

## THE PENTECOSTAL HOLINESS CHURCH'S MISSION IN THE ANTI-CHRISTIAN MOVEMENT IN CHINA (1920-30)<sup>1</sup>

Connie Ho Yan Au

### Introduction

The Classical Pentecostal Movement in the early twentieth century spread out as a missionary movement motivated by urgency to the preach the gospel before the imminent second coming of Jesus, which was expected to take place during the missionaries' lifetime. Empowered by the Baptism in the Spirit and equipped with tongues, Pentecostals single-mindedly set out to the mission field to which they felt called to go, and China was one of the countries where Pentecostals were burdened for the lost souls. However, when the movement was thriving, the doctrines of four-fold or five-fold gospel were confirmed, denominations were established, and they had collected funding to go to China, the country was overwhelmed by political and social chaos between 1920 and 1930. It was a common situation that when they had just started the work, their properties were destroyed, converts scattered around and their lives were threatened. Compared to Protestant and Catholic missions that had developed their work since the 1840s' when imperialism invaded China or earlier, Pentecostal missions were more vulnerable when facing the same political turmoil, and the Pentecostal Holiness Church's mission was one of the examples. This article is to illustrate the PHC's mission work in China under the leadership of

---

<sup>1</sup> This article is written based on the original materials collected from the archives of the International Pentecostal Holiness Church's headquarters in Oklahoma City. It is part of the research project on Pentecostal history in Hong Kong sponsored by the Synergy Institute of Leadership, an affiliated Assemblies of God Bible college in Hong Kong. The author would like to extend her gratitude to the archivists, Dr. Harold Hunter and Miss Erica Rutland and her college.

William H. Turner from 1924 to 1928, the years when the Anti-Christian Movement became radical and violent under the strong influence of communism from Russia. It is impossible to report what happened to thousands of missionaries in that period, but this story of the PHC and Turner can more or less reflect their experience of being regarded as a common enemy of the whole nation, simply because they risked their lives to preach the gospel of the Prince of peace.

### History of the Pentecostal Holiness Church's Pakhoi-Yamchow Mission

In the early stage of the PHC's mission to China, missionaries were sent to Hong Kong, a British colony at that time, but it always aimed at expanding its mission to the mainland China. In 1909, Anna M. Deane, converted in the First Baptist Church, went to Hong Kong as an independent missionary. When her church incorporated with the PHC, she became its official missionary.<sup>2</sup> She set up a mission in Shauiwan, a fishing port at that time, to preach the gospel to the poor fishing families. One of the ways she approached the people was to open schools for boys and girls and an English evening class for those who had to work during the day.<sup>3</sup> Two years later, her niece, Anna Dean Cole, joined her education work. Then in 1914, another female missionary came to the field, and she was Jane A. Schermerhorne. She further developed the education work and opened Sunday school both in Chinese and in English. She was responsible for the administration of the mission in 1918 when Deane was on furlough.<sup>4</sup> After almost a year, W. H. Turner and T. H. Rousseau came to the field with their families. Mary Wilkes Andreas, Pearl Loftin, Julia Paynes and Laura Hylton also joined the mission since 1920.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> Violet Miller, "History of the Pentecostal Holiness Church in Other Lands", *The Pentecostal Holiness Advocates (PHA)*, 10/44 (10 March 1927), p. 7.

<sup>3</sup> Jane Schermerhorn, "A Few Words Concerning the Pentecostal Holiness Church Mission School in Hong Kong", *PHA*, 12/2 (10 May 1928), p. 9.

<sup>4</sup> Violet Mille, "History of the Pentecostal Holiness Church in Other Lands", pp. 7, 10.

<sup>5</sup> Violet Mille, "History of the Pentecostal Holiness Church in Other Lands", p. 10;

P. F. Beacham, "China", *PHA*, 12/5 (31 May 1928), p. 7.

Among these PHC missionaries, Turner had always had a strong zeal for opening a mission station in the interior of China. He envisioned establishing a local church of thousands of people and hundreds of preachers, with a publishing house to produce teaching materials for its Sunday School, literatures for spreading the PHC's faith and a periodical as an "official organ" in China, functioning as the *Pentecostal Holiness Advocate* did in America.<sup>6</sup> He hoped that Chinese would take the pastoral and financial responsibility completely in the future, as they were the most suitable preachers to bring the gospel to their own people who share the same language, custom and culture. Hence, it was his vision to open a Bible school to equip the locals to be preachers.<sup>7</sup> Establishing a mission station in mainland China was also the General Board's instruction to Turner; therefore, soon after he and his family arrived in Hong Kong, they learnt the Chinese language and went for several mission trips to Guangdong province.<sup>8</sup> In January 1923, the General Board appointed him as the Superintendent of China mission and instructed him to organize a missionary conference "without delay".<sup>9</sup> In May of the same year, he visited various places in Southern China via Pakhoi (Bei Hai),<sup>10</sup> which was about 400 miles Southwest of Hong Kong and was a British Treaty port, according to the *Chefoo Convention* signed in 1877.<sup>11</sup> When he was looking for

---

<sup>6</sup> Letter from William H. Turner, Hong Kong, to T. A. Melton, Royston, GA, 13 February 1923.

<sup>7</sup> Letter from William H. Turner, Hong Kong, to A. L. Jackson, Tallapoosa, GA, 14 February 1923.

<sup>8</sup> William H. Turner, *Pioneering in China* (Franklin Springs, GA: The Publishing House of the Pentecostal Holiness Church, 1928), pp. 155-6.

He went to Fatshan (Foshan), Sainam (Xinan), Kongmoon (Kangmen), Saam Chi, Lopau, Tsingyeun (Qingyuan) and other towns in Guangdong. (Members of the Yamchow Mission, "In Memory of the Departure of Pastor Turner on Furlough", 1928.)

<sup>9</sup> Letter from G. F. Taylor, Royston, GA, to William. H. Turner, Hong Kong, 6 January 1923.

<sup>10</sup> "Bei Hai" is the contemporary official romanization of "Pakhoi" in mandarin. In this article, the author puts the bracketed names next to Turner's romanization as far as she knows.

<sup>11</sup> Letter from William H. Turner, Hong Kong, to all who are interested in Missions, 10 August 1923;

lodging in Pakhoi, he was told by the locals about the compound of the China New Testament Mission (CNTM). Joseph Smale of Los Angeles had founded it in 1907, but it had closed down because of the ill health of his co-worker, Mrs. Crofts, and the conflict between the Mission and his church in Los Angeles, which eventually stopped the financial support. The CNTM developed missions in the towns around the Tong King Gulf including Liemchow (Lianzhou) and Nomhong. It owned property in Yamchow (Qinzhou), which was “a district capital” and west of Pakhoi about 70 miles, but there was no other mission organization except Smale’s at that time.<sup>12</sup> He had considered transferring the Mission to a Christian society, but after hearing criticism against it, Smale felt unable to trust the “men unfaithful to God’s word and the spiritual warfare of soul”.<sup>13</sup> He also thought about entrusting the Mission to the Christian Missionary Alliance, but they had already committed their work in Guangxi Province.<sup>14</sup> As a result, the properties were released for public sale. As far as Smale was concerned, “the conservation and strengthening of the cause of Christ” and “the adequate spiritual care of the Mission” were much more important than the selling price. When Turner showed interest in purchasing the property, Smale rejoiced over this proposal since his many tearful prayers for a proper buyer were answered, considering the “purity” of PHC’s worship and the “evangelical character” of its doctrine.<sup>15</sup> He therefore requested the PHC to offer a price that they could afford to pay for this “God’s building”.<sup>16</sup> The compound was solidly built with “a seven foot brick wall” which shielded a boys’ school, girls’ school, a bungalow for the workers, a church for 300, a

---

William H. Turner, “Our Pakhoi-Yamchow Work”, *PHA*, 10/2 (13 May 1926), p. 8.

<sup>12</sup> William H. Turner, *Pioneering in China*, p. 161;

William H. Turner, “Our Pakhoi-Yamchow Work”, *PHA*, 10/2 (13 May 1926), p. 9.

<sup>13</sup> Letter from Joseph Smale, Los Angeles, to William H. Turner, Hong Kong, 18 June 1923.

<sup>14</sup> William H. Turner, *Pioneering in China*, pp. 161-162, 164.

<sup>15</sup> Letter from Joseph Smale, Los Angeles, to William H. Turner, Hong Kong, 18 June 1923.

<sup>16</sup> William H. Turner, *Pioneering in China*, p. 161.

garden and a burial ground.<sup>17</sup> Turner found this compound most suitable for the future work of the interior mission because, first, the facilities available allowed Turner to meet his goals of preaching the gospel and training local pastors.<sup>18</sup> Second, since Pakhoi is in the centre of the region around the Tong King Gulf, it is easily accessible to other places and could be a base of the mission work. Last but not least, compared to cities like Guangzhou, Pakhoi had been mostly untouched by foreign missions. Some Anglican missionaries had built a hospital and a centre for lepers, and some German Lutheran missionaries had been there for 24 years and there were about 1000 Christians recorded among the population of about three million.<sup>19</sup> Turner was burdened by these lost souls and this dark land. He believed that this compound had been prepared by God before he arrived in Pakhoi and it was God's answer to his prayers about establishing a mission centre in mainland China.<sup>20</sup> Turner eagerly desired for the approval of the General Board for buying the property, especially when he heard that some Catholics also showed a lot of interest.<sup>21</sup> Eventually, Smale agreed with the selling price, US\$5,000, which was to be paid in five years (1924-28) and the Board approved Turner's proposal.<sup>22</sup> That

---

<sup>17</sup> The measure of the compound was "596 feet on the south side, 600 on the west side, 713 on the north side and 477 on the east side". The burial ground was about 100 feet square.

William H. Turner, *Interesting Facts and Figures of Missions in China* (Franklin Springs, GA: The Publishing House of the Pentecostal Holiness Church), p. 11.

<sup>18</sup> Letter from William H. Turner, Hong Kong, to A. L. Jacson, Tallapoosa, GA, 14 February 1923.

<sup>19</sup> Letter from William H. Turner, Hong Kong, to Dan W. Evans, OK, 23 August 1923;

Julia Payne, "China's Women" *PHA*, 10/2 (13 May 1926), p. 13;

Letter from Miss Wendt, German Mission, Liemchow, to William H. Turner, Hong Kong, 14 November 1923.

<sup>20</sup> William H. Turner, *Pioneering in China*, p. 161.

<sup>21</sup> Letter from William H. Turner, Hong Kong, to L. R. Graham, Memphis, TN, 9 August 1923.

<sup>22</sup> Letter from William H. Turner, Hong Kong, to Ralph Taylor, Anderson, SC, 9 August 1923.

was partly paid by a member of the PHC, Bro. Jackson, who generously donated US\$1,000 in 1923.<sup>23</sup> In January 1924, Turner was elected as the Superintendent of the mission on the Tong King Gulf and Julia Payne was ordered to be involved in the work with his family.<sup>24</sup> On 2 March in 1924, Turner, his wife, his three boys, Payne and two Chinese workers left Hong Kong and arrived in Pakhoi via Guang Zhou Wan, which was a French colony at that time.<sup>25</sup> Shortly after their arrival, Turner conducted a funeral service for a baby who was brought to them by a minister's wife. Payne and Mrs. Turner bathed and dressed the baby and put it in a coffin that they made with a grocery box and cotton. The mother was comforted and their sincere work for this diseased little person who they had never known made an impact in the people's hearts at the beginning of their mission.<sup>26</sup>

The PHC succeeded the CNTM's former work in Pakhoi, Yamchow and other towns. The mission was joined by Laura Hylton in January 1925, after she had been a missionary in Hong Kong.<sup>27</sup> In Pakhoi, they had about 22 services every week in 1924.<sup>28</sup> They were mainly held in a chapel, which they rented on Sing Ping Street in the western part of the city for the non-Christians. These services were all so packed with people that some had to stand on the street.<sup>29</sup> They also

---

<sup>23</sup> Letter from G. F. Taylor, Royston, GA, to William H. Turner, Hong Kong, 19 March 1923.

<sup>24</sup> Letter from G. F. Taylor, Royston, GA, to William H. Turner and Henry Rousseau, Hong Kong, 12 January 1924;

Letter from G. F. Taylor, Royston, GA, to William H. Turner, Hong Kong, 23 January 1924.

<sup>25</sup> William H. Turner, *Pioneering in China*, p. 172.

<sup>26</sup> Julia Payne, "China's Women", *PHA*, 10/2 (13 May 1926), p. 13.

<sup>27</sup> Letter from G. F. Taylor, Franklin Springs, to William H. Turner, Pakhoi, 10 January 1925.

<sup>28</sup> Letter from William H. Turner, Pakhoi, to G. F. Taylor, Franklin Springs, 3 December 1924.

<sup>29</sup> Letter from William H. Turner, Pakhoi, to G. F. Taylor, Franklin Springs, 4 July 1924;

Letter from William H. Turner, Pakhoi, to G. F. Taylor, Franklin Springs, 12 November 1924;

had Sunday services in the compound, and these were primarily for Christians who were thoroughly converted and did not worship idols. Some of them were baptized at the CNTM and had been praying for a missionary to pastor them after the closure of the Mission.<sup>30</sup> One of them was Ah Shang, who had been a cook and caretaker of the compound for the CNTM for ten years. However, since he suffered from tuberculosis, Turner assigned him a job as a keeper of the new chapel in Pakhoi. He was described as a “hot-hearted” Christian who not only faithfully took care of the mission’s buildings but also people’s spiritual lives. He was also in line with PHC’s teaching.<sup>31</sup> Hoh Tsok Seung was a “fully consecrated” preacher and a schoolteacher, but he had not received the Spirit baptism by 1924.<sup>32</sup> Moreover, there were services for women in the middle of the day when they were most free, after finishing the duty of buying fresh vegetables and meat in the market and preparing lunch in the morning, and before going to the market again for dinner in the afternoon. It was not a custom for women to go out at night.<sup>33</sup> As a woman herself, Payne had a special calling to approach the women there, especially because in traditional patriarchal Chinese society, women were severely oppressed. It was justified that female babies could be murdered or thrown away. To reach out to women, one of the ways was through their children at the schools where she taught English twice a week, as she explained that “for the way to a mother’s heart is by her children” and she could pay the visits occasionally.<sup>34</sup> Like most of the Protestant and Catholic missions, they also used education as a means to preach the gospel. They ran a boys’ school of 100 and a girls’ school of 30, where they

---

Letter from William H. Turner, Pakhoi, to G. F. Taylor, Franklin Springs, 20 November 1924;

Letter from William H. Turner, Pakhoi, to G. F. Taylor, Franklin Springs, 11 May 1925.

<sup>30</sup> William H. Turner, “Our Pakhoi-Yamchow Work”, *PHA*, 10/2 (13 May 1926), p. 9.

<sup>31</sup> Letter from William H. Turner, Pakhoi, to G. F. Taylor, Franklin Springs, 4 July 1924.

<sup>32</sup> Letter from William H. Turner, Pakhoi, to G. F. Taylor, Franklin Springs, 4 July 1924.

<sup>33</sup> Julia Payne, “China’s Women”, *PHA*, 10/2 (13 May 1926), p. 12.

<sup>34</sup> Julia Payne, “China’s Women”, *PHA*, 10/2 (13 May 1926), p. 12.

had students whose parents held significant political positions in the region, such as Laam Tsan T'eng (Lin Zhen Tang), who was the top military official and controlled the west side of Guangdong at that time, and Mr P'ang (Peng) who worked in the Deputy of Foreign Affairs. They also had students from families of wealthy businessmen or humble workmen.<sup>35</sup> To minister to the congregation in Yamchow,<sup>36</sup> Turner and his workers had to travel on a junk from one to five days, depending on the wind, from Pakhoi.<sup>37</sup> They had to bear discomfort from filthiness, bad weather and the tiny space in the junk boat. Since they wanted to seize the time to be there for two weeks, they designed a packed schedule consisting of services, Bible class, and prayer meeting from day until night during the week. The meeting house was full "from the pulpit to the door and into the street" and most of the time people came with "the very best and most intelligent interest".<sup>38</sup> When Turner was not in Yamchow, the church was looked after by a Chinese pastor, Tang Ching Fung (Deng Qing Fang), who was a "qualified worker," as he was believed to have the experience of sanctification and was seeking Spirit Baptism at that time. He was also "earnest in work".<sup>39</sup> In addition, the mission also had a primary school for girls there.<sup>40</sup> Apart from these indoor works, Turner and his team also

---

<sup>35</sup> Letter from William H. Turner, Pakhoi, to G. F. Taylor, Franklin Springs, 20 November 1924;

William H. Turner, "Our Pakhoi-Yamchow Work", *PHA*, 10/2 (13 May 1926), p. 9.

<sup>36</sup> According to Turner, the population in the Yamchow and Fong Shing areas was 385,000. There were 33 market towns, 20 townships and over 500 villages. (Letter from William H. Turner, Pakhoi, to G. F. Taylor, Franklin Springs, 20 November 1924)

<sup>37</sup> William H. Turner, "Our Pakhoi-Yamchow Work", *PHA*, 10/2 (13 May 1926), p. 9.

<sup>38</sup> Letter from William H. Turner, Pakhoi, to G. F. Taylor, Franklin Springs, 4 July 1924;

Letter from William H. Turner, Pakhoi, to G. F. Taylor, Franklin Springs, 1 May 1925.

<sup>39</sup> William H. Turner, "Our Pakhoi-Yamchow Work", *PHA*, 10/2 (13 May 1926), p. 10.

<sup>40</sup> Letter from William H. Turner, Pakhoi, to G. F. Taylor, Franklin Springs, 6 August 1924.



itinerated between villages and reached out to people in public places such as streets, temples, bazaars, markets, teahouses and even under a big tree. They travelled by boats where they made friends with sailors and passengers, then introduced Christianity to them, but this is also where they risked their lives under pirate attacks. In the evening, they lodged at inns where both ordinary travelers and violent bandits rested.<sup>41</sup>

Before June 1925, since the radical anti-Christian movement had not yet happened, Turner had a good relationship with the Chinese officials and they offered protection by sending out soldiers when his team went to dangerous places.<sup>42</sup> People also showed a growing interest in their teachings and walked for miles from their villages to attend services. Some came to the compound at 10-11 p.m. to seek more understanding about the Christian faith.<sup>43</sup> Those who lived far away from the mission station and street chapels fervently desired for a church in their areas, such as Sai Cheung (Xichang), Ng Lei, Nomhong, Tung Hing (Tungxing), Ling Shan (Lingshan) and On Po (Onpu). Because of the shortage of funds from the headquarters, Turner had to sadly decline the invitations and even close down the mission in Liemchow.<sup>44</sup> In addition, the improvement of road connections between towns and cities enabled Turner to do more itinerating work and reach out to small villages.<sup>45</sup> Because of these encouraging signs, Turner saw that there was plenty of opportunities for the mission, and

---

<sup>41</sup> Letter from William H. Turner, Hong Kong, to Nina C. Holmes, Greenville, SC, 19 March 1927.

<sup>42</sup> William H. Turner, "Our Pakhoi-Yamchow Work", *PHA*, 10/2 (13 May 1926), p. 10.

<sup>43</sup> William H. Turner, "Our Pakhoi-Yamchow Work", *PHA*, 10/2 (13 May 1926), p. 9;

William H. Turner, *Pioneering in China*, p. 205.

<sup>44</sup> Letter from William H. Turner, Pakhoi, to G. F. Taylor, Franklin Springs, 20 November 1924;

Letter from William H. Turner, Pakhoi, to G. F. Taylor, Franklin Springs, 26 March 1925;

Letter from William H. Turner, Pakhoi, to G. F. Taylor, Franklin Springs, 1 May 1925.

<sup>45</sup> Letter from William H. Turner, Pakhoi, to G. F. Taylor, Franklin Springs, 20 November 1924.

therefore, he constantly requested the General Board to send more missionaries to share the workload and to increase funding for renting, buying and maintaining properties and employing local pastors, Bible women and teachers for the schools.<sup>46</sup>

Because he was a Pentecostal Holiness missionary, the five-fold gospel was the message that he preached in Hong Kong and Southern China.<sup>47</sup> He proclaimed the redemption of sinners and emphasized Spirit baptism and speaking in tongues, which for him made the PHC a Pentecostal church.<sup>48</sup> Moreover, he also declared that Jesus was the healer and refused to use medicine “of any nature,” no matter how easily he could contract serious diseases in filthy and unhygienic environments in China.<sup>49</sup> The seed of this teaching seemed to have grown in the people’s hearts, as one of the members, Mr. So Ying Kuk, told other people that the PHC preached about the God who healed the body and soul, which was good news for those who could not afford medicine.<sup>50</sup> Compared to other Protestant and Pentecostal missions, Turner’s teaching was distinct in sanctification as the second blessing after conversion and the preparatory experience of Spirit baptism. These three steps formed the “old time gospel”, as he put it. These were non-negotiable criteria for membership as well as authentic transformations in a person’s life. There were cases where Turner

---

<sup>46</sup> Letter from William H. Turner, Pakhoi, to G. F. Taylor, Franklin Springs, 26 March 1925;

Letter from William H. Turner, Pakhoi, to G. F. Taylor, Franklin Springs, 2 April 1925;

Letter from William H. Turner, Pakhoi, to G. F. Taylor, Franklin Springs, 1 May 1925.

<sup>47</sup> The five-fold gospel states the five roles of Jesus, that He is the Saviour, sanctifier, baptiser of the Holy Spirit, healer, and the soon-coming King. The “Finished-work” Pentecostals such as the Assemblies of God leave out the “sanctifier” point and only talk about the four-fold gospel.

<sup>48</sup> William H. Turner, “Seven Years in China”, *PHA*, 10/30 (25 November 1926), p. 14.

<sup>49</sup> Letter from William H. Turner, Pakhoi, to G. F. Taylor, Franklin Springs, 3 December 1924.

<sup>50</sup> Julia Payne, “Christmas in China”, *PHA*, 9/42 (25 February 1926), p. 6.

rejected applications even though it resulted in a small membership.<sup>51</sup> By the end of December, Turner reported the first conversion and baptism since the mission started. The convert was an elderly Mr. Hui, who had attended services unceasingly.<sup>52</sup> In order to intensify the teachings on sanctification, Spirit baptism and divine healing, Turner launched a Bible Conference for ten days, a special Chinese New Year meeting for four days and a prayer meeting for a week in the beginning of 1925. As a result, almost all his local workers experienced either sanctification or Spirit baptism.<sup>53</sup> To maintain themselves in the revival, they fasted and prayed every Saturday for the work of the Spirit in their mission and the mother church in America.<sup>54</sup> Turner was critical of the conduct of other missionaries such as smoking, drinking, selling opium, gambling and running gambling dens. He believed that God sent the PHC to Pakhoi to preach “a clean pure gospel” and the Pentecost.<sup>55</sup>

Since he insisted on sanctification as the criterion for Spirit baptism, he strongly opposed the “finished work” movement (by which he meant the Assemblies of God). He regarded it as the “plague” of the Pentecostal movement, the “most deadly enemy” of the PHC to battle against and he named their preachers “the soft tongue representatives” of “the delusion of the devil”.<sup>56</sup> In fact, the PHC came to China much

---

<sup>51</sup> Letter from William H. Turner, Pakhoi, to G. F. Taylor, Franklin Springs, 4 July 1924;

Letter from William H. Turner, Pakhoi, to G. F. Taylor, Franklin Springs, 12 November 1924;

Letter from William H. Turner, Pakhoi, to G. F. Taylor, Franklin Springs, 20 November 1924.

<sup>52</sup> Letter from William H. Turner, Pakhoi, to G. F. Taylor, Franklin Springs, 3 December 1924.

<sup>53</sup> Letter from William H. Turner, Pakhoi, to G. F. Taylor, Franklin Springs, 2 April 1925;

Letter from William H. Turner, Pakhoi, to G. F. Taylor, Franklin Springs, 1 May 1925.

<sup>54</sup> Letter from William H. Turner, Pakhoi, to G. F. Taylor, Franklin Springs, 1 May 1925.

<sup>55</sup> Letter from William H. Turner, Pakhoi, to G. F. Taylor, Franklin Springs, 1 May 1925

<sup>56</sup> William H. Turner, “Seven Years in China”, *PHA*, 10/30 (25 November 1926), pp. 14-15.

later than the Assemblies of God from Springfield, Finland and the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, and the local AG members had already formed a council without missionaries' supervision and financial support. They also published a periodical, the *Assemblies of God Monthly*, in Hengjiang in Guangdong Province in 1926, to connect local AG believers in the Southern areas by reporting news of different churches, teaching about the Pentecostal truths and sharing testimonies.<sup>57</sup> However, when Turner discovered that one of his workers had gotten 25 other members to subscribe to the periodical, he ordered them to cancel the subscription and get the refund. Since the PHC was the only church that taught about sanctification, as far as he was concerned, there were not any other Pentecostals on the Tong King Gulf at that time.<sup>58</sup>

#### The Anti-Christian Movement in the 1920s

Ancient China, which was guided by Confucianism in its political, educational, familial, social and religious systems, had found sufficiency in its tradition and developed a sense of superiority over other countries and tribes. Both the country and the culture formed a closed system for five thousand years, until the outbreak of the opium war, which nakedly displayed to the West that this empire, claiming to be the centre of the world, could be easily defeated by bullets and a few canons. Its military technology remained in the pre-modern era when soldiers used bows and arrows to fight. The Qing Empire was forced to sign the *Treaty of Nanking* with the British Empire in 1842, which demanded the opening of five major ports, Guangdong, Xiamen, Fuzhou, Ningbo and Shanghai, the concession of Hong Kong Island and an indemnity of millions of dollars, without negotiation. Other western countries, including France, Germany, Italy, Russia, Austrian-Hungary, the United States, and Japan followed suit, defeating China with modern weapons, drafting unequal treaties to acquire trading, economical, political and military privileges. These treaties laid a heavy burden on the people since the government had to increase tax to pay the massive indemnities. As the Han Chinese had been under the

---

<sup>57</sup> *Assemblies of God Monthly*, 1/1 (1 April 1926), pp. 5-6. (translated by the author from Chinese into English)

<sup>58</sup> Letter from William H. Turner, Pakhoi, to G. F. Taylor, Franklin Springs, 4 July 1924.

oppression of the Manchurians for more than a century, and they witnessed corruption and powerlessness of this government when facing the Western power, they rose up to launch revolutions to rescue the country, and Sun Yat Sin was the prime revolutionist. After nine trials, the Manchurians power was successfully demolished in 1911; however, the country was in more devastating chaos as bandits and warlords attempted to develop their military, economic and political power when the Nationalist Government was still in its infant stage. In view of these problems, Sun regarded that the revolution had not successfully rescued the country, as there were deep-rooted problems in its social, ethical and political structures for centuries. Some intellectuals felt burdened to search for resolutions and launched campaigns to rebuke old practices and promote new thinking. In the New Culture Movement, Hu Shi, who had studied in Cornell University, introduced "Mr. Science" to counter superstition and promote rationality, and "Mr. Democracy" to promote a political system with the foundation of the general public. Others like Chen Du Siu and Li Da Chao believed that communism would lead the country to a better future with regard to the example of Russia. No matter which direction the intellectuals were guiding the general public, they were building these ideas based on nationalism and patriotism with a call for political and economic independency and autonomy as well as the restoration of the distinctiveness and wholeness of Chinese identity. Henceforth, they all emphasized anti-imperialism and insisted on the return of sovereignty in their own land. These requests were transformed into actions in the May Fourth Movement in 1919 such as boycotting British and Japanese products. The Nationalist Government also pleaded for the invalidity of all unequal treaties. However, those countries, except the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, refused to do so at the Washington Conference in 1921. It intensified the fervent anti-imperialist sentiment and caused a determined inclination to communism of the Nationalist Government, which was demonstrated in Sun Yat Sin's declaration, "We no longer look to the Western power. Our faces are turned toward Russia."<sup>59</sup>

In any anti-imperialist paradigm, either communism or de-colonialism, Christianity is regarded as the twin of imperialism and hence, destroying imperialism directly implies destroying Christianity. Although China's colonial experience was not parallel to India, or most

---

<sup>59</sup> Jessie G. Lutz, "Chinese Nationalism and the Anti-Christian Campaigns of the 1920s", *Modern Asian Studies*, 10/3 (1976), pp. 399, 405.

of the African and Latin American countries, it suffered from the same ideological aggression generated from avarice and racial superiority and eventually materialised with military force. The Anti-Christian Movement that exploded in the entire China in the 1920s was revenge to decades of progressive political, economic, military, educational and religious invasion. This movement involved the government and ordinary citizens, intellectual and illiterates and soldiers and the unarmed in the whole country. In any case the Boxer Uprising in 1900 was incomparable because it happened mainly in the Northern part of China and the people involved were non-intellectuals who superstitiously practised *Chi Kung* to gain supernatural power. Moreover, the Movement in the 1920s was more complicated because of the permeation of Bolshevism from the country's northern neighbour, Russia, which had just been liberated from an imperialist monarchy in 1917. Due to the return of Russian concessions to China and relinquishment of indemnities, the Nationalist Government gradually developed a trusting relationship with the Moscow Bolshevik Government. The Bolsheviks had been doing political propagandas across China and Outer Mongolia became part of the USSR through which the Russian transported weapons and military forces into Inner Mongolia. Among all the provinces, Guangdong was most influenced by the Bolsheviks. Moscow had been assisting local Bolshevik affiliates to form a communist party and strengthened their military forces by sending millions of dollars and commanders.<sup>60</sup> General Galant M. Borodin was in charge of the civil and military administration in Guangdong. The naval and aviation departments and other military sections were controlled by Russians.<sup>61</sup> There was also a Soviet representative in the executive committee of the National Party.<sup>62</sup> On 6 November 1925, Chinese communists participated in the Russian Bolsheviks' celebration of the eighth anniversary of the Soviet revolution.<sup>63</sup> On 1 December 1925, Turner reported that the Red army had entered Pakhoi.<sup>64</sup> Some Chinese Bolshevik affiliates, who were

---

<sup>60</sup> William H. Turner, "Bolshevism and South China: It Effect on Christian Mission", *PHA*, 9/44 (11 March 1926), p. 7.

<sup>61</sup> William H. Turner's Diary (24 August 1925).

<sup>62</sup> William H. Turner's Diary (16 July 1925).

<sup>63</sup> William H. Turner, "Bolshevism and South China: It Effect on Christian Mission", *PHA*, 9/44 (11 March 1926), p. 7.

<sup>64</sup> William H. Turner's Diary (1 December 1925).

supported by Russians ideologically and financially, were at the forefront of the Movement. Li Da Zhao was one of the founders of communism in China and edited the *New Youth* as a platform to exchange anti-Christian theories.

Anti-Christian intellectuals who were influenced by Western modernism put their faith in science. Their logic was that since science was believed to be the effective and reliable way to achieve modernisation of the country, religion is superfluous; and since religion and its phenomena could not be proved and interpreted by scientific methods and theories, it was only superstition. Christian teachings like God's creation and eternal life cannot be explained by biology.<sup>65</sup> Therefore, religion drove the country backward from modernisation and thus was the enemy of the prospected new China. The Young China Association aimed at promoting science as the method of social service and forbade people who were adherents of religions to apply for membership.<sup>66</sup> They held a series of lectures and published their own magazine, the *China Youth* (Shao Nien Chung Guo) under the title of "The Problem of Religion". Authors of article included a writer, scientist, Marxist, the Chancellor of the Beijing University (Mr. Cai Yun Pei), Bertrand Russell, and a student in France. Some of them were former students of mission schools or universities in China or Western countries, they were familiar with Christian teachings and practices and their anti-Christian arguments seemed to be more convincing for the general public. Tracts like "What is Jesus" written in 1919 and "A Record of Facts to Ward off Heterodoxy" illustrated the hypocrisy of Christianity based on rumours, exegeses of biblical texts and dogmas of original sins and salvation and were widely distributed.<sup>67</sup>

All the literal debates on paper or in lecture halls were immediately fanned up just by one incident, and that was the World's Student Christian Federation's decision of convening the 11<sup>th</sup> assembly on 4-9 April 1922 at the Qing Hua University in Beijing. On 11 March, as a protest against this decision, a group of students in Shanghai founded

---

<sup>65</sup> William H. Turner, "Some Facts about the Anti-Christian Movement in China Today", *PHA*, 9/50 (22 April 1926), p. 13.

<sup>66</sup> William H. Turner, "Some Facts about the Anti-Christian Movement in China Today", p. 7.

<sup>67</sup> Jessie G. Lutz, "Chinese Nationalism and the Anti-Christian Campaigns of the 1920s", pp. 398-9.

the “Anti-Christian Student Federation” and sent out a statement against the WSCF and Christianity by telegraph throughout the country. On 21 March, scholars widened the scale of the campaign by organising the “Great Federation of Anti-Religionists”, and wrote a statement proclaiming, “Religion teaches men obedience, which is the moral code of slaves. Religion propagates superstitions’ which hinder the search for truth”.<sup>68</sup> During the conference, there were demonstrations in the campus of the Beijing University, and on 9 April, some prominent scholars including Cai Yun Pei, gave speeches against Christianity in major cities in the country.<sup>69</sup>

### Restoration of Educational Rights

The anti-Christian movement at the intellectual level quickly quieted down by 1923, as there was not a clear direction and contributive proposal for the movement as a whole.<sup>70</sup> However, it was revived in the summer of 1924 and straightly entered the second phase, the “Restore Educational Rights Movement”. Since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, missionaries from different Protestant denominations and the Catholic Church had founded 7,382 schools with 214,254 registrations.<sup>71</sup> The campaigners regarded Christian schools as a subtle form of cultural invasion which eroded the purity of Chinese culture and damaged the sustainability by requiring students to study foreign languages, the Bible and attend religious assemblies. In July 1924, there were several meetings of students’ associations announcing the abolition of

---

<sup>68</sup> William H. Turner, “Some Facts about the Anti-Christian Movement in China Today”, p. 7

Jessie G. Lutz, “Chinese Nationalism and the Anti-Christian Campaigns of the 1920s”, p. 400.

<sup>69</sup> William H. Turner, “Some Facts about the Anti-Christian Movement in China Today”, p. 12;

Jessie G. Lutz, “Chinese Nationalism and the Anti-Christian Campaigns of the 1920s”, p. 401.

<sup>70</sup> William H. Turner, “Some Facts about the Anti-Christian Movement in China Today”, p. 12.

<sup>71</sup> Jessie G. Lutz, “Chinese Nationalism and the Anti-Christian Campaigns of the 1920s”, p. 404.



education right of Christian missions in Nanking, Shanghai and Kaifeng.<sup>72</sup> The Chinese National Youth League, proclaimed, “We strongly opposed Christian education which destroys the national spirit of our people and carries on a cultural program to undermine Chinese civilization.”<sup>73</sup> The National Student Union accused mission schools of “denationalizing Chinese youth and making them the ‘running dogs’ of the imperialist power” and therefore all the mission schools should be relinquished.<sup>74</sup> Being aware of the fact that education was the means to promote nationalism and conveying ideologies, the coalition government of the Nationalist and Communist Parties was determined to obtain education autonomy. The Cantonese government was controlled by Russians and local communists planned to take over all mission schools promptly and to confiscate their properties to train young people to be communists.<sup>75</sup> Although this movement was aimed at the restoration of educational autonomy of the Chinese government compelled by a nationalist sentiment, some local students and teachers used this as an excuse to launch riots against mission schools out of selfish wills or because they were expelled or punished by the school authority.<sup>76</sup>

---

<sup>72</sup> William H. Turner, “Some Facts about the Anti-Christian Movement in China Today”, p. 13.

<sup>73</sup> Jessie G. Lutz, “Chinese Nationalism and the Anti-Christian Campaigns of the 1920s”, p. 406.

<sup>74</sup> Jessie G. Lutz, “Chinese Nationalism and the Anti-Christian Campaigns of the 1920s”, p. 407.

<sup>75</sup> William Turner’s Diary (3 October 1925).

<sup>76</sup> The principal of an Anglican school, Ching Tak School, Miss Dunk, discovered that a female teacher who was in charge of a dormitory had close relationship with some of the male teachers and she was going to be dismissed. As revenge, she told her students that Miss Dunk tore down the Chinese flag and about 200 students were on strike and shouted “Abrogate the right of Mission Schools to teach. Down with Imperialism etc. Down with Miss Dunk. Down with Christianity”. They demanded printed handbills which said, “For a long time we have been dissatisfied with our principal Miss Dunk, First because she is a depraved daughter of England and her educational qualification are hardly worth mentioning and besides her previous conduct of the school is out of line with all accepted usage because she even forces the students to become her servants. Second, she is [thoroughly] taken up with the advancement of the Church and is filled with its doctrines and refuses to allow the students freedom of thought for she forces them to memorise and recite the

### Shanghai Shooting

The flame of anti-Christianity was uncontrollably fanned up by the Shanghai shooting on 30 May 1925, which lifted up the movement from the level of literatures and intellectual arguments to violence. The incident happened when the Chinese workers of a Japanese cotton mill were on strike because of the ill treatments. One of the strikers attempted to damage a machine and was shot dead by a Japanese owner. However, the police of the international settlement did not investigate the case seriously and arrested protesters including students and Chinese workers. Students continued to publicize the injustice against the Chinese and anti-imperialism near the Louza police station, where a big crowd of people gathered to protest. After giving warning, the foreign police officer commanded to fire and four people were shot dead instantaneously and many were injured. The incidents fueled up a nationwide violent anti-Christian movement. Foreigners and local Christians were taken for ransom or killed.<sup>77</sup> Foreign women were insulted physically and verbally.<sup>78</sup> Services were disturbed by or used at the time by agitators to speak against Christianity and foreigners. Mission schools and the furniture were damaged and mission homes were occupied.<sup>79</sup> Christian hospitals were closed down and in some cases food and milk were not allowed to be delivered to patients and even to babies.<sup>80</sup> Christians were insulted as the “running dogs of the

---

scripture and keep the Sabbath. Third her treatment[s] of the student are such as cannot be born. Students are not allow[ed] freedom of speech not to take part in community interest now patriotic movements. They demanded her immediate deportation, but eventually she was allowed to stay in Pakhoi by the help of the gentry. (William H. Turner's diary, "April to August Continued", "From April 15<sup>th</sup> to August 25<sup>th</sup>".)

<sup>77</sup> It was reported that in Szechwan, eight female and three male missionaries 'of the Church Missionary Society were taken by bandits. (William H. Turner's diary, 22 August 1925)

<sup>78</sup> William H. Turner's Diary (28 June 1925).

<sup>79</sup> William H. Turner, "Pioneering in China", pp. 231-2.

<sup>80</sup> The Baptist Hospital in Wuchow was closed down and some of the Chinese Christians were against missionaries. The Canton hospital which had been run by American Presbyterian Mission for 90 years and the oldest hospital in China was closed by the Labour Committee and the pickets. People were not allowed

imperialists””.<sup>81</sup> There were also student demonstrations and street riots in major cities, towns and small villages in all provinces.<sup>82</sup> Many missionaries fled to Hong Kong for safety. On 27 July 200 of them gathered at St. John's Hall to discuss the current situation.<sup>83</sup> The week of 22-27 December 1924 was dedicated to the anti-Christian movement. People in the whole country were stirred up to be involved and Christmas services were disturbed. Handbills were widely distributed. One of them said, ““Overthrow Christianity which kills people without shedding their blood; Stamp out the missions schools which make men the slaves of foreigners; bring to an end the foreign cultural program which saps the national spirit.””<sup>84</sup>

### The Incidents at the PHC Mission

Since Pakhoi was a treaty port where foreigners had lived for years, it was a major place of agitation in Southern Guangdong. After the Shanghai Shooting, there was a big parade in June 1925 initiated by students to protest against the shooting. Invitations were sent out to all schools in the region, but Turner's schools decided not to join, which upset other agitators.<sup>85</sup> Young students were giving speeches about the abolition of unequal treaties and handover of concessions in public.<sup>86</sup> Foreign currencies and products, especially British and Japanese, were boycotted.<sup>87</sup> Foreigners were forbidden to land in Pakhoi from Hong

---

to enter the hospital and food for patients and milk for babies were forbidden to bring in. Staff was forced to stop their work otherwise they would be killed. Eventually food was brought into the hospital under the protection of American Marine after the American Consul writing to the minister of Foreign Affairs. (William H. Turner's diary, 5 April 1925)

<sup>81</sup> William H. Turner, “Pioneering in China”, p. 231.

<sup>82</sup> William H. Turner, “China, Her Troubles and Their Cause”, *PHA*, 9/39 (4 February 1926), p. 13.

<sup>83</sup> William H. Turner's Diary (27 July 1925).

<sup>84</sup> William H. Turner, “Some Facts about the Anti-Christian Movement in China Today”, p. 13.

<sup>85</sup> William H. Turner's Diary (27 June 1925, 7 July 1925).

<sup>86</sup> William H. Turner's Diary (27 June 1925).

<sup>87</sup> William H. Turner's Diary (30 June 1925).

Kong by boats and all mail and parcels would not be sent via Hong Kong, but Wuchow only.<sup>88</sup> Some food merchants rejected sales with foreigners, anticipating their starving.<sup>89</sup> One of Turner's friends, Mrs. Surh, could not buy a pack of flour.<sup>90</sup> Food supply became scarce because imports from Wuchow were also terminated.<sup>91</sup> Demonstrations, parades and strikes happened almost daily and people involved were financially supported by the strikers' union funds sponsored by the Bolsheviks.<sup>92</sup> Soldiers and ordinary people gathered together to openly discuss cooperative acts of killing foreigners in teahouses.<sup>93</sup> Bandits and warlords took advantages of this chaotic situation to take foreigners for ransom. Soldiers prosecuted foreigners who ran businesses in Pakhoi and took away their valuables. Turner's Japanese friend was taken away and beaten badly without reasons, but was rescued by the French Consul.<sup>94</sup> After the English merchants Joe Bell and his son were forced to leave Pakhoi or they would become "mince-meat", the property in the house was confiscated by the local government or the house became an entertaining place for the soldier club.<sup>95</sup> They were also fighting against each other to gain sovereignty in the region; as a result, local people and the mission were under the threat of civil wars during this anti-Christian climate. Some of them took refuge in the compound with their valuables.<sup>96</sup> In view of this chaotic situation, the French Consul requested a gunboat from France immediately and agreed to shelter all the foreigners there in case of emergency. He

---

<sup>88</sup> William H. Turner's Diary (19 June 1925, 16 July 1925).

<sup>89</sup> William H. Turner's Diary (20 June 1925); "Pioneering in China", p. 222.

<sup>90</sup> Letter from J. S. Harthom, Pakhoi, to William H. Turner, Hong Kong, n.d.

<sup>91</sup> William H. Turner's Diary (24 July 1925).

<sup>92</sup> William H. Turner's Diary (24 July 1925, 27 July 1925).

<sup>93</sup> William H. Turner's Diary (29 July 1925).

<sup>94</sup> William H. Turner's Diary (11 July 1925, 12 July 1925).

<sup>95</sup> William H. Turner's Report, 5 April 1926.

<sup>96</sup> Letter from William H. Turner, Pakhoi to A. E. Robinson, Falcon, NC, 12 March 1925.

William H. Turner, *Pioneering in China*, pp. 237-8.

would fire a rocket to notify the upcoming danger and all foreigners had to flee quickly to the harbor to get on the gunboat.<sup>97</sup>

The atmosphere in the region had been tense by the spreading of rumours about attacks against foreigners. On 29 June 1925, Turner got news from one of his workers that killing would certainly take place in the evening. That night he received a note from the French Consul, saying, "Very bad news, you are invited to go to the French gunboat urgently, where you will meet all the foreigners."<sup>98</sup> Turner, his family and Julia Payne quickly fled to the gunboat and stayed there overnight with foreigners who were "in every state of dress".<sup>99</sup> During the night, the French Consul sent more soldiers to protect foreigners' properties. The following morning, he and other men were allowed to go ashore and, fortunately, he found the compound had not been damaged.<sup>100</sup> His wife and four children had to remain in the gunboat for three days and were then taken to Hong Kong by a Japanese steamer.<sup>101</sup> Turner stayed in Pakhoi to continue his missionary work and to watch over the compound every day and night. He and his family were separated from July until early September when he went to Hong Kong to look after his wife who was in deteriorating health condition after all the turmoil.<sup>102</sup> Services were conducted by local preachers, and a German missionary, Rev. Rossing of the Lutheran Mission, was watching the compound occasionally and paid for the necessary expense of Turner's mission.<sup>103</sup> He returned to Pakhoi with his family on 16 October.<sup>104</sup> In response to the outbreak of the violence, the Commander of the region, Teng Chi Tang, gave a public announcement on 20 June, saying that people should maintain "peace-like and neighbour-respected attitude" with foreigners, otherwise they would be severely punished

---

<sup>97</sup> William H. Turner, *Pioneering in China*, pp. 223-4, 226.

<sup>98</sup> Note from the French Consul, the Consulate de France à Pakhoi, to William H. Turner, n.d.

<sup>99</sup> William H. Turner, *Pioneering in China*, p. 237.

<sup>100</sup> William H. Turner's Diary (30 June 1925).

<sup>101</sup> William H. Turner, *Pioneering in China*, p. 228.

<sup>102</sup> William H. Turner's Diary (2 July 1925, 5 July 1925, 14 September, 1925).

<sup>103</sup> Letter from Mr. Ng, Pakhoi, to William H. Turner, Hong Kong, 4 August 1925 (Translated by the author from Chinese into English).

<sup>104</sup> William H. Turner's Dairy (30 September 1925).

for violence and disturbance. He assured foreigners that he would protect their properties and lives and hence they should avoid listening to any rumours.<sup>105</sup> Two days later, the Director, Teng Pen Yin, made a similar public announcement assuring that he would increase military effort to protect foreigners and would repress any “slightest hostility” and agitations against foreigners. He firmly warned the public that, “The public is hereby notified that your patriotism must be governed by civilized manner, and that anybody who is so ignorant as to act beyond the proper bounds or to injure foreigners or to create rumours or disturbance of any kind will be arrested at once and summarily dealt.”<sup>106</sup> However, these notices could not recover foreigners’ confidence in the official as they did not practically keep their promises and even allied with the agitators.<sup>107</sup> This was clearly shown when Teng Chi Tang became Honorary Chairman of the student union that had helped the demonstrators in Shanghai.<sup>108</sup>

#### Intimidations, Dangers and Response of Turner’s Mission

The most direct and immediate effect of these waves of anti-Christianity was the drop of attendance in services. On 13 July 1925, the pastor in Yamchow reported a similar situation caused by students’ agitation.<sup>109</sup> When Turner was in Hong Kong to look after his wife from July to the middle of October, one of his workers reported that the public service in the chapel in Sing Ping Street was only attended by 10-12 people, and there were only a few people in the service in the compound.<sup>110</sup> The situation continued in 1926. When missionaries were accused of spying in China and threatening the security of the

---

<sup>105</sup> Public notice signed by Commander, Teng Chi Tang, 30 June 1925 (in Chinese and English versions).

<sup>106</sup> Public notice signed by Director, Teng Pen-yin and Associate Director, Shen Pao-fan, 2 July 1925 (In Chinese and English versions).

<sup>107</sup> William H. Turner’s Diary (30 June 1925).

<sup>108</sup> William H. Turner’s Diary (10 July 1925).

<sup>109</sup> William H. Turner’s Diary (13 July 1925).

<sup>110</sup> Letter from Mr. Ng, Pakhoi, to William H. Turner, Hong Kong, 4 August 1925 (Translated by the author from Chinese into English).

country, the following service's attendance was nil.<sup>111</sup> The same problem occurred in the children's service that took place three times a week, and there had been a good attendance in the street chapel services. However, since they had been threatened, they were afraid to attend.<sup>112</sup> The movement also deterred people to be baptised, worrying that the Nationalist Government would not protect them and their families from any attacks as it had been announced.<sup>113</sup> Some attendants turned to their idols instead of Christ in that trying time.<sup>114</sup>

Services were constantly disturbed by violence and quite often Turner and his workers could not complete their preaching. People were forbidden to enter the chapel; otherwise, agitators would throw a firecracker inside and a rotten egg or stone at the preacher. Some people in the congregation fought back, and that created a conflict.<sup>115</sup> Agitators also went up to the pulpit to give their own speech. Turner's workers were cursed as being chickens being fed by missionaries and expecting to be slaughtered by them. Upon the request of the landlady who was worried about the burning of her property, Turner had to close the chapel, but services were continued in the compound.<sup>116</sup> On Christmas day in 1925, about 1000 agitators "smashed windows, gates, doors, flowerpots" and decorations of English schools near the PHC mission.<sup>117</sup>

Anti-Christian slogans were commonly used. The front gate of the compound was molested by slogans like "Crush the Christian Church", "Down with the Christian Religion" and "Christianity is a

---

<sup>111</sup> William H. Turner, "Bolshevism and South China: Its Effect on Christian Missions", p. 13.

<sup>112</sup> William H. Turner's Diary (9 December 1925).

<sup>113</sup> "From Brother and Sister Turner in China", *PHA*, 10/39 (3 February 1927), p. 14.

<sup>114</sup> William H. Turner, "Our Pakhoi-Yamchow Work", *PHA*, 10/2 (13 May 1926), p. 8.

<sup>115</sup> William H. Turner, "Carrying on under Difficulty", *PHA*, 10/45 (17 March 1927), p. 6.

<sup>116</sup> William H. Turner, "Carrying on under Difficulty", *PHA*, 10/45 (17 March 1927), p. 6; *Pioneering in China*, p. 233.

<sup>117</sup> William H. Turner, "The Persecution of Christianity in China: Further Details of the Activities of the Anti-Christian Movement", *PHA*, 10/6 (10 June 1926), p. 14.

superstition". In Liemchow where Turner also had a mission, a poster saying "Opium is poison, but there is one thing more poisonous than opium, viz., the Christian religion" was written in a public place.<sup>118</sup> In 1926, Pakhoi was under the attack of cholera and plague, which caused plenty of deaths, but people used this disaster to insult Christianity, saying that it was "more dangerous than cholera and plague". Another means to publicise the anti-Christian ideology was dramas.<sup>119</sup>

On the other hand, Turner decided to close the schools to avoid being used as a political centre by the communists.<sup>120</sup> Whenever Turner appeared in public places, he was threatened to be shot by soldiers who pointed at him with a rifle, mauser or an automatic. Each time when he went out for a week he and his wife had prepared themselves for the final farewell and made arrangements for some matters.<sup>121</sup> During those years Turner learnt how to deal with threats and managed to survive, as he said "One learns to keep one's head in China. If one does not learn to keep it in a crisis he is pretty certain to be searching for it and fail to discover where it has gone."<sup>122</sup> In 1926, when Turner, his wife, the baby daughter and Payne were holding revival meetings in Yamchow, robbers were fighting fiercely on the outskirt of the city for a week. They feared death day and night for three days.<sup>123</sup> During the week, on the birthday of Sun Yat Sin, a parade mixed with soldiers walked past the mission in Yamchow and shouted "Down with the imperialists" and threw a firecracker inside.<sup>124</sup> Then on the boat going back to Pakhoi, they were nearly kidnapped by robbers who had set a plot to take them for ransom. Fortunately, the police had been informed

---

<sup>118</sup> William H. Turner, "The Persecution of Christianity in China: Further Details of the Activities of the Anti-Christian Movement", *PHA*, 10/6 (10 June 1926), p. 14.

<sup>119</sup> "From Sister Payne", *PHA*, 10/23 (7 Oct 1926), p. 6

<sup>120</sup> William H. Turner, "Our Pakhoi-Yamchow Work", *PHA*, 10/2 (13 May 1926), p. 8; *Pioneering in China*, p. 231.

<sup>121</sup> William H. Turner, *Pioneering in China*, p. 232.

<sup>122</sup> William H. Turner's Report.

<sup>123</sup> William H. Turner, *Pioneering in China*, p. 233.

<sup>124</sup> "From Brother and Sister W. H. Turner", *PHA*, 10/39 (3 February 1927), p. 14;

William H. Turner, *Pioneering in China*, p. 234.



of it and immediately arrested the robbers, who were soon executed by a shooting squad.<sup>125</sup>

In this anti-foreign atmosphere, some local Christians were trying to gain independency from foreign missions, and Turner's mission was under the same threat. In 1926, a Chinese Anglican pastor, Lai K'ei Chong, with the assistance of the Anglican missionaries, Miss Dunk and Rev. Paulson, attempted to gather local Christians, local pastors of the Lutheran and Turner's mission, to form an independent Chinese church, called Pakhoi Christian Union.<sup>126</sup> Turner discovered that two of his workers joined it without consulting Julia Payne, who was in charge of the Pakhoi mission at that time when Turner was in Hong Kong. Turner warned those two workers not to publish any materials of the Union under the title of the Pentecostal Holiness Church and made clear to them that they did not represent the PHC to be involved in the Union. Lai encouraged Christians and students to participate in parades in Pakhoi and promoted patriotism. If people did not follow him, he would look at them as imperialists and therefore they would be killed. Through these actions, he wanted to show the military and the officials his faithfulness to the country.<sup>127</sup>

In view of intimidations of the agitators, the constant threat to life, suspension of schools and services that had only been started for over a year, and the divisive intention of Patriotic Chinese Christians in the area, Turner said, "Truly we in Southern Kwongtung are sowing in tears."<sup>128</sup> In this trying time, the team could not always be together to face the problems. In April 1926, Turner had to take his family back to Hong Kong to administer the mission under the order of the General Board, as Jane Schermerchorn's health had been worsening.<sup>129</sup> Turner's wife had been suffering from emotional breakdown and the hardening

---

<sup>125</sup> William H. Turner, *Pioneering in China*, p. 235.

<sup>126</sup> Letter from William, H. Turner, Hong Kong, to Miss Dunk, 25 August 1926.

<sup>127</sup> William H. Turner's diary, "April to August Continued", p. 4;

Letter from William H. Turner, Hong Kong to Rev. Paulson, Pakhoi, 25 August 1926.

<sup>128</sup> "From Brother and Sister W. H. Turner", *PHA*, 10/39 (3 February 1927), p. 14.

<sup>129</sup> Letter from William H. Turner, Pakhoi, to Miss Jane Schermerchorn, Hong Kong, 5 March 1926.

of blood vessels, but it was healed by divine power.<sup>130</sup> Payne was ordered by the American Consul to leave Pakhoi and settled down in Hong Kong at the beginning of 1927.<sup>131</sup> However, the more suffering they underwent, the stronger the passion they had for a greater mission. Payne declares, “Hallelujah! The call to China is even more precious today than when we left dear old America”.<sup>132</sup> Turner announced, “We must do it. We must be instant in season and out of season. This is the ‘out of season’ in China, and we must after having done all to stand just stand.”<sup>133</sup> He believed that that was the time when China needed God and it was God’s will to “establish a strong, well organized, spiritual, Pentecostal Holiness Church in China”.<sup>134</sup> The facts that people did not listen to the gospel and wanted to cast them out were not the reasons for giving up; rather, he insisted that they should preach the gospel to show that what the agitators said was wrong. Therefore, he concluded that the General Board made a wrong decision of not sending new missionaries to China.<sup>135</sup> In 1926, some of his local workers in Yamchow preached in some government schools. They managed to hold thirteen services a week and visited villages to preach, distribute tracts and pray for the sick. Payne went to Sai Ching with two Chinese men and a woman to start a new work.<sup>136</sup> By September 1927, the American Consul allowed American citizens to go to China and Payne returned in December and was joined by Laura Hylton who also dedicated herself to China.<sup>137</sup> They started an English class<sup>138</sup> and a

---

<sup>130</sup> News written by William H. Turner, *PHA*, 11/20 (15 September 1927), p. 5.

<sup>131</sup> “Letter from Julia Payne”, *PHA*, 11/35 (5 January 1928), p. 11;

<sup>132</sup> Letter from Miss Payne”, *PHA*, 10/16 (19 August 1926), p. 5.

<sup>133</sup> William H. Turner, “China—1925: Some Stirring Events Mentioned”, *PHA*, 9/48 (8 April 1926), p. 4.

<sup>134</sup> William H. Turner, “Seven Years in China”, *PHA*, 10/30 (25 November 1926), p. 14.

<sup>135</sup> William H. Turner, “The Persecution of Christianity in China: Further Details of the Activities of the Anti-Christian Movement”, *PHA*, 10/6 (10 June 1926), p. 14.

<sup>136</sup> William H. Turner, “Our Pakhoi-Yamchow Work”, *PHA*, 10/2 (13 May 1926), p. 8.

“Letter from Miss Payne”, *PHA*, 10/16 (19 August 1926), p. 5.

<sup>137</sup> “Selections from Report to Rev. W. H. Turner to the General Board”, *PHA*, 11.30 (24 November 1927), p. 6.

Sunday School with a few boys and girls, but later they had nearly one hundred. Some of the children were not afraid of being threatened and killed and continued to attend the Sunday School. The team of full-time local preachers was joined by a Bible woman, Mrs. Ko, who was a "Pentecostal preacher through and through" as she faithfully preached the PHC's doctrine on conversion, sanctification and Spirit baptism.<sup>139</sup> There was a member in Yamchow who preached and worked very hard for the mission even though he was not paid, and Turner said, "He is a man of God if there ever was one."<sup>140</sup> In 1928, Turner and his family were on furlough after seven years in Hong Kong and China, Payne was in charge of the mission and reported that the Sunday School was still well-attended by some 80 people. They kept producing tracts and were seeking permission from the Commissioner of Chinese and Foreign Affairs to visit prisoners and soldiers.<sup>141</sup>

#### Comments

The Anti-Christian Movement is full of contradictions. The intellectual believed that science and democracy in Western thinking could rescue the country from ignorance and corruption, but they attempted to sweep away all mission schools, which taught the young generation about Western technology and philosophy. They promoted a scientific mind and rationality, and cast out superstition that implies subjectivity, ignorance and narrow-mindedness, but when the movement became radical, it demonstrated the most irrational and ignorant way to achieve the goal with violence. Ordinary people superstitiously and blindly believed in the nationalism and patriotism interpreted by the so-called intellectual and were given a dichotomous concept that whatever and whoever related to Christianity and the West, they were enemies of the whole nation. Insulting the elderly Christians

---

"Letter from Laura Hylton", *PHA*, 11/48 (5 April 1928), p. 5;

<sup>138</sup> Letter from Laura Hylton to William Turner, Pakhoi, 5 June 1928.

<sup>139</sup> "Letter from Julia Payne, Pakhoi, to Mrs. Nina Holm and the Advocate Family, 8 June 1928", *PHA*, 12/16 (16 August 1928), p. 5.

<sup>140</sup> "Selection from Report of Rev. W. H. Turner to the General Board", *PHA*, 11/30 (24 November 1927), p. 6.

<sup>141</sup> Letter from Julia Payne, Pakhoi, to William H. Turner, US, 7 May 1928.

and teachers, destroying others' properties and killing were justified and much encouraged, and it looked as though the basic moral Confucianist teachings on kindness, empathy and respect to the senior existing in the country for a thousand years had never rooted in the society. However, the ironic thing was that they only murdered the Western foreigners who were regarded as imperialists, but they did not do so to the Russians who had been controlling their army and local governments. When enthusiastic young students and people believed that they were fighting for national autonomy and unification by casting out Christianity, they could not discern the fact that they were being used by the Bolsheviks from Russia that had ambition to control their country. Furthermore, if they blamed the imperialists for their avarice which deterred the civilization of China, then what about the bandits and warlords who were launching civil wars and imposing high taxes on the poor people in order to increase their own wealth? Sadly the Chinese seemed not to learn the lesson, and thirty years later a similar tragedy happened again in the Cultural Revolution. There the means of political propaganda was dramas, handbills, public speeches and parades, and slogans beginning with "Down with..." The cruelty involved treating the innocent as "enemies", and the number of people whose lives and psyches have been severally damaged until today was the expanded version of the-Anti-Christian Movement.

This story of the Pentecostal Holiness Church's mission in China provides a glimpse of ideas to explain the current persecutions against Christians, especially the Pentecostals and charismatics who do not register with the communist government because they cannot conform to the Three-Self Patriotic Church system in contemporary China. To trace the root of anti-Christianity in China, the atheist doctrine in communism is only the most recent one; there were others including imperialism since the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the closed system of Chinese culture and tradition for thousands of year. After almost one hundred years, besides the Western missiologists reflecting on what the missionaries had done wrong in China – what cultural issues they were not aware of, how arrogant they were in front of the local and disrespectful they were to Chinese customs – it is also the time for Chinese Christians to search for the cultural and psychological factors which have discouraged people to accept Christianity. It is also necessary for us to reflect on the disgraceful way our ancestors treated the missionaries, who sacrificed their youth, families and lives in this land for the sake of our redemption and for the social welfare of the oppressed, disinherited and abandoned in the society. For sowing the

seeds of the good tidings, we thank them. For shedding the blood of the innocence, we repent.