

World Missionary Conference, 1910

(To consider Missionary Problems in relation to the Non-Christian World)

THE HISTORY AND RECORDS OF THE CONFERENCE

TOGETHER WITH
ADDRESSES DELIVERED AT THE
EVENING MEETINGS

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THE PROBLEM OF CO-OPERATION BETWEEN FOREIGN AND NATIVE WORKERS

I.

BY THE RT. REV. BISHOP ROOTS

*Address delivered in the Assembly Hall on Monday
Evening, 20th June*

LET me ask you first of all, what is the problem of co-operation between native and foreign workers? It is the problem as to how and when the foreign workers and foreign Church may rightly turn over their responsibilities and work to the native workers and native Church. That is the problem and the answer is, in general terms: *Just so soon and so far as the native workers and the native Church are able to sustain that responsibility and do that work.* And we give this answer because our aim throughout our missionary work is, or ought to be—and I believe more than ever from the expressions we have heard in this Conference, that our aim is—to develop the native workers in the native Church so completely that they may, as far as possible, take charge of all the Christian work in their own land; and when this stage has been reached the presence of the foreigner and the foreign worker will be unnecessary and they should withdraw entirely. But why do we have specially at this time to consider this problem? It is because the earliest stage of mission work has in most countries passed, while the final stage has not yet been reached. The native workers and the native Church are no longer infants, neither are they

fully grown ; but they are in that most perplexing of all stages, whether of the individual or of the corporate life, the stage of adolescence.

It is hardly possible to deal with the problem on general principles alone. I think that the principles involved in the aim above stated are sound, but, as is always the case, the point of the principle is in its application. The scope of what I wish to say is therefore not world-wide, but it is limited to China only, and that from the foreign missionary's point of view. It would be presumption or affectation for me to attempt anything else. In the next World Missionary Conference we look forward with confidence and great joy to hearing this subject treated, not simply from the foreigner's point of view as I must treat it, but also, though of course not solely, from the Chinese point of view. One further preliminary remark with regard to the terminology of this subject as it appears on this evening's paper. Should we speak of our Chinese fellow workers as native workers? Although that may be right elsewhere, I am convinced that we had better not use the term "native" in speaking of the Chinese people.

Let us consider first of all what signs there are showing that the stage of adolescence has been reached in China. The first of these signs is the growth of the national spirit. Ten years ago a national spirit in China was hardly known, but now throughout the length and breadth of China there is an enthusiasm which the old China never knew. Furthermore, we find that in many of the most serious-minded Christian young men patriotism operates as a twin motive with the love of Christ and His Church, leading them to offer themselves for the work of the Christian ministry. In the second place we find this sign, a wonderful development of our Chinese staff of workers, and of Chinese ability within the Christian Church. This ability of Chinese Christians is one of the most significant signs of the times. Chinese Christians of ability are in the greatest possible demand wherever they can be secured—in Government services, in private families, and in positions of great commercial responsibility and trust. The salaries which are being offered

to these young Christian Chinese prove that in the eyes of their countrymen they take a foremost place in the life of the country. In the third place, we find everywhere in China an enthusiasm for any organisation which tends to develop the Chinese Church. For example, that which called forth the greatest enthusiasm in the meeting of the Anglican Conference in Shanghai in the spring of 1909 was the proposal to adopt the name "The Chinese Church" for the Anglican communion in China, a name not ecclesiastical but patriotic. Another indication of this enthusiasm is found in the success which the Young Men's Christian Association, more than any other Christian organisation in China, has had in rousing an active and liberal spirit amongst Christian workers and young Christians. I believe that this is due to the fact that it offers to Chinese young men an opportunity to show their patriotism and their Christianity at the same time. These three indications all point to a demand for the transfer of more responsibility to Chinese shoulders. Let me add that these signs of growth, although they lead us into great perplexity, are a cause not for discouragement but for the most profound congratulation.

Passing now from these signs, showing that the stage of advanced adolescence has been reached in the Chinese Church, let us ask ourselves what need there is to recognise Chinese leadership more fully. In the first place, we need to recognise Chinese leadership more fully than has yet been done in the authoritative councils of the Church, whether conferences or synods, or representative assemblies, or whatever we call them. Further—and here, it seems to me, is in many respects the crucial point at the present moment in the Church of China—we need to recognise Chinese leadership more fully upon the staffs of salaried workers, pastors, teachers and physicians. We must place on these staffs of Chinese workers, the ablest Chinese Christians. These Christians, who are being called for in the Government service, should be claimed first of all by the Christian Church. They should not be allowed, because they have no place, or are not welcome for any reason whatever, to use their energies outside the Church. They are needed

in the Church more than anywhere else in their country. And in order to secure these ablest Christian young men for the service of the Church, we need to see first of all that their salaries are not too small. It is not right for us to claim the services of Chinese, willing men of ability in the Christian Church, at salaries which do not give them sufficient to live upon honourably and in accordance with that state of life to which they have been developed by our labours. Perhaps even more important than this is the need to see that, once within the employment of the Church, these willing men of ability are given ample scope for their powers in preaching, in pastoral work, in the administration and government of the Church. Furthermore, we need to see that these young men of ability within the Church—I am thinking now especially of young deacons, clergymen—are given also opportunity of further study and self-development. I believe nothing will more readily repay the Christian Church than to give these young men, when they are proving to be men of true Christian ambition, every opportunity to develop to the very utmost their powers of mind and heart and soul.

Now, if this is all true, we come to the last point. What is the place of the foreign workers? I believe at the present time the position of the foreign missionary in China to be first of all that of preacher and teacher. It has, I believe, been truly said that every missionary should be an evangelistic missionary. This is a sweeping statement which should, in my humble opinion, be paralleled by another equally sweeping statement, namely, that every missionary should also be a teacher. I am sure those of you who have read the Reports carefully will have seen how insistently in nearly every one of them the responsibility of the missionary to be a teacher is emphasised. That is why we say that missionaries should be given more training in the art of teaching. Whatever they are to be—teachers, preachers, physicians even—they should be trained in the art of teaching. It is absolutely necessary that the missionary understands the work of teaching, the supreme element in which is not technicality, but which requires the use of every art and

device, along with the prompting of a heart full of confidence and love. It seems to me that the first office of the missionary to be handed over to Chinese leadership is that of the teacher. The Chinese Christian teacher will come, not as a foreigner, but as one who has lived his life in China, who knows and loves and honours the Chinese people, and who approaches every problem with an open mind, and with a mind full of sympathy. It is the business of the Christian Church at home to say that its missionaries in China shall produce such teachers from among the Christian Chinese.

But the missionary in China must not be simply preacher and teacher. He must realise always that he stands, at any rate for the present, as Mediator with the Church universal; and foreign workers must never withdraw from China until there are Chinese workers able in their own persons to maintain touch with the universal Church. We must never think of leaving the Chinese Church, however it may develop in independence and power, until we have first developed that contact with the universal Church.

Finally, I come to the most solemn thought that can possibly come to our minds, namely, that we in China, either personally or by our representatives, are considered as the embodiment of the Christian life. We stand truly in the place of Christ before this wonderful people. We stand with all the richness of our inheritance from a Christian past. We stand in a position of peculiar responsibility, because, while living in China, we are free from local influences which frequently tend to obscure the moral and spiritual vision of Chinese workers. Our sense of responsibility to the Chinese finds its expression in the words of St. Paul to the Galatians: "My little children, of whom I am in travail until Christ be formed in you." Is Christ formed in us? Is He formed in the Home Church?—for ultimately the relation of which we are speaking is not a relation between worker and worker, it is a relation between Church and Church, between the Church of our land and the Church of China. It is our responsibility to lead the Chinese Church, directly or indirectly, so long as we retain real, intellectual, moral and spiritual power for leadership.