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INDO-CHINA REPORT, 1923

BY REV. E. F. IRWIN, TOURANE, FRENCH

INDO-CHINA.

"God working with them."

The watchword of the Indo-China Report for 1922 was "The sound of marching." We began the year with "Forward march," and God has been present at every step, on every station. The advance has continued, and we have tasted victory. Thus it seems appropriate that this year's motto should be "God working with them." The Psalmist says "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain."

Three new main stations and five new outstations have been opened since 1923. Our missionary force has increased, and our Annamese staff has nearly doubled. The hitherto untouched state, the kingdom of Cambodia has been entered with the Gospel. God has enabled us to plant our foot in one of the large centres of

the closed Protectorate of Annam. And everywhere the people have listened to the Good News of Christ our Saviour with open hearts. The membership of our Churches has more than doubled. The translation of the Annamese New Testament has been completed. It is now printed and in the hands of the people. Surely God is working with us.

BIBLE SCHOOLS

Our Bible Schools are the heart of our work. Here native young men and women are being trained to carry the Gospel far and near, reaching people whom the foreign missionary cannot reach. God is calling Annamese and Cambodians to His service, and the Bible schools are their training ground.

An advance step has been made this year in the opening of a Woman's Bible School. This is to

meet the need of efficient Bible Women, and also to give to the wives of our preachers and students the necessary training to fit them to be help-mates to their husbands in the great work of evangelizing the millions of Indo-China. At our Conference in September, Miss Frost and Miss Ailshouse were set apart for this work. This school was opened in October, and during these three months twelve women have been taking either full or part time classes.

MEN'S SCHOOL

God is working with us in the Men's Bible school too. Rev. D. I. Jeffrey who is in charge of this work reports the best year yet. In 1921 there were 12 students enrolled; in 1922 this number was increased to 18; and in 1923 the total enrollment was 26. Half of the 1923 student body is made up of new young men who have this year consecrated their lives to God's service and entered Bible School. Seven students are fully self-supporting, and five are partially so. Over one quarter of the total cost of student support is paid by the students themselves. This does not include amounts paid by missionaries or friends for the support of individual students, and is a good indication of whole-hearted consecration on the part of the students. We have made it a rule that under very exceptional circumstances,

we will not accept any new students who are not at least partially self-supporting.

Our policy has been to give the students alternate years in the Bible School and in the work on our stations. This has been done because we have been very short of native workers; but it has also proven to be an excellent method of training our men. The system prevents us from having a graduating class until five years is complete, but we feel that each year our native staff is stronger than ever before. A regular course of nineteen hours per week has been carried by the senior class, and sixteen hours by the juniors. Rev. H. T. Thua, Annamese Pastor of the Tourane Church, has done excellent work as assistant teacher. Splendid progress has been made in all classes, and a fine spiritual tone has been preserved in the school.

CAMBODIA

At the beginning of the year we were permitted to begin work in one of the hitherto unoccupied mission fields. Until this year no Protestant missionary effort has, as far as we know, ever been made in the Kingdom of Cambodia, one of the five great States of French Indo-China, a Protectorate of France. In February 1923, Rev. and Mrs. A. L. Hammond began work at Pnom-penh, the capital of this land, where King Sisowath, the

oldest living monarch, has his court; and keeps his five hundred wives in gorgeous oriental splendor.

The Cambodians are bigoted Buddhists. So much so that it has been said that it would be almost impossible for the Gospel to get a foothold among them. But God is "working with us," and in less than a year in Pnom-Penh, Mr. Hammond reports that seven have been baptized. Five of these are Annamese. Two are Cambodians, a young man and his wife, who are now in the Bible School preparing themselves to preach the Gospel to their own people. There are six who have given themselves to Christ and are candidates for baptism. There are also several Cambodian converts who have been baptized at Chaudoc station on the borders of Cambodia by Mr. Grupe. Twenty-five New Testaments, and three thousand Annamese Scripture portions have been sold; also 5,000 tracts and 1,500 Christian books. Some of these tracts and some two or three hundred Scripture portions were in Cambodian. These were eagerly sought after by the people, and our very limited supply was far too small. We obtained the scripture portions from Siam, but the entire stock is exhausted and there are no more obtainable. We are hoping as soon as possible

to translate the Scriptures into Cambodian, as we have done in Annamese, and are preparing to get a stock of Cambodian type, so that we can print them as well as tracts and other Christian literature for the Cambodians on our press in Hanoi.

Work in Cambodia, however, has not begun without considerable opposition from Satan and his followers. It is only because of "God working with them" that our missionaries have seen souls saved in their first year. Mr. Hammond writes: "Shortly after Conference our work was almost at a standstill, and the Annamese preacher was becoming discouraged. We found it difficult to get even one or two into the Chapel to listen. When we played the organ and sang, a number would gather around the doors, but as soon as we invited them to come in they would run away as though someone were chasing them! All seemed like failure, but God put it upon our hearts to meet daily for prayer. We did so, and the very next evening the Chapel was crowded. Ever since a greater interest has been shown by all. Our few members were backsliding because of the persecutions, but now they have come back to God and He is adding to their number almost daily."

BATTAMBANG

At the Indo-China Conference in September, Rev. David Ellison

was united in marriage to Miss Muriel Harrison. They were appointed to Cambodia. In October they began the study of the language at Battambang, a large center about 180 miles north west of Pnom-Penh. They have been there scarcely three months but "God working with them" has brought six souls to Christ, three Annamese, two Cambodians, and one Laasian.

Mr. Ellison writes as follows: "The Lord gave us the joyous privilege of winning our first soul at Battambang within a month after coming here. Arriving in a strange land, unable to speak a word of the Cambodian language, my wife and I made it our practice each evening to play our little folding organ. One evening a young Cambodian came and sat in the open window to listen to the music. After a few moments he spoke to me in good French, making inquiries about the organ, etc. God opened his heart, and after coming back a number of times to hear the Story of Redeeming Love he confessed his faith in Christ. Educated in a French school at Pnom-Penh, he had just arrived from that city about a week after we came here. He loves the Lord and has told many others of Christ, acting as interpreter for me as well as being a live individual soul winner."

In the 1922 report Mr. Jaffray wrote: "At this time we do not know of a single Cambodian who has a saving Knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Pray for souls." That prayer was made, and we are seeing the firstfruits of the glorious answer that is on the way. God has begun to call out His Church in Cambodia, and two educated Cambodian young men have heard His call to the work of preaching the Gospel to their own people. Pray for more souls.

CHAUDOC

The Lord has also been working with Rev. and Mrs. R. A. Grupe at Chaudoc on the Cambodian border of Cochin-Chine, where they are giving the Gospel to Annamese, Chinese, Cambodians, and Malays. Fifty three new converts have been baptized on this station during the year, 41 Annamese, 8 Chinese, and 4 Cambodians. There are three out-stations and six meeting-places where more or less regular services are held. Mr. Grupe writes: "We find a more receptive hearing in the country than in the city." In all one hundred and ninety-eight trips have been made into the country during 1923. Beside these trips the colporteurs are continually scouring the country endeavoring to put the Word of God into as many homes as possible. Ten Bibles, twenty-five New Tes-

tament, 6,500 Scripture portions and 10,000 tracts and 25 other Christian books have been sold.

An encouraging feature in connection with the Chaudoc work is the Children's Meeting. Mrs. Grupe has from seventy-five to eighty children meeting in her home every week to hear the story of Jesus. Another interesting feature is the witness given to the village of 5,000 Malays who live across the river from Chaudoc. These people are strict Mohammedans, and although thus far none of them have yielded to the Gospel, yet a faithful witness has been given to many interested listeners.

Mr. Grupe writes: "A case of particular interest is the recent conversion of a young man who was a slave to opium. He stopped the practice voluntarily though he had been smoking two dollars worth a day. He is an Annamese-Chinese, and he speaks both languages perfectly. Pray that he may be called to preach the Gospel to the Chinese of Cochin-China. He was baptized Christmas Day, and is very happy in the Lord."

CANTHO

At Cantho our next station in Cochin-China, God has called out a strong body of Christians. These have stood true, and the Church has gone on with God, and has greatly increased in membership in spite of the fact

that Rev. and Mrs. Herbert Jackson, the missionaries in charge, have had to be absent from their station for five months on account of sickness. Mr. Jackson writes of his sickness and restoration as follows: "God most mercifully heard the prayers of natives and foreigners for both Mrs. Jackson and myself. Mrs. Jackson has been steadily gaining in health and strength after a nervous break-down, and God has done more for me than I had faith to expect or even dared to hope. Three times He delivered me from serious abdominal trouble that would certainly have taken my life without His intervention."

The native preacher "held the fort" while Mr. and Mrs. Jackson were away. Too much cannot be said in praise of the splendid way in which he held the Christians together and kept their loyal support during these five months of testing. The Gospel beacon was not for one moment allowed to burn low, and when the missionaries were able to return to their station, they found the Church stronger and larger than when they left—"The Lord working with them."

A remarkable feature of the work at Cantho has been colportage work. Three paid colporteurs have been employed on the station, and six of the Church members have been doing more or less systematic work as voluntary

colporteurs. The splendid total of 29 Bibles, 52 New Testaments, 7,257 Scripture portions, 19,253 tracts, and 3,228 Christian books have been sold by these men. Mr Jackson writes: "We have done and are doing colportage work in five provinces. I consider the work of the colporteurs to be invaluable. It has borne much fruit in itself, and has prepared the way for us to do the more permanent work of establishing out-stations. We are asked to open out-stations in other provinces that have been canvassed by our colporteurs."

There have been thirty-one new converts baptized at Cantho during the year. Of these Mr. Jackson writes: "One old woman, who was a Buddhist for years, has forsaken all and cast out every form of idol worship, though her altars and idols had cost her one thousand dollars. She has now converted her home into a temporary chapel. An old man came to Jesus because he saw what God had done for another old man who was freed from the opium habit, after being in its grip for thirty years."

Children's meetings have been regularly conducted at both Cantho and the out-station at Cairang. "The man who is now treasurer of our Church was brought to realize the power of the Gospel through a tract that his little

daughter brought home from the children's meeting."

Two young men from Cantho are attending the Bible School at Tourane. One of these, although the youngest in the home, led his own immediate family and most of his relatives to Christ.

SADec

At SadeC we have our largest Church in Cochin-China. In connection with this station there are two out-stations; one at Cau-lanh, and the other at Cai-taiha. Two student evangelists and one Bible woman are assisting Rev. and Mrs. I. R. Stebbins who are in charge. Work was commenced at SadeC in January 1922, and now after only two years, there is a baptized membership of one hundred and thirteen at the main station, and fourteen at Cau-lanh. Ninety of these have been baptized during 1923 and Mr. Stebbins reports that there is a steady stream of earnest inquirers. There are three students in the Bible school from SadeC, and three more young men and two women are prospective students for next year.

An encouraging Sunday-school with an enrollment of twenty men, fifteen women, and sixty children meets regularly.

Mr. Stebbins writes: "A little blind boy has had his sight restored in answer to prayer. His grandmother brought him to

us after the doctors had said that his eyesight was gone never to return. As a result of this healing the child's mother and grandmother were saved." This is another evidence of "The Lord working with them."

Colportage work is also a marked feature of the work at SadeC. During 1923 fifty-seven Bibles, 11,621 Scripture portions, 20,000 tracts and 4,000 Christian books have been sold. Mr. Stebbins writes: "An intense interest has developed all over the district of SadeC. We have people visit us from all parts. Colportage work has let the people know that we are here."

MYTHO

Just before the close of 1923, God enabled us to open another station at Mytho, the most populous center in Cochin-China, and situated about forty miles south west of Saigon. As our missionaries travel from Saigon to their stations in the interior, they have had to pass through this great center. Their hearts have been burdened that here also a Gospel light-house might be established, and now, thank God, their prayer has been heard. In December Rev. and Mrs. H. C. Smith began work there with a student-evangelist to assist them. Already at the writing of this report at least one soul, a young woman, has publicly confessed Jesus as her Saviour.

SAIGON

Saigon is the natural center for our work in Cochin-China. Here we have a Chapel in Saigon city, and two out-stations, one at Lai-thieu, and the other at Cho-lon. There is also a Chinese Church at Cho-lon affiliated with the Saigon work. This Church is self-supporting and self-administering. It is under a Chinese Pastor, Rev. Chue Sing-wan, a graduate of our Wuchow Bible School, and is under the advisory administration of the missionary in Saigon.

There are thirty-one members of the Saigon Church, sixteen at Lai-thieu, and fifty-five in the Chinese Church at Cho-lon. This makes a total of one hundred and two, of whom thirty-nine were baptized during the year, twenty-one at Saigon, nine at Lai-thieu, and nine Chinese at Cho-lon. A student-evangelist assists Rev. J. D. Olsen in the Annamese work. He is entirely supported by the local offerings. A paid colporteur has been distributing Scriptures and tracts in Saigon and the vicinity. He has sold 32 Bibles, 53 New-Testaments, 4,000 Scripture portions, 2,500 tracts and 1,500 Christian books during the year.

Mr. Olsen writes: "God has been working in a real way in Saigon. He has given us some very faithful Christians. Especially has His blessing been manifested in the life of one of

our Christians at Lai-thieu. This young man has brought sixteen souls to the Lord since he was saved; for practically all the Christians who have been saved of Lai-thieu are the result of his faithful witnessing. He has been persecuted by relatives, friends, and foes; so much so that the whole village is against him, nevertheless he stands true, and is trusting God to bring those who now hate him to a knowledge of the Saviour. To God be all the Glory!"

More than half of Mr. Olsen's time has been employed in translation work. He has assisted Mr. and Mrs. Cadman in the translation of the New Testament, and has translated the Old Testament up to the end of "The Song of Solomon."

MISSIONARY HOME

We have also a Missionary Home in Saigon as a base for our work in the interior of Cochinchina and Cambodia. Rev. and Mrs. Geo. C. Ferry have been in charge of the home throughout the past year, and Rev. William Robinson has been stationed with them studying Annamese since he arrived on the field in August. Miss Jeanne L. Rollier, who came to us at the close of 1922 to help our missionaries in the study of French, has also made the Missionary Home her headquarters. She spends about a month with the missionaries on each

station, and also carries on a regular correspondence course with all. We thank the Lord for Miss Rollier's life and ministry among us. She has helped us greatly in our knowledge and use of the French language. Miss Rollier has also translated Dr. Simpson's book "Wholly Sanctified" into French. We hope to print this early in 1924, and to circulate it as widely as possible among the French speaking Annamese and Cambodians as well as the French people themselves.

TOURANE

"God working with them" was again strikingly in evidence at Tourane during the year 1923. In December 1922 God enabled us to open an out-station at Fai-foo, some twenty miles within the border of the Protectorate of Annam, which is still formally closed to Protestant missionary propaganda. God has wonderfully blest the efforts that have been made there. Within one year a Church has sprung up which is now almost as large as the main Church at Tourane. The membership at Fai-foo is 273, and at Tourane 304, a total for the station of 577, of whom 323 were baptized during the year.

The most marked feature of the work at Tourane has been the witnessing spirit on the part of the Christians and new converts. The first man baptized during

the year was remarkably used in this way. He brought his wife and family to Christ, then his father-in-law and mother-in-law, these last four are all over 70 years of age. After these he brought more than twenty of his relatives and friends. This man, his family and friends, all live in a village over fifteen miles from Fai-foo; but he is seldom missing from service, and is always accompanied by a large following. The old father, 80 years old, was healed from some internal disease that made it difficult for him to get around. Some time ago he came to the missionary rejoicing that his trouble had almost entirely left him. He said that the only trace of it he now felt was that it made him tired when he walked to Church, and asked prayer that he might be delivered from this weariness! The missionary felt somewhat abashed, and thought that if it was a sign of sickness for a man eighty years old to feel tired after walking thirty miles, perhaps some of the rest of us, who were not yet that old, might have the same disease. There are an average of fifty Christians who have a similar walk every Sunday to the Fai-foo Church.

There have been many instances of healing during the year. A child of one of the Bible School students had cholera and became unconscious. Her parents and

others thought she was dead. But when Pastor Thua came in, he was led to pray for the child's healing, and within a few minutes it was raised up completely healed. The wife of the Cambodian student in the Bible School had severe stomach trouble. She was examined by the French Doctor who said that the case was a very serious one, and that the patient could only be cured after a long treatment, which would probably include an operation. He wanted her to come to the hospital, but she was anointed and prayed with, and within a couple of days was completely healed.

Two Sunday-Schools have been regularly conducted, one at Tourane and the other at Fai-foo. The enrollment at Tourane numbers 180, and at Fai-foo 185. The schools are divided into three classes, a men's Bible class, a women's Bible class, and a children's class. Children's meetings are also held at our other two meeting-places, An-hai and Hai-chau. There is a boys' and a girls' Primary School at Tourane, both of which are self-supporting, and have an enrollment of seventeen and twenty-seven respectively. Mrs. Jeffrey has daily Bible classes with the children, and several have given their hearts to Jesus during the year.

A number of the Christian women meet daily with Mrs Irwin

as teacher for Bible study. They have completed a consecutive study of the Old Testament in two years and are now beginning the New Testament. This class has done much to deepen the women spiritually, and has kept them on fire with personal testimonies. Quite a number of them do considerable work as volunteer Bible Women, making frequent visits to the surrounding villages and witnessing in the homes of the people. Many souls have been saved as a result of work.

HAIPHONG

Rev. and Mrs. R. M. Jackson are in charge of Hai-phong station where we have an Annamese Church of fifteen members, five of whom were baptized during 1923. A student-evangelist is employed in the Work; also a Bible Woman up until the opening of the Women's Bible school in September, when she came to Tourane for further training. One paid colporteur is employed in Hai-phong and the vicinity, and Mr. Jackson reports 10 New Testaments and 7,575 Scripture portions were sold, and 17,000 tracts were distributed during the year.

The street chapel meetings have been well attended, and most of the Christians meet regularly at the mid-week prayer services. The children's meetings have been very encouraging; an average of

65 meet regularly with Mrs. Jackson to hear the old story of Jesus and His love.

The work in Hai-phong, like that in the other cities of the Protectorate of Annam, has been restricted to the area within the city limits. This year a large tract of land has been annexed to Hai-phong, and thus our opportunities have increased. Mr. Jackson writes: "Praise God that a strip of land five-eighths of a mile wide and several miles long has been added to the city. This area includes five villages. Our home and Chapel are right on the edge of the former limit and thus convenient to the new district."

HANOI

Rev. and Mrs. W. C. Cadman have been in charge of the Hanoi station during 1923. Misses Frost and Ailshouse were resident there until our Conference in September when they were appointed to the women's Bible school at Tourane. One student-evangelist, and one Boys' school teacher have been employed in the work, also a Bible Woman until the opening of the Women's Bible School, when she came to Tourane for further training.

Nineteen new converts have been baptized at Hanoi during 1923. These make a total of forty-five members in the Church. Mr. Cadman writes: "Several bright young college students have been baptized who, if they keep

true to God, give promise of great things in years to come. Five of these have already left Hanoi to take up positions in various parts of the country." There has been an average attendance of eighty-five at the Sunday evening service, and sixty at the week-night evangelistic services in the Chapel. There has been an average of sixty children attending the children's meetings; and the self-supporting Primary School has an enrollment of forty scholars.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Cadman have given much of their time to translation work, and have this year completed the translation of the New Testament in Annamese. The publishing of this book has been one of the great accomplishments of the year. It marks a new and big advance in our work. Praise God for this great blessing. Mr. and Mrs. Cadman have also translated the last half of the Old Testament, and as Mr. Olsen has finished the first half, we are hoping that the entire Bible in Annamese will be in the hands of the people before the end of 1924.

This Report would not be complete without a grateful acknowledgement of the splendid help of the British and Foreign Bible Society. We thank God for their part in this service, and particularly for the completion of the New Testament. Large editions of the Four Gospels, and the Acts

are being printed in Annamese and distributed by the Bible Society colporteurs in connection with the station work.

PUBLICATION WORK

Another important department of our work is under the superintendence of Mr. Cadman at Hanoi. This is the publication work. Much has been accomplished along this line during 1923. As mentioned before, the great work of the year in the line of publication was the production of the New Testament in Annamese. Five thousand of these have been published. These met a great need, and are making the work of the Missionaries much simpler. They are also a great boon to our Bible Schools, where we have been working under a big handicap without an Annamese Bible, until now.

Besides these the press has turned out 65,000 Scripture portions, 99,600 Annamese tracts and Christian books, 103,500 Annamese leaflets as well as printing the "Call" in English our Indo-China missionary News Quarterly, and miscellaneous items. In all the press has turned out a total of over ten million printed pages during the year. We are hoping in 1924 to procure a full equipment of Cambodian type, so that we will be able to put the Scriptures and Gospel tracts into Cambodian as well as Annamese.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion let us restate a few of the outstanding features of this year's progress;

Five hundred and sixty-seven have been added to the church by baptism, as against two hundred and forty-eight last year, an increase of over one hundred and twenty-five per-cent.

Our missionaries have entered the great unoccupied Kingdom of Cambodia, and the firstfruits from that land have been brought to the feet of the Saviour.

Three new stations have been opened, and souls have already been saved on each.

The New Testament has been printed in Annamese and is in the hands of the people.

Ten million pages of Annamese Christian literature have been produced by our press in Hanoi, and have been distributed to the Glory of God.

A Women's Bible School has been opened for training Annamese women for the Master's service.

Surely these facts are evidence of "GOD WORKING WITH THEM."

Directory of Indo-China Missionaries

Chairman, - Rev. R. A. Jaffray, Wuchow
 Sub-Chairman, - Rev. E. F. Irwin, Tourane

Tourane

Rev. and Mrs. E. F. Irwin
 Rev. and Mrs. D. I. Jeffrey
 Miss E. M. Frost
 Miss C. Ailshouse

Hanoi

Rev. and Mrs. W. C. Cadman

Haiphong**Saigon**

Rev. William Robinson
 Rev. A. Pruett - April, 1924

Sadec

Rev. and Mrs. H. C. Smith

Cantho

Rev. and Mrs. H. A. Jackson

Chaudoc

Rev. and Mrs. R. A. Grupe

Mytho

Rev. and Mrs. G. C. Ferry

Pnom-penh (Cambodia)

Rev. and Mrs. A. L. Hammond

Battambang (Cambodia)

Rev. and Mrs. David Ellison

On Furlough

Rev. J. D. Olsen
 Rev. and Mrs. I. R. Stebbins
 Rev. and Mrs. R. M. Jackson
