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Mission Round Table

The OMF Journal for Reflective Practitioners

"As the Father has sent me, I am sending you."

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Contents

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Cover picture:

"Go and Tell of My Redeeming Love" by Hanna Varghese (2007)
© Hanna Varghese and OMSC, New Haven, CT.
Hanna Varghese (1938–2009) was from Selangor, Malaysia. Born into a Christian family, she was encouraged to attend different churches so that she could appreciate the liturgy and traditions of various Christian denominations. Hanna always had a passion for painting and drawing and mainly worked in the mediums of acrylic paint and Batik. Her work has been exhibited in Hong Kong, Japan, India, Indonesia, China, Sri Lanka, South Korea, the Philippines, and the USA. While she was artist in residence at the Overseas Ministries Study Center (OMSC) in 2006–2007, exhibitions of her work were held at the Institute of Sacred Music at Yale Divinity School and at Princeton Theological Seminary. Of her work, she said, "When I see one image that I worked on being used by a publisher or presented in a workshop/seminar/Bible study, I know it is my one drop of contribution to Christian ministry. We are all here to be a blessing to others."

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Editorial

Walter McConnell

Some time ago my wife and I were invited out to dinner by three elderly sisters who got on with each other like school girls. They teased each other. They made comments behind each other's backs. They finished each other's sentences. Their interaction was delightful. At one point during the evening, they began to tell an old family story. Although the story was started by one of the sisters, the others occasionally interrupted to correct something or add an important piece of information. Along the way, the original storyteller asked another sister to continue the story while she finished eating, because "You know it as well as I do."

Some stories are just like that. They are well known and repeated so often that one storyteller can pick up where another has left off without missing a beat. While the voice changes, and some details may be enhanced or slightly modified, the underlying story remains the same. This is what we find in the biblical Gospels. Four distinct voices ring with a unified testimony about "That which was from the beginning [of the Christian faith], which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life" (1 John 1:1, ESV). The Gospels are faithful accounts of what the apostles saw and heard and touched and experienced. And they give us stories that can and should be told over and over and over again by many voices speaking in many languages.

This issue of *Mission Round Table* tells some stories about God's work in his church that are so well known that many readers could come in at almost any paragraph and take up the tale in their own words and style, though it is likely that it might develop in somewhat different directions. Other stories told here are probably not as familiar as some might have imagined, and at least one will hardly be known at all.

We begin with David Harley's article written to answer the question, "Do we need missionary societies?" David deftly leads us through biblical and theological concerns that highlight the place of the church in God's plan for world evangelism and points out historical evidence of men and women gathering into fellowships and moving out to share the good news. He includes recent examples and provides a practical perspective on how sending churches, mission agencies, and receiving churches can partner in a way that enhances our gospel effectiveness. Is this a story that you can pass on to others, adding your own twists and nuances?

In "'Making all things new'—or did we?," Rose Dowsett takes a step back into history as she recounts the "reluctant exodus" of the China Inland Mission from China and its re-formation into the Overseas Missionary Fellowship, later OMF. Times were changing. The world was changing. And the mission was forced to change right along with it. Decisions were made that would shape the organization and its ministry as it began to work in new lands among people of different cultures and languages. The question is, would they be the right decisions? Would they enhance the spreading of the gospel and development of the church in the post-war world or not? As we take up the telling of this story for our time and for the future, what will we say about recent decisions that shape the work of missions today?

Our third article is also set in history. The story told by John Usher gets us "Beyond the Cambridge Seven," those prominent young men who left what could have been the good life in late nineteenth-century England to share the gospel in China. But even though we know that they became famous for what they gave up, the careers of these men remain largely unknown. A partial remedy is found here as we learn about Arthur Polhill, the youngest of the Cambridge Seven, who was converted under D. L. Moody while in university and within three years was in China as a member of the China Inland Mission. Polhill spent much of his career in the province of Sichuan where he served as an ordained Anglican priest in the diocese of Western China and planted what was one of the largest churches in the region. Can anyone else step up to the podium and fill in the stories of any of the other members of this group or another lesser-known missionary?

Our final article turns to one of the most familiar stories in CIM/OMF history, though it probably tells some things in a new way. The biographies of J. O. Fraser and books by Leila Cooke and Isobel Kuhn have introduced God's work among the Lisu tribe to the Christian world for several generations. Is it possible to say anything new? Are we familiar with the other missionaries who labored among the Lisu? Or can one only retell the tale in different words for a new audience? As I wrote the article, "God's mission to the Lisu," I will have to let others answer these questions. I would, however, like to challenge others to relate the story of how the gospel impacted other groups in ancient or modern history.

As we listen to the biblical story about Jesus and learn of the expansion of the church throughout history, how can we refrain from inviting people in and sharing this wonderful news with them? As you read this issue, listen to the stories and consider what you can add to them using your unique voice in a way that will give delight to your listeners and glory to the God of all.

Do We Need Missionary Societies?

David Harley

Having lived in Africa, Asia and Europe, David and his wife, Rosemary, have expertise and experience in a variety of areas within Christian work. David has served as Principal at All Nations Christian College (1985 to 1993) and as General Director of OMF International (2001 to 2006). He studied at Cambridge University and holds doctorates in missiology from Columbia University in the USA and the University of Utrecht in Holland. He is the author of several books, including *Preparing to Serve* and *Missionary Training*. Since his retirement, David has continued to minister through speaking and preaching around the world.

In my first year as General Director of OMF International, I was invited to speak to a group of pastors in Singapore on the question "Do we still need missionary societies?"[1] I accepted the invitation with some trepidation. I had been a member of OMF for less than five months. My wife Rosemary and I had lived in Singapore for only five years. On the positive side, we had worked as missionaries in Africa and had spent fifteen years teaching at All Nations Christian College and reflecting on the theology, history, and practice of mission.

In this paper, which is substantially what I presented at that gathering in Singapore, I reflect on the ways God has worked in his redemptive mission to the world, both in the history of salvation as recorded in the Scriptures and throughout the subsequent history of the church. I then consider the distinctive contribution mission societies and local churches can make to the task of global evangelism and the benefits that can be achieved through mutual cooperation.

Before we look at the specific question before us, it will be relevant to start by considering the nature of the church. We would all agree that the church is God's agent for evangelism. As Melvin Hodges says in his book, *A Guide to Church Planting*, "The church is God's agent in the earth—the medium through which he expresses himself to the world. God has no other redeeming agency in the earth."[2] But the question needs to be asked: "What is the church?"

We may think of the institutional church—the church down the road or the denomination to which we belong. We may say "I belong to the Grace Street Baptist Church," or "I am a member of the Methodist church." Both are valid statements but we all know that that is not what the Bible means by church. When Peter or Paul or Jesus refers to the church, they do not mean denominations or the building down the road. They see the church as the body of believers who have been born again and become the children of God, members of Christ's body in whom his Spirit dwells.

In the NT, the church is described primarily in spiritual rather than institutional terms. The primary focus is on the dynamic union between its members and its Lord and founder. Certainly, there are some institutional aspects of the church: entrance into the Christian community through public baptism; participation in the Lord's supper; having a group of leaders or elders. These are visible expressions of what it means to be a body of Christians. But it is recognised that although people may belong to the visible institution, they may not be members of the body of Christ—the invisible church, the true church. In Philippians, Paul refers to some who were apparently members of a local church and yet were living as "enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction" (Phil 3:18–19, NASB).

In the NT, neither denominational structures nor paradenominational structures existed. There were no denominations. There were no Christian schools, evangelistic associations, or missionary societies. It should be self-evident that such structures have no explicit biblical basis. Whether we think of a local church with its organisational structures, committees, constitution, etc., or of a denomination, or any other Christian organisation, mission, or agency, they are all, from one perspective, parachurch organisations. They provide the framework within which members may worship God, grow in their faith, and witness in the world.

We need to distinguish between the church as biblically understood and auxiliary ecclesiastical structures which did not exist in the NT but have grown up subsequently. There seems to be no biblical basis for making a distinction between denominational structures or local church structures on the one hand and parachurch structures on the other. The more basic distinction in Scripture seems to be between

the church as the body of all true believers and all institutional structures, including denominations, churches, and parachurch organisations.

Both the parachurch organisation and the local church serve the body of Christ. Biblically, it is irrelevant whether evangelism is carried out by a denomination or some non-denominational structure, for in both cases the sponsoring structure is in reality a parachurch institution. The key question is how effective and appropriate that evangelism is in a particular context.

The church is God's agent for evangelism. That, of course, is absolutely true. Only the church can evangelise. Only believers can share the gospel. Non-believers cannot. Those who do not belong to the church cannot reach out into the world. It is theologically misleading to say the *local* church is the sole or primary agent for evangelism. A more precise statement of the biblical teaching would be to say that it is the *church* which is the agent of evangelism.

Having said that, I do not want in any way to belittle the role of the local church or the denomination. The local church plays a critical role in mission. It is in the local body of believers that most of us come to faith, are fed, discipled, envisioned, and sent out. Every local church must have a global vision and must assume the primary role in sending out workers. It must have a primary role but not an exclusive one.

The evidence of Scripture

As we read the OT story, we notice that God loved to act in a variety of ways. Sometimes he worked through institutions which he had established and sometimes he acted independently of those institutions. In Numbers 11, Moses called for the Spirit to come on seventy elders. They gathered together and were duly anointed with the Spirit. But two of those who were called were not present at the meeting. They remained in the camp where they also received the Spirit and began to prophesise. Joshua was most concerned at their behaviour and viewed it as a threat to Moses' authority. In his mind, these two were not operating within the established institution. Moses, on the other hand, was not upset as he did not see these two as rivals to his ministry. Rather, he rejoiced at what God was doing through them.

As we read the OT story, we notice that God loved to act in a variety of ways. Sometimes he worked through institutions which he had established and sometimes he acted independently of those institutions.

Through the major part of the history of Israel, the central religious institution was the temple and the main religious leaders were the priests. But frequently, God operated outside that system and inspired prophets to serve the people in ministries that were parallel to the ministry that pertained in the central place of worship. Amos is a good example. He did not belong to the establishment. He was sent out, not by the mission committee of the Jerusalem temple, but by the direct instruction of God to go as a missionary from the south (Judah) to the north (Israel). The prophets were often used by God to act independently of the religious establishment so that they might fulfil a particular ministry and, sometimes, challenge or revive the establishment. Jonah, of course, is another example of someone who received an independent call to go as a missionary with no apparent connection with the leaders in Jerusalem.

In the NT, we find a similar pattern. We see the emerging church in Jerusalem under the leadership of the apostles. At the same time, we find a number of individuals who were inspired to "do their own thing." While the Twelve remained in Jerusalem, God sent Philip off to Samaria. This does not appear to have been part of a planned missionary strategy on the part of the church in Jerusalem. Rather, it seems to have been an example of the spontaneous leading of the Spirit. Later, Philip was led into the desert so that the gospel could be preached to a man from Africa.

Acts 13 is often seen as a classic example of missionaries being sent out by the local church and, it is argued, it therefore provides the normative pattern for the church today. It is, however, a matter for debate how far the NT can provide models for every aspect of the church's life today. Indeed, it is not easy to discern a clear and consistent pattern in matters of church leadership or styles of worship. But let us leave that aside and consider the model of Paul and Barnabas.

Moses Elects the Council of Seventy Elders by Jacob de Wit (Public domain), via Wikimedia Commons.

It should be noted that neither of these two men originated from the church in Antioch. Indeed, they could be appropriately described as missionaries to the church in Antioch. What is clear is that after they had spent some time ministering and teaching in that city, they were sent out by the local church (or was it a group of churches?) in Antioch. It is also true that they reported back to the church in Antioch and told them what God had done. It is also clear from the text of Acts that they did not remain under the control and direction of that church, and this could be seen as an early prototype of a mission agency.

Although Paul and Barnabas were sent out by the church and subsequently reported back to the church, once they had received their initial commissioning they appeared to act largely independently under the guidance of the Spirit. They were financially independent. They selected team members. They decided team strategy. They accepted new workers into the mission team from the churches they had founded. They received finances from those churches. They appointed elders in those churches without any reference to Antioch. They did feel a sense of responsibility to the whole church and did make it their business to keep in touch with and report to the church in Jerusalem. What they did not do was act as an extension of the church in Antioch.

Antioch does not provide a model of a local church sending, guiding, and controlling mission. Rather, it gives a model of a church or group of churches choosing, sending, and releasing members to form an autonomous, self-supporting, self-directing missionary enterprise for the evangelisation of the world. The mission work of Paul was not just an extended outreach of the Antioch church. It was not simply the Antioch church operating at a distance from its home. It was something else. Something different. It was an autonomous structure, answerable to the whole church. Hence, the fact that Paul reported back to the church in Jerusalem was significant.

Does this mean the local church has no role in mission? Of course not. The local church may be in a position to direct a specific ministry in another place but, like the mission agency, it must avoid the dangers of exerting tight control, placing limitations on the initiative of those sent, dominating the newly founded churches, or imposing its own denominational patterns. At other times, the local church may find it more effective to work through an agency which is specifically set up to facilitate global mission.

The evidence of history

In the early church, groups of believers gathered into fellowship or house groups, after the pattern of synagogues. These later developed into congregations, which could then forge formal or informal links with similar congregations in the same region.

At about the same time, some groups of men and women who felt called to a life of service to God and to their fellows started living together in communities. These later became known as monasteries. During the dark centuries of the Middle Ages, it was the monasteries that kept the faith alive. The monks were committed to Christ, to prayer, to care of the poor, and to evangelism. They became itinerant preachers, and their monasteries became mission stations. So, the gospel spread and the Scriptures were faithfully copied and passed down. Many significant Christian leaders came out of this movement, and serious biblical and theological study was continued.

After the Reformation, the Protestant churches wanted nothing to do with these monasteries. Rather, the Reformers emphasised personal faith, the supremacy of the Bible, and the importance of the local congregation. They were not concerned with the evangelisation of the world and, even if they had been, they had no structures with which to carry out a programme of global evangelisation. Consequently, during the next three hundred years the expansion of the Christian church depended almost entirely on the Roman Catholic religious orders. The Roman Church had a structure, outside the local or diocesan level, which could and did undertake outreach to the far corners of the globe. Protestants, alas, had no such structure and did virtually nothing towards reaching those who had never heard the gospel.

Protestants slowly woke up to their missionary responsibility and started to develop their own structures at the time of the Pietist movement and the Wesleyan revival. Three hundred years after the Reformation, William Carey was burdened to find "the means for the conversion of the heathen,"[3] a pursuit that led to the formation of the Baptist Missionary Society (BMS). Within the space of thirty years, another twelve mission societies were founded, including the Church Missionary Society (CMS) and the London Missionary Society (LMS). The "great century" of mission ensued. Christianity grew with such unprecedented speed that at the Edinburgh Conference of 1910 many anticipated that the task of global evangelism would soon be completed, or—as the constant refrain put it—"in this generation."

It is important to emphasise that in the sovereign grace and purpose of God it was not the local church but the missionary society that became the primary agent in reaching the world with the gospel. In a hundred years, the Protestant church changed from being a self-contained, impotent European and North American backwater to becoming a universal family. It was wave after wave of evangelical initiatives—mostly undertaken by parachurch groups, many of them "faith" missions—that transformed the religious map of the world.

Yet all along, some Protestants have been a bit unsure about the model of the missionary society. They still insist that the primary responsibility for mission rests with the local church. Does this come from an inadequate

The local church may be in a position to direct a specific ministry in another place but, like the mission agency, it must avoid the dangers of exerting tight control, placing limitations on the initiative of those sent, dominating the newly founded churches, or imposing its own denominational patterns.

understanding of the church, or a failure to recognise that mission is God's task rather than ours and that he may use whatever structures he will to complete his purpose?

Some of the denominations have developed their own mission agencies or allowed such agencies to be started in their name providing they maintain a loose affiliation with the denomination. After WWII, most of the older denominational mission boards, which had once enjoyed partial or complete autonomy, were brought back under the control of their respective denominations. The same movement took place in the amalgamation of the International Missionary Council into the World Council of Churches. In both cases, the missionary budget became part of the unified budget of the church. The predictable result was that concern for evangelism decreased and the vitality of the missionary movement—the voluntary society—was lost in a sea of bureaucracy.

In the last fifty years, the most remarkable development in the mission world has been the rapid growth of the missionary movement in the Two-Thirds World. While it is difficult to obtain accurate statistics, many researchers suggest that the number of missionaries being sent out from the churches of Asia, Africa, and Latin America now exceeds the number being sent out by the West. Some of these have joined international missions like OMF, WEC, SIM, YWAM, etc. Others have decided it is preferable to found their own mission agencies to meet the needs of their own people and to conduct mission in a way that is more appropriate to their own cultural context. Back in 1989, Larry Pate identified 351 missionary societies that were founded in these continents between 1980 and 1988 and estimated that the number of such agencies would be nearly two thousand by the year 2000.[4]

These figures would seem to indicate that God is continuing to do what he has done in the past, and to use both the local church and the mission agency to reach out to his world.

The practical perspective

I have tried to show that the missionary society is every bit as much a part of the church—the body of Christ—as any denomination or local group of Christians. I have also argued from the evidence of both Scripture and history that God has often used the church and the parachurch to fulfil his purpose. In this section, I wish to consider how these two structures can work effectively in partnership. Clearly, each has a key role to play, although the role of the local church is primary.

1910 World Missionary Conference, University of Edinburgh (Public domain), via Wikimedia Commons.

There are a number of things which the local church is far better equipped to do than the missionary society.

- It can provide initial discipleship training for new believers who may eventually serve God in mission.
- It can provide the right context in which spiritual gifts can be developed and suitability for mission service can be assessed.
- It can provide further training and/or provide guidance and support regarding attendance at Bible or missionary college.
- It can interact with the mission society in discussing candidates' gifting and appropriate fields of service.
- It can commission candidates by the laying on of hands.
- It can provide realistic support according to actual needs.
- It can give practical help in departure arrangements.
- It can provide loving concern and moral support.
- It can send representatives to visit the missionary.
- It can provide care for parents and family left behind.
- It can give pastoral care, especially during home leave.
- It can provide a role for the missionary in the local church.
- It can provide an opportunity for further study and refreshment.
- It can care for the missionaries' children.
- It can ensure that the needs of the retired missionary are met.

There are also many things which the mission society is better equipped to provide than the church.

- It can provide detailed knowledge and experience of life and work in other countries.
- It can provide or identify the best language schools.
- It can provide opportunities for bonding with national believers.
- It can provide on-going orientation to culture, religion, and society.
- It can provide informed medical services, advice regarding inoculations, preventative medicine, etc.
- It can provide pastoral care during the difficult period of "settling in" and "culture shock."
- It can provide support services regarding visas, forwarding baggage, transferring money, permits, etc.
- It can facilitate evacuation procedures in times of natural disaster or military conflict.
- It can provide immediate communication in emergencies and regular news of progress.
- It can provide prayer support for the overseas work.
- It can link the workers with other Christian organisations in the area or country.
- It can determine policies and strategies on the basis of local experience.

- It can act as a middleman between missionary and receiving (national) churches.
- It can provide, supervise, or advise about children's schooling.
- It can assess the missionary's progress in language and ministry and report back to the church.

Working in partnership

It is clear that both the local church and the mission society have a vital role to play in God's mission to the world. Of course, there may be occasions when a church has grown so large that it feels it is in the position to undertake the role both of the church and of the agency. This may be possible, especially if the church's mission concern is focused on one country and where there is sufficient experience and expertise to provide the kind of guidance and support that a missionary will require. What often happens, however, is that the church finds that it is reinventing the wheel and having to provide a complete department to supervise their missionaries that is as large as that of a missionary society. I would strongly advise such churches to proceed with real caution, both for the sake of their missionary and for the good of the work.

The key word today is partnership. As we realise the enormity of the task that faces the church we must work together as closely as possible to obey Christ's Great Commission. We can accept both these structures, represented today by the local church and the mission society, as legitimate and necessary, and recognise that both have a vital and distinctive role to play in God's mission to the world. Churches within Asia and elsewhere may need to form their own mission societies or utilise existing ones if they are to exercise their missionary responsibility. Only if both structures are fully and properly utilised and working in partnership will our mission be fully effective.

Possible objections

Some people may raise objections, many of which are perfectly valid and demand an answer. Let me close by addressing some of these.

1. You cannot use Paul as a model because he had apostolic authority and did not need to be accountable.

And yet, he was held accountable on several occasions and his authority may be more obvious to us now than it was then. If one dismisses Paul and his colleagues as a model of a mission team because he was so special, by the same token one must dismiss him as a model for local church control of their missionary.

2. Acts is history, not theology.

True, but it is the record of how the church grew. It shows that Paul was an integral part of the church. His mission team emanated from the church. He planted churches, related to churches, and saw himself as part of and responsible to the whole body of Christ. Paul and those who worked with him served as members of the body of Christ. They received their inspiration, strength, and guidance from the same Spirit who empowers the whole church and were directed by the same Lord who is head over the whole church.

3. Mission agencies often act too independently and ignore the local church.

This is sadly true and many missionary societies need to repent and mend their ways. Both structures need each other and must work closely together.

4. Missions often take away our best people.

It can be difficult for a church to lose gifted members of the congregation but we must recognize the sovereignty of the Lord in this matter. The Antioch church displayed a sacrificial obedience in sending out two of their best people. But God is no one's debtor and those churches that willingly release those whom God calls will themselves be blessed.

5. Mission agencies do not involve the local church in the decision-making process regarding location and type of ministry.

This is often true and again the structures need to work in synergy. Churches should express their desire to be more involved. Mission agencies must listen.

6. Mission agencies may not reflect the local church's denominational position exactly.

In mission today, we must be concerned primarily for the extension of the kingdom of God. Sometimes it may be appropriate to establish churches in the name of one's own denomination. Sometimes it may not be appropriate to do so, especially if there are a plethora of denominations already or if the local churches have united into one church. We must be willing to work alongside other Bible-believing Christians as we plant the church. We must avoid perpetuating our divisions.

7. People in the local church want to be involved closely in what is going on and not to be held at an arm's length by a third party—the mission agency.

This is a laudable goal and one that can be developed in partnership.

8. Mission agencies are too expensive and not cost-effective. We can do a cheaper job by ourselves.

Those who make this claim need to look carefully at the facts and to be realistic about the costs and the services they can provide. Provision must be made for administrative costs, news bulletins and prayer letters, travel, language learning, education of children, medical costs, insurance, pastoral care on site, and all other services that the mission agency can give. Churches that choose to send out their own workers independently need to consider the level of back up and expertise they can provide compared to that provided by a responsible and experienced mission agency.

Mission agencies are not perfect nor should they expect to continue beyond their sell-by date. The time may come when some agencies are no longer needed and new agencies may be developed. But for the past two centuries, at least, they have played a significant role to the spread of the gospel worldwide. Local churches, likewise, are not perfect but God graciously works through them too. Mission agencies and local churches together can achieve more by working together. The following two examples illustrate the value and importance of such cooperation.

A large church in Kuala Lumpur had five thousand members. The pastor and elders of the church had a strong desire to be involved in world mission and they believed they had the necessary resources, the personnel, and the vision. They saw

no reason why they could not send out missionaries by themselves instead of depending on a mission agency. At the end of a week's teaching on mission, a young couple responded to the call to missionary service. Within a few weeks, they were sent out to start a work in another Asian country. They were given words of encouragement but no formal training or preparation. They struggled for two years and discovered that they were unable to cope with the pressures and challenges they faced. Depressed and ashamed, they returned home to Malaysia to apologise to their church for their failure, but the pastor said it was not the couple who had failed but the church that had sent them. He concluded that in the future the church should not be reluctant to use the resources and expertise of a mission agency.

But if it is true that the church can benefit from working with a mission agency, it is equally true that the mission agency can be more effective if it works as closely as possible with the local church, both in the sending and the receiving countries. Those who, like Paul, have a burden to preach where no one has yet preached are to be commended, but if they are coming from outside a particular country, their starting point should be to find and work with national Christians who share their vision. This is well illustrated by a Burmese mission leader with a very effective ministry who lamented the attitude of some missionaries. "We welcome any who wish to come to Myanmar to work with us in the task of evangelism. What we do not want is people who want to work independently with their own strategy worked out in a Western seminary."[1] Mission agencies and individual missionaries must echo Paul's desire that we become of one mind with local believers "striving side by side for the faith of the gospel" (Phil 1:27). When mission agencies, local churches, and denominations partner together in gospel ministry, our effectiveness can greatly increase. **MRT**

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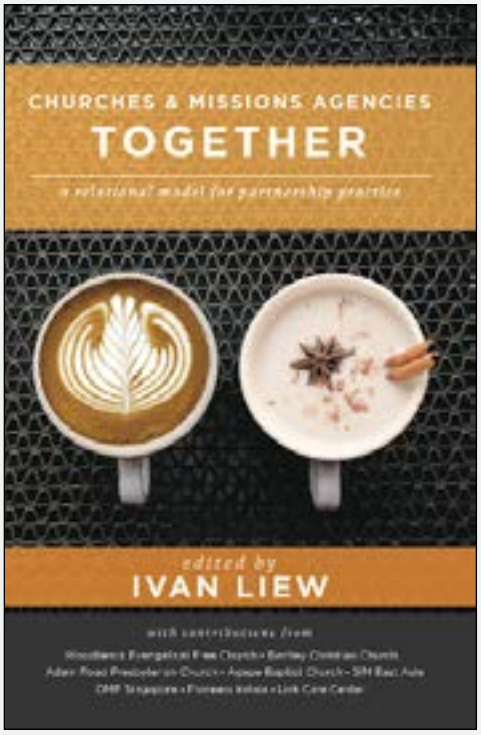
[1] Singapore, 16 October 2001.
[2] Melvin Hodges, *A Guide to Church Planting* (Chicago: Moody, 1973), 15.
[3] William Carey, *An Enquiry into the Obligation of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens* (Leicester: Ann Ireland, 1792).
[4] Larry D. Pate, *From Every People: A Handbook of Two-Thirds World Mission* (Monrovia, CA: MARC, 1989), 16–25.



Churches and Mission Agencies Together: A Relational Model for Partnership Practice

By Ivan Liew, ed. Singapore: Condeo Press, 2017.
ISBN 978-0997120448. 270pp.
Reviewed by Ka-Neng Au

The book is a call to developing good relations between churches, mission agencies, and their missionaries, with many helpful suggestions for best practices to address some important issues in missions. The editor is the Missions Pastor of a church in Singapore and the contributors are leaders in churches and mission agencies.

The first half of the book discusses the biblical, theological, and historical foundations for partnerships between churches and agencies, and describes a model for partnership practice that was initially developed through research focused on experiences at the editor's church.

This model was then validated and improved upon by a series of meetings held by a group of leaders of sending churches and mission agencies. The group affirmed a set of four values as foundational to the relationships between churches, mission agencies, and missionaries: (1) the biblical centrality of the church; (2) equal value of church and agency in missions; (3) mutual deference and glad submission; and (4) joyful fellowship and encouragement. These values are applied to several case studies in the second half of the book.

The case studies focus on several major issues which require a common understanding for resolution, such as candidature, conflict, crisis management, finances, and ministry philosophy. The book is of great value for the high regard it places on group analysis, the way it deliberates important issues, and the recommendations given for ideal partnership practice that enhances the relationships and well-being of all parties. While the contributors note some Singapore-specific circumstances, the partnership practice recommendations are applicable in many other missionary-sending countries.

This book is recommended for every missions-minded person who desires to improve communication among missionaries, mission agencies, and supporting churches.

‘Making all things new’—or Did We?

Rose Dowsett

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There is an old Irish joke that goes like this:

A traveller who has ended up in a remote village: “I seem to have got lost. Please could you tell me how to get to Dublin?”

Local villager: “Well, if I was going to Dublin, sure, I wouldn’t start from here.”

Of course, the truth is that we have to start where we are, not where we might wish we were. “If only” is usually an unhelpful wistfulness, a wishing that things had been different, often a way of excusing ourselves when things don’t turn out quite as we hoped, even sometimes expressing a defensive grievance to God. Realism is not romanticism. Most China Inland Mission members (and the wide circle of supporters) were grieved at the circumstances in which they had to leave China, and many felt they left their hearts behind as they left. It was not the situation they had expected to be in, or wished to be in, when they had followed God’s call to China, and many were confused about “what next”. What was God doing?

The one thing they could cling on to was their deep belief in the sovereignty of God. Even if they found it hard to make sense of why they were where they were, they could trust the Lord of history and of the present and of the future to bring good out of evil, light out of darkness, guidance out of confusion. To that end they would pray, trust, and obey. OMF was birthed, not out of what, humanly speaking, we might have considered a good starting point, but with the knowledge that God’s people could trust him to lead them to his chosen destination.

Few current members of OMF International, and few of today’s believers, Asian or otherwise, have a grasp of history that helps them understand what happened 70 years ago as the CIM painfully withdrew from China after 85 years of serving its people and began to relocate in other Southeast Asian countries. But understanding what happened and the reasons why are important if we are to grasp how we got to where we are today and why OMF-related churches (and others) developed the way they did. Many of the decisions made then still shape the present.

China wasn’t the only place in turmoil

China had been in uproar for decades, more recently with the Japanese occupation followed by civil war, and then the triumph of Communism. Before and during World War II, Japan had invaded numerous countries, leaving a trail of destruction and bitterness behind. The Western Powers fought back, both to try to dislodge the Japanese and to protect their own colonial and economic interests. The whole of Asia was a battlefield.

When the atom bomb eventually brought the conflict to a devastating end, almost every Asian country had suffered extensive loss of life, the destruction of much infrastructure and property, and trauma. There was now a widespread, restless clamor for political independence as each country was in need of extensive rebuilding. The desire for independence was to lead to even more conflict in the late 1940s and through the 1950s. At the same time, Communism seemed to many to offer the possibility of a new kind of future—fairer, free, and empowering—a future they were prepared to fight for. Asia was still a battlefield.

The term “World War” was entirely accurate. While North America, Australia, and New Zealand were not invaded, they suffered heavy economic and personnel losses through military participation. Europe was in turmoil. Many countries suffered incredibly due to bombing, which devastated the civilian population, and were economically near destitution. In Asia, and indeed in Africa and Latin America, Communism—supported by

both China and Russia—was making headway by leaps and bounds. Many countries were already in the control of these two great powers, and many people believed that it would not be long before most of Asia, most of Europe, and many African and Latin American territories would succumb to them—the two great atheistic global empires.

The CIM dilemma[1]

The CIM had been birthed in 1865 out of a vision to reach into inland China with the gospel. This was its charter, its reason for existing. Those who served with CIM had a strong sense of call to reach the people of China, and the logic was that that would mean the vast country of China. There had been times when civil war and other issues made it prudent for many members to be withdrawn from their places of ministry to the safety of the coast, but in the past they had always been able to return to their posts after an interval.

This time things were different. During the early 1950s, it became absolutely clear that the new regime would not permit any foreign Christian missionary activity, and the Chinese churches themselves were asking the Mission to leave. The lives of Chinese believers were endangered if they were seen to have any connection with foreigners. With deep reluctance, leaders realized that total withdrawal was the only option. The question was, should the Mission "fold", or did God have some further purpose for it?

It was a comfort that by now the CIM-related churches were self-governing and self-financing, a process that had been wisely speeded up ever since the uproar of 1927, so that in that sense CIM's exodus would have less of an impact than if the churches were still dependent on foreign funding and direction. In addition, with the exception of the Anglican "field" in Szechuan, there were no links to any denominational structure outside China. Arnold Lea, a senior Director, could write that "we believe, too, He is leading us out in order that His Church in China may enter into new depths of trust in Him which perhaps could never be attained while the missionary remained in the background."[2]

As a small group of seven leaders met in February 1951 at Kalorama, near Melbourne, Australia, where the General Director, Bishop Frank Houghton, was slowly recuperating from an extended period of ill health, it was agreed that God was leading the Mission to redeploy into other Asian countries. Initially, it was assumed this would focus on the many millions of Chinese who had migrated. For instance, there were estimated to be ca. 3 million Chinese in Thailand (Siam until 1948–49), ca. 2 million in Indonesia, and ca. 750,000 in the Philippines. In addition, Singapore was home to another ca. 750,000, and perhaps more than a further 2.5 million were distributed between Burma (now Myanmar), Malaya (now Peninsular Malaysia), and Indo-China (now Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos).[3]

Surely it made sense to deploy experienced CIM workers—most of them proficient in Mandarin and a few in other mainland languages and already committed to reaching unreached communities—to take the gospel to these millions of Chinese. There were already Christian churches among the Chinese in several countries, but there were also large numbers of the Chinese of the Asian diaspora who were still unevangelized. There were also a number of minority tribal groups, such as the Lisu, the Lahu, the Kachin, and the Miao, among whom CIM personnel had been working in west China, who had spilled across the bordering mountains and valleys into north Thailand and Burma in particular. It would be possible to continue work among them in Thailand as they had in China. In March 1951, Allan Crane wrote: "The present condition of unrest has set on foot a number of migrations. Christian Kachin families have moved over into Burma, taking the gospel with them."[4]

The question remained, exactly how should the fledgling OMF—with its first word, Overseas, meaning initially overseas Chinese—relate to already established Chinese churches? Many of these were Presbyterian, Methodist, or Brethren, with a handful of Anglican, each reflecting their own history. Most CIM churches had been planted as non-denominational gatherings of believers, encouraged to make their own alignment as they reached independence. How would an interdenominational OMF membership adjust to already existing denominations? And how would Chinese church leaders relate to CIM patterns of church planting if they were carried over into the new situations? Would they welcome OMF church plants, or feel threatened by them?

There were some warm (as in the case of Singapore) and some cautious expressions of welcome, but for the most part the assumption from those churches seems to have been that any OMF church plant would be directed by the leaders of the existing church structures and that OMF missionaries would come under the authority, not primarily of their own mission Directors

Directors' Conference, Kalorama, Melbourne, 10–17 February 1951. Front from left: H. M. Griffin, J. R. Sinton, F. Houghton, F. Mitchell, Back: J. H. M. Robinson, H. W. Funnell, J. O. Sanders. *China's Millions*, North American edition (April 1951): 51.

as had been the case in the past, but under leadership beyond and outside the Mission.[5] The CIM, however, had had a strongly self-contained ethos, did not loan workers to third parties, and had a structure that was heavily shaped by "Director rule".[6] These approaches are clearly not compatible. It seems that the leaders meeting at Kalorama, and a few months later with a much larger group at Bournemouth, England, did not envisage any radical departure from that Director rule. Even the Anglican work in China had had its own CIM bishops in charge of the Diocese, starting with William Cassels (one of the famous Cambridge Seven) from 1895 through to Bishop Frank Houghton until he became General Director in 1940. Only then was a Chinese appointed.

Continuity and discontinuity

In his report on Kalorama, Houghton wrote that survey teams were being dispatched immediately to Thailand, Malaya, Indonesia, and the Philippines, and that, "Further, while giving priority to work among Chinese, we agreed that a few of our workers with special linguistic training might respond to the inarticulate appeal of Bible-less tribes in the Philippines and elsewhere."[7]

In addition, two financial gifts had spontaneously been sent with the proviso that they be used for CIM work in Japan, conditional upon the mission actually sending someone there. Thus, it was agreed to send a survey team to Japan as well. The significance of this was that it was not for work among Chinese but among Japanese, whose final defeat in the War had left them humiliated and confused. The prayerful hope was that the gospel would bring reconciliation and healing as no other "rebuilding" could do. This was the first real indication—apart from earlier work among the tribal groups—that OMF in its new life might work among other Asian nationals, although there were already some suggesting this could be how the Lord would re-shape the Mission.

The survey teams—apart from Orville Carlson, John Kuhn, and others exploring the tribal scene in northern Thailand—started by contacting established Chinese church leaders, because that was the assumed focus of future work. They felt comfortable with them as those whose culture they thought they understood. They also consulted other mission agencies, some of whom were wary of another group coming, and all of whom expected OMF workers would be seconded to work under their leaders should they work with a ministry of their denomination or in the areas where they worked, or else observe strict geographical comity arrangements (i.e. OMF would only go where there was a "blank canvas"). Most agencies had established work in major cities and larger towns, but were rarely bothered with more rural areas where populations were often poor and illiterate.

This priority given to Chinese church leaders by the various survey teams in the different countries, and to mission agency leaders, meant in and of itself that rather less attention—at least initially—was given to sounding out non-Chinese church leaders, whose perspectives may have been rather different.[8] It also almost certainly made it harder to build warm and mutually respectful relationships later on with non-Chinese leaders who saw themselves as having been treated with less courtesy—not a good thing in any Asian culture. All the same, most of the surveys made it clear that there were huge needs among the non-Chinese populations, and in central Thailand and some Philippines provinces in particular, geographical areas were identified that seemed as empty of gospel work as had been inland China in 1865.

It quickly became apparent that one size does not fit all. For instance, in Indonesia, it was clear that ministry needed to be within Presbyterian boundaries (a heritage of former Dutch colonialism), and that any incoming missionaries must be sponsored (and usually designated) by existing churches if they were to obtain visas. In the Philippines, some Chinese churches and institutions were willing to welcome former CIM and new OMF personnel, but because of the American influence there since 1898, missions already working among Filipinos were strongly pre-millennial, often dispensational, and suspicious or even hostile in relation to any new workers who did not share those emphases, or of anyone coming from a denomination which had connections with the World Council of Churches (which many evangelical Europeans did, even if they roundly condemned the WCC's increasingly liberal theology).[9]

In Malaya, the British colonial authorities were actively looking for missionaries to come to serve in the New Villages, which were almost entirely populated by relocated Chinese. This was part of their strategy to choke off food supplies

CIM leaders at the Conference in Bournemouth, England, 17 November–1 December 1951.
China's Millions, North American edition (January 1952): 3.

for the Communist insurgency, which was largely supported by Chinese within Malaya and guerillas from mainland China. There were many Chinese who did not align with the insurgents, but whose remote and scattered farms were being raided to provide food for them. But the endorsement of the colonial power did not endear missionaries, or their work, to those who longed for political independence.[10] And as several OMF members who worked in the New Villages testified, many believed that the Christian faith was a tool of western imperialism.

Hong Kong was not seen as a pioneer priority, since many well-established Chinese churches were already there, although later OMF personnel were asked to help pioneer in the growing forest of high-rise apartment blocks and in the New Territories. Similarly, Singapore already had strong Chinese churches and some Tamil churches. It was recognized to be a promising location for a biblically faithful training college, as the existing theological college was perceived as being too liberal. The British authorities insisted the Muslim Malay population was "off limits" in order to prevent religious unrest, a policy that was followed throughout the various parts of Malaya. Thailand, however, seemed open to missionaries locating in the southern part of its country.

Japan's churches were few, mostly very small, and scattered, and the scars of war made it hard for Japanese, in general, to relate positively to westerners (as all CIM/OMF personnel were to be until 1965). However, some Japanese Christian leaders were more open to foreign help and it seemed that, especially in the north, there might be much scope for the pioneer evangelism and church planting that had been CIM's main ministry. It was to prove a very difficult field that yielded little fruit.

The initial surveys in the new Asian fields laid some clear direction of travel and established priorities of location. However, it remained the case that the self-contained pattern of CIM life in China would, too often, be replicated in the new situations, with Director rule/control assumed and few attempts made in many places to find ways of working in partnership with Christian networks that were already in place. For missionaries who came from highly entrepreneurial cultures where the existence of many denominations was normal, this did not produce many problems. CIM had had a strong identity, and surely OMF would be the same. Wouldn't it?

Against all Odds: God at Work in an Impossible Situation

Elizabeth Goldsmith (London: Authentic and OMF, 2007)

Jungle guerrillas. Flying bullets. Rampant idolatry. A baffling jumble of languages . . . the odds stacked against the church of Malaya were enormous when OMF began its work in Malaysia, and there was little evidence that God would break through. Using the testimonies of Malaysian Christian leaders and the experiences of early OMF workers, Goldsmith recounts how God radically transformed the whole situation. This account of the dynamic growth of the church in Malaysia will be an encouragement to all who struggle in small, discouraging churches and difficult circumstances.

It is difficult to know how many members at the time questioned this approach or whether any were uncomfortable with it. The irony was that "old China hands" knew that back in their beloved China the unrelenting pressure was to herd every Christian group into one to accomplish the political purposes of an atheistic policy. Similarly, in some countries, such as India, and especially wherever the WCC was influential, national churches were often moving to submerge different denominations in one united body. The scandal of church disunity, and the desire to achieve visible unity, would also impact some of the churches in Asia for both good and bad reasons. Going it alone, as OMF expected to do, was definitely counter to the prevailing wind (and surely on the right tack where the prevailing wind was to work for visible unity at the expense of gospel truth). Further, with no long history of Christendom behind them, and professing Christians being a tiny minority in the face of some other dominant religion, the need to stick together was understandable, even though that did not always help them retain biblical faithfulness.

Evangelicals might be distressed by visible disunity, but mostly believed unity was to be spiritual rather than structural, and dependent on unanimity of heart and mind around core biblical truth, which liberalism was perceived to betray. Evangelical Alliances, and the fledgling World Evangelical Fellowship, modeled growing partnership across denominations and the desire to work together rather than in competition. Most Asian countries had at least some groups that were committed to the biblical gospel and that shared (and acted on) the need to reach the lost through committed evangelism. Sadly, again largely because of pressure from America, OMF chose not to align even with these, but followed its own independent course.[11]

The question was, which pattern was better, if either? And which most fitted in Asian cultures, where harmony was of very great importance and the pressing need was for a wider community than can be found in one small local congregation? And which paradigm was most helpful to gospel credibility in the countries to which OMF was now planning to go? Evangelicals have rightly emphasized the importance of personal conversion and faith, but in so doing have often lost sight of the strongly communal nature of authentic faith. Would the story have developed differently had we honored other believers better and found ways of working together?

The early OMF workforce

The leadership communicated their plans, at least in outline terms, which most continuing members accepted, believing them to have been the result of prayerful dependence on God's guidance. The senior leaders were indeed godly men, steeped in God's Word; but were they mostly too set in their ways to cope well with such radical changes or

to be open to working in very different patterns? And then the new workforce was to be more variegated than the old and additionally would be spread over a number of very different countries.

The "old China hands" were accustomed to the CIM way of doing things through their experience in China. They were Mandarin speakers and their missionary call was bound up with the Chinese. When assigned to work among Chinese of the dispersion, they rapidly found that other Chinese dialects were the norm—some very far removed from what they had so diligently studied—and that Chinese culture was not so monochrome as they might have expected. Many of them were wounded from their recent experiences, physically and emotionally weary, and some had been separated from their children, often for years. Though some had spent time recuperating at home before setting off to their new designations, the question remained whether these folk were able to make big cultural adjustments or would they transplant to their new contexts the methods and assumptions of the old?

Some new workers, who had not yet studied language or had China experience, had felt called to China. These needed to recalibrate their expectations and overcome the confusion as to whether they would now work with Chinese or Thai or Japanese or whoever. There were, among them, a number of men (and women, too) who had seen military service, were older than recruits had often been in the past, and whose experience had aged, matured, and maybe scarred them. Many of them had their faith tested in fire long before they arrived in Asia. Some had held ranks of considerable responsibility and were accustomed to being in charge as well as to taking orders from seniors, to thinking strategically as well as devotionally. Some had received more theological training than was common twenty or so years earlier and had been trained to ask questions and not to accept ideas and practices without careful examination. Many had significant professional experience: nurses, doctors, teachers, lawyers, as well as a sprinkling of ordained men. These new workers stood in sharp contrast to the raw, young, inexperienced men and women who had joined the CIM before the war.

They were still all from the UK and Europe, the USA and Canada, Australia and New Zealand, or South Africa: white and western, every last one of them. Most had no experience of working with or getting to know Asians, other than possibly a handful of Chinese. Asian migration to the west had scarcely begun. Some had served in Southeast Asia during the war, and the Lord had implanted in their hearts the desire to return as missionaries of peace. Few had any experience of actually planting a church, though almost all would be committed to evangelism and gospel sharing. And none, not even the continuing members, had the languages of the countries they were scattering to. Few knew much about, much less understood, the very different nature of the cultures.

Lessons to be learned?

This was not a good context within which to reboot CIM's sufficient-to-itself stance. Would a more co-operative mindset, more openness to real partnerships and to secondments, have made progress—especially in the early years—more straightforward? Might there have been a healthier relationship with national church leaders? Was it really adequate to justify a separatist policy by saying that if OMF linked with one denomination or group of churches and not another, too many other relationships would be jeopardized? Was there an element of "keeping control" through the separatism? Would North Americans have resigned *en bloc* because some of the denominations had (often distant and tenuous) links to the WCC? Was there a rather arrogant assumption that Asian Christian leaders were too immature for OMF members to work under them?

It is impossible to answer these questions definitively, of course, but in Indonesia, where the only way to gain entry was through sponsorship by existing churches, the genuine problems did not deter people entering into service there. In fact, in later years, a number of OMF people, including a number of women members, were ordained by the local denominations, and their contribution hugely appreciated. It is interesting that those serving there have often had a high regard for many of the national leaders with whom they worked. There were, of course, some difficult problems with nominal Christians, especially among second and third generation church members. But that proved to be a problem in entirely CIM/OMF planted churches too, as well as among evangelical and Pentecostal churches in many countries today.

The separatist policy worked in some measure where there were significant geographical areas that were unevangelized, such as most of rural central Thailand and the tribal areas of the Mindoro mountains in the Philippines. But people moved around, and as infrastructure improved and mobility increased, there were diminishing "blank canvas areas." Bit by bit comity arrangements broke down, so that OMF (along with others) went wherever they thought would be strategic. In practice, many denominational choices are about preference rather than absolute theological/biblical differences, and as people moved about they preferred the group they were accustomed to.

Contrary to some assumptions, the New Testament simply does not give us a detailed blueprint as to how a church should be organized and exactly what it should look like. The Epistles, read without prior assumptions, show the Apostolic authors relating to different communities in different contexts, and not always emphasizing the same things, or apparently setting about church planting in one way only. Acts 2:42 is a good starting point, but it is in very broad brushstrokes, and the way in which believers lived out these elements in different settings seems to have varied quite a bit.

Many early churches were household-based, and CIM and OMF have often sought to replicate that in its adoption of a baptistic, individualist understanding of conversion and baptism. Might the household pattern of baptism, such as in Acts 16:15 and 32–4 have been

helpful in Asia's strong family and communal cultures? It seems that these mini-churches also got together in larger groups—and had to navigate the challenge to loving relationships that entailed. Today's emphasis on discrete people groups, segmenting the Lord's people, may be pragmatically useful, especially in initial evangelism, but is a denial of the hard work of abolishing barriers and prejudices in lived-out practice, according to God's declared Word and the example of the early churches (e.g. Col 3:11, Gal 3:28, or the multinational list of people in Rom 16:1–16).

Perhaps the last two paragraphs seem something of a by-path. But what is missing in much of the Council minutes and articles in CIM/OMF journals around this key transitional period for the Mission is any attention to thinking freshly and theologically about the nature of the church and to addressing whether evangelism of individuals, or the planting of churches unrelated to anything already in place, was indeed the only way in which to understand and obey Scripture. The Overseas Council of 1953 did give attention to relating to existing churches, but largely committed to working independently, and with a strong separate OMF identity. That may have been congenial to many supporters, but was it in the best interests of the gospel?

Clearly, the leaders wanted to guard the importance not only of gospel faithfulness but the principle of planting churches that were indigenous. Actually achieving that is, in fact, very complex and difficult. Working as "OMF solo" has sometimes resulted in genuinely indigenous churches but sometimes has not. In the initial years after China, OMF missionaries—who were all from western countries—inevitably brought some of their own cultural as well as theological assumptions with them and, consciously or otherwise, this shaped in some measure the churches they planted. And whatever reservations may have existed about the rightness of denominations, it was equally inevitable that as those young churches developed their own networks, the result, in a number of countries, was the formation of new denominations that were OMF ones. Whatever the strengths and weaknesses of these policy decisions, it was also a struggle to get to the point where fledgling churches passed from missionary hands to national leadership. This reality is easy to understand when most members of these OMF churches had only recently been converted from another faith and were ignorant of just about every aspect in biblical truth. The journey to full indigenization may take quite a while and there may often be different ideas about where the road leads and what the destination looks like.

Further, in a generation when the Billy Graham template for evangelism was increasingly the background from which western evangelical missionaries came, it seems that the wholeness of the gospel was often overlooked. The CIM had arisen in a climate where gospel proclamation was rounded out and made visible with care for the poor and initiatives for social justice and so on, and so CIM instinctively set up refuges for opium addicts and small clinics to offer simple medical care, developed literacy programs and produced literature, organized famine relief, resisted the abuse of women and the abandoning of babies, and much more. This was not an "add on", nor primarily a means to achieve a narrower agenda of "getting people to accept Christ," but because these things were seen as integral to the gospel itself.

But in 1951, apart from plans for some medical work in Thailand and Indonesia and some ongoing literature production, that fuller understanding of authentic mission seems to have been largely lost in the policy discussions. Given the post-War situation throughout Asia and the clear need for widespread compassionate service alongside proclamation, it would seem that this loss made church planting progress harder. In practice, and sometimes defying the wishes of some leaders, many members found that they simply had to engage with whole-life, concrete issues, whether it be, for example, through helping the Mangyan in Mindoro to learn better farming practices, or helping leprosy sufferers not only medically but by training them in work skills that could make them self-supporting. Most Asian cultures are "whole person" cultures and also communal—as indeed were Old and New Testament cultures—so that a verbal message that can too easily appear to be only propositions to believe is (understandably) not engaging.

Conclusion

This paper has explored some of the contexts that shaped early OMF policy and, therefore, practice. Was it a new beginning? Yes, and no. Those early decisions set directions, both good and not so good, for the Mission's work in many countries and in so doing, impacted the growth and shape of some of the churches in those countries. Is that still the case seventy years on? Well, that's the subject of another study. And maybe the analysis would best be given by Asian brothers and sisters.

Are we ready and humble enough to listen? **MRT**

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[1] The story is well documented in numerous biographies of James Hudson Taylor, including the seven-volume set by A. J. Broomhall, *Hudson Taylor and China's Open Century* (Sevenoaks: Hodder & Stoughton and Overseas Missionary Fellowship, 1981–89).

[2] Arnold Lea, "Why this Sudden Change?" *China's Millions*, British ed. (February 1951): 21.

[3] David Bentley-Taylor, "The Chinese in Southeast Asia," *China's Millions*, British ed. (May 1951): 54–5.

[4] Allan Crane, "A Branch over the Wall," *China's Millions*, British ed. (March 1951): 26–7.

[5] Confirmed in personal conversations by Chinese leaders in the Philippines, Singapore, and Malaysia, and by Arnold Lea, Jim Broomhall, and other "old China hands" in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

[6] In China, there had been no need to work with others, although there were some territorial comity agreements. Some CIM/OMF leaders and members saw the mission's independence as much-needed protection against liberalizing tendencies in some established denominations, and that it preserved their focus on reaching the unreached.

[7] Frank Houghton, "'If it be Thou…'," *China's Millions*, British ed. (April 1951): 40.

[8] This was expressed to me by thoroughly evangelical Asian national church leaders between 1980 and 2000.

[9] CIM had a sensitive policy of trying to place workers with similar theological positions together, so the various field distinctives could be accommodated fairly straightforwardly. In time, some places (including the Philippines) became more diverse in the background of members, with mutual respect.

[10] See Elizabeth Goldsmith, *Against all Odds: God at Work in an Impossible Situation* (London: Authentic and Borough Green: OMF, 2007), 12.

[11] This is neither a racist comment not a slur on my American brothers and sisters, but reflects the testimony of Leslie Lyall, Arnold Lea, Jim Broomhall, Art Glasser, and others who were leaders through the momentous changes of the 1950s and early 1960s. There are clear historical reasons why Europeans and Americans saw some of these things differently.

Beyond the Cambridge Seven:
The Rev. Arthur Twistleton Polhill and the Dazhou Fú Yīn Táng

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The church is on an interesting journey in Mainland China. On the one hand, it is on track to be the most Christian country in the world by 2025.[1] On the other hand, many Chinese Christians do not fit into the neatly defined denominational categories recognised elsewhere (sometimes referred to as "postdenominational"), and there is a great deal of theological and practical idiosyncrasy that would make many "orthodox Christians" uncomfortable.[2] It must be remembered that this is a product of China's peculiar history and geopolitical circumstances, and the church outside of Mainland China is not without its own peculiarities. It is pleasing to note, however, that in spite of China's political vicissitudes over the last century, the landscape is still peppered with visible reminders of the labours of the China Inland Mission, other mission agencies, and indeed the Chinese themselves. To illustrate, I present a case study of one of the lesser-known members of the Cambridge Seven: Rev. Arthur Twistleton Polhill (formerly Polhill-Turner), MA (1862–1935).[3]

Arthur Polhill was the youngest member of the Cambridge Seven, and he is reckoned to be the first of the seven to seriously consider mission to China (initially signing up with the Church Missionary Society).[4] This article examines his life and legacy of faithful, persistent labour in China, particularly the completion of a large Fú Yīn Táng (福音堂)—Gospel Hall—in Dazhou, Sichuan (达州,四川) and what remains of this today. The Cambridge Seven still stir the imagination, and this is thanks in no small part to John Pollock's popular book on the group.[5] He describes the call of the seven men to join the China Inland Mission, but apart from a brief epilogue little information is given about their subsequent careers. This article will cover some of the major landmarks of Arthur's missionary career in China, though there will be many omissions. It is hoped, however, that this summary will serve as a helpful reference point for a more thorough analysis of his life and work at some future date.

Early life and call to the mission field

Arthur was born on 7 February 1862, in Bedfordshire, to Captain Frederick Polhill-Turner MP and Emily Frances Polhill-Turner.[6] Emily's family, the Page-Turner Barrons, were a wealthy aristocratic family, so according to custom the Polhills adopted Turner as a suffix to their own surname. In 1902, Arthur and his missionary brother, Cecil, removed the "Turner" part by deed poll, "to suit the times."[7] Arthur was the youngest of a total of three Polhill brothers, but he was, by about the age of ten, the same height as his older brother Cecil (1860–1938) and outgrew him as an adult.[8] The two younger brothers seemed to share a close bond with one another: they became missionaries together, as did their sister Alice, and they co-wrote their (unpublished) memoirs, *Two Etonians in China*.[9] The eldest brother, Frederick Edward Fiennes (1858–99), inherited responsibility for the family estate in England but died when he was just forty-three.[10] The two younger Polhill brothers are, therefore, seen as a kind of "double act," but they were really very different and were rarely in the same place for very long after their probationary period came to an end in China in 1888.[11] This article will say very little of his older brother (of whom I have written at length elsewhere) and instead focus on Arthur's independent work.[12]

Arthur enjoyed sporting distinction at Eton and the University of Cambridge. At the latter he played football with the Old Etonians F.C., one of the best clubs in the country in those days. The Old Etonians won the All England Association Cup (later known as the Football Association or FA Cup) in 1879 and 1882.[13] Arthur was not in the squad on those occasions, but he writes in his memoirs, "I had the pleasure of touring with them round the North of England and Scotland. Anderson, Kinnaird

The Cambridge Seven in a photograph taken in Shanghai. Back row (from the left): C. T. Studd, M. Beauchamp, S. P. Smith. Front row: A. T. Polhill, D. E. Hoste, C. H. Polhill, W. W. Cassels. *China's Millions* (1885): 162.

and Rawlinson, the Goalkeeper, were amongst the team. We beat Sheffield and Edinburgh University, but succumbed to the Glasgow Queen's Park and Dumbarton."[14] Professional football was evidently in its infancy: "I was amazed at the way the Scotch Backs used their heads to strike the ball in mid air. It was rather new to us Southerners."[15]

Arthur's life changed in 1882 when an unrefined North American evangelist, Dwight L. Moody, had the temerity to address the nation's polished elite at Cambridge. Arthur writes of the time:

> Mr D. L. Moody was a short thick-set man, with a broad American accent, and rather a dramatic manner, as he preached on Daniel, representing him as a man dressed in a frock coat, and carrying in his tail coat pocket a scroll and drawing it out with gusto, to the amusement of the Students, amounting to merriment…The last night…saw a wonderful change from the previous Sunday night; a crowded gathering, but so still you might hear a pin drop: a sense of awe and realization of the presence of God, no laughing or joking…the writer was drawn by the simple text Isaiah 12.2 and decided for Christ that night.[16]

The tradition in many wealthy families in Victorian times was that the eldest son would inherit the family estate, the second son would join the military, and the third son would become a lawyer. The Polhill-Turners were no exception, but after Arthur's conversion he transferred from law student to theology student, i.e. from "Law" to "Grace". "The tone of the College was indeed greatly changed. The great Law College, now might be said to be 'under grace'. The tide of revival continued to rise for the two following years, to the great delight of the principal of Ridley Hall, Rev. H. C. G. Moule, afterwards Bishop of Durham. I had transferred from Trinity Hall to Ridley Hall."[17]

Exactly how and when Arthur decided to become an overseas missionary in China, rather than a parish vicar in England, is not absolutely clear. Broomhall and Pollock suggest the decision came after being given a copy of Hudson Taylor's *China's Spiritual Need and Claims* by fellow student Montague Beauchamp, probably sometime in 1882.[18] Hudson Taylor (1832–1905) had founded the China Inland Mission (CIM) in 1865, and by 1883 he had returned to the UK for a recruitment drive. It is not unlikely that Arthur read Hudson Taylor's work, but the principal of Ridley Hall, the evangelical Anglican Handley Moule, probably influenced Arthur too. Moule's two brothers, Bishop George Evans Moule (1828–1912) and Archdeacon Arthur Evans Moule (1836–1918), had by 1884 already been serving in China for many years with the Anglican Church Missionary Society (CMS).[19] This probably explains why Arthur had initially signed up to go to China with the CMS before switching to the CIM around November 1884.[20] Indeed, Arthur—who became an ordained Anglican—retained a strong connection to the CMS even though he was technically a missionary of the CIM.

Arthur may have been the first of the Cambridge Seven to seriously consider mission to China, probably as early as the winter of 1882–3, but he was not the first to sign up with the CIM. Dixon E. Hoste—the only member of the seven not to have actually studied at the University of Cambridge—holds that honour, having written to Hudson Taylor on the subject in July 1883. Stanley P. Smith, the son of a London surgeon, followed in March 1884. Smith then influenced the young Anglican curate, William W. Cassels, to join in October 1884. Smith also influenced the outstanding cricketer, C. T. Studd, named on "the Ashes" trophy, to join in November 1884 and this in turn influenced Montague Beauchamp, son of Sir Thomas William Brograve Proctor-Beauchamp, to join soon afterwards.[21] It is likely, then, that Arthur switched from the CMS to the CIM after he observed his esteemed fellow students joining the CIM. (All six men were present at a joint CIM-CMS meeting in Cambridge in November 1884).[22] He had probably, I suspect, received assurances that he could retain a connection to the CMS, as an ordained Anglican, while being a member of the CIM at the same time.

As for his brother, Cecil, Arthur had been encouraging him to become an evangelical Christian since his own conversion at the Moody campaign of 1882.[23] By January 1885, Cecil too had decided to join the China Inland Mission. The decision of seven fit, young, well-connected men, giving up almost guaranteed lives of privilege and comfort in England for a hard life of itinerant mission work in unindustrialised, rural China caused something of a stir. (Imagine the effect of the current captain of the England football squad announcing his early retirement to become an overseas missionary). They toured the nation's universities and held rallies in large halls, entreating other young, intelligent men to become missionaries. The last of these on the eve of their departure, in the now-demolished Exeter Hall on the Strand, in London, had more than three thousand in attendance and was covered in *The Times*.[24] Arthur was just twenty-two when he left London for China with his brother and five compatriots on 5 February

1885.[25] He would spend most of the next forty-three years of his life there.

After arriving in Shanghai on 18 March 1885, the Cambridge Seven were just over a fortnight later separated into two groups and sent to different parts of China.[26] On 4 April, Arthur, his brother, and C. T. Studd took a boat up the Yangtse and Han Rivers—for there were no trains inland in those days—deep into the heart of China to the city of Hanzhong (汉中), in Shaanxi province.[27] Here they undertook language training as probationary missionaries and tasted the rigours of itinerant mission work in the surrounding cities, towns, and villages. It was difficult and frequently life-threatening work. They had already witnessed one of their party, a Chinese Christian, being swept away by the river to his death on the journey inland, and in 1886 the two brothers were stoned by the inhabitants of Langzhong (阆中, formerly Paoning), in Sichuan.[28] The missionaries of inland China were not unacquainted with violence, but this would have given them a strong sense of being close to "real" New Testament Christianity. It is perhaps no surprise, under such a heightened spiritual atmosphere, that at one stage the Polhill brothers and C. T. Studd set aside their Chinese grammar books and began praying for the Pentecostal gift of Mandarin, but after a brief reprimand from Hudson Taylor they wisely returned to their language studies.[29]

In 1888, Arthur relocated to Bazhong, Sichuan (巴中, formerly Pacheo or Pachow), "a pretty little walled city," to become the leader of his own station. In the same year, he married fellow-missionary Alice Drake and they spent ten years together in the city between 1888 and 1898.[30]

In 1899, they relocated again to Dazhou (达州, formerly known as Suiting, Suiting-fu, Suiding-fu and from the 1930s as Tahsien), "beautifully situated on the north side of the Ku [Zhou] River, a clear crystal stream," where they laboured until the Boxer Uprising.[31] China had been humiliated by foreign powers for decades. The British twice went to war against the Chinese to assert their right to trade opium, a highly addictive and socially destructive narcotic, but the French, Dutch, Germans, Japanese, and others had also conjured their own pretexts for

Alice Polhill (née Drake). *China's Millions*, British edition (February 1907): 25.

relieving the Qing Empire of control over large swathes of their territory.[32] Missionaries were openly opposed to the opium trade, but extremely vulnerable to the anger of the subdued people. Montague Beauchamp wrote to England in 1885, "Are you not surprised that any Chinaman will listen to the Gospel from an Englishman? I am sure I am."[33]

The Boxer Uprising began to unfold in 1899 with Chinese paramilitary groups gathering at town boxing grounds (hence the "Boxers") or temples to vent their anger. Crowds would gather to watch them enact spiritual possession by characters from popular operas such as the Monkey King (Sun Wukong) or the God of War (Guangong).[34] They recruited young men and taught them trance-like rituals in order to initiate them for conflict. Some parts of China were also gripped by drought, and rumours began to spread that Christians had poisoned wells and supernaturally held back rain clouds. The dominance of some Chinese Catholic communities and their exemption from paying idol taxes served as another source of resentment. By 1900, the Boxers had murdered around two hundred foreign missionaries and thousands of Chinese Christians until the Eight Nations Alliance defeated the joint Boxer-Chinese Imperial Army in August 1900, after a tense fifty-five day standoff in Beijing. It is still possible to see the marks on the large bronze cauldrons (once used for water in case of fire) in the Forbidden City in Beijing, where it is said Alliance soldiers sharpened their bayonets.

Foreigners in Sichuan province, where Arthur's family were stationed, escaped much of the horror. He writes in his memoirs:

> The Empress Dowager then telegraphed to the Governors throughout China: "The foreigners must be killed; even if the foreigners retire, they must still be killed." The wording of the telegram was allegedly altered by two friendly mandarins… 'sha' [for] 'kill' being changed to 'pao' [for] 'protect.' The Yangtze Viceroys… also advised Governors and Viceroys to refrain from murdering foreigners… Yuan Shi Kai, Governor of Shantung, suppressed the Boxers in his province, and Yung Lu forbade the use of heavy artillery against the Legations in Peking. Providentially by these means the majority of the missionaries in inland China escaped.[35]

After a short break in England, Arthur and his family were able to return to Dazhou in 1902 where he spent the rest of his missionary career.[36]

The diocese of Western China

Arthur and fellow-Anglican Rev. William Cassels occupied unusual positions in the China Inland Mission. They were both ordained Anglicans and Cassels would, in 1895, be appointed Bishop of Western China.[37] This meant that both men were *de facto* members of the Anglican Church Missionary Society as well as the China Inland Mission, and Cassels was both Bishop of Western China and the China Inland Mission's Superintendent of Sichuan. It was an admirably ecumenical step for the Church of England at that time—indeed, rather too ecumenical for many Anglicans in England.[38] Both missions were active in Sichuan (a province roughly twice the size of the entire United Kingdom), amongst other missions, so the CMS was allotted part of the western section of Sichuan (from Chengdu northwards and west of Langzhong, the episcopal seat of the bishop), while the CIM section of the diocese was often described as the "eastern" section of the diocese.[39] The CIM had stations as far west as Kangding (southwest of Chengdu, very much not in the eastern section of the province), but presumably there were no Anglicans under the bishop's jurisdiction in the CIM west of Langzhong.

Table 1. Stations of the CMS and CIM in Sichuan (excluding outstations)

CMS Stations (modern spelling, simplified Chinese)[40]	CIM Stations (modern spelling, simplified Chinese)[41]	
Anhsien (Anxian, 安县) Chengtu (Chengdu, 成都) Chungkiang (Zhongjiang, 中江) Chungpa (Zhongba, 钟坝) Hanchow (Guanghan, 广汉) Lungan (Long'anzhen, 龙安镇) Mienchow (Mianyang, 绵阳) Mienchu (Mianzhu, 绵竹) Mowchow (Maoxian, 茂县) Sintu (Xindu, 新都) Tehyang (Deyang, 德阳)	Chentu (Chengdu, 成都) Chungking (Chongqing, 重庆) Fushun (Fushun, 富顺) Kaihien (Kaixian, 开县) Kiangtsin (Jiangjin, 江津) Kiating (Leshan, 乐山) Kiongchau (Qionglai, 邛崃) Kühien (Quxian, 渠县) Kwangyuen (Guangyuan, 广元) Kwanhien (Guankouzhen, Dujiangyan, 灌口镇,都江堰) Liangshan (Liangshan, 凉山) Luchow (Luzhou, 泸州)	Nanpu (Nanbu, 南部) Pachau (Bazhong, 巴中) Paoning (Langzhong, 阆中) Shunking (Nanchong, 南充) Siaoshi (Xiaoshi, Luzhou, 小市, 泸州) Sintientsi (Xiandianzi, 新点子) Suifu (Cuiping, Yibin, 翠屏, 宜宾) Suiting (Dazhou, 达州) Tatsienlu (Kangding or Dartsedo [Tibetan], 康定) Wanhien (Wanzhou, 万州) Yingshan (Yingshan, 营山)

The Dazhou Gospel Hall

One of the peaks of Arthur's time in Dazhou was undoubtedly the completion of a large multi-purpose Gospel Hall. This led to the station becoming, in his opinion, "the most complete up to date station in the district if not the mission."[42] The idea for a new home and five-hundred seat church was borne, in many ways, out of Arthur's unsatisfactory living conditions in the city.[43] He wrote to the deputy director of the mission, Dixon E. Hoste, in August 1903, explaining that the house where his family lived was damp, too small, difficult to access, and in an area surrounded by opium dens and brothels.[44] The building work started the following year—23 February 1904—and by April it was well under way.[45] He wrote to his brother about the news with his customary informal greeting, "Dear Old Cec":

> I am now watching the carpenters begin to erect the house. They are putting up 2 scaffoldings – before they begin – then the beams are put up and fitted together which will take place tomorrow. Already it…can be seen for miles around. Standing on a bit of hill – with nothing to hide it – save perhaps one or two trees near which give some grateful shade. The view is truly grand – so refreshing gazing at lovely mountains, trees and cottages.[46]

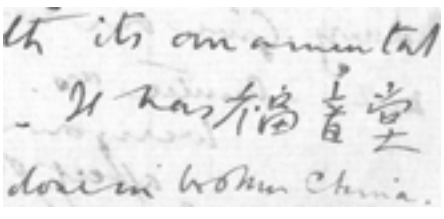
By August the complex was complete:

> The Opening Day Aug 28 was just 6 months and 5 days from Feb 23 the day we started our boundary walls and 1 day under 6 months since the carpenters started work. Entering from the main street from East gate which runs by the river you turn up a passage some 20 yards – when you enter an ornamental gateway which is also conspicuous from the street itself – the first object that strikes you is the big church in front of you built in Chinese style with rounded top. The roadway passes on the left side next you ascend a flight of steps and pass a block of buildings containing the men's guest halls on one side facing roadway on the other side facing the back – the women's guest halls at the top of the roadway stands a round ornamental gateway leading into garden and dwelling house – this stands on the highest ground, and so gets a grand view on all four sides – the street below is hidden by trees and you look over on to the hills – on the north west side we see the city walls some 200 or 300 yards away. So it is a wonderful combination of country residence and yet proximity to crowded city.[47]

The CIM's periodical, *China's Millions*, was strangely mute about the opening of this new building, and there are no labelled pictures of it in the Polhill family papers, but Arthur did send pictures to his brother of himself standing in front of a large building.

In the photo below, the partially obscured writing above the doorway seems to confirm that it is, indeed, Arthur's Gospel Hall for he wrote to his brother, in June 1904, shortly before the building work was complete, "it really looks finished – and pretty with its ornamental corners and top. It has 福音堂 [Fú Yīn Táng] over the doorway done in broken China."[48]

Arthur's activity was also occasionally reported on in one of the periodicals



The Chinese Characters for 'Gospel Hall' in a letter between Arthur and his brother.

An unlabelled photo in the Polhill Collection. Arthur can be seen on the right.

of the Church Missionary Society, *The Bulletin of the Diocese of Western China*. From this periodical there is another picture of the east side of the Gospel Hall, with the ornamental corners of its rounded roof partially visible.[49]

A small, package-stamp sized version of this photo was also added to a circular that Arthur wrote on 1 July 1905, so it is likely that he took this photo himself.[50] Another from *China's Millions* (1915) is taken from the west wing of the building and gives some idea of its not inconsiderable length.

The wider mission in Dazhou

The Gospel Hall was not the only success story in Dazhou. Arthur had the very able assistance of Dr. William Wilson FRSA, "a clever doctor, surgeon… dentist [and] enthusiast in experimental science, especially electrical, including the practical side of making models to work, and showing electrical experiments."[51] Wilson opened a hospital in Dazhou in 1900, but gradually gave his time over to science lectures as the medical work was handed over to Dr. Julius Hewitt.[52] Arthur, an accomplished amateur photographer, gives us an intimate snapshot of Wilson at work in his laboratory in which the contrast between ancient and modern, east and west, is vividly portrayed. Unlike so many photos of the period, the subject has assumed a much more natural posture, not facing the camera, but eyes down, engrossed in his work and almost unaware of the photographer.

Wilson left the CIM in 1910 to join the YMCA in Chengdu, and his science hall was later taken over by a Girls' School (opened by the missionaries), complemented by a Boys' School in a separate building.[53]

Dazhou outstations

The list in Table 1 does not include the many outstations of each of the main stations. By 1911, Dazhou alone had at least seven.[54] Many of these were under the leadership of the Chinese themselves. Revival meetings held by CIM missionary Albert Lutley (1864–1934) in 1910 had given new fervency to many of these outstations. According to Arthur, "Mr [Albert] Lutley's Revival Meetings began a new era for our work in many ways. There is a deeper spiritual tone and a more fervent spirit, as well as the leaving behind of many insincere followers."[55] Lutley joined the CIM in 1887, having responded to "the hundred" recruitment campaign.[56] He rose to Superintendent of Shanxi and became a firm admirer of the Chinese evangelist Xi Shengmo ("overcomer of demons"), a.k.a. Pastor Hsi.[57] Lutley seems to have travelled throughout China exercising a kind of proto-Charismatic ministry of renewal. For example, *China's Millions* (1910) records, "Mr A. Lutley, whom God has so abundantly used in his own province, Shansi [Shanxi], and also in Shensi [Shaanxi], is to go to Bishop Cassels' district…to conduct a series of meetings there. Will you not pray that the Spirit of the Lord will be poured out upon the Chinese in this district. May there be such a mighty manifestation of His power that many who believe on Him may be quickened and many who know Him not, born again."[58] Min-yueh-chang (Mingyuexiang, 明月乡)—"clear moon village,"—was one of the Dazhou outstations touched by the new spirit of renewal.[59]

Minyuexiang

Arthur's visit to Minyuexiang, in August 1911, illustrates the courage of the missionaries and the converts and the very real risks they faced. Shortly after arriving in the village, the missionaries took a brief excursion to nearby Liu-tsi-pin (possibly Liuchixiang), where a Chinese convert brought his idols out to be burned whilst they all sang hymns.[60] This provoked an angry response from a large crowd of his family members and others who placed red paper on the convert's house, proclaiming it as their ancestral hall. The missionaries ripped the paper down and retired to the house next door to pray. The convert's house was then broken into and robbed, but as the missionaries were praying the crowd dispersed. When they returned to Minyuexiang the next day, they learned that the opposition leaders from Liu-tsi-pin were members of a secret society and had planned to bring two hundred men to Minyuexiang to murder the Christians. According to Arthur, "We prayed about it and waited. Mr Kang, the Evangelist, came up from Tung-hsiang [Xuanhan, 宣汉] and exhorted the street elders that they must take steps to protect us. However, it is better to trust in the Lord than to put any confidence in man, 'Whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe!' In two days' time things were all quieted down and there was no further trouble."[61] Before his visit to Minyuexiang there had "only" been four Christians baptised and eight persons admitted as catechumens (those studying and preparing for baptism), but by the end of his visit he had baptised a further six and admitted a further nine as catechumens.[62] In addition, the Minyuexiang Christians, under the

Photo from the West Wing of the Dazhou Gospel Hall. *China's Millions*, British edition (June 1915): 89 .

Photo of the East Wing of the Dazhou Gospel Hall. Arthur Polhill, Circular, 1 July 1905 (Polhill Collection).

Dr. William Wilson at work in his Science Hall. Arthur Polhill, Circular, 1 July 1905 (Polhill Collection).

leadership of Mr. and Mrs. "Liao-Sï-Ku," had raised almost half of the $80 required to rent a mission hall.[63] Less than two months after Arthur's visit, the Xinhai (辛亥) Revolution[64] broke out in Hubei, followed by province-by-province declarations of independence from the resented ethnic Manchu Qing dynasty, eventually resulting in the abdication of the monarchy.[65]

Dazhou after the revolution

The Dazhou Gospel Hall itself seems to have survived the revolution of 1911, the War Lord Era, and the Civil War, at least until Arthur's retirement in 1928, but fighting caused the city to be evacuated in 1933.[66] It was safe for missionaries to return in January of the following year, but they found the Gospel Hall and other missionary properties had been ransacked:

> Suiting [Dazhou] seems to be worse, only a few seats remain in the church, the rest having been broken up for firewood. The foreign house is an empty shell. Not a scrap of furniture remains below, and upstairs only a few empty boxes…floorboards have been torn up and holes dug in the walls and floor in search for silver. All the windows have been deliberately smashed. Doors have been taken away. The garden is littered with torn up books and broken glass and pots. Not a single bed remains in the place.[67]

In addition, it was estimated that about fourteen church members and enquirers had lost their lives by being caught up in the conflict.[68] The missionaries did not give up easily, however, and sent Chinese helpers to reoccupy their properties, but by August 1934 they had to be evacuated again until October of the same year.[69] The work and ministry of the Chinese Christians in Dazhou seems to have been particularly important at this time. For example, the station had a strong women's work under the lady evangelists: "Mrs Lui," "Miss Lü," and "Miss Chen," who formed a "Women's Evangelistic Band" in 1938.[70] By 1950, when Dazhou was occupied by the victorious Communist Army, the work had recovered enough for "revival meetings" to be held by Miss Ellen Lister, and in December of that year the church was "decorated beautifully" for a Christmas Eve Carol Service.[71] Miss Marion Parson reported that the lady evangelist, Miss Chen, gave the Christmas Sunday address, but the Western missionaries were living in China on borrowed time. In January 1951, it was reported that Miss Lü (by this time sixty-seven years old) and a younger co-worker, Miss Wang Fei-Yuin, who had a "settled work in Tahsien," were being asked to lead "revival meetings" in a neighbouring station, but by July 1952 Miss Parson and Miss E. Barkworth were forced out of Dazhou altogether and relocated to Singapore and then Malaysia.[72] It was the end of an era for Western mission work in China, but by no means the end of Chinese Christianity.

Dazhou today

Dazhou is now a huge city of almost 6.5 million people. Could there be any remains of the Gospel Hall? Did it survive the Cultural Revolution? Arthur described its location as on the north side of the river, near the east gate of the city wall, and a map search does locate a Dazhou City Gospel Hall in the Tong Chuan district which is on the north side of the river, and on the east side of the city. The physical building that Arthur erected is no longer there; the current church is located on the first floor of a modern building above a clinic. But it is satisfying to know that something remains of Arthur's labours and those of his Chinese co-labourers. Buildings may be demolished, but the walls of the "City of God" are imperishable. The Earthly City fluctuates between cultures and political rivalries, but the City of God transcends these transitions and opens her gates to those who seek to love God over self—"there the public treasury needs no great efforts for its enrichment at the cost of private property; for there the common stock is the treasury of truth."[73]

Conclusion

Missionaries of the CIM were expected to wear Chinese dress in order to help them better identify with the Chinese until 1907, when it became discretionary.[74] After the revolution of 1911, however, it could be dangerous to look too traditional. According to a ditty from the time, "One cannot mix with people if he does not cut his queue. But if he cuts it he must fear what [the War Lord] old Chang Hsün will do."[75] Shortly before his retirement, in 1928, Arthur is pictured in his 马褂 (mǎ guà) jacket, remaining faithful to the CIM's original principle of wearing Chinese clothing, with four Chinese Christians similarly attired.[76] It is typical of the single-minded determination that characterised his forty-year tenure in China. It is perhaps one of the Chinese men, with whom he is pictured, that we owe some thanks for the maintenance of the Dazhou Gospel Hall. After retirement, in 1928, Arthur became the vicar of St. Mary's Furneux, Pelham and enjoyed a few short years of English parish life, where he could comfortably walk the entire parish boundary in a day and the threat of murder by secret societies was far less likely.[77] It is not really possible to sufficiently summarise the lasting impact of an active Christian life like Arthur's, but his missionary career overlapped with his friend and bishop, William Cassels, who wrote of the results of forty years of labour in the diocese shortly before he died in 1925: "When I came here nearly forty years ago, there was no Mission House or Church…no Christians nor even a catechumen of any kind. Now over 10,000 converts have been baptised…now twelve tried men have been admitted to Holy Orders.…

There are also in the diocese ninety-eight licensed preachers, not including colporteurs, Bible-women and others."[78] Arthur died at his home in Letchworth in 1935 and joined the Church Triumphant.[79] **MRT**

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[1] Tom Phillips, "China on course to become 'world's most Christian nation' within 15 years," *The Telegraph* (19 April 2014), https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/china/10776023/China-on-course-to-become-worlds-most-Christian-nation-within-15-years.html (accessed 13 February 2019).

[2] Fenggang Yang, Joy K. C. Tong, and Allan H. Anderson, eds. *Global Chinese Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity*, Global Pentecostal and Charismatic Studies, Vol. 22 (Boston: Brill, 2018), 8; Karrie J. Koesel, "China's Patriotic Pentecostals," in *Global Chinese Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity*, 245, fn 10. "Postdenominational" in theory, but in reality many Chinese churches have opted to identify with a particular theology and/or ecclesiology (such as Reformed and Presbyterian, Reformed and Congregational, or Pentecostal and Congregational, etc.), often in continuity with the mission that started the church, but sometimes on the basis of subsequent conviction.

[3] The Cambridge Seven were: Montague Proctor-Beauchamp (1860–1939), Rev. William W. Cassels (1858–1925), Arthur T. Polhill-Turner (1862–1935), Cecil H. Polhill-Turner (1860–1938), Stanley P. Smith (1861–1931), Charles T. Studd (1860–1931) (all of whom studied at Cambridge) and Dixon E. Hoste (1861–1946) (who did not study at Cambridge).

[4] J. A. Venn, *Alumni Cantabrigiensis: A Biographical List of all Known Students, Graduates and Holders of Office at the University of Cambridge, from the Earliest Times to 1900* (Cambridge: CUP, 1953), s.v. "Polhill-Turner (post Polhill), Arthur Twistleton." Both Broomhall and Pollock estimated Arthur to be the first to seriously consider the mission field. A. J. Broomhall, *Assault on the Nine*, Hudson Taylor and China's Open Century, Book 6 (Sevenoaks: Hodder and Stoughton and Overseas Missionary Fellowship, 1988), 334; John Pollock, *The Cambridge Seven: The True Story of Ordinary Men Used in no Ordinary Way* (Fearn: Christian Focus, 2006), 37.

[5] Pollock, *The Cambridge Seven*, first published as *The Cambridge Seven: A Call to Christian Service* (London: IVP, 1955).

[6] Venn, s.v. "Polhill-Turner, Arthur Twisleton."

[7] Arthur Polhill, "Proposal for an Eton Mission to the East" (c. 1904), ed. John Usher, Polhill Collection Online, https://pconline.org.uk/browse/13-papers/281-proposal-for-eton-mission-to-the-east-arthur-polhill (accessed 15 March 2019) [PCO or PC for Polhill Collection].

[8] He seems to have been about the same height as the eldest brother, Frederick Fiennes.

[9] *Two Etonians in China: Reminiscences of Two of the "Cambridge Seven" Missionary Band (Cecil and Arthur Polhill)* c. 1925–6; Cecil's chapters and some of the manuscripts have been digitised at the PCO, https://pconline.org.uk/about-the-collection (accessed 18 March 2019), while Arthur's chapters and manuscripts are in the PC.

[10] Administration of Frederick Edward Fiennes (died 24 December 1899), filed on 17 November 1900. London Probate Office, Royal Courts of Justice, the Strand, London.

[11] Pollock writes of them together in the chapter titled "The Brothers." Pollock, *The Cambridge Seven*, 27.

[12] For example, John M. Usher, "'For China and Tibet and for World-Wide Revival' Cecil Henry Polhill (1860–1938) and His Significance for Early Pentecostalism" (PhD Thesis, University of Birmingham, 2015).

[13] See the Football Association website under www.thefa.com/competitions/thefacup/more/finals (accessed 1 October 2018).

[14] Arthur Polhill, *Two Etonians in China*, 4.

[15] Arthur Polhill, *Two Etonians in China*, 4.

[16] Arthur Polhill, *Two Etonians in China*, 6.

[17] Arthur Polhill, *Two Etonians in China*, 7.

[18] Pollock, *The Cambridge Seven*, 37 and Broomhall, *Assault on the Nine*, 334.

[19] Gordon Hewitt, *The Problem of Success: A History of the Church Missionary Society 1910–1942*, Vol. 2 (London: SCM, 1977), 264. Bishop George Evans Moule was serving at the time of the Taiping Rebellion; Archdeacon Arthur Evans Moule and his wife served in China from 1861–96 and from 1902–10.

[20] See "A Five Days Mission Relative to Work in Foreign Lands [12–17 November 1884]" flyer in the China Inland Mission collection, School of Oriental and African Studies library, Russell Square, London, UK [SOAS]. Arthur is listed at this meeting as a representative of the CMS.

[21] Broomhall, *Assault on the Nine*, 336–42.

[22] See "A Five Days Mission."

[23] Cecil Polhill, *Two Etonians in China*, 10.

[24] Pollock, *The Cambridge Seven*, 99–100. The Strand Palace Hotel now occupies the former site of Exeter Hall. For more information, see Leonard Cowie, "Exeter Hall," *History Today* 18, no. 6 (1 June 1968): 390–7.

[25] Technically, the Polhill brothers were not members of the CIM when they left London. The CIM London Council Minutes record, "it was proposed that they [the Polhill brothers] should proceed to China without formal identification with the mission which they could form after a time if on both sides it seemed desirable." CIM Minutes of London Council, 13 January 1885, SOAS. But by May 1886, both brothers had written out by hand the Principles and Practices of the CIM (part of the first section of the CIM missionary exam), signifying their commitment to and acceptance to the CIM. A signed copy of the P&Ps, dated 25 May 1886 at "Hanchong" (Hanzhong), and countersigned by J. W. Stevenson (deputy director) is available at SOAS. For more on the study course for CIM probationers, see Alvyn Austin, *China's Millions: The China Inland Mission and Late Qing Society* (Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2007), 250–4.

[26] Benjamin Broomhall, ed., *The Evangelisation of the World: A Missionary Band, A Record Consecration of Appeal*, 3rd ed. (London: Morgan & Scott, 1889), 22, https://archive.org/details/evangelisationw00broogoog (accessed 13 February 2019).

[27] Montague Beauchamp actually joined them as far as Wuhan (formerly Hankow or Hankou), but he returned to Shanghai and then joined the remaining members of the group in Shanxi. Thus, the two groups were initially stationed in neighbouring provinces: Shaanxi and Shanxi. Broomhall, *The Evangelisation of the World*, 24; Broomhall, *Assault on the Nine*, 374–5.

[28] Liao, "a native Christian and a great favourite," was employed by Dr. William Wilson and his wife Caroline Wilson, CIM missionaries in Shaanxi, who were escorting the new missionaries to their first station. Cecil Polhill, *Two Etonians in China*, 33–34. The inhabitants of Langzhong, on observing the Polhill brothers retire outside the city wall each morning for prayer, believed them to be prospecting for precious stones. Arthur Polhill, *Two Etonians in China*, 39–40.

[29] Usher, "For China and Tibet and for World-Wide Revival", 62.

[30] Arthur Polhill, *Two Etonians in China*, 52.

[31] Arthur Polhill, *Two Etonians in China*, 70, PC.

[32] See for example, A. J. Broomhall, *Over the Treaty Wall*, Hudson Taylor and China's Open Century, Book 2 (Sevenoaks: Hodder and Stoughton and OMF), 375–90.

[33] Broomhall, *The Evangelisation of the World*, 49.

[34] Austin, *China's Millions*, 397.

[35] Arthur Polhill, *Two Etonians in China*, 73, PC.

[36] They arrived in England on 17 March 1901. *China's Millions*, British ed. (April 1901): 62, http://findit.library.yale.edu/catalog/digcoll:218118. They began their return journey to China, by the Trans-Siberian Railway, on 1 October 1902. *China's Millions*, British ed. (October 1902): 144, http://findit.library.yale.edu/catalog/digcoll:218313. They arrived in Shanghai on 31 October 1902. *China's Millions*, British ed. (January 1903): 8, http://findit.library.yale.edu/catalog/digcoll:218496, (accessed 13 February 2019).

[37] Marshall Broomhall, *W. W. Cassels*, *First Bishop in Western China* (London: China Inland Mission, 1926), 180. A Queen's Warrant was granted to the Archbishop of Canterbury to create a diocese of "those parts of the province of Szechwan and Kweichow [Sichuan and Guizhou] in the Empire of China as lie to the north of the 28th parallel of latitude." A huge area, about three times the size of England. In May 1919, Cassels wrote that in an eight-year period he had spent more than 700 days travelling and still not visited all the stations in his diocese. Broomhall, *Cassels*, 305–6.

[38] The chief complaint being that Cassels could not be at one and the same time an Anglican bishop and a superintendent of an interdenominational mission. Broomhall, *Cassels*, 196–206.

[39] Hewitt, *The Problems of Success*, 284. See also *China's Millions*, British ed. (July-August 1903): 102, http://findit.library.yale.edu/catalog/digcoll:218496 (accessed 19 March 2019). The other missions included, for example: the American Baptists, American Episcopal Methodists, Canadian Methodists, and the Society of Friends.

[40] Hewitt, *The Problems of Success*, 283–4. See also Map of the Diocese of Western China (Western Section) in *The Bulletin of the Diocese of Western China* (April 1913): 17 and R. G. Tiedemann, *Reference Guide to Christian Missionary Societies in China: From the Sixteenth to the Twentieth Century* (London: Routledge, 2015), 143. The CMS archival material is held at the Cadbury Research Library, University of Birmingham, UK, and much of this has been digitised by Adam Matthew Digital (https://www.amdigital.co.uk/), for which a subscription may be required. There is additional archival material at the CMS office in Oxford, UK.

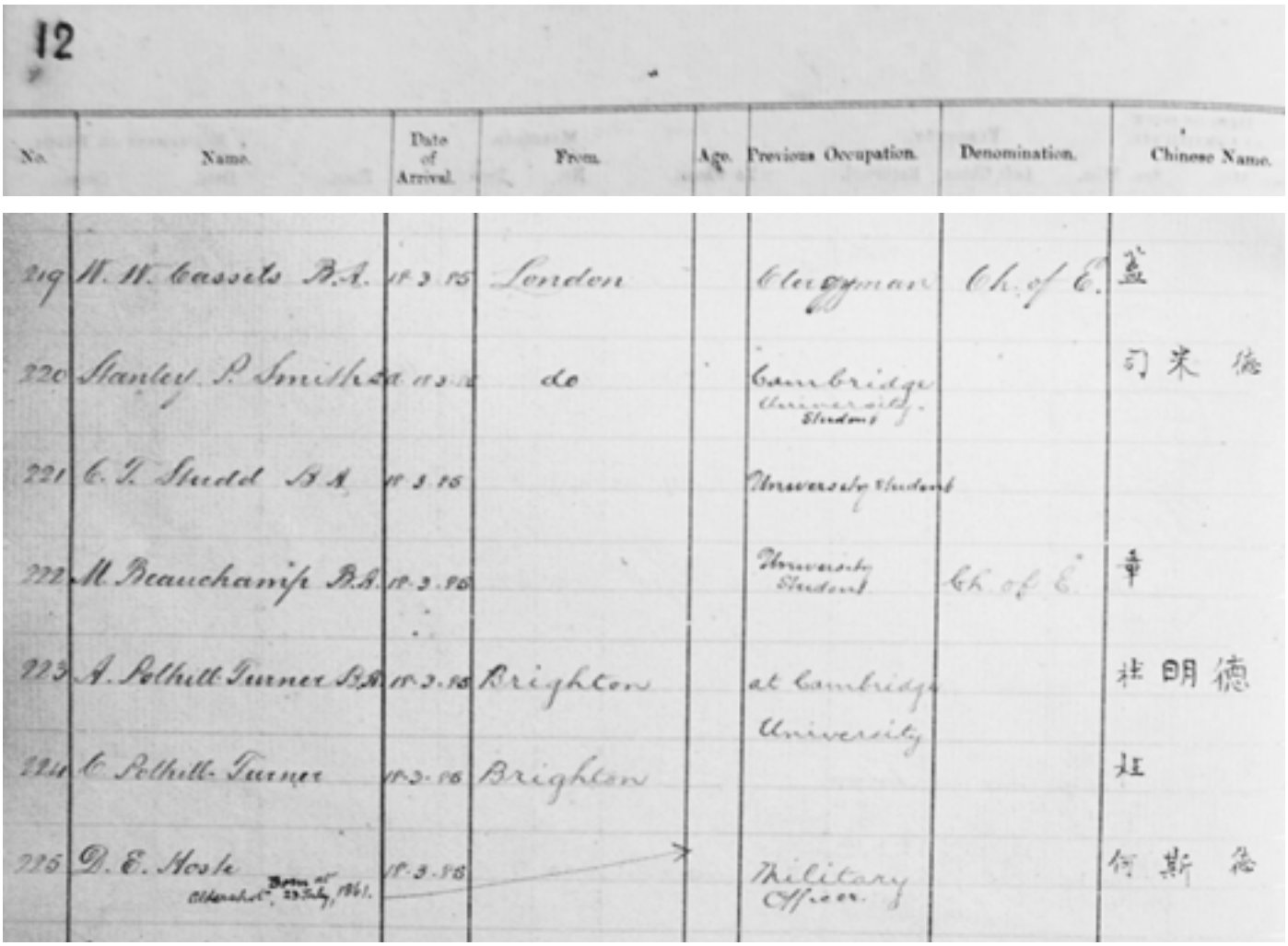
[41] From *China's Millions*, British ed. (July-August 1903): 102. See also 'Map of China' (1900) at the Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/resource/g7821e.ct005537/?r=0.229,0.306,0.121,0.094,0 (accessed 18 March 2019).

[42] Arthur Polhill to Cecil Polhill, 3 August 1904, PC.

[43] Arthur cites the seating capacity to his brother as seven hundred in Arthur Polhill to Cecil Polhill, 18 July 1904, PC, but this was before its completion. In the 1920s, he would cite the seating capacity of the church (more accurately) as five hundred. Arthur Polhill, *Two Etonians in China*, 93.

[44] Hoste subsequently forwarded the letter to his brother Cecil. Arthur Polhill, Copy of Letter to D. Hoste, 17 August 1903, PCO, https://pconline.org.uk/browse/14-cim/371-arthur-polhill-copy-of-letter-to-d-hoste (accessed 15 March 2019).

[45] Stated in a letter of the same date to his brother Cecil. Arthur Polhill to Cecil Polhill, 23 February 1904, PC.
[46] Arthur Polhill to Cecil Polhill, 4 April 1904, PC.
[47] Arthur Polhill to Cecil Polhill, 30 August 1904, PC.
[48] Arthur Polhill to Cecil Polhill, 10 June 1904, PC.
[49] See *The Bulletin of the Diocese of Western China* (April 1910): inside cover.
[50] Arthur Polhill, Circular, 1 July 1905, PC.
[51] Arthur Polhill, *Two Etonians in China*, 96.
[52] Arthur Polhill, *Two Etonians in China*, 93.
[53] *The Bulletin of the Diocese of Western China* (October 1911), 12. This had been started by Caroline Wilson and Miss F. J. Fowle in 1903. Arthur Polhill, *Two Etonians in China*, 88.
[54] Tung-hsiang (Xuanhan) and Sin Lin (walled cities); Lanpa-chang, Hwang-kin-keo, Tsin-chi-chang, Ren-shih-pu, and Min-yueh-chang. *The Bulletin of the Diocese of Western China* (October 1911), 13–14.
[55] *The Bulletin of the Diocese of Western China* (October 1911), 14.
[56] Austin, *China's Millions*, 230.
[57] See Lutley's comments on the late Pastor Hsi in his report discussed at the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh (1910). Brian Stanley, *The World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh 1910* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 142.
[58] "Tidings from the Provinces," *China's Millions*, North American ed. (February 1910): 22, https://archive.org/details/millions1910chin/page/22 (accessed 20 March 2019).
[59] *The Bulletin of the Diocese of Western China* (October 1911): 14.
[60] *The Bulletin of the Diocese of Western China* (October 1911): 16.
[61] *The Bulletin of the Diocese of Western China* (October 1911): 17.
[62] *The Bulletin of the Diocese of Western China* (October 1911): 16.
[63] *The Bulletin of the Diocese of Western China* (October 1911): 11, 17.
[64] The Chinese zodiac, unlike the Greco-Roman zodiac, is based on twelve animals that recur in twelve-year cycles (these represent the "earthly branch" of the Chinese calendar); 1911 was the year of the boar (hài-亥) [commonly known as the year of the pig], as were the years: 1923, 1935, 1947, 1959, 1971, 1983, 1995, 2007, and the present (2019). Alongside the zodiac are ten "heavenly" or "celestial stems" (based on the traditional belief in the existence of ten suns). In 1911, it was the xin (辛) stem (lit. to offend superiors), thus xinhai (辛亥) revolution. Corresponding to the heavenly stems are five elements (one element for every two celestial stems), so that 1911 is sometimes known as the year of the metal pig (jinhai - 金亥).
[65] James E. Sheridan, *China in Disintegration: The Republican Era in Chinese History 1912–1949* (New York: The Free Press, 1975), 29.
[66] "Editorial Notes," *China's Millions*, British ed. (September 1931): 174, http://findit.library.yale.edu/catalog/digcoll:222171; "The Red Terror in East Szechuan," *China's Millions*, British ed. (December 1933): 224, http://findit.library.yale.edu/catalog/digcoll:222682 (accessed 13 February 2019). See also *The Bulletin of the Diocese of Western China* (April 1934): 14–15.
[67] "Editorial Notes," *China's Millions*, British ed. (March 1934): 56, http://findit.library.yale.edu/catalog/digcoll:222939 (accessed 13 February 2019).
[68] Dazhou was by this time also known as Tahsien. "Editorial Notes," *China's Millions*, British ed. (May 1934), 96, http://findit.library.yale.edu/catalog/digcoll:222939 (accessed 13 February 2019).
[69] *China's Millions*, British ed. (November 1934), 217, http://findit.library.yale.edu/catalog/digcoll:222939 (accessed 13 February 2019).
[70] *The Bulletin of the Diocese of Western China* (January 1936): 11 and (July 1938): 2.
[71] *Four Streams: Diocesan Association for Western China Bulletin* (May 1950): 23, 26–28.
[72] *Four Streams: Diocesan Association for Western China Bulletin* (January 1951): 16; (July 1952): 10.
[73] Augustine (Henry Bettenson's transl.) *Concerning the City of God Against the Pagans* (London: Penguin, 1984), Book V:16.
[74] See William Cooper, *The Book of Arrangements* [Principles of the CIM] (Gang'King: Shanghai Mercury, 1890), under "Instructions," "The Missionary (except in certain localities) will wear the Chinese dress," 24. OMF Archive, Borough Green, UK. See also, D. E. Hoste, "My Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ" (23 April 1907), OMF International Archives AR5.1.1, Box 1, Folder 2.
[75] Sheridan, *China in Disintegration*, 66.
[76] See 剑桥七杰 (Cambridge Seven) at Baidu: https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E5%89%91%E6%A1%A5%E4%B8%83%E6%9D%B0/1504923 (accessed 18 March 2019).
[77] Venn, s.v. "Polhill-Turner (post Polhill), Arthur Twistleton."
[78] Hewitt, *The Problems of Success*, 286.
[79] Venn, s,v. "Polhill-Turner (post Polhill), Arthur Twistleton."



Entries of the Cambridge Seven in the CIM Register of Missionaries held in the archives at the OMF International Center in Singapore.

God's Mission to the Lisu

Walter McConnell

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Mission is God's work of coming into the world to make a difference in the lives of the people he created to have relationship with him but whose relationship was broken by sin. Mission is the story of how people who were once ignorant of God—indeed, people who were his enemies—have their relationship with him restored and become members of his family because of Jesus Christ and his death on the cross. Mission is the command that Jesus' disciples—from the first century until today—who, in spite of their weakness and lack of faith, obey by kneeling before him in worship and then going to tell other people about the wonders of his love. Mission is the glorious mystery that, in the last day, God will gather to himself worshippers from every tribe, nation, people, and tongue.

One of those tribes and people and tongues is known as the Lisu. They are a people for whom Christ died and to whom he sent missionaries from foreign lands and from other tribes so that they could hear and respond to the gospel. But God's mission wasn't only to the Lisu. It also includes sending Lisu evangelists and preachers to take the gospel to other Lisu and to different tribes. In many ways, the history of the Lisu church is one of the great success stories of CIM/OMF, particularly as related in the books *Behind the Ranges* and *Mountain Rain*.[1] Even so, various aspects of the work remain unfamiliar to many. That this is true as much for the Lisu themselves as for others, became clear as the Lisu church gathered to celebrate their 109th anniversary in northern Thailand in February 2019.

For the past few years, Lisu church leaders knew they had passed their 100th anniversary and wanted to celebrate this significant event, but were not entirely sure when their church was founded. They could have chosen the date in 1902 when the first Lisu were baptized in Burma, 1913 when J. O. Fraser was formally freed to work among the Lisu, or 1915 when Fraser baptized the first Lisu in China. In the end, they chose to mark the date Fraser first met Lisu people in 1910. As they were preparing for the celebration, I was asked to draw up an account of history, in part because someone told them I had once written a master's thesis on Fraser and the Lisu and also because I have ready access to historical material in the OMF archives in Singapore.[2] Though I felt inadequate to talk about the history of a church to a group of around 1,000 members of that church, I was later informed that the Lisu were unaware of the numbers of missionaries who had served among them. As I expect that many others are similarly unaware, what follows provides an overview of the many missionaries who served the Lisu church in China before 1952. While more could be written to include missionaries who worked with them since that date, space constraints will limit us to the earlier work.

Who are the Lisu?

Though there can be no certainty regarding the origins of the Lisu people, most scholars conclude that they originated in eastern Tibet.[3] This is supported by Lisu tradition, migrational patterns, and linguistic development. Historically, the Lisu have claimed that their ancestors came from further up the Salween River (Nu Jiang, 怒江, in China) and Mekong rivers. The fact that the highest concentration of the tribe lives along the upper stretches of the Salween supports this. Estimates of the number of Lisu in the world range from around 800,000 to 1.5 million, with the majority living in China and others in Myanmar, Thailand, and India.[4]

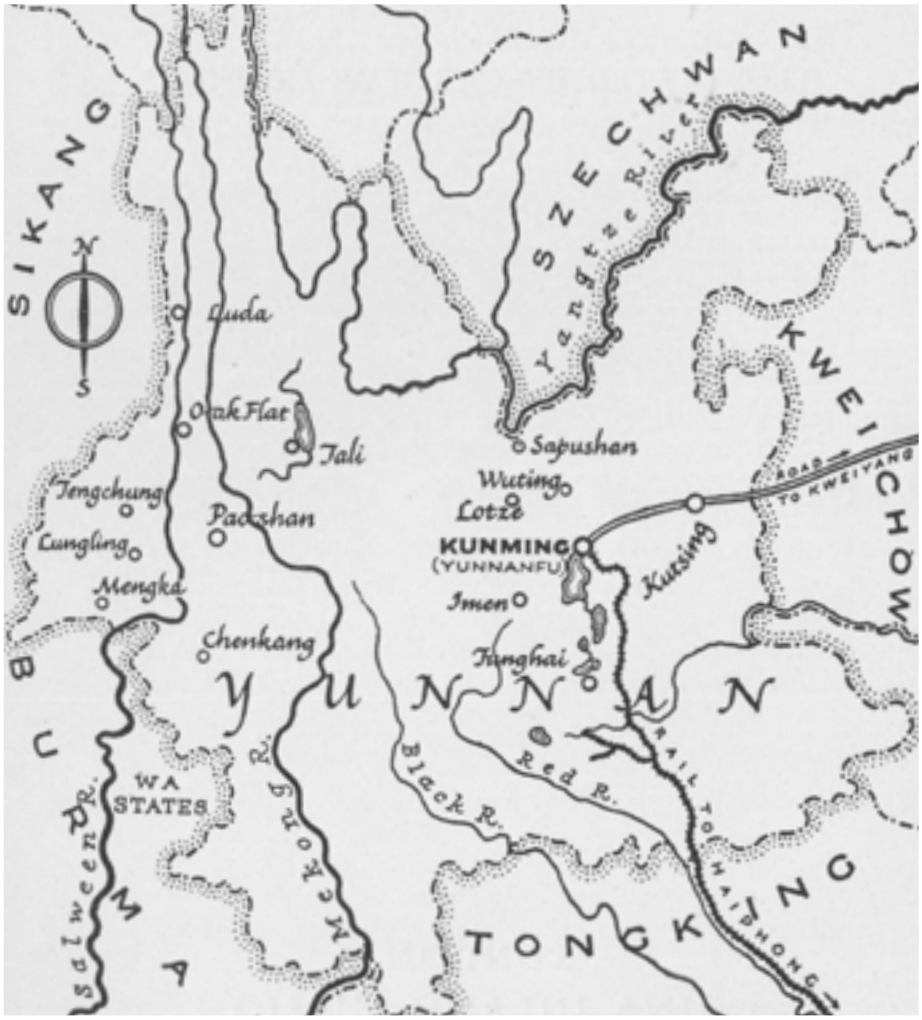
Traditions and higher populations to the north are not the only signs that Lisu have progressively moved south. It is clear that the farther one travels south, the greater the change in the language through assimilation of vocabulary from other tongues. Lisu is a monosyllabic Tibeto-Burman language with six tones and no syllables ending in a consonant.

The language is further distinguished by several regional dialects.[5] The dialectic differences were noted quite early. China Inland Mission workers noted that the language "in the extreme north…is quite pure", but that further south it included "a large number of Chinese words."[6] The absorption of Chinese words was so complete that Leila Cooke reported that the Lisu living around Stockade Hill (Muh-cheng-P'o, 木城坡) and Gospel Mountain (Fuinshan, 福音山) "often put Chinese words into their conversations without knowing it." When alerted of this, they would reply, "Oh, no, that is really Lisu. The Chinese have taken it from us!"[7]

At the 109th celebration, a Lisu leader informed me that while reading a book of Lisu legends he discovered a word he had never heard before. No one among his contacts knew what the word meant. Finally, an elderly person explained that the term referred to a grape that was common to the area. When he asked others what they called the grape, they uniformly responded with the Chinese word *pu tao* because it was the only one they knew. In the 1980s, it was estimated that about 30% of the words of the Lisu dialect spoken in Thailand are derived from the Chinese Yunnanese dialect.[8] Undoubtedly, the Lisu who live in Myanmar and northern Thailand have absorbed vocabulary from the majority cultures as well as from other tribal groups with whom they share close contact.

Where are the Lisu?

The province of Yunnan in southwest China is famed for its mountain scenery, and has been styled the Switzerland of China. Being an extension of the Himalayas, the mountains of the western portion of the province are especially high with precipitous slopes plunging into deep river valleys.[9] The alternation between ranges and valleys that primarily run in a north-south direction make travel exceedingly difficult and, until recent times, few people traveled through these hills who did not live there.[10] As the Lisu made their homes among these mountain fortresses between latitudes 26° and 28° north,[11] early missionaries often referred to the area as "Lisuland." It should be recognized that this is an incredibly imprecise term, as other peoples—both tribal and Chinese—live in the same general region, though often at different



Map of the Yunnan province in *King of the Lisu* by Phyllis Thompson (London: OMF, 1956).

elevations. The vagueness of the term is confirmed when one takes into account the movement of the Lisu into Myanmar and Thailand.[12] Even so, reference to Lisuland points to the general area where the group live and their church is growing. Ties to the Salween valley by kinship, dialect, and history keep them in touch with their ancestral homeland and testify that the Lisu of Myanmar and Thailand could be counted among the diasporic people of the world.

Though Hudson Taylor may never have known of the existence of the Lisu as an independent tribal group, his prayer "for 24 willing, skillful labourers" that launched the China Inland Mission (CIM) in 1865 was a significant step in the sending of the gospel to them. The prayer for *twenty-four* workers was significant. Before that time, Christian missionaries were limited to the coastal provinces of China and there was no gospel witness in the eleven inland provinces or Mongolia. Taylor longed to see God send two missionaries to each of the inland provinces and two to Mongolia. Movement toward Yunnan was not long in coming. In 1875, John W. Stevenson and Henry Soltau established a CIM mission station in Bhamo, Burma to serve as a post from which missionaries could travel into Yunnan with the gospel. However, the British authorities in Burma did not at first permit them to cross into China, particularly since the "Margary Affair"—which resulted in the death of a British consulor interpreter—had occurred less than a year previously and had not been resolved.[13] While waiting to get into China, Stevenson and Soltau studied Chinese and Burmese.[14] In 1876 Mr. Joseph S. Adams and Dr. Thomas and Mrs. Harvey joined them to do medical work.[15]

Although the missionaries in Bhamo were prevented from entering China from the west, John McCarthy set off from the east in 1877, travelled up the Yangtze to Chongqing and then went by foot to Yunnan before exiting China and visiting Bhamo. Though he hoped to return to China from Burma, he was not allowed. Not long afterwards, James Cameron also passed through Yunnan on one of his crossings of China. In 1881, Mr. and Mrs. George Clarke set up the first CIM station in Yunnan, in the town

of Dali. A second station was opened in 1882 in Yunnanfu (now Kunming). Though their numbers were few, the missionaries were faithful in their gospel work and people began to accept the new teaching about Jesus. They also experienced the personal cost of taking part in God's mission. Just two years after moving to Dali, Mrs. Clarke died, leaving her husband with a six-week-old child.[16]

As the missionaries came to Yunnan, Guizhou, and some other provinces, they discovered that the peoples of China included more than the Han.[17] Many minority groups, each with its own language, culture, and religious background, were found. And all of them needed Jesus. As the missionaries would duly record, even though work among the Chinese was "notoriously barren and unfruitful," the Holy Spirit was ready to move among many tribespeople so that by 1911, "Scores of villages have become wholly Christian, and hundreds of other villages are nominally Christian" and "there are now some 50,000 of these people at least nominally Christian."[18] Though a great work of the Spirit had begun among the Miao, Noso, Lipo (Eastern Lisu), and Lahu, many other tribes remained beyond reach of the gospel. Who would tell them about Jesus? The missionaries from overseas were so few. It was clear that more prayer was needed that the Lord of the harvest would send workers. The Lord wisely sent both foreign and local evangelists to share Jesus with these tribes, but he also prepared them in some other ways, not least by some of their age-old legends.

The gospel comes to the Lisu

Throughout the mountains of southwest China and northern Burma, a number of minority people maintained a legend of a lost book.[19] In the Lisu version, the Mother-God made books of deerskin and gave them to three brothers—the forerunners of the Chinese, Shan, and Lisu. While the Chinese brother took relatively good care of his book, he put it down in the sun to allow the ink to dry. While he wasn't looking, chickens walked all over it. This explains why Chinese writing looks the way it does. The Shan brother took better care of his book, so Shan writing looks better than Chinese. The Lisu brother, however, did not take care of his book and, one day, a dog ate it up. This explains why the Lisu did not have books of their own. But the legend went on to say that one day a white man would come from far away and bring the Lisu their own books and their own king.[20] This legend attracted many Lisu to the gospel when J. O. Fraser and others reduced the Lisu language to writing and translated the Bible into Lisu. While some thought that Fraser was the waited-for Lisu king, the missionaries instructed them that the true king was Jesus.

Another legend spoke of a great flood. As the Lewises recount the story:

> The only two survivors were a boy and his younger sister who were saved by riding out the flood in a large gourd. On finding they were the last human beings left in the world, they knew that they were the only hope for the future of mankind. However, they believed an incestuous relationship would be wrong, so they looked for signs indicating whether they should marry or not. First they separated the two stones of a grain mill and rolled them down opposite sides of a mountain. When the stones reached the bottom they kept on rolling around the mountain until they came together.

After performing other tests, the brother and sister discerned that it would be proper for them to marry. "Their union produced many children who paired up and became the progenitors of all the different tribes."[21] This legend is told regularly as a bridge to the Old Testament account of the flood and the belief that a version of the biblical story had been retained through the centuries. The Lahu emphasize the story to the extent that many of their men wear a festive garment decorated with a gourd on the back.[22]

The legend of a white man coming to Lisuland received special attention after James Outram Fraser (富能仁, 1886–1938)—known to the Lisu as A-YI-S, "elder brother number three"—came into contact with hem. They particularly took note when he used the words he jotted on paper to "speak their language." Fraser, who would come to be known as "the apostle to the Lisu,"[23] was an accomplished pianist and engineering student who gave up what could have been a promising future in England when he sailed for China in 1908 to become a missionary with the CIM. In May 1909, he arrived in Yunnan through Burma with Mr. McCarthy, the CIM superintendent of the province, and began to learn the Chinese language

James and Roxie Fraser on their wedding day

in Tengyueh (now Tengchong) under the supervision of William Embery.

Fraser was originally designated to work with the Miao who lived to the north of Yunnanfu, but after living in Tengyueh for around one year, made his first acquaintance with some Lisu people when he visited Trinket Mountain. From that time on, the Lisu were on his heart and in his prayers and in those of his prayer supporters back in England.[24] His initial desire was to reach out to Lisu who lived near Tengyueh and knew Chinese. Only later did he devote significant time to learning their language and culture so that he could preach to them more directly and translate the Bible and other Christian literature into their language. Fraser—working with Ba Thaw (1891–1967), a Karen evangelist, whom Fraser first met in 1913 when Ba Thaw came to Yunnan with George Geis, an American Baptist missionary to Burma—developed an alphabet for the Lisu language that could be learned in just a few weeks and that has stood the test of time as it is still used today.[25] Before his death in 1938, Fraser translated two of the Gospels, a catechism, and many hymns into Lisu. He also worked with others to translate the rest of the New Testament and produced a Lisu dictionary and grammar.[26]

A bachelor for many years, Fraser joked that he was "the loneliest man in China." In 1929, he married Rosie [Roxie] Maud Dymond (富師母, 1904–1972).[27] The Frasers started out married life with a journey through western Yunnan that

would last for five-and-a-half months.[28] As they sought tribal people who knew Christ and others who didn't, the newlyweds slept in simple houses, chapel buildings, and under the stars. Simplicity suited Fraser. As he once told Roxie, "You know what my dream has always been? Well, it has been to have my wife on one mule, myself on another, and all my worldly possessions on a third."[29] Fraser and Roxie had three daughters, the youngest being born after her father's death in 1938.[30] Roxie continued to serve with CIM/OMF until her retirement in 1955.

Assessing his accomplishments, Neel Roberts says that "In the annals of CIM history, J. O. Fraser stands out as the preeminent field missionary among the tribal groups of China."[31] But while Fraser was the model missionary and the most famous of the missionaries to the Lisu, he was not alone. God's work requires partnership, not people who attempt to do everything by themselves. Following Fraser—the Englishman who paid numerous visits to the Salween valley while living in Tengyueh—the next five couples to work among the Lisu all came from the United States or Canada and they all moved *into* Lisuland.

The first to move into Lisuland were Herbert W. Flagg (范善慶, 1889–1973) and his wife Minnie (nee Green, 范??, 1884–1963). Like Fraser, Rev. Flagg preached Jesus and built up the church in the hills above the Salween from his home in Tengyueh until his marriage in 1921. The newlyweds made preparations

Flagg (left) and Fraser (right) in Lisu dress

Lisu singing "Hallelujah Chorus" at the 109th anniversary

to move into the village of Longling where a "temporary house" with four rooms "made of thatch and woven bamboo laths" was built for them.[32] Within a very short time, around 200 Lisu believers who had been carefully taught by the Flaggs and Mr. Fraser were baptized and more baptisms were expected to come. The Flaggs returned to the States in 1931 when Minnie became too ill for them to remain.

The next missionary couple to move into Lisuland was Allyn (楊思慧, 1896–1990) and Leila (宋大成, 1896–1943) Cooke.[33] When Allyn completed thirty-seven years of formal service with CIM/OMF in 1955, his work with the Lisu was far from over. During his career and throughout retirement, he helped translate and revise the entire Lisu Bible and produced Bible study materials in Lisu that kept him busy into his 90s.[34] Leila introduced the Lisu church to many English-speaking readers through her books, *Honey Two of Lisu-land* and *Fish Four and the Lisu New Testament*.[35]

The Cookes were still fairly new missionaries when Fraser returned to England in 1922 on his first furlough. They came to love the Lisu, learned their language well, and were on hand to see the church begin to grow at an astonishing rate. By the time Fraser returned to Yunnan, they were leading a Bible school in the newly established station of Gospel Mountain or Fuinshan (福音山) and had spiritual responsibility for around 1,000 Christians.

Before the Cookes went to China, Fraser had taught Lisu people to sing hymns—a good means of teaching Christian doctrine to a naturally musical people. And though Fraser might be given the title of chief musician, the Cookes' musical training made a significant impact on the Lisu church. Leila, a pianist, and Allyn, a violinist, were responsible for teaching Lisu Christians to sing in four-part harmony. Many visitors to Lisuland have commented on Lisu singing.[36] Fraser himself said that listening to the Lisu sing "has often brought tears to my eyes."[37] While attending the celebrations of the Lisu church in February 2019, we had many opportunities to hear them harmonize hymns. Hearing them sing Handel's "Hallelujah Chorus" in their own language, the words proclaiming that "the kingdom of the Lord and of his Christ has come and he shall reign forever and ever" took on new meaning, as it was clear that the Lisu were among the people from every tribe and nation and people and tongue who will worship the Lord of heaven and earth.

Another missionary to the Lisu, Carl G. Gowman (高漫,[38] 1886–1930), had worked in the office of the Ford Motor Co. and studied at Moody Bible Institute[39] before going to Tengyueh, China in 1911 where he began to tune his ear and mind to studying Chinese. In those days, new CIM workers who came single were required not to marry for two years so that they could focus on language and cultural studies. This must have made life difficult for him and Anna C. Dukeshereer (席克敬, 1889–?) who arrived in China eight days after he did and was sent to Dali for language study. After a 27 November 1913 wedding in Tengyueh, they spent six years working with the Eastern Lisu in Sa-p'u-shan (洒普山) and Yuanmowhsien (元謀縣) before moving to take up a ministry in Muh-cheng-P'o (木城坡, Stockade Hill) where they served until Mr. Gowman's death in 1930. Gowman was

so proficient speaking Lisu that he was selected to be the language examiner for the language. Even so, his major accomplishment was probably the encouragement he gave to Lisu believers to share the gospel with others so that the good news of Jesus could spread to the tribes who lived farther up the Salween.

DeWitt Payne (貝文華, 1885–1992) went to China from Salt Lake City, Utah in 1924 and married Grace L. Fraser (福恩喜, 1898–?) in Yunnanfu in 1928. The Paynes lived a roving existence, at times making their home at Yungchang (1928–31), Luchang (1932), Longling (1935) and Mengka (1936–7 and 1939–41). During their first couple of years at Yungchang, four Lisu evangelists were sent by Mr. Gowman from the south and west to engage the Lisu living farther up the Salween. After walking eight days to Yungchang, they went on a further nineteen-day journey to the north but returned disheartened, as the men of the northern villages were all away and they had no opportunities to evangelize. A second attempt—with Mr. Payne traveling with them—proved successful. This trip had been committed to the Lord in prayer, and resulted in some thirty families renouncing idolatry and turning to Jesus. As they approached new villages, the Lisu evangelists cautioned Payne to wait in hiding until after they had first gone in to talk to the people who had never seen a white man before. Before the end of 1929, around 120 families from the region were following the Lord.[40] Many of those who turned to Jesus were Black Lisu who had never heard the gospel before. While this was wonderful news for the evangelists to take back to their mother church, they also tasted the bitter side of gospel

Back row (from left): Cooke, Fraser, Fitzwilliam, Casto. Front: Mrs. Casto with child, Mrs. Fitzwilliam with child, Mrs. Cooke. *China's Millions*, North American edition (January 1934): 8.

ministry when one of their number died of malaria.[41] Foreign and local Christians shared in the work, the joy, and the sorrow. Knowing that the Lisu had originally come down the Salween from Tibet, Payne desired that God would use them to take the gospel back to their ancestral homeland. The Paynes retired from service with CIM in 1948.

The Lisu team was enriched by three young Americans who arrived in China on 16 October 1926: Francis J. Fitzwilliam (李崇德, 1900–1940), John B. Kuhn (楊志英, 1906–1966), and Joseph H. Casto (張師道, 1901–1992).

Francis Fitzwilliam went to China from Illinois and married Jennie Kingston (康榮善, 1903–2003) a year later. The Fitzwilliams served in Muhchengpo from 1931–34 and again in 1936 and at Lungchiu in 1937 and from 1939 to 1940 when Mr. Fitzwilliam died of Typhus.[42] For many years, this couple lived an eight-day journey from their nearest CIM neighbors. In that isolated setting, they busied themselves with preaching the gospel, building up the church, and encouraging Lisu evangelists along their way. While they were at Muhchengpo, the Lisu church numbered about 1,000 members, though the number of teachers remained small and many had lost their first love.[43] In 1932, Fitzwilliam reported that fifteen Lisu evangelists had been sent out for between two months and one year, some traveling for two weeks before they arrived at their destination for preaching and teaching about Jesus. Along the way, they found many who were interested in turning to Jesus.

Joseph Casto (張師道, 1901–92), from Spokane, Washington, USA, married Alice Naughton (安榮德,1904–2000), from Glendale, California, in 1927 at Shanghai. They lived in Tengyueh from 1928–30 and moved to the new station at Fuinshan (福音山, Gospel Mountain) from 1930 until they went on furlough in 1933 and where they returned from 1935–36. In 1937, they lived for a short time in Chenkang until they were forced to return to America at the end of the year for health reasons. In addition to working with the Lisu, they also reached out to the Lahu.

The third young American to go to China in 1926 for Lisu work was twenty-year-old John B. Kuhn (楊志英, 1906–66). Kuhn joined the CIM after completing a course of study at Moody Bible Institute where he met Miss Isobel S. Miller (宓貴靈, 1901–57). The two were engaged before John left for China, but Isobel didn't come out until 1928. John and Isobel were married in Yunnanfu in 1929, less than two weeks after J. O. Fraser and Roxie. In her autobiography, *By Searching*, Isobel indicates that she felt called to the Lisu in 1924 while hearing J. O. Fraser speak at The Firs camp in Bellingham, Washington.[44] In years to come, the Lord would use her many books to inform Christians all around the world about the needs in Lisuland and how God was building his church there.[45]

The Kuhns initially worked among the Chinese in Yungping. Not until March 1934 did Mr. Fraser ask them to move into Lisuland to help the Cookes who had too much work to do to follow up the new Christians won to the Savior by the evangelists who had been sent out by Gowman. After an exploratory journey, the Kuhns moved to Oak Flat (Padé or Paddy) in December 1934. They then moved back and forth between the hills above the Salween and the Yunnan plain until they left China in 1950. After the death of Fraser, John served as the CIM Superintendent of Western Yunnan. He later worked as the Superintendent of the CIM/OMF work in Northern Thailand and then of Laos, before taking on an international role in Singapore.

One of the most important parts of the Kuhns' ministry was instructing Lisu to become teachers of God's word. While some of this happened during the Short Term Bible Schools, a major part of the teaching took place during the Rainy Season Bible Schools (R.S.B.S.) which was known by the Lisu as the "three months' Bible School."[46] The first R.S.B.S. was held in Oak Flat in 1938 as a means of providing deep training for the Lisu who lived in the upper Salween valley. The first year about fifteen full-time and more part-time students were present. By 1949, around fifty attended, including a Nepali who had been led to Christ by Lisu evangelists in Burma during the war. From the beginning, the local church was responsible for the material provisions for the school, selecting who should attend, and providing for their needs while there. The missionaries were responsible for the spiritual teaching.[47] The school was attended by full-time teachers, voluntary workers, church leaders, and promising young

The first girls' Bible School with Isobel Kuhn (back row, third from the left)

people. In time, a girls' Bible School[48] and boys' Bible School were started.

As the Bible School's goal was to equip church leaders, it was essential that everyone attending had a personal relationship with Christ. The School thus began with leaders interviewing the students about their spiritual lives. John Kuhn wrote, "the first two weeks of the School the main emphasis was upon regeneration. There was little use teaching the precious things of our most holy faith to any but who were born-again."[49] The overall purpose of the R.S.B.S. was "To keep abreast of the needs of the growing church; to teach the faithful men who in turn would teach others; to provide faithful shepherds over the district churches; to preserve a New Testament pattern of church growth."[50] The first R.S.B.S. commenced just after the completion of the Lisu New Testament. Much time was given for the students—all of whom had received little formal education—to copy portions of the New Testament as it was not yet in print. Hymns translated into Lisu or written by the Lisu themselves were also taught as a means of helping congregations throughout the mountains. While this was not the only way the Bible was taught, during the school's ten plus years of operation, it was the main teaching venue for church leaders and it provided them with the basis for their teaching for the rest of the year.

Another American who came to work with the Lisu a few years after the three just named was Charles Peterson (畢德森, 1908–1995)[51], widely known as Brother Three. Charlie, who arrived in China in October 1931 from New Jersey, began to learn Lisu around 1936 when he joined the Cookes in Luda. As he developed in ministry experience and language he began to teach at the Rainy Season Bible School, a role he carried out for many years. During his frequent travels, Peterson took along some basic medicines, a pair of dental forceps, and a phonograph with records to play gospel talks and songs in Lisu—all useful tools for a missionary at the time. While he was thrilled when people showed interest in the gospel of Jesus, he was aware that "Mass movements always bring a certain amount of anxiety, because many who profess to be 'followers of God' do not know what it is to have a living faith in the Lord."[52] The lesson he learned should never be forgotten by anyone who desires to share the gospel with others and see churches multiply. Solid foundations must be laid through consistent biblical teaching. Though he rejoiced when people came to Christ, Peterson was well acquainted with the pain of losing and burying co-workers as he buried Earl Carlson in 1937 and J. O. Fraser in the following year.

The next missionary to the Salween Lisu was Allan Charles William Crane (孔雅綸, 1909–1987), who left his home in Ipswich, England, and arrived in China exactly one week after Charles Peterson in October 1931. In 1936, he married Lydia Evelyn Baker (貝道義, 1908–1984), from Oregon, USA, in Hankow. After serving elsewhere for a number of years, the Cranes lived at Fuinshan from 1940–42 and 1947–49. That post separated them from their nearest missionary neighbors by a ten day's walk. Toward the end of their time in Yunnan, Allan and Evelyn began to emphasize training Lisu and Lahu children and ran a Sunday School and Vacation Bible Schools so that the younger generation of the church would be trained in their faith.[53] Like other CIM workers, the Cranes did not limit their ministry to one tribe, and also worked with the Lahu and Liti people and helped to produce literature in those tongues. They showed great concern for minority people who had no Christian witness and no Christian literature and did what they could to provide for them.[54] The Cranes moved to Thailand in 1951 and immediately began to seek out tribal people to whom they could minister.[55]

Orville Carlson (賈怡承, 1908–2001) went to China from a farming background in northern British Columbia, Canada in 1936, following his brother Earl who had joined CIM two years earlier and who had been struck down by typhus in 1937 just as his Lisu was reaching the level necessary to share the gospel. Orville joined the Kuhns in 1941 to work at Padé. On the six-day trek from Baoshan, Carlson's first glimpse of the Salween stirred up

Job Fish, Allyn Cooke, and Allan Crane in translation consultation. *The Millions*, British ed. (April 1958): 45.

a remembrance of his brother who had died up the river to the north a few years earlier. He felt that as Earl had fallen "with a blazing torch in his hand," that "perhaps it is for me to pick up that torch where spent but clutching fingers laid it down."[56] When, on the following day, he saw a young Lisu girl approach the Kuhns with her hands outstretched, he made the mistake of thinking that she was a beggar when, in fact, she was extending "the right hand of fellowship" in proper Christian Lisu fashion.

When Carlson went to help teach at the Bible School (through an interpreter), he was introduced to another Christian Lisu tradition—a line of people waiting to welcome guests through an arch made of tree branches. After singing a hymn, the guests are welcomed through the arch amid much handshaking. Our recent experience at the celebration in northern Thailand proved that this custom is still in effect though the arch was not as primitive as they once were.

Carlson resigned from CIM in 1944 due to the war, taking up a commission with the British Army, and was readmitted in 1946. In 1948, he married Hazel M. Waller (王榮蘋, 1920–2008) from Pennsylvania, in Kunming. After moving to Thailand, they worked with the Pwo Karen.

These were the main CIM members who worked with the Salween Lisu in China. In addition, a few others who were assigned to reach out to the Chinese or other tribes also shared the gospel with Lisu or were involved in ministry to them for a short period of time.[57] Others would later join the work in Thailand, one of whom—Lilian Hamer (何莉莉, 1913–1959)—would become OMF's first martyr in that country.[58]

Lisu church growth

Counting from J. O. Fraser's first encounter with Lisu in 1910 until John Kuhn left in 1951, the CIM had just over forty years of ministry to the Lisu in China. During that period, more than twenty CIMers spent between a few months and more than twenty years working with this people who turned to Jesus in such great numbers that it is possible that more than one-half of the 700,000 or so Lisu in China today call themselves Christians. The number is so large that they are considered a Christian ethnic group. Some estimates place Lisu Christians in Myanmar at 90 percent.[59] More conservative estimates reckon that between 75 and 80 percent of the 400,000 Lisu in Myanmar are Christian.[60]

While the number of Lisu in Thailand is much lower as is the percentage of Christians, a sizeable number can be found there too as the 109th celebration aimed to have 1,000 people in attendance. While we heard no exact count, and Lisu from at least three different countries came and went, the event was ablaze with the beautiful costumes of Lisu women and resounded with their singing. And though this was a major festival, we were assured that their Christmas gatherings were even larger. Many have wondered what has given rise to the tremendous growth of the Lisu church. Several possibilities could be suggested.

Prayer

It is well known that from his early days in Yunnan, Fraser stressed the need for prayer in the spiritual life of the believer and for the spread of the church. Its place was so crucial that he wrote: "Just as a plant may die for lack of watering, so may a genuine work of God die and rot for lack of prayer."[61] He thus encouraged his prayer band to pray new believers into the church, uphold and nurture them, and bring them to maturity in the faith. General requests would not do. His requests were so specific that prayer partners felt that they lived "just next door" to the Lisu. His letters still serve as models for today, as they contained interesting information, explicit requests, and devotional teaching. His emphasis on prayer was absorbed by his coworkers who wrote detailed prayer letters and books so that their supporters could uphold the work.

As important as it is for people in sending countries to pray for the work, it is equally important that new believers learn how to pray whether by memorizing a prayer or learning to sing a hymn. One of the prayers taught in early years focused on God as Father and Creator and asked for protection from evil spirits so that they could remain faithful to Christ.

> God, our Father,
> Creator of heaven and earth,
> Creator of mankind,
> We are Your children,
> We are followers of Jesus.
> Watch over us this day;
> Don't let the evil spirits see us.
> Trusting in Jesus, Amen.[62]

"Crude, but full of meaning, is the arch of welcome under which Lisu Christians pass as they approach a short-term Bible School." *China's Millions*, North American edition (October 1941): 154.

Lisu 109th anniversary welcome arch

April Bible School with John Kuhn

The Lisu were also taught to pray for those who were sick that God would heal them. In addition to the practical reality that medical care was almost non-existent in the mountain villages, by teaching them to pray to Jesus—the Great Physician—for healing, new believers were less likely to listen to their neighbors who exhorted them to sacrifice to the spirits they had previously worshipped. When they prayed and someone was healed, they learned through experience that they didn't need a missionary to pray for them but that God would listen to them. Undoubtedly, prayer played an important part in the growth of this church.

Itinerant evangelism

Along with prayer, the growth of the church was linked to itinerant evangelism by the Lisu themselves. As the work began, Western missionaries traveled from village to village with the gospel. By the fall of 1916, the first fruits of great growth were being gathered, but it was not until 1922 that the first permanent station was established among the Lisu. Throughout this time, and for many years to come, the missionaries traveled throughout the mountains to preach and relied upon local evangelists who took the gospel to many places they could never reach. Some visits took place because distant Lisu had heard that Jesus had power over the evil spirits and had come looking for a teacher because they wanted to be set free. Treks to other locations were planned so that others might have a first opportunity to hear about Jesus. The fact that both missionaries and locals worked together in this work enhanced the spread of the church.

The Bible

Another key factor in the growth of the Lisu church is the Bible. While the legend of the lost book may have stirred up interest, the possession of God's book that spoke their language was of greater importance. Few Lisu had received any education prior to becoming Christians. As the missionaries translated the Bible for them and taught them how to read, they began to hear God's word speak. And though the missionaries agreed that Lisu believers only needed to understand the plan of salvation to go and plant a new church, they were adamant that the evangelists needed a deeper understanding of the Bible to help the church grow. For this reason they developed the short-term and Rainy Season Bible Schools mentioned above. Of these schools, Gowman wrote:

> In our work here, as in all our other fields among the tribes, we have consistently placed the emphasis strongly upon the conducting of short-term Bible Schools, not only at the main station but in the larger out-stations from time to time. This we consider THE most important part of our work. We believe in education, but it is Bible education which is of primary importance.[63]

And though Bible teaching was the major responsibility of the missionaries, it did not take long before Lisu evangelists joined them in teaching others.

Hymnody

The singing of hymns was such an important factor in the growth of the Lisu church that a doctoral dissertation has been written on the phenomenon.[64] Tegenfeldt describes the importance of singing in the growth of the Lisu church.

> Vocal music was an important facet of Animist Lisu culture, which the missionaries incorporated very early into the life of the infant Church. Village choirs, composed of young and old of both sexes, proved very popular, the villagers often singing until late at night. Lisu people, even those somewhat older, usually found it easy to learn to read, using the orthography developed by Fraser. In fact, it often was the desire to sing in the choir which motivated them to learn to read. After learning to read well enough to sing from the Lisu hymnal, they usually progressed to the point where they could read the Scriptures as well. The choir experience was often the means whereby Lisus became literate, in some cases were introduced to the Christian faith for the first time, and were strengthened in the Christian life.[65]

In addition to translations of common western hymns, other lyrics were developed for teaching the Christian faith to the Lisu. As early as 1917, words were set to music to provide young believers with an outline of Old and New Testament teaching that supplemented the few translated portions of Scripture.[66] When the missionaries suggested that traditional Lisu music and poetic forms be used for hymns, some church leaders "protested that the new hymns had a heathen flavor."[67] Eventually, though, they were added to the hymnal. As Lisu poetry is in some ways structured like Hebrew poetry, some Lisu hymns appear to be modeled on the biblical Psalms.

> Lord Jesus, Thou art my road!
> Lord Christ, Thou art my way!
> Oh, what joy when my journey's done.
> Oh, what happiness when I've arrived!
>
> My hope is up above.
> My trusting-place is up yonder.
> Because of that my joy is full.
> For that reason my joy is complete.
>
> When this house of flesh falls over,
> When this tabernacle falls down,
> I hope for the Great House,
> I think of the Great Home.
>
> My trusting place is secure.
> My hope also is sound.
> May God's will be done.
> May the Lord's wish
> be accomplished.[68]

As it condenses scriptural truth, provides words for prayer, and motivates people to read God's word, hymnody is a potent stimulus for spiritual and numerical growth in the church. It clearly moved many Lisu to listen to the gospel, respond to it with faith, and allow its message to fill their hearts and move them to action.

Three-self principles

One more factor that may have prompted the growth of the church is the use of the three-self principles as developed by Roland Allen.[69] According to Allen, self-support, self-extension, and self-government should always be united in church practice. While it is not known how Fraser discovered Allen's work, it is clear from something his co-worker, Francis Flagg, wrote in *China's Millions* that they had already been impacted by the 1912 publication of *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours?* In describing a 1917 journey he took with Fraser, Flagg wrote:

> Here, by necessity, some of the conditions idealized in the book, 'Paul's Missionary Methods and Ours,' are realized. The missionary visits a raw heathen village and after only about three days' teaching and instruction the people pull down the spirit altars and perhaps six or seven families accept the Gospel. The missionary returns after a year's absence and finds them true to the light they have received and very anxious for more instruction.[70]

He continues his description of Lisu Christianity by recording that the first Christian chapel in Lisuland would not be recognized as such by people at home but that its builders are "perfectly satisfied" with it. Their basic confession is that, "I'm a student of the Books; I'm bound for Glory!" He further tells that the Lisu, not knowing how to conduct a Christian funeral, wrote that the deceased was a "student of the Books" and a faithful Christian on a piece of paper and then "sent the message to the Lord by burning the paper at his coffin."[71]

If Allen's earlier book had opened Fraser's eyes to the possibilities of stimulating church growth by giving the local church responsibility over all the work, his second book sank it deep into bedrock. John Kuhn, who came to China in 1926, recorded that "The

Boys copying Lisu Scriptures

first book that that I ever noticed Mr. Fraser reading was Roland Allen's [1927 publication] *Spontaneous Expansion of the Church.*"[72] Kuhn went on to write:

> From the early days he was persuaded of indigenous development in church growth. The foundations laid in the Lisu church reflect his early conviction of this. When the Lisu wanted to take the Gospel to their fellow tribesmen, Fraser encouraged them to go right ahead and exhorted those left behind to support the evangelists. Did they want to build chapels? They were instructed to do so with their own skill and materials. God blessed their "home grown" efforts which developed into a most exemplary work.… His persistence was rewarded when the Yunnan Chinese and tribal churches brought into being by the C.I.M. were growing in full swing with indigenous principles. Meanwhile we in the Lisu work were allowed to reap the results of his early planting. Fraser's clear grasp of indigenous principles was aptly and consistently applied to the emerging Lisu Church. The expansion of that church both in China and Burma give genuine evidence of their validity.[73]

While some of Fraser's ideas came from his reading of Scripture and Roland Allen, others developed from pragmatic concerns. One of the chief of these was the necessity of using local evangelists. When the strangeness of the white man distracted the people so that they could not remember his message, he determined that Lisu Christians should be at the forefront of evangelizing their own people.[74] This characterized the movement. As Fraser wrote, "they have been saved not merely for their own sake, but saved in order to reach the unsaved all around them," a task that included both Lisu and people from other tribes.[75]

If self-propagation was essential, so was self-support. From the very beginning, Lisu Christians were to provide for their own material needs without outside support. They thus built their own chapels, supplying everything needed for the services, and supported their own evangelists and teachers. By the time the first CIM mission station for the Lisu opened in Muchengpo in 1922, thirty chapels had been built without recourse to Western funds. By 1926 these had been expanded to forty-four and by 1928 to fifty-three.

The third "self"—self-government—was practiced from the beginning as is illustrated by the building of chapels when, where, and how the Lisu wanted them. They were also taught to lead their own services so that they could worship God without a missionary present. Leaders were selected by the Lisu themselves, the only requirement was that the person be called of God. As Isobel Kuhn wrote, "We may put up with ignorance, inexperience, and shortcomings, but a call from God they *must* have.... *No development of the whole work rejoiced me more than to see the way God has been raising up these native workers.*"[76] In 1927—only five years after the beginning of the movement—the 2,036 communicant members in the Muchengpo district were served by fifty-nine elders and seventy-eight deacons—all unpaid.

The first pastor—Paul Tiger-Fish—was ordained in January 1930. He had served as an evangelist and the head of all the evangelists in the Muchengpo district. Gowman recorded that, "Although since the beginning of 1927 the Lisu evangelists have in fact exercised all the prerogatives of ordained pastors, it was felt wise not to administer formal ordination until they had been in the work for five years."[77] The ordination

of Paul Tiger-Fish was followed by the ordination of Moses Fish in 1935.[78]

Self-governance impacted the sending of evangelists. While a missionary might suggest where evangelism should be done (in part, because they were more aware of the wider needs), the churches would decide who would go, where they would go, and how much the evangelists would be paid.

Prayer, itinerant evangelism, the Bible in their language, hymnody, and three-self principles can all be cited as things that led to the growth of the Lisu church. And it is likely that each of these had a part to play in the spectacular expansion of Christianity within this tribe. Missionaries working with other groups would do well to emulate the principles discussed here. Even so, no one should conclude that there is a formula here that will always receive the same result. Many groups of people have been prayed for, evangelized by outsiders and insiders, had the Bible, hymns, and other teaching materials prepared for their languages, and had a local church established following three-self standards and yet seen no growth. Though some may see this as a lack of faith on behalf of the missionaries or a proof that the soil where the seed was sown was too rocky, there may be another explanation.

John 3 records a conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus about being born again. According to Jesus, spiritual rebirth is essential for anyone to enter the kingdom of God. He then informs his new friend of the mysterious nature of salvation. "The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit" (John 3:8 ESV). And though neither Nicodemus nor we can fully understand what happens when we share the wonderful story that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16), the Holy Spirit blows where he will and sweeps the people he desires into his kingdom. Whether he does that in a big way, as with the Lisu, or in a smaller way, as with many other groups, he is the one who leads people into his kingdom. As this paper has shown, we have much to learn from the work that the Spirit performed among the Lisu. And while we desire to see him impact other people in the same way, let us always share the good news of Jesus not to the glory of a man, tribe, people, or even a strategy, but to the glory of God. **MRT**

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[1] Geraldine Taylor, *Behind the Ranges* (London: CIM, 1944); Eileen Crossman, *Mountain Rain* (Sevenoaks: OMF, 1982).

[2] Walter McConnell, "J. O. Fraser and Church Growth among the Lisu of Southwest China" (master's thesis, Regent College, 1987).

[3] Early discussions of Lisu origins can be found in George Forrest, "Journey on the Upper Salween, October–December 1905" *The Geographical Journal* 32 (July to December 1908): 260–1 and J. O. Fraser, *Handbook of the Lisu (Yawyin) Language* (Rangoon: Government Printing, 1922), iii. For a recent examination concluding that "we will probably never know" the origin of the Lisu, see Michelle Zack, *The Lisu: Far from the Rule* (Boulder: University of Colorado, 2017), 29–34.

[4] It is impossible to be precise about the number of Lisu in the world today. At the lower end of the scale, Ethnologue reports 610,000 Lisu in China and a total of 767,000 in all countries (though this may refer to active speakers). Ethnologue, "Lisu," https://www.ethnologue.com/language/lis (accessed 9 March 2019). Around twenty years ago, James S. Olson said the population "probably exceeds 800,000," more than 500,000 of whom live in China. Olson, "Lisu," in *An Ethnohistorical Dictionary of China* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1998), 206. Michelle Zack estimates 1.5 million in her magazine article and about 1.15 million in her book. Michelle Zack, "From Struggle to Success, Lisu Hill Tribe enters the 21st Century," http://www.khaosodenglish.com/featured/2018/01/18/lisu-hill-tribe-enters-21st-century/ (accessed 9 March 2019), 14 and *The Lisu*, 14. Zach correctly notes that "Numbers and even names applied to minority groups by nations are not consistent and shouldn't be assumed to be accurate, particularly in areas of conflict.… Census data may be intentionally inaccurate and identities ambiguous—groups exaggerate their population to appear 'bigger' as they vie for political power. Questions of what constitutes or how to define an ethnic group (or its political activities) are becoming more, not less, contested today than in the past." Zack, *The Lisu*, 15–16.

[5] Ethnologue lists ten different dialects. Ethnologue, "Lisu." From an early date, missionaries of the China Inland Mission distinguished between the Western Lisu who lived along the Salween River and the Eastern Lisu who lived in the Sapushan district along the Yangtze. The two groups shared only about 50% of their vocabulary and were said to speak dialects that were so different that they were mutually unintelligible. Furthermore, the Eastern Lisu referred to themselves as "Lihpaw" and were only called Lisu by the Chinese. Fraser, *Handbook*, iv. The difference was confirmed at the 109th celebration by a Lisu leader who said that when he visited these people he could not understand when they spoke to one another. He added that they are not Lisu but Lipo (a variant spelling from that used by Fraser). Due to the differences, early missionaries concluded that "co-operation in the matter of literature appears to be out of the question." "Editorial Notes: More Work Among the Tribes," *China's Millions*, British ed. (December 1915): 189, http://findit.library.yale.edu/catalog/digcoll:220325 (accessed 9 March 2019). The Lipo, who were evangelized from a slightly earlier time than the Lisu, deserve more historical research.

[6] Grace R. Liddell, "An Introduction to the Lisu Tribe of Yunnan," *China's Millions*, North American (NA) ed. 48 (April 1940): 54.

[7] Leila R. Cooke, *Fish Four and the Lisu New Testament* (London: CIM, 1947), 11–12, https://missiology.org.uk/pdf/e-books/cooke-l-r/fish-four-lisu-nt_cooke.pdf (accessed 19 March 2019).

[8] Paul Lewis and Elaine Lewis, *Peoples of the Golden Triangle* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1984), 242.

[9] The highest mountain in Yunnan is Meili Xue Shan (梅里雪山) which rises to over 22,000 feet (6,000 meters) and is bounded by the Mekong and Salween rivers.

[10] The first journey up the Salween by Western explorers took place in 1905. If the report of that exploration is accurate, much of the region was wild with no effective governmental oversight. Forrest, "Journey on the Upper Salween."

[11] Frank M. LeBar, Gerald C. Hickey, and John K. Musgrave, *Ethnic Groups of Mainland Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Human Relations Area Files Press, 1964), 28.

[12] Lisu had begun to move into Burma before the beginning of the twentieth century. The available data indicates that the first Lisu to enter Thailand arrived from Burma during the early 1920s, although some residents in the Fang area claimed to have arrived as early as 1905. Lewis and Lewis, *Peoples*, 242.

[13] Augustus Margary, the interpreter for Colonel Browne's expedition to China, was killed along with five Chinese companions on 21 February 1875. For more information, see A. J. Broomhall, *Refiner's Fire*, Hudson Taylor and China's Open Century, Vol. 5 (Sevenoaks: Hodder and Stoughton and Overseas Missionary Fellowship, 1985).

[14] Henry Soltau, "Work in Rangoon," *China's Millions*, British ed. (December 1875): 81, https://archive.org/details/chinasmillions7576chin (accessed 19 March 2019).

[15] Marshall Broomhall, *The Jubilee Story of the China Inland Mission* (London: Morgan and Scott and CIM, 1915), 106, https://archive.org/details/jubileestoryofch00broo/page/n6 (accessed 19 March 2019).

[16] After the death of his wife, George Clarke remarried, lost another wife, and remarried again. He remained in China until his death in 1919. "In Memoriam: Mrs. J . W. Stevenson.—Mr. George W. Clarke.—Mrs. J. Brock.—Miss I. Cormack," *China's Millions*, British ed. (March 1920): 35, http://findit.library.yale.edu/catalog/digcoll:220838 (accessed 19 March 2019).

[17] Elsewhere in Southeast Asia tribal work had been going on for some time. By the time Adoniram Judson died in 1850, around 7000 people in Burma had come to believe in Jesus as Savior and Lord, including a Karen man—Ko Tha Byu (ca 1778–1840)—who joined George Dana Boardman (1801–31) to pioneer work with his own people. By 1856, the Karen church numbered around 11,000. Missionaries in Burma began to reach the Chin in 1845, the Shan in 1861, and the Kachin in 1876. The American Baptist, George Geis (ca. 1860–1936), had contact with Lisu in Burma as early as 1898, communicating with them in Kachin, and baptized a Lisu couple—Ngwa Tar and Gu Na Du—in 1902.

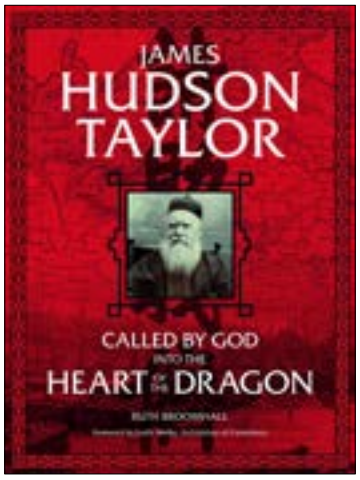
[18] Marshall Broomhall, "Preface," in Samuel R. Clarke, *Among the Tribes in South-west China* (London: CIM and Morgan and Scott, 1911), vii, https://archive.org/details/amongtribesinsou00clarrich (accessed 19 March 2019).

[19] Tegenfeldt says that this story is reported, with variations, by the Karen, Lahu, Wa, Akha, Lisu, Lushai, some Naga from India, and Kui from northeast Thailand. Herman Tegenfeldt, *A Century of Growth: The Kachin Baptist Church of Burma* (South Pasadena, CA: William Carey, 1974), 46.

[20] Leila Cooke, *Fish Four*, 11–12; Phyllis Thompson,

King of the Lisu (London: CIM, 1956), 12.
[21] Lewis and Lewis, *Peoples*, 242.
[22] Other tribal groups from southern China tell similar stories about a flood and humankind being saved by a gourd. Jia Zhi, "Epics in China," in *Religion, Myth and Folklore in the World's Epics: The Kalevala and its Predecessors*, ed. Lauri Honko (Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 1990), 506–07.
[23] Allyn Cooke, "In Memoriam: James Outram Fraser, B.Sc.," *China's Millions* (December 1938), 180.
[24] James O. Fraser, "Work among Aborigines in the Tengyueh District," *China's Millions*, British ed. (August 1913), 128.
[25] Ba Thaw spent much of his life sharing the gospel with the Lisu. It was said of him that he "lived with the Lisus, dressed like a Lisu, and consistently sought to learn more about their language and culture." Anna May Say Pa, "Ba Thaw," in *A Dictionary of Asian Christianity*, ed. Scott W Sunquist (Grand Rapids and Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2001), 50. He thus modeled what it is like for Christian evangelists to go beyond their own people and culture to reach others for Christ.
[26] James O. Fraser, *Handbook of the Lisu Language* (Rangoon: Government Printing, 1922); "The New Testament in Lisu," *China's Millions*, NA ed. (September 1937), 135.
[27] Roxie was the daughter of Frank Dymond, an English Methodist missionary who had sailed for China on the same ship as Samuel Pollard with whom he worked for many years to bring the gospel to the Miao people. It is interesting to note that Roxie's father's childhood friend developed the script for the Miao language and her husband did the same for Lisu.
[28] Roxie Fraser, "J. O. Fraser: A Memoir," in *Fraser and Prayer* (London: CIM, 1963), 6.
[29] Roxie Fraser, "A Memoir," 5.
[30] This daughter, Eileen, wrote the biography of her father titled, *Mountain Rain*.
[31] Neel Roberts, *No Solitary Effort: How the CIM Worked to Reach the Tribes of Southwest China* (Pasadena: William Carey, 2013), 71.
[32] James O. Fraser, quoted in "Here and there," *China's Millions*, NA ed. (February 1922), 30, https://archive.org/details/millions1922chin (accessed 19 March 2019).
[33] The Cookes have a unique distinction in that they joined the CIM after graduating from the Bible Institute of Los Angeles—now Biola University—with ten other members of their class. They made up 17% of their graduating class and was the largest group of missionaries to go out with CIM since the original Lammermuir Party sailed in 1866.
After the death of Leila, Allyn married Esther Francis Freeman (費文德, 1915–2009) in 1944 in Kunming. Esther had come to China in 1940 from Vancouver, Canada.
[34] More than thirty years ago when I was writing my master's thesis on J. O. Fraser and the Lisu, I met Allyn Cooke and Esther at their home in Salem, Oregon. At that time, Allyn epitomized what it means to live a simple lifestyle. Most of his activities revolved around his reading of God's word, prayer, and preparing Bible study notes for the Lisu church in Myanmar.
[35] Leila R. Cooke, *Honey Two of Lisu-land* (London: CIM, 1933); *Fish Four and the Lisu New Testament* (London: CIM, 1947), https://missiology.org.uk/pdf/e-books/cooke-l-r/fish-four-lisu-nt_cooke.pdf (accessed 19 March 2019).
[36] See Aminta Arrington, "Hymns of the Everlasting Hills: The Written Word in an Oral Culture in Southwest China" (PhD diss., Biola University, 2014).
[37] J. O. Fraser letter to Geraldine Taylor, in *Behind the Ranges*, 240.
[38] Also known as 高靜安.黃錫培, "走遍四川、雲南西部村寨傳福音: 精通多種土語的高靜安教士 (Carl G. Gowman 1886–1930)," *傳書* (2005年4月號・第13卷・第2期・總第74期), http://www.ccmhk.org.hk/Common/Reader/News/ShowNews.jsp? Nid=2575&Pid=16&Version=74&Cid=37&Charset=big5_hkscs#.XIcw1igzbIU (accessed 12 March 2019).
[39] Geraldine Taylor, Behind the Ranges, 59.
[40] Talmadge DeWitt Payne, "On the Border of Burma," *China's Millions*, NA ed. (October 1929), 153.
[41] Talmadge DeWitt Payne, "The Forward Movement in the Far West," *China's Millions*, NA ed. (February 1930), 28.
[42] After the death of her husband, Jennie went to Chefoo to see her son at the CIM school and, unable to return to Yunnan, was briefly interned at the Weishien internment camp before being returned to America by way of Goa, India.
[43] Francis F. Fitzwilliam, "Among the Lisu of Stockade Hill District," *China's Millions*, NA ed. (August 1932), 118.
[44] Isobel Kuhn, *By Searching*, American ed. (Chicago: Moody, 1959), 65; *In the Arena* (Chicago: Moody, 1958), 53. Interestingly enough, the first OMF meeting I ever attended was held at The Firs. The following year I began to write my thesis on Fraser and the Lisu.
[45] Isobel Kuhn's books include *Ascent to the Tribes* (Sevenoaks: OMF, 1956); *In the Arena; Nests Above the Abyss* (Philadelphia: China Inland Mission, 1947); *Precious Things of the Lasting Hills* (Chicago: Moody, 1963); *Second Mile People* (Sevenoaks: OMF, 1982); *Stones of Fire* (Singapore: OMF, 1984).
[46] John Kuhn letter to David Fuller, 23 March 1959.
[47] As with many other ideas, it is likely that Kuhn absorbed this from Fraser who had long believed that the Lisu and Kachin converts "would be easily able to support their own pastors, teachers and evangelists" but, as spiritual babies, were dependent upon the missionaries for instruction, guidance, and organization and upon the churches in the home countries for spiritual life and power through their prayers. Taylor, *Behind the Ranges*, 189. Responding to this, Roberts rightly asks "what are the implications for mission organizations which begin a work and then move on to new fields and draw their prayer supporters with them to those new fields of service?" Roberts, *No Solitary Effort*, 91, note 138.
[48] Charles B. Peterson, "Bible School for Lisu Maidens," *China's Millions*, NA ed. (December 1942), 186.
[49] John Kuhn letter to David Fuller, 2.
[50] John Kuhn letter to David Fuller, 4.
[51] He married Miss R. M. Swain in 1951 in Chungking, not long before leaving China.
[52] Charles B. Peterson, "Mass Movement among the Lisu," *China's Millions*, British ed. (November 1950), 122.
[53] Allan C. W. Crane, "A School for Jungle Children," *China's Millions*, NA ed. (October 1947), 159; "Headhunters!," *China's Millions*, NA ed. (July 1947), 100.
[54] When all the missionaries left China, the Cranes moved to northern Thailand where they were based in Chiang Mai (1952 and 1960), Hwei Phai (1953–54), and Chiang Rai (1958–59 and 1970). They also spent time in Burma (1961–62) and Hong Kong (1965–68) working on Lisu literature and Bible translation.
[55] Their early days in Thailand are recounted in Kuhn, *Ascent to the Tribes*, 15–21.
[56] Orville Carlson, "The Thrill of that First Meeting," *China's Millions*, NA ed. (October 1941): 154.
[57] Sarah Kelly (蓋道周, 1902–), from Vancouver, Canada, had spent four years in China before joining Lisu work with the Castos at Fuinshan in early 1936. Though she had reported that she felt the Lord wanted her in Lisu work the whole time she had been in China, her time there was limited, as the day before Christmas, 1936, she married Dr. Stuart Harverson (海富生, 1908–1995) in Kunming and lived in that part of the province until the Harversons resigned from the CIM in 1939. They later served with WEC in Hong Kong, Vietnam, and Taiwan.
Victor J. Christianson (陳士登, 1906–1979) from Minnesota, USA married Catherine E. Galpin (葛爾品, 1909–1948) from New Zealand in 1939 in Kunming. After her death in 1948 of cancer, he married Leita Emily Partridge (巴嘉琪, 1907–2000) from Hobart, Australia in Kunming in 1949. Christianson was one of the teachers at the Rainy Season Bible School.
Jack S. Kirkman (蓋爾曼, 1906–45) from Walla Walla, Washington married Estella A. Hayes (海福如, 1906–) from Kent, Ohio in Dali in 1938.
Erling [Earl] B. Carlson (賈理勝, 1905–1937), from British Columbia, Canada went to China in 1934. While he was just getting his Lisu to the level where he could start to share the gospel, he died of Typhus along the Salween in 1937. He was buried by his co-worker Charlie Peterson. His brother Orville, who followed him to China in 1936, moved to Lisuland in 1941.
[58] Her story is told in Allan Crane, *Fierce the Conflict: the Story of Lilian Hamer* (London: CIM, 1960).
[59] Sun Fei, "From China to Myanmar: Lisu Christians Chase the Sunset," *GoKunming* (24 March 2018), https://www.gokunming.com/en/blog/item/4108/from-china-to-myanmar-lisu-christians-chase-the-sunset (accessed 18 March 2019).
[60] Zack, *The Lisu*, 148.
[61] Fraser, quoted in Taylor, *Behind the Ranges*, 189.
[62] Fraser, quoted in Taylor, *Behind the Ranges*, 151–2.
[63] Carl G. Gowman, "On the Burmese Border," *China's Millions*, British ed. (October 1928): 154, http://findit.library.yale.edu/catalog/digcoll:221343 (accessed 19 March 2019). The article includes a useful timetable of a normal day at a short-term Bible School.
[64] Arrington, "Hymns of the Everlasting Hills."
[65] Tegenfeldt, *A Century of Growth*, 283.
[66] Taylor, *Behind the Ranges*, 152.
[67] Cooke, *Fish Four*, 35.
[68] Cooke, *Fish Four*, 85–6.
[69] Roland Allen, *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours?* (London: Robert Scott, 1912; reprinted Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962); *The Spontaneous Expansion of the Church: and the Causes Which Hinder it* (London: World Dominion, 1927; reprinted Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962).
[70] Herbert W. Flagg, "The Lisu of the Yunnan Highlands," *China's Millions*, NA ed. (August 1918): 121.
[71] Flagg, "The Lisu of the Yunnan Highlands," 121.
[72] John B. Kuhn, "Memoirs of J. O. Fraser," Folder 55, Box 4, Collection 215, Records of Overseas Missionary Fellowship. Archives of the Billy Graham Center, Wheaton, Illinois, 9.
[73] Kuhn, "Memoirs of J. O. Fraser," 9–10.
[74] Kuhn, *Nests*, 16.
[75] J. O. Fraser, "The Aboriginal Races of Western Yunnan," *China's Millions*, NA ed. (January 1929): 8.
[76] Kuhn, *Nests*, 116. Italics original.
[77] Carl G. Gowman, "Among Chinese and Tribespeople," *China's Millions*, NA ed. (September 1930): 136.
[78] This is the "Fish Four" of Leila Cooke's book.

James Hudson Taylor: Called by God into the Heart of the Dragon



By Ruth Broomhall. Surrey: CWR, 2018. ISBN 978-1-78259-063-7. 192pp.

Reviewed by Ka-Neng Au

This biography by a great-grandniece of James Hudson Taylor is beautifully illustrated with photographs and pictures of artifacts from the China Inland Mission archives. The text draws selectively from earlier biographies as well as family letters. While the narrative follows a typical chronological structure, the author focuses on a particular spiritual theme at the end of each chapter (e.g., God's faithfulness, dependence on God, and the fruit of the Spirit). These thematic reflections include thoughtful questions and suggestions for personal application. The author has managed to tell a grand story without going into too much detail on the key events in Taylor's life but readers wishing to delve further can refer to the sources in the endnotes. The book is very suitable for the general reader as an introduction to the founder of the China Inland Mission and its General Director for the first 40 years.

Planting an Indigenous Church: The Case of the Borneo Evangelical Mission

Regnum Studies in Mission

By Jin Huat Tan. Oxford: Regnum, 2011. ISBN 978-1-870345-99-6. 336pp.

Reviewed by Ka-Neng Au

The Borneo Evangelical Mission (BEM) was founded in Australia in 1928 on principles and values that were inspired by those of the China Inland Mission. This included trusting that God would provide their material needs and that leadership should be based in the field. The BEM committed itself to the speedy evangelization of the inland peoples of the island of Borneo and to establish an indigenous church that was self-governing, self-supporting, and self-propagating.

To tell this story, Tan conducted extensive research on the historical background of evangelical Christianity in Australia, the changing political environment in northern Borneo, and the spiritual needs of some of the peoples who lived in remote parts of what is the present-day state of Sarawak in East Malaysia. He also gained access to selected BEM archival material, including field and home council minutes, prayer newsletters, and correspondence between BEM members and their leaders.

The first half of the book focuses on BEM's evangelization and church planting efforts, the development of Bible translation and literacy programs, the initial steps in the provision of theological training, and transitions in mission leadership. To complete this picture, Tan conducted interviews with former members of the mission and local church leaders. The church founded by BEM—the Sidang Injil Borneo (SIB) or Borneo Evangelical Church—grew out of the individual fellowships of local believers and became independent of the BEM in structure and governance in 1959.

The second half of the book traces the development of the SIB from being a widespread collection of rural faith communities planted by pioneer missionaries (both foreign and national) to a missions-minded urban church with active lay leaders found throughout the major cities of Sarawak. Today, the SIB is one of the largest Protestant denominations in Malaysia, with congregations in both East and West Malaysia.

Through its process of evangelization, the BEM worked itself out of existence. There are few parallels with other organizations which intentionally operated with such a "sunset clause." For practical reasons, including compliance with new Malaysian regulations governing missionary visas, the BEM merged with OMF in 1975 so that there would be continuity of the work for a few more years in partnership with OMF personnel. By 1979 the last of the BEM members had left Sarawak but several others were offered new fields of service within OMF.

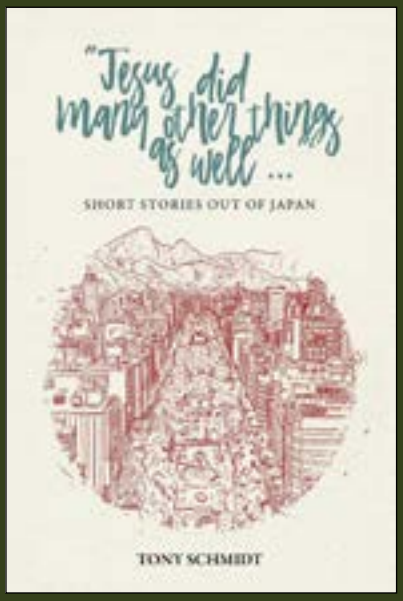
Tan intentionally limited his study to the years 1928–79, and points out that his book is complemented by Brian Michell's D.Miss. thesis from 2004, *The Role of Missionary Partnership and Closure in Indigenous Church Development: A Malaysian Case Study*. Michell, who served as OMF Area Director during the organizational transition, picks up several of the themes from Tan's book and describes the relationship between OMF and the SIB.

Tan's book is academic in nature, with extensive footnotes and a long bibliography. However, he has leavened the facts from official minutes and reports with personal recollections from SIB leaders and BEM members. The narrative is both informative and instructive, especially for students of church history, missions agencies, and Christianity in Asia.

For further reading

- Roland A. Bewsher, *How Hardly…! A Decade of Missionary Effort among the Dayaks* (Lawas, Sarawak: Borneo Evangelical Mission, 1939).
- Jennie Bray, *Longhouse of Faith* (Lawas, Sarawak: Borneo Evangelical Mission, 1971).
- Ray Cunningham, *Longhouses, Open Doors: God's Glory in Borneo* (n.p.: Hudson, 2002).
- Bill and Shirley Lees, *Is it Sacrifice? Experiencing Mission and Revival in Borneo* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1987).
- Shirley Lees, *Drunk Before Dawn* (Sevenoaks: OMF, 1979).
- Shirley Lees, *Jungle Fire* (Lawas, Sarawak: Borneo Evangelical Mission, 1967).
- Ken Nightingale, *One Way Through the Jungle in Borneo* (London: OMF for the Borneo Evangelical Mission, 1975).
- C. Hudson Southwell, *Uncharted Waters* (Calgary, Canada: Astana, 1999).

Books by OMF members

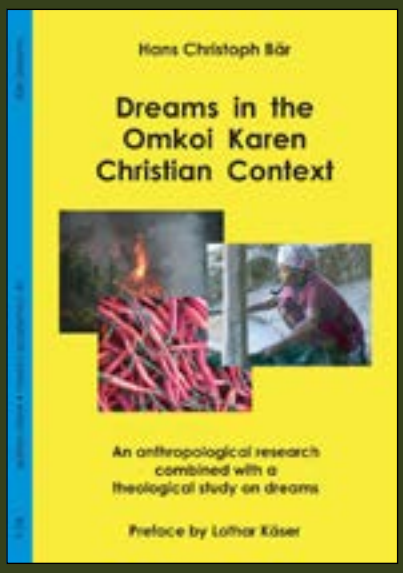


Jesus Did Many Other Things as Well…: Short Stories Out of Japan

By Tony Schmidt. ISBN 978-1775146209

"I couldn't help laughing aloud a few times reading Tony's stories of his experiences in Japan, mirroring so well our lives as missionaries in this country. Each story not only shares an aspect about the Japanese culture but teaches a spiritual lesson to be applied in daily life as a Christian. Tony does not describe the super star missionary but a servant who experiences the Lord's victories in the midst of failure and weakness."
Wolfang Langhans, OMF International Japan Field Director 2002–12.

Tony and Pat Schmidt went out in 1972 from South Africa to Japan as short term workers. During that time, they felt God's call to join OMF long term. They retired from Japan in 2011 and now serve as Associate Pastors at the Vancouver Japanese Gospel Church.



Dreams in the Omkoi Karen Christian Context: An Anthropological Research Combined with a Theological Study on Dreams

By Hans Christoph Bär ISBN 978-3957760807

"The present volume is dealing with the subject of dreams in an animistic culture, concentrating on the Karen people from Northern Thailand. The author has been a missionary in the area for many years. As he learned their language he could make an emic approach to their culture, so that instead of looking for Western-European concepts of dreaming he started strictly from the vocabulary the Karen use in this field of their respective local knowledge. Moreover, he compares the dreaming complex with those of other world religions including what the Bible has to say about it."
Prof. Dr. Lothar Käser, Professor for Anthropology, Freiburg i.Br., Germany

From 1982 to 1998 and 2006 until present, Hans Christoph Bär has been a missionary with OMF International in Thailand, working among the Sgaw Karen people as church planter, Bible teacher and leadership trainer.

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