

ANNUAL LETTER

Linchow Fu via Pakhoi Station 1st Dec 1924

Attention is given to paragraph 191 on page 52 of the Rules and Regulations of the Society (Part 11, 12th Edition) which enacts that Annual Letters (dealing with this year ending 30 September) should be posted no later than November 30. You are asked to conform to this Rule and not wait until your statistics (to December 31) are made up.

The purpose of an Annual Letter is to give the Parent Committee a general view of the work accomplished by the missionary during the year. But matters of detail which are interesting or important should be included, as well as references to outside events which have any considerable influence on the missionary enterprise. It will be helpful if you will begin your letter by indicating as briefly as possible (a) the sphere in which you work; (b) the department of work in which you have taken part during the year. Also (1) when any of the work referred to in the course of your letter is new please indicate the fact plainly, and in the case of a new station or out-station state where it is situated; (2) kindly make it clear whether the work to which you are referring is done in connexion with a church council or other church organization.

Missionaries engaged in Literary Work are asked to give in tabular form a clear list of the translation and revision work, etc., (A) in which they have been occupied, (B) which they have completed during the year. Those who edit papers or magazines should state the fact.

All native names should be written in English capitals, and nothing beyond paragraph headings should appear in the margins. Please state if any part of your letter is not for publication.

One thankfully reports uninterrupted years work i.e. no fighting, thieves and high floods, which in the past has been one's experience, & causes drawbacks to progress.

Although one thanks God for the peace of Limchow ones heart been sad and anxious on account of the news of the outlying district. Market Towns & Villages have not escaped the ruthless exploits of the brigands. Women, children & cattle carried away, their little homesteads destroyed by fire with loss of life.

The "Womens School" Amah (Su Koo) with two little "proteges" of Miss Bakewells (snap-shot enclosed), had a narrow escape while visiting "Sheung-Lok" (outstation). A band of thieves made an attack – overpowered the soldiers – ransacked the homes & in some cases burning – carried off women & children – the Amah had the presence of mind to pick up the children - run outside & hide in the hedges. After the thieves made off – she reentered the house & found all their possessions stolen.

An early return to Linchow was made – with but the clothes they wore – but thank God hearts lives were spared

Motor – Service

The opening of “Motor Roads”, & running & service of “Motor- Cars & “Buses” are the cause of rapid changes here & this makes me realize in the very near future “Limchow” will be in the whirlpool of changes & chances along with the majority – of China.

Evangelistic Workers Needed

One alone realizes; very solemnly too, that the need for this Centre to be more strongly staffed, is urgent, especially “Evangelistic Workers”.

(Ling Shaan) LING.SHAAN and MO.LI a distance of some 100 miles, are now included within this district & we hope very shortly the motor-road will extend in that direction, & thus bring these “Stations” to within comparatively easy working distance for from the past five (5) years “Holy Communion Service” has not been held there, & the former “Station” LINH.SHAAN has a very fair Church membership.

With these progressive movements one longs to see the letting go of the dreadful heathen Customs which abound here. A few evenings past one witnessed the following strange combinations; about six (6) ft from the ? north-west & sunning alongside, was a long pile of “Char-coal” thirty (30) ft long, two (2) ft high & three (3) ft wide covered with brushwood, all this in preparation a “Kuroh-Foh-Shaan” i.e. passing ones the fiery mountain a ceremony indulged in by members of wealthy families should a woman die at child-birth, to prevent her soul from passing through the homes of the “Budhist hell”. The Char-coal is lighted about 6pm & by 8pm is a glowing mass of Coals, the “Witch-Doctor” performs a weird ceremony, over during which food & paper money (the latter burned) offered to the spirits accompanied by beating of “gongs” and “clashing – symbols”, at “Cock Crow” 12pm. The Witch-doctor rolls over the still burning coals from end to end, the Members and Relations of the deceased woman seen from end to end calling upon their “household gods”.

After one such ceremony, a request to us, to go & attend the scorched feet of three people.

Women’s Work

This branch of the work is of a threefold nature

- a) Training of “Bible Women”, two of whom are at present in the Women’s School under instruction, both earnest keen women – one wisely thanks God for raising up two such women, for there are now three “outstations’ without Bible-women.

One of these has the following interesting story, “after her own conversion, she determined to win her heathen husband for Christ, now a member of the Church, then having no child of her own, & longing for one, she adopted one of the “picked-up-babes” this was a step of faith, for being ? she had to do ? share towards making both ends meet, by making string in “dying cloth”. During the fighting last year, she showed her colors, by taking the cloth to some distant hill-sides to dry, when all women and

girls were securely locked in their homes, afraid to venture out for fear of molestation from the uncouth soldiers. She fearlessly told them she was obliged to her work, & trusted his "Heavenly Father" to protect her, which He did.

b) Women's School & Station Classes

Women who wish to learn the "Doctrine" are invited into the "School" for a month, where they are taught – not only by the missionaries – also by a very earnest and capable Christian Chinese-woman Teacher. During the year fourteen (14) women have had sound Gospel truths taught them & we hope to several will be prepared for baptism with their little ones.

One of these women has an interesting story. We had come in touch with her when visiting "Sheung Lok", & found her eager to hear the Gospel, but her old "mother-in-law" was opposed to the "Jesus Doctrine", at the same time quite pleased for our visits, which gives them "face" as they call it, but would not allow her to come to us! During the summer holidays, a band of thieves attacked that neighbourhood, she hid on the roof of her home – her mother-in-law with her one little "grandchild" in her arms in her attempt to escape was killed by the thieves, the little child miraculously escaped unhurt.

Thus in this sad, though we believe providential manner, the way was opened for both mother and child, to come to the "Women's School", where we trust she will find & love Him who has promised that "Thy Maker is thy husband" and will be a "Father to the Fatherless child, for since his advent here, her husband has written to say that he has married again, & she is his wife no longer. Such is the tale of many of our helpless Chinese-Sisters and they have no redress.

c) Inquirer's Classes – these are in held in the "Guest Hall" and during the past months have been splendidly attended and one feels greatly encouraged to see intelligent interest on the many faces, & where before there was a shrinking back when questions were asked, now, it is truly a joy to hear the quick eager answers.

We fell that here too there are many hopeful signs & one faith to believe that some will be moved by the Holy Spirit or request for baptism, one has already expressed the desire but will first be accepted as a "Catechumen".

Schools

On account of there being several Government-Schools here with a splendid system of education, our schools are not largely attended at the same time one realizes the great importance of the "Christian Schools" in order to provide for the children Christian parents, & all wish to have a Christian education.

The Teachers have done a faithful years work, resulting in very satisfactory examinations.

A "heathen school" of some 60 children, which one visits weekly when hearing that last year, the children of our school gave the "blind people" in a village near by, a Xmas treat, expressed the wish to join them this year.

Anything of this nature i.e. caring for sick, weak & helpless is totally foreign to them so one accepts this healthy sign as a cause for much thanks giving takes courage, & hopes for greater things.

New Gospel Hall

This is a very real need, the present building used as Gospel-Hall or “Boys’ School” is a “Confucian Hall” the front-part used occupied by Soldiers, ones which we have no control & naturally the atmosphere etc, is not always healthy or helpful nature.

The ground is already purchased & in a very good position for both “Gospel-Hall” or “School”.

We therefore make a very earnest appeal for practical sympathy, or hope very soon this need will be supplied i.e. a “building” to be used to the Glory of God & for the extension of His Kingdom.

In closing one’s heart is full of thankfulness & praise to Him who has fulfilled His promise “I will never leave thee nor forsake thee” & we are deeply grateful to the many Friends in the “Home-Lands” for their loving intercessions & prayers – for the workers.

Yours in His Service

Nelle Smith