

## MISSIONARY-STATESMEN OF THE BIBLE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Keith Coleman

### ***Albert B. Dodd***

I am reading along with great interest, the letters and published reports of Dr. and Mrs. Albert B. Dodd, informing the Independent Board headquarters of their labors in northern China. Printed in the early *Independent Board Bulletin*, the correspondence follows the exploits of these Presbyterian pillars in the earliest years of the Independent Board itself. The Dodds had served in China for thirty-two years before leaving the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the USA, and joining the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions.

But as I open the 1942 hard-cover collection of the *Independent Board Bulletin*, I read in the January issue:

Dr. and Mrs. Dodd were at their posts at the North China Theological Seminary at Tenghsien, Shantung, CHINA, which is in Japanese controlled territory, when the war broke out. We have had no word from them either since then, so include them in importunate intercessions.

Doing a little math I find Dr. Dodd was 65 when Christians were requested to pray for him and his wife. By this stage in his life, Dr. Dodd had been God's instrument in the founding of the North China Theological Seminary (within 6 years it was the largest in China), in ministering faithfully to a congregation of lepers, and authoring numerous textbooks and commentaries in Chinese. During that same time Dr. Dodd was influential in the founding of the League of Christian Churches in China and the League of Evangelical Students, in order to strengthen the Bible-believing Presbyterian Church of China.

Knowing that Dr. Dodd served his Lord for the better part of 95 years, one could conclude that neither the Japanese invasion of China, WWII, nor even the communist invasion of China could deter this missionary-statesman from his calling. Forced to leave China in 1948 for Taiwan, Dr. Dodd continued to minister to those whom he loved. It was reported of Dr. Dodd in 1963 that, although he was 86 years of age, he preached from one to five times every Sunday and averaged three to four hours of travel each day on the bus or train. In addition, he taught at the Reformed Theological Seminary (which he founded) and spent about a tenth of his time on the weekly paper *The Trumpet*. Albert Baldwin Dodd went home to be with his Savior on July 31, 1972.

### ***J. Gordon Holdcroft***

In my research of Dr. A. B. Dodd, I came across another name I had always heard of, yet never really knew much about. Rev. J. Gordon Holdcroft, D.D., was appointed as a missionary to Korea in 1909 under the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the USA.

At his appointment to the IBPFM in 1940 I read in the January-February edition of *The Independent Board Bulletin*:

Dr. Holdcroft for the past thirty years has served under the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the USA, working in Korea. His record as a missionary has been surpassed by none and equaled by few. Outstanding in evangelical conviction and evangelistic zeal, he has in late years labored sincerely for the restoration of the true Gospel testimony of both the Presbyterian Church in the USA and its foreign board. Having now become convinced that the attempt as concerning both is hopeless, he has resigned as a missionary and announced his intention of leaving the Church.

Dr. Holdcroft's ministry in Korea found him engaged continuously in evangelistic work, having had charge of up to seventy churches, involving both Bible teaching and supervision. Yet as a missionary-statesman, Dr. Holdcroft's influence would not be fully realized until he reached the IBPFM headquarters. First as the Independent Board's General Secretary (1940) and later as its President (1951), Dr. Holdcroft's name became synonymous with foreign missions for over 32 years. The name and influence of J. Gordon Holdcroft can be seen in the missionaries appointed under his leadership, in Amsterdam at the founding of the International Council of Christian Churches (ICCC) in 1948 (as well as in subsequent ICCS meetings), at the origin of The Associated Missions (TAM) in 1952, and in numerous fundamental conferences and councils around the world. Dr. Holdcroft went home to be with his Savior on June 30, 1972.

### ***Thomas Alexander Lambie***

A third name that immediately comes to mind when speaking of missionary-statesmen is that of Dr. Thomas Alexander Lambie. Graduating from medical school in 1907, this pioneer medical missionary left that same year and served with the American Mission in the Sudan. Twelve years later Dr. Lambie began a medical work in western Ethiopia. Within 10 years a hospital and school were established and a thriving church came into being. In 1921 Dr. Lambie met Ras Teferi Mekonnen who urged Lambie to build a hospital in Addis Ababa. During Lambie's years in Addis Ababa, he became burdened for the large unreached populations of southern Ethiopia. With two others, Dr. Lambie formed an independent mission called the Abyssinian Frontiers Mission to reach the southern tribes, and later joined forces with the Sudan Interior Mission. Finally in 1945 Dr. Lambie joined with the IBPFM to take up his final field of service. We read a portion of the IBPFM report, from the minutes of the 8<sup>th</sup> General Synod of the Bible Presbyterian Church:

We have prayed for them but have seen no way to help meet their need of Christ until suddenly we learned that Dr. and Mrs. Thomas A. Lambie, who also have, more than once, made a stand for the of God and the testimony of Jesus, have long had the need of both the Jews and the Arabs of Palestine upon their hearts. Moreover, on an extended visit to Palestine they found that there is very little sound Christian witness in the land of our Saviour's birth and earthly life. They believe that a medico-evangelistic work could be combined with a Mission Home for missionaries in all surrounding countries, which, if founded on the principles which both they and we approve, could be made practically

self-supporting. So, after joining the Bible Presbyterian Church, Dr. Lambie made this proposal to The Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions, which has approved it and has accepted Dr. and Mrs. Lambie as missionaries whom it would like to send to Palestine this fall.

Dr. Lambie's story is best told in his own hand: *A Doctor Without a Country* (1939); *A Doctor Carries On* (1942); *Boot and Saddle in Africa* (1943); *A Doctor's Great Commission* (1954). And so it was on April 14, 1954, as he was preparing for an Easter Sunday service in the brow of Calvary's hill, that Thomas A. Lambie was called home to be with his Lord.

### ***Malcolm St. C. Frehn***

I would be remiss if I did not mention Malcolm St. C. Frehn. "It was when I was eleven years of age that I heard the Gospel preached in simplicity and purity. I was convicted of my lost condition . . . a year later I did accept our Lord Jesus as my personal Savior." Thus was the beginning of a stalwart career of this missionary-statesman, who was first sent to the "teeming millions of Japanese Shinto idolaters." For twenty years Dr. and Mrs. Frehn served among the Japanese whom they loved.

World War II found the Frehn's living under wartime conditions, and then repatriated from Japan in 1942. Dr. Frehn subsequently served in the U.S. Army Intelligence Service for the next ten years, always with the desire always to return to Japan as a missionary. The ministry in Japan was once again open in 1953, where the Frehn's continued until the IBPFM asked them to consider a move to Korea. So in the fall of 1966 this veteran couple transferred to Korea to establish a Bible institute to train Korean young men. In 1977 the Frehns retired from active service, yet returned again to Korea for a few years more. Finally in 1980, because of poor health, Dr. Frehn returned to the United States for the last time. The Reverend Dr. Malcolm St. Clair Frehn was called to his heavenly home on September 9, 1989 at the age of ninety-two.

### ***Sarah Longworth Hosmon***

Dr. Sarah Longworth Hosmon meets all the credentials of a missionary-statesman. At the age of 12 she lost a leg in an accidental fall. At 14 she made a full surrender of her life to Jesus Christ; a decision she referred to as "a quiet conversation between me and the Lord." Because of the loss of her limb, she could not enter into the games of her friends, so as she writes, "my mind was urged to use that time for prayer." It was during her medical school training that she was challenged to missions among the Muslims by Dr. Samuel Zwemer. The seeds of serving with her medical skills as a woman where no man could, were now planted. And that is exactly what the Lord used.

First serving in Arabia under the Dutch Reformed Church in 1911, Dr. Hosmon was appointed to the IBPFM on May 24, 1938. Some thirty years later she writes in an article published in the March 1958 edition of *Biblical Missions*:

I naturally look back over the years in my stay in Muscat and also camping for many years in the villages of 200 miles on the Batina Coast of Oman. I do praise God for His wonderful faithfulness in opening closed doors before me, for Arabia is a closed country.

The best part of my life work began when I was accepted by the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions in 1939. I opened work in Saham in 1941. Miss Edna Barter joined me in 1945. We prayed for many years that God would give us more land and more missionaries. He graciously opened this Trucial Coast for us in 1950.

At this time, the mission was one of only four allowed in Arabia. The difficulty of ministering among Muslims and the primitive living conditions in the early years can be seen in Dr. Hosmon's letters; yet the reward of service can also be witnessed in those same letters. Initially her medical ministry was to women and children, with an emphasis on maternity cases. But as the years moved on, Arab men could be seen waiting in line at the clinic, listening to the Bible as it was read before the clinic opened.

Long past retirement age, Dr. Hosmon returned to Arabia in 1959 from her final furlough. She served as an advisor to the nurses, yet continued to teach the Word to the clinic and inpatients. She lived her remaining two years in the US, entering into the presence of her Lord on July 25, 1964. Dr. Hosmon authored the book *Presenting Jesus Christ the Son of God to Moslems*.

### **Louisa Lee**

In the same breath of Sarah Hosmon also belongs Louisa Lee. Miss Louisa Lee was the very first missionary assigned under the Independent Board on April 9, 1934. Having served in India under the auspices of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the USA, Miss Lee severed her connections with that Board as a protest against its modernism. She writes:

Truly there is no greater joy so satisfying as the joy of telling the story of redeeming love to lost sinners who are interested in hearing it, and many of them are. One Hindu in a far village said in astonishment, 'Why! Are these things anywhere in print?' and took a gospel as a hungry man takes food.

I thank God for the priceless opportunities he has granted me. I expect ... to serve under the auspices of the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions, and pray that God's precious Word may have free course through me and run and be glorified.

After coming to the Independent Board, God granted her an additional 37 years of faithful service in India. A teacher at heart, she did evangelistic work in the villages among the women and children. She truly helped build up the church of Jesus Christ in India.

In 1955 Miss Lee retired, but returned again five years later because younger missionaries could not be found to carry on the ministry. In returning to Kannauj, India, she

continued to be a witness where there was no witness. So it was on October 7, 1972, Miss Louisa Lee finished her 59 years of service in India and went home to be with the Savior.

Obviously there are others that could and should be mentioned; missionary-statesmen from Kenya, Korea, Cameroon, Israel, Brazil, Chile, Peru, Europe, China, etc. Yet sufficient to say these are part of the marvelous heritage that God has given the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Mission, and the Bible Presbyterian Church. May He continue to be glorified in and through them all.

(I am indebted to the publications of the IBPFM for the materials used)