

**THE BOARD OF FOREIGN MISSIONS
OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

156 FIFTH AVENUE
NEW YORK 10, N. Y.

Rev. Edwin Wade Koons, D.D.

Memorial Minute
Adopted by the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions
December 16, 1947

The Board made record of the death of the Rev. Edwin Wade Koons, D.D., of the Korea Mission, on November 29, 1947, at Southampton, Long Island, New York:

Edwin Wade Koons was born on April 22, 1880, in McLean, New York, where his father, Rev. Silas Edwin Koons, was pastor of the Presbyterian Church. He was graduated from High School, La Porte City, Iowa, in 1895, Coe College, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, in 1900 and Auburn Theological Seminary, Auburn, New York, in 1903. On February 16, 1903, Mr. Koons was appointed by the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions to the Korea Mission and the following autumn he sailed for the field. Two years later, Miss Lucy Donaldson arrived in Seoul, Korea, where she was married to Mr. Koons on September 13, 1905.

Mr. Koons' first years had been spent in language study and itinerant evangelism in Pyengyang but, at the time of their marriage, Mr. and Mrs. Koons were assigned to service in the Chairyung Station. In 1907 Mr. Koons had the satisfaction of participating in the organization of the first Korean Presbytery and ordination of the first seven Korean Presbyterian pastors. Until 1912, Mr. Koons spent most of his time traveling through rural areas, teaching and preaching wherever interested groups were gathered.

After returning from furlough in 1913, Mr. and Mrs. Koons were transferred to Seoul, where Mr. Koons became Principal of the John D. Wells Academy for Boys. While Mr. Koons gave most of his time and strength to this school, with particular emphasis upon its Christian influence, he spent Sundays, and often other days, as well, in visitation among the rural churches in the vicinity of Seoul. One afternoon of each week he devoted to personal work at Severance Union Medical Hospital. For a time, he was also Director of the Language School for new missionaries and was connected, in an administrative capacity, with the Christian Literature Society of Korea.

In 1931 his Alma Mater, Coe College, conferred on Mr. Koons the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Divinity. Dr. Koons had been the beloved Principal of the John D. Wells Academy for Boys for twenty-six years when, in 1939, the School was transferred to Korean Christian ownership. No finer tribute could have been made regarding the Christian influence of Dr. Koons upon his students than that given by the Japanese officer who cross-examined him during his six months' imprisonment at the outbreak of the war on a charge of espionage. Said the officer, "You think you have done good to the Koreans by running high schools for Korean boys for thirty years?" "I do," Dr. Koons calmly replied. "You are wrong," shouted the officer. "You have done nothing but harm; you have just put a crook (illustrating with a bent finger) into those boys in thirty years that it will take the Japanese government three hundred years to cure."

During his six-month period of imprisonment, Dr. Koons was tortured by his captors but, through that experience, he learned how the fellowship of suffering with Christ can be a blessed experience. "A new certainty of the presence of God," he writes, "came to me. When I was tied in a helpless bundle for the 'water cure' and

gasped for breath while my examiners splashed water in my face and knew I could end this by saying, 'Yes' to their demand, 'Did not that letter contain a code?'..... it was not easy to stand firm. But God came to me, nearer than ever before, and I was not afraid."

Dr. and Mrs. Koons returned to America in 1942, following Dr. Koons' release from prison and, from that time until his death, he served the Department of State, first on the West Coast and later in New York. He was Chief of the Korean Unit of the International Broadcasting Division, Department of State, while in New York, and was responsible for the daily messages beamed to Korea as a part of the "Voice of America," which, it is estimated, are heard by 2,000,000 Koreans. Dr. Koons gave himself unstintingly to this work of real value to both America and Korea, but he felt that it was only preparatory to the resumption of his work as a missionary in Korea, where he hoped to employ the radio as a means of spreading the Gospel message to untold numbers of Koreans.. But before he could return to his beloved Korea, he was called to a higher service..

The Board extends its deepest sympathy to Mrs. Koons, their five daughters, Mrs. G. Gompertz, Mrs. John R. Stephens, Mrs. John B. Griffith, Miss Margaret Koons, Mrs. Dryden Moore, and their son, Dr. Edwin Donaldson Koons, but rejoices in this life of faithful and effective service for our Lord and Master.