

Jason Linn



Pioneering in Dyak Borneo

Translated by Timothy Tow

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Contents

Translator’s Preface to this Abridged Edition	4
Prologue	5
Chapter 1	
A Half-Century of Fleeting Shadows	7
Chapter 2	
A Half-Century of Fleeting Shadows (continued)	22
Chapter 3	
A Laborious Couple	42
Chapter 4	
“A New Thing”	59
Chapter 5	
Strange Quarry from a Wild Island	73
Chapter 6	
“Rivers in the Desert”	108

Translator's Preface to this Abridged Edition

Pioneering in Dyak Borneo by Jason Linn in the Chinese original is rather an autobiography which includes Part II of the author's life after he left Dyakland. The Chinese original and its English translation both stretch to 250 pages.

In order to cut short the reading time (in this day of rush) we have left out the second part. But nothing is lost of the pioneer work, a thriller that must be read, and read again.

This missionary classic is unique in that it is from a rare Chinese pen, and from the provocative thoughts of a Christian philosopher. You will find many gems of wit and wisdom therein. Above all it is the testimony of one called of the Lord. After A.B. Simpson and R.A. Jaffray, Jason Linn truly comes from a noble tradition of the Christian and Missionary Alliance.

I have become a bosom friend of Jason, "knowing him as myself," as the Chinese saying goes, through translating this great work. Our earnest desire is that you, our Reader, may also answer God's call after reading through Dyak Borneo.

Timothy Tow

Prologue



“I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision” (Acts 26:19).

When Simpson saw the vision of worldwide missions, he immediately knelt before the Lord, “Yes, send me, I will go!” When Hudson Taylor saw the vision of China, he immediately offered his whole life for China. He laboured ceaselessly all the days of his life for the souls of China to the very end.

When Jaffray saw the vision of preaching to the natives of the Southern Archipelagoes, he immediately accepted God’s challenge. He cried aloud as he went about to promote a South Seas missionary work.

Young brothers and sisters, may God today also show you the vision of world-wide missions. May you willingly answer His call in the words of David Brainerd: “Lord, here am I, send me. Send me to earth’s uttermost end. Send me to the uncivilised tribes. Send me away from all the comforts of life, if it is to serve Thee, to extend Thy Kingdom. Yea, even to death I will serve Thee.”

The Great Commission

T. Tow

Thuringian Folk Song

1. Go in - to the world, in - to all the wide world,
2. For you I have sent in - to all the wide world,
3. But first re - ceive po - wer, the Spi - rit of God,
4. Go ye in - to all, in - to all na - tions,

The first system of music consists of a treble and bass staff in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat. The melody is simple and folk-like, with lyrics written below the treble staff.

And tell the joy - ful news to ev' - ry pe - rish - ing soul,
And you shall be my wit - ness - es from Je - ru - sa - lem,
And you'll go through Ju - de - a, Sa - ma - ri - a all the earth,
And make them My dis - ci - ples, and bap - tise them for Me,

The second system continues the melody and accompaniment from the first system, with lyrics written below the treble staff.

And tell the joy - ful news to ev' - ry pe - rish - ing soul.
And you shall be my wit - ness - es from Je - ru - sa - lem.
And you'll go through Ju - de - a, Sa - ma - ri - a all the earth.
And teach them all My Word, for I'm with you to the end.

The third system concludes the piece with a double bar line. The melody and accompaniment are consistent with the previous systems.

Scripture: Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46; Acts 1:8; Matt. 28:19,20

Chapter 1

A Half-Century of Fleeting Shadows

“Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul.” (Psalm 66:16)

It was a sultry summer day, fifty years ago. In an easily accessible to traffic suburban village not far from Canton, a baby boy was born. Were it not for someone announcing the happy event, not even the next-door neighbour could have known it. For, when this infant in swaddling clothes was born, he came wrapped in peaceful slumber. Not a sound did he make. How strange, such a landing with neither cry nor sob. Was it that the world had given him a VIP welcome, and he felt it so good? Or was he so dull as not to feel the pains of a world of woes? He only was the exception to the way of all flesh, to the rule of “three cries on landing.” So, peacefully he slumbered on, day after day, without a whimper. The fact was he was a tiny tot of a dullard. What in the world could he have sought for himself?

When the baby boy was born, his father was a theological student who had little to bring home. The three-dollar pocket money his dad got from school was saved up and remitted to the family. This sum was handled by his wife in tontine with the view of financing the younger brother’s coming marriage. Now, the baby boy had an elder brother, so his mother had three mouths to feed. For their livelihood she wove bamboo sun-hats. (There were a few scores of families weaving sun-hats in the village). It

seemed the baby boy had no desire from nor demand upon the world which allowed his ever-toiling mother to lay him up in a wooden dish. Unless his mother remembered his needs, he could not even cry for his food.

This silent, speechless boy grew up to be what he was. Whether he got sick or met with other troubles, he would not so much as make a whine, but slept or sat through the day, neither eating nor drinking. Though dad and mum would make every enquiry of his ills, he chose to remain dumb. This exasperated his parents not a little.

From an early age the boy was very blunt in word. He had no use for flattery or fawning. He could less practise fraud or trickery. Of such a nature as he was, he could not perpetrate a wicked plot. Should he try to work a little mischief, he would but “wrap burning charcoal in thin paper.” Often he would end up the butt of this joke, “There are not three hundred dollars buried here, Nor has Second Uncle next door stolen them.”

The boy’s stupidity earned him loss of parental affection. This was accentuated by the intelligence and smartness of his elder brother. Under such contrast the parents became the more estranged from the child. They had little hope of his making good when he grew up. So they bent all their energies to bring up the big son. They saw as wasted effort any struggle to nurture one who gave them such little promise. Such a conclusion by his father was not without reason. He had seen how his younger brother (i.e. the boy’s uncle) weep over his text book for a whole day under their father’s tutoring, which made their father so mad that he threw away the book up an idol-house, and how he had to stop schooling thereafter. To this day an illiterate he has remained, but remorse was of no avail. The boy, being a chip of his uncle’s block, could not have incited any feeling in his father than despair. But the Lord says, “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens

are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts your thoughts” (Isa. 55:8,9). God’s grace is more perfectly manifested upon the weak and the foolish.

After this an event struck our family that made the boy’s father more despairing – the death of the boy’s big brother, his father’s fond hope. One day the boy, his mother and the elder brother got sick together. The boy’s sickness was the gravest of all, but somehow this good-for-nothing recovered. On the contrary, his big brother died. The suddenness of his death broke his father’s heart. He became a depressed, hapless, empty soul.

After this the boy’s father was transferred to another parish. There he found a private girls school run by the Church. The principal, seeing the boy now nine years old, without any schooling, entreated his father to let him enrol. She said, “Let him try. No harm whether he could study or not.” Under such circumstances the father reluctantly sent his son – this was the boy’s first chance at school.

The boy belonged to the smallest family, both in standing and numbers, in the village. Being so miserably few, the boy’s family often lost out to a bullying world. The boy’s great grandfather was literally bullied and threatened to death. In such dire circumstances he joined the Christian Church. This explains why our family had come to believe in Jesus. From a spiritual standpoint, this family consisted not of spiritual children because they were not born of the Spirit, but by blood and the will of man. But, thanks be to God, this wild olive has now been grafted in the true olive tree! After they were soundly converted, they have yielded not a little fruit. The boy’s grandfather at first was a Chinese physician. After he became attached to an itinerant pastor, preaching and healing as they went, he gave his eldest son to God. He sent him to a theological school to prepare for fulltime service. From thence this village has yielded over one hundred

converted to Christ, five young men and women to study theology, of whom the writer is one.

Was the boy born on an inauspicious day? Was he bound to an unhappy fate? No! In the perfect will and providence of God, this so-called unhappy fate was truly auspicious.

When the boy was twelve his father took ill and died. This came like a bolt from the blue that caused dark clouds to enshroud this unhappy family. Mother, over-grieved, yet seeing the needs of her brood, with help from nowhere, could but regain herself to bear up her heavy responsibility. She not only bore up the family's financial burden, but also had to face the cold unconcern of relatives and neighbours, the distant aloofness of friends and the hand-folding of her husband's younger brother, whose success today was due entirely to his care. Her heartache was known only to herself. However, for the children's happiness, she fought the dark surroundings with rolled-up sleeves and a gnashing determination. She believed that her sufferings would one day be rewarded. She believed that winter's cold would bring in the warmth of spring, the dark night soon yield to a bright day.

Though beset by troubles, daybreak was not far distant. And despite her lack of education, she had far-sightedness to educate her children at all costs. Just as she contemplated sending her big son to a private school, a Western missionary offered to send him to a Church school. What could have been a better relief to her burden of eking out a livelihood? Her dead husband, being a poor preacher with "two sleeves of cool breezes", had left her nothing.

There's a saying: "Blessing comes not in pairs nor disaster alone." This poor widow, aged thirty, found herself unsympathised and unconsoled, a face of tears from morn to night. Due to constant weeping which resulted in her eye-lashes growing backwards, her eyeballs became affected. For the sake of her

children, her great hope, and looking forward to a bright future, she worked and struggled with all her might.

But, under the heavy toils, her limited strength could scarcely provide adequate care to her children. Further, that hitherto supposed to be good-for-nothing boy was incapable of looking after his younger brother and sisters. Without proper nutrition, the brood of children began to wilt. Several of these innocents died an early death in a measles epidemic. The only survival was that big good-for-nothing.

This family had now come, as it were, to a bloody stage of battle when all were but decimated, both rider and horse thrown to the ground. Now only two were left, mother and son, forlorn and sad. Their strength had been slashed to almost zero. Imagine a woman who had undergone over ten conceptions to have passed through several ordeals on life's battlefield and to see only this useless, good-for-nothing worm remnant before her eyes! But the woman did not lose heart. Regaining her spirits and recovering from defeat she marched forward with this remnant seed God had given her family – to another contest, to final victory! Indeed the repeated survival of this remnant seed is another miracle episode. This little life had passed through death several times. Once, a few days after his birth, while sleeping alone in the wooden dish, someone dropped a bamboo pole that landed by his side. Bang! It so scared his spirits out that he “froze to death” for several days. Everyone had lost hope except his mother who felt a flicker of warmth within his breast. Although he appeared to have stopped breathing, she had no heart to “bury him alive.” At last he really revived, resurrected from the dead! After this, the boy suffered several bouts of acute convulsions.

Once he was resuscitated from a coma well nigh death by a dose of child's urine. On another occasion, soon after his father's death, he was almost drowned when a younger friend pulled him out of the water by the forelock.

At the age of seventeen, he almost died of appendicitis. He literally lay on the hospital bed for one whole month, so much so that the doctor wagged his head in despair for him. At that time there were three such cases in hospital. The two lighter cases had ended up in being carried to the “dark room.” How much more this boy in a graver condition? However, he walked out of the hospital’s front door after one month and returned to his house in peace beyond man’s expectations.

Now we know the reason why that woman did not lose heart in the face of such hopelessness, who went through a hundred battles – unto victory. Although this boy was born a “dullard” and had gone through the crucible of a thousand trials, she regarded him precious indeed. Should you desire to know her thoughts, she could answer you in the words of Luke 15:23,24, “And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found . . .” We won’t care to know if this woman then understood God’s will, but this boy who had gone through a thousand trials and come back to life from the dead must have been a vessel kept for the Lord’s own use. When the Rich Man was suffering in hell and saw afar off Abraham with Lazarus in his bosom he not only begged Abraham for mercy but also considered his five living brothers. He said, “Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent” (Lk. 16:30). Now there was such a Lazarus resurrected from the dead before their eyes.

In reminiscence there are several indelible impressions made upon the boy’s heart. After his father’s death, his mother earned a living by weaving sun-hats. In order to help Mother out the boy was obliged to look after his younger brothers and sisters after school, and attend to kitchen or help in the weaving. Now, the school was located in the city Church, about a mile from home. Everyday he had to travel to and fro four times. Once he had to stay in school for a season at his teacher’s request. Every evening

he would have to go from home to school. This took him through a deserted cemetery, a wet rice field, an execution ground and a small temple where dead babies were wont to be abandoned. Every evening his mother would walk him to the shoulder of the village. Standing on the edge of the cemetery she would not return until her son had gone through the long, rugged path to safety in the city. Indeed, her dim eyes could hardly see far beyond, though her ears were sharp enough. The boy would look back as he walked to see if Mother had left. Often, as he entered the city gate, he would turn round to gaze upon his mother, motionless like the hills. He wanted very much to say to her, "Mother, I have safely arrived in the city. You can go home in peace." Unfortunately, they were too far apart for such a verbal message. At this juncture, Mother and son would stand each on his or her edge of the field. Between them stretched the deserted rolling cemetery.

As they faced each other speechless, the hazy twilight had descended on earth upon a lonely road devoid of a single passer-by, save for the chirping of insects. A dismal scene indeed that brought many a shudder upon the orphaned child. The sight of Mother standing afar off sparked a surge of courage within. His heart became filled with Mother's love, his eyes brimming with warm tears.

One Sunday, he accompanied Mother to Church. On the way home the boy wandered here and there and forgot his blind mother carrying a little sister. Unawares, she fell into a big roadside ditch, her foot beginning to bleed. Passers-by vied to render aid. The boy showed no emotional expression then, but became much hurt within by a guilty conscience. Whenever he thought of Mother's ever-loving care, he felt ill at ease.

Well-to-do children live in homes piled up with foods, so much so that they weary to eat, and discard them on the floor. Sometimes, even their doggie would not care a look. But, this boy

had to be content with only two meals a day, for Mother could not give him even a little cake-money. Should he sometimes spend a cent or two on a bowl of **sakok mai** (sago broth), that would be a treat indeed. From early years he understood what Mother's indigence was. Rarely did he dare to ask beyond Mother's means, except as she would give him to buy some tit-bits.

Once the East River flooded and merchants had to use sail boats. Their village suddenly became an anchorage. Seeing that school was closed by the flood, Mother realised here was a good chance to make money. As the flood water overflowed the streets, and her eyes were bad, she could not freely move about. The children being young and without understanding, Mother and son mobilised themselves to go and find goods.

They both set out, boy leading Mother through the flood, sometimes chest deep. What a bitter experience! They bought home cakes and confectionery and the boy soon became a vendor from boat to boat. This little boy had got some business. But he was struck by another thought, "Don't I have the many cakes that I carry in my hands before my eyes? Why should I send them up to other mouths while I could enjoy not a bit?" Many a time his mouth watered but he dared not eat any – for this was to make money with. The money earned, he knew, was intended for a higher purpose than eating cake. So he had to exercise self-control while his eyes gloated over these tasty things transferring into other hands.

Although the boy's education in primary school was church-subsidised, his mother had to pay his other expenses. There was a time when his shoes gaped like "an inverted sky-window." Realising Mother's difficulties he dared not ask for repair money, but salvaged some leather bits and nails and hammered them together. But then the sole-thread gave way which made it gape the more like a hungry demon. Fearing discovery, he walked with an agonising gait. This attracted his teacher's attention to inquire

if he had footache, to which he could only tacitly respond with flushing cheeks.

Once a friend of his in the school administration was promoting boy scouts. He offered to pay half for the uniforms of needy students (which amounted to \$12.50 per suit). At that time the boy, as an upper student, should have joined. But he had no courage to ask Mother for money and resorted to a feeler-propaganda rhetoric. As Mother's purse was empty like a washout, she remained unenthusiastic. This brought him no little despair. Had he revealed the true situation to the sports master, that friend would have gone out of his way to help. But, his self-respect forbade him. He could but bear the sin of disobedience by telling his teacher his disinterest in scouting. Nevertheless, the boy was also vain-glorious, and he would forlornly peep from a classroom window-chink at all the upper-class pupils putting on their smart uniforms – to his exasperation. Sometimes one or two classmates chanced to step into the classroom. This he straightly took to be a show-off and challenge to him. From this incident you can fancy how indescribably bitter he had felt within for failing to procure the twelve-and-a-half dollars.

The boy was slow of tongue and surely not good at speaking up. Particularly, before the opposite sex and strangers, he would be at a loss. When he entered school at nine he found himself a male in an all-girls school, including the teachers. One day he needed quick relief, but being abashed, he held his peace until he could hold it no longer and let it all loose. This resulted in a puddle of water on the floor which drew the notice of a gentle lady and, through her, the principal. Fortunately, far from rebuking, she dealt with the sheepish boy in a corner with understanding and consolation. She asked the same lady to take him away for a change. This gave him at least a breathing space. From a boy he had not had the will power as this incident shows, and he had grown up to be like that. He had no gift of speech, nor

tact. He spoke as he thought and that's that. When he was first introduced to a certain miss he could not affect a courteous reply nor use an honorific in speech. He simply said, "You." Afterwards it was reported by the friend who accompanied him, "No wonder their marriage contract was so easily successful. For when they saw each other it was love at first sight." He had no gift of argument in self-defence. So whether it be a case of dissatisfaction with man, or fowl, or dog, for wrong done to him, he would remain quite speechless and rather silently protest, all pent up within. Meanwhile there would rise from within him a silent curse, his mind heaped up with wild thoughts for the pleasurable punishment of others, in retribution. It is a pity that he hails from the South. Were he born in Peking he verily could have become a favourite disciple of Ah Q.

Wonderful it is that God has had pleasure in choosing such a stammering fellow. As He chose Moses before so He chose this boy. It is God's good pleasure "to choose the foolish things of the world to confound the wise" (I Cor.1:27).

After graduating from primary school, he was deprived of further schooling for a short while. This made a very bad impression upon him in regard to the church officers. Some time before graduation the school had picked four scholarship students to enter the Examinations in Canton with a view to their promotion to the middle school and thereafter to theological college or university. The results of the four were successful, but on graduation day the pastor said to the candidates, "Sorry, the choice has been given to those from another parish earlier. You are too late for the selection." So these miserable children were lightly brushed aside by that irresponsible Western missionary. As to the good-for-nothing? The missionary's conscience forbade him "to eat his words", i.e., to break a promise he had made to the boy after his father's death to give him an education. So, he said

to the boy, “You just come with me. I’ll find you an opening.” So the boy went with the missionary to Canton.

The missionary was well versed in the teachings of Chinese sages and in the will of Heaven. He knew that “before Heaven commissioned a man to some great work, He must lash his will power and try his sinews and bones . . .” Everyday he made this lad of ten-odd years to cut grass under a burning sun.

To a poor lad like him, such bitter hardships were digestible, and little to bother. But something happened after this that sent the boy scurrying home without a word of good-bye. One of the four who sat for the Examinations with him got a church scholarship to the middle school. He was fortunate to get this award, but that was due to his village pastor and elder’s effort in approaching the American missionary through an interview, wherein ideas were exchanged. He had the help of church leaders who argued and fought, so the victory. But pity this boy without a sponsor – he was to cut grass. When the news broke upon him, all the pent-up feelings got off his chest without a word, but sent him scurrying home an angry man. He said, “I am a human being. I don’t eat grass. I should not keep myself alive upon this grass-field.”

As the boy grew up, his eyes began to open to the reality of the world. Especially, his thoughts were provoked by the anomalies inside the Church. His young and tender soul was deeply hurt by the darkness and dirt of the Church, the hypocrisy and decay of Christians, the ignorance and sluggishness of the Mission, the superiority and autocracy of Western missionaries, the slender emoluments to Chinese preachers. This generated within him a strong wave of anti-church cogitations.

Soon after returning home from Canton he received a letter from that Western missionary inquiring if he would accept a hospitable job. After consulting his mother, it was felt that Mother was incapable of supporting him to study nor was it good to

remain idle at home. The vacancy presently might not suit one's wish, but being in the metropolis it served more conveniently as a stepping-stone to future betterment. Therefore they decided to accept it. From hence he entered into society and came in contact with all walks of people. This was not a school, and he lived an entirely unrestricted life. Fortunately, this was a mission hospital, with a chapel, and men and women preachers. Apart from worship on the Lord's Day, meetings were held every morning. So he remained sheltered in the Church. His anti-Christian sentiments temporarily found no chance to explode.

After some time, he and several colleagues inaugurated a National Day play, because dramas had become a great popularity in Canton. Almost all societies, be they schools, labour unions, doctors, lawyers, had organised theatrical troupes or societies. Their performances were extremely successful, receiving no small applause from the audience. Now this little chap became mighty enthusiastic and elated in this activity, and had occasion sometimes to play several roles – script writer, director and hero. Who could have thought that a green horn like him would acquire such talent and knowledge of human nature and the world? He could act old grandpa or grandma, play boy, fashionable lady, country girl, vagabond and many other roles and imitate their characteristics so exquisitely. Once, on the occasion of a Day of National Shame, he played heroine in a most sensational Spy Drama. The plot involved charming the elder brother of a student-patriot studying in Japan, in order to tap information from the latter for sabotage. The acting of the tragedy was so vivid that it brought down the audience in tears. A spectator said afterwards, “When I saw the girl spy get the student-patriot a prison sentence I became so stirred within that with a gun I might have fired onto the stage.”

With this dramatic success, he confidently organised a Benevolence Gospel Drama Team. For a period he would take off

with the nursing superintendent and others to the villages to hold open-air meetings. By virtue of these activities he was favourably accepted by the director and general superintendent of the hospital. The general superintendent was a German. He came to China at the close of the First World War. He served at first in the Customs as a si-yeh, a Government tax collector. But he found the Lord and later married a missionary. After conversion, he was bothered by an intricate problem. He did not know how to repay the Lord for His bountiful saving grace. Slow of speech, particularly in Chinese, he could not do the work of an evangelist. After seeing the boy he said to himself, "This little fellow can represent me and verily be my spokesman." So he decided himself to support the boy through theological school. Before the time was ripe, however, he said nothing to the boy. He committed the matter silently to God.

Whoever knew what the boy had exhibited was no indication of his inward aspirations. He had organised testimony and preaching bands as a matter of letting off youthful energy and looking for excitement. At heart he was not called of God, nor did he realise the preciousness of souls. Contrary to this, he was still possessed with a hatred against the Church and Western missionaries of his time. Nevertheless, his soul was untainted, for under the favourable circumstances, he had not yet been addicted to any evil habit.

However, there was once when he almost strayed into Satan's snare. That was when he became engrossed in drama and began to entertain the thought of becoming an actor. When Jonah wanted to run away to Tarshish, he found a boat sailing there all right. Someone had introduced him to the star of a Cantonese theatrical troupe known by name of Sun Chow Yu Lee. He joined the troupe as an apprentice for a few nights and drew the attention of Sun Chow Yu Lee. The latter found in him a good student, and would have taken him on tour. But, just as Satan was about to devour

him with open, bloody mouth like a hungry tiger over a lamb in his paws, there was an unseen hand stretched over the boy's head to protect him. Had he joined up with the troupe, his bright future would have been cut off by this. He would have fallen into the vortex of lust and passion. At this point, Sun Chow Yu Lee had received such sudden instruction to move on that he had little time to take him along. This saved him from the "the jaws of the tiger."

But Satan would not so easily let go until he got him. At that time there was a nurse who quarrelled with his superior. He left to join the army and became some big shot. Once he returned to the hospital to show off. Clad in stiff military uniform and spotting gold-rimmed spectacles, swinging a thick walking stick, he strutted about in a pair of new polished boots. What an air of arrogance he displayed, waited upon by an orderly trailing behind. How could any young man keep himself from such dazzle? However, that little fellow's desire to join the army was not prompted by a selfish motive for fame or power. He was possessed with a sense of justice and patriotism, and a fierce temper.

It is recalled that he was still in primary school when the Day of National Shame, May 9, came round, the day the Twenty-One Demands were made. He joined up with a gang of classmates in a show of irresistible indignation to strike, without ever getting the school's permission. He went on a demonstration with the rest, shouting slogans as they tramped. Returning to school, the gang smashed up every foreign-made article. All that their teachers could do in the situation was to stare blankly at them, without a word. Should he join the army at this time, he could well have sacrificed his life. If he did not, he would go the way of all flesh, to seek officialdom and wealth. But, could God permit such a one, resuscitated from the dead, to run off-course?

At this juncture, God made him to taste of death once more. It was, as related earlier, his sudden contracting of some

inflammatory disease of the small intestines. Having passed through the valley of Death's Shadow, he now heard the call of God. He had received enough from God's chastising hand, and he came to himself equally speedily. He gave himself to prayer the whole day. Apart from a few hours drifting into sleep, he spent the whole time in prayer.

That general superintendent of the hospital would pray specifically for him in the morning prayer. He and his wife would bring others along to pray for him at his sick bed. After his near-recovery, that superintendent felt the time was ripe to speak. "Good son," he asked, "God is calling you! Would you let God use you?" His reply was a sure yes. For, to this day, he has not once run from that call.

Before this, he had almost joined some anti-Church front with the view to strike down Christianity and expel Western missionaries. This sentiment arose not only from some previous disappointment but also from many things he had seen which raised doubts in his mind against the Chinese Church and her preachers. His thoughts and actions at this time sprang from a national consciousness – he was a red-hot patriot.

His position was right, but his reasonings were wrong. For there was nothing wrong with Christianity itself. The fault lay in the personnel. So why shouldn't one work it out positively by preaching Christ and Christ alone, that Christianity might be a religion beneficial to the compatriots? At this point, he received a new understanding. He prepared to go through seminary. All his work and growth hereafter found in this decision the turning point of his life.

Chapter 2

A Half-Century of Fleeting Shadows (continued)

“Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.” (1 Tim 6:19)

This boy who had missed school now went to school again. But this time his object was to study theology. Owing to his young age, in name only seventeen, he did not qualify to enter. So he went to normal school preparatory to joining seminary.

During teachers' training he met with another temptation. His desire to join the army flared up again. This was due to a very fine science teacher who “forsook the pen to take up the sword.” The troops he joined remained stationed in the locality. This gave teacher and pupils many times of seeing one another. With a fellow-student he was aroused to follow the teacher's footsteps. This teacher had promised to take care of them. He became thrilled to near-insanity at the prospect of a bright future. At this point he had clean forgotten the earlier decision to enter theological school and God's call. In his thoughts military might became an idol. He was like the young men of his time who thought the military was China's salvation, and China's revitalising could not be achieved except by slaughtering all traitors and thieves of the nation, every covetous officer and

corrupt petty officer. But he had not considered young runaway Moses' defeat was caused by such carnal exertions.

Immediately he wrote his mother in Hong Kong of his intention to join the army to serve the nation. When his mother received the letter she was sorely distressed. She had fought single-handed against evil times for many years. What remained in hand was this weak remnant soldier. Could it be that the Evil Spirit was going to snatch away this one and only surviving seed? But she realised young people could not be coerced, the less with such a queer spleen of a son. So she asked someone to write him a casual letter in which she briefly reviewed the family background and her having come to dismal evening years. She concluded, "I am old. I cannot look after you very much more. You're growing up and should strive to self-support. But in whatever you do, be sure you've carefully pondered it over." This letter seemed to carry back with it Mother's burning, passionate love. Warm tears welled up, as scenes of past days flashed across his mind. This young man had unflinching courage to shoot an enemy in the face. But now he was softened by this letter from home. That urge "to forsake the pen and take up the sword" was thereby dissolved. As to his teacher and the troops, they were transferred to an unknown destination. So he and his classmate settled into normal study again.

Though Mr. Ditman was a foreigner, for this was the name of the gentleman who put him through school, his ideas were sharply different from others' – he did not possess that white man's superiority. He excelled other Western so-called missionaries in lovingkindness, and identified himself with the poor toiling masses. He was the general superintendent of the hospital. Once the whole hospital staff went on strike following a dispute with the management. He actually sided with the staff. Owing to his position, it was impossible sometimes not to be misunderstood.



*Mr and Mrs George Ditman my spiritual parents.
Standing are their in-laws, missionaries to Kwangsi, China.*

He loved China like his own country. He opposed his own government's aggrandisement for world conquest. Having found salvation in China, he had always borne a debt of gratitude. He had looked for long for someone to be his mouthpiece, since he was not a good speaker, especially in the Chinese language. Should he find one to preach the gospel to the Chinese in his stead, he would thrill to it more than finding the greatest treasure on earth. Having fixed his eyes upon this small fellow, he became closely concerned for his welfare.

Once the boy was overtaken by itches. He himself bought medicine and applied it on him everyday. Having no children, he regarded this boy his all-in-all. He had nothing to desire from China, for China had given him the best and greatest, viz., salvation grace. His only desire now was to return thanks to China. He would freely give what he had freely received. After the boy entered seminary he felt his hope was realised. He need not remain in China. On the day he left China, he embraced and kissed him repeatedly in a profusion of tears. The highest expression of human love is in Christ, where there is neither racial nor national barrier.

The Seminary had a regulation: to hold a special meeting at the beginning of each semester. At the time of his entrance it was the end of year when a winter conference was held. This was attended by all students as well as by preachers from Kwangtung and Kwangsi Province. At this conference he was born again by the mighty working of the Spirit. He understood the meaning of studying theology now, that it was joining a soul-saving movement. The work of an evangelist was an incomparably important and sacred ministry. Evangelism was a sort of bloodless revolution, and the evangelist's duty to save all who "lieth under the hand of the evil one" (I John 5:19, Chinese Version). The evil one, as he was called, is Satan, the fiercest of imperialists. He also realised that the whole world was the preacher's parish, not

limited to several big cities but extended to the remotest villages where the gospel was never heard. And in all mankind those who needed the gospel most were the toiling masses and preaching to them was most rewarding. He realised all the more that some of the evangelistic methods of his time were Western methods, contrary to the Biblical. These should undergo a revolutionary change.

According to the Acts of the Apostles, the early Church's evangelism was on the go. Now evangelism was on the stay. The reason why the Western missions adopted this latter method was due in no small measure to the practice of some missionaries of the materialistic type. In the year after the Boxer Rebellion (1900), they came to China with the privilege of an unequal treaty. They made their headquarters in all the big cities. First they selected a piece of land of the best situation and scenery and built thereon the most spacious and comfortable Western-type mansion. They made it a palace like Herod the Tetrarch's – to rule over their parishes. They would employ between eight and ten men and women servants, consisting of cook, gardener, peon, valet, launderer, handyman, amah, etc. In their leisure they gathered these eight to ten servants to a worship exercise and taught them some Westernised Bible knowledge and recite the Lord's Prayer, and some sentences of "Jesus loves me, this I know." These were the beginnings of a Chinese theological education. Some of the smart know-nothings who were good at fawning became the elect. The missionaries would buy them a blue gown each for attire and send them to a town, rent a house and put a "Gospel Hall" signboard over it. Thereby they were made resident preachers. A preacher's salary per month was between five and six dollars. Not worth very much, it was the equivalent of a slice of American chocolate or chewing gum. To employ eight or ten of such preachers to the emptying of the missionary's own purse was no problem. Once a report was sent back to the Mission at home the gold dollars would roll to the field. The preacher being backed by

such an extraordinary institution played on his countrymen's inferiority to the foreigners. They would threaten or cajole, sometimes with honey-sweet words after the threats, so long as some would nod assent and belief in Jesus, whether these repented of their sin or not. Thus, like the temple-curates, these preachers made their rice bowl as secure as Taishan (China's sacred mountain).

When the Western missionary went on seasonal tour of the parishes, he would go to much trouble as if he were house-moving. He would even bring along drinking water, bottle by bottle. (The Western missionary need not "trust heaven for food", but as to water, yes – rain-water, because water in China was much contaminated. When the Western missionary went on tour, the native preachers would work their heads off to pull in the clients.

The Western missionaries came to China in style, the haughty sons of heaven. The doctrines they preached were far removed from Bible truth. They behaved in an arrogant and patronising manner, as if God created the universe specially for them, the white race. Yes, indeed. When Noah awoke from drunkenness, eyes a-blinking, did he not explicitly declare in blessing his sons, "God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant"? Then we of the coloured races who are predestined to be the white race's slaves should hold our peace! Such a situation the boy had keenly observed. This was a fact, though not every Western missionary was like the above-mentioned. Indeed there were others who sacrificed their lives for the Lord, but these were too few. The minority elite could not cover up the majority of bad ones. Truth to tell, the failure of Western missions in the Far East cannot be denied. It is a pity and a shame the early Church in China should have been built on such foundations. These questions kept revolving in the boy's mind and made him utterly resentful.

The longer he studied in the Seminary the more he became involved in the problems of the Church. He would often discuss these problems with one or two of his bosom friends. He felt the Chinese Church of his day needed a violent revolution. An overturning should come not only to all Western practices and systems but also to many of the Western theologies. If the Church would not quickly and voluntarily seek to remedy herself from such crisis, God would surely use a certain power to make her do it. The Chinese Church had undergone various waves of people's persecutions and should rethink herself. Should there be added to these a political pressure before she woke up? All the more he was dissatisfied with the salary system. He felt the problem of the preacher's livelihood needed a good solution on the principle of "a steady income, a steady heart."

China, an agricultural country, was heading towards the road of industrialisation in her nation-building. The problem of the preacher's livelihood should therefore be solved, primarily, through a merging with agricultural and industrial production. After he left school, he actively kept up promoting this ideal while one of his intimate schoolmates had bought land in Kwangsi as a base for operations. He himself had also begun to plan the opening up of Hainan Island. Unfortunately these plans became an empty dream and a washout in the welter of political changes. It all vanished like cloud and wind with the firing of the first shots at Lukaochiao (Lukao Bridge, scene of the Manchurian Incident, 1931).

Strange it was that in his younger days he was quieter than a girl, devoid of zest for action or laughter, so that he could remain speechless in the midst of a chattering company. He loved to be alone, immersed in deep thought. But now what a changeover! He was one of the most active of students, eager for any job, with a high sense of responsibility. Unless he had not promised, he was true to his word to pursue everything to a successful conclusion.

For the company of schoolmates who lazed around or performed their work haphazardly and perfunctorily, he felt an unspeakable miserableness within. He pondered, “How could theological students of this type be future church administrators? The Students Preaching Band was the sphere of students’ activities. Herein was the testing ground for every student. Every Lord’s Day afternoon when the open-air preaching band set out, some of the appointed students would take refuge in the lavatories. What a monstrosity! The theological Seminary is representative of the Church to come, a reflection of the reality of the future Church. As goes the Seminary so goes the Church. So he became a master of worry whenever confronted with such darkness from the students.

After he officially became the president of the Students Preaching Band he took slashing, revolutionary measures to clean up this state of affairs. He knew clearly this was a difficult job incurring the wrath of the masses. But he was bold beyond measure. At that time there was only one schoolmate who saw eye to eye with him and became his assistant. All other officers were passivists. Although a minority would cash in to create disruption and disorder, he being just to all and unfair to none, with all the might of righteousness, he was able to achieve all he desired. At that time he amended the Constitution and changed the Preaching Band theme song from one of elegant gentleness to that of such a robust march as “Columbia.” As for words he had asked the faculty and student body to supply, but to no satisfaction. Consequently he was obliged to compose them himself. In order to meet the dateline of the 13th Anniversary he hurriedly penned the following verses:–

*Hearts o’ergrown with thistles
Are waiting for the scythe
To root out and cut a swathe.
The darkness broods o’er society,
‘Tis time for a bright torch*

*To chase it till break of day.
Fierce foes abound,
Who dares wield the Sword to slay them?
Let's remove the curse and bring down heaven.
O Preaching Band,
Where's the scythe, the torch, the Sword?
Lost souls are waiting for rescue,
Forward march!*

As he shouldered this renewal work he must needs bear the brunt with sweat and tears. However, success brought him no small comfort. Looking back to the day of revolutionary beginnings with its tense and critical situation causes one to tremble. That he should be so filled with courage was not a sudden thing. He was sustained on one hand by sincere zeal and on the other by the faculty's support, with the school's facilities made available to him. Although the faculty was not in favour of his extremes, they acquiesced as a matter of course. The principal, who was concurrently the highest authority of the Church, had high regard for him. Often he would commit to his charge work of the Seminary and of the Provincial General Conference. He specially gave for his use a faculty room with all the freedom of lighting throughout the night. Taking advantage of this amenity he would slog on day and night. The Preaching Band's magazine for that number was almost all edited by his hand. He used it as his voice to express his own opinion. He wrote an article on "Why Have a Preaching Band?" to explain the importance thereof whether in relation to self, school, Church or society. He followed up with another on the past, present and future of the Preaching Band, appending a comparative table of the Band's thirteen years' achievements. Using the mirror of its history to show up oneself, he was able to stop the mouths of gainsayers, with a hope that they might be challenged thereby.

From an early age his interest in literature was aroused. While working at the hospital he liked to write short articles and get

them published in the newspapers' supplements. In the organisation of drama he boldly entered into its compositions. (He also revived the publication of the defunct Students Preaching Band magazine.) It was at this time that he got many of his articles published in the Church magazines. During his term of service in Borneo, he became correspondent to seven or eight Churches in China.

His progress in literary art grew entirely out of much reading and much writing. Though he improved in rhetoric through much reading, his ideals became profoundly affected thereby. From his youth he was acquainted with the classics and with those selections used by his teachers which were mostly of a pessimistic and negative vein. These selections included for instance: Han Yu's Sacrifice to the Twelfth Son, The Old Fisherman's Words, Preface to Li Yuen's Return to Pang Ku, Li Ling's Apology to Su Wu, Elegy to an Ancient Battlefield, Homeward Bound I Go, etc. He never received instruction from anyone on what to read, but just read whatever he laid hold of. During his employment at the hospital he was on good terms with a lady doctor, who took him as a younger brother. A young lady, she became infatuated with reading gloomy novels. She borrowed from outside many books of this nature like "My Wife" and "The Soul of a Jade Pear." Seeing that he was a voracious reader, she supplied him as much as she could. In literature these books perhaps had some value, but these have so influenced this young man to pessimism and negativism that throughout his life he has been helplessly ensnared by depression and melancholy. Of an extraordinary, sensitive and emotional make-up, he would often be moved to a profusion of tears whenever he read them. In these books were recounted many human tragedies. So, he became more and more embittered against the world by reading them. He had also read Water Margin, The Story of the Stone and a number of hero and ghost stories. From such literature he became obsessed with the futility of life and was totally sick and hateful of this world.

Often the vain thought came to him: Let me rather escape through an open door and enter the fast mountain recesses! But, man is a gregarious animal. He cannot leave his flock to live by himself. And can it be that there is a world of immortals within this world? Behold, where can you find a clean spot in this wide world? Then came another thought: Why not let me traverse every famous mountain and river and enquire from the immortals and Buddhas? Let me learn some Kung Fu (pugilistic art) that I might deal a death blow to every kind of evil? Could it be true that there is an elixir of life and wonder medicine, a divine art and a superhuman power? He was most of all obsessed with the thought: What about enacting another Liang Shan (Chinese Robin Hood) exploit? However, he was in doubt if there ever existed heroes as virtuous as the men and horses of Liang Shan. In the hopelessness of such vain imaginations he felt everything was a lie. He thought that the only way to end all things and save many headaches was suicide. This thought recurred to him time and again. He became a bookworm. His books had only turned his mind topsy-turvy. The “portions” he imbibed turned out to be “poisons.”

This boy was a deeply sentimental person. Under many outside influences his view of life became pessimistic. Fortunately there lay dormant in him some sense of humour. This sense of humour is none other than life’s spice or tonic. During times of depression he would write or talk with his friends with a humorous touch as a means of releasing his pent-up sorrows. This took away the oppression upon his health. He wept with those who wept and laughed with those who laughed. Under the onslaught of sorrow he gave full vent to his emotions by weeping aloud. Weeping can fully cleanse the heart from depression. In the full-tide of sorrow there is no harm smiling though it is tinged with bitterness. But you cannot deny that it is a smile. So, smile! Whether it be sweet or bitter, laughter is good. When you are

misunderstood or falsely accused, there is no harm for you to answer with a smile.

When you come to the end of your tether in utter sorrow, there is no harm to laugh and laugh. When you laugh, there is a good cleansing away of germs that hurt your health and of poisonous substances in the blood stream that sap your life.

Since childhood this boy was possessed not only with a confused and contradictory frame of mind, sometimes like a jumping monkey, and sometimes like an unbridled horse, but also with a queer disposition. He felt that the ceremonies employed in social intercourse were nothing more than a pack of hypocrisy. So he in this respect uniformly adopted a sort of nonchalant attitude towards everybody. You could not find any honey-sweet or opportunity-subtle word in his mouth. From his person, neither any cringing nor superfluity of etiquette. Relatives or friends, rich or poor, he treated them the same, without fear or favour. He realised that the sweetest honey would sour in course of time, whereas water though insipid remains always the same.

A lotus when viewed afar becomes the fairer. As to human relationships it is not good to get too close or intimate. Human beings are like a heap of coal. When heaped together for a long time and they become more compact, the danger in this situation becomes greater, the likelihood to explode increased. In human relationships what we need is sincerity. So what is the need of flowery words and artful speech and that show of affectations. From childhood he was imbued with a blunt straightforwardness, and handicapped by an inept slow tongue. Since he had not the gift of speech nor learned the art of making friends, so he could not greet them with gracious civility or gentility. Indeed, he was sometimes so tongue-tied as not to speak a word of common greeting or sympathy to others. Hence he was easily mistaken for pride or being unloving. This situation from one angle seemed quite natural but from another it seemed to be purported. The fact

is that the longer he experienced this world the more he developed an “insipid” and nonchalant attitude towards others. The longer he lived the more he perceived the craftiness and sleight of men, truly no different from what Jeremiah has said (Ch. 17:9). Thus, he had come to understand the more the axiom, “familiarity breeds contempt.” He had come to regard “insipid” his philosophy of life and golden-rule. For this reason he had not discovered during the scores of years of his life who truly was his bosom friend. Indeed, he had been obsessed all along by a sort of isolationist temperament or psychology. Was this due to the fact that so many of his brothers and sisters had deserted him at a tender age, thus relegating him to a life of loneliness? For this reason he had come to feel that no one on earth could be his bosom friend, or ever love him. So, he wrote in his diary during his days in seminary:

*I have found my best of friends
In the water reflection,
Inside the mirror,
Under the moon,
Before the candle*

He seemed never able to change from this isolationist temperament. Indeed, such a psychological condition is unhealthy, such queerness is illogical. Although God had taken away his brothers and sisters, he had in fact given him the more according to Matt. 12:48-50. And though he and his wife had few children, they have many more as Scripture says, “For more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife.” Therefore his sinking into an abyss of depression all his life was due to none other than the error of his own thoughts. But thanks be to God, perhaps He had purposely placed him in such an isolated, lonely situation that he might find the opportunity to know the Truth.

One day while writhing in the throes of loneliness he penned the following verses to the tune of “Face to Face.”

FACE TO FACE

*Earthy friendship is all but vain,
In a mirror can be seen:
Men’s hearts vary as their faces,
But their feelings are the same.
Face to face that Day we shall meet,
Gathered round our Father’s feet,
In sincerity and in truth,
And our differences removed.*

*We become fools when sin blinds us,
And our view of life is blurred:
What is all in the universe?
God’s Word becomes a riddle!
Face to face that Day we shall meet,
Gathered round our Father’s feet,
When the Lord’s glory we behold,
And our doubts like mist unfold.*

*Who in all the world’s like Moses:
To him God spoke face to face!
Who knew the Lord as He knew him,
What a glory by His grace!
Face to face that Day we shall meet,
Gathered round our Father’s feet,
When all our hopes shall be fulfilled.
And the storms of life be stilled.*

After this, being totally dejected with mankind, he thought of Jesus the comfort and solace for his lonesome heart. He penned several more songs to sing in soliloquy for solace whenever overtaken by loneliness and depression.

FRIEND, COME AND STAY
(to the tune of "Abide With Me")

*The twilight falls, fast sinks the evening sun.
The night is dark, O Lord, to Thee I run!
Weary and dreary pants my fainting heart,
O never, gracious Friend, from me depart!*

*The evening haze reflects life's changing day,
Quick as a twinkle ebbs the tide away.
Feastings are few, good fortunes soon decay,
O come, Thou sincere Friend, with me to stay.*

*The night grows cold, so the friendship of man,
The world's a mirage to the caravan.
Where is the door of help to this lost one?
O Thou my only Friend leave not alone!*

*The night is long, so winds the worldly path,
A speck of life floats far away from shore.
The fleshly lusts have often gripped my heart,
O holy Friend stay with me ever more.*

*The years flow on, how soon life comes to end,
The pomp and power of earth are but a dream!
They fade away sure as the law of change,
Eternal Friend, arise, my soul redeem.*

He Is My Friend

Translated by T. Tow

The musical score is written in 6/8 time with a key signature of one flat (Bb). It consists of four systems, each with a vocal line (treble clef) and a bass line (bass clef). The lyrics are printed below the vocal lines.

1. Je - sus is my ho-noured Friend, He knows me through and through.
2. When I feel weak and wea - ry, Sunk in the depths of woe,
3. I love Him and He loves me. He is my bo - som Friend.
4. My Lord's com - ma - nd I'll o - bey. How dare I fall be - hind?

His love is sure and full of grace, Makes me love Him a - new.
He lifts me up to run the Race Through Dan - ger's gate and toll.
He shares my joys and my sor - rows, And helps me to con - tend.
To save the sheep a - wan - der - ing, Re - deem a lost man - kind.

When I leave Him, I can - not stand, O let me turn to Him!
He keeps me straight with rod and staff. Love des - cend - ed from Heaven.
He teach - es me to cling to good, But flee from lust and sin,
The love of Christ they've ne - ver heard, His blood that's shed for sin.

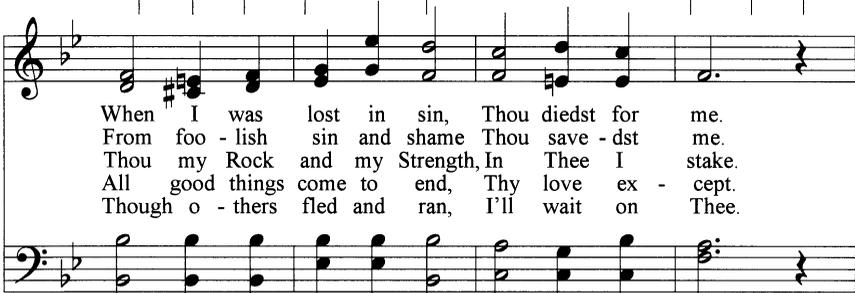
I must seek Him now and al - ways, He is my Friend.
With Him my Guide, what more to ask? He is my Friend.
Like Him in all ho - ly liv - ing. He is my Friend.
My hand in His, I must ad - vance! He is my Friend.

My Only Friend

Translated by T. Tow



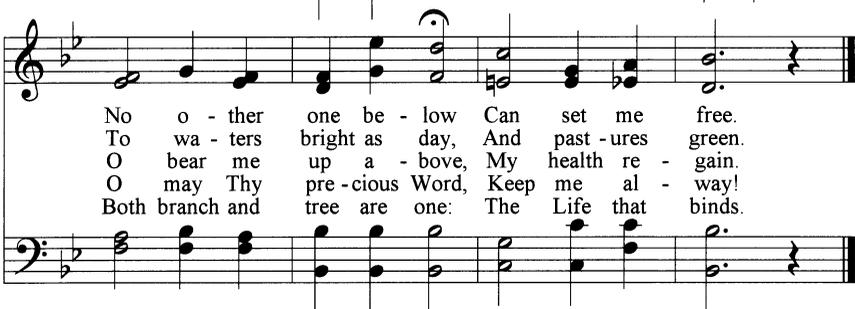
1. O Thou my no - ble Friend, Shall I un - grate - ful be?
2. O Thou my sin - cere Friend, How can I stray from Thee?
3. O Thou my gra - cious Friend, Shall I e'er Thee for - sake?
4. O Thou my life - long Friend, Let me ne'er Thee for - get!
5. O Thou my on - ly Friend, I will a - bide with Thee.



When I was lost in sin, Thou diedst for me.
From foo - lish sin and shame Thou save - dst me.
Thou my Rock and my Strength, In Thee I stake.
All good things come to end, Thy love ex - cept.
Though o - thers fled and ran, I'll wait on Thee.



Sal - va - tion free - ly flows; Thy blood shed from the Tree.
Thou leadst me in the way Through Death's dark vale un - seen
Like gush - ing streams Thy love, It clean - ses all my stains.
E'er shin - ing bright this love, Turn earth's dark night to day!
Both branch and tree are one: The Law of Life that binds



No o - ther one be - low Can set me free.
To wa - ters bright as day, And past - ures green.
O bear me up a - bove, My health re - gain.
O may Thy pre - cious Word, Keep me al - way!
Both branch and tree are one: The Life that binds.

Although he utterly detested those who kept not their word and practised hypocrisy, he treated all alike with sincerity. And though he repeatedly became disappointed in man, the love of Christ burned in his heart. Oftentimes he had given help and relief, but what he got in return was like “giving that which is holy to the dogs” and “casting pearls before swine” – “they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.” Many a time he almost swore he would never become a fool, but become a fool again he did. That’s right, one who has tasted the goodness of God’s grace cannot conscionably do what he should not do. But in our conduct we should acquire a new understanding, as Paul in Ephesians 6:6, 7 has said, “as to the Lord, and not to men.” Has not the Lord Jesus said, “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.” That famous book by Tolstoy, “Where Love Is, God Is” is most deeply inspiring.

Inexplicably, he who was so dull and shy in childhood had now learned many things. Were his father alive he would regret his stubborn error. Indeed, he almost hindered his future. Though he was no genius, neither was he such a dullard, for his school results were not too bad. Especially, when he entered seminary, he never dropped to second place in any examination. He graduated with an over ninety average. Many in seminary were either muggers or bookworms. In seminary we had no text books. All relied upon notes taken down from lectures. Before terminal exams many schoolmates would sit up all night and bore their heads into those lecture notes, so much so quite a few “vomited blood.” As far as he was concerned he kept late nights on account of work. When the examinations came, however, he went to bed early. Then, how was it that he excelled the rest in the results? Some thought he had taken better lecture notes, so they borrowed them. In fact, he himself did not read those lecture notes until an hour or two before examinations. Where then lay his secret? Was he smarter than others? Not apparently so. His secret first was in

trusting God, because he felt that his entering seminary was for the Lord's sake. Next, he was most attentive to the lectures given. He paid special attention to important points stressed by the lecturer. Indeed, he was conscientious in everything, and he practically digested every lecture that it should become a part of himself. Thus, what he learnt was not merely recorded on paper but upon his heart. Notes taken in class gave a mere outline and were an aid for reference when necessary.

According to seminary regulation, one year before a student graduated, he was given an opportunity "to do the practical." In his case he went to Lungchow in the extreme west of Kwangsi. The people there were steeped in ignorance and stubbornness, and superstitious arts were rife. It was the anniversary of the "May 30 Incident" when I arrived there. The middle school students of the whole city went on a demonstration and turned this opportunity into an anti-Christian showdown. This tide of opposition had already swept the whole province. Almost every Church had come under attack. Many Churches were wrecked. A missionary couple, his colleagues in Lunchow, who sensed trouble had long disappeared into Indo-China, leaving him in the lurch. It was also the time when the District Conference was to meet and all the preachers and delegates had gathered to Lungchow for the meeting. He was in charge of the big Church in Lungchow and was responsible for the entertainment of guests. There were two Churches in Lungchow, one inside the city and the other outside. Both of these were wrecked by the mobs at a loss of over ten thousand dollars, including private property.

The trouble started at the Gospel Hall outside the city, at the back of which were his quarters where delegates were to lodge. It broke out while he was in the process of preparing the Conference grounds at the main Church. When he got wind of the trouble he rushed to the Gospel Hall but the crowds were already inside smashing away. When he saw that several delegates were hemmed

inside the living quarters he became alarmed. Just as he rushed about to help in the twilight, he was picked out by someone as the preacher. Whereupon a threatening demand was made to him to deliver the “red-beard-blue-eye” Americans. He found the opportunity to speak had come, in fact, to buy time by getting them sidetracked to this matter. This gave the brethren hemmed inside a chance to escape. By God’s secret help he had the composure and wit to meet with the situation. Then, seeing that his purpose was attained, and delay meant deterioration, he quietly let them continue their smash up. Boldly, he mingled with the mob to see what they would do inside. When he got into his quarters and found those delegates had escaped to safety, he grabbed the Bible he had used for years lying on the study table. With one blow he smashed the glass of his bookshelf and saved the money and valuables hidden behind the books. The rest he left to the mob to loot. After saving the men and materials he rushed to the police and military to report. But all he got for a reply was that the police and military officers were gone to a mahjong party, and no one was available to make decision. The fact was that these thugs had shaken up the whole city. What reason could they give for not knowing, those upon whose shoulders the maintenance of peace rested, the police and military officers? They purposely refused to bother. Such a blot on Chinese officialdom! In fact not a few of the hooligans came from the police and military “to catch fish in the trouble waters.” It was after all the ransacking was over that with official decorum and disguise they sent a few police and military to keep peace and put up a few notices.

Now he had taken another step in the school of life. He saw clearly that the world was divided into two camps – good and evil. He saw he had an inescapable responsibility to mankind. When he returned to school to finish up he officially told the principal that he had picked a new name – Cheng Yeh (Witness for Jesus, his Chinese name).

Chapter 3

A Laborious Couple

I have said above that our family is a family of labourers. My father was a poor preacher and was deceased when I was twelve. As to inheritance, we had a small house in the village, what was once upon a time a barn when our family was rich. It was in this house that I was born. Since my birth I had not lived in this house for more than two to three years. In my childhood I used to stay with my preacher father. When I went to school I said good-bye to the house, and it has since decayed. As for my portion of inheritance, I have not got any apart from a Cantonese poem composed by my father now stored inside my brain. Neither have I inherited from my father the excellence of his gentle character. Indeed, all that I have endowed by my ancestors is this naked body from my mother's womb. Praise to be God, though from man I received nothing, from Him who is the Father of orphans, I have obtained a treasure, a life-long partner.

Many a young person has passed through a period in which they decide never to marry, and I am one of these. The reason for holding such a philosophy is that, largely, they are afraid of being burdened with a family. In Seminary we had two schools of thought, the so-called Peter's party and Paul's party, and the Pauline party had more adherents. But theory is one thing and practice another. From my knowledge there was only one who could really practise what he believed. From the very first to the

last, he was determined to a celibate life for the Lord. If for the sake of the Lord's work one could do like this, well and good. But the odds are many, and not a few the weaknesses of such a position. Paul knew human nature and so did not over-constrain the believers. To live a single life one is faced with the problem of a life-long consistency that runs counter to nature. Physiologically and psychologically it is a condition hard to maintain. Besides, there are many related problems such as convenience in the ministry, the molding of character, the checking up on one's actions, the discussion of one's work, the sympathy of thoughts, the cure of body and soul, etc. A minister cannot go without a wife. Indeed, the Word of God is true. He said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him." (Gen. 2:18).

According to regulations, after a student had spent two years in school he must be sent to serve a year in a Church as part of his training. Then he returned for another year to qualify for graduation. However, I had only one-and-a-half years study when I was sent out. During this period of practical work I completely overturned all those ideals I entertained in school as a result of all these experiences. I felt now that a minister could not go without a wife, though knowing full well that a "home" becomes a "yoke." But such a burden is a necessity. I began to pay attention to this matter after return from the practical work because I believed "the Lord will perfect that which concerneth me" (Ps. 138:8; 37:5). Having dedicated myself to rural evangelism, my conditions for a life-partner were very simple. I needed one sturdy in soul, character and body, able to stand the strain and hardship. Although some classmates had an eye on me and some even made advances, I had no desire to any choice. This is not to say there were none compatible in school. It was due rather to my queer temperament. In view of the fact that a boy seeking the hand of a girl was stopped by the authorities of the Girls Dorm with inelegant remarks, I regarded this matter an insult to the male

students. Henceforth, I decided not to pay any attention to any female classmate. Notwithstanding, this was not the absolute reason why I could not find a partner in school. For, as “every good match is made in heaven”, at the back of all this was God’s higher will (Ps. 39:9).

After this somebody introduced me to one Miss Wong. Although we had not met, we began to correspond. In our correspondence I purposely showed off my stubbornness to spark up her reaction in order that I might know her true self. Having come to understand each other thereby, we arranged a meeting to see each other. Our engagement was effected in a semi-modern or semi-old fashion. Nevertheless, God had bound us together by a crimson string, as the saying goes, “A marriage between two a thousand li (Chinese mile = one-third of an English mile) apart is made by that crimson string binding their feet.”

Some people say, “Marital love is blind”; or as another saying goes, “There is a Hsi-Shih in every lover’s eye” (Hsi Shih was a famous beauty in Chinese history). But, I can say that when I picked my life-partner, I was quite awake. I knew that the spouse I chose was no perfect being, as I am myself. For, there is no perfect spouse in the world. Since we cannot demand the impossible in the world of a perfect spouse the important thing therefore is “a deep mutual understanding.” It is said, “Two can live together if they understand each other’s character.” Now, if we can give and take one another’s weaknesses and let love fill up the gap, then we have a happy marriage. Yes, a happy marriage is founded on this, as Proverbs 10:12 says, “Love covereth all sins.”

But a marriage is not built simply on a right perception at the time of courtship. Such an attitude needs to be continuously substantiated. Thus can that unfortunate situation, “Marriage is the graveyard of courting love”, be prevented. Thanks be to God, although our marriage has not attained to that “fulness of beauty”, we can say we have found satisfaction in each other. In the last



“A laborious couple”

twenty-five years, apart from quarrels during the first two years, we have had less and less conflicts from then onwards. During these latter years, we have practically no more of such. Looking back at the quarrels of the first two years, these have been due to my foolishness, for, one of the reasons of my marriage was for Mother's sake. Remembering her life of bitter struggles in order to bring me up and how my brothers and sisters had all died young and I the only one left, I decided to have a family to give her some consolation in her evening years. In order to attain to this objective, I became hard on my wife. My mother was not only an ultra-conservative, but had never had any education. This put my wife at the time in a quandary. I do not know how it was I could not sympathise with her. This made it so unbearable on her part that often she would "weep and drink her tears secretly." As I think of this now, I feel most guilty and doubly sorry.

The first two years after marriage might be termed the period of mirkiness. Our disputes were not only due to the reason above stated, but rather to our not having known each other well enough. Thanks be to God, He had made a beautiful plan for my life. Three years after, we had a short period of separation. This was due to Mother's sickness and her frailty after giving birth, which necessitated their return to China for convalescence. This separation between us lasted three years until I returned home on furlough and we came together again. This period of separation became a great blessing to our reunion. Paul had written to Philemon on Onesimus' behalf, "For perhaps he therefore departed for a season, that thou shouldest receive him forever." We were in such a situation. In our separation, we had a time for self-examination, which we expressed in correspondence to our mutual understanding. Also, "absence makes the heart grow fonder" which thereby increased our love.

In fact, such a state existed even during our first two years. Sometimes, I left home for half a month at a stretch. During this

period, we expressed our regrets to each other in correspondence. From the experience I have found an unchanging principle, as stated by Paul, “the departing for a season can gain a forever”. Applying this principle to the Church, we can obtain similar results. Why do members of a Church often have conflicts with their pastor? Why do they often feel unhappy with their pastor? Gossip? If a Church will let her pastor off for a season each year, the situation would be quite different.

Another lucent reason for our marital quarrels was my explosive temperament. My uncontrollable temper is inherited partly from Mother and partly added on by my idiosyncratic righteous indignation and by that pessimism I have acquired from books. An unwholesome physiological and psychological constitution was the cause for all this. I knew full well such a state of affairs was detrimental both to my status and work as a minister of the gospel. Such a thorn in the flesh has not been plucked to this day. This thorn pains me not at the time of losing temper but after that. Often it makes me lose my dignity and the respect of others, precious friendship and many opportunities. In my 1940 diary there is this self-appraisal: “Temper has been adjudged for long to be my greatest enemy. So I have made this decision for myself. If I cannot conquer her I shall be defeated and even die at her hand.”

Another statement: “I have said before, should I unfortunately be defeated and die by accident, it must be due to my temper. For I know my fleshly nature to be too strong. I’ve no patience nor endurance. Looking back the past decade, many things have failed because of my temper. Whenever I lost my temper I begat many sorrows and troubles. Many unhappy events that have occurred (though not all due to me) have been undoubtedly due to the sowing of countless evils and woes. Yes, I have fallen, and that is due to my foolishness.”

Often I asked the Lord to take away my life because of this thorn. But in my prayers I would see in my mind the Lord speaking to Paul: “My grace is sufficient for you.”

Speaking about conflicts between husband and wife, undoubtedly, this is an unfortunate thing. If a minister quarrels with his wife often, how can he teach others? Since we quarrelled the first two years because of our shallow knowledge of each other, we on the other hand were afraid to let others know and thus affect our work. And since my temper was so strong, should I leave it alone, it would surely break me to pieces. So I thought of a way, the only way – that is, when our opinions clashed, we would refrain from a battle of words but resort to a battle of pens. Later I found such a method not only preserved the external peace of the family, but also was a wonderful way of solving disputes. Since everyone has a temper and self-dignity, if we should clash by word of mouth, there is bound to be over-heated argument. As lips become spears and teeth swords, and words are answered by more words, there cannot be peace in the home. By using the pen for the mouth, at least some time must elapse in the consideration, whereby the thoughts will be clarified. Passing thus through the sieve of time and space, they will not be like the careless words that usually blaze away. When words are written down, they are preserved which gives the opposite party a chance to analyse and correct. Who is right or wrong can be judged from what is written, and from the written to speaking terms again. From this experience I discovered that many of our conflicts had come from misunderstanding. And when we made up, we felt bashful all over.

I have just said what “a temporary separation” has benefited between husband and wife. Now, what method I am now using is based on the same principle. Though we are not separated in flesh, but in spirit, the result is the same. We do not speak face to face, but through pen and paper. We are so near, and yet so far. This has

resulted in our coming together again. Thanks be to God, senseless quarrels between us have now become a thing of the past. Now our peaceableness and love are the fruits from those precious experiences.

Solomon says, “Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it: if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned” (Sol’s. Song 8:7). From these words it is proven that true love is limitless, is that which is absolutely needed between husband and wife. Such love is the foundation of a happy family. It is only by such love that a couple can find life sweeter and more fragrant and harmonious each day unto perfection. During the Sino-Japanese Conflict Mr. Tsao Chu Jen had written a war story entitled “Life of a Refugee.” He tells us that true and noble love wears no make-up. When she expresses herself even in what seems a most trivial matter, her moving power is immeasurable. The story reads:

“One who has escaped from the Refugee Camp in Shanghai says: By the fifth day the entrance to the Refugee Camp in the South City has all but become a latrine. Hundreds of thousands of people wait along the iron fence for relief. When dumplings are thrown in from the other side of the fence, they all rush for a bite. That day we as a family, which included me, my wife and two small children, the four of us, tried to rush for them. For half a day we “caught” nothing save two cold dumplings my wife had salvaged from the dung heap. I could only stare sheepishly at her. I saw her brush away the wet dung from the dumplings and then peel off their “skin”, layer by layer. Then she divided one between the two children and the other she gave it to me. When I was about to divide my dumpling with her, she suddenly turned away and put those skins into her mouth. Suddenly I caught her in a staring embrace and knelt before her. We had been husband and wife for so many years. Now, I knew what this “noble love” was . . .”

We have been married for many years, and we have experienced such a situation not a few times. In the early days of the Japanese occupation of the Southern (Indonesian) Archipelago, I had the most bitter experience of my life. We knew that the Dyaks were an ignorant and weak people, and could hardly go through the crucible of suffering, that even the native evangelists would not be able to stand against such beatings of storm and rain. So, we decided to shift to the Dyak Christian village to stay by and encourage them. We knew this was a move fraught with danger, but we did it as a matter of duty. Sure enough, during the vacuum period of transition before the Japanese army arrived, the heterogeneous disciples, using political pressure, began to threaten the Church. The tide of persecution rose ominously and kept me in almost complete isolation. At that juncture, we were not afraid to die, for we had been prepared for death from the day of going to Dyakland. What we felt so miserable about at this time was that a decade of bitter labours was turned to nothing in a moment. We felt like Elijah seeking death under the juniper tree. I felt not only weak like water with all my ambitions pulverised, but was also prostrated by a sick body. In this utter solitude with not a single relative amidst the aborigines, deprived of medicine and food, not only was I laid low by illness, but my sick wife too. It was a case of patient nursing patient. Whoever got better would get up to work. Husband and wife were never so closely knit together as one life. When thoughts went to my mother and son now separated from us during those turbulent days, sadness poured down in tears. The following is an unforgettable page from my diary: – Tuesday, 23rd June, 1942, drizzling and cool.

We had a copious conversation last night on what occurred to us recently. We felt that the hardest thing to face in life was “man”. So our talk centred on the philosophy of living. Since we were husband and wife, what I went through was hers as well. When trouble came, I became pessimistic, and so did she. So she

was no help to me. But when she poured out her sorrowful heart, I could not but be moved. For example she was ill the other day and could little eat. Though void of strength for work, she forced herself to draw water (the descent to the river was equivalent to climbing down three storeys). She saw I was sitting sorrowful, solitary and restless, my body weak like water, my spirits at a low ebb. She dared not stir me even a little and forced herself to work. But this put such a strain on her that she almost wept, though she was afraid to let me know. So she forced herself to eat to regain strength. But this made the sickness worse. This she told me last night when I appeared more relaxed and at peace. She said, “We have brought this bitter worry and mess upon ourselves. Why shouldn’t we rely on God’s grace and take a more optimistic outlook? To be downhearted is to spend one’s day in vain. In life eight or nine out of ten we meet with unpleasant events. Let us not so foolishly dissipate our life like this. At this we both stared dumb at each other.

Today is my 39th birthday. Man Chong (my wife) specially killed a chicken for me. We had a desire to invite some friends, but since we were short of viands and our spirits were low, we stopped short at that. Fortunately, last night our hearts had become more at ease. So today we greet my birthday with a gladsome heart.

Upon reading the “New Little” newspaper of Nov. 21, 1940, I was moved to write two essays: “Thought and Action” and “Hero and Culprit.”

That love is the foundation of a happy home cannot be denied. But true love is born of sincerity and faith. Paul says, “Charity is out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned” (I Tim. 1:5). The peaceable and harmonious life between husband and wife depends solely upon the maintenance of sincerity and faith. Without sincerity and faith between husband and wife, there can be no talk of love. Thanks be to God,

there has not been any act worthy of suspicion between us both, so there has not been any surreptitious heart nor any secret that we could not share. So, we have always trusted each other, in every movement, and in finance. We have wholly made Christ the Lord of our house. Through this reverential fear of Him, we have treated each other with sincerity and trust, with concern and not with supervision.

The preacher has two great temptations, two chiefest enemies. They are money and sex. All preachers live under these two oppressive powers, and when they cannot prevail any longer they succumb. I have seen many preachers fall in these two matters. Almost all who fall are they who fail to extricate from their hold.

Usually the preacher meets with all kinds of people, and when he cannot help himself against little and insidious inroads, he succumbs to breaking the Seventh Commandment. As to the preacher's wife she often is tripped by the stumbling stone of money. Because the preacher's income is small, the housewife has to handle a hard-to-balance budget, and so the Tenth Commandment becomes her burden. In discussing this natural tendency in woman, we should rather touch on the lean stipends doled out to preachers by the Chinese Church. Indeed, this is a serious question facing the Church. Since this is not the place to give vent to the problem, we will not discuss further. However, the preacher must have a budget.

Thanks be to God, it can be said that these two great enemies were known to me, and before leaving, I had already been equipped to meet them. So, these two enemies could not get hold of me during the last twenty-five years. During my term of service with the Dyaks in Borneo, nearly half of the ten odd native preachers under my care fell into these sins – a great blow to my ministry. Those who were married were able to keep themselves better.

But the peculiar condition surrounding the mountain tribes were such that the women went about naked day and night as a custom. To them this was quite natural and there was no such (Confucian) etiquette as “no hand-contact between man and woman even in the delivery of anything from one to the other”. This state of affairs caused temptations to abound.

When I first went to preach to the Dyaks I was a youngster, while my wife remained in Hong Kong. Once a Dyak observed I had lived a single life for several years, so he asked if I was married. I said yes and that my wife was in Hong Kong. Surprised, he queried, “Has she remarried?” I replied that would be impossible with Christians. He felt more intrigued. To him this was news. For, to the Dyaks husbands and wives could not be separated for a moment. Sometimes, a wife would find another husband in one night.

When I first arrived in Dyakland, I often saw them in pairs on the road and in the field. I admired their love for each other which transcended that of the civilised. Later I found out the secret. All the young girls of marriageable age who met a new comer, whether they knew him well or not, would unshamefacedly seek love from the dauntless visitor. From this description you can see that we missionaries to the Dyaks came under constant temptation. We are all made of flesh and blood and circumvented with all human weakness. To keep ourselves was no easy matter. I had lived for fifteen years in such circumstances. That I am able to stand before God without a guilty conscience, and that I say without any boast, is gratefully due entirely to God’s protection and preservation.

A preacher’s pay is small. This is an open secret. The preacher’s wife as manageress of the household has a limited income to meet every item of expenditure. She has to rack her brains and heart to cope with such a situation.

In those days the Chinese Foreign Missionary Union prescribed for a preacher a salary of 48 Dutch guilders, 16 for his wife and 12 for each child. During the first two years it was able to pay us fully. Later, as funds dwindled while the work expanded, our salaries were cut. The most we got was 80 per cent and the least sometimes as low as 20 to 30 per cent. Most of the time it was 50 per cent. At that time, while I had four mouths to feed, we were divided into three places of abode. My son who was in school could hardly subsist from my meagre pay. If not for good budgeting, our livelihood would become a heavy burden. But thanks be to God who is rich, apart from keeping myself, I could still remit money back to China to support a nephew. This is not to say we had other income. We had practised frugality, and that was it.

Economical management is the way of fiscal administration. But a preacher's income is limited to his salary, so there is no such thing as "an open source" to talk about. On the other hand, economy can be achieved in a negative arrangement.

Paul says, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God." When God wants to use a man He often puts him through trials, even as perishable wood can be made into instruments. For example, through our small income, we had to resort to physical labour. This imperceptibly improved our wit and health, knowledge and skill. It is said that "poverty begets adaptation, and adaptation understanding." During the times when our salaries were low, we reared fowls and ducks, planted melons and vegetables, and increased production during our leisure. Sometimes, with book in one hand and fishing rod in the other, we would take after Chiang Tzu Yah to the riverside. After food we would take advantage of the resting time to go into the forest to pick firewood. For over twenty years my wife had been my barber. We would make furniture for ourselves. Once I spent one week to make a Western-style wooden bed. Those who

saw it declared it was the work of an experienced craftsman and would not believe I was not even a novice. Later on, I used this skill to teach the Dyaks in house construction and building Churches.

A first son was born to us about one year after going to the South Seas. Since we could not afford hospitalisation or calling a midwife, we had to do it ourselves. Quite successfully, the boy born in this manner weighed over eight pounds. Regretfully, we did not do well the next year. The new-born child caught cold and died in three days. But from this experience we became expert midwives, and helped many during our ministry with the mountain tribes.

Economy succeeds through “income first before expenditure,” and through maximal saving and minimal spending. Articles not urgently needed should not be bought. In former days, apart from food, medicine was my greatest item of expenditure. Ill health affects not only one’s work but also one’s economy. In buying things, I not only consider the should and should-not, but also the urgent and non-urgent. Since my marriage to this day, for twenty-five years, I have not ceased to keep accounts. The first few years I used the home account book published by the Hong Kong YMCA. It is a well-arranged and classified diary with a monthly and yearly balance sheet, so clearly set that at a glance one could tell what was necessarily or unnecessarily spent. Unfortunately, this publication was later discontinued, so we had to use ordinary account books.

Our income being small, we learned the habit of thrift. We were especially careful in buying and spending. We utilised every used article and considered valuable even “every bamboo stub and wood shaving.” Thanks to be God He specially blessed us so that our household utensils lasted longer than others’, some of which bought since our wedding have remained to this day. This is like

Israel going through the Wilderness. For forty years their garments did not tear nor their shoes wear out.

God gave us another good habit in the matter of money; we did not owe anybody. We had so decided, and God gave us the grace. Not only were we never in want, but also were able to help others. When we first went to the South Seas our pay was remitted from Kwangsi seasonally. A Hokkien brother wanted us to buy from his provision store but would not charge us, and even was concerned about our needs. But, I paid him on time every month lest we got into debt and found ourselves involved.

Once I received a telegram asking me to join a co-workers conference in the outer islands. A boat was sailing the next day, but all I had was over two guilders. Not only could I not find the several tens of guilders for passage, my family's grocery was in question. This was a test. We prayed about this matter, committed it to God and the result was that on the point of the boat sailing the next day, the remittance arrived. I have learnt this mystery myself during the twenty odd years of our ministry, according to Paul's saying, "As poor yet making many rich, as having nothing, yet possessing all things." We have gone through many such extreme experiences of deliverance. There's a saying, "When one comes to the land's end or the water's edge doubting if there's a way out, then through the dark willows and blooming flowers a village appears." In reminiscing the greatness of God's grace, one is often moved to tears.

Thanks be to the Father who loves us. During these decades He has put us in all kinds of environments to train us so that we have learned not a little in the classroom of economics. Now I can also say with Paul, "I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. Not that I speak in respect of want, for I have learned in whatever state I am, therewith to be content." I thank God moreover for my wife for

her same-mindedness in this matter. She has not allowed herself to be gossiped about in money matters. Owing to her shallow knowledge and bluntness and lack of speech, she has often been misunderstood. But none could point a finger at her. Sometimes she was more diligent than I, more loaded with work. But I am a stiff fellow not knowing how “to give face” and for the sake of friendship to practise reciprocity. In these matters I often broke the laws of etiquette. But my wife patched up my short comings.

When young I had a good memory, but in the welter of human affairs in latter, declining years, my memory lapsed. If she was by my side, I would ask her “like Confucius in the Grand Temple” about everything. I often engaged in writing but when I forgot the strokes of a character, she became my dictionary. In the things I told her I would do, she became my book of records. She often reminded me of things I wouldn’t think of. She was all in all an encyclopaedia. So, I could not go without her on many an occasion. Next to the Lord, she was my best friend.

Neither of us came from a family of scholars. We were born into a poor family of labourers. Being moved of the Holy Spirit I had gladly dedicated myself to serve the Lord, to suffer poverty for His sake. As for her, she had decided to marry a preacher. Both of us had a determination to become labourers. A young classmate of mine who became my co-worker overseas, Brother Paul Lenn, saw our wedding photo. Whereupon he remarked, “This is a laborious couple”. This word he spoke about our wedding photo naturally became the motto of our life-ministry. Yes, we are an ordinary, labouring couple. When I entered Seminary I was moved of the Holy Spirit to become a pioneering preacher, Although my objective at that time was Northwest Kwangsi, I eventually came to the South Seas. However, my work consisted of pioneering preaching.

After graduation, I got a job with the Hong Kong Methodist Church to open a branch Church. I started a Bible Class in On Lok

Yuen and in its factory I conducted evangelistic meetings right into the commercial world. Although I served in these areas very shortly, I had carried out a little of my responsibility towards pioneering work. Today the edifice of the branch Church is more majestic than that of the main one.

After half a year I resigned from the Methodist Church and came to Dutch East Borneo. In this unevangelised and uncivilised Island, I hung up the signboard of “Gospel Hall” and thus the first Chinese foreign missionary society, viz., “Chinese Foreign Missionary Union,” was born. Three years after, I took leave of this overseas Chinese work to go inland to open up work amongst the half-civilised Dyak tribes. In fifteen years of hard labours we have turned three thousand mountain tribesmen to the Lord. We have built over ten Churches. We left for Java only after the Japanese surrender. When we came to the Indonesian capital we established the first Cantonese Christian Church. Yes, we are a yoke of bovine pioneers. For the last twenty-five years God has been using me in pioneering work, great and small. Adding our ages together, we are about a hundred years. Will the Lord lead us into this type of pioneering work in the future? Though our bodies deteriorate with the days, our hearts are strong. Unless God excuses us and lifts the yoke from our shoulders, we both are ready to receive God’s call. We can say at any time to the Lord, “Here I am, send me!”

Chapter 4

“A New Thing”

“And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.” (Acts 22:21)

“Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert.” (Isaiah 43:19)

In Chapter Two I said I was moved by the Holy Spirit during the early days of seminary training to dedicate myself for pioneer work in the poorest villages. Now, it is said that when Simpson founded the Christian and Missionary Alliance he clung to the objective of “preaching the gospel where it was never heard”. This spirit was very much my spirit. According to my knowledge at that time the northwestern region of Kwangsi had not heard the gospel. So, I made up my mind from the very beginning to go there. Nevertheless, as my knowledge increased in course of time, I learned that northwest Kwangsi was not the only dark region unpenetrated by the gospel. There were countless areas where no preachers could be found. I got so enthusiastic (for the gospel) at that time that I could wish to multiply myself with the magic of the Monkey-god who by plucking off his hairs could turn each into a replica of himself. Thereby I could fly to the uttermost parts of the earth to preach the salvation grace to them!

1927, my last year in seminary, saw Dr. Jaffray return from reconnaissance of the South Seas to report to the alma mater. Displaying a wall map, he showed us the darkness over the Southern Archipelagoes. With the exception of the Philippines and British Malaya where the gospel was preached, there were many regions little evangelised. Particularly, the Netherlands East Indies. The places he visited, including many big towns inhabited by overseas Chinese, were devoid of ministers. Churches were scarcely seen, but temples and mosques everywhere! The Chinese in several towns who had been hungering and thirsting for long



entreated him to find them pastors from China. On his return journey Dr. Jaffray dreamed, to his amazement, how his hands became stained with fresh blood. The Lord was revealing to him this truth: If he did not go to the resuscitation of thirsty souls in the South Seas, then thousands of these would perish, and their blood upon him! Therefore, he dared not keep silent upon this return to China. He would launch a “Save the South Seas” project! He felt that the South Seas were the vineyard of the Chinese Church. Hence, his appeal to Chinese youth. So, whilst on one hand he planned the progress of future work, on the other he sought young volunteers to the front.

When I heard this report I was deeply moved. “To the South Seas” – this call kept pounding on my heart. But I dared not say a word because I wasn’t sure of the Lord’s will. Moreover, I had consecrated myself for North Kwangsi Province.

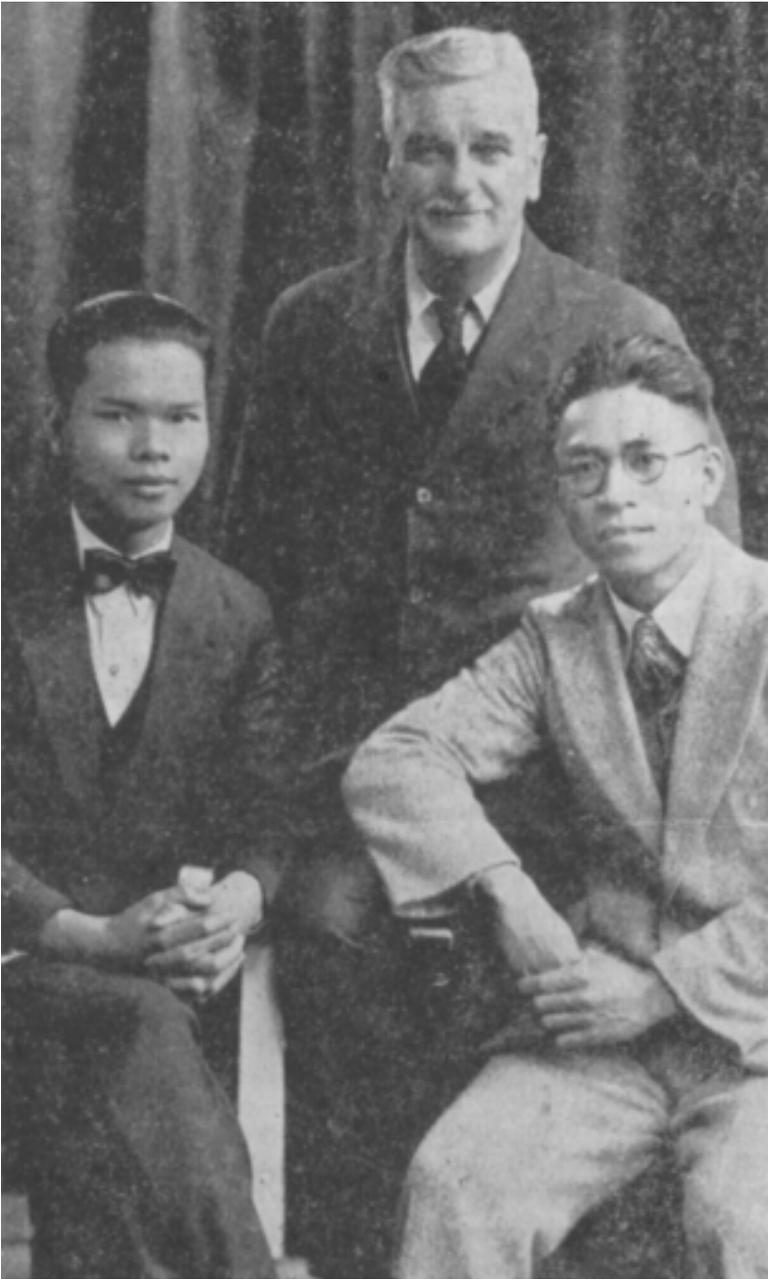
Nevertheless, graduation came, and after that, appointment to Hong Kong, which appointment was linked to my marriage. Now, before I commenced on the work undertaken, this new call was addressed to me. Dr. Jaffray wrote, and Rev. Leo T. Chow, also returned from the South Seas, talked it over with me. But, I excused myself with “the time has not yet come.” Then, one day, while I was drawing some gospel posters at the On Lok Yeun Restaurant I was accosted by Dr. Jaffray and Mr. Leland Wang who came there to dine. Dr. Jaffray said, “Mr. Linn, I was looking for an opportunity to talk to you. I feel the time has come. Because in my prayers these few months, God has given me two young men to send to the South Seas. The marvel is, whenever I prayed, you and Paul Lenn came right before me.” He further asked, “Where is Paul Lenn?” I replied, “He is teaching in Kowloon. We could see you tomorrow.” Thus, God appointed us to our future ministry.

However, I wasn’t very clear if this was God’s will. First, I had offered myself for North Kwangsi. Second, I hadn’t worked

with the Methodist Church in Hong Kong for half-a-year, and I could not leave like a fickle-minded child. Moreover, I was hampered by friends and relatives – with almost none sympathetic to this call. After prayer, however, the Lord opened a way.

The Methodist Church in the appointment or dismissal of preachers would invariably decide at the General Conference. This Conference was convened one week behind schedule due to the late arrival of the chairman. Now, although my case could not be decided by a majority vote, a brother offered this opinion, “Mr. Linn’s resignation is not for a private matter or with the view to join another Church. He is going with the gospel to the aborigines where the need is greater than ours. Moreover, it is not easy to have volunteers. Since Mr. Linn is in the prime of life and has volunteered, we have no reason to obstruct the will of God.” This facilitated my resignation.

Dr. Jaffray’s evangelistic ministry in the South Seas was without let up. He found Mr. Leland Wang and convinced him of its need. He thought of putting the responsibility on him and strengthened his resolve by urging him to take a trip to see for himself the great and urgent needs. After sending off Mr. Wang, he remained in Hong Kong to await my news. When he learnt that I was released from the Methodists, he at once prepared my travel documents. He got me to promise solemnly to return to Wuchow for the commissioning service. In order to make His will clear to me, and to strengthen my resolve, He gave me light, upon the first morning of my return to Wuchow, from Isaiah 43:18,19 and Acts 22:21. Clearly the Lord spoke to me, “Remember ye not the former things, . . . behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth . . .” Thus, I gave up my plans for North Kwangsi; I obeyed the Lord. I was willing to be sent to the Gentiles afar off “that He might make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert . . .”



With Dr Jaffray on eve of sailing from Hong Kong

January 30, 1929 – this was the Day we left Hong Kong, China on our foreign expedition. There were the three in our family, Paul Lenn and our leader Dr. Jaffray. Before setting out we were given a send-off by the brethren and sisters in the name of the Hong Kong “Keswick” at St. Paul’s Church. Nay, this was a commissioning service, for this service was sending in China’s behalf two youths overseas, as the Antioch Church sent Barnabas and Paul (Acts 13). This was a memorable Day, for this Day marked the opening of a new page in Chinese Church history. By the holy decree of “Go ye . . . into all the world” there was blazed a new gospel highway for the Chinese Church – this Chinese Foreign Mission.

Physiologically and morally speaking, man’s life may be divided into three periods. First, man is dependent on the parental nurture and upbringing. Second, he attains independence. Third, he brings up others. For example, even the 120-year-old Moses passed through these three stages.

Since Rev. Morrison brought the gospel to China, over a hundred years have elapsed, so that we should be entering into the third stage (of the Church’s life). We should progress from the independence stage to the stage of bringing up others. But, like the hunter sitting under the tree to catch the rabbit, there are many Churches which miss the opportunity. Furthermore there are certain Western missionaries who hold on to China as one of their “spheres of evangelism” forever, and are reluctant to let her become independent. We consider this a sin! However, the wonder is that God has raised up Dr. Jaffray from amongst the Western missionaries to stimulate a Chinese Foreign Mission work within the Chinese Church. At least, Dr. Jaffray had this vision.

After Dr. Jaffray had settled us on the field he quickly returned to China to consult with a few Chinese Church leaders to organise. By July of that year the first Chinese missionary society

– the Chinese Foreign Missionary Union – was born. Mr. Leland Wang was president, Dr. Jaffray vice-president and treasurer. He said, “This is the Chinese Church’s new enterprise. Therefore let her bear the responsibility. But, since God has moved me to start this work, I will give my help, won’t I?” Humorously, he observed, “My name is Fu Min (Dr. Jaffray’s Chinese name) which means: “I should stand on the side to help send Chinese national missionaries.”

Chinese Foreign Mission – this was God’s new enterprise for the Chinese Church. Logically, it should have been started by Chinese nationals. But now it was a Western missionary who did it – a satire to the Chinese Church. And now that Dr. Jaffray could humble himself, should not the Chinese Church leaders rise up to the occasion by accepting the Great Commission?

Many years ago I had written an article “Chinese Christians and Foreign Missions” in the Lutheran News of Hupeh Province. Similarly, in many church magazines I had followed up with such articles to arouse interest amongst Chinese Christians in this work, that by their participation, this new enterprise might become the joint effort of the Chinese Church. Alas! Opportunity lay daily at the door, but owing to various problems, opportunity slipped away! There were many unreportable events in this mishap.

In any enterprise, one should not always expect a smooth sailing progress. For founding the Chinese Foreign Missionary Union Dr. Jaffray was greatly misunderstood. Were it not for his strong-headedness and resoluteness surmounting a hundred knocks and countless struggles and setbacks, this enterprise could not have succeeded. A door was now opened for the Chinese Church in Foreign Missions, a foundation was laid!

That the Chinese Church should have founded a foreign missionary society, an evangelistic enterprise, was due entirely to

the efforts of Dr. Jaffray. Let us be thoroughly ashamed, because we had not promoted this work from within ourselves. We had allowed a foreigner to steal the march on us.

But were we so under-talented as some Americans viewed us? Any veteran Western missionary to China, who truly loved the Lord and was unblinded, must from his conscience say otherwise, and such interpretation would not be far from the truth. Should the Chinese Church be so under-talented, he could through love guide it. Appended below is an article by a veteran German missionary to China. He sympathised with the Chinese missionaries' situation and he concealed not to tell his feelings. Through him many Americans were touched to support the Mission. On the other hand he had aroused the displeasure of a certain section who made the writer a scapegoat for the Chinese missionaries.

The article, "The Chinese Foreign Missionary Union and Reform", was penned by Rev. Gus Woerner in his capacity as a Western missionary sympathetic to the Chinese Church's promotion of overseas missionary enterprise. Every word and line evinced the fervent hope he had for the Chinese Church becoming a missionary Church. He was a prophet and a seer among Western missionaries. He was one filled with a passion for righteousness. This article of his was translated in Chinese and published in the March 1937 issue of the T'ung Wen Pao. I did not know what were the thoughts of our Chinese Christian readers. Though God had raised up this new enterprise in our Chinese Church and kept a big field – the Southern Archipelago for us to open up, we continued to loll and slumber. Look! As Joshua in days of old called to the Israelites, there comes to us today a similar cry. Listen! Every Christian of China: "How long are ye slack to go to possess the land, which the Lord God of your fathers hath given you? (Joshua 18:3).

The Chinese Foreign Missionary Union and Reform

by Gus Woerner

(translated back from the Chinese)

The work of the Chinese Foreign Missionary Union and that of the Christian and Missionary Alliance in the South Seas are linked together, the Alliance there being a product of the CFMU. The founder of the CFMU is Dr. R.A. Jaffray, who is president of the CMA in the South Seas. Dr. Jaffray has been a missionary to China for the last thirty-five years. He is a church statesman. He is one of the ten most well-known missionaries of the twentieth century. He is full of spirit for pioneer missions, having established Churches in various places in inland Kwangsi. Now the Church of Kwangsi is steadily growing day by day. God has also used Dr. Jaffray in Indo-China. The Church in Indo-China is also flourishing, as church buildings spring up in various places in Kwangsi. Churches are built a hundred miles beyond important cities. This is so from Hanoi in the north to Saigon in the south. These Churches shine forth the true light all round, well beyond their locations. Though the missionaries are scattered, they work hand in hand. Although such is the case, Dr. Jaffray's evangelistic spirit burns like a torch and so he has opened another work in the Dutch Indies.

Since he has been a missionary to China, he loves the Chinese. So he has begun to find out how many overseas Chinese there are who have actually heard the gospel. He thought that in order to get a clear picture of the situation he should not visit only the important cities and ports along the sea coast. So he got on a small coaster that had no regular sailing schedule, that plied up and down there. On his first trip he visited Borneo, Celebes, and other islands. From his heart there arose a special vision. He felt the Lord was calling for someone to go. On these islands there were over two million overseas Chinese, mostly concentrated in the towns along the sea coast, though there were those living

inland. These were Chinese and local-borns. Once these were saved and called of the Lord to transmit the gospel to the thousands of natives, would not this be a wonderful short-cut? Upon his return to Wuchow, Kwangsi from this trip, how he was filled with zeal from the Holy Spirit to preach the gospel to the South Seas. These events still vividly appear before our eyes. Whether at breakfast, lunch, or dinner, at that time we heard the names of Samarinda, Balik Papan, Makasar, Bali, Dyak, Bugis and the name of every tribe. At first we found it very hard to pronounce these syllables nor did we know their meanings. After some time did we learn they were the names of cities and towns in the South Seas, or names of the native tribes. They all did not know the gospel of the Lord Jesus, but God's time had come, so the fire of the gospel was lighted.

That year three Chinese missionaries were sent, to Makasar, Samarinda and Balik Papan. Simultaneously a committee was born which was named the Chinese Foreign Missionary Union. The president was Leland Wang and vice-president and treasurer Dr. Jaffray. The finance and expenses were all in charge of the treasurer as entrusted by God. From a very small organisation in 1926 (then known as South Seas Evangelistic Band) this organisation has grown to its present size. During these eight years, there were in the field an average of 21 missionaries, of whom 17 were supported by the Mission. The rest of them were in charge of self-supporting Chinese Churches.

It is very evident that God has blessed the labours of this Mission. Three thousand souls have been brought to the Lord through the lips of the missionaries. What was called the tourist paradise, the alluring Island of Bali, was shut by the Government to the preaching of the gospel. But God gave the Mission a special entrance through one Chinese missionary. God has done a mighty work. Although the Dutch Government forbade us to preach the gospel to Bali, five hundred natives have believed Jesus and are

baptised. Moreover there are one thousand of the catechumens. The first to open a gospel work in Biliton and Banka are also Chinese missionaries.

The CFMU is the Chinese Church's only foreign missionary society. Although many Chinese are evangelising in many parts of the world, there never has been formed such a regular organisation. Though many Chinese preachers have gone abroad, they have worked only with their compatriots overseas. But the object of the Mission is to save every tribe of every island on a much wider scope. As a matter of fact the greatest success has been achieved in work among the aborigines. What the Chinese missionaries have done could prove they are equal to missionaries from Europe and America, and are capable of co-operation. They are not afraid of difficulties. They have gone also to Borneo and other islands into their interior. Their work has extended from the Makasar headquarters to various areas. They can also render full help to other areas of service, for instance, in publications and in the Bible schools for aborigines. To sum up we have a portion in every branch of church work in the Dutch Indies. Since we have been missionaries to China we have naturally learned to know and love the Chinese more. Today, by the gracious deployment of God, we are happier still to co-labour with the Chinese in the South Seas.

Apart from these happy results, it is regrettable that the Church has not clearly realised the significance of the CFMU's mission and special opportunities. We know that a Church with evangelistic work only inside her country but having no interest in foreign missions is a caricature. Praise be to God, there is now a small number who have become interested in foreign missions. Once, a Chinese Christian said, "I now know the reason why China has not found revival. We are like the Dead Sea, only receiving in and not giving out. The gospel has reached China for over a century. Both missionaries and funds have come from

abroad. If the Chinese Church does not give to other races, God will one day deal with this error of unfaithfulness. One day God will take stock with the master of the harvest and his debts will be revealed. Because of such fearsome facts and because we are chosen for the South Seas to work with members of the CFMU, so we are considered still as missionaries to China, to help the Chinese Church in their foreign missionary endeavour.

Since she is called the Chinese Foreign Missionary Union, her organisation, economics should logically return to the responsibility of the Chinese that she might live up to her name. This is an ideal objective. But the Church in China at present has not fully attained self-support and is unable to bear the burden of foreign missions, so they say the time has not yet come to have a CFMU. Such a situation might apply to Churches inland but not to Churches in cities and sea-coast ports which have abundant material wealth. And there are others who say that the Chinese Church is very poor. Such an excuse cannot be sustained for there are many rich Christians who have given time and again thousands of dollars to the Army to fight for the nation. They think this would bring revival to China. In the Judgment Day such Churches and Christians would hardly escape the Lamb's wrath. In the light of these fearsome facts Dr. Jaffray has not hesitated to press on with the work, not waiting for a more opportune time in the Chinese Church before he executed the Lord's command. Of course he needs certain helps, and Dr. Jaffray has already found them. Thereafter, one by one, all imbued with the same spirit, have rallied round him under Jehovah Nissi. You must join up with our group, offer your prayers and money until the Chinese Church bears up her whole responsibility.

The CFMU has and is now facing a crisis. Although it cooperates with the Christian and Missionary Alliance, USA, she is not an affiliated body. So not a drop of economic aid is coming from the States. Besides the Christians of China are very slow to

respond to this type of work. In addition there is a global recession, with sickness and disease painfully rampant, which affects the giving of those who have been cheerful in their donations. Some of these have even cancelled their support altogether. In the circumstances this batch of Chinese missionaries have their monthly salaries cut by half. But thanks and praise be to God, there has not been one murmurer. This is proof of their real worth. But how shall we face up to this? Do we want to disband this batch of workers whom God has sent? Let this organisation die a premature death? Or should we not accept this challenge to rely on God's promise and pray and bear a part of their heavy financial burden. Although the Chinese themselves are unable to organise a perfect foreign mission body and the CFMU is still immature, it is a case of something better than nothing. If they should wait until they are able, and for an opportune time to start, and if the Lord should return before that, what will be the consequence? And how would it be should these Chinese missionaries not work to save those souls within the scope of their ability? Since God has caused the CFMU to be established and blessed and used her eight years, it is deeply felt that before the Church can bear this responsibility there must be some outsiders (Christians in other countries of the world) to bear the burden for them in advance. So the CFMU has come to an important turning point as to be obliged to ask for your fervent prayers and send out an SOS like that sent out by ships in peril. We know there are many children of God in America who are deeply concerned for the gospel in China, who felt the Chinese Church should be revived and become a self-supporting Church. Their prayers and gifts are directed to this purpose. Have you ever thought that the Chinese Church should become a missionary Church? The Chinese Church clearly understands this truth, but often excused herself as being infant and weak. Hence God's blessings cannot come upon China. I firmly believe if she would concentrate her

strength for missions and faithfully take up this divine commission, God would pour down rivers of living waters!

We cannot bear to see the CFMU ship flounder and sink in this manner. China has had the gospel for a hundred years. In the light of this fact there should have grown up a foreign missionary society. Millions of souls are perishing and Chinese missionaries have the strength to save, and the glorious Lord Jesus is coming again. In the light of all these can they excuse themselves by saying the time has not yet come? Let us remember this is not a question of birth. The CFMU's birth pangs are over and the child is now eight years old. But she is not able to walk and still needs help and guidance. When she has reached womanhood then all her organisation, management of personnel and financial responsibility should rest on the Chinese Church. On one hand this will be a great burden and sacrifice, but on the other this will be a high privilege. This will receive special glory and reward before the Lord in days to come. Those who suffered together with David became generals and heroes. During David's kingly rule all who went to battle and who stayed by the staff received a reward. All who conquered were rewarded. But there will only be twelve thrones reserved for the Twelve Apostles. If you support the object of the CFMU of the Chinese Church please cooperate and get in touch with the founders of the CFMU. Offer your prayers and money at this crucial hour while we wait for the Chinese Church to awake from her deep slumber. Bear up each one his own burden!

Chapter 5

Strange Quarry from a Wild Island

“To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. And this I do for the gospel’s sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you.” (I Cor. 9:22, 23)

Wherever the Chinese went outside of China he was always encumbered by every kind of trouble. From the time of leaving his country to the time of landing in a new one, he had to go through every red-tape, spend money and mark time. These made it a mental torture for every emigrant. Thus, before I set foot on Borneo, I had already seen many strange things. Although overseas Chinese met with these difficulties, the number of emigrants kept on mounting year after year. This was due largely to natural disasters and man-engendered tribulations, making life unbearable. Finding no escape from these woes, emigration became their solution. It is said that twenty-five years ago emigrants from Hong Kong, Swatow, Amoy, Shanghai and other China ports amounted to 50,000 a year. From Swatow alone it averaged 15,000. And, those emigrants being all country bumpkins, they were preyed upon by various government officers. From this situation had arisen all kinds of strange happenings.

Having got out of the old country with difficulty, the emigrant was faced with another upon entry to the new country. Passport, luggage and body all came under stringent examination. There

was no exception made for us preachers. Our books came under special scrutiny. The body was examined from head to foot. (It is said that those entering Singapore were shipped en masse first to St. John's Island where everybody were stripped for medical examination. (Even their luggage had to undergo fumigation). The special marks on the head and face, the weight and height of the body, were recorded. Moreover everyone's fingerprints were taken. All these made news of the world, but were they not to the shame and insult of the Chinese?

Thanks be to God, although no exceptions were made for ministers of the gospel, I obtained many conveniences. The reasons were, first, I carried with me Church testimonials, and second, I found help from certain personnel. However, one could not totally escape from all these encumbrances. This was due to my having several big boxes of books which involved me several days with the Dutch censorship. For, the Dutch were most suspicious of the literati amongst Chinese immigrants, and books gave me the greatest headache.

The first time we left China, we stepped on Makasar soil which the Chinese called "Tin River." Makasar, now called Ujung Pandang, is a big port on the southern tip of Celebes Island (Sulawesi) and in Dutch times the provincial capital of the Island. It occupies a central position in the Indonesian Archipelago and thus an important centre politically and commercially. It forms a tripod with Surabaya on Java Island, and Banjarmasin in Borneo. So, it has attracted a lot of Chinese to live here. Flourishing shophouses were all established by the Chinese and the streets were flanked by Chinese signboards. Were it not for three or five natives in sarong sauntering along the road, one would have thought this was China.

Although the overseas Chinese were so many there was not a single proper Church. Except for a few dark and gloomy Chinese temples that served to tell your fortunes, there wasn't any



A Chinese Temple

institution where one could go for spiritual solace. Many years ago there was a Methodist Church here, but it was spoilt by hirelings and finally closed its door. It was not until 1928 when Dr. Jaffray visited and, in response to the believers' appeal, sent Rev. Chu Hsing Hoon here to start all over again. Pastor Chu arrived half a year before me. A veteran pioneer, he was the founder of the first Chinese Church in Indo-China. He was a hard worker with a fund of experience. Under his reformation ministry, a new life arose in the Church. For its central position and scenic surroundings, excellent conditions for a city yet without the hustle bustle of the metropolis, Dr. Jaffray chose Makasar as a station in Dutch East Indies for the Chinese Foreign Missionary Union.

China has been a closed and conservative country. From ancient times China politicians have never entertained aggrandising ambitions. Many countries in the South Seas came under China's suzerainty, yet China's emperors paid little attention on them. Although for more than a thousand years the Chinese have practised emigration, their objective has been one –

money-making. All that they scheme and dream about the whole day is how to get rich and build mansions. Most of the emigrants have come from the Swatow and Amoy regions. The Teochews (people from Swatow) regard going abroad a simple matter. Many have sailed at a very young age. They came to the distant South Seas which they considered “barbarian”. Within they entertained a beautiful vision, and that was that when they returned one day in splendour they would get married and settle down. The following is a “Going Abroad” song quite current in Swatow. In this folk song you can see the aspirations of those emigrants.

*There's a swan in the sky –
Younger brother is married, elder brother nigh.
Younger brother begets a son who calls me Uncle.
Uncle is shameful, and knows not how?
Let me pack up and go to Siam now!*

*The sea runs far –
Where's the filial heart for Pa and Ma?
Without a wife,
All within's a strife.*

*I bow good-bye to Mother dear
To go to Siam to breed hogs.
Whatever money I make I'll send,
For a wife in China I will slog.*

Nevertheless, for the Chinese to go abroad was no easy matter. He came from a semi-colonial country without any backing from his nation. Without education, he drifted to a colonial territory. This was a painful experience, not to talk of his being cast upon the waves. So, there were a great many when they tasted the bitterness of sea-sickness would gnash their teeth, “I swear I must by all means make some money and get back to enjoy my days.” But they did not know that in the South Seas there grows a fruit called the durian with such attraction as would hold them back!

The durian tree is very tall. Its fruit is uncolourful and is as big as a pomelo. Its husk is thick and full of thorns. Its taste is rich, sweet and fragrant, but paradoxically it smells obnoxious to the newcomers. While being rejected by the newcomers they are life to the old addicts. It is said that connoisseurs of durian would linger in the new land and forget all about their fatherland and home. As a matter of fact, it is not that the durian contains any magical power. Rather it is money and sex that are the attraction. It is said that the South Seas girls are very romantic. Polygamy and divorce are freely practised. The South Seas lie in the tropical belt. Productivity is high and life is simple. A man can easily maintain the livelihood of several others. A woman needs only food and clothing and would easily go and live with anybody.

Before, the natives of the South Seas were uneducated and lamentably stupid. But no matter how stupid the Chinese, they were smarter and therefore could easily make the money. Thus a simpleton from the village in China, who was suddenly transported from a hardworking farmer's life to a land of wine and flesh, money and sex, would little think of returning. This had resulted in countless tragedies in the homeland. Such a situation was reflected in another folk song, very current in the Hakka prefecture of Mei Hsien:

*We sail a boat to go abroad:
Sailing ocean's a hard life.
Husband with bamboo, wife with oar,
Carefully, let us keep alive!*

*The times are changing year by year,
Husband dearie, keep yourself!
Don't say money's soon made abroad,
Plum flowers are flowers, all the same.
(i.e. your wife is here, why go away?)*

*The smoke without feet goes up into heaven,
The steamer without feet crosses the ocean,*

*The thrush without feet turns not to roost,
Your younger sister with feet can't go beyond.*

These tell the story of a husband who has crossed the seas, leaving his forlorn wife in lamentation. Another couplet which runs:

*“Upon seeing the green willows by the sea shore,
She regrets her husband seeking officialdom”*

is written also for these women. The history of the last few hundred years of overseas Chinese endeavours is a story of their blood, sweat and tears. But what made this history was money.

Ouyang Hsiu the poet has said that everyone who has attained to riches and honour should naturally want to return home. If that is true then the Chinese of the South Seas are generally opposed to this principle. For though they have become rich they would not necessarily return to China. The Cantonese who came to the South Seas still maintain the sentiments for home, “like leaves returning to the roots”. Although they may not think of return in the present, they keep sending money home from their earnings and frugality to buy land. So, there's a big sum remitted every year. As to the Hokkiens these mostly stay behind refusing to go home. The reasons are of course more than one, for the South Seas are as comfortable as heaven, where livelihood is easy, the government is good, the land peaceful – a sharp contrast with China. The greatest reason is that since they find clothing and food here they become rooted to the soil, making the South Seas their second home. We Chinese have a special nature which is adaptability to mingle with the different races. For example, those who enter inland Borneo to make a living in time would marry Dyak women and thereby become Dyaks in every way. Hokkiens of the third and fourth generations may be found everywhere. These descendants are now become entirely Indonesian. They cannot speak Chinese. They could not tell what and where their homes in China were. Some simply regarded their birth-place to

be their home. Were it not for two big characters “Tsui Yuan” [meaning, Retracing (our) distant (source)] written over their god-shelf, you could never have recognised them to be Chinese. Since they have not the “going home” aspiration, they naturally are localised in their concepts.

Many overseas Chinese have become big landlords. These overseas Chinese who could not describe their ancestry are called local-borns. They live a simple life, with no long-range plans. Few of their descendants, however, become hard labourers. Therefore, what is concentrated in their thoughts is death and the hereafter. The tombs of the local-borns excel in majesty the houses of the living. To spend one or two hundred thousand on a mausoleum was a common matter. From such practice has arisen a tradition whereby almost all the Chinese associations have become old people’s societies. Without the funeral department, no association could ever exist, or rather, the object of every association is to take care of the aged and the dead. That these associations should establish schools to educate the younger generation is a new enterprise of the last few decades. There has been some progress.

During the colonial regime, the Dutch used the Chinese to govern the Chinese. They lavished on them official titles such as “Major”, “Captain”, “Lieutenant”. The Chinese have the traditional and indivisible concept of becoming some high official and getting rich. So the richest among them were usually the Chinese officials. With wealth in hand they lived differently from before, as evidenced by their residence. If you go to Batavia (now called Djakarta) you will see big, graceful mansions of a by-gone age occupying spacious grounds, one after the other. These were the official residences of the “Majors”. Then you would come across another mansion with a big glittering signboard “Batavia Public Hall”. It was a “Major’s” office. If their living quarters were so majestic you could imagine how much more would be



A Chinese mausoleum

their tombs. For example, the famous tombs amongst them are of the Koh family in Djakarta and of the Tang family in Makasar. But these Chinese officials became an extinct race upon Indonesia's gaining independence. Not only were their official titles abolished but also such small offices as "head of a street," or household, formerly held by the Chinese. Those dazzling mansions are now rented out or sold, and many have become the offices of Chinese associations. Like "white clouds making dogs in the sky," like "the sea now turned into a mulberry field," this changing world can only bring one regrets.

The religious thought of the overseas Chinese is very shallow. Though you might see them showing off their religious fervour in a certain matter, their motive is rather commercial, according to that dream for money circulating all the time in their minds. Their worship of gold is total. So, you can easily understand why every emigrant carried a "Tua Peh Kong" idol in his baggage, and why there was a temple wherever they settled.

A few days after our arrival in Makasar, it happened to be Chinese New Year. Pastor Chu our colleague constrained us to stay for a few days to see what we had never seen in China. After Chinese New Year's Day came the New Year's Night, which the Hokkiens call "The Fifteenth Night" (the full moon night). Now the newspapers transliterated the Hokkien pronunciation by the Mandarin characters which read "Chap Goh Meh". Among the Chinese associations there was no greater and more boisterous occasion throughout the year than "Chap Goh Meh". On that day all Chinese shops stopped trading. Those great and wealthy tycoons, attired in well-ironed western suits, personally went into the temples and carried out the idols. They laid them row upon row in the streets to prepare for the procession which was arranged well in advance. The procession was fully "accoutred" with dancing lions, paper figures, old-fashioned weapons of war, incense bowls, and three sacrificial animals. These rich tycoons regarded carrying the idols in procession their special privilege. Who gave the most "incense money" qualified to carry. And they should vie to carry in order to receive the idols' favour. Moreover, during the procession, they must shake it from side to side without let up, and the more excited the better while the on-lookers would cheer them on. To gain face and more blessings, the idol-bearers would carry on till their sinews became exhausted before giving others a chance. These tycoons who throughout the year were sofa-bound and ordered their servants and slaves around had been storing their energy for this day's performance with great pleasure. We pity their darling daughters who were required to take part in the acting. Some were dressed as centaurs and snake-gods in all the splendour of ancient pageantry. They were carried on the shoulders of coolies behind the idols while the gongs boomed and drums beat up to heaven and the fire-crackers crashed on the earth.

This boisterous scene was created in daylight throughout every street of the town. At night the same was repeated with



Chinese New Year's Night Procession

lanterns and firebrands in all its dazzling grandeur. Though an annual event, the cost was considerable. But after the procession, the next day saw the town sink back to a quiet humdrum life again.

When I came to Djakarta the Indonesian capital later, I saw more or less the same things enacted. But though there are many temples in Djakarta, they do not often carry out the idols in procession. The days between Chinese New Year's Day and the

Fifteenth Night are equally boisterous. The natives have a way of making extra money. Cashing in on the superstitions of the Chinese, they form their own processions of dancing lions and dragons, blowing and drumming along to beg from door to door. Like the gods of wealth in China coming around to bless, suddenly their drums and gongs boom up to heaven.

In recent years the overseas Chinese have made some progress. Taking advantage of New Year's Day the associations send out dancing lions and dragons to collect money for schools and charity, whereby tens of thousands are obtained for a good purpose. Such a transforming of a superstitious occasion to benefit charity is something laudable. What I regard as senseless is how the Fifteenth Night (when the moon is full) is spent. O the crowds of people surging like a mountain and a sea, men in scarlet and women in green, old and young jostling and mingling with one another! What good is there in all these except that it affords an opportunity for fleshly lusts? Some overseas Chinese being of a conservative, traditional type would lock up their daughters in the rooms nor allow them to appear with unveiled faces. The only exception to this rule is New Year's Night when they could leave the house to worship the gods in the temples. As a custom, this is the night when the women have their fling. Though the streets are full of profligate young men, you can see bevvies of young coquettish girls parading themselves.

When we set foot on this foreign land we got this first impression of a strange culture. This deep impression made us realise how urgently the overseas Chinese needed the true light of the gospel.

We sailed to Makasar straight from Hong Kong in the "Tjisalak" while Dr. Jaffray and Paul Lenn came by way of Java. When Dr. Jaffray arrived in Makasar we had already left by another boat for Samarinda in East Borneo, Rev. Chu in our company.

Samarinda is an important port in East Borneo. Although the Chinese here barely touched ten thousand, its hinterland and river basin were abundant with produce. The next town is a petroleum producing centre with a sizeable labour force. When we arrived in Samarinda we immediately rented a house and hoisted our “Gospel Hall” signboard facing the street. We stayed here on one hand to preach to the Church and on the other to learn Indonesian. I remember when Paul Lenn and I first went to market, we had in our shopping bag a Conversation Book which we consulted in our bargaining. When one comes into a new country, one becomes a laughing-stock often through barriers of language and ideas. For example there are many words with a similar sound and appearance. If one is not keen of mind to differentiate, and if one’s pronunciation is inaccurate or one’s memory weak, things can become quite laughable. The words below gave the learner some headache in the beginning.

Kepala is head, Kelapa is coconut.

Lagi is again, Laki is male.

Susu is milk, Susa is trouble.

Gula is sugar, Gila is mad.

Mandi is bath, Mati is death,

Apart from these there are some common words of daily usage which through carelessness may be made to mean the most vulgar. The beginner must exercise care when he tries to speak. Moreover Indonesian grammar often runs counter to the Chinese. If with your Chinese grammatical patterns you try to speak Indonesian you would surely make yourself the butt of all laughter. For example, if you use your Chinese grammar pattern to say, “the cat catches the rat”, the Indonesian may turn out to be, “the rat catches the cat”!

I remember some years ago we had a new worker from Shanghai joining us. He was the Rev. Moses Chow and hailed from Hsiao Hsing. Early every morning before he got up, he could

hear some hawker in the silent streets calling, “Kuwe, Kuwe!” This sounds like “Devil” in Mandarin. At night from the dark streets he could also hear another calling, “Sate, Sate!” (which sounds like Satan in his dialect). He could not understand this. Later he realised that “Kuwe” means “cake” and “Sate” is “satay” (Malay barbecued mutton). But “Sate” is same as the Shanghainese pronunciation of “Satan”.

What happened here had its counterpart in Canton or Hong Kong. Some hawker was selling yam so he called, “Mai Kod”. And when another was selling salted pears he shouted, “Ham sar lay”. To the English ear these sounded like, “my God” and “I’m sorry”. The South Seas abounds with a species of giant turtles. These would lay their many eggs on the sandy seashore. Both the natives and Chinese love to eat them, especially the Chinese who regard them as a sort of tonic. So we bought them to eat too. Now when we boiled the eggs and cracked the shell we found the egg white a glutinous paste. Thinking it was still uncooked we boiled again but the egg white remained the same glutinous substance. We boiled it for some hours and still it refused to congeal. We thought this must be some monstrous being and poured it into the drain. Later we learnt that such was the substance of turtle eggs.

Here’s another ludicrous incident. We were true busybodies. When we first arrived in the South Seas we saw red spittings everywhere on the road. We became worried. We began to cogitate in our minds: “There are so many T.B. patients in the South Seas. This scares us! This must be due to the tropical climate. Why doesn’t the Government prohibit such spitting? Why is the Government so careless about health? No wonder T.B. patients are on the increase!” Being over concerned about this matter we soon learned the mystery. This hideous lot of spitting is actually from the chewing of betel nuts and leaves, a habit of South Seas dwellers. It is a common thing which bothers nobody. But we new-comers were frightened in our little knowledge.

Although the Chinese in Samarinda were few, they hailed from many different places so that the spoken dialects became a babble. Hokkiens predominated and their dialect is Amoy. Next were Hokkiens from Eng Teng who spoke a Hokkien type of Hakka. The Cantonese were divided into those from Canton and others from Hsiuchow. The Hakkas came from Meih sien and there were the Hainanese from Hainan Island. The local-borns studied either Chinese or Dutch. The Chinese-educated spoke Mandarin, but with the Dutch-educated our medium of communication was Indonesian. Dialects became the stumbling stone of our ministry. Now, although our meetings were attended only by less than a score of people, we had to use three dialects – Hokkien, Cantonese and Mandarin. Soon after our arrival we made friends with a Hokkien family surnamed Chng and a Cantonese family surnamed Tam. We received their help not a little.

Our first-fruit was an octogenarian old lady. She was a devout Buddhist. She had a specially made idol of Kuan Yin (goddess of mercy) kept in a specially made glass case. For scores of years she worshipped this idol morning and evening with a perpetual burning of incense. When she got sick she would persevere out of bed to do the same, not permitting another hand to do service. When she could not get out of bed at all she would fervently request her daughter-in-law to serve on her behalf. When she discovered neglect on the daughter-in-law's part she would groan incessantly and implore Kuan Yin's forgiveness.

After she received God's Word and understood the Truth she requested us to her house to remove the gold image with all its paraphernalia and burn it to ashes. Henceforth she found spiritual liberty, and so great was her joy she could not put it into words. Though her daughter-in-law was married, for years she suffered miscarriages. Only two daughters survived. So, when the old lady asked if I could pray to God for a son, I said, "This is a proper request, as exemplified in the Bible. Only let God's will be done.

He will surely answer.” We prayed according to her request and, sure enough, two sons were born to her daughter-in-law. Her joy was unspeakable. This old lady kept the Word for a decade. Before the days of tribulation descended, the Lord had taken her back to heaven.

Soon after our arrival in Samarinda, we made friends with Mr. and Mrs. Liew En Hou, teachers at the Chinese school. Liew was a pastor’s son. He was moved to dedicate himself, and gave up teaching to study at the Alliance Seminary in Wuchow. He continued to serve at the alma mater. This was our first-fruit of dedication reaped in Indonesia.

To meet the Chinese needs, we advanced to Balik Papan to start another Gospel Hall. In two years a few scores had turned to Christ. Afterwards a slump overtook this petroleum town which resulted in many Chinese labourers being laid off. This so affected our work that it might have to close down. At that time both my wife and mother became ill which required their return to China. Thus, we felt the time had come when God would want us to shift to another front. So, for the time being, we left this field to answer the call we had first heard from the Lord, “to go to the regions beyond where the Gentiles are.”

It was in mid-February, 1932 that we advanced into the Bornean hinterland. At first, Paul Lenn and an Alliance missionary and I worked together. After eight months of East-West collaboration beset with many troubles, it was found necessary to part company. So we divided our territory of work with the Western missionary and moved on to another place.

Before we re-commenced work we laid down a plan. First, we must abandon that superiority complex of national pride. According to Paul, “I am all things to all men.” We would maintain a self-control in our daily life in order that there might be no difference in this respect between us and the Dyaks. Second,



Our second base of operations – Balik Papan

we would “enter the tiger’s lair” to strike up friendship with them as well as to understand their sentiments, custom and taboos that thereby we might obtain our quarry.

Borneo is the third largest island in the world. However, she is noted not for her size but for an aboriginal race of peoples – the Dyaks. The term “Dyak” covers all the “mountain” aborigines. Actually these comprise many tribes. In our territory for example, in the “kingdom” of Kutai, there are seven distinct tribes. One of them, the Punan, live in trees. They do not build but live a



Our jungle headquarters

nomadic life, nor do they cultivate. The other tribes having had contact with outside peoples have become quite civilised. So, apart from those who have grouped in cultivated settlements, it would be difficult to control them, the Punan for example. Nevertheless, though these are a nomadic people, few disturbances to the peace have come from them.

Inland Borneo, indeed, is a paradise. Not only do the people live peacefully, there are no ferocious wild beasts. With the advent

of the Pacific War, the smoke of gunpowder has introduced a new and strange odour into their midst.

The total area of Borneo measures over 700,000 square kilometres. Its northern part was British (now East Malaysia), the remainder five-sevenths constitute the former Dutch territory. Since 1950 when Indonesia gained independence this area has been called Kalimantan. With 500,000 square kilometres Kalimantan is as big as France or Kansu Province of our country. But its population of over two million is sparse. The Dyaks are sons of the Island. In course of time, as commerce and mining brought in outsiders, they were pushed into mountain districts of the interior. This fact is verifiable from the names of places left behind. With the exception of Java, the Dutch Government had concentrated very little on opening up Borneo, by reason, perhaps, of their limitations. So, Borneo has to this day remained virgin. Only along the seacoast have there been established a few important centres of commerce. For example, Bandjermasin in the south, Pontianak on the west, Kutai, now Samarinda, on the east.

There are a few overseas Chinese in Samarinda and the same may be said of all eastern Borneo. They total but a few scores of thousands. Most of our overseas Chinese live in the Pontianak district, the latest figure being over 200,000. The object of our mission to Samarinda was to evangelise the Dyaks. For Dr. Jaffray had investigated and discovered that they were long waiting for the saving grace of God!

Who are these so-called “mountain” Dyaks? How did the Dyaks originate? They are generally known to be of Malay stock, a branch of the people of Indonesia. They speak like the Sunda dialect of Java. However, their custom and habits rather resemble those of the Chinese. The colour of their skin is the same as that of the Chinese. This is not surprising for are not the aborigines of Formosa (Taiwan) of Malay stock? Moreover, the first to come in contact with the Dyaks were the overseas Chinese.

However, though many old Dyaks claim to be Chinese-descended and China their fatherland, we have little evidence from history. But the strange thing is: in the midlands of a little river at Kutai on an uninhabited bank there were the ruins of a temple with three Chinese characters on the lintel, “K’ung Ming Tung”, i.e. “The Cave of Kung Ming.” It is said in interior Pontianak that many natives have claimed Chinese nationality, with Chinese surnames such as Lim and Tan. Perhaps during the Yuan (Mongol) and Ming Dynasties, some refugees from Kwangtung and Fukien Provinces had fled here in sailboats. Later they married with the natives and a mixed race of Dyaks arose. When we first set foot on Dyakland we met an octogenerian, a Hakka from Punyu Prefecture, Kwangtung. He was an officer in Hung Hsiu Chuan’s army. After Hung lost the war, he sailed in a junk to the Philippines, the Sulus, and finally to Borneo. He married a girl of the mountains who gave him a son. Ever since he has lived a Dyak’s life. Had he not spoken in Hakka, you could not know his Chinese nationality. Alas, China is undone! Her turmoils of ravage and war have sent many talented ones abroad.

Through such consanguinity and friendliness to overseas Chinese, we were fired with a zeal to preach. To expedite our work we began to make an extensive study of their lore.

Those Dyaks we contacted were the semi-civilised who had come within urban environs. These were farmers. Borneo has few high mountains and the coastal regions are low-lying. The Dyaks, however, make their settlements in thickly jungled, hilly country or uplands. As the soil is not very fertile the Dyaks do not plant in watered paddy-fields but on the clearing of a jungle hill-slope. This sort of planting is done entirely by human labour. First they spend a month cutting down trees. (The area for planting is determined by the numbers in a family.) After another month, when the branches and leaves with all the shrubs and grass are sundried, these are set on fire, and their ashes are used for

fertilisation. Another round of clearing prepares the rather undulating ground for cultivation.

In the South Seas, there are only two seasons, a wet and a dry. This obliges them to plant only once a year, and this work begins two months before the rains. After the planting is completed they build thatched shelters among the paddy to live in for the convenience of looking after the crop.

The Dyaks have two big festivals in the year. They are: sowing and reaping. Although they keep cattle, these are not used for planting paddy on the hill-slopes. They are used for food during the celebrations.

Planting solely by human labour has nurtured a cooperative spirit. By turns they help one another in planting and reaping. For example, today is my turn to plant. The whole village will come to my help. If it is your turn tomorrow to plant, the whole village would also go to your help, and so on, till all the planting is done. In this cooperative enterprise they not only do not get paid but also provide their own food for the working expedition. In other words, each man eats his own rice while helping out his neighbour.

Speaking about the Dyak's place of abode, I often declare them to amphibious. Amphibious not in the sense that they live on land and water but in the sense that they live corporately and severally. They have villages. But, no matter how few their numbers, each village is built on one house which we called "longhouse" and they "lamin". If their chieftain has picked a spot for the village by putting up his house, the people would one by one build their homes adjoining one another's. Although a whole village might embrace a population of one or two thousand, the house would still be one. Thus, you can measure the numbers in a village by the length of their house. The longer the house, the more populous the village. The longhouse is not entirely for



A longhouse

dwelling. Ordinarily, you can scarcely find anyone in the village, for they spend their day mostly in the paddy huts. These they call “huma”.

Now, because their planting is on the hill-slopes, these lands are cultivable at most for two or three years, which obliges them to move on elsewhere. Their nearest paddy plots are on the village outskirts. Their farthest are a day or two’s journey away. In short they eke out a semi-nomadic livelihood. They live in the paddy huts not only for the sake of looking after the fields. They have also secondary crops and animals to tend. They also build their barns in the paddy fields to save the trouble of transportation. So the Dyaks eke out an existence that leaves them nothing to spare. In spite of all this, necessity is laid upon them to maintain their village longhouse.

One use of the longhouse is for the reception of Government officers, a convenient meeting place for taking orders or paying

taxes, a place for holding funerals or weddings. Or, in an hour of emergency, the chieftian can easily gather his people here. The longhouse is in fact built primarily for the purpose of such assemblage.

The Dyak earns a living practically from the soil. Although planting is a busy life, they do not rush about, and although they spend not a little time planting once a year, they go about to their own sweet time, like a lazy caterpillar. This is due, perhaps, to the fact that much time is at their disposal. Secondly, it is due to the warm climate of the South Seas. This breeds a lethargic gait in their stride. Apart from agriculture, their other chief occupations consist of fishing and hunting. There they come, leisurely, either floating on the leaf of a sampan, or squatting on the river bank, hook and line in hand.

Apart from aquatic tribes their menu consists of wild pigs and deer. But their main dishes display mostly the coarsest of vegetables. Except for several great festivals during the year when oxen and pigs are slaughtered alongside venison to be devoured with gusto, their daily viands comprise only rice, chilli-salt, and all kinds of fruits from their own cultivation or plucked from the wilds. When fruits are in full season they invariably eat of them in lieu of rice. A cornucopia, as far as food is concerned, is this tropical South Seas which being favoured with balmy winds and gentle rains becomes their storehouse. Here they may eat carefree-rice. Thus, they have a rule among themselves: At harvest time outsiders could also join in the reaping. But you must first speak to the owner who would gladly permit you to gather your fill.

In this Southland of perpetual summer, clothing is not a chief article of use. Whether men or women, old or young, they go about naked except for a rough loin cloth covering. During the Japanese southern invasion they had no more cloth. So they plucked some fibres from the bark of trees and without a weave or spin made them into natural loin cloths. Ah! These well-favoured



The first Dyak village we visited

sons of nature, how they spend their days in unending leisure. You could never find a busy man within their midst. If you come to Dyakland you could immediately spot out under the sun a man lying on the ground pillowed on a girl's thigh while she rivets her two eyes on his shaggy long hair – searching lice. This interesting picture tells you a story: They are in the process of spending a peaceful, leisurely day. Yes, such is the complacent Dyak lifestyle of whiling away the time. We know that contentment is the mother of simple living. So, when they have caught a wild pig the whole family could eat it all up in one night. When meat is scarce they are well satisfied with two meals of chilli-salt. In general, they are more than contented with what meets their daily needs. It never occurs to them what gloom their evening years might bring nor do they worry about the possibility of a famine year. They never practise saving, nor do they know the meaning of “rearing sons for old age” and “storing grain against hunger”. To them



“... such is the complacent Dyak life-style.”

these are like the self-made troubles of the simple-minded, the worries of the sophisticated.

Once I asked a hoary-headed grandpa his age. After pondering for half a day he broke slowly into a broad smile, “I think I am eighteen.” You can see from such an encounter that their philosophy of life is Epicurean. Were you to ask them the times in which they live, “of Chin or Han Dynasty,” they would surely find it a mystery to render an answer.

Talking about the education of the Dyaks, this may be crisply summed up in a word: they are illiterates. Without any education their knowledge is tightly circumscribed. It was only twenty years ago that the Dutch began to establish schools in their villages. Since they are illiterate and devoid of any scientific knowledge, they know not how to make aircraft, guns or atom bombs and the whole gamut of weapons of destruction. Nevertheless, they know

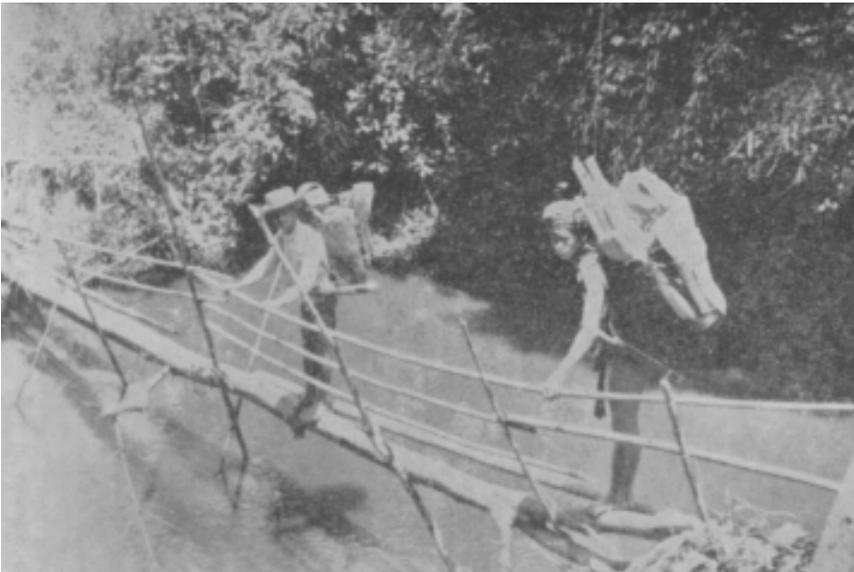
the art of eking out an existence. They carry on their hip a long parang (knife) and in their hands they carry a sumpitan (blow pipe). With these two weapons for eking out an existence they can go anywhere, uphill or down dale. They will not die of hunger with these tools and by their use they can build themselves a home. The Punans, for instance, have no worry for clothing or shelter. They neither plough nor weave. Everyday they go out into the hills and forests to hunt with these two weapons. They do not keep hunting dogs for they have an equally keen scent. Should you go into a jungle never entered by man and be suddenly confronted by a big fellow of a naked man, you might be frightened to death. How he has come to be there is by his scent of your presence. However, he would not harm you.

The Dyak's house is a modified version of nestling in trees. They live high from the ground. A small tree trunk serves as a ladder that leans steeply on the door-front. Such a tree-ladder is used also for communication from the water edge up the bank. If you were a high-heeled lady, you could never get up to their door. Nevertheless, whether old or young, they are as agile as monkeys, going up and down that ladder. They can climb, like monkeys, the slender betel palm or the thick-set coconut, parang on hip, and bring down their fruit one by one. They seem to have no difficulty in subduing snakes and wild beasts, for they are not only fully armed but also endued with agility and cunning. In their village there is hung a brass gong, or else there is a big drum set up before the door. In time of emergency the gong or the drum is sounded to alert one and all to self-defence. Thus they are enabled to live in a tranquil world by themselves.

Having lived with the Dyaks, it makes me to consider the utter stupidity of these highly educated, cultured ones. The cultured man is a do-nothing book-worm. He dresses in western-style pomp, and the female – nylon socks and high-heeled shoes, Paris perfume and high-class face cream. He takes the Chinese

tonic and drinks champagne, eats ice-cream and cocktails. He sits on a comfortable sofa and sleeps on a spring-bed. He goes to lustful cinema shows and indulges in some time-killing song hits. In all these things it is shown what a slave to materialism he is. And in order to satiate his carnal pleasures, he commits adultery and theft, cheating and fraud. The small fry brings disturbance to society and the big shot disputes amongst nations. This is a crime and misery inflicted on mankind itself.

The Dyaks live a much simplified life, and have they not lived in such fashion all along? They live a far happier life than the cultured man. They live simply whether in food, clothing, housing or travel, as simply as their simple minds think. This simplicity is reflected in many of the things they use. For example, their one-piece wooden bridge, one-piece wooden boat (canoe), one-piece wooden ladder, and even one-piece wooden coffin. Yes, they are as simple as infants. For this reason God's gift of eternal life



A Dyak bridge



Dyak one-piece coffins!

becomes their portion. So apart from this saving grace as their only need for the future, they have no greater desire or demand for their physical life now.

The Dyaks are a people from a sturdy stock. They have a well-built constitution which is covered with a tough, glossy, brownish skin, burnished by sun and air daily under an open sky. It is a pity, however, that they have no knowledge of hygiene or medi-care, nor do they know the need of temperance. The result is sickness upon sickness. A look at the annual poll tax reveals a higher death rate over birth. This brings an atmosphere of cold desertion to descend upon each village. With no knowledge of self-rescue and being left in the lurch by the Government, these people have become a forgotten tribe. From the type of endemic diseases that plague them we can discover the reason for their sufferings. The most widespread disease is ringworm in both males and females. This disease is so rampant that it stinks and repels. Then there are quite a number suffering from leprosy which might be a deterioration from malignant ringworms. Next comes malaria caused by pernicious mosquitoes breeding in the

dark and damp jungles. Then comes tuberculosis which catches on easily through lack of temperance in eating, working and sex and of quarantine. Thus the mountain districts have become a sick colony.

Another disease to be mentioned is of the sexual kind. Though prostitution is a word not known in their vocabulary, adultery and fornication is a rampant practice. Without instruction and education they regard intercourse between the sexes a very natural thing. Hence, marriage and divorce are easily contracted and given. "Borrowing mosquito-net," i.e., the practice of taking another man's wife (for a night) is an open secret among them. And those husbands willing to "wear the green towel," i.e. condone their wives' adultery, have acquiesced for the sake of getting "cheap sale goods" (bastards). In a certain mountain tribe there is the practice of the girls wearing silver or bronze ear-rings. Do not think that is merely a kind of ornament. The fact is the number of rings worn indicate the number of times they are married. The more ear-rings indicate the more lovers they have, which is regarded a high honour. Never have they thought of such vainglory as a shame and sin. Though there are the good and able amongst the Dyaks, such an erroneous and unethical concept of life without proper correction has led them more and more into wrong. But the reason for such depravity is not due merely to lack of education. There is yet another reason to be considered. This paradise country in which they live in the South Seas, being in the tropics, is under a perpetual summer. Without conditioning by the winter season, life can be miserably monotonous. When we see them eat chillies we notice that they need something to pep up their humdrum living. Now, with an abundance of produce of food and many hours of leisure does not this situation give place to sinful indulgence? Truly, the saying, "A full stomach breeds lustful desires", applies.

Although the things their hands have made are of rough and simple construction, the ladders, the beams and pillars, and even coffins, they have carved on them weird figurines and designs. And though they are not slaves to materialism as the cultured, whose bodies are become like a cosmetic showcase, they would sometimes adorn themselves with hats woven from twigs and grass or wear silver ear-rings twenty to thirty at a time, so much so that they weigh down to their chest. Male or female, they would also wear brightly coloured glass beads almost a kati heavy (over a pound) on their bodies. An old superstition got them to file down their teeth, but now they like to have them plated with gold (to the enrichment of merchants, for the gold used is not much to talk about). They tattoo their whole bodies, arms, legs and all, giving us an impression that they are an art-loving people.

Music is a special ingenuity of sons of the tropics. The South Seas have produced not a few born geniuses. The Dyaks are not behind others in the pursuit of music, so much so that they make tools of daily toil into instruments of music. For example, the staves that the women use to pound their rice is a sort of musical instrument. Made of the hardest Bornean wood, these staves are hollowed at the top for the insertion of one or two wooden slabs. As simple as that the pounding stave can make music. In the evening sun one could see some young girls around a rice-pounder, set high on a platform. As the pounding staves began to work, up-down, up-down, there was orchestrated a rhythmic sound most soothing to the ears.

For pleasure they usually play several kinds of bamboo instruments. Apart from flute and pipe they use a thin slice of bamboo which they blow with their lips while being tapped upon one side by a finger. The sound produced thereby also strikes a responsive chord in one's heart. However, their music produces a lugubrious note which quickly induces sadness in the hearers.

The principal musical instruments they have made naturally appear crude to us. Under a rhythmic orchestration, however, that indescribable music produced therefrom becomes such a grandeur as to charm you through and through. The whole orchestra of musical instruments is divided into three kinds. The principal ones are a set of six brass bells, shaped like small gongs. These are ranged on a stand. It is said on these six brass bells may be played over four hundred tunes. After these comes the drum. This is made up of two types: one worked by striking with the palm and the other with a thong. The drum is simply to keep time and add colour to the performance. Finally there are the eight or ten big and small brass gongs worked by a tandem. These gongs boom a strong solemn sound audible for a mile or two. These musical instruments are most useful for the celebration of "Pilihan," a sort of primitive, mystical, religious ceremony. When somebody became ill, they would "make Pilihan" lasting from three, five, seven days to as long as a month. The most macabre celebration of "Pilihan" is called "Naikkepala" or "skulls up!" When a harvest is bad or when sicknesses abound, they think these are due to the mischief of demons. So, "Naikkepala"! The whole village, in and out, is decorated with flowers and leaves, buntings and mysterious-looking carved figurines. Then when the gongs boom and the drums thud a host of male and female "devils", skulls in hand, begin to dance. The skulls on ordinary days are hung up in the village.

Talking about skulls there existed among the Dyaks a hocus-pocus known as "Ayau". This mystery was widely rumoured even during the first years of our arrival in Borneo. The "Ayau" was supposed to be a head-hunter of the night. After the Dutch Government had taken action this "Ayau" disappeared. Actually, the Dyaks have a hero-worship instinct. When a girl picks a husband, she does not consider the wealth he possesses but rather the numerosity of human skulls. Such a term for dowry is never heard of anywhere else in the world. Another reason for head-



An ox totem, part of the ox-spearing rite



Spearing down an ox for "Pilihan"

hunting stems from furtive murder originating in revenge, or lucre. Head-hunting, however, is now a thing of the past.

Every "Pilihan", involves the spearing of an ox. First there is planted in the middle of a field a totem pole carved with a weird naked figure. A thick cane several score feet long tethers the ox to this pole. Then comes a witch-doctor who recites incantations over the ox for a long while before the animal is ready for execution. Now, as soon as the mumblings are over, the ox is surrounded in a tight circle of hostile spearsmen. As the spears find their mark, the blood-oozing ox lurches forwards and sideways, to find himself enclosed by the enemy. This action becomes more and more tense until the ox loses all breath of life, and down he collapses. The ox is purposely made to suffer pain on behalf of the sins of the whole village. It is said that some forty years ago a human being bought with money was made a sacrifice in this manner. After he died, his head was chopped off and hung in the centre of the village. As it is said that his soul still lingered over his skull, a fire was lit to smoke it away until the blood was dried. The soul of the victim became the guardian-hero of their



“... further augmented by fierce games ...”

houses. This is cruel business and foolish darkness, but the belief in the shedding of blood to atone for sins tallies exactly with the Judeo-Christian truth. How did they get this idea we can hardly know. However, this opens for us an effectual door to lead them out of darkness into the light, to receive the truth of sins forgiven through the Cross.

Every “Pilihan” is accompanied by some games. One of them, “Pegantar”, is a pot-pourri dance. This dance seems too simple and monotonous to the uninitiated, or maybe there is a faux pas somewhere. Those who know can see clearly that this dance goes with every variation of the music. Sometimes it is a solo, sometimes it is group dance, and sometimes by a couple. This dance is an exposition of both foot and hand action and of the philosophy of strength. The weakling has no place in the dance. The dance is often a time of competition, of flirtations, which ends in inevitable promiscuity. It is also an occasion for gambling, further augmented by fierce games of strength-testing between man and man, cock and cock.

The Dyaks are sons of nature but what is regrettable is that they are not properly instructed. Although they are an adulterous generation and girls of fifteen and sixteen almost all lose their virginity, this situation is the result of not understanding the meaning of chastity. Nevertheless, their hearts are transparent as their bodies are openly nude. They bathe in the rivers, male and female, and they evince no sense of shame. This is where their naturalness is displayed and this naturalness needs to be enclosed. Yes, this fact cannot be gainsaid. When we first entered the interior, we felt that the biggest stumbling stones consist of “Pilihan” and this promiscuous culture. To gain them we must roll away these two stones. From the human standpoint this is a deeply ingrown thing and to do away with it is like trying to scale the skies. However, has not the Bible said, “There is nothing too hard

for Thee . . . The things that are impossible with men are possible with God.”

Thus saith the Lord, “Remember ye not the former things, neither consider the things of old. Behold I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert. The beast of the field shall honour me, the dragons and the owls . . .” (Isa. 43:18-20).

Chapter 6

“Rivers in the Desert”

“Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth, shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert. The beast of the field shall honour me, the dragons and the owls: because I give waters in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert, to give drink to my people, my chosen.” (Isa. 43:19,20)

“America! America!” This was the Dyaks’ siren-cry twenty to thirty years ago. I do not know who told them, but “America” had become a synonym for “Christian” However, anyone clad in white shirt and donning white topee would be considered “American”. The first time we made our way into the mountain villages in white shirt and topee, we were accosted by the siren-cry “America! America!”, from one who first spotted us. At this, the rest of the people scrambled to their homes and slammed the doors. Should you not seek out the village headman or chieftain, you simply had no standing ground in that village, for no one would dare come near you. Hence we learned this lesson: –

1. We must imitate Paul, to be “all things to all men”. In order to save the Dyaks we must needs become Dyaks. And that, not only as Dyaks in our daily living, but in dress as well – changing over was a must.
2. We discovered in this well-ordered kingdom of nature that the chieftain exercised full authority over his subjects, while



White khaki and topee

the virtue of the people excelled in “obedient following”. Thus, the hoary-headed had no recourse but to submit to the young chieftain. We took this to be an opening to our mission. As the saying goes, “Shoot the horse to get the rider; catch the robber-chief to catch the thieves”.

We tried our best to refrain from misusing authority by giving them the free choice to believe. But since their tie with the chieftain was one of slaves and master – the chieftain held absolute power of determination over the whole village – so we were obliged to get them to believe through their chief. Hence, the

first objective of our visit was the chieftain. As we have said before, we looked up to them in all things as learners in order to win them. To dispel their suspicions and misconceptions we adopted their style of living as much as possible. Sleeping, we sprawled with them on the plank-floor. Eating, we used banana leaves for dishes and the fingers inherited from Mother for chopsticks. But, the bitterest pill of all to swallow was to eat rotting meat with them! After they had slaughtered an ox or trapped a wild pig, and there were the leftovers at the end of the meal, they would hang these up on a bamboo over the fire-place to smoke. (After a couple of days, it goes without saying that the meat smells.) When you cooked viands or rice over the same fire-place you could see the maggots drop into the pot below. But you need not feel indisposed. For whence did those worms come but from the meat?

The following was an episode that happened soon after our entry to Dyak country. There was a "pilihan" festival on in the village. This drew crowds from the surrounding villages. This was our chance, for the chieftain "rolled out the red carpet" to welcome us.

He fed us with the richest of foods, topped with desserts of all kinds of cakes. With five or six village headmen for our company, how glorious was the occasion! But for some reason I had not the fortune of enjoying the feast. Though the floor was spread with meats and cakes (we were seated on floor-mats), I could not enjoy them one by one. To please our hosts I managed to eat three or four items by a process of breathlessly gulping down. After we returned from the feast I got sick for three full days. Subsequently I discovered that the fault rather was mine. This experience taught me to attend all dinners of this nature, hereafter, with a trusting heart.

The Dyaks have a very fine custom: they are extremely hospitable to travellers. Whether stranger or acquaintance, when

you come to their village, you need not worry, at least, about your food. If they feed you with rotting meat, that would be your blessing. It is an indication of their respect for you. No matter what, you must not stand on ceremonies. If you refuse the offer it shows you up as an ignoramus, not worthy of the honour, or it may reveal your intention to reject their goodwill. Evidently you are a wicked person, but then be on close guard of your skull during the night! Otherwise, your head could leave you without saying goodbye at dead of night to find a place on the beam of the Dyak's house.

Once, Paul Lenn and a Western co-worker visited a chieftain who gave them a warm welcome. This chieftain respectfully brought up a wild boar's head to their boat as a parting gift. This was considered a superb present, which they of course received with profuse courtesies and gratitudes for the chief's bountiful friendship. When darkness descended, and it took them several



Our Gospel "Courier"



Working our way through the rapids

hours (of sailing), – they hurriedly wrapped the hog’s head with a stone in some old clothes and let it slide silently into the river, like burying a dead man. Thereby was the boat rid of that awful stink.

In early September, 1933 co-worker Paul Lenn and I sailed the upper reaches of a small river called Lawa to visit a paramount chief, the ruler of a district. The “dread” of the district, he commanded even the respect of the State Sultan. Though little educated, he was a good thinker. From boyhood he entertained the high ambition and determination of regaining his deceased father’s glory. Being frail of body, however, he could not attain to it. He had a clever and courageous son-in-law whose second son, a teenager, was also endowed with a shrewdness that awed the people.

Now the paramount chieftain’s deceased father was a Sultan. After the Dutch occupied East Borneo his territory became incorporated for purpose of administration. Thus, after the Sultan’s death, the Sultanate was terminated in his son. A new

title given made him “Temenggung Mangku Radja” (highest officer over a district).

The supreme chief’s father was a Mohammedan. Now, although the Mohammedans tried every way to dissuade him from us, he would not listen. He felt the Muslim faith could not satisfy his heart. He perceived the existence of some better religion in the world than Mohammedanism. He had all along been waiting for the advent of that better religion.

In his native village he had built a rather imposing palace, superior to the other chieftains’. So was the construction of his village better planned. From these works might be seen his superior administration. When we called on him we met him first in the village of Suwakong at his Royal Lodge. He went to the extent of putting us up on the upper floor of his Lodge and gave us the hall downstairs for a temporary preaching station. He and his family, however, shifted to the quarters behind.

On the fourth night of our gospel campaign, just as I finished the sermon, he suddenly shot up in a loud voice, “I have found my religion. This doctrine is what we need!” By such a terse declaration a wide gospel door was opened into the Dyak tribe of this royal district of Kutai.

We had stayed over one year with the Dyaks. Although several villages had faith to believe the Word, they were afraid to baptise. For, without the chieftain’s permission, they deeply feared such move would transgress the law. Now that the chieftain confessed this was the religion he needed, who would not dance with joy at the decision? At the close of the campaign one evening, I asked who would receive this salvation? Who would receive Jesus Christ as his Saviour? At that, forty-seven hands were raised to receive the salvation, among them the chieftain’s two wives, sons and daughters, and the son-in-law. At this juncture, however, the chieftain retreated to the quarters at the



They believed and were baptised

back of the Lodge. Seeing this sudden change of demeanour, we became completely nonplussed.

After the baptism he offered us the explanation. “Sirs, you might think I’m equivocal in not getting baptised, a turncoat within a day. Indeed, if I reject this religion, who in the village would dare get baptised? Nevertheless, in my family, except for me, there is not one left who has not received the baptism. Do you understand what I mean? If I followed in the baptism then their trust was on me and not on the Lord Jesus! When I die they would very likely fall from the faith. So, what I would of them was that they be linked to Jesus directly. Thus could their foundation be securely laid.” No wonder, before the forty-seven were baptised, they delegated one to ask the chieftain’s opinion. To which he replied, “I’ve no opinion. This is your business. I said this religion was good. That was my personal view. If you understand clearly what this religion is, you have the right to take it or leave it. But don’t ever regret, hereafter.”

We spent a total of three weeks on this expedition, covering over ten big and small villages. Owing to the busy planting season, when the village-folk were scattered in the paddy-fields, it was hard to call a meeting. Fortunately, we had come to these upper reaches and got the chieftain's help, whereby the folk from three villages were ordered to come and hear the Word. We got over two hundred to come after a hard day's work. Of these forty-seven were gained as firstfruits.

The days of the meetings over, it was felt that the campaign, though successful, lacked something. And that something was the tranquil spirit to hear the Word, disquieted by the hustle of the planting season. Therefore they constrained us to promise to come back for another campaign – after the planting season. Some even went to the extent of securing a pledge with which we were obliged to comply. In response to their earnest expectations, we left behind our pump-organ.

Easily, several months slipped by. Meanwhile, we went down to Samarinda to spend a happy Christmas and New Year with brethren of the Chinese Church. After this we returned to the mountains to cope with a bigger and busier situation.

In late March the following year, we opened a campaign at a small neighbouring village called Djempedas. This village had a population of only several scores. We baptised fifteen unto the Lord here. This village was the first in this riverine district to receive the Word of the Lord.

During our first campaign here there was a deputy village headman who, while listening to the sermon, fixed his eyes on our gospel poster. Suddenly, like one having discovered something, he exclaimed in a loud voice, "Ah, now I know!" Were it not for his own explanation, none of us understood what his eureka was. He iterated, "It's the One in white robes in the poster. He is not a stranger to me! Where did I meet him? I've racked my brains for

half a day, and I know it now! It was one night five years ago when this white-robed Teacher came to our village, in my sleep. He came into our home. Pulling up the skirts of that dazzling-white robe, he took a pail and fetched water in to wash the floor. While I wondered he said, “Don’t be afraid. Five years after, I shall send men to cleanse your village, and your heart. While I pondered his word that Man vanished.” With uplifted hands he continued, “As I counted my fingers, this dream happened exactly five years ago. Now, it has come to pass!” I investigated if any had come here before us to preach, but their reply was no. As to Jesus’ picture, this was the first time they ever saw. But, the deputy head-man had seen with his own eyes five years ago!

The day after baptism, we pushed inland by boat via the little Lawa river up the jungled, mountain country. We arrived at Suwakong, the village contacted half a year ago wherein over forty firstfruits were reaped. The village folk, seeing our arrival as promised, were delighted.

Our original plan was to spend a fortnight to visit with the forty odd believing brothers and sisters, to consolidate their faith, and to preach to others as they came. Upon arrival, Paul Lenn dashed further up the riverhead to reconnoitre several more villages and blaze a trail for future work. I stayed behind to nurture the believers, and to our surprise the forty odd believers had a living, vibrant testimony under God’s mighty blessing. During the half-year they went everywhere preaching the gospel, witnessing for the Lord. Amongst them were several brethren from the riverine Teweh district of Banjarmasin, who came to stay with their in-laws here. Now the riverheads of Teweh and Lawa come from the same source though they are separate districts in administration. Their village folk, however, inter-marry.

During the half year gone by, they had sown the Word not a little among their relatives at Teweh. A believer’s big cousin brother said to him, “Since you’ve received this full-perfect

religion, it is your great mistake of not introducing that preacher to us. At any rate, should the preacher visit again, you must never let slip the opportunity to bring him to us here.” When I got wind of this, my spirits were drawn towards it, for the opportunity to work had come. However, certain problems arose which I could not easily solve.

The first problem concerned the Teweh basin. Being a district under the Banjermasin administration, it fell within the parish of the German Basel Mission. According to Dutch Government regulation, each Church was assigned its sphere of work. If we crossed beyond our assigned territory, would it not cause misunderstanding and altercation? Second, I had only a fortnight’s provision and travel funds. To make the trip might prolong our itinerary by one or two months.

Added to this problem of mine was a further doubt cast by the Dyak brother. This was in connection with the people of the villages beyond. A more sophisticated people than those who lived here they were steeped in witchcraft and “charms”. Being hostile to strangers, they discouraged the folks here from migrating. The people there married into the people here, but few from here married into the people there. But these things did not cow me, because I knew my life rested in God’s hand. Said I to the brethren, “If God permits not, none can hurt me. If God so wills that my blood be spilt, this would bloom into flower, and bring forth sweet fruit.” Meanwhile I committed this matter into the Lord’s hand and waited for my friend, Paul Lenn, to return.

But Bro. Lenn did not come for days. Subsequently it was learned how God had opened a door of preaching and feverish work for him which delayed his return. As for me, I was feeling the urge to go ahead as coming from the Lord’s sure leading. Jehovah-jireh, God would supply all my needs and prepare before me a prosperous journey. After baptising thirty-one persons, I

readied to set out for Banjarmasin. For precious human souls, I was determined to lay aside every anxiety.

It was the aborigines' harvest time when everyone were busy in the paddy-fields. To make this long journey it was easy to find companions. At a word, however, over ten would join us, of whom seven were chosen. These comprised one who had fervently witnessed with his wife, as guide, three brothers as pack-bearers, and two sisters as attendants. The brother who acted as our guide was a good witness. A converted sorcerer, he could thus gain the hearts and wills of many people, that even Mohammedans were obliged to listen to him. Moreover he could speak Malay (language of Indonesia) and became my best interpreter. Though illiterate he could translate many Biblical terms. God had given him this special gift. A native of "the other side", he could translate into the dialect of his own people. The sisters, while helping to cook and wash, sang also in the Evangelistic Band's choir. Musically talented, they lightened not a little my load.

Across our path ahead, however, there still lay that barrier of anxiety. From our entourage came this postulation, "You are God's servant. God will watch over you. We have a little faith. We have none to shelter us except you. Sir, wherever you go we will follow closely. We dare not leave you, eating or sleeping." Promising, I comforted them with Mark 16:17,18 that they should learn looking up to God.

Apart from the cumbersome pump-organ (we reduced our package to the simplest) our inventory included the following: mosquito net, bed sheet, canvass bed and a few changes of clothes, Bible, gospel posters and their kind, and portable cooking utensils. My cereals and tinned foods consumed, we roasted chicken and wild boar meat and brought along a packet of chillies and salt, several bamboo-tubes of cooked rice and a pot of water. Besides we were armed with a parang (long knife) each, two



Like an army's expeditionary force

sheets of woven palm leaves. With all this accoutrement, we launched out to Banjarmasin. Though heavily packed, we covered the first six or seven days' rugged journey with ease. We crossed high mountains and lonely valleys, thick jungles whose ancient trees reached up to heaven, their thick foliage blotting out the sun. Thorns, thistles, tall lalang grass overgrew little-trodden foot-tracks. Like sharp spears they stood in the way. The forward man naturally had to hack a way for his comrades behind.

Though we were spared meeting with wild beasts and robbers, we were the targets of swarms of mountain leeches with outstretched heads like hungry devils ready to strike each passer-by with a "kiss". Howsoever careful, you could hardly escape this nuisance. Bare-legged, those brethren and sisters painted themselves with a thick coat of crimson. As they walked on, red drops of blood trickled like oil onto the unending mountain path. My heart soured to see this squad of seven or eight bleeding afresh each day. I was fully accoutred, shoes and stockings up to the thigh, tightly fitted. On top of that I had soap and tobacco

rubbed in. So, I requested them to let me take the vanguard to alleviate somewhat their bleeding pains. But, to no avail. I was inexperienced. I did not know jungle lore. What appeared to be openings ended up in blind alleys. I was obliged to step down and follow in rearguard, under their lead again. When I sang “Jesus Saves the Lost Sheep” how they thrilled with joy (to the tune).

As we pushed through this sunless jungle we bumped into the stench that rose from the mountain vapours and miasma. Big and small streams kept criss-crossing our path, soaking us wet while fording. We had spent three days cutting through untrodden paths. “Sleeping on the dew and dining in the wind” through the unbeaten track of a jungle wilderness we each made for the night-halt a temporary arbour of a hotel. Of the two palm sheets we each brought we improvised one for roof and the other for a bed covering. We cushioned our beds with branches laid side by side. We made smoky-fire out of dead wood around the four quarters of our encampment to keep poisonous snakes from attack.

At dead of night, there orchestrated a chorus of voices from insects, birds and wild beasts to the sougling of the wind and the gurgling of mountain brooks. They formed themselves into a natural band striking up a melodious note with such perfect precision, that you must say it was a hilarious performance! Who says travel is lonesome? At midnight the mountain rains pattered down. One was obliged to behold the heavens weep till daybreak while embracing a bed of sleepless night.

During our journey we met with a rain pouring for two to three days. The road became muddy and slippery. Fortunately each one was clad with the peace of God. There was only one case of a slippery fall causing a sprained foot. This was the lot of the wife of that zealous witness. She had brought two children along, the older a girl of three and the younger a year-old boy. With one in front and the other on the back plus baggage on her hand, she trod on drenching wet. Over-fatigued, unawares, she tripped! At



Our jungle hotel

that time I was the only one lightly laden. The rest were weighed down. So I shared her burden of responsibility. I carried the three year old girl on my back. In one stretch we went over hill and dale, through thick spear-like undergrowth over a once-beaten track, in the slashing rain. We were all reduced to drenched fowls, head to foot, while the raindrops on the eye-brow made us appear all tears. Most unbearable was that little girl on my back who sobbed all the way. This experience stirred up a hundred feelings in my heart. It made me recall that famous rhyme of a psalm, "Tearful sowing, happy reaping."

We had run our course. We had reached our destination. Had we in vain gone through all those bitter hazards? Our blood and tears shed for nothing? No, no! "Labouring for Christ is not in vain". If we know our Bible verse, we know the Lord's promises are true and solid: "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." A few hours after our arrival at the village

of Benangin at the riverhead of Teweh, the news spread to the several neighbouring villages. Messengers from several places came to invite us, some sending as many as two or three emissaries. Merely receiving them kept us busy the whole day. They brought presents in humble measures, like a handful of rice, an egg, or some sticks of tapioca – expressions of their great expectations in and respect for us.

Quick as a twinkle, a busy and tense situation came upon us – getting the gospel out in this campaign, day and night, personal counselling and praying for the sick . . . so much so that we had neither time to eat nor sleep. For two months we were hard put trying to cope with such a welter of events, with many a sleepless night. Often we were kept up till dawn. Because they were thirsty for the Truth, they unceremoniously got us out of bed for several nights. The fact was it was the Dyak's custom to stay awake all night for any big occasion. Forgetting we were not Dyaks, they so requested us. On my part, I saw what an opportunity was before us. Overtaken with joy, I became oblivious to reality. In the prime of life, I could stand up to several nights, but not for long. After all, man is made of flesh and blood, not to speak of engines of steel which need supply of water and lubrication. So, I fell ill after one month. Not willing to let slip the opportunity I dared not slacken. Though the sickness persisted, I continued holding the meetings or baptisms. Each baptism got us into water several hours, for each small session took in forty to fifty persons, and for a big one, up to two hundred and fifty. This got us occupied for another month. During the two months we held meetings in five places. We baptised a total of six hundred and thirteen.

There were several more villages that requested us to evangelise, when suddenly I received a letter from the paramount chieftain. It said co-worker Paul Lenn was very ill and had to be carried back. Paul being my junior, and stronger, was an amateur boxer. He seldom got sick. Now he had become so sick he could



Paul Lenn among the brave

hardly walk. So much so it was rumoured he would soon die. I felt deeply disturbed. I felt miserable that he should grope alone in this sick condition. This news got me started to race back. The fact was I was quite indisposed myself. I could not go on in my own work. For the time being I had to conclude this programme. Arriving home I learned that Paul Lenn had contracted some malicious disease and was in coma for many days. He was taken by boat to hospital at Samarinda. I pressed on to Samarinda to see him but ended up in the same hospital there. Though Paul had fallen ill, God blessed his labours. Several hundreds were also baptised. This evidently showed that our labours in the Lord were not in vain.

Let me describe a little how we led them to Christ. The method we adopted was different from that in China. The method would neither be suitable to overseas Chinese settled in towns. Nor can the method be used hereafter. It is “first take, then teach”. To use this method on our Chinese compatriots would be very

dangerous. For our people have a high degree of knowledge inasmuch as they are exposed to temptations of the cities and more prone to sin. But not with the Dyak situation. They are a straightforward people. Moreover they are a docile people with a simple mind but sterling faith. Unless they do not understand what is the good of it and are still in doubt – else when they have got it, they will persevere to the end, little wavering. So, what we wanted was to get them to understand some basic doctrines of salvation. And should the foundations of faith in their hearts be shallow or limited they could still persevere in the faith as ever.

Another factor was Borneo's unopened interior with a most inconvenient transport system. Though we were located in the mountains not far from there, owing to blocked communication, we were so near and yet so far. Owing to travel hazards and hardships of livelihood we could not remain long with them. Thus, were we to adopt the method of "teach first, then take", we would not, primarily, be able to do this ourselves. Circumstances forbade us to live a Dyak's life for long. Secondly, these were surrounded by heathen religions. Unless we adopted the method of opportunely receiving them into the fold, we had to face up to the traditional-old enemies of Christianity who were most likely to spoil our work by preventing them to come to Christ. And so, if we did not grasp the opportunity to baptise, we would have made the trip for nothing.

So, in the first two to three years, we baptised almost three thousand. A steady stream of baptisms flowed in through the succeeding years. No doubt there were not a few who "retreated from the faith", especially those of the Japanese occupation. The reasons for backsliding were: First, lack of nurturing. In the early days we had no assistants. Later the Makasar Bible Institute sent us students "to do their practical". These were not only insufficient for fielding, but also inadequate in standard.

Second, the “disciples of a heterogeneous faith” kept up their attacks on us. Kutai, being once a Sultanate, was populated by “heterogeneous” disciples. Basically opposed to Christians, no wonder the progress of our work came under their fire of jealousy. This incited serious conflicts to their great pleasure. They went into the mountainous interior to trade. Exploiting the Dyaks’ ignorance they often cheated them. They knew that when the Dyaks became Christians they would become wiser. This would spell the end of their profiteering, hence all the efforts at disruption. At first they spread all kinds of weird rumours. By becoming Christians they were to be taken to China to be made cannon fodder for the Japanese. By joining the Church they had to drink a cup of medicine from the pastor’s hand. Then they would be taken out to sea and have their bellies split for the gold in them. “Don’t you believe? How come so much money from America?” These rumours had made some inroads into the Dyaks until the paramount chieftain received Christ and was baptised with his subjects. They automatically fizzled.

However, a new style of malice was manipulated by stirring trouble amongst the Dyaks with money and politics. A little gift here, an added threat there. They tempted the believers to take concubines, gamble or indulge in other sins. They got them involved in religious litigations. They struck up a “snake-and-mouse” alliance with a power gang with the purpose of confronting us. This led to a serious persecution four or five years after the establishment of our work. In spite of this, the bulk of the Dyak Christians, though weak and fearful, stood – kept safe upon the Rock by His protection. Those who persevered in the Faith were the majority. This baptism of persecution came to the Dyak Church as a blessing in disguise.

Now, enemies without are easier to deal with than traitors from within. Without assistants we were like performing one-legged stunts, unable to cope with the many-sided tasks of

nurturing. Though assistants were found, these being not born again were incompatible. Rather they became stumbling blocks. Among the eighteen learner-students, some were quite adequate to the task, but were liable to temptation. Some were virtual traitors, renegades, who disrupted and spoiled our work. Others were simpletons and no better than the Dyaks. Of course there were those who, despite their limitations, did not do a bad job at all. Now, all these situations gave me not a few headaches. If they lacked technique in the work, that would not matter. At the worst they would finish a little late. The worst, indeed, was their irregularity of character. The majority of these learner-students were of little help to me and rather a burden. Truly one's gains were no recompense to one's losses. So there was a time when I was sunk in utter pessimism, like descending a deep valley, hemmed in on all sides by the enemy. Satan's offensive and oppression upon me was hurled with the objective of downing the shepherd – in order to scatter the sheep and devour them.

A student who lost heart in his work got into a craze to become a ringleader. Striking partnership with a primary school teacher of the “heterogeneous faith” he made the Church to rebel over a little incident. The storm broke out at Long Puti, the home village of the paramount chieftain, and it began right inside the palace. Conspirators were the chieftain's son-in-law and son, pillars of the Church. You see how ferocious was Satan's attack, how subtle his tactics! At that time the chieftain had died for some years. When he died I was at Samarinda, from whence I was summoned to officiate the funeral. When the deceased was put into the coffin his cousin spoke to the people. “Our Chief is gone to heaven. Fortunately, his brothers are here (referring to us in compliance with the recognition given us by the chieftain in his lifetime. Hence his village-subjects, old or young, addressed us as grandpas). Henceforth you must follow Grandpas' leadership to a bright future.” Although we restrained ourselves assiduously from getting involved in politics, not willing to take part in anything



A Dyak Christian Chieftain's funeral

not connected with the Faith, lest we be misunderstood by the Government officials, these people would pay us the respect and regard us truly as “royal uncles”. Although the chieftain’s son succeeded his father, we were still regarded as officials. We were consulted for any important matter affecting the people. When the chieftain’s son ascended his father’s throne it was through us that the blessing was given at a grand ceremony. Notwithstanding, the work we did was smashed by Satan in a few years. Alas, what bitter reminiscences!

But, praise be to the Almighty God, “For I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.” And I was “confident that He which had begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.” So God gave me wisdom, and I quickly had the troublemaking students sent back to school. Later it was reported how these were expelled from school for theft. These students drifted about like vagabonds to their own destruction.

Later those abettors, viz., the chieftain's son-in-law and son, were gradually awakened. They came personally to apologise and confess their mistake. We became friends again when the storm that finally broke subsided. But I had gone through this ordeal with a great sweat. My health had taken a good beating.

It all started with the Christmas celebrations that year. Whenever the Dyaks have any celebrations they love to slaughter a cow. The custom of slaughtering cows is by the hand of a Muslim, without which they cannot eat. Now slaughtering the cow is according to Muslim religious rite. This involves saying a prayer which I regarded as adversely affecting our Christian faith. It was better to lose friends than lose part of our faith. Involved with this rite there were many other rules which they also respectively kept. So practice became habit. But while that learner-student had purposely broken our church regulations, he would not submit to censure and even incited this storm. But God, in order to keep His Church pure and its laws inviolate, gave us the final victory. However, we can learn from this incident how Satan attacks us in every way possible, in the minutest circumstance, getting us trapped unawares. As leaders of the Church our lot often is to fight him face to face, a hard job by ourselves indeed! At any rate, we are absolutely never to shift our position nor compromise and bow ninety degrees to Baal, no not for any excuse nor for any reason.

The Lord Jesus says, "The kingdom of heaven is to be entered by violence." Paul also says, "We must through much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God." These statements are true. Christian pilgrims journeying to the Celestial Kingdom cannot always expect a smooth-sailing trip. It is in these troubles that the saint's mettle is tested.

When we first put into practice our "First take, then teach" method we were still rather apprehensive. Wasn't this method too hazardous? Through testings, however, we have obtained a good

report, proving the method we've adopted to be correct. Henceforth were our misgivings dispelled.

During the decade past, the Dyaks had gone through not a little testing, especially from the threats and cajoles of those of the "heterogeneous faith". Once, there was the religious persecution, and another time, the Japanese southern invasion – these were evidently their great tribulations. In the Kutai sector, the Church at Suwakong was the first established and most numerous, because the whole village became believers. But, they came through a raging plague once in which some deaths occurred everyday. At that time my wife and I chose to risk the plague to live in their village until the pestilence subsided. Praise the Lord, in the midst of tribulation, songs could still be heard inside the village.

Here is a beautiful testimony related by the village headman. During the plague he became so scared by the deaths that he tempted some dangerously ill with the prospect of giving up their faith or of secretly exorcising the evil spirits and demons. No one would accept such offer. Instead came their forthright reply, "Our lives are in the Lord's hand. Life and death are predestined. How could we take such unconscionable and unreasonable measures for the sake of our temporal bodies and sin against the Lord – to drop out half-way, to lose the everlasting bliss of our souls? We are getting nearer heaven now. Please don't disturb us, lest we be found wanting." So, many of the believers died in their faith. And there were many who were healed through prayer without any medicinal aid. The headman was converted through these testimonies. He gave up ever the thought of relinquishing his faith.

As to Banjermasin, we had over a thousand baptised believers, scattered in about ten villages. These villages originally came under the Banjermasin administration and were within the parish of the German Basel Mission. It is said the Basel Mission has had a hundred years history under the Banjermasin

Government. But very few preachers ever came to the Teweh basin. If they did they were of itinerant nature. According to the aborigines, when they came with the gospel they came with a tirade against their superstitions. This rather scared them from acceptance of the doctrine. So the Basel Mission had long relinquished their responsibility to these village folks. Now that this news came to their ears, they picked up a row with us. Involuntarily we transferred these thousand odd believers to the Basel Mission's supervision. But several of these villages resolutely refused to come under their supervision who, on their part, had not the barest resource to supervise.

This stalemate lasted several years. During these years a vacuum of non-supervision prevailed. Logically such a state could not remain for long, for their faith was not strongly grounded. Surprisingly, they kept their faith as at the first, though the Basel Mission thereafter took the initiative to return four hundred of the believers to us. How did they, under no supervisory care, stand firm in the faith? No other cause than in God who showed Himself in this situation. That this parish should yield such a result today, truthfully, was wholly the work of God. Whether the Dyaks being converted came to be baptised in troops with no one excepted, whether the believers were consolidated and preserved in their faith, whether they be abandoned for a few years with neither teaching nor supervision, whether they stood firm after going through every trial, all these events revealed God working a mighty work in their midst. More so, they prove that Christianity is the only religion with abundant life, like the grass and flowers of the field that naturally grow with neither cultivation nor irrigation. This was of God. We must praise Him, all glory be unto Him.

Truly, truly, this foolish and good-for-nothing me, what is he in the sight of God? What I had, before God's eyes, was nothing. Placed in God's balance I would be lighter than dust. But God

who was with me showed His mighty works. And because the Lord Jesus kept the word of His promise according to Mark 16:20 we obtained those marvellous results. Jesus has said truly, “Because you have left me, you can do nothing.” Whatever there is that I can do is entirely the work of the Lord Jesus. I recollected the several mighty works the Lord Jesus had done while labouring in Banjermasin, without which, how could the thousand people come to Christ?

My work obtained results in the early stages of commencement when two hundred were baptised. This brought invitations from villages near and far to go to them for gospel meetings. Sweeping into their country like an army we incited the jealousy of disciples of the “heterogeneous faith.” It first began with a village headman conspiring with a primary school teacher. These gathered a bunch of the “heterogeneous” disciples who planned to bring an accusation before the district officer of Muara Teweh. To do this they bought over a few Dyaks who went with them on a day-and-night forced march. The accusation stated that a Chinese from Kutai State was holding meetings in the mountain villages. He was a charlatan who got many villages into his net. Their future was jeopardised. Hearing this the district officer, like one “shrouded in five li (Chinese mile) of fog,” chimed to their tune, “If that’s the case, you can go back first. I will join you to get him arrested.” The few of them returned elated, announcing to the villages en route the district officer’s coming to make arrest.

At that time I had spent all my travel funds and had to take a boat to Banjermasin to wire Makasar. (Not knowing beforehand that I had gone to Banjermasin, Makasar dared not remit the money requested, fearing the request in my name was a fake. But I met a friend on the way viz., the captain of the boat I took. He supplied my needs. Now he and family are turned to the Lord.) This trip down and up that I took lasted ten days. So, when the district officer went up, I was on my way back to Banjermasin.



But, wonder of wonders, the little motor boat used by the district officer hit a rock and sank. He and his retinue were saved with the clothes on their back. The baggage, documents, type-writer, long and short guns were captured by the river gods! When he got to the village with the most converts and began to investigate from the headman (who is called a “Singa”, meaning “lion”) he already saw the light. He did not make any noise.

On a second visit he was again accompanied by the Muslim headman and teacher, self-appointed mischief makers, and actors in a hoped-for arrest drama. No sooner had they seated themselves than I was back from outside. Seeing me entering, the district officer rose to his feet and gave me his hand, waiving any mutual introduction. He said, “Good brother, thank God for this opportunity of seeing each other.” Actually he was a Christian, a

reader of the Indonesian edition of **The Bible Magazine**. He had known the name of Dr. R.A. Jaffray the publisher. Without reiteration, the Christians gathered on this occasion were highly elated. The odd ones were the headman and teacher, self-appointed mischief makers, whose face now found nowhere to hide. Thus, without a sound, they slid away. Henceforth it was wonderfully reported amongst the Dyaks that the district officer was a careless fellow who would make arrest on the one-sided allegation of our enemy. Now he had himself found out the so-called charlatan was no ordinary person, but God's ambassador. No doubt the district officer was admonished in the boat mishap.

A certain village headman had sent three messengers to invite me specially to preach. En route they passed through a Muslim village where they stopped at a tea kiosk for a rest. They reached a point separated only by a river from our meeting place. But, being misled by the Muslims' threats and lies that some district officer was about to make arrest (who dared to seek the charlatan's help?), and making no inquiry, those messengers returned. The sequel to the three turning back was that they became dumb upon reaching home. This continued till the matter of arrest was cleared. The village headman again sent men to invite me to preach. The three listened to the Word and believed, whereupon their mouths opened as they testified, praising God.

Once, at a preaching service at the house of a certain village headman, all forty-odd members of the village willingly turned to the Lord. The headman was in throes of sickness, unable to move, as reported, for six months. In the course of baptism I said to him, "Let me take the brethren into the water for immersion. After this I'll return to sprinkle you, since you can't move." Said he, "No, Sir! Unless the One you introduce me is not the True God, He can surely fulfill my desire for baptism. I am their headman in physical matters. I must also be their leader in spiritual matters. The gospel was first preached in my house. So I must be first to

enter the water for baptism.” I said, “Since you have this faith, I can pray for you.” After my praying over him with laying on of hands he did get up and entered the water. When he got up from the water, he was also healed. On the other hand, his son absolutely refused to be baptised. The headman and his wife exhorted him all night, but in vain. The next day after I left, the son suddenly contracted a big boil on his back which put his life in jeopardy. And it was through his recently-recovered father that he was sent to hospital at Muara Teweh. This saved his life.

In another village there was a hard-hearted fellow. I spent three successive days there baptising, but he remained adamant. One night he saw me in a dream standing before him, reprimanding him with angry stare. Then with one hand I plucked a tall coconut-tree, root and all, and dashed it on the ground. I said to him, “If you remain stubborn without believing, God will similarly punish you.” This dream frightened him for several days until I returned from Banjarmasin. Whereupon, he spontaneously requested baptism and gave testimony before the congregation.

I held meetings in another village. As a result the village split into two camps. The village chief led two hundred people together to Christ, but his secretary headed the rest in defiance of the Word though he came with them to the meetings. On the day of baptism, the village folks gave a big feast with joyful songs of salvation. After prayer was offered we began to dine. My retinue of brethren and sisters sat on either side, not daring to stay apart. Now in a Dyak feast each guest would get his share, but I had received a special one. Feeling I could not eat it all, I offered to share with them on my two sides, but they refused. Unsuspicious, I thought they were ceremonious. So, stretching my abdomen, I ate and ate. After dark we held another meeting. I taught them singing and preached into the night before we retired. A peaceful night, I got up next morning as usual. I conducted meetings again. After lunch

we left for another village. Suddenly, a brother asked me, “Sir, how was it you were not dead last night?”

“Why should I have died?” I replied in astonishment.

“You had taken poison,” he wondered as to why I had not known it.

“How could it be?” I believed not his word.

“True!” he explained, “When we were eating last night did you not want to share the chicken with us? We dared not eat because the chicken skin looked a suspicious colour, but we could not be sure one way or the other.” “Then why didn’t you alert me?” I interjected. I was unhappy they were so irresponsible in respect of another man’s life.

“We dared not tell you before so many people,” he said. “We were truly scared of them, whilst we were not sure if the poison was real, not until we went to bed in the dark when I heard them whisper you had eaten their poison. We were really afraid. If you died, how could we return to Kutai, to report to ‘Grandpa’? So we prayed all night for you.” “Then,” I pointed out to them, “you must believe what Jesus said, ‘And these signs shall follow them that believe . . . and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them . . .’ This Word is a thousand, yea, ten thousand times, sure.”

The Lord being with me, miracles followed to authenticate my preaching. This was the reason why many were led to Christ. Many events proved the sincerity of their belief. Theirs was without guile, not for jumping on the bandwagon, not for protection, not by duress, not for greed or other reasons. Maybe some were of such a motive: As wood, hay, and stubble, these would not stand the fire test. For instance, at first they thought Christians were Americans and feared to have anything to do with us. Having joined the Church, their reasonings were cleared – they felt a raising of their status, and now they were become “tuan” (masters). In the South Seas only white men were

addressed “tuan”. “Tuan” means not only “Sir” but also “Master”. We overseas Chinese seem not worthy of this term either. So normally we are called “towkay” or “proprietor” by the aborigines. But during the Japanese occupation, they were afraid of unhappy entanglement. They felt that becoming “tuan” was a hard job, and so withdrew from the faith. This was due to the non-Christians scaring them, “When the Japanese come, they’ll look out for Americans to kill them.”

I’ve discovered that an evangelist tastes a whole gamut of flavours – from salt, sour, sweet, bitter to pungent, fragrant, stringent, rank, yes, none of these escaping him. This is especially true living among the Dyaks. Here life is kaleidoscopic, and full of surprises. Sometimes he is exalted like a god, at other times despised like dung. Our antagonists treat us like dirt and garbage but amongst believers we are addressed as grandpas or fathers, so attached by them as paint and glue.

Whenever we came to a village they would receive us way ahead of the approaches, calling and crowding around. Whenever we said good-bye they would send us off en masse men and women, old and young, singing at every stage. This was no less than showing courtesy to their Sultan. They did not know what an evangelist was nor could they differentiate between a minister and a missionary. Nor did they know our names and surnames. They simply called us according to their needs and expectations in us. So they called us “Tuan Selamat,” (Mr. Salvation) or “Tuan Salib” (Mr. Cross).

Living in Dyakland was a laborious life. We travelled either on foot or by canoe. This often took us over hills and through rivers and fords. Mountaineering brought slippery hazards, while on the rivers, dangers of capsizing lurked. Sometimes we spent a night in the jungle, sometimes we halted at a sand bank. Sweat, sweat, sweat was the order of the day. When we arrived at a village, no sooner was our luggage unloaded than we were

swamped with a hundred items of business. Whether in asking for prayer or medicine, in private counselling or solving some problem, I was became a Dr. Everything. I was not only preacher-pastor, but also doctor, nurse, teacher, judge, cook, attendant, even their parent, a hundred offices rolled into one. To meet their needs I was obliged to study many medical books to fortify myself with the common medical knowledge and to prepare some common recipes. Owing to lack of funds we had no means to buy the more expensive drugs. So, we got them from the forests after the arts of Shen Nung (Chinese progenitor of medicine). We learnt the effective use of many herbs and from the mountains we discovered a full range of them. Someone has said, "Man is not afraid of poverty. Poverty adapts and adaptation resolves." This is a true statement. Praise the Lord! What we must more praise the Lord about is that the believing heart of the Christian is better than many medicines. Though they get quite sick, they can be healed by prayer with anointing if they have faith.

When I first arrived in their midst what made me squirm within was their non-understanding of common physiological knowledge. For instance there was a woman in labour. Now they did not know if the time of delivery was come. In her agonising, they would summon a few old women who came with callous hands and briskly squeezed and pinched. Such artificial inducement of birth with a view to reducing labour pains was a dangerous process. But they had not believed the Lord, so I kept clear, lest through a slip by a ten-thousand-to-one chance, this might become Satan's handle of attack. When they believed the Lord and were counted our people, naturally and psychologically they should conclude I would not harm them. I told them that the one and only to be trusted was the Lord Jesus, while I helped alongside as best as I could. Thanks be to God, I got a secret midwifery formula, and with God's unseen help I have not only had an expeditious record, but also an attainment of seeing all my deliveries each one grow in health and loveliness. For this cause

my business was not a little multiplied, so that a call might come at mid-night to get me one or two hours through some crooked wild mountain path to a paddy-field hut. Looking back, those ten odd years of work and livelihood seemed to be a craze, especially the first couple of years. With high spirits one could little practise self-restraint. In the prime of life one was reckless. This brought about irregular hours of sleeping, rising and eating. This irregularity affected the harmony of every phase of living, breaking its law. In addition to this, we lacked the physical provisions in the mountains. Undernourished, my resistance lowered each day. The mountain country, in a word, was a sick kingdom. My energy and strength being spent, my health came under great wear and tear. Although this was the case, my furlough was delayed. I asked Dr. Jaffray several times for transfer, but my successor could not be found. By 1935 my bodily strength sank to its nadir. My inner organs not functioning properly, I was forced to tender resignation to Dr. Jaffray, irrespective of his granting or not. I was prepared to return to China, on my own. It was then that Dr. Jaffray was coerced to let me go, though requiring me to promise to return, with health restored. After my departure, Dr. Jaffray sent Mr. Chan Wing Sun to the South. Not long after he commenced his language study, Paul Lenn also left the field – and that during my furlough – to return to China to marry.

During my convalescence back home, I made lantern slides of our work and life. I also edited a “South Islands Calling” special to report to our people the condition of evangelisation in the South Seas. It happened that co-worker Rev. Chang Tou Hang had also returned on business. So I joined him on a deputation tour of Hong Kong, Canton, Shanghai, Nanking, Wuchang, Hankow, Changsha, etc. Thereafter I was invited to Swatow to hold meetings. I planned to tour all-China to awaken the Church to her responsibility of “overseas evangelisation”. Owing to shortness of time, the Netherlands Indies visa running out, I had to prepare

“going south,” and my original plan fell through. Wherever we went, we found the Church’s interest in “overseas evangelisation” greatly stirred. Liberal offerings were given while some resolved to offer their lives to labour thus for the Lord. At several places prayer bands were started to support us. When I returned to Shanghai, I drafted a proposal to Dr. Jaffray to reorganise the Chinese Foreign Missionary Union, to revamp and strengthen its sinews, and make this missionary band an all-China team. Personnel should be pooled in order to a greater outreach, and a liason body established in Shanghai and Hong Kong. A general secretary should be appointed and a regular magazine published to propagate the work. In every big city a promotion council should be formed through each local church council who should be responsible for its organisation. “Overseas Evangelisation Day” should be instituted for one Sunday every year at which the subject of overseas missions be preached from every pulpit. At this service an appeal should be made for workers and an offering for the work taken. All this was to intensify the overseas ministry, especially towards overseas Chinese, with the view of consolidating the Missions financial structure away from relying on foreign funds. Maybe my ideas were too naive, for my proposal got no further than Dr. Jaffray’s waste-paper basket. At this juncture Dr. Jaffray’s attitude seemed to have taken a turn. The initial inspiration and determination seemed to have dissipated in him. What was known as the Chinese Foreign Union to some eyes was the embodiment of an empty name.

On September 30, 1941 I wrote a Report on the Dyak Church of Borneo. This is now reproduced in synopsis. That the condition of the Church there was an encouragement to many and a thanksgiving to God may be seen as follows: –

A first common phenomenon of the Church of this district is that whether men or women, old or young, they know prayer and love to pray. For they all find prayer not merely as a kind of

religious rite, but a kind of action that braces the daily livelihood. Without prayer they simply could not exist. So they must pray to cope up with anything. Children of four or five would pray at meals and bedtime, and that is not confined to one or two bright ones.

Once a Western missionary went with us to visit the Churches. Seeing that the believers would very naturally and unaffectedly pray in every undertaking, he breathed a sigh to me, "Such spirituality on their part puts me to shame."

There was an eight-year-old girl who went with me in my preaching tours. Running ahead, she unfortunately kicked against a stump. Uninjured, she naturally said a quick "Praise the Lord!" Before our preaching band returned I said to the girl, "Beautiful, I love you very much. You've helped me very much by singing. Since you follow me wherever I go, why not be my daughter? Else, when shall I see you again?" At this, a five-year-old girl spontaneously chimed, "Never mind, Sir, we can pray for one another." Such phenomenon cannot come out of the blue. Through their love for prayer and earnest trust in God, God had shown His loving-kindness upon them, with miracles, so that on every Wednesday evening many new and beautiful testimonies were given. Every prayer meeting was a long drawn affair often till midnight by reason of their many testimonies. They had no medicines, but prayer was their only method of cure. In regard to prayer-healing and their faith, four dispensations of such may be observed.

In our visitations at the very beginning, the sick family would only ask for medicine; then, as time went on, they would ask for medicine plus prayer; subsequently prayer and, by the way, medicine. Now, they asked for prayer and no more medicine, unless it was given by you. If some of them got sick, they would pray themselves immediately or come together in group prayer

without anymore relying on the evangelist. From these developments you can see what spiritual progress they had made.

The second general phenomenon about them is the love for singing. A musically gifted people, even old grandmas keep singing ceaselessly. Optimistic by nature, all their woes and difficulties disappear in song.

Once an old man fell from high ground and twisted his bones. While many rushed about to give him first-aid his old wife, however, took her sweet time to come home. When bystanders rebuked her for not hurrying back to render help she smilingly replied, “Why worry? With Jesus here wasn’t it better than with me?” She then picked up her song.

Recently a five-to-six year old girl and her mother accompanied me out preaching. Unawares, she fell and broke her arm, a compound fracture. Evidently a serious case, I asked her at time of applying medicine if it hurt? With a little smile she said, “With Jesus, no pain,” while her mother sang happily.

Whenever I went on a trip I would prepare eight or ten new songs to teach them. Although the songs were lengthy, up to four or five verses, they could retain them in mind without missing a letter. For they would rehearse up to four or five hours, never feeling fatigued. At every meeting we would spend up to an hour’s singspiration. Everyday, outside their siestas, you could hear the happy salvation songs issuing out of their mouths – in the village, in paddy-fields, by rivers or on the road.

A third general phenomenon was their love for the Word, “as the hart panteth for the water brooks.” Before this they had their primitive religion. After hearing the Word they knew that from their ancestors to themselves they had been defrauded by the old religion. So they resolved now to seek after the new religion of Christian Truth. Whatever they had obtained, they clung fast to it, never relenting. Between Kutai and Banjermasin there are four

villages with about four hundred believers. Being out of our bounds, we could not visit them again. Now since they refused to accept the leadership of the Church there they declared, "Every man has his father, every tree his trunk." For this reason the case stood pending several years while they remained unvisited by evangelists. During these years this region became an evangelistic vacuum. The most that evangelists had visited them totalled not more than three or four times. Every time the visit lasted at most three or four nights. This shows that they did not receive much of the Word. Such a lonesome, under-nourished situation was pitiful indeed. But they astonished you in the degree of their keeping the Faith. From their receiving the Word and baptism to this day, eight years have elapsed, and all the opportunity they had of listening to the Word was during the three or four nights. But they knew prayer, and everyone knew how to sing.

I just now related the story of that girl. Well, she belonged to that district. From whence did they obtain these? Who had been their succourer and shepherd? The fact is they knew that we had a resident Dyak preacher in every village on the Kutai side. So their young people have been coming over successively to learn from these preachers. After three months or so they returned with the knowledge received to teach the village folk. They knew that we were prevented from visiting them or from sending workers to them by the boundary problem. So they have sent young men to come and learn the doctrines. How assiduous is such pursuit of knowledge!

There is a village with a four-year-old Church, but never visited by any evangelist. In my recent visitation, I came here for the first time in order to baptise a group of ten. Such a Church, like one with neither father's upbringing nor mother's nurture was no better than a forsaken orphan. It began with several from that village hearing the Word at a neighbouring village and receiving baptism. These went back and gathered a group to hear the Word.

Those who first heard the Word and were baptised became preachers to them. They led a group of unbaptised believers to worship God, keep the Sabbath, attend prayer meetings like any other Church.

Some waited in vain for the evangelist to come. Impatient, they crossed mountains and rivers for several days, a rugged journey to Kutai this side to seek the Word and be baptised. Such an effort is repeated many times. I have baptised two hundred white-haired old men who have taken such a rough journey. I felt deeply moved for having caused them to come at such odds.

At Christmas year before last that zealous and faithful believer again brought a party of friends over to keep the festival and get baptised. Whereupon I ordained him deacon of that Church. This is how that Church was born and bred. Truly, they have never been nurtured by human hands nor taught through man's enterprise. This all the more manifested God's great power that Christ's Church is full of vitality. The founding of this Church was like Jesus' conception, being entirely conceived by the Holy Spirit, absolutely devoid of any human power entering therein. Praise the Lord!

Recently our Church launched a popular Read-the-Bible movement. Everyone would regard knowing how to read the Bible and having a copy in hand as glory. Through such a movement was born a literacy movement – men and women, old and young, all sought diligently to study. Suddenly, the Beginner's Reader and the Bible both became best sellers. There is a village, Berong by name, with the fastest progress record. At every meeting the majority had their Bibles and songs complete with exercise books and pencils. These would take notes while the sermon was preached, like theological students in class. This made me forget I was in Dyakland.



The Gui Family of interior Borneo



Mrs Linn with the women's prayer fellowship

They are in unceasing pursuit of improvement. They are soon completing a central church building. In the rest of the villages church buildings are under planning. There are no more districts for evangelism. They are become organised Churches. One by one things are falling in line, decently and in order, according to the Word – no more that old life of the mountain aborigines. They sought in all things to follow the rules of propriety, etiquette, and culture; whereas adultery and fornication were open secrets, now they were deemed most shameful. They regard mass wedding as the most glorious event in life, so much so some old men said, “Let us have a new chance at it.” They admire the present day youth for their blessing and happiness. Every Christmas they hold an inter-district conference and united revival meeting to promote the simultaneous progress of church work and spirituality.

At this point, let me include “A Record-breaking Conference” that we might visualise what sort of a Conference the Second Inter-District Conference, 1940 was. (In December 1941 the Pacific War broke out. The state of emergency there and thereafter put a stop to such a Conference): “I have been coughing for nearly three months and suffering from sleepless night. Before the great work approaching, for a week I have been lying as it were in the water. Every night I perspired profusely, changing clothes seven or eight times. These clothes were so soaked through that you could wring out the water. I know this is Satan’s work, but, this is none other than the darkness before Light. I prayed with all my might. Nevertheless, I must press on to the end. The great work is before me. I cannot drop out. I must fight for final victory. Praise God, in the darkness, I have sought and found the light. A few days before Christmas I set out cumbered by illness to break through this dark surrounding to accept the responsibility entrusted to me. The Second Inter-District Conference has come. During eight days of meetings, we have assembled forty to fifty Dyak Church leaders and delegates. We discussed and determined the doctrines and regulations to be observed by the fourteen



A chieftain's house turned into a Church

Churches of this district. Henceforth they would take on the proper image of a church-district and no more remain an evangelism-district – a new image of organisation and order. During the conference the people seemed to have awakened to a new reality as they spontaneously exclaimed, “This is it!” On Christmas Eve we held a big welcome meeting. The next morning was the Christmas Service. Every Church was represented by a choir, properly dressed and attired. The atmosphere of the Service was solemn. After service we baptised twenty-nine men and women. In the evening we had a Christmas party at which 50 items were lined up on the programme, including some well-acted plays. This was a first in the history of the Dyak Church.

In conjunction with the Christmas celebrations we held a combined revival meeting, another first. Believers and non-believers from twelve or thirteen villages, totalling 400, assembled. To feed the people we consumed ten buckets of rice a day. This went on for eight or nine days, three long meetings a day. We had launched out into battle, but this poor me was so

weak. Yet the conference required my personal direction since it was a “first”. Thanks be to God, the eight or nine days passed without a hitch. God’s power had overshadowed my weakness and His glory was mightily manifested.

The meeting ended in a solemn mood. In this revival were exposed the sins of cold-heartedness, backsliding, theft, adultery, concubinage, robbing of another’s wife, polyandry, witchcraft, intent to murder, evil-speaking against God’s servants, breaking of Church laws, gambling, double-dealing – indeed all the hidden sins in everyone’s heart. To give the people time for prayer and confession the evening meetings were lengthened to midnight. Some wept bitterly for their sins, some danced for joy for God’s forgiveness. Open confession was made of sins, a thing deemed impossible with the Dyaks before this. Praise the Lord, this was the Holy Spirit’s work!

The following statistics were arrived at from the several reports of preachers and delegates from the Churches. Apart from the members and Churches transferred to the Basel Mission, the total baptised membership for 1939 stood at 964. Baptised in 1940: 77. Recanted 13. Repented 36. Births 27. Deceased 14. Married 10 couples. Including children the total membership would be at least 3,000, not counting catechumens. From past experience we gradually changed our policy. During the last few years, we have stressed on quality rather than quantity. Now that the Church was established we need to lay good foundations with every care.

In the matter of contributions, the Dyaks could only give in kind and work. Whenever the missionary visited they would come in flocks to carry his baggage. At the beginning of harvest they would offer their firstfruits. They build their own Church or meeting house, including the missionary’s lodge. Now they also practise cultivating of the Church’s land. Their produce is plentiful, covering every hillslope. If each member would spend



Dyak preachers

just one hour gathering the produce once a month, the reaping would suffice support of the preacher for the whole month. On top of the ground produce, they rear cows and sheep, fowls and pigs, without capital outlay. A little offering from each person would suffice the Church's upkeep.

The six young people who dedicated their lives were now under practical training. Soon another twenty would join the Bible School. Amongst the trainees was one from Teweh now sent to work with his people. So they don't feel lonesome any more. Several young people after training in Makasar would soon return and lead those Churches over there. At that time the so-called problem of territorial division was changed from being a heavy burden. Yes, they have awakened to their own responsibility to go and save their own "kinsmen."

When I penned the Report above on the Dyaks, I had worked with them for over a decade. I was preparing to leave the field because I was getting on in years and my strength was diminishing. These indicated to me I should no more linger in those surroundings. Since the Church's founding it had taken form and shape. But though I held on till the year's end, no suitable successor was in sight. Suddenly the Pacific War broke out! (Co-worker Rev. Chan Wing Sun went to Makasar that year to marry, and left our field altogether). The reason why I stayed put by this helpless flock against bitter odds was to guard against the wolves, lest all the lifeblood given to this work be spent in vain. The situation faced by my family at this hour was like some wild vine crushed beneath a boulder, trying to wriggle out. We planted, herded, and traded to keep our family body and soul together, and to help out our co-workers. Our two years of a struggling existence had gone by. Those sons of perdition excepted, my family and those ten-odd Churches with several Indonesian co-workers, were saved by the Name of Christ. My heart overflows with thanks and praises to the God whom I serve all my life.

With the conclusion of the Pacific War, that jungle life I had led for over a decade also came to a close. In 1946 I officially left this field. I said goodbye to those lovable, innocent children of nature. As I retrospect with bowed head I can say I had done my duty. I had fought that head-on battle, through every thorny and bristly situation. That once-upon-a-time wild country is now become a fruitful field.

This bovine pioneer in me, shouldering heavy plough, made a turn to another field.

The Mountains Shall Depart

Isaiah 54:10

John E. Su

The moun - tains shall de - part, And the hills be re - moved;

But my kind - ness shall not de - part from thee;

The moun - tains shall de - part, And the hills be re - moved;

But my kind - ness shall not de - part from thee.

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“A Commendable Work”

At a time when Indonesia is never so open to Christian missions, the publication of the English translation by Dr Timothy Tow of Rev Jason Linn’s “Pioneering in Dyak Borneo” is truly timed of the Lord.

When the translator first spoke of his desire to render this book into English, this writer rather doubted his ability to carry out his intention, he being a man of multiple duties and the task of rendering into English the idiomatic and classical expressions in the Chinese original being a very formidable one. That the translator has completed this laborious task and that equally beautiful in the English, unlike what Lin Yutang quoted as the “sit-eat-mountain-falls” style of literal translation, is a very pleasant surprise. It is indeed a commendable work that has added another milestone in the progress of the art of translation.

Just as hundreds who read the Chinese original of this thriller have been inspired with missionary zeal, so is it expected that equally many who read the English translation will be so interested in winning souls for Christ that through them the cause of missions will be further advanced in the yet unevangelised parts not only of Indonesia, but of other parts of the world.

Rev (Dr) Quek Kiok Chiang



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