaching was done by Korean leaders. Their *prayers* and addresses showed wonderful spiritual force. A jet black map containing a few white spots made plain the problem how their district was to be evangelized. These thousand men were impressed that it was their duty to make more white spots.

At TAIKU four hundred women gathered for Bible class. They were huddled into three or four rooms to sleep; they could not lie down. "They saw much bitterness in the night, but were willing to endure it for the unspeakable blessing received during the day from the teaching of the Word."

The Persian Christian is being tested by fire. In addition to the civil war raging in the great cities of Persia, bands of lawless Kurds, bent on robbery, murder and rapine, have destroyed many villages and brought terror in the hearts of thousands of people. In the midst of such trying scenes it is refreshing to read from the pen of the missionary of the steadfastness of the Persian Christian:—

"Poor little Aliawa church, in daily terror from the Kurds and suffering much from their hands and at the same time bereft of their pastor, have kept their services up all these months. There being no man sufficiently intelligent to take the lead, a graduate of Fiske Seminary (a woman) conducted the services each Sunday until the danger disappeared and some one was sent to look after them."

Remember that the entire constituency in all non-Christian lands will not equal 100,000 in the midst of 100,000,000. We bring our missionaries home because the surroundings are so depressing to intellectual and spiritual life. What shall we say of our fellow-Christians—the 100,000 in the midst of the 100,000,000 who, "denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, live soberly, righteously and godly in this present evil world?"

THIS IS THE CHALLENGE WHICH THE NATIVE CHURCH GIVES THE CHURCH AT HOME!

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