

## *Mission to the Chinese in America*

In the mid-1800s, tens of thousands of Chinese immigrated to California, first due to the 1849 Gold Rush and then to provide labor for railroad expansion. These immigrants, often unskilled laborers working for very little pay, were frequently greeted with hostility and mistrust by white citizens.

Presbyterian ministers in San Francisco, seeing the immigrants' spiritual, medical, and educational needs, appealed to the Board of Foreign Missions for assistance. Late in 1852, the Rev. William Speer arrived to open the Presbyterian Mission for Chinese. Speer was well-qualified for the work, having served for four years in Canton, China. His article in the January 1853 *Princeton Review* encouraged Westerners to embrace the newcomers. Speer wrote: "Wherever their foot has rested, like the fabulous dragon, painted on their imperial standard, they have been the symbol of prosperity.... Let, then, the United States encourage the influx of this people."

Presbyterian mission to the Chinese continued in California through the work of the Loomises, the Condit, and many others, including Donaldina Cameron. Known as Lo Mo (the Mother), Cameron worked with young Chinese girls at risk, serving from 1895 to 1938.

Presbyterians continue to serve new immigrant groups as they arrive, building a history of welcome and support for all who come to these shores.

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PHS 2009

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Donaldina Cameron and a group of Chinese children.  
*The Assembly Herald*, August 1907.

*Do justice, love kindness,  
walk humbly with your  
God. Micah 6:8*