

East Kweichow Mission (1928–1944)

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.

East Kweichow Mission () was a sub-division of the West China Union Mission. Because Kweichow (or Guizhou) Province was mountainous and not easily accessible during the 1920s, it seemed advisable to divide the province into two sections to more easily facilitate visitation and getting supplies to out-stations. Headquarters for the enterprise was located at the provincial capital Kweiyang (or Guiyang).

In 1928 Herbert Smith became the first director of East Kweichow Mission. Alexander Buzzell and Li Wan Chuen assisted him. However, warring factions in the central provinces thwarted the initial attempt by the mission party to reach their territory from Shanghai.² Persistence finally enabled them to get through safely to Guiyang. Early in 1929 Herbert conducted a Bible School, and ten individuals were baptized. Li Wan Chuen, who had been a successful colporteur, instructed four young men in the art of bookselling.³ However, the mission was born in tragedy. On his first tour away from headquarters, a bandit robbed and fatally shot Herbert.⁴ (see article Smith, Herbert Kenneth).

Alexander Buzzell replaced Smith as director. Hostile forces captured the city of Guiyang in late 1929, but he labored on, baptizing several converts and preparing other candidates in the event that he could safely conduct a service.⁵ Circumstances did improve, allowing him and several national assistants to establish out-stations in places such as Tsunyi (or Zunyi) to the north of the capital and Anshun to the southwest. Some converts came from the minority Miao and Tai clans. At the close of 1932 the East Kweichow Mission had three organized churches and several companies with a total baptized membership of 145.⁷ Prior to his transfer in 1933, Alexander made sure that the believers in the central church at Guiyang had a well-built chapel in which to worship.⁸ Two other chapels were erected at out-stations. A small elementary school began at Guiyang, the better students advancing to the China Training Institute in Jiangsu Province.⁹

The years of the Great Depression brought cuts to the budget for the East Kweichow Mission. Civil unrest in the north of the territory also restricted advances.¹⁰ In 1934 a group of visiting church officials from Shanghai had to detour through Sichuan Province and enter Guiyang City from the west.¹¹ Some limited progress was reported, however, with the baptized membership rising to 170 and the opening of a dispensary in Guiyang. Miss Pan Shu Ho, a Miao who had graduated from the Shenyang Sanitarium as a qualified nurse and returned to minister to

her own people, conducted the small medical initiative.¹²

In 1935 a significant shift to national leadership took place with the appointment of Li Wan Chuen (L Wànquán) as director.¹³ Having helped to pioneer the mission in East Kweichow, he was well acquainted with the territory, its people, language, and culture. Growth continued during the Second World War years when Hwang Dz-chiang (Huáng Z qiáng) assumed charge,¹⁴ followed by Du Shu Ren (Dù Shùré^h), the total baptized membership hovered around 250, and evangelism continued to penetrate new districts. At the end of the Second World War a reorganization took place, uniting the East Kweichow Mission with the West Kweichow Mission. It had become advisable in view of the fact that improved road and air transport made administration easier!¹⁶

Directors of East Kweichow Mission

Herbert K. Smith 1928-1929; Alexander B. Buzzell 1929-1933; Floyd W. Johnson 1933-1935; Li Wan Chuen 1935-1939; Hwang Dz-chiang 1939-1942; Du Shu Ren 1942-1945.

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NOTES

1. "East Kweichow Mission," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1929), 195, 196.
- 2 "Enroute to West China," *Far Eastern Division Outlook*, July 1928, 6.
- 3 Herbert K. Smith, "An Open Letter From Kweiyang," *Far Eastern Division Outlook*, May 1929, 15.
- 4 Benjamin E. Beddoe, "The Price of Advance in China," *ARH*, May 2, 1929, 32.
- 5 Alexander B. Buzzell, "Word From Kweiyang," *Far Eastern Division Outlook*, October 1929, 11.
- 6 Clarence C. Crisler, "The East Kweichow Mission," *Far Eastern Division Outlook*, April 1930, 6.
- 7 "Statistical Report," *China Division Reporter*, January 1932, 5.
- 8 "A Chapel for Kweiyang," *China Division Reporter*, April/May 1933, 2.
- 9 Alexander B. Buzzell, "East Kweichow Mission," *China Division Reporter*, July/August 1933, 12.
- 10 Floyd W. Johnson, "In East Kweichow," *China Division Reporter*, October/November 1933, 4.
- 11 Clarence C. Crisler, "Once More in Kweiyang," *China Division Reporter*, July/August 1934, 4.
- 12 Clarence C. Crisler, "The Annual Conference in East Kweichow," *China Division Reporter*, September-November 1934, 2.
- 13 "East Kweichow Mission," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1936), 122-123.
- 14 "East Kweichow Mission," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1940), 121.
- 15 "East Kweichow Mission," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1943), 99.
- 16 George L. Wilkinson, "West China Union Report for 1936," *China Division Reporter*, June/July 1937, 19-20.

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