

In May 1911 three South China missionaries, Jaffray, Hosler and Hughes, sailed from Hongkong to visit Tourane, Annam. Rev. Paul M. Hosler wrote:

"A few years ago our Board made some effort to enter this field by way of northern Tonkin, but nothing came of the undertaking. More recently the American Presbyterian Board made an attempt to enter from the Laos side but after some time they were compelled to withdraw. The French Swiss Plymouth Brethren have been successful in locating a small mission in Laos near the Annam border, but at this time their force is reduced to a single worker.

"Although we had once failed to effect an entrance, we still prayed for these destitute millions of souls and kept the matter before the Board and some friends at home. And again in July 1910, the question was brought before the Conference of our South China Mission. As a result Mr Hughes and the writer were appointed to study the French language preparatory to establishing a mission in some part of Tonkin or Annam.

"In the month of May 1911, a deputation was sent to Tourane, Annam, to look into the condition of the field with the express purpose of making arrangements for opening a station. We left Hongkong the 22nd of May and arrived in Tourane the morning of the 25th. We had a cordial welcome at the home of M. and Mme Bonnet, who were to help us in securing a location.

"The work of our deputation was facilitated by our good friend, M. Bonnet, who is the agent of the British & Foreign Bible Society. He has been located at Tourane eight years and has been the means of opening this region to the Gospel. All this time he has prudently and patiently carried on his work, being careful to maintain a neutral attitude towards the political affairs, and in so doing has gained the goodwill of the Resident and fonctionnaires. But his work has been more than that of disarming suspicion. He has made many trips throughout Annam and has sold thousands of Scripture portions and Bibles in the Romanized and the Chinese character. In this way the soil has been prepared, the seed sown, and already the harvest has begun. At first M. Bonnet encountered a little opposition from the Catholics, but the Resident understood his work and allowed him to continue his labors."

Another of the trio, Rev. G. L. Hughes, who later died before he could serve in Annam, wrote:

"On May the 22nd, 1911, the Rev. R. A. Jaffray, representing the Executive Committee of our South China Conference, the Rev. Paul M. Hosler and the writer, as pioneer missionaries, left Hongkong for Tourane, in Annam, with the object of making investigations re the possibility of establishing mission work in that long neglected land.

"We had been led to choose Tourane as our objective point by a series of providential leadings which, in substance were: that M. Bonnet, of the British & Foreign Bible Society, in Tourane, entirely ignorant of the fact that we were preparing for Annam, wrote and told us that for eight years he had been praying for missionaries to come to Annam, and that he sincerely hoped we would come, and that he would do all in his power to help us.

"A two and a half days' voyage brought us to ~~the~~ Tourane, a seaport in the province of Quang Nam, situated on the Annam coast about half-way between Saigon and Haiphong. Its commodious harbor, with a lighthouse at its entrance, might prove an excellent typhoon shelter but for the shallow water. The appearance of the town from the steamer's deck is not very interesting. A low-lying, sandy land, with a sprinkling of cocconut trees in the distance, does not lend much charm to the place, but after disembarking and looking around a little, one gets a different impression of the town. But it was upon our arrival at the home of Mr and Mrs Bonnet that our hearts were made glad by meeting friends of kindred faith. We stayed with them for several days during which time we visited some native villages in the neighborhood and travelled to Hue, the capital of Annam. We also went to Haiphong, the chief seaport of Tonking, Hanoi, the capital of Tonking, then crossed the country to Langson on the Kwang-si border. During this ~~expedition~~ expedition we had ample opportunity to converse with different people as to the best place to locate our future work."