

Is It Possible for the Annamese to Establish an Indigenous Self-Supporting Church?

By Rev. I. R. STEBBINS

Let the Annamese answer for themselves. Last Sunday a new main station was opened at Tanan. The writer, accompanied by Pastor Long and Colporteur Suu from Mytho, arrived by the mission automobile at the newly opened chapel situated opposite the big market at Tanan. An enthusiastic crowd greeted us out in front, and while we were exclaiming over the fine location of the chapel, opening up the folding organ and swiftly looking over the new equipment of this chapel, the people came swarming into the building, quickly filling up every available chair. It was a unique beginning, for practically everyone who occupied a chair was a Christian, having been saved and baptized by Mr. Ferry at Mytho. The prayers of the little company of Tanan Christians had been answered, and God had given them the desire of their hearts, a chapel, which will no doubt be soon changed into a new church building. It had been told them that if they would pay the rent of the new chapel, buy the benches, pulpit and lamps, paint the new sign, and also look after Pastor Long's travel expenses, the mission would gladly cooperate with them. They paid every cent, and the evidences are that the Tanan work will not cost the mission a penny. Two souls prayed at the close of the first meeting.

Gocong is a neighboring province where Evangelist Nien has been in charge but three months. A church has sprung up from Mytho work in this place. On the arrival of their newly invited evangelist, they found it was necessary to add to their equipment. The preacher needed a bicycle to travel about in the province, and they needed new lamps to better illuminate the chapel for evangelistic meetings held at night. The Christians gladly took up an offering of \$50 to meet this

pressing need and the preacher can now see the hungry faces when preaching at the night meetings, and now can quickly get over the ground with his nice new bicycle, and thus triple the amount of his work each day, all due to the fervent Gocong Christians who want their people to get saved.

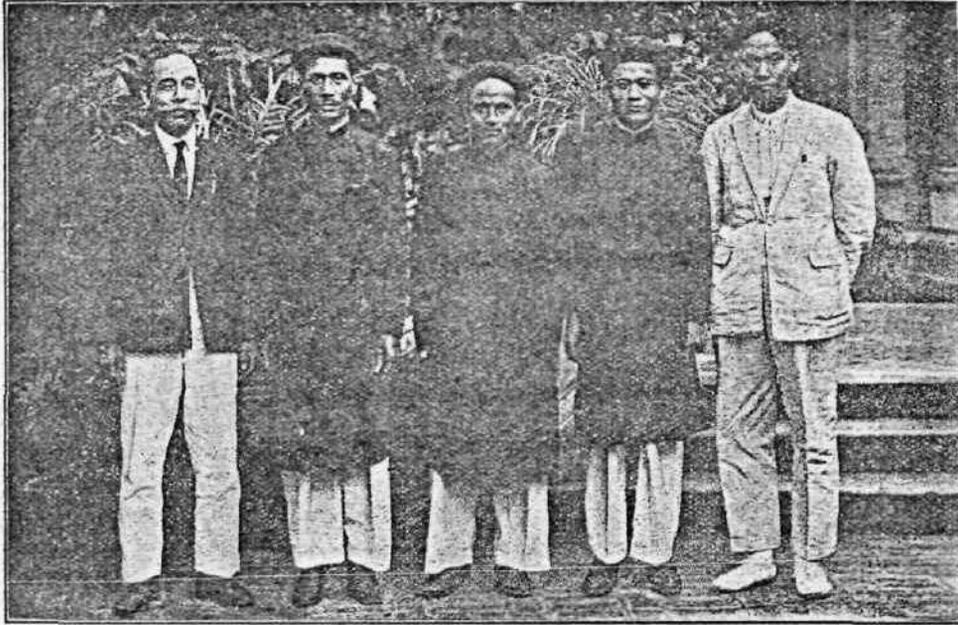
There are four fully self-supporting churches in Cochinchina where not one penny is paid from foreign funds. The writer happens to have the privilege to fellowship with these churches, and it is a wonderful thing to see the growing faith of such young churches. The pastor of Sadec church when he first arrived vis-

and after I secured the necessary authorization they informed me they would pay every expense involved, that of renting the new chapel, buying the chapel equipment, and entire support was guaranteed by them. It is an accomplished fact, and special meetings are going to be held there soon. The Mytho church is also stepping forward steadily with plans for pressing into the unoccupied areas of Mytho province, with over three hundred thousand souls. These four pastors are not hirelings, but earnest evangelists with a definite program for pressing into the regions beyond.

Vinh Long is almost ready to build their new church. Seven hundred dollars has been paid in by the Christians and they still lack about \$200, but even part of this sum is pledged. Vinh Long will soon be a self-supporting church. Travinh and Soc-trang, two more newly opened provinces, are already stepping up to the ranks and giving offerings and we expect another year will see rapidly growing churches.

The Annamese evangelists and pastors are ready to give their best and want to be self-supporting and self-propagating. Their last District Prayer Conference at Cantho had expenses of over \$500 and the churches of Cochinchina paid every penny. The native leaders make mistakes, but they are learning, and with the earnest prayers of God's children in America, a mighty Spirit-filled, self-supporting, indigenous church will soon come to the birth in French Indo-China. The executive committee of our last Prayer Conference rather overstepped themselves in authority, but we were greatly encouraged to see this evident desire to undertake responsibility.

At the meeting of the joint-executive committee of the Annamese church, the native leaders had the impression that the



The Native Executive Committee of Indo-China

ited the writer and earnestly besought the help of the Foreign Mission to buy a new bicycle, as the old one was worn, and he said it looked as though the offerings would not be sufficient to meet all the expenses. We prayed with him and assured him we would stand with him for victory in these needs. The following month he came to us with a shining face and said the bicycle had been bought and that all the current expenses had been paid. Cantho on receiving their new pastor had to increase his salary from \$27 to \$43, because of their large family of seven children. With a monthly expense of \$90 they are meeting every penny and have not encountered a deficit. Bentre decided to open a new outstation at Batri

Central Bible School was already under their control. This shows they are thinking, but thank God they are doing more than idle thinking and dreaming, for there are many of them praying earnestly and working, yes, and giving liberally, that soon in this land they may have their own, indigenous self-supporting, self-propagating, self-governing church. It is their right before God, and shall we hinder them? Can they establish their work? I have given facts that prove that they can. It is true that to develop faith in a child, you must trust it, you must give it a task way beyond its own vision, and it will usually respond and be more than equal to the task. Pray much for the work in French Indo-China, that the missionaries may know God's way in the establishing of the Annamese indigenous church, and pray that we may in no way hinder its development.

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