

Liao An Mission (1918–1949)

MILTON HOOK

Milton Hook, Ed.D. (Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan, the United States). Hook retired in 1997 as a minister in the Greater Sydney Conference, Australia. An Australian by birth Hook has served the Church as a teacher at the elementary, academy and college levels, a missionary in Papua New Guinea, and as a local church pastor. In retirement he is a conjoint senior lecturer at Avondale College of Higher Education. He has authored *Flames Over Battle Creek*, *Avondale: Experiment on the Dora*, *Desmond Ford: Reformist Theologian*, *Gospel Revivalist* the *Seventh-day Adventist Heritage Series*, and many magazine articles. He is married to Noeleen and has two sons and three grandchildren.

The Liao An Mission () was organized in 1918 as part of the Manchurian Mission. Its territory covered the Liaoning Province. Mission headquarters were located in Mukden (now Shenyang). For the first decade it was named the Fengtien Mission. In 1929 the name was changed to the Liaoning Mission, but in 1933 it reverted to Fengtien Mission. It was known as the South Manchuria Mission throughout the Second World War. Finally, in 1947 it was named the Liao An Mission.

Bernard and Bertha Petersen (Bái Déxùn) and Ole and Anna Grundset (Gé Lúnsàn) located in Mukden in October 1914 to begin evangelism. They opened a chapel on New Year's Day of 1915.¹ Later that year a church of fifteen members was organized in Mukden.² By 1919 the team of workers had increased to three expatriate families, eight national evangelists, an elementary school teacher, and six colporteurs.³ During the summer of 1921, a spacious church with tower was erected to replace their little chapel. It provided much needed seating for large crowds who attended public crusades. A substantial church school was also built on the same property.⁴

Statistical records show that at the close of 1922 there were 101 baptized members in five church groups within the province.⁵ At the end of 1926, the numbers had risen sharply to 227 members in seven organized churches.⁶

Mukden became a center for medical work. A clinic was opened in 1931 with Dr. Martin Vinkel (Wén Mùtiān) in charge.⁷ In the first year, 3,528 out-patients and 633 in-patients were treated. Some surgical operations were also performed. A larger institution, the Shenyang Sanitarium and Hospital, opened to the public on May 14, 1933. It had a capacity of forty-five beds and became a training school for nurses.⁸

Liaoning Province was the most populous of the three Manchurian provinces. That fact was reflected in the rising number of church members. At the close of 1933, the mission had organized eight churches, and the total baptized membership stood at 337.⁹ Six years later, in 1939, it numbered 887.¹⁰ It reached the milestone of one thousand members in 1942.¹¹ The peak was attained with 1,300 in 1946¹² and then, because many members moved away from the province due to worsening war conditions, the membership total was more than halved.¹³

After the Second World War, the medical work continued, and some individuals were led to church membership because of its influence. Another institution, the Northeast Union Training Institute, prepared approximately

eighty nationals each year in order to increase the quality mission staff.¹⁴ But in 1948 food became scarce, and the students had to be sent to other training institutes. Three elementary schools remained open with a total of one hundred children on the rolls. Some radio broadcasts were initiated by national evangelists after the style of the Voice of Prophecy.¹⁵

Liaoning Province was an early casualty in the communist takeover. Transportation problems made it almost impossible to obtain book supplies for canvassers. Evangelists found it difficult to attract an audience, especially with the dangers associated with night-time programs.¹⁶ The mission was effectively closed in 1949.¹⁷ The following year a new entity was created, the Liao Ho Mission, its territory including Liaoning Province but extending beyond the provincial borders. This entity was short-lived, the structure of mission organization in China crumbling in 1951.

Directors of the Liao An Mission: Bernard Petersen (Bái Déxùn) 1918-1927; A. N. Kovshar 1927-1929; Du Shu Ren (1929 to 1930); Bernard Petersen 1930 to 1931; Harvey Brodersen (Bāo Déshēng) 1931-1938; Frederick Larsen (Lái ěrxùn) 1938-1940; Wang Ching-yang (Wáng J ǐngyáng) 1942-1947; Nils Dahlsten (Dé Shítíng) 1947 to 1948; Wang Ching-yang 1948 to 1949, Liu Chang Li (Liú Chánglǐ) acting 1949.

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NOTES

1. Bernard Petersen, "Manchurian Mission," *Asiatic Division News*, July 1, 1915, 20-21.
2. Ole J. Grundset, "What Hath God Wrought," *Asiatic Division Mission News*, November 15, 1915, 2.
3. Bernard Petersen, "The Manchurian Union Mission," *Asiatic Division Outlook*, June 1, 1919, 2.
4. Bernard Petersen, "Mukden, Manchuria," *Asiatic Division Outlook*, February 15, 1922, 8.
5. "Statistical Summary," *Asiatic Division Outlook*, May 15, 1923, 8.
6. "Statistical Summary," *Asiatic Division Outlook*, May 1927, 9.
7. "Arrivals," *Far Eastern Division Outlook*, January 1930, 8.
8. Nathan F. Brewer, "The Manchurian Union Mission-1933," *China Division Reporter*, March 1934, 4-5.
9. "Statistical Summary," *China Division Reporter*, June 1934, 12.
10. "Statistical Summary," *China Division Reporter*, August 1, 1940, 10.
11. "South Manchuria Mission," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1943), 91.
12. "Liao An Mission," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1947), 95.
13. "Liao An Mission," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1950), 102.
14. Ezra L. Longway, "In Manchuria and North China," *China Division Reporter*, November 1947, 3,5.
15. Wang Ching-yang, "News From the Northeast," *China Division Reporter*, November 1948, 4.
16. Ibid.
17. "Liao An Mission," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1950), 102.

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