

1918

Vietnam

History

# The Indo-China Mission.

A.W. p. 393

F. A. CHRISTOPHERSON.

Sept. 21, 1918

Annam is a name which was given by the Chinese in the third century A. D. Annam was conquered by the Chinese in 214 B. C., but in 1428 A. D. it completely won its independence.

In the year of 1862 France secured a foothold near the mouth of the Cambodia River in Indo-China, and later on obtained the southern and most productive part of Cochin-China, subsequently known as French Cochin-China. In 1874 they obtained large powers over Tonquin, notwithstanding the protest of the Chinese. Finally, in 1883, Tonquin was ceded to France, and the next year Annam was declared a French protectorate. After a short period of hostilities with China, the latter recognized the French claims, and Tonquin is now directly administered by France, while Annam is entirely under French direction.

A chief aim of the French in this region is to secure the trade of South China. To this end they are projecting the

extension northward into China of the system of railroads they have already constructed. France has now in these quarters territories which exceed in extent the homeland.

The inhabitants of Annam are under middle size and less robust than the surrounding peoples. Their language is monosyllabic, and is connected with the Chinese.

The religion of the majority is Buddhism, but the educated classes hold the doctrine of Confucius, besides which there are 420,000 Roman Catholics.

Missionary statistical specialists agree generally that there is no one part of the world with so great an area and so dense a population that is so totally without the pure gospel as Annam, and that this large colony has received less evangelical help than any other region in Asia.

Annam with its three provinces has an approximate population of 22,000,000. Why should not the Anamese people,

as all others, have the privilege of being able to read and study the Scripture as our Lord ordained?

Until recently the Protestant Church had made no attempt whatever to bring the gospel to these millions of immortal souls.

It is about twenty-five years since the Christian and Missionary Alliance made its first effort to enter this field. But real work was permitted by the French authorities only six or seven years ago, and even yet, with perhaps the sole exception of one station in Laos, opened by the Plymouth Brethren, the Christian and Missionary Alliance is the only Protestant Missionary Society at work in Annam.

The British and Foreign Bible Society has through its colporteurs for some years scattered the Scriptures, principally the Chinese version, among the people.

Last year was a good year for the Christian and Missionary Alliance. Chapels are now open in three large cities of Hanoi, Haiphong, and Tourane; thirty-two converts were baptized during 1917. The total baptized membership of the field is thirty-nine.

How we praise God for these firstfruits from Annam, souls who by the power of the Holy Ghost in their hearts and lives are lifted from darkness to light.

The last report from Tourane Church is full of interest:

"Two-thirds of the members are men, mostly young men, two or them are related to the royalty, three are clerks in the French railroad offices, four are students, one an engineer on the railroad, two are workmen on the railroad line, two others are coolies, one is a cook, and another is a soldier in France.

One is the preacher, another the Biblewoman and three are colporteurs. In all, ten of the members have an education in French, and twelve of them read the Chinese characters. No Roman Catholics have yet been received into the Church, though some are interested."

A good start has been made and a firm foundation has been laid for the future Church of Christ in Annam.

Shortly after the war broke out some of our missionaries were asked by the French authorities to leave the field on account of their German names, thus only four were left to do the work in this great harvest field with all its opportunities and well may we cry out: "What are these among so many!"

Some of our missionaries have been kept busy in translation work. The four Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, also the Epistle to the Romans have been translated in the Standard Romanized Annamite language, called Quev Gnu. The plan is to print large editions of direct gospel messages in tract form, largely in the words of the Scripture, for wide distribution among the people.

Let there be much prayer for this newly opened and needy field, for the native Christians as well as for the hard working missionaries.

Pray also for more missionaries of His own choice to be sent out, so that without delay the open door to the City of Saigon and the whole province of Cochin-China may be entered.

May it soon be said of Annam that, there "the gospel has been fully preached."

Nothing new here.  
A repeat of published materials