By Eleanore W. Hover

The new brick buildings look much like those of any other modern, middle-class church. There are some differences, however.

A worshipper enters the sanctuary through a traditional Chinese moon gate in a Chinese-style courtyard. He then passes through another circular door of red and white glass panels in a sparkling blue and white floral stained glass window which extends to the roof. From there, he steps into a typical Protestant church: stained glass windows and a simple cross on the altar.

Tien in the Chinese Presbyterian Church, 2525 Biscayne. 1 Nov. 1962

The church, with a predominantly Chinese membership, was in the history back 157 years. In 1862, Miss Louise Saunders, who was working with the Coastal States Presbyterian Church, received a letter from a Friend in San Francisco asking her to help five young Chinese men who were in the United States. When they arrived, she helped them adjust to their new surroundings and begin a Sunday school for them which became a mission under the Presbytery of New Orleans in 1863.

Mission activities were held in a frame building at S. E. Liberty St. until 1888 when they were moved to 220 S. Harris.

The present pastor, the Rev. Dayton Catterson, came to the mission in 1888 as its first minister. Pre- vailing him, four women directed the mission-Miss Anna Catty, Miss Anna Harris and a woman known as Mrs. Radford. A measure was formally made into a church in 1920 in its 50th anniversary. The committee charged with the church's welfare was composed of representatives from the Presbytery of New Orleans and the Church of Christ also in the area.

The educational building—which has classrooms, meeting rooms, offices and an auditorium—was finished in 1921; the sanctuary was completed in 1922.

The worshipper at the Chinese Presbyterian Church participates in a liturgical service. The leader is Mr. Catterson, who speaks Chinese, deliver the sermon in English. It is summarized in Chinese by Miss Grace Ching Yee. He leads the Lord's Prayer, scripture and other prayers read in Chinese. He may also read a Chinese Bible. There are one Chinese Bible and several English Bibles in each pew. He may sing the Lord's Prayer in either language—from an English-Chinese hymnal.

If a church member speaks English well enough to deal with the congregation, and in fact many do, he has the freedom to group the abstract concepts and philosophical ideas of Christianity better when they are translated into his native language.

Although many of the 100 church members were born in the United States, others, often relatives of people already here, have recently arrived from the Far East since changes were made in the immigration laws in 1960. The Chinese community in New Orleans now numbers around 600 persons.

The Chinese Presbyterian Church encourages English classes for its members, and Mr. Catterson gives individual lessons in citizenship. SE

Although the church buildings are Western, and the congregation quite Westernized, the church keeps a distinctly Oriental flavor throughout. In addition to a 100-year-old organ, the new church has a piano in the sanctuary. The piano has a cover which is opened during the singing of Chinese hymns and closed during the singing of Western hymns.

The church choir has about 15 members. It meets at 11 a.m. Wednesday afternoons. The church sponsors a Sunday school in the Church League, and a Bible school. The woman of the church now has a choir that sings in the Chinese language.

The church also has about 20 members.

The church includes the public at a Chinese dinner. Before coming to the church, Mr. Catterson worked in Toleda, Texas. A native of Louisiana, he attended Austin College, a Presbyterian school in Sherman, Texas, and Louisiana-Presbyterian Theological School for graduate work in Christian Theology.

Just before World War II, Mr. Catterson was all set to go to China as a missionary. He had undergone his physical examination and was almost packed when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. After the war, he studied Mandarin Chinese for about four months in preparation for China service, but again his plans were thwarted. This time by the Communists.

Mr. Yeo, director of Christian education, came to the church five years ago from Hong Kong, where she was active in church work.

A luncheon at the Chinese church would be incomplete without shop wise. Wai Sin Yip, left, and Che Ham prepare dish on special views. Horner Ming washes dishes.

New Orleans' Chinese Church

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A Live Nativity Scene

At 7:30 on the three nights preceding Christmas Eve, all the lights in the town of Marshall, N.C., are doused. The combined choirs of all the community's churches, assembled on a balcony on the main street, begin to sing "O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie...". Immediately afterwards, a taped narrating of the story of the Nativity is broadcast over the local radio station. As the radio tells of the first Christmas, each event in the familiar tale is dramatized as though the modern village of Marshall were Bethlehem on that fateful day more than 19 centuries ago.

On a nearby mountainside, costumed shepherds appear, herding a flock of sheep. On cue, they point upward, and atop the mountain a "star" suddenly blazes. Its light pierces the darkness to pick out two figures slowly approaching the town. One rides a donkey and the other walks solemnly along at her side. Both wear the robes of biblical times. Spotlighted by the star, they cross a river bridge that leads into Marshall.

The light of the star then focuses on a small stable erected on the courthouse lawn. As the robed travelers approach the stable and settle in, the choir bursts into "Joy to the World." The people of Marshall, dressed as angels, wisemen, shepherds and the Holy Family, continue their pageant until they've reenacted the whole story of the birth of Christ.

Marshall, population about 1,000, produces its Nativity pageant each year with the cooperation of almost everybody in town. Live animals for the stable are lent by local farmers. The electric company installs the searchlight-star on a mountain almost a mile from town. All storekeepers close their shops. The druggist and postmaster play roles in the play, as do many high school students. And spectators come from near and far to see the age-old story come to life.

One striking tribute to Marshall's Christmas observance occurred a few years ago. An amazed railway engineer, new to the run, was streaking through Marshall on a tight schedule and suddenly caught sight of the robed actors spread from mountainside to town. He stopped his train while he and the passengers and crew watched the pageant to its end. No one complained about the delay.

By light of gleaming star, Mary and Joseph make way to Carolina stable.