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## Religious Education in Mission-Schools in China.

The question of religious education in mission-schools in China has again become very acute. In fact, it has reached a crisis. The present regulations touching religious instruction in elementary and middle schools are as follows: "A private school founded by a religious body is not permitted to give religion as a required subject, nor is religious propaganda permitted in the class instruction. If there are any religious exercises, students shall not be compelled or enticed to participate. No religious exercises shall be allowed in primary schools." (Chap. 1, Art. 5.)

Authorities approached by interested groups for an official interpretation of this paragraph declared that voluntary religious instruction in schools lower than the senior middle school and religious exercises of all kinds in primary schools is forbidden.

In the face of the liberty of conscience guaranteed by the constitution of China to the Chinese people, the law and its official interpretation manifestly were not only out of joint with the Magna Carta of China, but they also jeopardized the very existence of Christian educational work.

Accordingly, eleven religious Chinese organizations that had been founded under foreign Christian missionary effort took heart and in the early part of the past summer approached the government for a repeal of the galling restrictions against religious education and worship in the Christian schools. It might be worth while to record the names of these organizations, as they represent some of the foreign missionary societies that have been laboring in China for many years: Church of Christ in China (Shung Hwa Chi Tuh Chiao Hwei), Methodist Episcopal Church (Mei I Mei Hwei), Baptist (Chin Li Hwei), Anglican (Chung Hwa Sheng Kung Hwei), Lutheran Church of China (Chung Hwa Sin I Hwei), Swedish Lutheran (Nan Hsin Tao Hwei), Evangelical Church (Tsen Tao Hwei), Church of the Brethren (Yu Ai Hwei), Rhenish Mission (Li Hsin Hwei), Methodist Protestant Church (Mei Po Hwei), Basel Mission (Chung Chung Hwei), United Methodist Church (Hsin Tao Kung Hwei), Southern Baptist Church (Shansi Chin Li Hwei), Southern Baptist, South China (Liang Kwang Nan Chin Hsin Chuan Tao Hwei), United Church of Canada in Szechuen (Mei Tao Hwei).

The petition to the national government, among other things, set forth the following:—

"We, the undersigned, are herewith submitting to you a petition for your consideration. The purpose of this petition is to request your honorable Ministry to allow all grades of church-schools to have elective religious courses and to permit the primary to have the privilege of worship. . . .



"The purpose of the Church in conducting schools is to nurture Christlike personality, to serve society and state. There are many facts to substantiate this statement which we need not mention. We firmly believe that the real value of education consists not only in imparting knowledge or providing vocational training. In the broader sense, education should enable the student to appreciate the beautiful, good, and true, so that he will be able to give expression to beauty, goodness, and truth in his conduct. This can be realized to the highest degree, we believe, only through the gateway of religion.

"We also are of the firm conviction that the religion of Jesus Christ, His teachings of love, liberty, and equality and His vicarious sacrifice, is such that it can inspire and enable the students to achieve the ultimate aim of education, namely, the development of a healthy and perfect personality.

"Because of this conviction we have in our schools offered religious courses besides courses on natural and social sciences and conducted worship in addition to other meetings and services which are required of the students of the government. . . .

"The reason why Christian schools have religious courses and worship is from the sincere desire of educators to realize Christ's great purpose to help in the establishment of the personalities of others through personalities already established, to aid others to their ultimate achievement through those who themselves have achieved.

"Secondly, regarding the question of separation of religion from education: There has been a strong movement during the last few years in educational circles for the 'separation of religion from education.' It is maintained that churches should not use education as an instrument to propagate religion. It is held that the aim of education is to 'open the mind' of the students, and the aim of religion is to strengthen the faith of a man in an abstract being. To believe a being which one can hardly conceive, it is argued, will make a man mentally blind; hence he cannot achieve liberty of thought and a full development of personality. Therefore religion and education must be kept separate. By so doing, they have determined to suppress church-schools, to forbid religious worship. The wise have not considered [what they were doing]. The masses have agreed to follow their lead.

"But we do not think so. We believe that education should have as its aim the 'opening of one's mind.' We also believe that religion does not make one mentally blind. If religion tends to close one's mind to new knowledge, how can it be possible for us to propagate religion by means of education?

"We have during the past in our schools made every effort at our disposal to teach natural and social science to the students who came to us. In addition we have taught religion. This demonstrates



the fact that religion and science are not mutually contradictory. When we consider the real value of education, we cannot conclude that education without religion is complete. A full-rounded personality is a personality mentally sound and emotionally sane. Reason and feeling cannot well be divorced."

In the following sections of the petition the need of schools generally and of Christian schools for Christian children is stressed. This part of the petition reads:—

"We have religious instruction and worship in our schools because we are of the conviction that a full-rounded personality cannot be fully developed apart from religious experience and religious influence. . . .

"In short, our church-schools have religious instruction and worship because we firmly believe that education without religion is incomplete. The religion of Jesus Christ helps a student to give expression to the things most beautiful and most idealistic. It does not close the mind of an intelligent student, but guides him to understand the true meaning of life, a life that is worth living, a life for the well-being of others. The government should permit private schools to teach such a religion and give it an essential place in education.

"The word *entice* is vague and not defined. If it is to connote that one cannot even mention the name of Jesus Christ and His teachings to others, it would seem as if the government had violated the freedom-of-speech clause in the Party Program. The prohibition of conducting worship in private schools and teaching religion in schools lower than senior middle grade is also a violation of 'religious liberty,' which was precious to the heart of Dr. Sun. . . .

"The consequences of chap. 1, Art. 5, of the regulations governing private schools and of the official interpretation thereof will mean education exclusively without religion, the closing down of a majority of our schools, and the loss of opportunity for an education to thousands of children and young people. . . . We therefore sincerely hope that your honorable Ministry will reconsider the whole matter and so modify the article in question as to allow all grades of church-schools to have religious instruction and church primary schools to have the privilege of worship."

The petition was signed by representatives of eleven church-bodies, which claimed to represent over 250,000 communicants.

In the process of time the petitioners received an answer from the government, dated July 24, 1930, which I quote at length:—

"Upon consideration of the points raised in your petition, we find them not free from misunderstanding. Let us consider these points *seriatim*.

"1) The first point, that we should use religious teaching in the training for life, is not far from the truth. But this depends upon whether you utilize in your teaching the ideals of *all* religions, such,



for example, as the teaching of equality and mercy in Buddhism, of universal love and service of others in Christianity; one cannot limit the teachings exclusively to those of one religion. Furthermore, religion cannot be taught by outward forms and practises. If you conduct courses in religion and have worship limited to one religion only, this is in fact mere outward formality and from an educational point of view is not an essential in the training for life.

"2) In the regulations governing the establishment of private schools the restrictions on religious education are not limited to one particular religion. If we allow any one religion to inculcate exclusively its own principles in non-adults of junior middle-school grade and below, this will preempt their minds and deprive them later on, when they have reached the years of maturity, of the ability to exercise freedom in the choice of their religion. This is really the placing of shackles upon their liberty of thought.

"3) Since the principal purpose of your churches in establishing schools is to make education widely available and is not intended to employ education to entice or compel students to become church-members, therefore the restrictions against the propagation of religion do not run counter to the prime purpose of the churches in conducting schools.

"With regard to the idea that all the children of the 200,000 Christians must be enrolled in church-schools, this seems to us to be on the same plane as the attempt to view the world from your own doorstep, and such an idea should not continue to be cherished.

"4) If you propose to experiment in education, basing your experiment on projects related to science and social conditions, this is something which the government unquestionably approves and permits. Religion, however, is one type of abstract, intangible imagination and is outside the category of educational theories, and there is therefore no reason for the government to permit religion in schools for the purpose of experimentation.

"To sum up: There is not only *one* religion. If we allow each religion in the name of education to vie with another to propagate religion, the natural tendency will be to create divisions and strife. The Ministry of Education, in order to guard against such a possible future calamity, is obliged to impose these restrictions, which apply not only to Christianity, but to the other religions as well.

"Hence, to have elective religious courses in junior middle schools and to have the privilege of worship in primary schools embodies obstacles too difficult, and therefore the Ministry cannot grant the request. Moreover, we hope that you will consider in a sympathetic way this our humble opinion regarding the restriction upon propagation of religion in schools. Let this be considered final and not subject to further review. (Signed.) Moling Tsiang, Minister of Education."



Mr. Moling Tsiang is said to be a graduate of a well-known American university. If that is the case, it is to be deplored that he did not have the opportunity of learning just what the Christian religion really is. The answer of the Chinese government shatters for the present all hope that Christian missionary educational endeavor can be continued, unless the government, by a new appeal, will be induced to retrace its steps and to rescind the order, or unless the recent ruling will not actually be enforced by the provincial authorities. Fortunately for missionary societies provincial officials occasionally permit orders of the Nanking government with which they are out of sympathy to become a dead letter, the more so since there are constant changes in *personnel* and policy in the governmental offices. However, strict enforcement of the most recent interpretation of the law will sound the death-knell to Christian missionary week-day-school education.

No hope may be entertained at present (September, 1930) that the political coalition in North China, which is said to have established a new common center in Peiping (Peking), will differ materially from the Nationalists in their educational policy. In fact, it would seem to be even more rabidly antichristian, if such a thing were possible. Already certain registered universities and certain lower educational institutions have been ordered to close down their religious departments or suffer the consequences. And all private schools of whatever character have been ordered to register with the government by the middle of September or suffer closure. "Registration includes data constituting a complete survey of the type of work engaged in as well as a short history of the school."

Certain non-Lutheran mission-societies laboring in China have taken the latest decree of the authorities so seriously that they are closing their schools and are dismantling them rather than to continue to conduct them as non-Christian institutions.

Our own missionaries and the Board of Foreign Missions long ago decided that we will suffer the closing of our schools in China rather than conduct them in agreement with the former and recent governmental rulings. These schools were opened as Christian educational institutions and must retain that character or be discontinued. Local authorities, we are glad to say, have permitted us in the past to operate in our own way without serious objections. And we shall continue to conduct our schools in future in agreement with our past policy until the local authorities order us to desist from it.

Certain other restrictions which can hardly be suffered have already been laid upon Christian educational institutions by the Chinese government. But we have earnestly and faithfully endeavored to adapt ourselves to them. It would lead us too far afield to dwell upon them at this time. However, the latest enactment creates a crisis.



In case closure of our primary and middle schools is forced upon us, we have already planned to serve our Christian youth and others whom we shall be able to reach outside of regular school hours with the Word of God. Also, we will engage far more in general evangelistic work than we have been able to do in the past.

Finally, it needs to be said that the governmental rulings do not at present seem to affect our educational efforts in our proseminary and in our theological seminary. Still it needs to be seen just what the attitude of the authorities will be with respect to these in future. The prayer of the old Lutheran hymn is still in place:—

*Frieden bei Kirch' und Schulen uns beschere,  
Frieden zugleich der Obrigkeit gewachre!*

St. Louis, Mo., September 11, 1930.

FREDERICK BRAND.

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## Abhaltung einer Gemeindevisitation.

(Schluß.)

Auf den Predigtgottesdienst folgt die eigentliche Visitationsversammlung, und zwar entweder unmittelbar nach dem Gottesdienst oder zu späterer Stunde. Es ist meistens am besten, wenn nicht nur die stimmberechtigten, sondern alle Glieder der Gemeinde, Männer, Frauen und junge Leute, zu dieser Versammlung eingeladen werden und erscheinen. Der Visitator führt das Wort. In welcher Sprache er zu reden hat, wird sich aus den bestehenden Verhältnissen von selbst ergeben. Nach einer kurzen Einleitung stellt er, um sich über den geistlichen Zustand der Gemeinde zu informieren, eine Reihe von Fragen. Er leitet sie in passender Weise ein, um die Verbindung herzustellen, und läßt deren Beantwortung etwaige Bemerkungen folgen, um, je nachdem es nötig ist, zu raten, zu loben, zu tadeln, zu ermuntern, zu warnen usw. Da in dem hier gesetzten Falle die Predigt vom Worte handelte, so dreht sich nun auch in der Versammlung alles ums Wort. Der Visitator hebt etwa so an:

Die hiesige evangelisch-lutherische — Gemeinde hat heute Besuch. In dem Visitator wird sie von einem Vertreter ihrer Schwestergemeinden, der Gemeinden, mit denen sie im Synodalverband steht, besucht. Wie nun ein Besuch unter Verwandten und Freunden im Weltlichen ein freudiges Ereignis ist, wie da von dem geredet wird, was alle gemeinschaftlich interessiert, wie man sich da berät und ermuntert, so soll auch die Visitation einer Gemeinde eine allen ihren Gliedern willkommenen Sache sein. Auch dabei gilt es von dem zu reden, was das Interesse aller Christen in Anspruch nimmt, nämlich von dem Lauf des Wortes Gottes, zu erwägen, wie der Same des Wortes ausgestreut wird, wie er gedeiht und was für Früchte er bringt. Erlaubt mir, etliche