

## **The Archives**

### **James Hudson Taylor (1832-1905) Biography**

James Hudson Taylor was born on May 12, 1832 into a family that prayed together and spoke often of other countries that had not heard the word of God. Yet when he was 17, he chose not to follow the God his family knew. The following is a personal account of what changed his life, as taken from one of his books, *A Retrospect*.

“I had many opportunities in early years of learning the value of prayer and of the Word of God; for it was the delight of my dear parents to point out that if there were any such Being as God, to trust him, to obey him, and to be fully given up to his service must of necessity be the best and wisest course both for myself and others. But in spite of these helpful examples and precepts, my heart was unchanged. Often I had tried to make myself a Christian; and failing of course in such efforts, I began at last to think that for some reason or other I could not be saved, and that the best I could do was to take my fill of this world, as there was no hope for me beyond the grave.”

During this time, Hudson and his friends were skeptical of Christianity and turned off by “the inconsistencies of Christian people” who claimed to believe the Bible but “were yet content to live just as they would if there were no such book.” Hudson’s mother and sister persisted in praying for him. Just one month after his sister decided to pray for him daily, he had a change of heart through reading a small tract. This changed his understanding of the change that God brings, and the completion of God’s purpose through the life of Christ.

Brought into saving faith through such a testimony, the power of prayer continued to be a valuable core of his life. He knew that “the promises were very real, and that prayer was in sober matter-of-fact transacting business with God, whether on one’s own behalf or on behalf of those for whom one sought his blessing.”

In the following years of his life, through poor health, financial pinches, and completion of his medical studies, he became a missionary in China. He sailed on the *Dumfries* in September of 1853 and landed in Shanghai on March 1 in the midst of a rebellion. As he spent time studying the language, he saw that many missionaries of his day had adopted rich lifestyles and that few had gone further inland to the rural and poorer areas. After six months he moved to a little house where he could get to know his Chinese neighbors. One day, however, as he watched a fire from a little balcony a cannon ball hit a wall near him showering him with tile bits and landing in the courtyard below. Hudson decided to move back to the foreigners’ compound just before his house was burned to the ground. His mother kept the four-to-five-pound ball for years as a small token of God’s great protection of her son.

Together with his co-workers Hudson Taylor began speaking and preaching and distributing



literature in the nearby areas. However, when he saw that the Chinese people could only see him as an outsider he followed the example of Dr. Charles Gutzlaff, whom he called the “grandfather of the China Inland Mission,” and chose to wear the clothes of the common Chinese people. Although this made him the laughing stock of both foreign and Chinese onlookers, the effects proved his point and helped people see that what he preached was not such a foreign message after all.

In 1857, he and a co-worker founded a mission in Ningbo. The following year he married Maria Dyer, the daughter of another missionary family. They had nine children, but in 1870 Maria became very ill and died. In 1865 he founded the China Inland Mission (CIM) to meet the needs of the Chinese in the rural and inland areas. He knew there were millions of people who needed to hear the message of Jesus Christ and thus named the mission magazine “China’s Millions.” It is published today as “East Asia’s Millions.”

Hudson Taylor was known as a man of prayer, just as he learned the power of prayer through his mother and sister. Also known as a “man of faith,” he would respond that he was “only a servant of a faithful God.” Hudson Taylor died on June 3, 1905 and was buried in Changsha, Hunan. The CIM, known for a time as the Overseas Missionary Fellowship and now OMF International, was thus established and supported through his example and urgent requests for people to pray and go. May those of our generation uphold the word of our faithful God, living, preaching, and praying according to his will wherever we may be.

Hudson Taylor was convinced that a new mission was needed. However, the idea of shouldering such a burden troubled him. Suddenly on that Brighton Beach a fresh truth dawned; the responsibility was not his but God’s! On the flyleaf of his Bible he wrote, “Prayed for the twenty-four willing, skillful laborers at Brighton, June 25, 1865.”

While stressing the need to preach widely Taylor urged local churches to establish and mature and for church buildings to be of Chinese not foreign design, and leaders of the churches to be Chinese Christians. His burden for the still unreached areas pressed him further. The first party of 18 sailed for China in 1866, and 18 more in 1870 including the famous Cambridge Seven.

In 1886, he issued another call for 100 new workers in two years; 102 were sent out by the end of 1887. In 1888, the first North American party was sent out.

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### **CHINA INLAND MISSION (CIM) SINCE 1865**

In 1900, the Boxers set out to exterminate all foreigners in China in a reign of terror during which hundreds of missionaries and Chinese Christians were put to death. The CIM lost 79 people. When it was all over, indemnity money was procured by consulate officials and offered to the foreign mission societies, but Taylor would not accept.



Taylor died in 1905 after 50 years of active service for China, and D.E. Hoste, one of the Cambridge Seven, was appointed mission director. In 1927, there was another call for 200 workers, and the policy for churches to be run by national believers was established. By 1931 there were 203 new missionaries on the field.

## **1932-2009**

At its peak in 1939, the CIM had more than 1,300 missionaries, and nearly 200,000 Chinese and minority people had been baptized. During the years of World War II and those that followed, missionaries had fantastic opportunities among university students and professionals, some of whom were high up in the government. The benefit to the church of these years of war is difficult to assess. It was a time of great harvest, and a preparation for the difficult days when the communist armies with their atheistic emphasis would be in control.

Many missions pulled out in 1948-49, but the CIM was one which attempted to stay. Having so decided, the CIM took a further step of faith and brought in 49 new workers to Shanghai in 1948 and in 1949. But it eventually became plain that the continued presence of the missionaries was causing suspicion and harassment for the Chinese believers. So the momentous decision was made in 1950 that in the best interests of the Chinese church, the CIM would withdraw.

The China Inland Mission now faced the question of whether it should continue to exist. Was this to be the end, or was there something new in God's plan? It was either extinction or expansion. Discovering great pockets of need that included totally unreached people groups in the countries surrounding China, the CIM decided God wanted them to move forward in new faith. The mission began again in East Asia, establishing headquarters in Singapore.

A new name, Overseas Missionary Fellowship (OMF), was adopted in 1964 (changed again to OMF International in 1993) and the old name (China Inland Mission) was dropped. Asian Christians also began to be accepted into membership during this period, and home councils were formed in Japan, Korea, Singapore, Hong Kong, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Indonesia. Today, nearly 20% of OMF International's membership comes from Asia.

In 2006 Dr. Patrick Fung became the general director, the first Asian believer to hold this position for OMF International. At the OMF International Council gathering in 2006 he presented "Passion for the Impossible—Reaching the Neglected Frontiers," to leaders from across the countries and fields where OMF serves. In his keynote, Dr. Fung looked at lessons from the China Inland Mission (CIM) history, its recent past and ministry priorities for the next 5-10 years.

He stressed the importance of who OMF International is as a fellowship: a godly community, a pioneering mission, a relevant organization and a caring family with a servant spirit. He then presented an outline of key concepts for the future.



Considering the totality of the effort required, OMF International's leaders forged "The Five Challenges." These identified the kind of workers God can use; the work they would do; the number of new workers needed to join the effort; how to process them and, finally, how to partner with the churches involved.

OMF International's leadership invested a tremendous amount of energy into discerning God's call to the neglected frontiers. They performed a detailed survey, a contemporary version of the one done with Hudson Taylor in 1883, of all the fields in East Asia. Leaders in China, Japan, Laos, Macau and so on reported on people groups and workers and all that God was doing. The momentum built as each shared the physical and spiritual needs of the targeted peoples and the numbers of personnel needed in the work. God led to the "impossible" tally of a need for 900 new workers for the work at hand! These workers will teach, provide medical expertise, lead in business ventures and a wide variety of other means to bring the gospel.

At the close of the gathering, OMF's leaders left with a passion for these impossible challenges:

1. To pursue holiness.
2. To reach the neglected frontiers.
3. To pray for 900 new workers by 2110 (including 200 support workers).
4. To assess, care for and equip our people.
5. To engage with the sending church in fresh ways.

The nations of East Asia are still teeming with thousands who need to receive those "glad tidings" that Hudson Taylor sought to bring to the furthest points of China, and God is still leading OMF International. In 2009 OMF International has more than 1,600 people from 30 nations reaching out in East Asia. OMF International is still breaking new ground in the most dramatically changing region of the world—whether in outreach to more than 100 people groups, working with disadvantaged children, seeking new ways of evangelizing the unreached of Manila, teaching and influencing students in Taiwan and Indonesia, pioneering a witness among the Malays in South Thailand, translating the Bible, or living as "salt and light" (Matt. 5:13-14) in countries closed to traditional missionary service. OMF missionaries are giving their energies towards building a strong church in the countries of East Asia.

## **Brighton Beach ... The Birth of a New Mission**

Excerpt from the book, *J. Hudson Taylor: A Man in Christ* by Roger Steer

(Upon returning from six years in China with the Chinese Evangelization Society, Hudson Taylor saw poor financial stewardship, comfortable missionary lifestyles and failure to reach the Chinese people for Christ.)

"Despite the fears, Hudson could see so clearly the sort of agency that was needed. It would be a mission composed of men and women from different denominations who would give



themselves to evangelism, church planting and the training of church leaders. They would need to press into the interior of China, depending on God alone to guide and provide for them in answer to believing prayer. To reach each of the 11 untouched provinces there would need to be a minimum of 22 missionaries. [...]"

"George Pearse invited Hudson Taylor to Brighton for the weekend of June 24-26, 1865. During Sunday morning worship he heard the Presbyterian J.M. Denniston preach and was moved by what he said. Then, as he recalled, 'unable to bear the sight of a congregation of a thousand or more Christian people rejoicing in their own security, while millions were perishing for lack of knowledge, I wandered out on the sands alone, in great spiritual agony; and there the Lord conquered my unbelief, and I surrendered myself to God for this service. I told him that all the responsibility as to the issues and consequences must rest with him—his to direct, to care for, and to guide me and those who might labor with me.'"

"Need I say that peace at once flowed into my burdened heart? There and then I asked him for 24 fellow workers, two for each of the eleven inland provinces which were without a missionary, and two for Mongolia; and writing the petition on the margin of the Bible I had with me, I returned home with a heart enjoying rest such as it had been a stranger to for months, and with assurance that the Lord would bless his own work and that I would share in the blessing. I had previously prayed, and asked for prayer, that workers might be raised up for the 11 unoccupied provinces, and thrust forth and provided for, but had not surrendered myself to be their leader."

## **TIMELINE:**

**The early attempts to Evangelize China:** Christian missionaries made four attempts to evangelize China. In 635 A.D. Nestorian Christians were invited by the Xi'an Emperor during the Tang Dynasty. After persecution forced the Nestorians out of China, Roman Catholics sent Friar John of Pian di Cartina to China in 1293. Friar Cartina found remnants of Nestorian Christian beliefs, but not unlike the Nestorians, persecution broke out and Christianity remained forgotten for the next century and a half, though there were 6,000 converts in China at the time. There were no further efforts to enter China until the 16th century when Jesuit Matteo Ricci arrived in Macao. Ricci learned the language well and adopted Chinese dress, which gave him greater acceptance among the people. This resulted in 300 Christian converts in Peking (Beijing) and 2,000 in neighboring cities. By 1670, there were 100,000 Christians in eleven Chinese provinces with only twenty foreign missionaries. In 1787 a new wave of persecution wiped out China's last foreign priest. However, by God's grace, Robert Morrison, the first Protestant missionary to China in 1807, translated the Bible into the Chinese language. By 1839 the Opium Wars with Europe caused further persecution against foreigners in China, including missionaries. In the midst of these wars, a rebellion started by a pseudo-Christian movement called the Taiping attempted to overthrow China's imperial government. The Taiping Rebellion



caused further persecution against foreign missionaries from 1847 to the early 1850s. It was during this time that the Chinese Evangelization Society (CES) sent Hudson Taylor to China.

**Hudson Taylor Resigns CES (1857):** Taylor served six years in China, during which time he married Maria Dyer, another missionary living in China. He encountered many problems facing foreign missions in China. When Taylor left China, God began burdening his heart for the millions yet to be evangelized inland.

**Brighton Beach:** The founding of the China Inland Mission (CIM), June 24-25, 1865: With a heavy heart, Taylor walked on Brighton Beach where God revealed that Taylor would be the one to lead a new foreign mission to China. The mission would be composed of men and women from different denominations who would give themselves to evangelism, church planting and the training of church leaders. On that day, Taylor, in faith, prayed for 24 willing and skillful workers for each of China's eleven provinces and Mongolia.

**The Lammermuir sets sail on May 26, 1866:** Taylor left England for China with his family and 16 workers aboard the Lammermuir. The missionaries traveled in groups of two or three to China's provinces, dressed in Chinese clothing, preaching the gospel and attempting to start churches. By the end of 1866, 24 workers were active in four stations across inland China.

**First advances despite hardship (1870-1875):** The years following 1870 were some of the darkest in the history of the mission due to low finances, political upheavals and poor health of the missionaries. Yet a call for 18 more workers was made. In response to the call, there were 60 offers for service; 10 people were accepted and sailed in 1875, with eight more the following year. A period of expansion followed as these new workers, two by two, took up residence in nine new provinces.

**A second call for advance (1881):** With the total number of missionaries barely 100, friends at home were challenged to pray for 70 new workers in three years. God answered, and within the allotted time 73 new workers had sailed to China. Right on their heels came the Cambridge Seven, a band of seven men from Cambridge University in Cambridge, England whose response and dedication to the task stirred the Christian world.

**Burden increased; a call for 100 more workers (1886):** As the burden for China's unreached pressed further upon Hudson Taylor, he issued yet another call for 100 new workers. Within a year, 102 workers had been sent.

**CIM vision enters the United States (1887):** A man named Henry W. Frost from New York had a strong desire to assist in the evangelization of China. Frost invited Taylor to speak at Northfield, MA, Niagara Falls, New York, Chicago, and other cities in the United States and Canada. Several hundred dollars were donated to the mission and 42 missionary candidates volunteered. By fall



1888, 14 people were on their way to China with Taylor. By 1901 the CIM established a home office in Philadelphia to supervise the mission's work in North America.

**Boxer Rebellion (1900):** In a reign of terror, the Boxers (a Chinese cult) set out to exterminate all foreigners in China. Hundreds of missionaries and Chinese Christians were put to death. The CIM alone lost 58 missionaries and 21 children as martyrs. During this period, the work force of the CIM increased to 933 people.

**Hudson Taylor dies (1905):** After 50 years of active service for China, Hudson Taylor died on June 3 in Changsha and was buried in Zhenjiang next to his first wife Maria.

**Growth of the CIM (1915-1934):** Early ministries of the CIM involved starting churches, supporting literature work, evangelism and running hospitals and schools. By 1915, 1,063 workers were located at 227 work stations throughout China. The mission's peak was in 1934 with 1,368 missionaries serving 364 stations. The CIM staff consisted of hundreds of Chinese pastors, teachers, chapel keepers and Bible women.

**In the midst of darkness, CIM calls for 200 more workers (1927):** The political situation was so strained that consulate officials strongly recommended all Western personnel to withdraw to the coast. The situation for the Chinese Christians was as devastating as in 1900—Christians everywhere were persecuted, tortured and put to death, and mission and church property was ransacked and destroyed. Half of the overall missionary community went home, never to return to China. In the midst of darkness, the CIM issued a new call for advance—this time for 200 new missionaries over two years. By 1931 there were 203 new missionaries on the field.

**Continued Growth (1939):** The CIM had more than 1,300 missionaries and almost 200,000 Chinese and minority people had been baptized by 1939. During World War II and the years that followed, missionaries had various opportunities to share the gospel among university students and professionals, some of whom were government leaders. The effect of these years of war on the church is difficult to assess. It was a great time of harvest, and a preparation for the difficult days when communist armies with their atheistic emphasis would be in control.

**Leaving China (1942-1950):** Political and military crises only grew stronger throughout the 1930-40s. The CIM headquarters in Shanghai was forced to evacuate in 1942 in order to flee the Japanese army that was invading China. Between 1945 and 1949 the Nationalist and Communist forces brutally fought over China. Communism took over in 1949. The new Communist government was highly suspicious of foreign missionaries as well as any Chinese workers associated with them, and they began harassing them. Missionaries were often accused of being foreign intelligence agents. In 1950 the CIM general director deemed that further work in China was impossible and ordered all missionaries to leave. A temporary office



in Hong Kong was established in 1951 to oversee the withdrawal of missionaries. The last CIM workers left China in 1953.

**Should the CIM continue to exist (1951):** During a conference held in Bournemouth, England in November 1951, it was decided that the mission would continue to exist despite the situation in China, and workers were sent to new fields: Thailand, Malaysia, Japan, Philippines, Indonesia and Taiwan. A new headquarters was set up in Singapore and the name of the mission changed to Overseas Missionary Fellowship. The mission reorganized its structure so non-western Christians could become full members and have home offices in their own countries. Other countries that developed home offices were Germany, Hong Kong, Japan, Malaysia, the Netherlands, Philippines, and Singapore. Today more than 30 percent of OMF International's membership is Asian.

**Since leaving China (1951-present):** Since the mission left China, 40 people groups of East Asia have been evangelized through the work of OMF International. God is still leading OMF International, and we are still breaking new ground in the most dramatically changing region of the world by reaching out to more than 100 people groups, working with street children in Bangkok, seeking new ways of evangelizing the unreached of Manila, teaching and influencing students in Taiwan and Indonesia, pioneering a witness among the Malay in South Thailand, translating the Bible and living as salt and light in countries closed to traditional missionary service, including China. OMF International missionaries are serving to build a strong church in the countries of East Asia. In 2005 OMF International celebrated 140 years of service among East Asia's peoples.