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# Our Missionary Task

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Its Requirements,  
Progress and  
Urgency

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Copies of this leaflet may be obtained from  
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF FOREIGN MISSIONS  
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# Our Missionary Task:

## Its Requirements, Progress, and Urgency.

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Fifty-seven years ago when the great Scotch Missionary, Alexander Duff, was in this country, he said before a memorable gathering in New York City, "If for a moment I could wield the wand of despotic power for a good purpose, I would go to the heathen world and there chalk out a separate district for every evangelical denomination."

### Our Foreign Parish.

What Duff longed for has come to pass. Waste and friction have been eliminated. The districts have been chalked out. In the seven countries where our missions were planted, definite sections have been set apart to our Church, embracing an aggregate population of over 25,000,000. Other Churches have accepted their assignments, and we have accepted ours. As servants of a Missionary Saviour we could not do less. Whether we evangelize the field assigned us or not, we keep others out.

Said a gentleman once to Daniel Webster, "Mr. Webster, what is the most solemn thought that ever entered your mind?" Mr. Webster's answer was, "The thought of my personal accountability to God." The most solemn thought that can enter the mind of our Church, a thought that should awe and thrill and quicken us beyond any other, is this, that twenty-five millions of men and women and children are dependent on us for spiritual life and light. We are their one hope of knowing Jesus Christ.

Missionary experts have estimated that to evangelize this number of people in a reasonable time will require of us one million dollars per year. This amount our General Assembly has approved and has called upon our people to contribute. According to the Minutes of 1912 we gave for the support and extension of religion in our Home Parish \$3,781,632. One fourth of that would be \$945,408, or nearly the annual amount required. Is it right that our Foreign

Parish should receive one fourth as much as we spend on our Home Parish?  
It seems right in view of

### **The Relative Size of Our Home and Foreign Parishes.**

Our Church is not responsible for the whole non-Christian world. It divides that responsibility with a host of other evangelical Churches in Christian lands. Neither is our Church responsible for the whole thirty million population of our Southern states. It divides that responsibility with thirty or more bodies of evangelical white Christians that live and labor in the same section. A study of the U. S. Religious Census Reports shows that our Southern Presbyterian Church constitutes four and one-third per cent of the white evangelical church membership of the South. Judging by numerical strength alone, therefore, our share of the thirty millions would be four and one-third per cent, or about 1,300,000.

But a Bible principle comes in here. "To whom much is given of him shall much be required." When we remember how much has been given to Southern Presbyterians in the way of godly ancestry, pious home-training, sound doctrine, educational opportunity, and material prosperity, we feel that God will require more of us than our numerical strength would indicate. How much more? Shall we say that God has a right to expect four times as much from the average Southern Presbyterian as from the average member of other denominations? Shall we say that Southern Presbyterians, when weighed, will balance four times their number of other church members?

Our modesty would utterly shrink from such a claim, and we do not dream of making it. Yet on this untenably extreme basis of apportionment our share of the 30,000,000 of the South would be four times our numerical proportion, or about 5,000,000. Certainly the most bigoted high-church Presbyterian in our whole connection could not claim for his Church a greater superiority than four to one, or a larger consequent share of our Home field than 5,000,000.

In the fear of God let us ask ourselves this question: If for the religious welfare of these five millions, including our own families, we contribute \$3,781,682, is it not reasonable that for the religious welfare of yonder twenty-five millions we should contribute \$1,000,000? Should we not give one-fourth as much to meet a five times larger responsibility?

## **The Superior Needs of Our Foreign Parish.**

But the case is stronger yet. Our Home Parish, for the most part, has long been blessed with a Christian civilization. The most of it has been for generations under continuous church and Sunday-school influence. On the average, out of every hundred of its people, including both young and old of all races, 31 are Protestant church members, and 37 belong to some form of church organization. There is an average of one Protestant minister to every 639 of its people, one doctor to every 650, and state-supported schools are in reach of nearly all; so that in the Home Parish our Church as such is called upon to do only a fraction of the educational work and none of the medical.

But in our Foreign Parish the mental, moral, and physical needs are so desperate and appealing that there our Church must reproduce directly our Lord's triple work on earth of preaching, teaching, and healing. It must preach, where every minister we send has an average parish of far above one hundred thousand. It must teach, where ninety-five per cent of the population have their minds closed and darkened by total illiteracy. It must heal, where the average is less than one physician to a million people. If we give \$3,781,632 to our Home Parish, should we not give one fourth as much to our Foreign Parish whose needs are so vastly greater?

I am not urging a reduction in our Home gifts. God forbid! But I am pleading for an increase of the Foreign Mission offering till the proportion is more nearly what it ought to be. So far from discouraging Home benevolence, what I am saying of the size and needs of our Foreign Parish is an argument for strengthening our forces here, so that on an ever-broadening base at home we may build up an ever-enlarging work abroad.

## **Not One Cause But All Causes In One.**

We are often tempted to look upon Foreign Missions as but a single item among our benevolent objects. We think of it as standing on the same platform and in the same row with the others. This is a mistake. Foreign Missions is not an item of benevolence; it is a vast international system of benevolence, embracing all the items. It includes traveling expenses, ministers' salaries, ministers' houses, church erection, home missionary and evangelistic work of all kinds; educational work of all kinds, day schools, colleges, and seminaries;

medical work, with doctors, nurses, hospitals, and dispensaries; translation and publication work, for sowing the truth broadcast; ministerial relief, for disabled and aged missionaries and their dependent families; colportage work, Sunday-school work, orphanage work, native helpers' support, and all the other items of labor and expense necessary to bring the regenerative powers of Christianity into closest, broadest contact with the awful needs of Christless nations. The Foreign cause is all the Christian causes in one. It requires so much because it includes so much.

### **Where Gifts and Work Bring Largest Returns.**

But great as its needs are, the blessings of God upon it, and the opportunities opening before it, are greater still. The work thus far has been largely foundation work, sowing rather than reaping. Yet already we have a Foreign church membership of over 26,000, with adherents numbering 65,000 more. Compared with the total amounts expended, the results in conversions are nearly twice as great, and the cost per convert nearly twice as small, on the foreign field as in our home churches. Our ordained missionaries average four times as many converts per year as our home ministers, while the percentage of annual increase of our Foreign membership is about eight times that of the Home church.

### **A Good Beginning.**

The blacker the background, the brighter the light. One Christian church, or one out-spoken Christian man or woman, in the midst of a corrupt or heathen civilization, is ten times more conspicuous, more widely known, discussed, and pondered, than such church or individual would be in this country. The following figures, therefore, while outlining the work in our seven fields, are wholly inadequate to measure the range of the Christian influence exerted or the extent to which it is steadily undermining the social and religious systems that blight and darken these lands.

In Mexico we have four Stations, 12 organized churches, 49 outstations, or places of regular meeting, an aggregate church membership of 927, and a Sunday-school membership of 846. Notwithstanding the intense and continuous political excitement, 78 were added by confession last year, and over \$5,000 contributed by the native Christians.

In Cuba, our most recently entered mission field, we have six Stations, five organized churches, an aggregate church membership of 506, and a Sunday-school membership of 670. Though our

already small mission force was reduced sixty per cent by sickness-enforced absence last year, yet 53 were added on confession and \$2,150 contributed by the native Christians.

In Brazil we have 31 Stations, 40 organized churches, 153 outstations, an aggregate church membership of 4,400, and a Sunday-school membership of 1,400. Last year 385 were added by confession and \$16,841 contributed by the native Christians.

In Japan we have six Stations, 34 organized churches of which 9 are self-supporting, 37 outstations, an aggregate church membership of over 2,300, and a Sunday-school membership of over 2,700. Last year 259 were added by profession and the native Christians contributed \$11,964.

In China we have 15 stations, 88 outstations, 20 organized churches, an aggregate church membership of 2,500, and a Sunday-school membership of 2,022. Last year 193 were added by profession and the native Christians out of their poverty contributed \$6,000. The year's work was greatly interfered with by political disturbances, and the enforced withdrawal of many of our missionaries to Shanghai.

In Korea we have four Stations, 353 churches of which all but 15 are self-supporting, an aggregate church membership of 7,155, and a Sunday-school membership of 11,200. Last year 1,900 were added by confession, and the native Christians, despite their extreme poverty, contributed \$5,283.

Our Stations, Luebo and Ibanche, in the Belgian Congo, Africa, to which a third Station Mutoto, has recently been added, report an aggregate church membership of 8,386, with 111 outstations and a Sunday-school membership of 10,550. Last year 615 were added on confession, though this number would have been much larger had not the Station force been so depleted that there were no missionaries to visit many of the outstations and receive into the church those who were waiting to be examined.

### Summary.

In our seven foreign fields last year we had 69 Stations, 438 outstations, 464 churches, 786 native helpers, a church membership of 26,174, a Sunday-school membership of 29,388, 3,483 additions on profession, and nearly \$50,000 contributed by the native Christians. Over 11,000 pupils were taught in our mission day-schools, colleges, and seminaries, over 100,000 medical treatments given in our hospitals, and vast quantities of Christian literature printed and circulated.

The above totals are in almost every instance below the facts, as several Stations have not sent in reports, and of the reports received many are incomplete.

### Our Present Foreign Missionary Force.

At the present writing, June, 1, 1912, we have in our seven fields 98 ordained men, 22 doctors, 11 male teachers, 122 wives, and 67 single women serving as teachers, nurses, or evangelists. The total is 320, distributed as follows: in Africa, 20; in Brazil, 38; in

China, 132; in Cuba, 18; in Japan, 38; in Korea, 62; in Mexico, 12. About four-fifths of our missionary force, on the average, are in active foreign service, the other fifth being in this country on their regular furloughs, which they usually spend in lecture tours among the churches, or else detained here by broken health, old age, or domestic necessities.

### **Are We Sending Out Too Many Missionaries?**

Of our 1,600 active ministers, 1,500 are laboring in our Home Parish of 5,000,000, and 98 in our Foreign Parish of 25,000,000. Of our nearly 300,000 members, including 11,000 Ruling Elders, 10,000 Deacons and 25,000 Sunday-school teachers, we have sent 222 to evangelize our Foreign Parish, or less than one-thirteenth of one per cent.

### **Financial Condition and Policy.**

By the blessing of God our Church last year for the first time crossed the half million line, the total receipts being \$504,803. Though the receipts from legacies were \$30,000 less than the year before, the gifts from living donors were \$82,000 more. For the five previous years the deficit had been steadily increasing as the actual expenses of the expanding work overtopped more and more the annual support provided. In 1910 the work required \$40,000 beyond income. In 1911 it required \$45,000 beyond income. On April 1, 1911, the deficit had grown to \$132,000. Last year its increase was not only stopped but 20 per cent of its total was paid off, while with pinching economies the whole work was not only sustained, but 24 new missionaries were sent out.

It is now the fixed policy and practice of the Executive Committee of Foreign Missions to send out no new missionary until his expenses of travel and equipment and his annual cost of \$1,000 have been secured or pledged in advance as a net addition to income.

### **Our Korean Field Provided For.**

In 1910 the physical equipment of our Korean Mission was provided for. Last year was added the practical completion of the missionary force necessary to accomplish our missionary task there; so that now, without enlarging our present outlay in that field, we may confidently expect that in a reasonable time the gospel will be preached and a church established in every city and village of that section of Korea, for the evangelization of which we are responsible.

This is the first actual fulfillment by our Church of its responsibility for one of those seven great fields which it assumed in 1907 as its share of the non-Christian world. It is a thrilling event in our Mission history. It is big with promise for our six other fields. It should evoke praise to God and fire with fresh zeal our whole Church. It means that we are grappling in a business-like and successful way with the mightiest work that God has given us to do.

Africa and China come next. Unmistakable providences indicate this order.

### **Ethiopia Stretching Out Her Hands.**

So marvelously has God's Spirit been poured out upon our African field that native tribes hundreds of miles distant have been sending messengers to our Mission begging for Bible teachers. The situation there for years has been the literal fulfillment of the Scripture prophecy, "Ethiopia shall stretch out her hands unto God." Last winter our missionary force had become so depleted that the native Christians appointed a season of prayer and fasting that more missionaries might be sent. Some of them were in such agony of supplication that for three days they touched neither food nor drink.

The answer to this prayer was seen at the great Convention at Chattanooga, when twenty-eight young volunteers stood on the platform offering their services for this field, fourteen of whom will sail this summer.

The following is part of a letter written from the Congo by Bishop Lambuth, Mission Secretary of the Southern Methodist Church. It shows how our missionaries are training the native Christians to be evangelists to their own people, which is the only way in which any land can be thoroughly and permanently Christianized.

"My soul rejoiced within me at this great piece of evangelism wrought out by the Southern Presbyterian missionaries in twenty-one years.

"A mere handful of white and colored missionaries have gathered about them 8,000 earnest Christians, and out of this number 300 teachers and evangelists, who, while they themselves are under training, have daily under instruction thousands of children and grown people. What is more, this is capable of indefinite extension. The only limitation is the number and strength of the working force. Do you wonder that my soul is stirred when I think of this being carried on for a nine days' journey on foot in almost every direction from Luebo as the base or center,



and by LAYMEN? Not one ordained preacher as yet, and 200 of the force of 300 self-supporting. In other words the villagers, in addition to building the sheds or school houses and churches, support these men by building them houses and supplying cassava for bread, palm oil, yams, chickens, eggs, ants, grasshoppers, and caterpillars.

### Challenge to the Laymen.

“What a challenge to the Laymen of our Church! We have never fully utilized this great contingent at home. Here is an illustration of what can be done from the foreign field. These men are not preachers. They do not pretend to be. They are Christian school teachers; they are expounders of the Word of God as they themselves have been taught; they organize cottage prayer meetings and establish and superintend Sunday-schools. They know God. I rarely have heard such prayers. They have learned how to talk with God, and with a devoutness of spirit which is marvelous. They are leading the people in the way of truth and right living.

“The work of these men and that of their missionary leaders is rooted and grounded in faith and in prayer. Think of three hundred turning out every morning of the year to 6 o'clock prayer meeting. Think of a semi-circle of cottage prayer meetings at Luebo every Wednesday night extending for two miles. I heard the singing from half a hundred different points while I was walking through the mission compound or campus, on my way to conduct the missionary prayer service in English. Is there any wonder that we felt that night the presence of our Lord? I thank God for what I have seen and heard. The half had not been told me.”

Sixteen more missionaries are needed to meet our responsibilities in the Congo. Who will go and who will send them?

### The Unparalleled Situation in China.

The astonished gaze of the world is fixed today on China. Her iron-bound conservatism of four thousand years has given place to a passionate eagerness to acquire Western knowledge and to incorporate into her own life whatever has made the Western peoples strong. A nation of 400,000,000, whose racial qualities as well as numbers predestine them to leadership; whose intellectual and spiritual capacity coupled with their unique ability to thrive in any latitude, would make them the best missionaries in the world; this nation is today susceptible, open-minded, looking to us for teaching and guidance. Could human imagination conceive a greater appeal to the Christian Church?

### The Thirst for Knowledge.

China's need of Christian teachers is a hundred times greater than the supply. Only one man in twenty can read, and but one woman in a thousand. The dead

hand of the past, which for four thousand years has rested with such crushing weight on the Chinese woman's mind, stifling aspiration and shutting out every opportunity for mental development, is at last being lifted, and her eagerness for knowledge is pathetic beyond words.

The principal of a school in Nanking writes: "One of our little girls recently asked to go home to have her picture taken. She proudly showed me the result, which was a feminine family group, with grandmother, mother, three or more aunts, and six cousins. All had assumed an intellectual expression and were posing before open books. Our little girl was the only member of the group that could read. The others only wanted to."

That picture stands for China's women today. Every woman in China wants to read. Our mission schools have more applicants than we can possibly accommodate.

In a certain town the school principal is an ardent Confucianist, yet so urgent is the demand for Western accomplishments that to teach them she employs a young woman trained in a mission school and a Christian. Were you to attend her class room, you would see a strange sight. Here is the tablet in honor of Confucius, the incense, candles, and all the other paraphernalia of worship. Amid it all you would see the young teacher, in the presence of the pupils, rise and sing, "Jesus, lover of my soul."

When we remember that teachers are more admired and revered in China than in any other nation on earth, we can realize in some measure what an unspeakable call there is for Christian men and women to go out as teachers to lead and mould the new China.

### **The Changed Attitude.**

Our missionaries today are popular. Their part in the famine relief has won the people's love and they are looked upon as the friends of the new Republic.

A few years ago when they first went to Suchien, they were driven out of the city by the town officers and the mob. But they came back. When some of these missionaries last fall were about to leave for this country, these

same town officers called on them, begged them to return, and offered to send a petition to the home church that they be sent back.

In those earlier years one of the lady missionaries was sick and had to leave the city for treatment. As she was borne out of the city gate, an old Chinese woman pointed her finger at the invalid and said, "The foreign devil is sick; she ought to die." Last fall when a sick lady missionary had to leave the same city, one hundred Chinese friends accompanied her to the boat-landing and sang, "God be with you till we meet again."

When our missionaries in 1894 went to Hsuchoufu, they were hounded out of the city. Today we have there a church of 500 members, one orphanage, two medical dispensaries, and boys' and girls' schools. Our workers are utterly incapable of overtaking the work. The church is packed to suffocation and overflow meetings have to be held, while the surrounding villages are clamoring for teachers. If we had Christian forces enough, we could take China for Christ.

Says an able member of our North Kiangsu Mission: "The country that was closed has been opened wide. It is for us now to seize the great opportunity. The time is now. The people are waiting with wide-open arms. They welcome us. They feast us. They cannot do enough for their American friends, as they call us. I could spend my days from year's end to year's end among the people, and then not get to visit all the places to which I have been invited."

#### The Critical Moment.

This period of eager open-mindedness is sure to be brief. The national mind is too sober and conservative to remain long unsettled, and when it does settle down it will be with the immobility of a great mountain. This it is that makes the present what Hon. James Bryce, British Ambassador at Washington, calls "the most critical moment there has ever been in the history of the non-Christian nations."

China's old religions are doomed. With all their defects they have been a morally conserving influence in the life of this great nation. But they are doomed. They cannot stand before the new knowledge. And with them go the only ethical guidance and restraints that China, as a nation, has ever known. Unless we give her a new moral basis of life, unless we furnish her with beliefs and precepts by which she can live and control her evil impulses and form worthy conceptions of life and work and destiny, her last state will be worse than the first.

The imminent danger is, that, torn from her old moorings, she will drift out on the dark ocean of materialism, agnosticism, infidelity; surely the richest freight ever derelict on the waters of time. Shall we let her take the path of tragedy across the unknown seas? Or shall we give her not only our railroads and telegraphs, our whisky and cigarettes, but also our divinest possession, the religion of our Lord Jesus Christ?

### The Burning Question.

That is far the biggest question before our Church today, for half our Foreign Mission responsibility is in China. And that question will be largely settled in the next few years. While we pause to calculate, events there are rushing forward with relentless and bewildering swiftness.

May God drive home to the mind, the heart, the conscience of our Church this most towering fact of modern world-history, that this nation of one-fourth the human family, this race that will one day sway the East as the white race sways the West, is NOW by God's Providence, for the first time in history, plastic, responsive, open-minded, **LOOKING TO US FOR WHAT SHE NEEDS.** Never since Christianity came out of Palestine has the Church of Christ been face to face with such a crisis and such an opportunity.

### What Will You Do?

This missionary task, whose requirements, progress, and urgency have been set before you, is your task, set you by your Saviour and Lord. Will you grapple with it gladly, heartily, heroically?

May God fire you with the ambition to make your life count to the very last ounce for the coming of Christ's Kingdom in the earth. Some of us ought to pray and go. All of us ought to pray and give, putting, it may be, a hundred dollars, a thousand dollars, or ten thousand dollars, a year into the great cause. All of us ought to pray and work, giving our personal efforts to help Christ save the world.

Will you be His faithful partner in the glorious enterprise? Will you transmute your prayers, your gold, your labors, into immortal spirits saved by the blood of Christ? Shall there be a great company from the heathen world to welcome you into everlasting habitations, and to make Heaven richer and sweeter for you throughout all eternity? What shall your answer be?