

MIENNONITE LIFE

JUNE 1980



In this Issue

This issue of *Mennonite Life* is a pictorial companion piece to the book *A People of Mission: A History of General Conference Mennonite Overseas Missions* by co-editor James C. Juhnke. The text which briefly introduces each section of this issue is taken from the pages of the book.

We now celebrate a centennial. It was in the spring of 1880 that Samuel and Susie Hirschler Haury began the first mission work at Darlington in Indian Territory. The character of the Mennonite church has been vastly changed in this country. And one of the greatest changes is that we have become a world-wide, international, multi-cultural people.

The challenge to missions goes on, even more urgent and more complex today than a hundred years ago. We see in all nations how the world worships that which is not God. We are aware in new ways of the paganism at the root of societies once collectively identified as "Christendom." The younger churches which are the fruit of missionary enterprise are essential partners in framing the missionary message and strategy for our time.

The camera was an indispensable tool of missionary work. Photographs from the field kept families and congregations in touch with the many facets of missionary life and work. Picture combined with word in binding together missionaries and supporting people.

This issue contains only a bare sampling of the thousands of missions photographs in the files of the Mennonite Library and Archives in North Newton, Kansas and the Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission office in Elkhart, Indiana. Additional photographs of Mennonite missions in China were published in the June 1979 issue of *Mennonite Life*.

This issue of *Mennonite Life* also includes the annual listing of recent books in the Anabaptist-Mennonite Bibliography.

It has been five years since *Mennonite Life's* last increase in subscription price. We now raise the price to \$6.00 for one year and \$10 for two years. This issue, with a bonus of sixteen extra pages, sells for \$2.00 per single copy.

MENNONITE LIFE

June 1980 Vol. 35 No. 2

Editors

James Juhnke
Robert Kreider

Front Cover

Missionary caravan tour in India.
Design by John Hiebert.

Back Cover

Sunday School which met in the home of Verney and Belva Unruh in Miyakonojo, Miyazaki, Japan.

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Indian Territory

The early Mennonite mission to Native Americans was quite secure and unselfconscious in its total ministry to the needs of people for food, shelter, health, education, and spiritual nurture. It seemed obvious to this generation that to bring the Christian gospel meant to bring the "benefits" of Christendom. The debate between fundamentalists and modernists which split body from soul and social service from evangelism was to come in the future. The age of "prioritization" would come even later. These early missionaries had a more wholistic agenda than their children and grandchildren would have.

Certain things were obviously necessary if Christian communities were to be established among the Cheyenne and Arapaho. The buffalo were gone. Native Americans would have to be taught the rudiments of agriculture for a new means of livelihood. Free movement on the land was ending. Tribes would have to learn to live in permanent settlements and in healthful houses. In all respects, the missionaries offered to the Native Americans a new way of life which promised the benefits of civilized Western technology to a people whose old way of life had been destroyed before their very eyes.

In those first decades there was no such thing as a missionary who was assigned solely to engage in evangelism. The missionaries were teachers, linguists, medical doctors, and administrators. They were supported by a large core of young Mennonite volunteers who worked in a great variety of roles—as farmers, gardeners, seamstresses, cooks, matrons, teachers. The close

proximity of the mission field meant that it was easy to recruit and send short-term young workers, to send food and clothing to meet emergency relief needs, and even to bring young Native Americans to Mennonite farms and schools, where they could learn new ways outside of the influences of their tribal environment. From 1880 to 1900, over seventy-five Mennonites worked in some capacity on the mission field, and many others had opportunity to make brief visits to the mission stations.

Some missionaries who officially rejected tribal culture found themselves unofficially fascinated—even entranced—by the subtleties of tribal languages, the vitality of traditional ceremonies, and the richness of Native American oral tradition. D. B. Hirschler, brother-in-law of S. S. Haury and graduate of the Wadsworth seminary, spent hours in conversations with the Cheyenne leaders, gathering evidence that the Cheyenne Indians were descendants of lost Israelites who had made their way across Asia and the Bering Strait centuries ago. H. R. Voth, after founding the new mission station among the Hopi in Arizona in 1892, gained access to their secret ceremonies, where he took detailed notes on everything he saw. Voth's collection of photographs and artifacts won a considerable reputation for him among American ethnologists but damaged his reputation among the Hopi, who felt that he betrayed their confidence. Missionary Rodolphe Petter, a skilled linguist recruited from Switzerland, was the first person to reduce the Cheyenne language to written form and to produce a Cheyenne transla-

tion of the Bible.

The Mennonites surely had much to offer—education, medical aid, agricultural expertise, and the Word of a God of love. But the best of the Mennonite offering was bound up with the worst of the American frontier offering—military destruction of the tribes in brutal warfare, slaughtering of buffalo herds, forcing of the tribes onto reservations, distribution of promised Native American land to white settlers, and systematic efforts to undermine tribal social and political organization.

The missionaries were well aware of the past and present sufferings of the people they had come to serve. But Mennonites were people of their times. They felt in their bones that this was an age of progress, and that missionary work was in the vanguard. They could not develop a thorough critique of government Indian policy because they were so grateful for the many ways government assisted with resources for the establishment of their agricultural and educational work on the mission. The Mennonites were a religious, ethnic minority group which was emerging from centuries of isolation and introversion. Mission work was a primary event in this awakening. As such, the missionary endeavor proved more meaningful for the Mennonite progressive spirit than for the liberation of downtrodden Native Americans.

Upper right. *Indians near Cantonment skinning cattle after beef issue.*

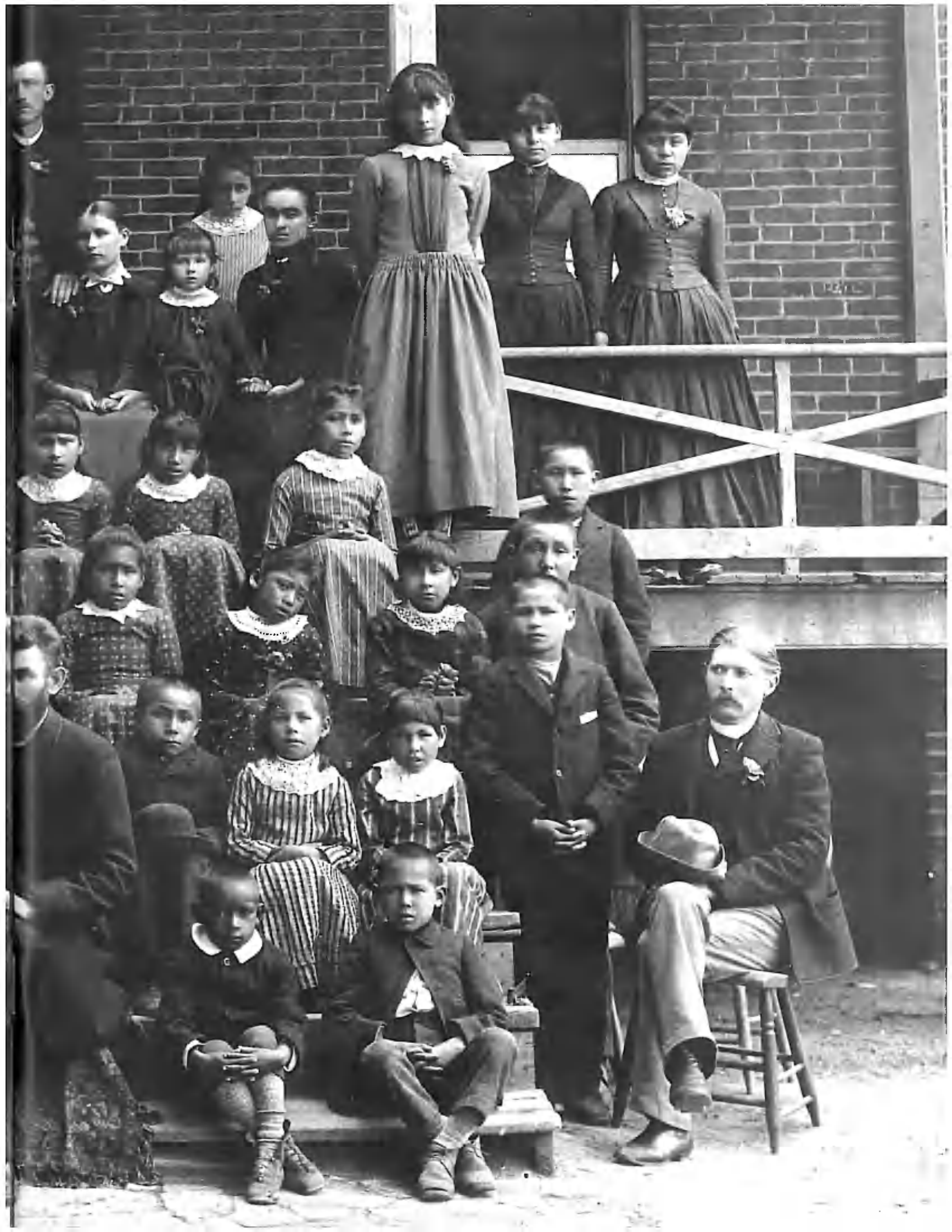
Lower right. *Original mission building at Cantonment, destroyed by fire in 1893. Teepees in background.*

Next pages. *The first mission school at Darlington. Widower H. R. Voth and daughter, Frieda, are front center. Martha Moser, later Mrs. Voth, is the first one seated in the top row.*



Cantonment Mission buildings O.K.









Far upper left. *The Maggie family, early Cheyenne converts.*

Center upper left. *Missionary H. R. Voth and his Hopi interpreter, Ooyawayma.*

Lower left. *Mrs. John P. Suderman teaching a Bible lesson to Hopi children in Upper Oraibi as adults watch. About 1935.*

Upper right. *First log chapel at Lame Deer, Montana.*

Lower right. *Cheyenne Mennonites Eugene Standing Elk of Lame Deer, Montana, and Thomas Horse-roads of Busby, Montana.*



India

Unlike H. R. Voth, with his Hopi researches and collections, and Rodolphe Petter, with his Cheyenne linguistic and ethnographic publications, none of the Mennonite missionaries in India ever became notable authorities on Hindu religion and custom. They did recognize the value in being well informed. "I am studying as much as my work will allow me," P. A. Penner wrote in 1905, "so as to get an insight into the religion of India. Only by doing this can we hope to help India." But Penner's study of Hinduism, no matter how hard he may have tried to be objective or sympathetic, was tinged with a measure of condescension. In his thinking, Penner was never willing to allow for a clear separation between the "high religion" of Hinduism, on one hand, with its exalted ethical teachings, benevolent gods, and inspired ancient scriptures, and on the other hand, the "low religion" of Hinduism, with its capricious local deities, crisis rituals, and lack of scriptures or institutionalized church. Hinduism, wrote Penner, was "a conglomeration of philosophical systems, pantheism, fatalism, ceremonies and ceremonial washings, and downright common idolatry." If Hinduism of the great tradition was supposed to be so exalted, Penner wondered, why did it result in such appalling superstition and degradation among the common people?

The Champa missionary compound happened to be just two miles (about three kilometers) from a popular local shrine to the great god Shiva at the village of Pithampore. Penner and John F. Kroeker went to Pithampore in March 1902 to see the observance *holi*, a festival of

purging and renewal prior to the beginning of the new lunar year. The festival was rich in phallic symbolism, role reversals (men dressed as women), and sexual licentiousness; it convinced the youthful missionary of the utter evil of this religion. Penner and Kroeker requested admittance to the big shrine (and were at first refused, then admitted) to see the people bringing offerings and being sprinkled with holy water. "Many of these poor deluded people evidently have a consciousness of sin," reported Penner, "but others give an offering out of habit." This first time they simply observed and held their peace. Next time it would be different: "Bro. Kroeker and I said to ourselves that this year the priests would not be hindered by us in their deviltry, but if it please God, opposition shall begin for them on next Holi. We will pitch our tent in that village and preach Christ, who truly and freely gives the water of life."

The growth of the mission stations justified the confidence of the progressive founders and put to shame the timidity of conservative doubters of Mennonite ability to sustain the work with volunteers and money. After the first five spartan years, nine new workers arrived between 1906 and 1909. In this group were the founders of two new mission stations at Mauhadih (1911) and Korba (1915), on the banks of the Hasdeo River about thirty-five miles (fifty-six kilometers) upstream and downstream from Champa. P. J. and Agnes Harder Wiens, builders of the Mauhadih station, had come from Sagradovka and Molotchna in

South Russia, respectively, and received pledges of support from churches there. C. H. and Lulu Johnson Suckau, founders of the Korba station (he from First Mennonite in Newton, Kansas), had accompanied P. A. Penner to India at the completion of Penner's first furlough in 1909. Also in that group was P. A. Penner's new bride, Martha Richert, daughter of Heinrich H. Richert of the Alexanderwohl congregation in Kansas.

Congregations were formally organized at Champa and Janjgir in 1912, at Korba in 1915, and at Mauhadih in 1916. Champa was the station with greatest class and prestige. Champa had good railway access, a beautiful location, a home for Hansen's disease patients, and a hospital—all of which served as institutional magnets for money and jobs. Above all, Champa had continuity of leadership with P. A. and Martha Penner, and with Drs. Harvey and Ella Garber Bauman in the hospital.

The Janjgir station carried on a strong educational program, including a boys boarding school growing out of early orphan work, a girls school founded by Annie C. Funk in 1908, and a pastors training school which flourished in the 1930's. The Janjgir work was less deeply rooted, however, and had less continuity in mission station leadership. J. F. and Susie Kroeker returned to Russia in 1909, and Annie Funk perished in the famous *Titanic* disaster of 1912.

The Mauhadih station had a thriving program for some twenty-five years and was noted especially by its school for boys. But in 1937 a disastrous flood at the confluence of the Hasdeo and Mahanadi rivers led to its retrenchment and to eventual abandonment.

The Korba station, which had earlier appeared to be a more "jungly" outpost, turned out to be located in a region rich with mineral deposits. After independence, the government of India moved to develop Korba as a major industrial center.

In these four places the mission strategy was basically similar. The early hope was that the entire "field" could be Christianized. The missionaries were eager to take the

gospel to the people. An early method was the evangelistic "tour" during which they traveled with a retinue of servants, drivers, and native evangelists from village to village, preaching the gospel to those who would listen. In eighteen January days in 1905, for example, J. F. Kroeker preached in ninety-two villages. Such tours put missionaries in some contact, however, superficial, with their wider social and physical environment. For many villagers, the touring mission band provided the very first contact with the Christian gospel, their first view of a bicycle, and their first encounter with the magic of stereopticon slides. Missionaries identified sites for new stations on such tours. It became clear, however, that successful evangelism required more sustained contact with the people.

Three sets of differences formed the basis of identity for the General Conference Mennonite Church in India. One was the difference between the new Christians and their dominant Hindu environment. A second was the difference between the Indian church and the Mennonite mission. The third was the difference between the southern churches of the Gara farmer-weaver caste origin and the northern churches

of multicasite origin. All three of these relationships were fraught with tension and with potential for both creativity and conflict.

In their relationship to their Hindu social and religious environment, the Christians would remain a beleaguered minority. Even after Indian independence from Britain in 1947 and the official implementation of religious toleration in a secular state, the Christians were accused of belonging to an alien religion and of having converted in order to gain social and material advantage. Their emancipation from the caste system and their self-improvement through education made the Christians an upwardly mobile people in a modernizing world. But it would take many decades for them to overcome the psychological sense of inferiority which came from outcaste origins and from minority religious identity.

It was also possible for Indian Mennonite Christians to be overwhelmed in their relationship to the highly educated, well-financed, and authoritative Mennonite missionaries. From the beginning, the mission was committed to the goal of an indigenous, independent church. To this end the first congregations were organized in 1912,

and the Hindustani Congress of churches was established in 1922. Missionary C. H. Suckau was the first chairman of the Hindustani Congress at the outset, but he was succeeded by Indian leaders Datan Bhadra, Paul "Babu," and B. D. Stephen. The Hindustani Congress (or "Conference" as it was called after a reorganization in 1943) evolved as a separate organization from the missionary conference. There was some discussion of possible amalgamation of the church and missionary conferences in 1933, but the two organizations actually became increasingly distinct in the following decades. Church and mission worked side by side in partnership. Efforts were made to make the church autonomous and self-sufficient as far as evangelism and discipline were concerned. But the mission grew ever larger and more powerful with control over the work of education, medicine, literature, and Christian nurture.

Below. Peter A. Penner and his first wife, Elizabeth Dickman Penner in Champa with a group of victims of Hansens Disease. About 1904.







Upper left. Pastor H. Masih administers baptism in the courtyard of a village Christian home.

Lower left. Rice planting near Champa.

Lower middle. Bookstore at Korba.

Upper right. Ox cart from Mauhadih to Jagdeeshpur.

Middle right. Crossing the Mahanadih River.

Next page. Missionaries at Champa in October, 1950. First row: Eva Pauls, Eleanor Schmidt, Anne Pen-

ner, Marie Duerksen, Melva Lehman. Second row: Christine and Jacob R. Duerksen, Metta and Samuel T. Moyer, Martha Burkhalter, Harvey and Ella Bauman, Paul and Adah Wenger. Third row: Edward and Ramoth Burkhalter, Orlando and Vernelle Waltner, Herbert and Hilda Dester, Kathryn and Aron E. Jantzen, Olga and Curt Claassen. Fourth row: Leona Cressman, Helen Kornelsen, Willard and Selma Unruh, Erwin Schrag, Tillie and Lubin Jantzen, Helen E. Nickel.





China

The history of General Conference mission work in China can be divided into three stages, each separated from the other by major evacuations from the mission field. The first sixteen years, until the evacuation in the face of civil war in 1927, were a time of solid foundation building and rapid expansion. The second stage, until the Japanese invasion in World War II, was a time of unsettlement and reorientation. In the years after the war, the work on the old field was disrupted by civil war. The last General Conference missionaries left China in 1951.

By the time of the 1927 evacuation, twenty-three missionaries had arrived on the GC field in China. The major influx came in the 1918-21 period, with an increase of funds and volunteers which seems to have resulted from the impact of World War I in North America. The field covered the six southernmost counties in Chihli (changed to Hopei in 1928) province, an area of some 4,000 square miles (10,400 square kilometers) and 2,200,000 people living in 4,500 villages. The major mission stations were at Kai Chow, with one large church built in the town and one at the main station in the southeast suburb; and at Taming Fu, where a church building with capacity to seat 1,200 people was under construction in 1927. The four other county seats—Nanlo, Tsing-feng, Chang-yuan, and Tung-ming (the latter separated from the rest by the Huang Ho River), served as centers for schools, for regular church services, and for evangelistic and medical itineration to the villages.

The medical work at first depended upon the audacity of H. J. Brown, who performed many surgical operations that went far beyond what he had learned in two years of training. Dr. Abe M. (and Marie Wollmann) Lohrentz and nurses Elizabeth Goertz and Frieda Sprunger came in 1921 as the first professional medical workers. In 1926 they made a total of 6,451 outpatient visits. Central hospital facilities were developed at Kai Chow.

The antiforeign and anti-Christian student movement of the 1920s involved a setback for the mission. In January 1927 the students at Hua Mei middle and high school at Kai Chow went out on strike. To H. J. Brown's great dismay, students at the Bible school which had been founded in 1925 joined in the strike, and "a few of them seemed even worse than the rest." When the strike fever subsided, the Hua Mei students were all reinstated, but the mission closed the Bible school. Another Bible school was begun at Taming Fu under the leadership of P. J. Boehr. The mission was not successful in attracting and holding educated leaders. Brown complained that they had to depend upon "second grade men" sent from other Protestant missions. Most of the college-educated men who worked with the mission in the mid-1920s eventually left the Mennonites. The extensive Mennonite education program which, according to one survey published in 1922, had more children in school per church members than any other mission in North China, yielded a disappointing harvest for church leadership. One missionary wrote, "Thousands

of young promising people have gone through our schools, but to a large extent the church members have consisted of old illiterate women."

There were some notable exceptions to the pattern of generally weak leadership. Two of the most promising Mennonite students, Stephen Wang and James C. Liu, attended American schools at Bluffton and Bethel colleges beginning in the fall of 1930. E. G. Kaufman, who became president of Bethel College instead of returning to China after his first furlough, arranged private support for Wang and Liu. Both of these men returned to take positions of leadership in the church and schools and to suffer the severe consequences which followed from Communist takeover of China. Both Wang and Liu wrote articles for the twenty-fifth anniversary publication of the mission in 1936. Wang attempted to disentangle the Christian gospel from the structures of Western Christendom in adapting to the Chinese environment. He wrote, "It is, therefore, not the Jesus of the creeds and the ceremony, not the Jesus of Christendom with its economic and military might, it is the Jesus of the Galilean ministry and the redemptive work in Jerusalem who is being discovered by and is discovering the young men and women of China today."

Significant leadership roles in the Chinese church were taken by Christian women. From the earliest years, adult women converts worked as "Bible women" in village evangelism. Maria Brown paid special tribute to the work of Bible women Chia and Liu, as well as Mrs. Wang, the mother of Stephen Wang.

The politically chaotic and dangerous years from 1938 to 1941 were years of religious revival and church growth. Mission-church relationships improved and anti-Western feelings diminished in the face of Japanese aggression. Church membership nearly doubled (88 percent increase) to a total of 2,273 members between 1935 and 1940. In the year of 1940 alone there was an increase of 15.6 percent. Taken by themselves, the membership sta-

tistics suggested that the church had reached a takeoff stage.

The leadership of the twin brothers S. F. and C. L. Pannabecker lent a degree of maturity and sophistication to the General Conference China mission in its latter years. C. L. came as a medical doctor to take the post of medical superintendent at the Kai Chow hospital, where the number of inpatients increased from 810 in 1938 to 1,205 in 1940. S. F., who at the time of evacuation was principal of the Bible school and editor of the missions paper *The China-Home Bond*, articulated most clearly the problems and prospects of the mission.

Shortly before his August 1941 departure from the field, S. F. Pannabecker summarized the condition

of the Chinese Mennonite Church in an article, "Withdrawal and the Future." He noted the Chinese church's strength in the three areas critical for survival under difficulties. There was a spiritually alive "central Christian nucleus," a strong core of available leaders, and a good overall indigenous church organization. All mission institutions, including schools, hospitals, and churches, were administered by trained Chinese. (The Pannabecker brothers were replaced by Dr. Paul Hu at the hospital and the reverend Chang Ching in the Bible school.) The first five Chinese pastors had been ordained in 1940. A new church conference had been organized in March 1940 with an elected general committee which had authority to make decisions formerly reserved

for the mission conference. James Liu was the chairman of the new church conference, with Ku Tung-ching (hospital business manager) serving as secretary.

Pannabecker's optimism was guarded, but he had great hope for the future. "... It seems quite possible," he wrote, "that we have a setup independent of foreign operation. In general our work is in the best condition it has ever been to face future eventualities."

Below, *The Chinese congregation at Kai Chow on the occasion of a visit by Mr. and Mrs. H. E. Suderman of Newton, Kansas. W. C. Voth and Mathilda Voth sit to the right and left of the Sudermans.*





“In recent years we have seen the fruit of early efforts in training men. Every institution is under a competent staff of local Chinese. The administration is even now in practice under trained Chinese rather than missionaries. We have our own doctor, nurses, teachers trained in standard schools and with sufficient experience to prove reliability. Further we have in the last two years five fully ordained Chinese elders.” . . . It seems quite possible that we have a set up independent of foreign operation. In general our work is in the best condition it has ever been to face future eventualities.”

S. F. Pannabecker, 1941

Upper left. *Wherever medical missions made an impact, mortality rates declined. Here nurses in the Mennonite Kai Chow hospital exhibit the population explosion.*

Lower left. *Kai Chow hospital. The first clinic is in the center and the hospital wards surrounding.*

Upper right. *On the way to an outstation clinic.*

Lower right. *The hospital staff at Kai Chow.*





“The first new Ford Auto in our Chinese mission field—and the first auto in any of the inland missions—is certainly proof that our brotherhood has a much broader missions view than earlier, and they intend to use the best means for the rapid evangelization of our part of the heathen world. . . . We believe the Ford will be a proper missionary.”

J. J. Boehr, 1919



Upper left. P. J. Boehr and the first Mennonite mission car in China.

Lower left. S. F. Pannabecker assisting in an earlier form of transportation.

Middle right. E. G. Kaufman and Aganetha Fast transported by wheelbarrow.

Lower right. Civil wars and international warfare disrupted mission work in China. S. F. Pannabecker poses with a group of occupying Japanese officers.



Congo-Zaire

The Congo Inland Mission (CIM) mission was different in many ways from the other GC Mennonite missions. The difference was most remarkable in the relative degree of success the CIM had in achieving its goals. The CIM-founded church experienced continued growth from its beginning years until the 1970s. The number of Congolese CIM Mennonites surpassed the numbers of the founding Central Conference and Defenseless Mennonites in the 1930s. By the 1970s, this Congo church, with some 35,000 members, was roughly 60 percent as large as the entire North American General Conference Mennonite Church.

The CIM mission was relatively successful not only in terms of church growth, but also in efforts to transfer authority and control of the church to national leadership. The mission and church underwent traumatic upheaval in the independence revolution of 1960 and the Kwilu rebellion of 1964, but the outcome was an agreement to hand over all mission property and institutions to the Zaire Mennonite Church. That church remained dependent upon financial support and leadership personnel from North America but took charge of its own affairs with missionaries in a subordinate and supportive role.

CIM success in Congo was a small part of broader Christian growth not only in the great Congo basin area of central Africa, but also in West, East, and southern Africa. In the twentieth century, contrary to many expectations, Africa be-

came largely a Christian continent. By 1970 the Christians accounted for 34 to 44 percent of the total sub-Saharan population. By the year 2000 it was projected to be up to 57 percent. The young African leaders who headed independence movements and struggled to establish viable nations in the 1960s and 1970s were typically graduates of Christian mission schools. While traditional tribal religion remained influential in many areas, and the impact of Islam continued strong, Christianity, in a variety of expressions which included thousands of independent sects, came to dominate the African religious scene.

From the beginning, Mennonite missionaries, as well as the CIM board, assumed they were working among "primitive" people who lived in heathen darkness. In one moment of self-pity in 1925, the missionaries complained to the board of their tribulations in "this dark, cheerless and demon ridden land of superstition and sin." A more realistic and appreciative view of African culture emerged slowly over the decades. Frank Enns was one who tried to understand and describe tribal customs. Enns' conclusion, published in the *Congo Missionary Messenger* in 1930, was that it would be unwise to "ruthlessly attack and ridicule the African's religion." "There is danger," Enns wrote, "that we uproot before we can supplant and the latter state become worse than the first." The missionary should sympathetically understand Africans and their problems. "If he [the African] is

brought under conviction by the Holy Spirit he will see the folly of his own religion."

Missionaries who inquired into the histories and cultures of the tribes in the Kasai area became aware of great differences between tribal groups. The Bena Lulua and the Baluba tribes were patrilineal, with lineage traced through the father who was the clan head. Both these tribes had unified structures with a chief whose authority was recognized by the clans. The Bampende, Bashilele, and Batshioko tribes, located west of the Kasai, were matrilineal, with lineage traced through the mother and with the mother's brother taking responsibility for the child. The Bena Lulua was the truly indigenous tribe east of the Kasai. The Baluba had moved in at the turn of the century after being displaced by conflicts with slave traders. The Baluba were a more mobile and aggressive group, which adapted quickly and benefited from educational and commercial economic opportunities offered by white traders and missionaries. Tribal identities were more important than Congolese national identity for these people until well after the independence revolution of 1960. Tribalism was also a barrier or challenge to the development of the church in the Congo.

Without ignoring the suffering and trauma undergone by the church and mission from 1960 to 1965, it is possible to see the revolutionary upheaval and the missionary evacuations as blessings in disguise for church-mission relationships. In the mid-1950s no one among the missionaries or the Africans could imagine a situation in which CIM would sign away its separate existence in the Congo. The mission seemed as natural and as permanent a part of the landscape as the Kasai River. But the CIM, after decades of caution and hesitation, took the initiative to confront the African church leadership with the reality of their own identity. This was fundamentally the work of the CIM executive secretary, Harvey Driver, although it can also be said that Driver guided and channeled, rather than generated, the dynamics of this era.



“By the help of the Lord we are trying to create a church that is spiritually independent and in the fullest sense self-supporting.

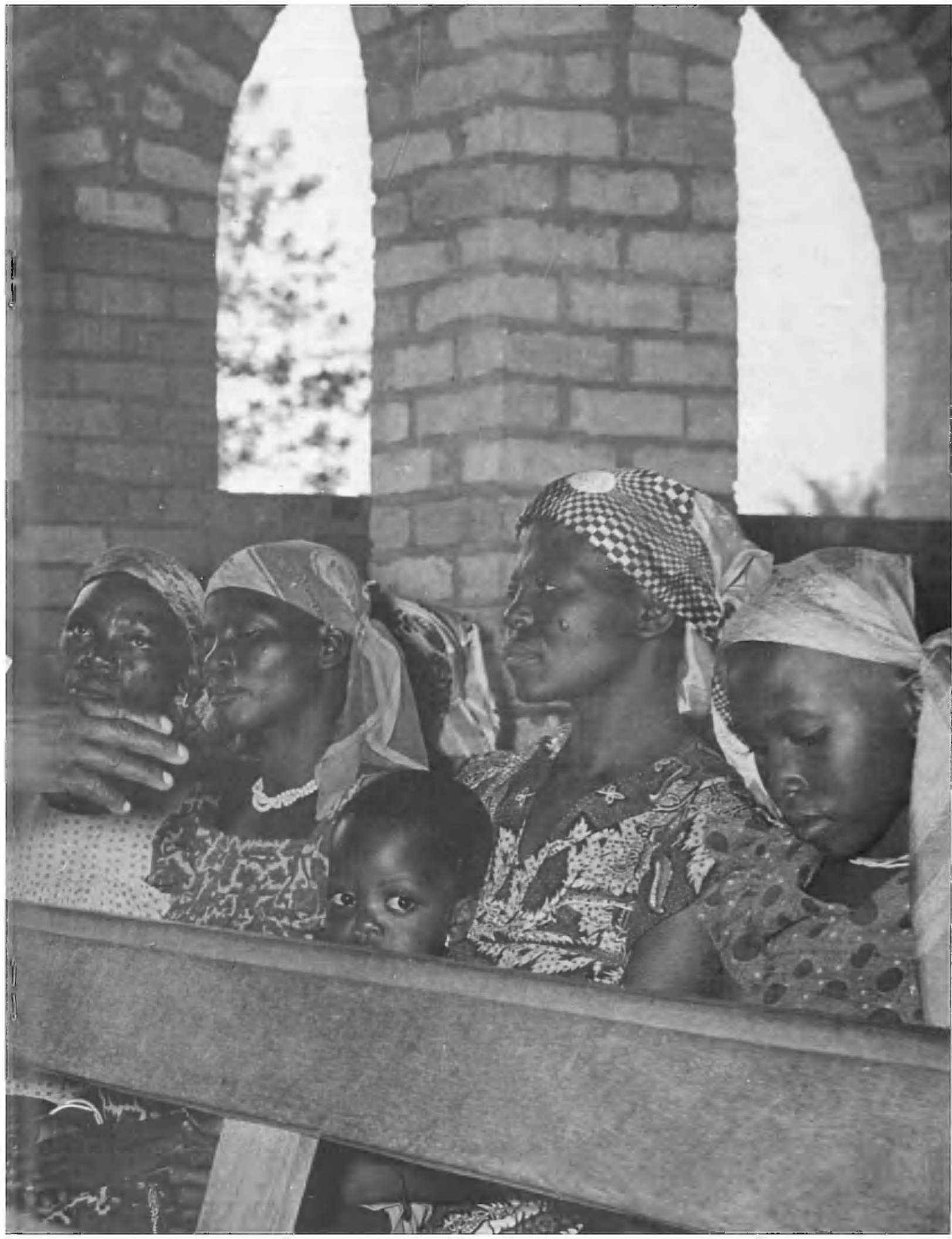
Kalamba Station
Report, 1936

Left. Traditional drumming and dancing—with non-traditional footwear.

Below. Teaching at a New Life for All seminar in Nyanga.







NZAMBI ATUMBUISHIWE MU NOAKA JIESUE



“For years we have prayed for a revival. This is being the year when the Lord has started to answer those prayers. Hundreds have come in the last few months to confess Christ as their Savior, and have burned or thrown away their fetishes, witchcraft, idols and medicines. Among the number are old men and women from the villages. It seems that the Lord has used the series of moonlight services in the surrounding villages to start this revival.”

Vernon J. Sprunger, 1939

Upper left. *The Mennonite church and congregation in Nyanga.*

Lower left. *Pax man Harlan Bartel teaches welding to Ngenze Kibunde.*

Lower middle. *Fremont Regier receives gifts of fruit and vegetables after returning from furlough and sick leave.*

Lower right. *In 1959 the Congo Inland Mission schools of various kinds served more than 27,000 students.*

Middle right. *Missionary Vernon Sprunger served in Congo-Zaire 1931-1972.*

Far middle right. *The gospel is translated from Lingala to Kipendi.*



Japan

Mennonite mission strategy for Japan was forged out of the wreckage of China. In mainland China the missionaries had established big Western-style mission compounds and institutions which were beyond the capacity of the local Christians to support. This time the missionaries resolved to travel lightly. William C. Voth, experienced China missionary who pioneered the work in Japan, warned at the outset that missionaries might only be allowed a short term in Japan.

Voth made an initial survey in Kyushu island on his way home from China in 1950, and returned for another survey with Verney Unruh in summer 1951. The Voth-Unruh report noted that there were only three or four Christian missionaries in Miyazaki Prefecture in a population of about one million. The Christian groups there, most of which had very small membership despite years of work, welcomed Mennonite involvement enthusiastically. Voth and Unruh recommended that Mennonites begin first in Miyazaki City, then in Miyakonojo, and that top priority be given to the neglected rural areas. Both Voth and Unruh had grown up in "neglected rural areas"—in Oklahoma and Montana, respectively—and the proposing of a rural strategy was for them as natural and as "Mennonite" as eating borscht and zwieback. They were optimistic about prospects for planting churches and expanding quickly. In Unruh's words, "We must not only win believers to Christ but at the same time make plans for their continued growth in Christ. Further, I feel that as soon as a church is firmly established we should move on to new areas. In brief, the indigenous Church is our goal."

Ten General Conference missionaries arrived in Japan in 1951; ten

more came in 1953-54. While the younger missionaries who planned for careers in Japan were studying language in Kobe, W. C. and Matilda Kliewer Voth moved to Miyazaki Prefecture (southeast coast of Kyushu), in 1952. Decisions about what kind of buildings to build or buy were not easy ones. Mission board secretary John Thiessen wrote to Voth insisting that all church or institutional buildings "be geared to an indigenous church and property be such as can be owned and controlled by the church." The sprawling bungalows of India and the massive church buildings and schools of China were not to be duplicated in Japan. In fact, the only GC missionary "institution" (in a traditional sense) built in Japan was the Kei Ai [Grace-Love] Kindergarten built next door to the missionary home in Nichinan in 1955. The anti-institutional policy of the mission did not always have unanimous support among the missionaries, but it did make the character of the mission and the church quite different from the Mennonite work in other countries where more energy went into schools and hospitals.

The Japanese were particularly fascinated with American culture and language in the immediate post-war years. The old empire had been destroyed and discredited. Japanese survivors eagerly looked for new alternatives. Mennonite missionaries discovered that one of the best methods for establishing personal contacts was through the teaching of English classes. Such teaching did not require full command of the Japanese language, and it allowed for additional contacts through Bible study or worship. The English-teaching method of evangelism proved to be more long-lasting than some other methods.

Radio evangelism was discontinued in 1966; tent campaigns seemed to lose their appeal with the coming of television. But the English classes remained popular. In the 1960s a number of short-term mission workers were recruited for the mission, in some cases fulfilling American Selective Service obligations, and these workers usually engaged in English teaching.

A number of consequences seemed to flow from the teacher-learner context of mission work. People were won to the church not in groups but as individuals who had done some wrestling in Christian theology. The Christian faith among Japanese Mennonites probably had more intellectual content and appreciation than in other Mennonite mission fields. The size of Mennonite congregations remained small. Whether led by missionaries, or later by Japanese pastors, the congregations did not grow above classroom size.

The witness of Japanese Mennonites was inhibited by the small size and limited growth of the churches. In this regard the Mennonites were similar to Protestant churches in Japan generally. The Kyushu Mennonite Church Conference in 1978 claimed 588 members, but many of these were nonresident or inactive. It was, for the most part, a middle-class whose members were growing in economic prosperity. But the church's resources for program development were restricted by limited numbers. This meant continued dependence upon the North American mission board in a number of respects, although there was no doubt that the church would survive even if all North American missionaries would have to leave and all foreign subsidies would be cut off.

In no country other than Japan did there emerge so quickly a group of spiritually dedicated and theologically articulate Mennonite leaders who could communicate the gospel with freshness and persuasiveness. In the space of a few short decades, North American Mennonites found themselves sitting at the feet of Japanese teachers to learn the meaning of biblical Christianity in the Anabaptist tradition!



Above. Japanese missionaries in 1955. First row left to right. Martha Giesbrecht, Beverly Boschman, David Voran, Douglas Voran, Esther Patkau, Beth Thiessen, Richard and Evangeline Derksen, Patricia and Judith Unruh, Anna and John Ediger. Back row left to right. Paul, Lawrence, Lavern Boschman, Anna Dyck, Lois Voran and Debra, Leonore Friesen, Peter Voran, Peter and Mary Derksen, Robert and Alice Ramseyer and John Mark, Verney and Belva Unruh and Paul Edward, Ferd and Viola Ediger and James Allen, Ruby and Bernard Thiessen and Royce Bernard.

Bottom. Tent campaigns were popular in the early years of the mission in Kyushu.





“By nature the Japanese people like to be taught.”
Hiroshi Isobe



Upper left. A youth Sunday School class at Miyazaki.

Lower left. The Kindergarten at Nichinan.

Upper right. Miss Kushima teaching the children's Bible class.

Lower right. Class time at spring Bible School in Miyazaki.



Taiwan

The Mennonite mission in Taiwan published a special calendar for the year of 1960, marking twenty-two days of celebration of historic occasions of significance for the identity of Mennonites in Taiwan. The calendar was a revealing blend of political and religious high points, as well as a linking of Anabaptist-Mennonite history with Mennonite church growth in Taiwan. Three of the selected dates marked Taiwanese political celebrations: Sun Yat-sen's birthday, the anniversary of the Republic of China, and the coming of freedom for Taiwan in 1945. Six of the dates were religious holidays such as Christmas, Thanksgiving, Bible Day, and Pentecost. The notable dates for Mennonite history included the dates of the founding of Mennonite churches and institutions in Taiwan in the 1950s, alongside events associated with Anabaptist founding fathers 400 years earlier (Menno Simons, Georg Blaurock, Felix Manz). This 1960 calendar seemed to express the hope for a synthesis in Taiwan—for a church which would be both truly indigenous and truly conscious of standing in the historical Christian-Mennonite tradition.

Mission and church development in Taiwan held numerous surprises for the Mennonites. It was a surprise that church planting took place among the Taiwanese people, rather than among the mountain tribes or the mainland Chinese immigrants. It was another surprise that the work in Taiwan proceeded

under conditions of political stability—a stability of long-term crisis but nevertheless allowing a longer uninterrupted period of mission work than had ever been possible for Mennonites on mainland China. And there was the surprise of rapid Taiwanese economic development that set an urban-industrial context for Mennonite missions, which was radically different from pre-World War II mission work in rural India, Africa, and China.

In some ways Taiwan was a unique mission field for the GC Mennonites. Taiwan was the only overseas country where GC Mennonites carried on mission work without the presence of other Mennonite branches in the same country. In Taiwan the mission work was uniquely determined and shaped by preceding Mennonite Central Committee work. Only in Taiwan were Mennonite fortunes so closely bound up with another Protestant denomination — the Presbyterians. Finally, the Taiwan mission was singular among GC Mennonite missions for the cordiality of relationships between missionaries and nationals—a fact which surely owes much to the sensitive leadership of the four Mennonite missionary couples of longest tenure on the island: Roland and Sophie Schmidt Brown, Hugh and Janet Frost Sprunger, J. N. and Martha Boschman Vandenberg, and Peter and Lydia Pankratz Kehler.

There were, of course, many unresolved questions and challenges

for that Taiwanese Mennonite church as it faced the waning decades of the twentieth century. Did the Mennonite mission burden the church with so great a weight of institutional responsibility — hospital, church conference apparatus, inter-Mennonite Asian and worldwide programs—that the church would be perpetually dependent upon the wealthier North American churches? Would Anabaptist-Mennonite teachings of church, discipleship, and nonresistance come to have concrete application in the volatile and dangerous Taiwanese church-state situation? What would it mean to be a faithful Christian and a Mennonite in Taiwan in the 1980s and beyond?

In 1978 a twenty-voice Mennonite women's choir from Taiwan toured North American churches and sang at the Tenth Mennonite World Conference in Wichita, Kansas. The director of the choir was Ruth Chen Lin, a graduate of Bluffton College who had recently been named one of the ten outstanding women in Taiwan. The choir's ability to finance its own international travel, as well as its distinguished promotion of Christian fellowship across boundaries, was one more indication of a new day in mission-church relationships.





Above. The first baptismal group at Nan-tun. Lay evangelist, Mr. Chang, is second row extreme left. Missionary Hugh Sprunger is second row extreme right.

Bottom center. Mennonite Taiwanese womens choir, directed by Ruth Chen Lin. Photo taken before a choir trip to Korea and Japan.







Upper left. At a village church made from thatch and boards. Harold Becker, Roland Brown, Mr. Liu and Glen Graber.

Middle left. Preparing to show pictures at evening meeting among aboriginal tribal people.

Lower Left. Childrens class.

Upper right. Street meeting in Hwalien.

Lower Center. Nurses graduation in 1959 at the hospital in Mihun-Hwalien. Lena Peters, Alvin Friesen, P. J. Pankratz, and Esther Mae Andres.



Colombia

The first four missionaries arrived in Colombia in the fall of 1945—Gerald and Mary Wood Stucky, Janet Soldner, and Mary Becker. Soldner was a nurse, also from Berne. Becker was from the First Mennonite Church in Newton, Kansas, and had turned toward Colombia after waiting long for a visa to India. They acquired a site and began school in 1947.

Mission strategy in Colombia in the early years was dictated by practical possibilities and limitations, rather than by a prescribed missions philosophy or mission board direction. The result was the creation of a kind of Mennonite mission "compound"—although it was quite different from Mennonite mission compounds in India, China, and Africa. The site chosen for the school was a fifteen-acre (six-hectare) farm nestled in the Andes Mountains about fifty miles (eighty kilometers) west of Bogota. It was an idyllic isolated environment—lush with orange and banana trees and bordered by a rushing mountain stream. About one mile (1.6 kilometers) distant by burro path was the village of Cachipay (Cah-chee-pie); its five hundred inhabitants came to the market twice a week in the village square which sloped down from the imposing Catholic church. The local economy was geared to coffee production. An enterprising German had built a two-story hotel-house on the farm in about 1939, having brought all the building material up the path by beast of burden. The Mennonites

first rented and then bought the property and turned it into the physical and spiritual center for mission work in Colombia.

The mission aimed for an independent national church from the time the first congregations were organized. "The Mission Board has urged us," said a 1953 article in the *Colombian News*, "to take immediate steps of self-government, self-support, and self-propagation in the groups now functioning in Colombia under our oversight." The first four copastors of the Cachipay congregation, elected at the end of 1953, took correspondence courses in Bible study and instruction in practice preaching to develop leadership potential. The occupations of these men—tailor, barber, carpenter, and baker—suggested that the first core of the Cachipay congregation was made up of village artisans. The tailor was Armando Hernandez, a gifted person who became the outstanding Colombian leader of the church for the next twenty years.

By 1959 there were 112 members in the GC Mennonite churches in Colombia: 50 in Cachipay, 22 in Anolaima, and 40 in La Mesa. Nearly twenty years later (1977) the number of active members in these same three village congregations was just about the same. The Mennonite village churches failed to grow. A key explanation for this lack of growth was the high mobility of church members. Educated people—and Protestant membership tended to be identified with

education and upward mobility—tended to move out of the village to seek jobs in the cities, especially in nearby Bogota. The most qualified national pastors and church leaders sought more stimulating and challenging locations for work.

Antonio Arevalo, a charismatic pastor of Pentecostal background, became pastor of the Berna congregation in 1972. Under his leadership the congregation grew to 260 active members by 1977, more than twice the membership of all eight other Mennonite GC congregations in Colombia combined. Arevalo provided significant leadership in the Colombia Mennonite church conference, as well as in Colombian ecumenical Protestant associations. The Berna congregation opened a day-care center in church facilities for fifty children in April 1977.

A second Mennonite congregation in Bogota grew out of the ministry of Gerald and Mary Hope Stucky, who returned to Colombia in 1973 after spending a number of years in the United States. The core of the new group was again formed of ex-students from Cachipay, including some who had helped begin the Berna church. In 1978 this new group, which met in the Stuckys' apartment in the Chapinero section of Bogota, numbered forty-four members and faced decisions regarding church building and leadership for the future. It seemed clear that the growing edge of the church was in Bogota and that new Mennonite groups might emerge in the city in coming years.

Upper right. *Site of the mission near Cachipay in the Andes mountains.*

Lower right. *LaVerne Rutschman engaging in adult literacy work.*





“Following the Mennonite tradition, by the side of the shrine must be a clinic, a school or a social center. The Mennonite Church is a faithful believer in human dignity.”

Luis Correa, 1975

Upper left. *The first year group of children at the Cachipay school, 1947. Luis Correa, fourth from the right on the front row, became the director of Mencoldes, an inter-Mennonite Colombian development organization in the 1970s.*

Lower left. *Destruction in Bogota*

in 1948 from the revolution which began the decade of political upheaval known as “The Violence.”

Upper right. *Gerald Stucky and congregation at time of 1948 baptisms.*

Lower right. *Primitive agricultural methods on the Cachipay farm.*



Paraguay

The Paraguayan Chaco is an isolated and forbidding plain of dense bush, intermittent grasslands, and hot winds, which had long defied any dreams of settled, agricultural life. When Mennonites first arrived in 1926, they thought the region was entirely uninhabited. There were in fact several nomadic Indian tribes of carefully limited population which were thinly dispersed in the area. It has been estimated that the total Indian population in the area initially settled by Mennonites consisted of two groups of the Lengua tribe, with fifty to a hundred in each group, plus several scattered bands of other Indian tribes beyond the fringes of the newly settled territory. The Lenguas may have been in the process of dying out as a people. Various Indian tribes suffered severely in the Chaco War between Paraguay and Bolivia, 1930-32.

The establishment of successful Mennonite agricultural settlements in the Chaco transformed the social and economic life of the Indian tribes. It changed their interaction with each other, as well as their relationship to the outside world. The Mennonite colonies were a magnet of economic opportunity toward which the various tribes converged. In the half-century to 1975, the number of Indians in the Mennonite area grew from several hundred to over nine thousand. The accompanying processes of modernization may have saved some of these tribes from extinction, but it also entailed virtual obliteration of their traditional way of life.

The Mennonites were clear from the beginning that their mission

work among the Indians would involve thorough cultural transformation. Preliminary discussions of plans for mission work were held as early as 1932. In September 1935 members of three Mennonite groups in the Chaco—the Mennonite Brethren, General Conference, and Evangelical Mennonite Brethren (Allianz Gemeinde)—formed a missionary association which they called Light to the Indians. The stated purposes of the association allowed for no separation of body and soul, or of individual and community. The purposes included witness to the living God, teaching of the Bible and Christian doctrine, education for children, teaching for morally pure Christian family life, training in hygiene, and economic and cultural progress. The Mennonites hoped to make the Indians into "true, useful and industrious citizens of the Paraguayan state."

The settlement program in the Chaco has been remarkably successful, and may in fact be virtually without historical precedent as a model by which one modernized community aided hunting and herding peoples to make the transition to agricultural life. Compared to the failures of the United States government policy to turn Native Americans into agriculturists on reservations in the nineteenth century, the Mennonite Chaco program is most impressive. Mennonite ideology—particularly the doctrines of nonresistance and missions—had much to do with the evolution of the settlement program. If the Mennonites had not been pacifists, if they had been prepared to destroy the Indians with military weapons

as happened on other frontiers, an Indian settlement program may have been neither necessary nor possible.

The issues of economic justice and social separation remained as major ongoing problems, however. Mennonites benefited from cheap Indian labor. The Mennonites were relatively wealthy and the Indians were relatively poor, and this disparity was a source of potential conflict. In their other mission programs, wealthy North American Mennonites had been separated from their economically poor mission churches as in, for example, India and Zaire. But in Paraguay the Mennonites were cast into a situation where they competed for limited economic resources with the Indians who had been converted by their mission efforts. Many of these Paraguayan Mennonites could recall their recent history in Russia where the relatively wealthy Mennonite German-speaking colonists were driven out after the Russian revolution by Russians who resented Mennonite wealth and cultural separateness. The missions-settlement program must be successful to keep the Mennonites from once again reaping the whirlwind.

The Mennonite communities in the Chaco face continuing social changes of their own in coming decades. Their isolation from Paraguayan society and economy has been gradually breaking down, especially since the completion of the trans-Chaco road in 1961. A slow transition from the German to the Spanish language is taking place. Meanwhile Mennonites are slowly losing mastery and control over relationships with the Indians as Indians are becoming more self-conscious and more articulate in making their demands and in establishing direct contacts with the Paraguayan government. There remain many fascinating chapters to be written in this story of one of the last geographical frontiers on the earth.

Right. *Heinrich Duerksen, colony leader of Fernheim colony, talks with an Indian settler.*







Upper left. Indians who live on the reservation established by the mission society, Light to the Indians.

Lower left. Reservation life means a shift to an agricultural life style.

Upper right. Indian mother and two children.

Lower right. Kornelius Isaac, a thirty-year-old missionary among the Chalupi Indians in Neuland Colony, was killed in a contact with the Moro Indians in 1958. His grieving family stands by the casket.



Radical Reformation and Mennonite Bibliography 1978-1979

by Lawrence Klippenstein. Assisted by Nelson Sprunger, and James C. Juhnke

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