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# Someone in the Darkness Singing: Anthony Walvoord, a Wisconsin Missionary to Japan

By Lane Earns

**I**N 1905 Anthony Walvoord, a twenty-seven-year-old Wisconsin native, sailed for Japan with his young bride to teach English at a Reformed Church mission school in Nagasaki. Originally intending to stay only six years, he remained for fourteen and oversaw the rapid growth of the school as its principal from 1910 until his untimely death in 1919. One of the most influential Christian educators in his day in Japan, today his contributions have been forgotten by most in both Japan and America. Yet he was an exemplar in his chosen field, and his influence extended well beyond the little hilltop school where he taught and learned.

Anthony Walvoord was born in the small farming community of Cedar Grove, in Holland Township, Sheboygan County, Wisconsin, on March 13, 1878. His parents were Dutch immigrants. His father, Anthony Christian Walvoord, had come to Cedar Grove from the Netherlands in 1849 at age fourteen and his mother, Johanna Gertrude Veldhorst, probably arrived soon after. They were among a pioneer group of Dutch immigrants that settled in Wisconsin about the same time similar Dutch colonies were being established in Michigan and Iowa. Most had come to America seeking relief from wars, floods, and famine in Europe; some hoped as well to discover a new spiritual beginning under various religious leaders.<sup>1</sup>

The Dutch minister Pieter Zonne is usually

given credit for founding Cedar Grove. Some New England settlers had come to the area as early as 1841, and even a few Dutch arrived in 1845, but Cedar Grove, for all practical purposes, was founded by a Zonne-led group of Dutch immigrants in the summer of 1847.<sup>2</sup> While a large number of Dutch followed Zonne to Cedar Grove, not all followed his religious beliefs. Zonne became the leader of the Presbyterian church in town; others, including the Walvoords, chose to ally themselves with the Dutch Reformed Church of America.

The journey from the Netherlands to Wisconsin was not an easy one for the Dutch immigrants. While some arrived via Canada or New Orleans, most came through New York. The latter not only had to brave the difficult voyage across the Atlantic to New York City but then had to make their way to Buffalo, travel by ship through the Great Lakes to Milwaukee, and then trek northward along the Green Bay Road to Cedar Grove. The dangers of such a journey were shockingly underscored by the sinking of the ship *Phoenix* in Lake Michigan not far from Cedar Grove in late November, 1847. More than two hundred passengers,

<sup>1</sup>For a detailed discussion of early Dutch settlement in mid-nineteenth-century America, see Jacob Van Hinte, *Netherlanders in America* (Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1985).

<sup>2</sup>Gustave W. Buchen, *Historic Sheboygan County* ([Sheboygan], 1944), 298–299.

mostly Dutch immigrants headed for Wisconsin, went down in flames with the ship.<sup>3</sup>

As dangerous as life in the Midwest could be in the early days, however, people from western Europe and the eastern United States continued to flock to the region searching for a new and better life. The young Dutch immigrant, A. C. Walvoord, was one of those who came seeking the elusive dream.

Like most early immigrants, A. C. Walvoord was originally a farmer. On May 21, 1858, at the age of twenty-two, he married seventeen-year-old Johanna Veldhorst in Cedar Grove. The following year a son was born to the young couple, but he died soon thereafter. Undeterred by the early loss, however, from 1861 to 1875 Johanna Walvoord gave birth to six healthy children—four daughters and two sons.

By the time Anthony, the youngest of the Walvoord children, was born in 1878, his father had switched from farming to operating a general store next to the Reformed Church in town.<sup>4</sup> Years later, Anthony reflected upon those early days at the store: "It was a time when Wisconsin was being settled and things were all very primitive. Men obtained a plot of land, hewed down the trees, burned those they could not use immediately, and erected a building in the clearing. The result was that houses were erected not altogether suitable and since they grew larger by having additional rooms added in accordance with the needs of the time and place, most of the buildings covered a great deal of space. My father first opened his store in a room that was afterward used as a parlor. When the parlor became too small, he erected a frame building . . . about fifteen feet distant. . . . The upstairs [of the store] was divided into two rooms and we boys used the front room for our sleeping room."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup>For an account of the *Phoenix* disaster, see John H. Yzenbaard, "Shattered Dreams: The Burning of the *Phoenix*," in *Inland Seas*, 30 (Fall, 1974), 159–167.

<sup>4</sup>The building which housed the general store still stands on Main Street in Cedar Grove near the Reformed Church and at present is used as a private residence.

<sup>5</sup>Anthony Walvoord, *Polly Antics*, Vol. I (June 27, 1918), 11. *Polly Antics* is simply a collection of thoughts and photographs put together by the Walvoords and friends in

ANTHONY Walvoord attended elementary and junior high school in Cedar Grove, but since he was the youngest child in the family, he had to work to support himself and other family members before he could continue his education. In 1902 he graduated from nearby Sheboygan High School at the age of twenty-four.<sup>6</sup>

While attending high school, Walvoord was sophomore class president and a member of the newspaper editorial staff and glee club. He was also a three-sport starter in baseball, basketball, and football, and the school shot put champion as a junior. When his fellow students attempted to characterize Anthony in the 1901 school yearbook, however, it was not his leadership or athletic prowess that they noted, but rather his even-tempered nature and positive outlook on life. Anthony's life ambition could also be discerned from the yearbook. He aspired not to become a politician, a singer, an athlete, or even a missionary, but a poet. It was this placid, athletic, potential poet who readied himself to leave Wisconsin for the first time to seek a college education.<sup>7</sup>

Anthony's choice of college was not surpris-

1918. It is contained in the Walvoord family private collection in Holland, Michigan. (Hereinafter cited as the Walvoord Collection.) The quotation is from a reminiscence written by Anthony Walvoord when he was forty and more accurately depicts a Cedar Grove of his father's early days than his own. By the time Anthony was a young man in the 1880's, Cedar Grove was an established town with developing industries.

<sup>6</sup>It is not clear which years Anthony was away from school and when he actually graduated from high school. One account in Ikawa Naoe, *Tozan gojunenshi* [Fifty Year History of Tozan] (Nagasaki: Tozan Gakuin, 1933), 184–185, says he graduated from high school at age eighteen, taught at an elementary school in Oostburg for two years, and then entered Hope College in 1900 at age twenty-two. Another account in the same book (p. 206) says he took two years off after junior high school to work in order to support the schooling of an older brother, and two years off after high school to teach elementary school. Available records from Sheboygan High School and Hope College do not support either version, but certainly Walvoord interrupted his studies at some point, and, more than likely, he did some teaching in the area.

<sup>7</sup>Compiled from information contained in the 1900 and 1901 editions of *Lake Breeze*, the Sheboygan High School yearbook. The yearbooks may be found in Sheboygan County Historical Research Center in Sheboygan Falls.

ing, coming as he did from a strong Reformed Church background; he enrolled at Hope College in Holland, Michigan, the most important Reformed Church-affiliated college in the Midwest. The college also had a direct relationship with Cedar Grove in that its president helped establish the Wisconsin Memorial Academy in town in 1902. In fact, Anthony's elder sister Cornelia was one of the first teachers at the school.<sup>8</sup>

In addition to receiving a college education in Michigan, Anthony also met his future wife there. Edith Walvoord, who was visiting relatives in the area, not only shared the same last name as Anthony, she was born and raised in a third Dutch enclave called Holland—this one in Nebraska.

While a student at Hope College, Anthony Walvoord's ambition in life changed from wanting to be a poet to becoming a medical missionary. Lacking the funds needed to acquire such training, however, he decided to teach for a while after finishing college. He graduated from Hope College in June, 1904, and in the fall began to serve as teacher and principal of a Reformed Church high school in Sioux Center, Iowa. Shortly thereafter he was offered another position that proved more to his liking.

Two Reformed Church missionaries who had known him at Hope College were in search of a teacher to fill a vacancy at Steele Academy in Nagasaki, Japan. In July, 1904, one of the missionaries, Garret Honedlink, wrote to the Secretary of Foreign Missions in New York that Anthony might be just the person for Steele: ". . . I met him eight years ago in Wisconsin. I also met him once or twice in the last two years. He is a very earnest young man, has an excellent character, and is quite bright. If I were to choose between him and many others of those who graduated at Hope this past year, I should have no hesitancy in choosing him. . . . I am sure that if he could be secured [for the vacancy] he would prove an excellent young man for the place."<sup>9</sup> In April, 1905, the Reformed Church officially offered the teaching

position to Walvoord on a special six-year contract basis. While excited about the prospect of going abroad, he did not want to go alone. He asked Edith Walvoord if she would marry him and sail to Nagasaki together. She agreed, and they were married at her home in Holland, Nebraska, on August 3, 1905.

In order to catch their honeymoon ship to Japan, the newlyweds had to leave Nebraska by train four days after the wedding. Upon their arrival in Seattle, they discovered that their scheduled ship had departed the previous day. They eventually sailed for Japan on August 19 aboard the steamer *Kanagawa Maru*.

THE Walvoords arrived on September 4 in Yokohama, and on the seventh departed for Kobe, where they boarded the *Minnesota* (the ship they had missed in Seattle) for the final leg of their journey to Nagasaki. They sailed into Nagasaki harbor early on Sunday morning, September 10. In her diary, Edith Walvoord expressed her apprehension over what was scheduled to be their home for the next six years: "We were now entering our *dear* homeland. Hope in time it will become dear to us."<sup>10</sup>

There was little time to recover from the rigors of the voyage, as three days later both Anthony and Edith Walvoord were put to work at the school. Edith was unexpectedly pressed into service teaching small music classes at the girls' school (Sturges Seminary), while Anthony taught nineteen hours a week at Steele Academy. They were housed in temporary quarters while they waited for their house to become available and for their goods to arrive from America. The house they moved into in October was perched high on a hill overlooking the harbor and very near the schools. Edith

<sup>9</sup>Garret Hondelink to Dr. H. N. Cobb, July 9, 1904. Contained in Correspondence Files, Board of Foreign Missions, 1859–1931, Reformed Church of America Archives, New Brunswick, New Jersey. Unless otherwise noted, all subsequent citations of letters and manuscripts are to the Reformed Church of America Archives.

<sup>10</sup>*Diary of Edith Walvoord*, Vol. I, entry for September 10, 1905, in the Walvoord Collection.

<sup>8</sup>Buchen, *Historic Sheboygan County*, 295–296.



*Anthony and Edith Walvoord on their wedding day, August 3, 1905. All photos accompanying the article courtesy the author.*



*Kyushu missionaries of the Reformed Church, about 1915. Anthony Walvoord is standing in the back, fourth from the right.*

Walvoord described it as a cottage with an attached servants' quarters, and a yard with palm trees and roses. The little house with its commanding view of the harbor was to be their home in Nagasaki for their entire stay.<sup>11</sup>

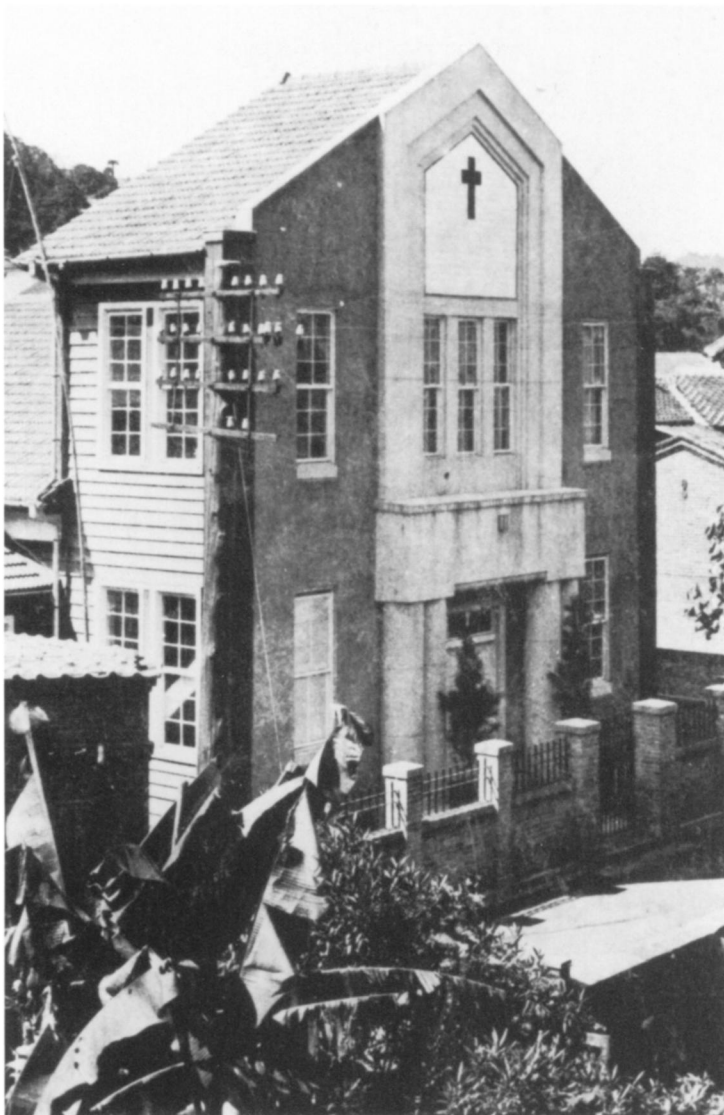
The situation that confronted Anthony Walvoord when he arrived at Nagasaki was a difficult one. The Reformed Church had had missionaries in the town since soon after the opening of Nagasaki as a treaty port in July, 1859, but in the few years prior to Walvoord's arrival, the Mission found itself with a stagnating student population at its school and personality conflicts among some of its missionaries.

The Reformed Church presence in Nagasaki had begun in November, 1859, when the Rev.

Guido Verbeck (who had spent some time in the Green Bay area after immigrating from the Netherlands and before leaving for Japan) came to town. He stayed until 1868, when in the aftermath of the Meiji Restoration he was called to Tokyo to work for the new government.

Verbeck's replacement was Henry Stout, a missionary from New Jersey who, along with his wife, for years manned the sole Reformed Church outpost in Kyushu (the southernmost of the four main islands of Japan that includes Nagasaki). It was Stout who founded the local Reformed Church, called simply Nagasaki Church (Nagasaki Kyokai in Japanese). In the 1870's the Stouts had tried to establish separate schools for males and females in Nagasaki, but both failed because of the lack of financial support from America. In the mid-1880's, however, support finally arrived in the form of additional missionaries and the building of boys' and girls' schools on Higashiyamate hill

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, September 15, 1905. In the 1950's the house was moved to another hill overlooking Nagasaki harbor, where today it serves as a museum.



*Nagasaki Church (Nagasaki Kyokai).*

overlooking the harbor. The schools—Steele Academy (Tozan Gakuin) for boys and Sturges Seminary (Umegasaki Jo Gakko) for girls—were located next to the boys' (Chinzei) and girls' (Kwassui) schools built by the Methodists a few years earlier. Under Stout's influence, Steele Academy also included a seminary to train Japanese boys to be ministers of the Reformed Church.

Some of the younger missionaries in Nagasaki, led by Albertus Pieters and H. V. S. Peeke, disagreed about the need for a seminary in

town, believing that the one in Tokyo was sufficient for all of Japan. They also found Stout rather obstinate and difficult to work with. A confrontation between the three missionaries erupted in 1898 and eventually led to Stout's unceremonious departure from Japan in 1906, soon after Walvoord's arrival in Nagasaki.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup>Albertus Pieters and H.V.S. Peeke were classmates from grammar school days through college (Hope College, class of 1887). Peeke came to Nagasaki in 1888 and Pieters



*Edith Walvoord (back row, second from left) with an R.C.A. missionary and Japanese friends outside the family residence.*

Pieters, who was principal of Steele Academy when Walvoord arrived, administered the school out of necessity, but he desired to return to evangelical work in Kyushu. The school did not prosper under his tenure, primarily because of insufficient staffing and facilities. Anthony Walvoord brought needed teaching relief, and Pieters was able to turn some of his attention to other matters. Walvoord also brought a strong personality, however—one that occasionally clashed with the views of Pieters and Peeke. (Walvoord’s comments concerning the two senior missionaries often sounded similar to statements voiced by Pieters and Peeke a few years earlier regarding Henry Stout.) Establishing a good working relationship with his two colleagues became a high priority for Walvoord during his early years in Nagasaki.

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followed in 1891 after graduating from Western Theological Seminary. Pieters, a native of Alto, Wisconsin, who would later become a highly respected teacher at Hope College, stayed in Japan until 1925. Peeke remained until 1929.

**M**OST of Walvoord’s first year in Nagasaki was spent teaching English and Bible classes and studying the Japanese language. Pieters initially described him as a man of great promise and someone who could “[hold] his tongue except when he had something valuable to say. . . .” This was an especially valuable trait, considering the clashes that had taken place between Pieters, Peeke, and Stout in the preceding years.<sup>13</sup>

Walvoord came to be greatly impressed with the work done at Steele Academy in training local Japanese evangelists, and he felt that his work as a Christian educator was of considerable importance. This belief prompted him to declare to the Mission Board in August, 1906: “Persuaded that I am following the path of duty as made known to me by Divine Providence, I herewith offer my services in educational work as a member of the South Japan Mission for life.”<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup>Albertus Pieters to H. N. Cobb, July 14, 1906.

<sup>14</sup>Anthony Walvoord to H. N. Cobb, August 8, 1906.





*The Walvoord daughters sitting under palm trees at the family residence.*

Anthony Walvoord wanted to be more than an educator—he wanted to be an educational missionary. He wrote the Mission Board that he did not want to spend all of his free time studying the Japanese language if he was not going to be allowed to stay in Japan as a missionary.<sup>15</sup> In early 1907 the Mission Board agreed to Walvoord's request and commissioned him an educational missionary with the Reformed Church. From this time, Anthony Walvoord was no longer a short-term special contract teacher but a permanent member of the Reformed Church Mission in Japan.<sup>16</sup>

The professional satisfaction achieved through his change in status must have added to the personal satisfaction of having become a father for the first time on December 6, 1906, with the birth of his daughter Geraldine. The Walvoord family was complete two and a half years later when twin daughters, Wilhelmina and Jeane, were born on July 9, 1909.

<sup>15</sup>Anthony Walvoord to H. N. Cobb, November 20, 1906.

<sup>16</sup>Anthony Walvoord to H. N. Cobb, March 13, 1907.

While continuing to carry a heavy teaching load and having the added responsibility of fatherhood, Walvoord also had to study for the Japanese language examination required of all Reformed Church missionaries. By May, 1908, he had passed all sections except for a prayer written in Japanese. Pieters rejected his prayer, however, despite the fact that it had been approved by Walvoord's Japanese teacher. This prompted a scathing letter from Walvoord to the Mission Board in New York accusing Pieters of unfair treatment toward him since his arrival in Nagasaki. Edith Walvoord also noted the contretemps in her diary. The Mission Board accepted Pieters' evaluation, however, and Walvoord began studying Japanese five hours a week with a Japanese language teacher to prepare for a second examination.<sup>17</sup> As much

<sup>17</sup>Anthony Walvoord to H. N. Cobb, May 25 and October 24, 1908. "Very unhappy day for us. Pieters finally got a chance where it was still in his power to down Anthony. He would not accept Anthony's prayer for Exams." *Diary of Edith Walvoord*, Vol. II, entry for May 20, 1908, in the Walvoord Collection.

as Anthony enjoyed his work teaching English, music, and the Bible, he clearly had a number of disagreements with Pieters. One of the biggest areas of disagreement was that of cooperation with local Japanese in the South Japan Mission. According to Walvoord, Pieters was opposed to cooperation with the native church (Nagasaki Church) and the appointment of a Japanese principal at Steele.<sup>18</sup> Walvoord felt that both were necessary to gain the trust of the Japanese. In principle, the Mission Board supported these goals, but reminded Walvoord that a Japanese principal had been tried at Steele once before in 1892 and had not worked out. It emphasized the need to find a Japanese of suitable character to fill the position.<sup>19</sup>

Further problems between Walvoord and Pieters were avoided when Pieters resigned in November, 1909, effective April 1, 1910, in order to return to evangelistic work in Kyushu.<sup>20</sup> At the same time Walvoord was named Pieters' successor as principal of Steele. In January, 1910, the Nagasaki Station of the South Japan Mission recommended that Walvoord be relieved of his teaching duties for the remainder of the semester to prepare for his responsibilities as principal. Walvoord was also authorized to conduct a tour of the schools in the country in order to study school organization and administration.<sup>21</sup>

As instructed, Walvoord made a four-week tour of twenty-five Japanese public schools and private mission schools. He concluded that the Japanese schools were superior in equipment, staff, and discipline: "As I went on this trip I could not help but conclude that the reason why mission schools have no better reputation is because they do not deserve it. We ought either bring our schools up to the standard, or else go out of business."<sup>22</sup>

Walvoord had specific suggestions concerning Steele Academy and Sturges Seminary,

which shared a hill with the boys' and girls' schools operated by the Methodist Church. He did not believe that all four Protestant schools could survive, especially in light of increased competition from higher-quality Japanese public schools. He suggested that Steele should unite with Chinzei, the neighboring Methodist boys' school, in order to make the best use of common resources. In addition, he thought that Sturges should be sold to the Methodists in exchange for the Methodist girls' school in Fukuoka. Both issues dragged on for years, but ultimately were settled by other means.<sup>23</sup> While not abandoning the prospect of union, Walvoord concentrated on expanding and improving the quality of Steele Academy. To assist him, the Mission Board allocated additional funds to help restore some of the older buildings. Slowly at first, then dramatically, enrollment at Steele began to increase, and by June, 1911, Walvoord could proudly relate: "This year the school . . . had the largest number of applicants for entrance in the history of the school. The applicants numbered 126 and out of this number 103 were admitted. The present enrollment is 224."<sup>24</sup>

With most of the repairs at Steele completed and enrollments up, Walvoord applied for a furlough to the United States—his first in seven years—to continue his studies for a master's degree. Permission was granted and arrangements were made for the Walvoords to leave Japan on August 17, 1912. Just prior to his departure, he outlined the future needs of Steele Academy. In addition to the annual op-

<sup>23</sup>Fukuoka, an industrial city in northern Kyushu, was growing much more rapidly at the time than Nagasaki. The boys' schools never did unite, as the Steele students were absorbed by Meiji Gakuin in Tokyo in the early 1930's, and Chinzei moved to a different section of Nagasaki. Kaisei, a French Catholic mission school on the same hill, bought the Steele buildings and property. Sturges combined with another school and moved to Shimonoseki in 1913. Kwassui, the Methodist girls' school, bought the Sturges buildings and property. Kaisei and Kwassui still operate on the hill today, although the Steele and Sturges buildings no longer remain. One of the Steele buildings has been restored, however, and moved to Glover's Garden, a tourist attraction in Nagasaki.

<sup>24</sup>Anthony Walvoord to W. I. Chamberlain, June 14, 1911.

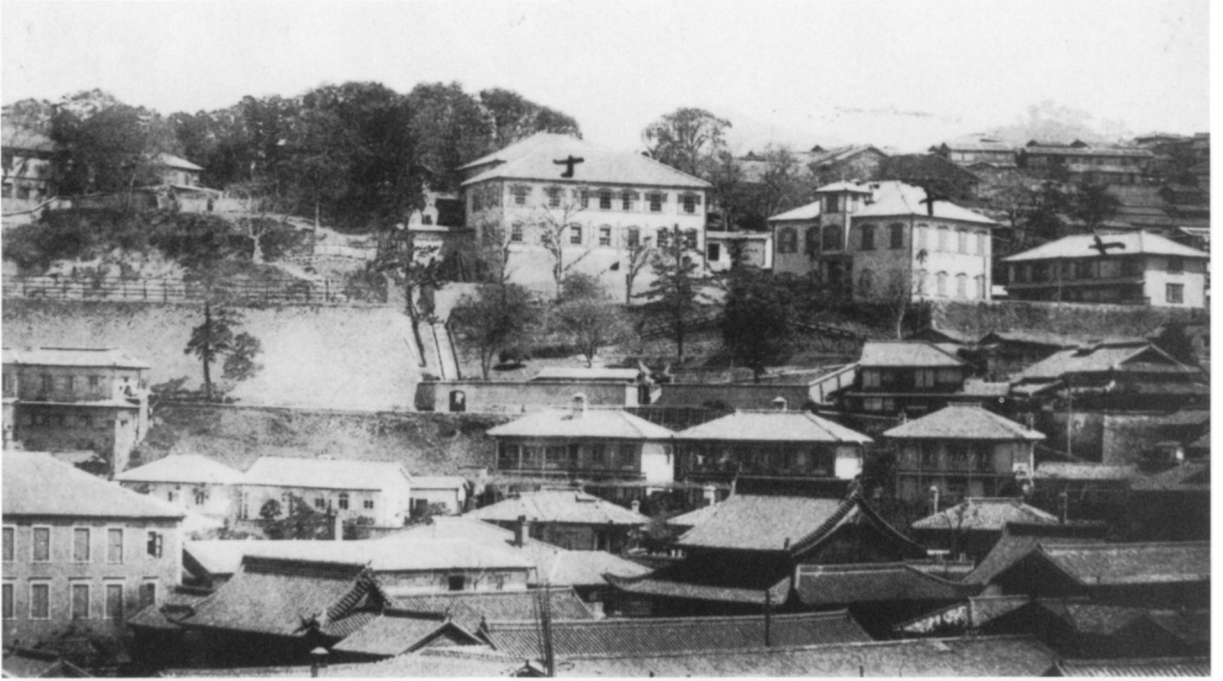
<sup>18</sup>Anthony Walvoord to H. N. Cobb, May 25, 1908.

<sup>19</sup>H. N. Cobb to Anthony Walvoord, November 29, 1909.

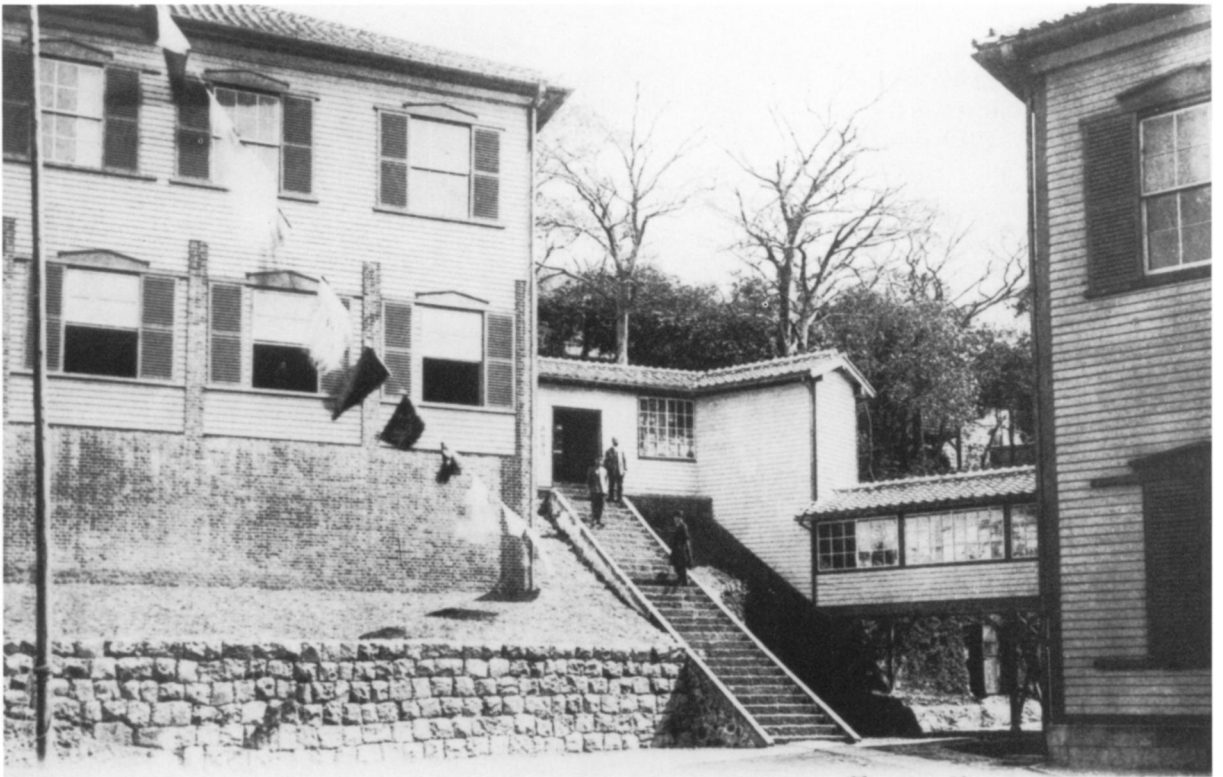
<sup>20</sup>Willis Hoekje to H. N. Cobb, November 16, 1909.

<sup>21</sup>Willis Hoekje to H. N. Cobb, January 17, 1910.

<sup>22</sup>Anthony Walvoord to the South Japan Mission, March 18, 1910, and to H. N. Cobb, March 18, 1910.



*The Steele Academy (Tozan Gakuin) buildings, about 1915.*





*The music classroom (above) and the main buildings (below) of Kwassui Girls' School, about 1915.*



erating budget, he asked for funds to build a science hall, a waiting room, and covered passageways connecting all the buildings. In America, in addition to pursuing an M.A., his major task would be to attempt to raise the money needed for these projects.<sup>25</sup>

Before departing, however, Walvoord had to meet a final time with other members of the South Japan Mission, at least two of whom, Pieters and Peeke, had serious doubts about his returning to Nagasaki after his furlough. At one point Peeke commented that Walvoord's animosity toward Pieters would not allow harmony within the mission. The tension of the meeting was alleviated, however, when Walvoord sided with Pieters on a number of issues. Afterward Peeke was able to write, "[I] believe that Mr. Walvoord is capable of working harmoniously and successfully with this mission in the future." The meeting was apparently a turning point in the relationship between the three mission members, who from this time on got along much better than they had in the earlier years.<sup>26</sup>

**B**ACK in the United States, Anthony Walvoord entered the master's program of the Divinity School at the University of Chicago, from which he received his degree in August, 1913.<sup>27</sup> He also spent a great deal of time trying to raise \$2,500 to complete the building projects at Steele Academy. The Mission Board made this difficult by limiting his fund raising to "special personal appeals to friends whom you may meet in your travel among the churches this Fall," and by not allowing him to give public speeches on the matter.<sup>28</sup> Undeterred, by December Walvoord had

raised the \$2,500 and also found a \$1,000 donor for a dormitory fund. The Mission Board, while delighted with his success, wrote that the additional money might better be used elsewhere in the South Japan district.<sup>29</sup>

Having earned an M.A. and raised enough money for his building projects, Anthony Walvoord and his family left once again for Japan on January 16, 1914. Back in Nagasaki the Walvoords resumed not only their teaching duties but also the numerous social endeavors in which they were actively involved. As well as being principal at Steele Academy, Anthony was a director of the YMCA and the Seaman's Home, as well as a Sunday School teacher. In addition to her school obligations, Edith Walvoord made "comfort bags" for Allied soldiers in Europe, attended WCTU meetings, taught Sunday School, and entertained both friends and strangers in her home on almost a daily basis.<sup>30</sup>

Life within the Walvoord family revolved around service to the community, with all members contributing to the best of their abilities. The entire family performed in numerous community concerts in Nagasaki to support worthy causes. Within the foreign community, the Walvoords counted among their friends not only American teachers and missionaries of all denominations, but also residents from the British, German, Russian, and Jewish enclaves in town.<sup>31</sup> They were always the first to arrive at the train station and the dock to greet the many American servicemen who stopped in town on their way to and from assignments in Asia.

Unlike some members of the foreign community, Anthony Walvoord had great respect and admiration for the Japanese with whom he lived and worked. Among the Reformed Church missionaries, he above all others called

<sup>25</sup>Anthony Walvoord to W. I. Chamberlain, September 16, 1911. In this letter Walvoord also said he still found it desirable to have a Japanese principal at Steele, but that it was not absolutely necessary. Also, Walvoord to W. I. Chamberlain, April 1, 1912, and Walvoord to the South Japan Mission, July 22, 1912.

<sup>26</sup>H. V. S. Peeke to W. I. Chamberlain, August 2, 1912.

<sup>27</sup>His twenty-five-page master's thesis was entitled "Confucian Ethics in Japan."

<sup>28</sup>W. I. Chamberlain to Anthony Walvoord, August 14, 1913.

<sup>29</sup>Anthony Walvoord to W. I. Chamberlain, December 8, 1913, and Chamberlain to Walvoord, December 12, 1913.

<sup>30</sup>See the *Diary of Edith Walvoord*, Vol. II, September 4 to November 5, 1914, in the Walvoord Collection.

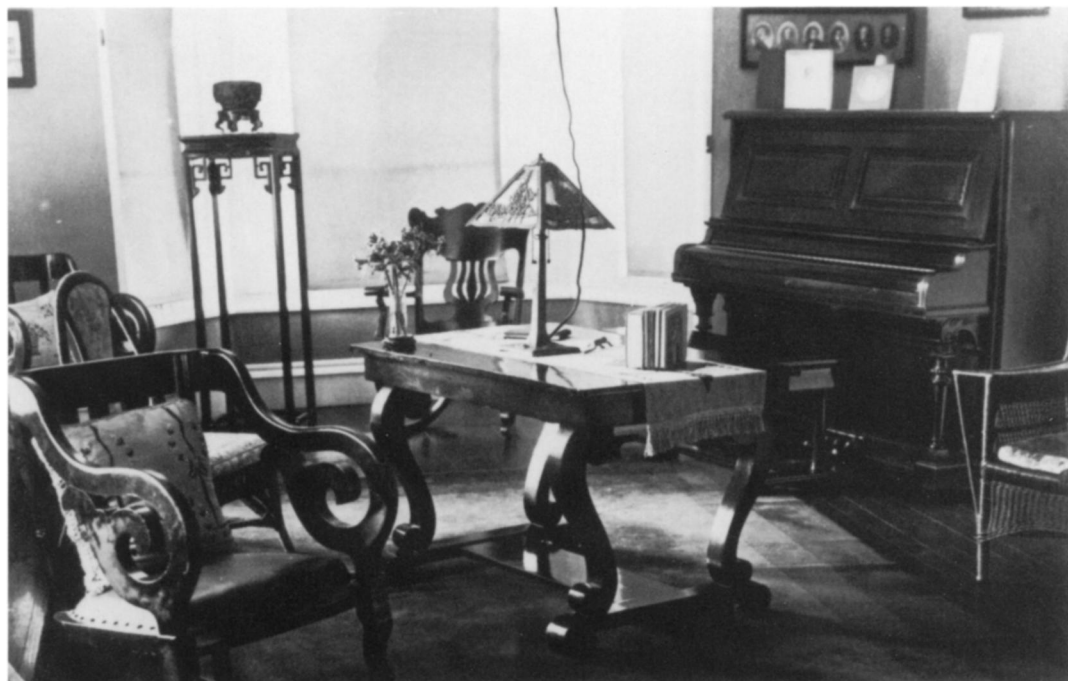
<sup>31</sup>While officially the foreign settlement at Nagasaki had been closed in 1899, a number of foreigners—mostly merchants, missionaries, sailors, and consular officials—continued to inhabit the town.



*Above, the Walvoords enjoying a picnic with U.S. Army officers at the family residence overlooking Nagasaki Harbor, 1918; below, an early photo of No. 16, Higashiyamate, the Walvoords' residence during their stay in Nagasaki.*







*Above, the Walvoords' living room; below, the Walvoords and friends at their summer house in Unzen.*



for cooperation with the Nagasaki Church and for the necessity of a Japanese principal at Steele Academy.<sup>32</sup> He was an earnest, hard-working man who respected others and wanted the same in return. Although he went to Japan expecting to teach more than to learn, he developed a great sense of admiration for the quality of Japanese schools and the ability of Japanese teachers. He also worked long and hard on the Japanese language, so that he could reach all of his students, not just the ones skilled in English. His efforts to learn a difficult language, his dedication to hard work, and his willingness to cooperate with the Japanese on all levels made Anthony Walvoord one of the most respected figures of Christian education in Nagasaki.

From 1914 to 1917 Walvoord oversaw the construction and repair work that needed to be done at Steele Academy. During this period a students' common room, dormitories, a lab, special classrooms and a gymnasium were erected. He also instituted changes in the curriculum in an attempt to correct faults he perceived in Japanese education. Walvoord felt that the students had too many courses and spent too much time at school merely memorizing facts. He said they would be better served by preparing more outside of the classroom and developing their ability to reason.<sup>33</sup>

In nine years as principal of Steele Academy, Anthony Walvoord dramatically increased student enrollment and made the school one of the best in southern Japan. At the age of forty-two he seemed poised to lead the school for many years to come. But this was not to be. On the return journey to Nagasaki from the nearby summer resort of Unzen on September 5, 1919, he noticed a small sore above his left elbow, possibly caused by an insect bite. The sore soon became infected, and on the eighth

he consulted his longtime family physician Dr. Ikube. Ointments and lancing failed, however, and the infection spread to the whole lower arm. Within a week the decision was made to amputate, and even though the operation was declared a success, Walvoord's fever remained high. His condition worsened, and he died on the evening of September 16.<sup>34</sup>

ON September 13, aware of the seriousness of his illness, Walvoord had asked his wife and children to visit him in the hospital. According to twelve-year-old Geraldine Walvoord's diary entry, "We came as soon as possible and we each prayed and sang and father talked to us for a little while."<sup>35</sup> His final words were taken down by his wife. He wanted his family to return to America and live with one of his sisters in Wisconsin. His desires for the children included a public school education and then college at Hope College in Holland, Michigan. Anthony Walvoord's final thoughts concerning his family were as follows: "Perfect wife—Happiest year—God will strengthen you—I will wait for you—Tell little girls Christ has been all in all—They have been perfect little children." His last words, which ended in mid-sentence, concerned his friend Dr. Ikube, the Japanese physician who operated on him: he wanted Ikube to become a Christian. As the end of his life rapidly approached, Anthony Walvoord's thoughts were focused on his family, his religion, and his Japanese friends—the three things in life that mattered most to him.<sup>36</sup>

A funeral service was conducted for Anthony Walvoord at the Steele Academy chapel on September 18. It was attended by students and teachers of Steele, the local missionary community, the mayor of Nagasaki, principals and

<sup>32</sup>As late as the summer of 1919, Walvoord advocated a Japanese principal at Steele, so he could be free to conduct religious work among the students, but the Japanese members of the board of directors rejected the Japanese candidate because of his inexperience. Luman Shafer to W. I. Chamberlain, September 27, 1919.

<sup>33</sup>From the funeral address by C. Suzuki, September 18, 1919, in the Walvoord Collection.

<sup>34</sup>From an account in the *Nagasaki Press*, September 16, 1919. Also, Luman Shafer to W. I. Chamberlain, September 23, 1919.

<sup>35</sup>*Diary of Geraldine Walvoord*, entry for September 17, 1919, in the Walvoord Collection.

<sup>36</sup>From a one-page note in the papers of Anthony Walvoord, in the Walvoord Collection.



teachers of Japanese government schools, the American Consul, and various foreign residents.<sup>37</sup>

Rev. Araki, the pastor of the Nagasaki Church who conducted the service, described Walvoord as a man of indomitable will, marvelous perseverance, and extraordinary zeal. "He found his mission in education of the young men of Japan, and it may be said that he has given his life for that cause. His noble career calls for our deepest respect and thankfulness."<sup>38</sup>

Luman Shafer, speaking on behalf of the Reformed Church, asked people to remember Walvoord's "calm sincerity . . . his uncompromising loyalty to the truth as he saw it at any cost . . . his deep, pure, river-like friendship . . . [and] his wonderful tenderness as father and husband."<sup>39</sup>

Koyanagi Shigeru, speaking on behalf of the Steele Academy students, said, "We cannot but be moved with an overwhelming sense of gratitude toward him. . . . These grand and beautiful buildings of our school powerfully speak for the ardent love he had for us."<sup>40</sup> He was viewed by both teachers and students as a model of hard work and pious faith, who through fourteen years of dedicated service had earned the gratitude and respect of those who knew him.

Even his onetime adversary, Albertus Pieters, had come to recognize Walvoord's considerable contributions to mission education work in Nagasaki. In an obituary in *The Leader*, a Reformed Church weekly newsletter, Pieters wrote:<sup>41</sup>

As an educational administrator [Walvoord] was most successful. He took over

[Steele Academy] when it had about 200 pupils, an appropriation from our Board of \$2000 a year, and an income from other sources of not much more than half that sum. It has now 400 students, an appropriation of nearly \$5,000 and receipts from Japanese sources of more than the same amount. . . . He carried on an extensive building program, making the school one of the best equipped institutions in the southern part of Japan. In school administration he was a strict disciplinarian. . . . At the same time, he possessed to an unusual degree the affection of both students and teachers.

Pieters also referred to Walvoord as a man of deep piety and someone who had become proficient in both speaking and writing the Japanese language. Of Walvoord's Japanese-language ability Pieters commented, "It was a delight to listen to his Japanese addresses or hear him read difficult documents that the average missionary does not think of tackling." In a relatively short time Anthony Walvoord had not only won the respect of the Japanese, but had achieved the sometimes more difficult task of winning respect from his American colleagues.

After one of the longest funeral processions ever seen in Nagasaki, Walvoord was buried at Sakamoto International Cemetery beside the mother of an American teacher at Steele who had died a week earlier.<sup>42</sup> A tombstone was erected for Walvoord by the students and teachers of Steele Academy. In the days after his burial, many came to visit the gravesite, and a year later a memorial service was attended by everyone at the school. On that occasion, the school flag was placed next to Walvoord's tomb and all the students and teachers filed by one by one to bow before his grave. The students also wrote a letter to his widow Edith at the time, which read in part:<sup>43</sup>

<sup>37</sup>*Nagasaki Press*, September 19, 1919.

<sup>38</sup>From the funeral service sermon of Rev. Araki, September 28, 1919, in the Walvoord Collection.

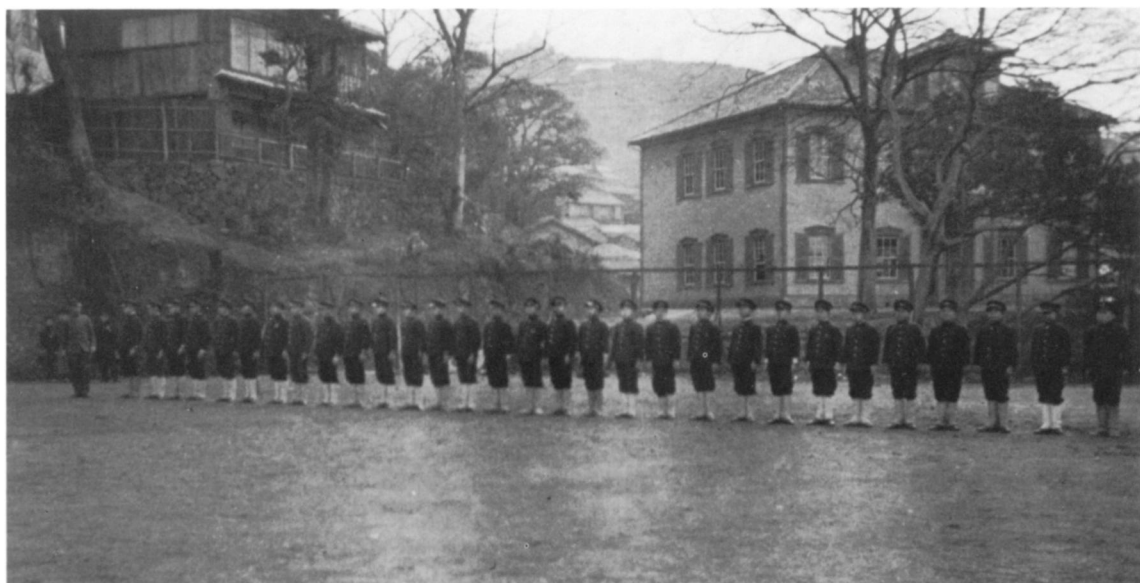
<sup>39</sup>From the funeral service address by Luman Shafer, September 18, 1919, in the Walvoord Collection.

<sup>40</sup>From the funeral service address of Koyanagi Shigeru, September 18, 1919, in the Walvoord Collection.

<sup>41</sup>From an obituary of Anthony Walvoord written by Albertus Pieters in *The Leader*, 13 (October 8, 1919), 13.

<sup>42</sup>The two-year-old son of Luman Shafer was buried on the other side of Walvoord in 1921.

<sup>43</sup>Y. Kusano to Edith Walvoord, November 1, 1920, and Students of Tozan [Steele Academy] to Edith Walvoord, November 1, 1920, both in the Walvoord Collection.



*The athletic grounds of Steele Academy, about 1915.*

As you know, [Principal Walvoord] had three children, but they are all girls. He had no sons. If one should have questioned him whether he did not feel it hard, he would have replied that he was quite rich in sons, and pointed to the three hundred and fifty boys under his care. So dearly and to his very last, did he love his pupils and care for their present and future.

**E**DITH Walvoord and her three children left Nagasaki for the United States on December 6, 1919, the thirteenth birthday of the oldest daughter Geraldine. They spent the winter of 1919–1920 with Edith's parents in Holland, Nebraska, and then went to Cedar Grove, Wisconsin, in the summer of 1920 to stay with Anthony's sister Hannah. From there they moved to Holland, Michigan, where the president of Hope College offered Edith the opportunity to become house mother of Voorhees Hall on campus. The Walvoords lived on the Hope campus for their first ten years back in America. Geraldine graduated from Hope College in 1928 and Wilhelmina in 1930. Daughter Jeane likewise attended Hope College from 1926 to 1928, but received her

B.S. and R.N. from the University of Michigan in 1931.

In addition to her work at Hope College, Edith Walvoord remained active in church affairs in Holland, Michigan, for many years. She lived a full and active life in Holland with her daughter Geraldine until her death in 1978 at the age of ninety-seven. Geraldine worked in the filing and accounting sections of the Holland Furnace Company from 1931 to 1962, and since then has served as a library worker in town. She is still extremely active today at the age of eighty-four. Jeane Walvoord was appointed a missionary of the Reformed Church to Amoy, China, in 1931. She had to leave the mission for health reasons from 1936 to 1948, but again returned to China in 1948. She remained in China until forced to leave in 1951, at which time she was reassigned to work among the Overseas Chinese in the Philippines. In 1954 she was sent to Taiwan, where she trained nurses until 1974. In 1975 she officially retired from missionary service and came back to live with her mother and sister in Michigan. Today, at the age of eighty-one, she is still an active member of the community. Anthony and Edith Walvoord's third daughter, Wilhelmina, worked for many years with social service agencies in New England prior to her retirement. In April, 1987, she returned to Holland, Mich-

igan, where she died in October of the same year at the age of seventy-eight.<sup>44</sup>

Edith Walvoord did not remarry, nor did her three daughters marry. All four women dedicated their lives, in one form or another, to Christian education and service.<sup>45</sup> Only Jeane, on her way back from China, has had the opportunity to return to Nagasaki to see her father's gravesite and their former house, but memories of time spent in the city remain strong. The intervening years have not diminished the images Geraldine and Jeane Walvoord retain of their father or their childhood days in Nagasaki. They can still identify the faces of people in faded photographs and recite the lines of children's songs they memorized more than seventy years ago.

FOR a number of years, former students and teachers at Steele Academy also helped to keep the memories of Nagasaki alive through correspondence with the Walvoord family, but most of these threads have been severed by time. While Steele alumni members were still relatively young and active, however, in the years after World War II, they rendered a tremendous service to the Walvoord family by restoring Anthony Walvoord's tombstone after it was destroyed by the atomic bomb. The effort to raise funds from alumni all over Japan to restore the tombstone began in 1948 under the direction of Inuzuka Isao, a former teacher at Steele Academy. The unveiling ceremony of Walvoord's gravestone was held on January 13, 1949, and was attended by many of his former students and friends. According to Inuzuka, the alumni members "planted five trees around the grave and concreted the ground in order to keep it free from weeds." The stone bears the inscription, "For me to live in Christ and to die is gain." It remains in good, though somewhat unkempt condition to this day.<sup>46</sup> There was poignant irony in the events leading up to the restoration of Walvoord's tombstone. The original stone had been destroyed by the bomb dropped on Nagasaki by his own countrymen, and it was replaced by some of his three hundred and fifty

"sons" who banded together to honor the memory of their former teacher. As noted in the article describing the restoration of the tombstone, "[Anthony Walvoord] loved Japanese through his life and was a true friend of Japanese."<sup>47</sup> Among those friends was Takenaka Jiro, who after graduating from Steele got a degree from Hope College and taught at Meiji Gakuin University in Tokyo. Takenaka showed his affection for the Walvoords by dedicating one of his books to them, and including personal inscriptions in two others. He continued to correspond with Edith Walvoord until his death in 1976.<sup>48</sup>

Who is left to remember Anthony Walvoord, the Christian educator who died thousands of miles from home trying to make the world a better place to live? Steele Academy closed its doors in 1933 when it merged with Meiji Gakuin in Tokyo, and since then all of the former students and teachers who had remained in contact with the Walvoords have passed away. The Seaman's Home in Nagasaki has been defunct for years, and the records of the Nagasaki YMCA make no mention of him.<sup>49</sup>

In Wisconsin, most in his home town of Cedar Grove have forgotten him. His brothers moved elsewhere, and only one of his sisters who remained in town married.<sup>50</sup> In Holland,

<sup>44</sup>Information for this section was gathered from various interviews conducted with Geraldine and Jeane Walvoord from 1988 to 1990, and from a Reformed Church information sheet on Jeane Walvoord dated January, 1968.

<sup>45</sup>Florence Walvoord, Anthony's niece, also served as a Reformed Church missionary and teacher in Japan for many years from 1922.

<sup>46</sup>From "Tribute to a Teacher," in *The Intelligencer*, May 6, 1949. Also Inuzuka Isao to Luman Shafer, contained in "Tribute to a Teacher," *ibid.*

<sup>47</sup>*Ibid.*, May 6, 1949.

<sup>48</sup>Dedicated to the Walvoords was *Amerika bungakushi* (A History of American Literature), 1964. *Aru eigo Kyoshi no omoide* (Recollections of My English Teachers), 1971, and *Kyuji nichi sekai isue* (Round the World in Ninety Days), 1966, both contained handwritten inscriptions. The book on English teachers contains several sections on Walvoord and his influence on the young Takenaka.

<sup>49</sup>The Nagasaki YMCA records are currently in the YMCA Archives in St. Paul, Minnesota.

<sup>50</sup>One of the few remaining ties to Anthony Walvoord in Cedar Grove is the cemetery behind the First Reformed



*Takenaka Jiro, a former student at Steele Academy standing next to the reconstructed tombstone of Anthony Walvoord.*

Michigan, his memory is just as faint. Even though a large Reformed Church archives is situated in the city, no one had made contact with the Walvoord family about their collection of papers and photographs until the author, while gathering material for a book on Nagasaki's international cemeteries, got in touch with them quite by accident.

Anthony Walvoord was the epitome of an early twentieth-century Christian educator, husband, father, and community leader. Like others of his kind, he deserved more than a tombstone halfway around the world from the land of his birth. But the passage of seventy-five years and the tumultuous events of war and

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Church on Main Street; not far from the house in which he was born. His parents, three sisters, and a brother are buried there.

reconstruction have effaced the memory of far more famous men. It is enough to acknowledge that he served, and was judged worthy by those whom he served. More fitting, perhaps, than the inscription on his tombstone are the words from the last stanza of a poem entitled "Nagasaki," found among Anthony Walvoord's papers:<sup>51</sup>

One lone heron westward winging  
Hears above the ship bells ringing  
Someone in the darkness singing  
Nagasaki, still of thee. . . .

<sup>51</sup>From the poem "Nagasaki" written circa 1915, probably by Mary Melton, a missionary and teacher at Kwassui Jogakuin in Nagasaki. Melton was a friend of the Walvoords who died and was buried in the same cemetery in Nagasaki as Anthony Walvoord.