

The Passion, Vision and Strategy of Hudson Taylor

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The phenomenal growth of the Chinese Church today despite many decades of persecution is a subject that merits in-depth study and analyses. There were about 800,000 baptized Protestants in China in 1949. Despite the trauma of dramatic social change in the 30 years after 1949, it is remarkable that there were still approximately 2 million Christians in China in the 1980s. This number grew to 33 million in 1996, 39 million in 2008 and 60 million today!¹ There is clearly no simple answer to the question why this was possible, but a careful study of the foundation that the missionaries had laid before 1950 may shed some light on the matter. Only a church with a solid foundation can survive change of this magnitude. Undoubtedly, the CIM, being the largest mission organization in China at the time, played a very important role. By 1950, more than 20% of all the churches in China had been founded by CIM missionaries.² Any analysis of the nature of the foundation laid by these missionaries must begin with the role played by the CIM.

The hypothesis of this research is that the success of the CIM is due to two main factors. First is the passion, vision and the daring spirit of Hudson Taylor and his followers. Second is Taylor's strategy, and the timely changes instituted by successive CIM leaders over the course of her history.

1. The Passion and Vision of Hudson Taylor

Without doubt, few missionaries in the nineteen centuries since the apostle Paul have had a wider vision and carried out a more systematic plan of evangelizing a broad geographical area than James Hudson Taylor. His vision was to reach the whole of China, all 400 million people in the second half of the 19th century. Lyall called it the passion for the impossible. Humanly speaking, Taylor was an unlikely leader. He was not charismatic or powerful. His stature was small; his voice did not in the least degree command attention; he displayed little oratorical power; he elicited little applause in his public-speaking. When he visited Canada, an article entitled *Hudson Taylor in Toronto* printed in a local magazine included this comment "Hudson Taylor was rather disappointing. I had in my mind an idea of what great missionaries should look like. He being professedly one of the great missionaries of modern times must be such as they.

¹ These numbers are gleaned from various sources and in many cases, are simply educated guesses by missiologists. Estimates of the number of Christians today vary widely among experts. For details, see Werner Bürklin, "Facts about Numbers of Christians in China," *The Gospel Herald*, accessed July 31, 2014, <http://www.gospelherald.com/articles/44825/20081209/facts-about-numbers-of-christians-in-china.htm>.

² Leslie T. Lyall, *Three of China's Mighty Men* (London: OMF International, 2000), p. 3.

But he is not. A stranger would never notice him on the street except, perhaps, to say that he is a good-natured looking Englishman.”³ Even so, he was possessed of a magnetic personality that drew men and women to him and to his point of view. He also had a knack for organization. This enabled him to create the CIM, which became a model for future faith missions. Under him, the CIM missionary force grew to more than eight hundred strong, and in the decades after his death, continued to expand. Hudson Taylor’s greatest gift was his ability to inspire his followers and fellow-workers, and to pass on his passion and vision to the succeeding generation of leaders. It is amazing to see so many CIM missionaries follow in his footsteps, and likewise dedicate their lives whole-heartedly to this seemingly impossible mission. I term this passion as the daring spirit after the “type of Hudson Taylor”. This was the unique characteristic of the CIM mission force. It is no wonder that Lyall named his book on the history of the CIM *A Passion for the Impossible - the Continuing Story of the Mission Founded by Hudson Taylor*.

1.1 The Paradoxes in Hudson Taylor’s Life:

Hudson Taylor’s life was full of paradoxes. It was marked by tribulation and weakness, but also by triumph and inner strength. To use the apostle Paul’s words, he was sore pressed at every point, but not hemmed in; he was persecuted by men, but never abandoned by God; it was amidst his most testing times that he experienced his sweetest moments with Christ; he might at times have been at his wit’s end, but never at his hope’s end; he might have been knocked down, but never knocked out.⁴ This is an accurate description of Hudson Taylor’s life.

He had many near-death experiences during the course of his career in China. He and his companion, Joseph Edkins barely escaped being killed by hopping onto a passing boat when they tried to evangelize in Songjiang in 1854.⁵ He and his family had another very narrow escape August on 22nd 1868 while they were trying to establish a base at Yangzhou. About eight to ten thousand hostile Chinese surrounded the house where the CIM was located. Some were armed with knives, spears and clubs, and others threw bricks at them. While Taylor and George Duncan, another CIM missionary, fled to the *yamen* (衙門) to ask for help, the mob broke in and set fire to the house. Taylor’s wife Maria was then six months’ pregnant; she, the rest of the family and the other missionaries, narrowly escaped by jumping from the roof

³ Roger Steer, *J. Hudson Taylor: A Man in Christ* (Singapore: Overseas Missionary Fellowship Ltd, 1990), p. 31.

⁴ 2 Corinthians chapter 4, verses 7-15. William Barclay’s translation. See William Barclay, *The Letters to the Corinthians* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1996), pp. 221-223.

⁵ Roger Steer, *J. Hudson Taylor: A Man in Christ*, p.71.

into the yard. Many were injured, and Maria Taylor almost fainted from loss of blood. Yet, these experiences did not deter him from his mission. On the contrary, he became more determined to expand the CIM ministry, and issued a call for a hundred new missionaries that year.⁶

Apart from the hostility of the Chinese, he also faced challenges and opposition from within the CIM. Many of the early CIM missionaries had little formal education; others were university graduates, but with little theological training. Many arrived idealistic and enthusiastic, but mentally and spiritually unprepared for the rigors of mission work in the interior part of China. Some were arrogant and insensitive to Chinese culture. The CIM's policy was that all CIM missionaries should wear Chinese clothes and worship in Chinese-style buildings. One of the early missionaries, Lewis Nicol, abandoned his Chinese dress, claiming that English clothes gave him more protection and respect. After two years of unpleasantness, Taylor finally dismissed Nicol from the Mission, not only because of the dress issue, but also because of his lack of integrity for he constantly spread lies about the CIM. Three CIM missionaries resigned in sympathy with Nicol. About the same time, some missionaries filed complaints to the London office that it was dangerous for so many unmarried men and women to live together at New Lane, the CIM headquarters, and that Taylor was too intimate with the young ladies (he and Maria, his wife, kissed some of them on the forehead before they went off to bed). Though the ladies themselves denied any inappropriate behavior on the part of Taylor and thus cleared his name, yet these charges led to a fall in support for the Mission for a time. The most disheartening issue was the rivalry between the London and China Councils of the CIM. Herein lay the problem: Taylor believed the China Council understood the situation in China much better than the London Council, and should have executive powers. The London Council disagreed, fearing this arrangement would make Taylor too autocratic, and reduce the position of the London Council to that of a "rubber-stamp." This issue caused Taylor enormous strain for a time. However, despite these setbacks, Taylor pressed on and by the end of 1887, one hundred and two candidates had been accepted for service and enough money raised to pay for their passages to China!

Taylor faced criticism and challenge from other mission societies as well. George Moule, a

⁶ Ibid., pp. 215-231.

missionary with the British Church Missionary Society (CMS), was particularly critical of Taylor. The style of missionary work favored by Moule was in great contrast to that of Taylor's. Moule was very critical of CIM missionaries walking about town in Chinese dress. In fact, it was he who instigated some missionaries of the CIM to file complaints to the London Office against Taylor. He also called the CIM establishment at New Lane "scandalous" and "worse than a Romish convent."⁷ Timothy Richard was another who posed an even greater challenge to Taylor. Richard was an able young Welsh Baptist missionary who arrived in China in 1870. He emphasized that Christian mission was not just about the conversion of souls, that it was much broader and deeper than this. It was about establishing the Kingdom of God on earth, and protecting the poor and needy from tyranny. He argued that God also worked through other religions such as Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism, and that if one could just point out the similarities between Christianity and these other religions, followers would be won over to Christ. A handful of CIM missionaries were influenced by Richard's more liberal view and left the organization.

Taylor paid a high personal price in order to accomplish this "impossible mission." His beloved wife and able assistant, Maria, died at the age of thirty-three. Four of his eight children with Maria died before they reached the age of ten. But there was more. In the summer of 1900, while Taylor was convalescing in Switzerland, the Boxer Uprising spread through China. Fifty-eight missionaries of the CIM and 21 of their children were murdered. This broke Taylor's heart.

Taylor's work in China involved relentless rounds of speaking engagements, personal visits, correspondence and administrative tasks, and long separations from his wife and children. All this wore him down physically, mentally and spiritually. At certain points, his "neuralgic headaches", symptoms of stress, were so bad that Maria had to help him handle all she could of his day-to-day work. He also had regular bouts of depression. Spiritually, he felt very low at times. Irritability was his "daily hourly failure," and he even wondered whether someone so dogged by failure could be a Christian at all.⁸ Physically, he was always in bad shape. As early as 1860, he wrote to his mother, "I should inform you that I have felt for some time past, my health has been failing and I have felt more and more unequal to my work... I think that my chest is affected with tubercular disease... Attacks of ague have more or less injured

⁷ Ibid., p. 108.

⁸ Ibid., p.232.

my liver and spleen.”⁹

Paradoxically, it was in his weaknesses that we see him emerging as a spiritual giant who pressed on and grew the CIM into the largest and most influential mission in the history of Christian missions. What was the secret of this spirit of endurance?

1.2 The Vision and Passion of Hudson Taylor

A good leader is one who knows where he is going, and is concurrently able to influence others to follow him towards that goal. Taylor possessed both these marks of leadership. He knew very well where his life was headed. We call this “vision”. The term “vision” in this study is used in a religious sense. Charles Swindoll describes “vision” thus: “it is spawned by faith, sustained by hope, sparked by imagination, and strengthened by enthusiasm. It is greater than sight, deeper than a dream, broader than an idea. Vision encompasses vast vistas outside the realm of the predictable, the safe and the expected.”¹⁰

After serving as a missionary in the Chinese Evangelization Society in China for seven years, he and his wife Maria returned to England to recover his health in 1860. Though dispirited from service in a very inefficient mission, he lost none of his deep concern for the people of China. At the time, there were only 91 Protestant missionaries in China, mostly from North America, working with 20 mission societies. Their work was confined to twelve cities along the coast.

In 1865, Taylor had occasion to be invited by a friend to Brighton for a break. June 25th 1865 was a Sunday. He slipped out during the Sunday service for a walk along the beach. As he reflected on what he had just seen and heard during the service, he saw a great contrast between the congregation of rejoicing Christians in Brighton, and China’s dying millions. Later, he wrote about this experience:

I was unable to bear the sight of a congregation of a thousand or more Christian people rejoicing in their own security, while millions were perishing for lack of knowledge, I wandered out on the sands alone, in great agony; and there the Lord conquered my unbelief,

⁹ Ibid., pp. 160-161.

¹⁰ Charles R. Swindoll, *Swindoll's Ultimate Book of Illustrations & Quotes: Over 1,500 Outstanding Ways to Effectively Drive Home Your Message* (Nashville, Tenn: T. Nelson, 1998), p. 606.

and I surrendered myself to God for this service. I told Him that all the responsibility as to the issues and consequences must rest with Him; that as His servant it was mine to obey and to follow Him—His to direct, to care for, and to guide me and those who might labor with me.¹¹

Then he decided to start his own mission - the CIM. His goal was to bring the Gospel to the entire China. In the beginning, he asked for 24 fellow-workers, two for each of eleven inland provinces which were without a missionary, and two for Mongolia. He wrote this petition in the margin of his Bible. Then he experienced great relief, and peace at once flowed into his burdened heart. At the first opportunity he went to the London and County Bank and opened an account under the name “The China Inland Mission.” The opening deposit was ten pounds plus all the promises of God.

Taylor’s vision was to preach the Gospel to the 400 million Chinese. He intended that the CIM would have six distinctive features:

- Its missionaries would be drawn not from any particular denomination, but from all the leading Christian churches provided that they could sign a simple doctrinal declaration. In other words, unlike many mission societies in those days, the CIM was entirely non-denominational and trans-denominational. They did not have any intention of building up the CIM as another denomination in China.
- CIM missionaries would have no guaranteed salary, but would have to trust in the Lord to supply their needs. Income would be shared by all missionaries. No debts would be incurred.
- No appeals for funds were permitted; there would be no collections; names of donors would not be published though they would be given official receipts, and annual accounts of the CIM would be made public.
- Hudson Taylor was determined to set up a Council in China with full executive powers to direct the work of the CIM. In other words, CIM headquarters would not be in London,

¹¹ Leslie T. Lyall, *A Passion for the Impossible; The China Inland Mission, 1865-1965*, p. 23; Roger Steer, *J. Hudson Taylor: A Man in Christ*, p.173.

but in China because Taylor believed that the missionaries in the field understood the situation on the ground much better than the Council members in London.

- The main aim was to bring about the evangelization of the whole of China, particularly the inland, as quickly as possible. Who actually garnered the sheaves and set up the Chinese Church would be regarded as of secondary importance.
- In order to identify with the Chinese, the missionaries would wear Chinese clothes and worship in buildings built in the Chinese style.

Hudson Taylor strongly believed that this was the vision and mission given to him by God in Brighton. Like the Apostle Paul who was given the vision and mission to reach out to the Gentiles on the road to Damascus,¹² he was given the challenge to reach out to the 400 million Chinese. Taylor was determined to follow in the example of the Apostle Paul to obey the call. He unreservedly committed his whole life entirely to this mission. He described his passion in this way: "If I had a thousand pounds China should have it - if I had a thousand lives, China should have them. No! Not China, but Christ. Can we do too much for Him? Can we do enough for such a precious Savior?" Taylor demanded a similar passion of all CIM missionaries, saying, "China is not to be won for Christ by quiet, ease-loving men and women ... The stamp of men and women we need is such as will put Jesus, China, [and] souls first and foremost in everything and at every time - even life itself must be secondary."¹³

1.3 The Forces Shaping the Life and Ministry of Hudson Taylor

Spiritually speaking, we can say that the vision and passion of Hudson Taylor came from God. There were, however, also other factors at work. First, Taylor's parents played an important role in his life. Even before his birth, his parents already prayed, "Dear God, if you should give us a son, grant that he may work for you in China".¹⁴ His father, James, was fascinated by China and the Chinese people. He often wondered why Persia, Greece and Rome had risen and fallen, while the Chinese Empire remained. As a Methodist, he was also concerned that millions of Chinese had no knowledge of the Gospel in his time because there

¹² Acts, chapter 9 verses 1 to 8

¹³ "James Hudson Taylor Quotes," Goodreads Inc, accessed Aug. 31, 2014. www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/4693730.James_Hudson_Taylor.

¹⁴ Roger Steer, *J. Hudson Taylor: A Man in Christ*, p.1.

were hardly any Protestant missionaries in China. He often discussed theology, sermons, politics and missions in front of his children. Besides, James Taylor taught his children many things about China. He often said, “If all the Chinese were ordered to stand in single file, with a yard between each of them, they would circle the globe seven times at the equator.” As Taylor’s sister Amelia said, “It made a great impression on us as children.” The boy Hudson himself would say, “When I am a man, I mean to be a missionary and go to China.”¹⁵ Without any doubt, his parents were instrumental to Taylor’s life and ministry in China. But, while Taylor’s parents might have planted the seed of his passion for China, they did not influence his mission’s philosophy or strategy. From whence did this come?

Some historians, particularly historians of the Brethren movement, claim that Taylor was much influenced by the Plymouth Brethren. This movement began in the early nineteenth century in Dublin and its leaders were Anthony Norris Groves, a returned missionary, J.G. Bellet, a lawyer, W.F. Hutchinson of Dublin and John Nelson Darby, a Londoner who served as an Anglican curate in Ireland. They dreaded clericalism and stressed that every Christian was a priest. They were not happy with the institutional churches which they considered, either too worldly and dead, or too orthodox and cold. Anthony Norris Groves declared, “Our aim is that men should come together in all simplicity as disciples, not waiting on any pulpit or ministry, but trusting that the Lord will edify us together by ministering to us as He sees good”.¹⁶ They also gave a prominent place in their preaching to the doctrine of Christ’s imminent second coming. At Plymouth, the movement became strong under the leadership of B.W. Newton, thus the name ‘Plymouth Brethren.’ Subsequently, this group split into two, known as the Exclusive Brethren and the Open Brethren. The Exclusive Brethren, led by Darby, refused to have any fellowship with other churches besides their own, but the Open Brethren, led by Newton, welcomed fellowship with other churches.

Many of Taylor’s early supporters were Brethren including George Muller, William Berger, and his own daughter-in-law Geraldine Guinness Taylor, who was a second generation Brethren. Thus some historians claim that Taylor’s concept of faith mission was heavily influenced by George Muller, who was a Brethren. Muller was called “the grandfather of the faith mission movement.” Born near Halberstat, Germany, educated at the University of Halle, Muller was appointed as a missionary to London by the Society for Promoting

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.2.

¹⁶ A. M. Renwick, and Allan M. Harman, *The Story of the Church* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1985), p. 184.

Christianity among the Jews of England in 1832. At the time, Charles Dickens had drawn the British public's attention to the miserable plight of orphans in London with his book *Oliver Twist*. Muller, therefore, resigned from the Mission to establish and run an orphanage on the basis of faith and prayer. He founded that first children's home in 1836 in rented premises in Bristol. In 1849, he opened a brand new purpose-built home in another part of Bristol. By 1851, he was caring for three hundred children and planning a great expansion of his work all by faith and prayer, no public appeals, not even a mite box at the back of the room. Hudson Taylor had a close relationship with Muller. Muller was also the CIM's largest donor. In fact, Muller's motto "Ebenezer" (meaning the Lord helped us) and "Jehovah-Jireh" (meaning the Lord will provide) was adopted by Taylor and printed in every issue of *China's Millions*. Therefore, it is logical to conclude that Taylor's faith mission concept was directly influenced by the Brethren.

Historians also claim that many of Taylor's theological positions were similar to those of the Brethren. This was particularly true of his eschatological view. Both Taylor and the Brethren believed in the imminent coming of Jesus. Henry Grattan Guinness, an ardent supporter of Taylor's and the father of Taylor's daughter-in-law Geraldine Guinness, wrote *The Approaching End of the Age* in 1870, and instructed his daughter Geraldine on the Second Coming of Jesus in this way, "He (Jesus) may not come in my life-time, but I believe that He may come in yours."¹⁷ Though Taylor might not have been as extreme in his view as Henry Grattan Guinness, he still believed in the imminent coming of Jesus and that is why his main aim and mission was to bring about the evangelization of the whole of China as quickly as possible.

Another issue pertained to Taylor's ecclesiology, that is, the doctrine of the church. According to Moses Yu (Yu Ligong 于力工 1920-2010), Taylor's view on denominational churches was very much influenced by the Brethren. Yu said, "Taylor was able to shed the cloak of denominationalism as he went about his ministry. This can, perhaps, be attributed to his Brethren roots and his continued close correspondence with them." Again he asserted that after 1900, the major traditions of significant influence such as Wang Mingdao, Yang Shaotang, Calvin Chao as well as organizations like Watchman Nee's group were undeniably influenced by the Brethren. Apart from the impact made by denominationalism through

¹⁷ Michele Guinness, *The Guinness Legend* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1989), p. 21

Wesleyan theology and Pentecostalism, the biggest single influence, whether directly or indirectly on the Chinese Church must surely be that of the Brethren Movement. This influence was mediated mainly through Taylor and the CIM.¹⁸

On the other hand, there are also factors which support an opposing view. In Geraldine Guinness Taylor's thirty books about Hudson Taylor and the CIM, the word "Brethren" never appeared. A.J. Broomhall, who wrote *Hudson Taylor and China's Open Century* went to great lengths to deny the "false label" that Taylor was connected to the Plymouth Brethren.¹⁹ Taylor himself repudiated the separation ecclesiology of the Plymouth Brethren.²⁰ He often claimed that he was a Methodist, and he was never known as an advocator of anti-denominationalism even though the CIM was a trans-denominational mission society.

Therefore, we can conclude that Taylor might have been influenced by some individuals of the Open Brethren background notably Muller, Berger and the Guinness family, but that he cannot be said to have been influenced by the Brethren movement as a whole.

A careful comparison of the ministries of Hudson Taylor with that of the apostle Paul in the New Testament, shows us that Taylor was in fact most influenced by Paul, the first great missionary in the Christian Church. Paul emphasized that he would not preach in a place where there existed on-going ministries by other Christians (New Testament Romans 15:20); Taylor followed the same principle, choosing to reach out to the eleven inland Chinese provinces where there were no missionaries. Paul emphasized that his call and vision was from God on the road to Damascus (New Testament Acts 26:19); Taylor likewise was very conscious that his call and vision was from God on the beach at Brighton. Like Paul, Taylor never abandoned his mission no matter how discouraging the situation became.

There were other striking parallelisms between the experiences of Paul and Taylor. Paul described his experience thus:

¹⁸ Moses Yu, (Yu Ligong 于力工) "Aspects of the Emergence of the Chinese Church from the Missionary Movement, 1900-1949", Th.D diss., the University of South Africa, 2000, p. 32, accessed Aug. 30, 2014, <http://uir.unisa.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10500/954/dissertation.pdf?sequence=1>.

¹⁹ A. J. Broomhall, *Hudson Taylor & China's Open Century. Bk.3* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1982), pp. 446-450.

²⁰ Alwyn Austin, *China's Millions: The China Inland Mission and Late Qing Society, 1832-1905* (Grand Rapids, Mich, William B. Eerdmans Pub, 2007), p. 94.

I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea. I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger from Gentiles, in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea, in danger from false brothers. I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food. I have been cold and naked. Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches. Who is weak, and I do not feel weak? Who is led into sin, and I do not inwardly burn?²¹

Like Paul, Taylor was hard-working; he was beaten several times, and went through near-death experiences; he was stoned while preaching in China; he was in danger at sea, on rivers, at the hands of bandits and even from his own countrymen and fellow-workers. He was physically and emotionally weak. Moreover, he was emotionally burdened by the developments in the mission field. The killing of the 58 CIM missionaries and 21 children in the Boxer Uprising in 1900 truly broke his heart. It is likely that Taylor was so much influenced by Paul that he consciously or unconsciously followed his every step. When Taylor was criticized in the Toronto Magazine for not looking like a great missionary leader, he paraphrased Paul's words in reply, "This is a very just criticism, for it is all true. I have thought that God made me little in order that He might show what a great God He is."²² When we discuss Taylor's strategy and methodology in missions in the following section, we shall see even more clearly how Taylor was influenced by Pauline theology.

1.4 The Passion of the CIM Missionaries

Taylor's whole "tribe", namely, the CIM missionary force, was similarly inspired to follow in his steps. It is amazing that so many CIM missionaries would sacrifice their lives for such a mission.

William Borden (1887-1913) was a typical example. He was known as "Borden of Yale" and

²¹ 2 Corinthian chapter 11 verses 23 to 29. NIV

²² Roger Steer, *J. Hudson Taylor: A Man in Christ*, p.311.

was born in 1887, into a very wealthy Chicago family. He was educated at Yale University and Princeton Theological Seminary. Inspired by Taylor's vision, he joined the CIM to work among the Muslims in north-west China. Before he went to China, he lived in Cairo in early 1913 to study Arabic and Muslim literature. Unfortunately, he contracted spinal meningitis and died on April 9th, 1913 and thus his dream of working in China was derailed. When news of his death reached America, the story was carried by nearly every newspaper there. Prior to his death, he wrote about his decision to serve the Lord in China in this way, "No reserve, no retreat and no regret."²³ After his death, his family donated money to build The Borden Memorial Hospital in Lanzhou, Gansu, China.

Dr. Harold Schofield (1851-1883) of Rochdale, England was another example. He graduated from London University with B.A. and B.Sc. degrees. He won an Exhibition at Lincoln College, Oxford, where he gained First Class Honors in the Natural Sciences. He then won an Open Scholarship in Natural Sciences at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, where he was awarded the Foster Scholarship in Anatomy, the Junior and Senior Scholarships, the Brackenbury Medical Scholarship, the Laurence Scholarship and the Gold Medal. He was one of the ablest young men in his profession, with a brilliant career ahead of him. At the age of twenty-nine, he declared his intention to become a missionary doctor for the CIM. Every attempt was made to dissuade him, but nothing would deter him from obeying the call of God. In his first year working as a doctor in Shanxi, he treated 1527 out-patients and 40 in-patients, performed 40 operations and made 3204 out-calls. The following year, these figures doubled. He was also heavily involved in evangelistic work and baptized new converts. His testimony led four more doctors to join the team at the Shanxi hospital. Unfortunately, in 1883, he contracted typhus from a patient. This proved fatal, but his last words were: "These three years have been by far the happiest of my life."²⁴

We should not forget the hundreds of martyrs who were killed serving in China. In the Boxer Uprising alone, 58 CIM missionaries and 21 of their children died. Among these martyrs, more than half were women, some married and some single. Wong Sik-Pui compiled a book entitled *Hui Shou Bai Nian Xun Dao Xue: Yi Jiu Ling Ling Nian Yi He Tuan Shi Jian Xun Dao Xuan Jiao Shi De Sheng Ming Gu Shi* (回首百年殉道血：一九〇〇年義和團事件殉道宣教士的生命故

²³ Howard, Taylor, *Borden of Yale '09: "the Life That Counts"* (London: China Inland Mission, 1926), p. 75.

²⁴ Leslie T. Lyall, *A Passion for the Impossible; The China Inland Mission, 1865-1965*, p. 52.

事 *In Remembrance of Martyrs a Century Ago*) recording for posterity the touching stories of their sacrifice. Their last words were not of grievance, regret and bitterness, but hope and grace. Mrs. Ernest Atwater, for example, wrote in her last letter before her whole family of seven were killed, “I have no regrets of coming to China. I just feel that I have done too little.”²⁵

Apart from those martyred in the Boxer Uprising, there were also a number of CIM missionaries murdered by the Red Army in the 1930s. The better-known case was that of the murder of John and Betty Stam in 1934. The night before the execution, John quoted Philippians chapter 1 verse 21 and wrote, “For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.” On the very day when John’s father received news of the murder, he also received the last letter written to him by John. In this letter, John wrote the following poem:

Afraid?
Afraid? Of what?
To feel the spirit’s glad release?
To pass from pain to perfect peace?
The strife and strain of life to cease?
Afraid? Of what?
Afraid to see the Savior’s face?
To hear His welcome, and to trace
The glory gleam from wounds of grace?
Afraid? Of what?
A flesh - a crash - a pierced heart;
Darkness—light—O heaven’s art!
A wound of his counterpart!
Afraid? Of what?
To do by death what life could not -
Baptize with blood a stony plot,
Till souls shall blossom from the spot,

²⁵ Wong Shik-Pui (黃錫培), *Hui Shou Bai Nian Xun Dao Xue: Yi Jiu Ling Ling Nian Yi He Tuan Shi Jian Xun Dao Xuan Jiao Shi De Sheng Ming Gu Shi* (回首百年殉道血：一九〇〇年義和團事件殉道宣教士的生命故事) (Petaluma, CA: Meiguo Zhong xin chu ban she, 2010), pp.271-688.

*Afraid? - of what?*²⁶

Just as the Apostle Paul wanted to preach Christ where He was not named, many bold CIM missionaries risked their lives to preach in the unknown western part of China where they met great hardship and danger. These intrepid pioneers found stoning an almost routine experience. All faced death repeatedly. They endured shame and rejection everywhere. They had no settled residence for they were continually on the move. They faced the dangers of travel, capture by bandits and infection by fatal disease. Their only purpose, motivated by their passion for the Chinese people, was to preach the love of Christ. In 1875, James Stephenson and Henry Soltay travelled to the Shan State in Burma and preached to the people there. In 1877, Charles Judd and James Broumton took a journey by boat into Kweichow (Guizhou). There, the snow and ice on the higher mountains provided a cold welcome. For the first time, they brought the good news to the aboriginal Miao. James Cameron, a Scot, went to Eastern Tibet. To get there, he was constantly travelling on foot at an altitude of 10,000 to 17,000 feet above sea-level. The journey was one of the most arduous imaginable. Everywhere he sought to make Christ known.

This spirit was not the monopoly of the Western missionaries. Many local Chinese believers were likewise inspired by this passion. A young Chinese evangelist and his eighteen-year-old bride had read Taylor's *Retrospect*, then newly translated into Chinese, and decided to meet the author. Taylor was in the CIM house at Changsha dying. Yet, they were allowed to gather at his bedside. Holding Taylor's hand, the young evangelist said, "You opened for us the road to heaven. You loved and prayed for us for years. We came today to look upon your face ... We do not want to bring you back; but we will follow you. We shall come to you. You will welcome us by and by."²⁷ This young evangelist was not alone. Hundreds of visionary Chinese, including Wang Mingdao, David Yang and Watchman Nee sacrificed their lives in order that the Church in China might be established. That is why we conclude that the vision, passion and the daring spirit of Hudson Taylor's type is one of the keys to the success of the CIM.

²⁶ Peter Stam, SR, "Precious in the Sight of the Lord," *China's Millions* 61 (1935): p.24.

²⁷ Roger Steer, *J. Hudson Taylor: A Man in Christ*, p.366.

2. The Mission Strategy of Hudson Taylor

Taylor's mission strategy was not only innovative; it was brilliant. Ruth Tucker rightly wrote, "The contribution Hudson Taylor made to Christian missions was enormous. It is difficult to imagine where missions would be today without his vision and foresight ... Taylor's greatest influence was with the thousands of like-minded missionaries of the CIM and later faith missions who sought to evangelize the "unreached inland frontiers."²⁸ Taylor's greatness was not limited to his ability to inspire thousands of missionaries to share his vision and passion and join the CIM. He also influenced later generations with his two very important mission strategies, namely, outreach to the "unreached inland frontiers" and his idea of faith mission.

2.1 Going into Inland China

In the 1850s, almost all missionaries were located in the coastal provinces of China. The main reason was that the unequal treaties with foreigners only forced China to open the coastal cities to foreigners. Inland China remained largely closed. Furthermore, it was extremely dangerous to travel in the interior part of China especially after the Taiping Rebellion. The military campaign against the Taipings, the God-worshippers, was concurrently accompanied by much propaganda against Christianity. Thus, we find records of a torrent of violently anti-Christian sentiment among the Chinese especially in Hunan and Shanxi.²⁹

According to Lyall's reports, Taylor's dramatic call to lead a daring advance into the vast interior of China came gradually. Lyall said, "His faith was at first as a grain of mustard seed, but it was to grow until it became a huge spreading tree."³⁰ In the beginning, Taylor had only a vague idea of spreading the gospel to the whole of China. There were no concrete plans or strategies for its execution. In fact, in 1854 when he was still a missionary under the CES (Chinese Evangelization Society), he and his CES partner William Parker submitted to the London Office a bold plan for developing the ministry in China. They wanted a hospital, a school, permanent buildings for the headquarters of the CES in China, three or four village schools with dispensaries attached. All these were to be located in or around the vicinity of the city of Shanghai. There was no mention about interior China. Clearly, at that time, Hudson Taylor had not yet developed his plan to evangelize inland China. In September 1855,

²⁸ Ruth Tucker, *From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya: A Biographical History of Christian Missions* (Grand Rapids, Mich: Zondervan, 1983), pp. 200-201.

²⁹ Alwyn Austin, *China's Millions: The China Inland Mission and Late Qing Society, 1832 -1905*, p. 116.

³⁰ Leslie T. Lyall, *A Passion for the Impossible; The China Inland Mission, 1865-1965*, p. 35.

they received the CES response, “Our professed intentions are not to work in free ports, but in the interior.... We don’t want to spend money in Shanghai.” Parker reacted quite strongly and wrote a letter in protest, “Couldn’t the Society understand that however well-intentioned your policy might be, settled residence in the interior was quite out of question at this time and in this part of China.” He also grumbled, “How can persons at a distance of many thousand miles judge as well as those on the spot as to the state of the country or what is the best course to pursue?” Taylor reacted differently. While he agreed with Parker that it was ridiculous for the London Office to make the decision, he nevertheless saw the wisdom of the CES in insisting on their policy of outreach to the interior part of China.³¹ He later became convinced that God had called him to start a mission with the vision of reaching out to the inland provinces of China which were without any missionaries.

Political change in China enabled Taylor to implement his plan to reach out to the unreached interior provinces. In 1859, the Second Opium War between China and the Allies (also known as the Arrow War) ended with the harsh Treaty of Tientsin and the Peking Convention in 1860. A clause inserted in the French language version of the treaty - but not in the Chinese version - by the French translator, a French Catholic priest, and copied by the British and American authorities, granted foreign traders and missionaries the right to travel anywhere in China and to rent and buy property outside the treaty ports.³² It was upon the basis of such an understanding that the CIM decided to start their mission base in Yangzhou in June 1868 resulting in the Yangzhou riots. The Yangzhou incident was extremely significant to the development of the CIM ministry. On the one hand, missionaries received protection through what was called gunboat policy and were enabled to go inland. In the Yangzhou incident, Taylor appealed for help from the British consul, who came to his aid with a gunboat against the Chinese authorities. As a result of the British consul’s intervention, Taylor and his family were formally reinstated in their Yangzhou home in November 1868 and his house was perfectly repaired at the expense of the mandarins. On the other hand, this gunboat policy sowed the seeds of future hatred, resentment and bitterness among the Chinese against foreign missionaries, finally resulting in the Boxer Uprising in 1900. Even in the British press, the CIM came under harsh criticism. The Duke of Somerset was particularly critical of the CIM ministry. He said:

³¹ Roger Steer, *J. Hudson Taylor: A Man in Christ*, p.93.

³² Alwyn Austin, *China’s Millions: The China Inland Mission and Late Qing Society, 1832-1905*, p. 115.

Now, what I want to ask is - what right have we to be sending inland missions to China - what right have we to be trying to convert the Chinese in the middle of their country?... I have a decided objection to this system of supporting missionaries in the interior of China ...The fact is, we are propagating Christianity with gunboats; if they get into trouble with a missionary, a gunboat will come up ... A missionary, indeed, must be an enthusiast; if he is not an enthusiast, he is probably a rogue. No man would go up and live up one of those rivers and preach Christianity unless he were an enthusiast, and being an enthusiast, he is more dangerous.³³

Clearly, such comments about the CIM missionaries were not well-grounded. If these arguments were valid, all missionary activity whether in the interior of China, or in the treaty ports should have been prohibited. Yet the Duke of Somerset did have a point regarding the wisdom of gunboat policy as it pertained to Christian missions.

From a missiological point of view, Taylor's strategy of going into inland China was a brilliant one. Unlike the Nestorians in the Tang Dynasty and the Jesuits in the Ming Dynasty who targeted the court, the capital, the politicians and the elite class, Taylor's approach was exactly opposite. It was evangelization from the bottom up. He distanced himself from politics, abandoned the capital, the court, and the elite class, focusing instead on the masses in inland China, indeed on the evangelization of the whole of China. This patterned the strategy of the Apostle Paul as recorded in the New Testament. As pointed out by Roland Allen, Paul did not seek particularly to attract the scholars, officials, or philosophers; he focused instead on the middle and lower classes of society, concentrating more on the provinces than the cities. Allen said, "Paul's theory of evangelizing the province was not in every place, but to establish centers of Christian life in two or three important places from which the knowledge might spread into the country around."³⁴ Taylor followed Paul. He planned to reach out to the eleven provinces where there were no missionaries and he called these CIM centers "mission stations". Likewise, the Catholics also recognized the problems inherent in the strategy used by the Jesuits, and similarly changed their focus to the lower and middle classes in the interior part of China. This may be one of the reasons why the Catholic Church also survived post-1950 after many years of severe persecution.

³³ Roger Steer, *J. Hudson Taylor: A Man in Christ*, p.228.

³⁴ Roland Allen, *Missionary Methods; St. Paul's or Ours?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962), p. 12.

2.2 Targeting the peasants in the countryside

Taylor avoided creating large operations in the cities, but sought to penetrate the countryside where farming was the fundamental occupation. C.P. Fitzgerald pointed out that there were two major pillars in Chinese society, namely the peasants and the intellectuals.³⁵ Before the industrial age, over 80% of the total population were peasants. Peasant revolts played a very significant role in the downfall of any dynasty in the history of China. Mao Zedong's famous saying, "If you win the peasants, you win China" makes a point. Moreover, it is interesting to note that almost all the peasant revolts were religiously motivated. The White Lotus Revolt and the Taiping Revolt in the Qing Dynasty were typical examples.

The peasantry in China had the following characteristics. The ordinary folks did not own the land. They rented farmland from landlords at a very high cost. The landlords were also moneylenders who usually demanded that the peasants sell their produce to them much below the market price. In many ways, peasants were like indentured laborers of landlords and there was little possibility for peasants to break out of the cycle of poverty. Thus, the term "landlord" acquired some notoriety among the Chinese populace. Unlike the Catholics who preferred to purchase a large piece of land to build up their mission compound, thus becoming the "foreign landlord" in the sight of the local Chinese, the CIM was wise enough to live among the locals. That may be why the Chinese, particularly those subsequently influenced by the Communists, were more hostile towards the Catholic than the Protestant missionaries.

Hunger and poverty were regarded as women's issues according to Chinese tradition, particularly in the rural areas. Women experienced hunger and poverty more intensely than men. If one member of the family had to starve, it was an unspoken rule that it would be the mother. Women had very low social standing in Chinese society. A husband could throw out his wife or concubines any time he liked. From birth, girls were seen as financial burdens to their families. The Chinese believed that unbound feet in women were unsightly, made a good marriage unlikely, and destined women for a life of hard labor and poverty. However, foot-binding left women barely able to walk on their deformed and crushed feet for the rest of their lives. Many marriages were arranged in infancy and the girl transferred to her future

³⁵ C. P. Fitzgerald, *The Birth of Communist China* (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1964), pp. 30-32.

home without being consulted, usually in early adolescence as soon as she could be useful to her future mother-in-law who was generally harsh and demanding. Often, families were so poor that parents would sell their daughters to the landlords as concubines and their lives in such extended families was often intolerable. Almost all the women in the rural areas were illiterate. Taylor's strategy of using single women missionaries in the interior part of China was a brilliant idea though this strategy brought him severe public criticism in his day.³⁶ Many CIM women missionaries made great contributions to the establishment of the Chinese Church. Since most Chinese women at the time did not appear in public, only missionary women could enter the secluded chambers where they lived. A.J. Broomhall called this kind of intensive house to house visiting "gossiping the Gospel" as the women used simple devices such as a "wordless book" or a five-finger mantra to interest these women at their own level and thereby taught them the rudiments of the Christian faith, along with sewing and hygiene.³⁷

Unlike the intellectuals who believed in nothing spiritually, the peasants in China believed in everything. Chinese intellectuals were much influenced by Confucianism. Confucius was a humanist, a realist and not a mystic. He believed intensely in a moral order, and in a somewhat impersonal Supreme Power as a sanction for moral conduct, but he steadfastly refused to discuss such questions as the nature of gods or the problem of the after-life. He was more concerned about the present world than the next, about our relationship with other human beings than with God. However, the peasants were very different. They believed in folk religion, also known as *shenism*. Folk religion consisted in the worship of the *shen* (gods or spirits) which could be nature deities, city deities, tutelary deities, national deities, cultural heroes, ancestors, deities of kinship, among others. That is why I suggest that they believed in "everything". Peasant beliefs were diverse, varied, but inclusive in nature. There was no dogma, and no conversion necessary for participation. It was not expressed in a separate organizational structure like the Christian church, but was deeply embedded in family or civic life. In a way, it was very similar to the situation in New Testament times. Paul tried to work among the intellectual philosophers at Athens who were similar to the intellectuals in China, but to no avail. That is why he changed the focus of his ministry to the middle and

³⁶ Valerie Griffiths, "Biblewomen from London to China: the Transnational Appropriation of a Female Mission Idea," *Women's History Review* 17, no. 4 (2008): p. 523.

³⁷ A. J. Broomhall, *Hudson Taylor & China's Open Century*. Bk.6, Bk.6 (Hodder & Stoughton and the Overseas Missionary Fellowship, 1988), p. 103.

lower classes. There were objective reasons why this was a good strategy for work among the peasants in the initial stage. In the growing body of literature on religious conversion, Daniel Bays and Murray Rubinstein, both respected evangelical historians, pointed out that “commonalties” were very significant in cross-cultural missions.³⁸ In other words, a missionary could only adapt the cultural patterns of one society to another if he found common ground, that is, “the existence of key parallel cultural patterns and structures.” Alan Hunter and Kim-Kwong Chan wrote in *Protestantism in Contemporary China* that “prayers, healing, fellowship, a system of morality, rationale for suffering and promise of salvation” constituted common ground between Christianity and Chinese folk religion.³⁹ That is why CIM missionaries found that the most attentive listeners to their message were members of religious sects.⁴⁰

2.3 Using the wordless book

Taylor had the amazing gift of reducing incomprehensibly complex ideas into simple objective lessons. He did not like abstract theories or dogma, preferring to use pictures and images to illustrate the Christian faith in a practical way. He believed that the Gospel must be presented in a way that made it relevant to the needs of the people. He said:

Talk theory to the heathen, and they are generally unmoved. Rather missionaries should preach that they had an infallible help for every opium smoker among them, for every drunkard, for every fornicator, for every gambler ... and you will see that that Gospel is good news to your hearers, can command attention, and will accomplish the mightiest changes of which the mind of man can conceive, or the heart of man can desire.⁴¹

After the Taiping uprising, Taylor was convinced that the printed word needed to be accompanied by the preached word, either by foreign missionaries or native preachers or by Biblewomen. He wrote in 1877, “... putting a whole bible or New Testament into the hands of an unconverted and uninstructed heathen, in an unconverted language without printed note,

³⁸ Daniel H. Bays, “Christianity and the Chinese Sectarian Tradition,” *Ch’ing Shih Wen-t’i*, 4, no.7 (1982): p. 33-35; Murray A. Rubinstein, *The Protestant Community on Modern Taiwan: Mission, Seminary, and Church* (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E.Sharpe, 1999), p. 9.

³⁹ Alan Hunter and Kim-Kwong Chan, *Protestantism in Contemporary China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 1993), p. 129.

⁴⁰ Alwyn Austin, *China’s Millions: The China Inland Mission and Late Qing Society, 1832-1905*, p. 11.

⁴¹ J. Hudson Taylor, “The Substance of Several Addresses given during a Conference of Missionaries of the China Inland Mission,” *China Millions* May 1877: p. 122.

or comment - without explanatory tract, and without the comment of Christian life, is the most unsuccessful, and is, so far as my experience goes, sometimes even hurtful.”⁴² Thus, the early CIM missionaries used a simple device called the wordless book to preach the Gospel. The wordless book was a simple mnemonic device that consisted of different colored pages to illustrate God’s plan of salvation. Black stood for sin; red for Jesus’ sacrifice; white for sanctification and finally gold for heaven. Using different colors to illustrate different concepts was not strange at all in the Chinese culture, especially among the peasants. Alwyn Austin had these comments, “Wittingly or unwittingly, the missionaries were presenting the Christian message in colors that the peasants already understood - new wine in old wineskin ... The missionaries were appropriating the colors of Chinese folk religion and giving them new, secret meaning.”⁴³

Another form of the wordless book was what we called “the Gospel Glove.” Mrs. Howard Taylor, a historian as well as a CIM missionary used this method to preach to the peasant women in the 1890s. It was a five-finger mantra:

Thumb: “There is only one true God.”

Forefinger: “The true God loves us.”

Middle finger: “The true God can forgive sin.”

Ring finger: “The true God keeps us in peace.”

Little finger: “The true God leads us at last to heaven.”

When a sister finally got the message, the others would stand around clapping, “Her heart is opening! Her heart is opening!” as an assurance and encouragement.

Typically, early CIM missionaries started evangelizing from a central city, such as the capital of the province. A male missionary, in gown and pigtail, would make evangelistic tours of the neighborhood, covering the same area over and over again until he was recognized and then ignored. He would then conduct what was called “teashop evangelism,” stopping at places wherever people gathered such as shrines, marketplaces, teashops, preaching with his wordless book and handing out tracts. Once he had established a beachhead, that is, an outstation staffed with a native preacher, he would move there by himself. As circumstances

⁴² Ibid., p. 124.

⁴³ Alwyn Austin, *China’s Millions: The China Inland Mission and Late Qing Society, 1832-1905*, p. 6.

permitted, he would bring his wife to share his mud-brick house. While he continued with “teashop evangelism”, his wife, together with a local Biblewoman or a single female missionary, would carry out intensive home-visits to preach to the women with their wordless book. Such an approach sometimes had remarkable results. In 1887, for instance, CIM missionaries devoted six months to intensive country work in Hongdong County, Shanxi and as a result of this hard work, 216 people were baptized.⁴⁴ However, there were also problems with such an approach.

By focusing on peasants in the countryside, the CIM intentionally ignored the needs of the other major pillar of Chinese society, namely the intellectuals. As a result, the intellectuals and the students were left to the ministrations of the YMCA or other more liberal missionaries. This problem was not rectified until 1937 when, during the war, thousands of intellectuals and students moved to free China in the West, presenting simultaneously, great opportunity and challenge for the CIM missionaries, especially those who had previously been involved in the Inter-Varsity Fellowship groups in Britain or North America. This very significant change of CIM strategy is discussed in Chapter Five.

Since Taylor’s main purpose was not to build up and educate the Christian community, but to diffuse as quickly as possible, a knowledge of the Gospel throughout the Empire, the foundation of the church might possibly have been shaky because of the lack of spiritual nourishment. Let us take the 1887 “spectacular draught of fishes” when over 200 people were baptized within a year in Hongdong, Shanxi as an example. Five years later, it was reported that of the 216 baptized that year, 7 had transferred to other churches; 4 had died; 50 had definitely backslid, while another 20 were difficult to trace. Of the backsliders, most had returned to opium-smoking, or idolatry, while some still carried on ancestor worship. Only one hundred and thirty-five remained faithful. In other words, there was a 40% casualty rate, which was high.⁴⁵ When D. E. Hoste took up leadership of the CIM, he recognized the problem at hand, and changed the focus of the CIM to that of building up and consolidating the indigenous Chinese church. This is examined in Chapter Three.

The “wordless book” approach tended to over-simplify the Christian faith. In the West, the wordless book approach was intended only for children. In China, this approach was used to

⁴⁴ Phyllis Thompson, *D.E. Hoste: "a Prince with God"* (London: China Inland Mission: 1947), p. 56.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, p. 56.

teach adults as if they were just as naïve as the children in the West. Equating the minds of Chinese adults with children in the West had two major problems. First, it gave the impression that the Christian faith was anti-intellectual. This was one of the main points of attack on the Christian church during the anti-Christian movement in the 1920s. Second, such an approach opened the Christian faith to misrepresentation for symbols are a very cultural thing. Red was the symbol of good fortune in Chinese culture while the Christians associated it with blood and death. White would be associated with purity in the Christian culture while the Chinese associated it with death. In fact, theology was never taken seriously among the Chinese evangelical churches and it was likely that this was in some way due to the CIM mission approach in the very early stages. Watchman Nee hit the nail on the head when asked by CIM leaders, on the eve of the “reluctant exodus,” about the role that missionaries should play if they were given a chance to return to China. Nee responded, “Please come as teaching elders rather than missionaries (evangelists). What we need most is the right interpretation of the Word of God.”⁴⁶

2.4 Healing ministry as pre-evangelism

Following the example of Paul and Jesus, Hudson Taylor emphasized a healing ministry. He realized that provision of medical care for needy people was the fastest and best way to bridge the gap between the missionaries and the local Chinese. This is why upon return to England after his first term as a CES missionary, he was determined to complete his medical training to become a fully qualified physician.

Medical services played a very significant role in Christian missions in China. In 1905, there were 3,445 missionaries in China, 301 of them were medical doctors. There were 166 hospitals and 241 dispensaries. They treated about 35,301 in-patients and 1,044,948 out-patients in that year. In 1915, of 5,338 missionaries in China, 525 were medical doctors and 142 were nurses. There were 330 hospitals and 223 dispensaries. In that year, they treated 104,418 in-patients and 1,535,841 out-patients.⁴⁷

Taylor saw medical services not as an end in itself, but as a means to spread the Gospel. Theologians call this “pre-evangelism.” In other words, the CIM’s primary intent was not to

⁴⁶ Leslie T. Lyall, *God Reigns in China*, p. 123.

⁴⁷ Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of Christian Missions in China*, p. 623.

spend too much time or resources setting up medical or educational institutions despite the fact that it did produce quite a few outstanding missionary doctors such as Harold Schofield. By 1889, there were 61 hospitals in China; only 9 of these were founded by the CIM. However, out of a total of 44 dispensaries, 18 belonged to the CIM.⁴⁸ The CIM clearly focused on the smaller scale dispensaries rather than the larger scale hospitals. There was wisdom in this strategy. By 1911, the majority of CIM missionaries were actively involved in evangelism, while most of the other mission societies spent more than half their resources and staff maintaining medical and educational institutions.

Using medical services as a means to spread the Gospel had its pros and cons. Without doubt, medical services attracted many locals to the missionaries. Anna Crickmay, a CIM missionary at Taiyuan, Shanxi wrote, “A very slight knowledge of some homeopathic medicine has won us many a friend amongst rich and poor.”⁴⁹ On the other hand, this also created ethical and social problems. Since medical service was so attractive to the local Chinese, many missionaries who were not trained in medicine would take bottles of pills to China and start dispensing them indiscriminately. This was not only dangerous, but extremely unethical.⁵⁰ Some medicines such as morphine, which was useful for the treatment of opium addicts under the careful supervision of a trained physician, fell into the hands of bad businessmen who sold them on the black market. This, for them, was a very lucrative business, but a great disservice to the community. In 1890, the Shanghai Missionary Conference expressed “unflinching opposition to the opium-traffic.” Further they expressed alarm at the rapid increase in the consumption of morphine largely owing to the indiscriminate sale and consequent abuse of the so-called anti-opium medicines. Upon the advice of the Medical Missionary Association, the conference resolved that all missionaries should discourage and as far as possible, prevent the sale of such anti-opium medicines.⁵¹

Since opium smoking had exploded on a massive scale in the second half of the nineteenth century in China, the majority of patients were opium addicts. Taylor was the first missionary

⁴⁸ General Conference of the Protestant Missionaries of China, and M. T. Yates, *Records of the General Conference of the Protestant Missionaries of China, held at Shanghai, May 10-24, 1877* (Shanghai: Presbyterian Mission Press, 1878), p. 732-733.

⁴⁹ Anna Crickmay, “Women’s Work in Shan-si,” *China Millions* March 1881: p.35.

⁵⁰ Alwyn Austin, *China’s Millions: The China Inland Mission and Late Qing Society, 1832-1905*, p. 242.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 367.

to open an “opium asylum” in 1859 in Ningbo.⁵² Furthermore, in 1886, Taylor committed the CIM to using Pastor Hsi’s opium refuges as an auxiliary tool for opening up new districts. Most of Pastor Hsi’s converts in Shanxi were ex-opium smokers. He claimed to have treated over 300,000 addicts,⁵³ but the casualty rate among these converts was very high.⁵⁴ Many returned to opium smoking, some relapsed into idolatry, while others were just “rice Christians,” referring to those who took advantage of the missionaries solely for material benefit. In fact, perhaps with the exception of Pastor Hsi, we do not see any outstanding Chinese Christian leaders, in the entire nineteenth century. This, apparently, had something to do with the strategy of the CIM. It was not until D.E. Hoste took up the Directorship that more emphasis was put on discipleship and leadership training. With this strategic change, we see the emergence of some outstanding Chinese leaders in the beginning of the twentieth century.

2.5 Putting on Chinese dress

The Apostle Paul gave a very important principle for evangelism in First Corinthians chapter 9 verses 20 to 23:

To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God’s law but am under Christ’s law), so as to win those not having the law. To the weak I became the weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all these things for the sake of the gospel, that I may share its blessings.

One of the ways in which Taylor practiced this golden rule was to require all CIM missionaries to put on Chinese dress. In fact, Taylor was not the first to do this. The Catholic missionaries had already adopted this practice previously. Dr. Walter Medhurst (1796-1857) of the London Missionary Society, one of the most experienced British missionaries in China when Taylor first arrived, was the first to advise Taylor to wear Chinese clothes when travelling in the country. Medhurst himself had done so on a journey to the green tea district

⁵² Ibid., p. 245.

⁵³ Ibid., p. 14.

⁵⁴ Phyllis Thompson, *D.E. Hoste: "a Prince with God"*, p. 56.

in 1845.⁵⁵ Taylor was persuaded because he wanted to follow Paul's example. He wanted to identify with the local Chinese as much as possible for the sake of the Gospel though he knew that the foreign merchant community would regard this as demeaning his "superior race" and that some missionaries would share that view. Nevertheless, when he started the CIM, he required all CIM missionaries to wear Chinese clothes as a courtesy to the Chinese people.

It is interesting to note that while there is hardly any literary comment to be found among the Chinese regarding their reaction to the dress issue of the CIM, the Western world reacted quite strongly. The merchant community in China called CIM missionaries "the pigtail tribe." The North China Herald had very harsh words for Taylor. They believed that it was unjust and cruel for Taylor to force missionary women to wear Chinese gowns. The missionary community too was critical of Taylor's approach. George Moule, a CMS missionary, was particularly vocal. He had great influence on some of the CIM missionaries such as Lewis Nicol. Nicol, a member of the original *Lammermuir* team, deliberately refused to wear Chinese clothes once he moved to Xiaoshan, which was about ten miles away from Hangzhou. He also influenced John Sell, another member of the CIM team to follow his example. They felt that the wearing of English clothes afforded them greater protection. After two stressful years trying to resolve this issue, Taylor finally dismissed Nicol. A few other CIM missionaries resigned in sympathy with Nicol.

Was this, in fact, good missionary strategy? The answer is both yes and no. The hostility of the Chinese toward missionaries in those days was a result of the opium war and the unequal treaties which ensued. The CIM's well-intentioned gesture on the issue of dress could hardly be expected to change their attitude. The Xiaoshan incident in 1866 showed that the Chinese were hostile toward missionaries regardless of the clothes they wore. On a Monday evening in 1866, Nicol and his wife Eliza were in the CIM chapel in Xiaoshan. They wore English clothes while another CIM missionary James Williamson wore Chinese clothes. The magistrate of Xiaoshan came with fifty men and began to beat up their Chinese servants and bully the missionaries. There was no difference in the way the two missionaries were treated. The magistrate threatened them saying, "If anyone of you remain tomorrow, you will be beheaded."⁵⁶ In the Boxer Uprising in 1900, the CIM had the highest casualty rate amongst all the missionary societies even though all its missionaries wore Chinese clothes. Hatred of

⁵⁵ Roger Steer, *J. Hudson Taylor: A Man in Christ*, p.9.

⁵⁶ Roger Steer, *J. Hudson Taylor: A Man in Christ*, p.193.

foreign missionaries was so deep-rooted among the Chinese that the missionaries could not change this mind-set by merely changing the way they dressed.

However, if we look at the spirit instead of the letter of this policy, we see the significance of Taylor's approach. Director D.E. Hoste (1861-1946) used to give all new missionaries this advice, "Beware of national pride. It makes itself known like a man who has been eating garlic."⁵⁷ Dressing like the local Chinese was a constant reminder to the missionaries to be wary of national pride. Many missionaries came to China with some level of contempt for the local Chinese culture. They came with a messianic mission, looking to save China with Western technology and culture. These were more eager to preach Western civilization than the Gospel of Jesus. Maria Taylor wrote thus to Mary Berger on this dress issue:

I am not peculiar in holding the opinion that the foreign dress and carriage of missionaries - to a certain extent affected by some of their converts and pupils - the foreign appearance of the chapels, and indeed, the foreign air given to everything connected with religion, have very largely hindered the rapid dissemination of the truth among the Chinese. But why need such a foreign aspect be given to Christianity? The word of God does not require it, nor do I conceive would reason justify it. It is not their denationalization but their Christianization that we seek.⁵⁸

When Taylor came to China, he was very upset with the mentality of "Western superiority" among the missionaries. The policy of dressing in Chinese clothes was Taylor's way of directly addressing this problem. Many foreigners felt that the Chinese costume looked stupid and ugly and even some among the local Chinese disrespected their own style of dress. Some missionaries believed that by putting on Chinese dress, they would lose the respect of the Chinese. Maria Taylor frankly admitted such misgivings before she went back to China with Taylor, but she later found no grounds for retaining these misgivings. On the contrary she was convinced that "the force of character, education, and Christian principle gave them weight with Chinese of both sexes, which neither wearing their own dress could give, nor adopting the Chinese costume could take away." She was treated with quite as much respect in the latter as in the former. Again she said:

⁵⁷ Carolyn Armitage, *Reaching for the Goal: The Life Story of David Adeney: Ordinary Man, Extraordinary Mission*, p. 48.

⁵⁸ Roger Steer, *J. Hudson Taylor: A Man in Christ*, pp.205-206.

Let us in everything un sinful become Chinese that by all means we may save some. Let us adopt their costume, acquire their language, study to imitate their habits, and approximate to their diet as far as health and constitution will allow. Let us live in their houses, making no unnecessary alterations to external appearance, and only so far modifying internal arrangements as attention to health and efficiency for work absolutely require.⁵⁹

These were the ideas, and this was the vision, that inspired Taylor and his wife, Maria in their work. In directing the mission, Taylor tried his best to shy away from drawing up lists of rules and regulations, but he passionately believed that the Chinese would only be won for Christ if the missionaries were free from “national pride.” The mission of the West should be to bring the Gospel to the Chinese while respecting their culture instead of imposing Western civilization on the Chinese people. The policy of putting on Chinese dress seemed to be the most effective tool to combat “national pride.”

2.6 Sending single female missionaries to work in the countryside

The CIM was among the first mission organizations to accept large numbers of single women as missionaries, even sending some of them to work in the countryside with no males accompanying them. In those days, this was seen as scandalous. However, its effect on the later development of the Chinese church was great, beyond even the expectations of the pioneers. According to *Tianfeng*, the official monthly organ of the Three Self Patriotic Churches of China, there were 7,908 women evangelists (Biblewomen) in China in 2005, five hundred and forty-eight ordained women ministers (about ¼ of the total number of ministers in China), and 920 female elders.⁶⁰ We have reason to believe that the number of female leaders in the unregistered churches may be much higher. In the present day Chinese Church, the number of women in leadership positions is much higher than men. This phenomenon is not reflected in churches of the West. Missiologists such as Valerie Griffiths and Rebecca Lewis believe that there is a possible link between Taylor’s strategy then and the present-day growth among numbers of female church leaders in China today.⁶¹

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 207.

⁶⁰ *Tianfeng* (April 2005) http://open.oriprobe.com/journals/tf/TIAN_FENG.htm

⁶¹ Rebecca Lewis, “Underground Church Movements: The Surprising Role of Women’s Networks,” *International Journal of Frontier Missions* (Winter 2004): 145; Valerie Griffiths, “Biblewomen from London to China: the Transnational Appropriation of a Female Mission Idea,” *Women’s History Review* 17, no. 4 (2008): pp. 145-150.

Before the coming of the Lammermuir party, there were hardly any single foreign women in China, not to mention female missionaries. Yet, in the first CIM missionary group, of the twenty-two people including Taylor's family of six, nine were single women. In those days, Taylor's policy of sending single women as missionaries and treating them as equal members of the mission was radical. He scandalized Victorian England, just as Florence Nightingale had done ten years earlier when she took nurses to the Crimean War. In England, unmarried women lived with their families and never set up their own households. Taylor knew this, but he also realized that without the help of single women missionaries, a large portion of China would remain inaccessible. In nineteenth century China, women were secluded. Female foot-binding, a wide-spread practice in China, made walking extremely painful for women, and kept them from venturing far from home. Apart from this practical reason, Chinese culture also discouraged women from appearing in public. Thus, only female missionaries could enter into the secluded inner chambers where women lived. Many of the wives of missionaries were preoccupied with their own children and household chores, so Taylor had to depend on single women missionaries to reach Chinese women. He set up a ladies' council in London under the "chairman" Henrietta Soltau. Miss Soltau started the Women's Training Home and between 1886 and the First World War, she personally prepared 547 women who were accepted by the CIM as missionaries. Among these women trained by Soltau, the most well-known was Evangeline French, who became a pioneer in Shanxi, and later with her sister Francesca French and Mildred Cable, became famous as "the Trio" of Central Asia.⁶² In fact, the number of single women missionaries increased significantly after 1870, not only in the CIM, but in the entire mission field. In 1861, there was only one single woman missionary in the field, Miss Marston in Burma, but by 1909, there were 4,710 unmarried women in the field. The CIM was particularly strong in this area. In 1889, the CIM had 268 missionaries in China; single women numbered 120, almost one half of the force. In 1890, Hudson Taylor visited Australia and sparked off a flood of applicants to the CIM. The majority of these applicants were women. Of the 337 Australian missionaries who had sailed for China up to the year 1938, one hundred and ninety-three were single women and 144 were men (some of whom were married). The proportion of women was even higher in the period up to 1918, with 121 women going out with the CIM and 77 men, a number of

⁶² Alwyn Austin, *China's Millions: The China Inland Mission and Late Qing Society, 1832-1905*, p. 196.

whom were married.⁶³

Once in China, some of these women missionaries established schools and homes for girls. Jennie Faulding who later married Taylor, successfully and imaginatively ran several schools for both boys and girls in Hangzhou. She provided lodging for all the students. Each bedroom had six double beds with one of their teachers as their warden. Faulding taught them to read and trained them in practical handicrafts.⁶⁴ Other missionaries rendered medical services. Because seclusion practices made it extremely difficult for male doctors to treat women, female missionaries trained in medicine became the primary health care providers for Chinese women. Anna Crickmay, a CIM missionary in Taiyuan, Shanxi for instance, said even a slight knowledge of homeopathic medicine won them friends among all classes.⁶⁵ Some were actively involved in what they called “gossiping the gospel.” Using simple devices such as the wordless book and the five-finger mantra, they conducted itineration on an intimate, more intensive scale, starting in their own courtyard, and moving on to their neighborhood, nearby villages and the city. L.M. Forth described one village trip in Shanxi, where she was taken into a cave that the Christians had transformed into “a little miniature meeting-house.” After a short prayer meeting, she witnessed a bonfire of idols - only pieces of paper - the god of riches, the god of the kitchen, and the god of skill. From there they went into the open air, where they had a very informal meeting for about two hours. Miss Forth took care of the women and children. They were charmed by her singing, “Jesus can help little children to be obedient to their mother’s words...”⁶⁶ From such small beginnings (singing the gospel), the Chinese church gradually grew. In 1885, the total number baptized was 219; this number grew to 472 in 1888. Four hundred and seventeen were baptized in 1891, 1262 in 1896 and 1202 in 1899. By 1899, the cumulative total number of baptisms was 12,964.⁶⁷

Other single women missionaries were more adventurous. Following the example of the

⁶³ A. J. Broomhall, "Anniversary Meetings at the Conference Hall, Mildmay Park, 30 May 1889," *China's Millions* July 1889: p. 103; Janet West, "The Role of Woman Missionary, 1880-1914," *Lucas 21 & 22 (June & December 1996): 31-60*, accessed Aug. 30, 2014, <http://webjournals.ac.edu.au/journals/Lucas/nos20-21-june-dec-1996/02-the-role-of-the-woman-missionary-1880-1914/>; Ruth Tucker. 1983, *From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya: A Biographical History of Christian Missions* (Grand Rapids, Mich: Zondervan, 1983), p. 289.

⁶⁴ Roger Steer, *J. Hudson Taylor: A Man in Christ*, p.246.

⁶⁵ Anna Crickmay, "Women's Work in Shan-si," *China Millions* March 1881: p.35.

⁶⁶ L. M. Forth, "Good Tidings from Ban-shun," *China's Millions* Jan. 1893: p. 12.

⁶⁷ Alvyn Austin, *China's Millions: The China Inland Mission and Late Qing Society, 1832-1905*, p. 348.

Apostle Paul who wanted to preach Christ where He was not named, the CIM went into the north-west of China where there had hardly been any missionary activity previously. Tibet was another obvious target. In 1892, a gallant woman named Annie Taylor, a CIM missionary, spent a year in Sikkim learning Tibetan, and then made an unprecedented journey into Tibet from the east with Lhasa as her goal. Her party was attacked by bandits on several occasions, causing them to lose most of their possessions and some of their pack animals. She was able to lead a few Tibetans to Christ along the way, but before they could reach Lhasa, they were apprehended by Tibetan authorities and sent back to China.⁶⁸ In 1893, another cultured young lady who had been brought up in France went to China with the CIM. She worked in Shanxi for seven years and barely escaped with her life in the Boxer Uprising. Her name was Eva French. In 1901 she was joined by Mildred Cable and went to Hwochow in Shanxi where they built up an extensive educational and evangelistic work. Cable restarted a school for girls which had originally opened in 1883. In 1908, Eva's sister Francesca joined her and the renowned "Trio" worked together in Hwochow for twenty-one years. Their attention was drawn to the villages and towns sprinkled around a few oases in the vast Gobi Desert, a one-thousand mile wide expanse of desolate windswept desert in the South of Mongolia. The famous old Silk Road, travelled by traders, soldiers and nomads for centuries, ran across this desert. These three single women missionaries decided to bring the Gospel to these travelers as well as to the residents in the oases towns and villages. They travelled for months, rumbling and jolting over the uneven mountain roads. At night they stayed in primitive, smoky Chinese inns. Their progress was hampered by desert storms, bitter cold, searing heat and bandits. During winter, temperatures fell to -40° F and in the summer temperatures reached up to 122° F. Over fifteen years, they crisscrossed this desert five times, slowly and gradually building up Christian communities in these towns and villages. They left China in 1936 and were unable to return because of the war.⁶⁹

These single women missionaries without doubt contributed greatly to the establishment of the Chinese church, yet critics were also correct in that this CIM policy did indeed expose these young women to great dangers. Professor K.C. Lau (劉潔貞) of Hong Kong University wrote that many local Chinese thought that these women missionaries, who were physically bigger than most Chinese women, were actually men who disguised themselves as women

⁶⁸ Leslie T. Lyall, *A Passion for the Impossible; The China Inland Mission, 1865-1965*, p. 72.

⁶⁹ Cecil Northcott, *Star over Gobi: the Story of Mildred Cable* (Surrey: Lutterworth Press, 1987)

in order to abduct young Chinese women.⁷⁰ In addition, these missionaries were scattered in the countryside far from the coast, in areas where Westerners were hardly known. They had no protection either from male missionaries or the British authorities. As a result, there were many casualties among single women missionaries in the Boxer Uprising in 1900. Altogether over 130 Protestant missionaries and over 50 of their children died. The CIM lost 58 missionaries and 21 children. Of these 58 missionaries, 21 were single women.

These martyrs faced death with grace, peace and courage. Miss Emma Georgiana Hurn, one of the martyrs, wrote before her death:

We know that after this time of trial China will be a very different land. Truly the foundation of the church has been laid by blood; we know not at the present how many lives have been laid down, either of foreigners or natives; what these rulers and governors will have to answer for, one cannot say. One can only say, God rules over all and He must have some wise purpose in allowing all this to come to pass. One feels for some things, that it would be nicer to be taken and be with so many who laid down their lives; but for the dear ones who may read this, and for the sake of many heathen who are still without Christ, one would like to stay for further service. The Lord is keeping one's heart in perfect peace during this time of trial.⁷¹

Miss Edith Isabel Dobson was another example. She was a missionary nurse serving in Shanxi. In the last letter she sent out on April 26, 1900, she wrote, "We are in the Lord's hands, and well we know naught can come to us without His permission, so we have no need to be troubled; it is not in my nature to fear physical harm, but I trust, if it came, that grace will be all sufficient."⁷² The critics were right in saying this CIM policy exposed these young women to great dangers, but they were wrong to say that the CIM forced these young women to go to these remote areas. These women missionaries went voluntarily, with a definite vision and great passion.

⁷⁰ Wong Sik-Pui (黃錫培), *Hui Shou Bai Nian Xun Dao Xue: Yi Jiu Ling Ling Nian Yi He Tuan Shi Jian Xun Dao Xuan Jiao Shi De Sheng Ming Gu Shi* (回首百年殉道血：一九〇〇年義和團事件殉道宣教士的生命故事) (Petaluma, CA: Meiguo Zhong xin chu ban she, 2010), p. ix.

⁷¹ Marshall Broomhall, *Last Letters and Further Records of Martyred Missionaries of the China Inland Mission* (London, Morgan and Scott, 1901), p. 31-33.

⁷² Marshall Broomhall, *Martyred Missionaries of the China Inland Mission, with a Record of the Perils & Sufferings of Some who Escaped* (London: Morgan and Scott.1901), p.49.

What is the impact of this strategy on the development of the Chinese church? Missiologist Rebecca Lewis did interesting research on the issue of women and the rise of Christianity. She wrote that she had become increasingly convinced that a key to winning the Muslim world to Christ would be through strategically reaching Muslim women. In history, God used women in societies quite similar to the Muslim world. She observed three characteristics of such societies: the seclusion of women especially from men; an oppressive, hierarchical social structure that minimized female leadership; and persecution of believers and opposition to Christianity by the government. Then she cited the example of China to support her point. She noticed that the separation of the sexes, which resulted in foreign women working among women and children, created a larger impact than these missionaries could ever have imagined. These female missionaries were comparatively less threatening to the population at large, which was very suspicious of male foreigners. The women were therefore able to carry on their work “beneath the radar” more effectively. Furthermore, the Christian message was more attractive to oppressed groups such as women. The status and treatment of women was substantially better in the Christianity community in China than in Chinese society at large.⁷³

One of the most significant contributions of this strategy to the development of the Chinese Church was the tremendous change it created in the sociological structure of Chinese society. Daniel Bays pointed out that these women missionaries opened a new way for Chinese women through education. The schools that were started gave thousands of Chinese girls a glimpse of worlds they never would have otherwise seen, and exposure to the possibility of life paths different from what they could have previously imagined.⁷⁴ Besides, the presence of these women missionaries showed the Chinese that the church offered many more options of acceptable public roles for women than did traditional society. They also realized that most of these new options required education. The result was that more and more Chinese women received education from these missionary schools, and they became actively involved in church ministries. They either established and ran schools for local girls, or assisted women missionaries in running boarding schools for girls. Some even became effective public speakers. Others played important roles as deaconesses, Bible-women, traveling evangelists,

⁷³ Rebecca Lewis, “Underground Church Movements: The Surprising Role of Women’s Networks,” *International Journal of Frontier Missions* (Winter 2004): 145; Valerie Griffiths, “Biblewomen from London to China: the Transnational Appropriation of a Female Mission Idea,” *Women’s History Review* 17, no. 4 (2008): p.145.

⁷⁴ Daniel H. Bays, *A New History of Christianity in China* (Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012): pp. 79-80.

nurses or medical assistants.

One outstanding example was the work of Mildred Cable (1878-1952), Eva French (1869-1960) and her sister Francesca French (1871-1960) in Shanxi. After the Boxer Uprising, there was a surge of interest in the Christian faith especially in Shanxi. The "Trio" found that they could not possibly respond to all the requests for visits and teaching. They were convinced that the best way was to train local Christian women to serve as teachers and evangelists. They opened a boarding school, taking pupils from five different provinces, subsequently producing a teacher-training group from among the senior girls. They organized the girls according to ability, knowledge, and skill to pass on to others what they had learnt. They also sent the more gifted ones to the adjacent girls' school for broader studies. It was more or less like Bible Schools today. They received Bible training as well as much practical training in evangelism and teaching. They often travelled in pairs, renting rooms to stay in the villages where Eva met with them regularly to help, encourage and pray with them. This marked a new stage in the development of churches as local Christian women took over from the missionaries, the responsibility for wider evangelism. A thousand girls went through their schools in twenty years and 130 of these graduates taught 5000 children across five provinces. By the 1920s, Eva French had seen 850 largely illiterate women go through her training school, and then serve in their local churches and villages.⁷⁵

Margaret King, a CIM missionary from Montreal, was another case in point. She went to China in 1896. Her medical training as a nurse enabled her to reach both rich and poor. She found herself drawn in both directions: with the calling to help and empower women who were poor, and also with a door open before her to bring Jesus to the girls who would be the future leaders of China. She worked with a Mrs. Sie, a Chinese Biblewoman among the poor and underprivileged; she also worked with a Mrs. Feng, a well-to-do Chinese lady among the more privileged families. As a result of Mrs. Feng's connections, she was often invited to speak at many girls' schools. Many women became Christians through King's ministry. In 1912, she was instrumental in the founding of the Nanjing Bible College for Women. It offered further Biblical studies and training at the tertiary level for high school graduates. Many of the students enrolled there were converts from King's school visits. The College invited King to be their first principal, but she did not accept, believing that her primary

⁷⁵ A. Mildred Cable, "School Work at Huochow, Shan-si," *China's Millions* 13 (1905): p. 47; "The Story of the Stations - III. The City of Hwochow, Shansi," *China's Millions* 24 (1916): pp.5-8.

calling was evangelism among the local Chinese. However, she did give lectures there each year.⁷⁶ The result of these efforts was quite obvious. In 1917, there were 1819 missionary wives, 1818 single women missionaries, and in comparison, 2,579 paid Chinese Biblewomen.⁷⁷ In short, these Chinese Biblewomen were a powerful force in the building up of the Chinese Church.

Rebecca Lewis also noted that women leaders and believers have played a significant role in the “resurrection of the Chinese church” since 1980. After 1950, many Chinese churches of the evangelical faith came under great persecution. Many leaders were tortured and some were imprisoned for decades. The most violent repression took place during the Cultural Revolution in the 1960s. The male-dominated official church hierarchy provided an easy target for persecution. However, many women believers took up leadership roles during this period, forming an underground network of house churches. Since they held their meetings in homes and were less structured, they were able to survive the closure and destruction of church buildings. One of the most amazing female leaders was Lu Xiaomin. She was led to the faith by her aunt, a female house church leader. Lu wrote over 900 Chinese hymns. Today, her songs have taken the entire Chinese church, both registered and unregistered, by storm. Without doubt, Chinese women believers have played a very significant role in the phenomenal growth of the Chinese Church in the last half century.⁷⁸

2.7 Faith Mission

Another of Taylor’s strategies was his policy of faith mission. He directly or indirectly influenced over forty new mission boards to adopt the policy of the faith mission. This included the Christian and Missionary Alliance (1887), the Evangelical Alliance Mission (1890), the Central American Mission (1890), the Sudan Interior Mission (1893) and the African Inland Mission (1895). Many of these missions are still very active in the evangelical world today.

The term faith mission has often been associated with those missions whose financial policy guarantees no set income for its missionaries. Some such missions, following Taylor’s

⁷⁶ Valerie Griffiths, “Biblewomen from London to China: the Transnational Appropriation of a Female Mission Idea,” *Women’s History Review* 17, no. 4 (2008): p. 536.

⁷⁷ Rebecca Lewis, “Underground Church Movements: The Surprising Role of Women’s Networks,” *International Journal of Frontier Missions* (Winter 2004): 148

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 149.

example, carry the policy to the point of refusing to solicit funds or even make known the needs of its missionaries, thus professing to rely entirely on God to meet financial needs. According to Taylor, the concept of living entirely by faith went far beyond the matter of finances. Missions meant the risking of lives to bring the Gospel to those who had never heard it. Faith missionaries were motivated by a desire to save lost souls from the eternal torment of hellfire and brimstone. The poem by Grattan Guinness, “The Voice of Thy Brother’s Blood” written on the sailing of the *Lammermuir*, 26th May 1866 reflected such a spirit:

*Over the dark blue sea, over the trackless flood
A little band has gone in the service of their God
The lonely waste of waters they traverse to proclaim
In the distant land of Sinim Immanuel’s Saving Name,
They have heard from the far-off East the voice of their brother’s blood:
“A million a month in China are dying without God.”*⁷⁹

Faith missionaries were not oblivious to the physical and social needs of the people to whom they ministered, but evangelism was always paramount and in this they needed to trust God entirely.

There were two major criticisms of Taylor’s faith missions. First, this policy often put the missionaries at increased risk, resulting in a high mortality rate especially among the pioneers of faith missions. Is there any merit to this charge? Leslie Lyall shared some of his personal experiences which sheds light on this question.

During the War, Lyall served in Japanese-occupied Shanxi. Lyall and other CIM missionaries did not have enough food or clean water for their families due to the lack of careful financial planning by the CIM. They had to rely on the assistance of the nearby Roman Catholic mission, which had fruit and vegetable gardens, and clean water in the wells. The friendly Dutch bishop generously shared all these with them.⁸⁰ While the Lyalls believed that this was God’s providence, they nevertheless acknowledged that it was also the grace of the Catholic

⁷⁹ Broomhall, A. J. Broomhall, *Hudson Taylor and China’s Open Century. Bk.4, Bk.4.* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1984), pp. 160-161.

⁸⁰ Leslie T. Lyall, *God Reigns in China*, p. 54.

mission which had better financial planning, and resource allocation, thus avoiding unnecessary anxieties and risks.

Similar stories repeated endlessly among CIM missionaries. These reinforced the notion that while faith missions seemed to be the key to attaining the impossible goal of spreading the Gospel throughout the Chinese empire, yet those who experienced these crises and suffered from the financial instability and lack of good planning, would inevitably have questioned the wisdom of this policy.

The second charge pertained to the way Hudson Taylor handled finances. Ruth A. Tucker wrote that one of the interesting aspects of Hudson Taylor's ministry was his perspective on money. The impression given in CIM literature was that Taylor and Henry Frost, the American Director, were relaxed about money, confident that the Lord would provide. In fact, they were obsessed with money, and four of the five principles of the CIM (requiring no debt, no guaranteed income, dependence on God alone, and no solicitation) related to money matters. Tucker went on to cite Alwyn Austin on the problem of Taylor's secrecy about money. Millions apparently flooded into CIM coffers from donations and book sales. Tucker charged that Taylor hid millions in wealth, even while he focused publicly on the millions of lost souls in China.⁸¹ This is a very serious charge for it relates to Taylor's integrity, but neither Tucker nor Austin produced any concrete evidence to prove their point.

3. Concluding Remarks

A tree is judged by its fruit. The best way to assess the effectiveness of Taylor's strategy is to look at the "report card" of CIM's ministry. In the first forty years of its ministry in China, the CIM grew tremendously. Taylor founded the CIM in 1866. By 1885, twenty years after the arrival of the *Lammermuir* team in Shanghai, the CIM team had grown to 177 missionaries. There were 434 missionaries in 1891, and 811 in 1899. The CIM comprised about one third of the total number of foreign missionaries in China, and was three times larger than the next largest group, the British Missionary Society (CMS) at the turn of the nineteenth century.⁸²

In terms of the number of stations and churches established, in 1905 there were 200 stations, 521

⁸¹ Ruth Tucker, *From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya: A Biographical History of Christian Missions*, p. 197.

⁸² Alwyn Austin, *China's Millions: The China Inland Mission and Late Qing Society, 1832-1905*, pp. 345-347.

outstations, and 476 churches. Apart from these, the CIM had also founded 150 schools, 7 hospitals, 37 dispensaries, and 101 opium asylums. The total number of baptized members was 21,675 in 1905. The total number of paid Chinese workers, including pastors, Biblewomen and teachers was 820.⁸³

The growth of CIM ministry can be summarized in the following tables:

Table One

Growth of the CIM by Provinces⁸⁴

Number of missionaries, date founded and (number of stations)

	1885	1888	1891	1896	1899
Jiangsu	18	22	57	55	57
1854	(2)	(5)	(6)	(6)	(6)
Zhejiang	21	24	36	65	91
1857	(9)	(12)	(11)	(20)	(25)
Anhui	13	21	28	54	56
1869	(4)	(5)	(9)	(12)	(14)
Jiangxi	5	15	48	51	89
1869	(2)	(6)	(13)	(15)	(24)
Hubei	10	17	8	16	15
1874	(3)	(5)	(2)	(3)	(3)
Hunan	2	—	—	—	7
1875	(1)	—	—	—	(3)
Henan	2	14	20	28	33
1875	(1)	(2)	(3)	(8)	(11)

⁸³ Tang, Qing (湯清), *Zhongguo Jidu Jiao Bai Nian Shi* (中國基督教百年史 *The First Hundred Years of Protestant Mission in China*) (Xianggang: Dao sheng chu ban she, 1987), p. 486.

⁸⁴ Alwyn Austin, *China's Millions: The China Inland Mission and Late Qing Society, 1832-1905*, p. 345-346.

Shanxi	23	41	64	77	103
1876	(6)	(12)	(15)	(22)	(25)
Shaanxi	12	17	29	74	78
1876	(2)	(4)	(5)	(16)	(21)
Gansu	13	20	26	35	42
1876	(4)	(5)	(6)	(9)	(10)
Sichuan	12	33	48	74	96
1877	(2)	(8)	(12)	(13)	(17)
Yunnan	10	16	23	35	20
1877	(3)	(4)	(6)	(6)	(4)
Guizhou	6	8	10	30	22
1877	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Shandong	15	22	28	38	42
1879	(2)	(3)	(3)	(2)	(3)
Zhili	—	7	7	12	14
1887	—	(3)	(4)	(4)	(4)
Language Students, “missionaries absent”, or “location undetermined					
	—	43	32	50	29
Total missionaries					
	1885	1888	1891	1896	1899
	177	332	434	720	811
Total Stations					
	42	75	105	146	166

Table Two

Growth of the Chinese Church by Province⁸⁵

Baptism per year (and total number of baptized members in the church)

	1885	1888	1891	1896	1899
Jiangsu	1	33	6	13	6
	(127)	(189)	(216)	(160)	(183)
Zhejiang	80	110	194	800	389
	(1279)	(1696)	(2167)	(4153)	(5709)
Anhui	43	49	23	7	62
	(180)	(274)	(376)	(470)	(673)
Jiangxi	10	40	14	53	262
	(43)	(142)	(303)	(627)	(1082)
Hubei	9	1	—	5	2
	(47)	(81)	(81)	(47)	(62)
Hunan	1	—	—	—	9
	(1)	—	—	—	(28)
Henan	—	24	3	58	117

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 347.

	(2)	(33)	(57)	(254)	(649)
Shanxi	23	116	81	137	206
	(81)	(831)	(1055)	(1630)	(2205)
Shaanxi	20	13	39	61	41
	(131)	(159)	(277)	(492)	(638)
Gansu	—	9	3	13	22
	(5)	(38)	(64)	(109)	(135)
Sichuan	12	45	28	72	65
	(48)	(94)	(222)	(551)	(907)
Yunan	6	7	5	8	—
	(9)	(19)	(34)	(71)	(43)
Guizhou	9	4	9	1	10
	(27)	(35)	(69)	(100)	(137)
Shandong	5	21	12	4	11
	(28)	(71)	(124)	(187)	(203)
Zhili	—	—	—	—	—
	—	—	—	(16)	(29)
Total Baptisms per year					
	1885	1888	1891	1896	1899
	219	472	417	1,262	12.02
	2,209	3,587	5,054	9,276	12,964

Table Three

1906 Conference Report on the Chinese Churches established by the CIM (by province) ⁸⁶

	Pastors	Biblewomen	Teachers	Churches	Schools	Hospitals	Dispensaries	Members
Zhejiang	118	33	26	142	31	1	2	8169
Jiangsu	7	5	3	8	3	1	—	248
Anhui	23	4	8	28	7	—	3	1019
Jiangxi	52	20	16	55	22	3	—	2192
Hubei	4	4	3	4	1	1	—	122
Hunan	26	14	15	34	18	1	—	1368
Henan	7	2	1	6	1	1	—	210
Shanxi	37	15	36	61	40	1	4	3291
Shaanxi	23	11	17	30	17	—	4	1096

⁸⁶ Tang, Qing (湯清), *Zhongguo Jidu Jiao Bai Nian Shi* (中國基督教百年史 *The First Hundred Years of Protestant Mission in China*) (Xianggang: Dao sheng chu ban she, 1987), p. 486.

Gansu	5	3	5	8	6	1	4	223
Sichuan	45	11	30	76	33	2	8	2540
Guizhou	13	5	4	11	4	1	1	375
Yunan	2	—	—	7	—	—	1	67
Shandong	3	—	4	2	4	1	1	258
Zhili	8	2	1	4	1	—	1	97
Total	373	129	169	476	188	14	29	21,675

From the above statistics, we observe the following:

In the first forty years, the CIM grew from 0 to 825 missionaries. It was the largest mission society in China, with about one third of the total number of missionaries at the turn of the 20th century. There were a number of different reasons for the phenomenal growth, but the main one related to the strategy of the CIM. Its policy of using single women missionaries and treating them as equals to male missionaries attracted a large number of female missionaries. In 1889, there were 268 missionaries in China, and single women numbered 120, almost half the force. Furthermore, the CIM's international and trans-denominational policy attracted many Americans, Canadians, Australians and New Zealanders of various denominations to join in its ministry.

In the first twenty years, growth of the Chinese church was painfully slow, but from 1855 onwards, its expansion was exponential in all directions. After the first twenty years, the CIM had only 2,209 baptized members, but by 1905, this number had grown to more than 21,000, nine times more than in 1875.

We also see an interesting pattern in the development of CIM's ministry. Generally speaking, the larger and more "foreign" the work, the fewer the number of baptisms; the more indigenous the work, the more the number of converts. Zhejiang was a typical example. The church in Zhejiang had been turned over to Chinese leadership under Bishop Wang Lae-djun. It recorded an astronomical number of baptisms - 800 in 1896 alone, more than fifteen per missionary, with a cumulative total of 4,153 by that year. Another example was the growth of the church in Jiangxi where the work was largely conducted by native pastors and Biblewomen.⁸⁷ In contrast, results in other provinces were not so promising. For instance, in 1896, Anhui had 54 missionaries, yet they baptized only 7 people. In fact, half of the stations recorded no baptisms at all. This showed that the key to effective church planting was by training local leaders and passing

⁸⁷ Alwyn Austin, *China's Millions: The China Inland Mission and Late Qing Society, 1832-1905*, pp. 345-346.

leadership into their hands. This is exactly what D.E. Hoste did when he succeeded Taylor.

There is one very strange phenomenon in these statistics. In some provinces, the number of baptized members in the church decreased over time. In Yunan, there were 71 baptized members in 1896, but the figure had dropped to 43 in 1899. Jiangsu is another example. In 1891, they had 216 baptized members; but the number dropped to 160 in 1896. The statistics in these tables in fact reflect a high drop-out rate.

Overall, the growth rate of the CIM Chinese church in the last decade of the nineteenth century was relatively high. In 1896, the total number of baptized members in China was 9,276, growing to 12,964 in 1899. The growth rate over these three years was 40%. Jiangxi was the most outstanding province with a 72% growth rate (from 627 to 1082) over the same period. As mentioned before, this was due to the effective ministry of the local Chinese workers.

In contrast, the situation of the more established churches during this period was not promising. In 1905, there were altogether 21,675 baptized members and 476 churches. The average number of baptized members in each church was about 45. In fact, most of the churches established in this early period were small. This was because Hudson Taylor's main goal was to evangelize the entire country as quickly as possible rather than to make disciples and plant churches. Though it is understandable that in the early stage, the focus should have been on evangelization, yet without effective nurturing and discipleship training in the churches, the foundation of the churches was likely somewhat shaky.

Of all the provinces, the most outstanding were Zhejiang, Shanxi, Jiangxi, Sichuan and Hunan. All these provinces still have higher Christian populations today, relative to others, reflecting once more Lyall's assertion that CIM's ministry was instrumental to the development of the Chinese Church.

We can conclude that while many of Taylor's strategies worked relatively well in this initial period of evangelism, yet without the timely and relevant changes of strategy as the church grew in size, it would have been very difficult for the Chinese Church to survive and continue to expand. In the following chapters, we shall examine closely these changes and their impact on the development of the Church.