



CHAPTER TWO

THE CHINESE FACTOR

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This thesis deals with the unique contribution that Chinese cross-cultural missionaries can make, especially in Africa. The purpose of this chapter is therefore to allow readers to have a better understanding of the background of Chinese missionaries.

The first part of this chapter gives an outline of the Chinese country, its people, history, philosophy, cultural background and religion. The second part introduces Chinese church history. It gives an account of how the Western missionaries came to China and why the Chinese initially rejected the gospel. Describing how the church has grown in spite of persecutions and how opportunities have arisen for Chinese Christians to participate in cross-cultural mission work, this chapter hopes to encourage Chinese churches to play a more active role in world mission.

2.2 THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

2.2.1 The Country and its People

With an area of 9,573,000 square km, China is the third largest country in the world. In this wide country one can find some of the highest mountains and plateau in the world. (Information about Taiwan is not included here, because, although Mainland Chinese regard it as an integral part of China, this island is at present ruled by the Republic of China).

In terms of the population, China is by far the largest nation in the world and comprises almost a quarter of the world's population. Most of these people live in the better-watered central and eastern coastal provinces (Johnstone 1993:163).

<u>Year</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Annual Growth</u>	<u>Density</u>
1990	1,135,496,000	1.4%	119/sq.km
1995	1,214,221,000	1.3%	127/sq.km

The Chinese are mostly peace loving, hardworking and contented people. They respect elders, love children and are patient with their fellow countrymen. Chinese in general are reserved and peculiarly humble. They believe in harmony and avoid confrontation. China was once one of the most superior civilizations of the world, not only the equal to Rome, but far ahead of medieval Europe (Fairbank 1992:2). History tells us that the Chinese are non-militant with regards to the neighbours. (I mean tradition Chinese not Communist Chinese). During the heyday of the British Empire and when the western countries actively expanded their powers to Asia, China became one of the

victims of invasion. The Chinese are generally very proud of their ancient society. They have a great historical tradition (Goodrich 1951:5). Their attitude towards differences in religion and culture is largely open and pragmatic. Foreigners are treated fairly and visitors are welcomed.

China not only has a long history, but also a painful one. The fact is, even now, China remains a very poor country and most Chinese are still suffering from poverty. It is high time for all Chinese to work closely together so that China may catch up with the developed nations and enables its people to live happily and peacefully

(1999 Aug 23 <http://www.index-china.com/index-english/people-s.html>).

2.2.2 Chinese Philosophy

China's culture and religion may be traced back thousands of years before the common era. Before modern religions came about, China had already built up a religious worldview that, in some respects, can still be seen today. In their philosophy, earth is where we all live and work and heaven is where our ancestors live after death. While living on earth, it is important for a person to venerate their ancestors' past; for although they cannot speak, the ancestors have power over the world and have a tendency to send omens to the mortals below. The life of the average person is an escalation to heaven and while one lives one's life, one is also accountable to one's neighbour. The oldest man in a town is seen to be the wisest man and also as one who is most heavenly-minded. However, while on earth, a person must never forget their ancestors and should make sacrifices and acknowledgments to those that

have passed away. Doing so brings about a better balance (Yin and Yang) in the world.

The Yin-Yang Tai-chi symbol has since ancient times represented the Chinese view of the cosmos. The Yin and Yang, shown in the "Diagram of the Supreme Ultimate", or the Tai chi, depicts a basic understanding among all Chinese religions. In looking to explain the forces of nature that dictated life, the ancient Chinese philosophers developed this concept to explain the many opposites in the world. The Yin is the negative force and is the dark, the cool, the earth, the moon, the shadows and female. The Yang is the light, the warmth, the heaven, the dry and male. The Yin and Yang encompass varied forces existing in nature, where each force has a balanced opposite. A balance of the Yin and Yang must be attained for one to find happiness and comfort and is best achieved in the words of Confucius by "taking the middle road".

Chinese philosophers place great emphasis on the "Way of Heaven" and the "Way of Man". "Heaven" is viewed not only as "nature" but also the source of all life and human values. The concept of "heaven" encompasses the "universe", an organism brimming over with creative life force. The creation of life is viewed not as a mechanical, physical process, but a spiritual, purposeful procedure. In other words, "man" is the result of "heaven's" unceasing creation of ever-new beings that have more and more wisdom as time goes by. Relying on the wisdom and virtues bestowed by heaven, man creates an increasingly sophisticated and refined culture and cultural values. New life and new values are constantly brought forth in the universe and in



human society. The former is designated as "birth of new life" and the latter as "playing out one's inherent nature". The combination of the two is called the "unity of heaven and man" or "heaven and man being of one mind"

(1999 Sep14 <http://www.gio.gov.tw/info/culture/cultur21.html>).

"When one cultivates to the utmost the principles of his nature and exercises them on the basis of reciprocity, he is not far from the natural law. What you do not like yourself do not extend to others" (Sih 1957:13).

The above philosophical thought was promoted mainly by the Confucian and Neo-Confucian schools of thought. Proponents of Taoism and Buddhism espouse essentially the same notions. However, the weight of Confucian cultural value concepts lie in the "ethical plane," that of Taoism in the "artistic plane," and that of Buddhism in the "religious plane".

This philosophy of a "unity of man and heaven" evolved into the Chinese worldview of "being contented with one's heaven-ordained lot in life". This view gives the Chinese an enhanced ability to intimately experience the endless beauty of the natural world and to more fully enjoy the richness of feeling in the world of ethics. At the same time they have less resentment plaguing them and are able to work hard at their work with peace of mind. The work of man, after all, is the work of heaven. This view also offers a kind of religious consolation. The new life and values constantly brought forth by heaven into the universe and human society result in an unending cycle of life and a unity of heaven and man

(1999 Sep15 <http://www.gio.gov.tw/info/culture/cultur21.html>).

2.2.3 Traditional Chinese Religions

- **Chinese Buddhism**

Not unlike Christianity, Buddhism is an ever changing and evolving religion that has adapted to fit in with various philosophies and cultures. The religion of Buddhism began in India with the birth of Siddhartha Gautama, also known as Buddha, in 563 BC. Although he was born a prince, his destiny was not to govern but to search for a greater meaning of life. Throughout his search, he reached a stage of enlightenment and began to preach and obtain disciples. Originally, there were four truths in Buddhism and with an understanding of those, one would reach the next level, that of the Noble Eightfold Path. The main goal was to achieve absolute truth and have an understanding of the meaning of life. Several centuries after Buddha's death, the scriptures were finally written down and brought by his disciples to China

(1999 Sep16 <http://www.albany.edu/faculty/lr618/chbud.html>).

Among his main teachings were the Four Noble Truths:

- that sorrow is the universal experience of mankind;
- that the cause of sorrow is desire;
- that the removal of sorrow can only come from the removal of desire;
- that desire can be systematically abandoned by following the Noble Eightfold Path

(1999 Sep16 http://www.pages.com.cn/chinese_culture/buddhism/brief.html).

Buddhism in China can be traced back as early as the first century AD. However, it began to flourish during the Han Dynasty. Although it was met

with much resistance from Confucianist schools, it is thought to have entered China gradually through Central Asia and later by means of trade routes. Once Buddhism reached China, it began to influence the Chinese culture, while also adapting to Chinese ways. Early Buddhism in China was thought to incorporate magical practices and was compatible with Taoism. Chinese Buddhism integrates Taoism, bringing together the Indian concern with self-liberation and the Chinese focus on nature. Some even speculate that Lao-Tzu the founder of Taoism was reborn in India as the Buddha (1999 Sep.16 http://www.buddhanet.net/cbp2_f5.htm).

Buddhism spread rapidly not only in the north but also among the Six Dynasties of the south. In the great age of Buddhism in China, from the fifth to the ninth centuries, Confucianism was largely left behind and the Buddhist teachings as well as Buddhist art had a profound effect upon Chinese culture, both north and south (Fairbank 1992:73). Buddhism reached its peak in China during the Sui Dynasty. During this time, Buddhism was the state religion and many Buddhist monks served as military counsellors.

In the 20th century a reform movement in Buddhism adapted to modern day conditions. It was repressed during the Cultural Revolution and Communism, but has managed to hold its place as a major religion. Since 1976 the Chinese government has been tolerant of Buddhism

(1999 Oct24 <http://encarta.msn.com/find/concise.asp?z=1&pg=2&ti=00586000>).

Buddhist meditation is a technique of actualisation in that it repeats the ceaseless relationship between Emptiness, or "the Absolute" and real

existence. It consists essentially of two parts: the mental phase, "creation", starting from Emptiness, that corresponds to existence and "completion", or return to the unity of the "Absolute". Only the first phase is relatively easy to understand and perform, at least in the purely Tibetan system. The second comprises the practice of psycho-physiological yoga with a view of becoming liberated or entering a state of Nirvana

(1999 Oct 24 http://www.pages.com.cn/chinese_culture/buddhism/brief.html).

- **I-kuan Tao**

I-kuan Tao adherents more or less follow the rituals of traditional Confucianism and engage in ancestor worship. Services are usually held at family shrines and are aimed at both cultivating personal character and maintaining family relations – two key concepts in Chinese culture

(1999 Oct 24 <http://www.Taipei.org/info/religion/13ikuan.htm#top>).

- **Ancestor Worship**

This is the most important form of Chinese religion. It is widely practised across the entire society. The rituals concerning ancestor worship are very complicated and have to be followed precisely. Although in modern times it has been simplified, it appears that it will not easily fade away from the Chinese community

(1999 Oct 24 <http://www.fccj.org/learningresources/chi-elem.htm>).

- **Taoism**

Taoism as a philosophy appeared at the same time as Confucianism. As a popular philosophy, it introduced the fundamental principle of a naturalistic

worldview. The word "Tao" has the same value as the "Way" in Christianity. "Tao" is the main thrust of the whole universe. The philosophical aspect of Taoism suggests that human beings should flow with the universe rather than taking an aggressive attitude toward it

(1999 Oct 25 <http://www.fccj.org/learningresources/chi-who.htm#top>).

Traditionally, Taoism stemmed from Lao-Ze, "The Old Master", who was claimed by his followers to have been an older contemporary of Confucius (Fairbank 1992:53). Later, in the Han Dynasty (around AD 200), Taoism gradually emerged as a religion. As a religion Taoism provided the concept of Yin and Yang, the Jade Emperor, the immortal stage, hierarchical structure of the supernatural world and the connection between life and death. It also took over the role of Heaven Worship. The Tao priest is the major player in the exercise of exorcism.

(1999 Oct 25 <http://www.fccj.org/learningresources/chi-who.htm#top>).

2.2.4 The Current Religious Situation in China

Elimination of all religious groups has always been the ultimate aim of the Marxist government. In the 1950s the government engineered the infiltration, subversion and control of all organised Christianity. By 1958 this had been achieved through the "Three Self Patriotic Movement" among Protestants and the "Catholic Patriotic Association" among Catholics. During the Cultural Revolution these structures were banned and all religious activity was forced underground, giving rise to the house church movement. In 1978 restrictions were eased and the TSPM and CPA were resurrected as a means of regaining

governmental control of the thousands of house churches. This has been only partially successful. The collapse of Communism in Europe is perceived to be due to “religion”, so strict controls are maintained over Christian and Muslim organizations and all unregistered activity is repressed wherever possible. The atheism propagated in the education system ensures that most young people have no religious knowledge (Johnstone 1993:163).

- **Non-religious/other:** 59,1 %. The number of Communist Party members is claimed to be only 50 million - all officially atheists, including non-theists. The atheism propagated in the education system ensures that most young people have no religious knowledge.

- **Different kinds of religions:** 27%. A blending of Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism and folk religion.

- **Buddhist:** 3%. Traditional Buddhists 24 million; strong among the Zhu-ang, Manchu, Dai Lahu, Korean, Bulang tribal cultures. Also Lamaistic Buddhists 9,6 million; Tibetans, Mongolians, Naxi, Tu Moimba, Pumi, Yugur Lhoba

- **Animist:** 2,4%. Mainly among the tribal peoples of the south, southwest and far north regions.

- **Muslim:** 2,4%. Dominant in Xinjiang and Ningxia. The major religion of the Hui Uygur Kazak, Kirgiz, Tajilk, Uzbek, Tatar Dongxiang, Salar and Bonan. There are now 43 000 officially allowed mosques.

- **Christian:** 6,1 %. Growth 7,7% p.a.

Protestants: 5,1 %. Growth 7,1 % per annum.

<u>Church</u>	<u>Members</u>	<u>Affiliated</u>
Home meetings	18 800 000	47 000 000
<u>TSPM</u>	<u>7 000 000</u>	<u>11 000 000</u>
All groups	25 800 000	58 000 000
Evangelicals (5%)	25 140 000	57 130 000

Catholics: 0,77%. Growth 10,8% per annum.

<u>Church</u>	<u>Members</u>	<u>Affiliated</u>
Roman Catholic	3 500 000	5 000 000
<u>CPA</u>	<u>2 600 000</u>	<u>3 700 000</u>
All -groups	6 100 000	8 700 000

Indigenous Marginal: 0,18%. Growth 13,3% per annum

<u>Church</u>	<u>Members</u>	<u>Affiliated</u>
All groups	1 000 000	2 000 000

2.2.5 Political Situation in China

This ancient nation has regained its place of importance in the world after nearly two centuries of decline and humiliation at the hands of the Western powers and Japan. Since the final conquest of Mainland China in 1949, the Communist Party has remoulded the nation along Marxist lines. The Cultural Revolution (1966-76) was the culmination of Mao's policy. It caused

immeasurable suffering and economic chaos. Intellectuals and religious believers were cruelly persecuted. It is estimated that 20 million Chinese lost their lives during that time. The death of Mao Zedong in 1976 and the discrediting of radical leftists in 1978 was followed by a more pragmatic leadership under Deng. He initiated a series of economic, political and cultural reforms and developed links with other nations, but all within the limits set by Deng. The crushing of the 1989 student protest in Tiananmen Square in Beijing and also the collapse of Communism in Europe and the USSR left China diplomatically isolated as the oldest surviving Communist regime. The threatened government responded with a reversion of its ideological rigidity and repression of all political, ethnic and religious dissent. Economic reform, with tight political control, emerged as the government policy for the 1990s. In 1997 the British returned Hong Kong to China in 1999 and Portuguese Macao.

2.3 THE “SLEEPING DRAGON NATION” IS WAKING UP

The word “Dragon” is used in the Bible for the enemy of the Child, the Lord (Rev 12:3-9 and Rev 20: 2-3). The concept “Dragon” in China, on the other hand, means “a beneficent amphibian deity of oriental mythology and is an ageless symbol of greatness, royalty, power”. For two thousand years, the Emperors of China had sat on a dragon throne and ruled the “Land of the Dragon” (Dehoney 1988:12).

When Mr Nixon, the ex-US president, made his fourth visit to China as a

private citizen, he told Beijing University students that Napoleon once said, "China is a sleeping giant! Don't awake her! Because when you do, she will move the world" (Dehoney 1988:12). He continued: "Well, China is awake today! And with the help of your generation, China will lead the world in the paths of peace and progress". The Dragon is not only alive and awakened now, but also has abandoned the isolation that has cut off the Chinese people from the rest of the world for centuries. This giant, with more than 1,2 billion people, is joining the world family of nations. China's new openness and turn outward to the West may well be the most significant single event of the twentieth century (Dehoney 1988:13)!

There are significant parallels in China today with the Roman world in the time of Christ. God prepared and used the crosscurrents of history in the Roman world to prepare for the coming of Christ. Today, it is said, the situation in China is similar to that of the time of the birth of Christ. The Chinese are using one common language, Mandarin, for the first time in their history. The roads are open for travel and commerce. Chinese bandits, who from antiquity plagued the remote areas, have been eradicated. There is political stability, a strong central government and internal peace throughout the whole empire. There is also a great spiritual vacuum and it is expected by many that this is the time for the dragon to receive the coming of the Lamb. The Bible says that, "In the fullness of the time ...God sent forth his Son" (Galatians 4:4).

This implies that in God's divine purpose he had perfectly prepared the world to receive the Saviour and the time of his advent has come.

"We Chinese believe that God has now prepared our world to receive His Son. It is God's 'fullness of time.' for China" (Dehoney 1988:172).

The 21st Century seems to belong to the Chinese because of the following facts:

- **Economic Growth**

China, as a consequence of its economic development will become one of the richest countries in the 21st century.

- **Language**

Today, more than one out of every five people is Chinese and they mostly speak Mandarin. Despite English being used around the world, the fact is that Mandarin is spoken by more people.

- **Chinese Emigrants**

The Chinese have emigrated to all parts of the world and wherever they settled, China Towns and Chinese restaurants have mushroomed up all over those countries.

2.4 CHRISTIANITY IN CHINA

Nestorianism first arrived in China and was known as the "Persian religion". The first missionary team that came to China was called the "Jin-Jiao". They arrived during the Tang Empire in 635AD. Jing Jiao means "Luminous

Religion” or “Religion of Light” and it represented Jesus as the light of the world (Covell 1986:30). Nestorianism was a sect condemned as heretical by the Council of Ephesus in 431, because of its belief that Jesus had two distinct natures – that of a distinctly divine and a human nature. The Nestorians separated themselves from Byzantine Christianity and one arm spread into Africa (forming the Coptic churches) and the other arm eastward, into Persia. Their missionaries followed the caravans along the trade routes of Central Asia, crossing into China on the ancient Silk Road.

The China into which the Nestorians came was at the zenith of its power. The then ruling Tang Dynasty was probably the then most powerful and wealthiest empire in the world. Trade with India and the Near East was flourishing. Nestorian communities were established in the trading centres of the empire and for decades enjoyed considerable success. However, in 845, the Emperor, an ardent Taoist, issued an edict proscribing Buddhism and ordered all monks to return to private life. Apparently, Nestorians were included in the persecution since three thousand foreign monks were referred to in the edict. Nestorianism lasted for only 211 years (Brown 1921:15-16).

The second mission that came to China was Arkaun. It lasted for only 91 years, from 1277-1367, during the Yien Empire (Lin 1977:53).

In 1601 the Italian Jesuit Matteo Ricci was permitted to reside in Beijing. The Bishop Alexandru Valignani tried many times to enter the interior of China, but the government forbade him. In 1606, before he died, he looked at China and cried out aloud to the Land: “Rock! Rock! When will you open the door for my

Lord? Who are able to use his flesh to hit this Big Rock China"?

Two centuries later, the first Protestant Missionary, by the name of Morrison, a Scottish Presbyterian under the appointment of the London Missionary Society, arrived in China on 7th September 1807 (Lin 1977:301). At that time the Mun-Ching Empire did not allow a white man to stay in China unless he belonged to a shipping company, so he went to Canton, the only city of China that was then open for trade. Further, the Empire did not allow white men to learn Chinese. They also forbade the Chinese people from teaching the language to any white man. If any Chinese transgressed, he was perceived to be one who assisted a spy and therefore sentenced to death.

In 1817, however, the first Chinese pastor helped Morrison translate the Gospel. The government punished him and he was almost killed (Lin 1977:309-310). Because of his linguistic skills Morrison spent his time translating the Bible as well as preparing a Chinese-English dictionary. He started the first Chinese monthly magazine as well. In 1819, twelve years after his arrival, Morrison, with some help from his colleague William Milne, completed the colossal task of translating the Old and New Testaments. In the first twenty-five years of the Protestant missionary effort, only ten Chinese were baptised. These were difficult, lonely years. Morrison's wife died of cholera. Milne's wife died of dysentery. Milne himself died a few years later. All of them were under the age of forty when they died (Brown 1921:15-16). Morrison also died in 1834.

Subsequently, Hudson Taylor had also come to the conviction that God had

called him to China as a missionary. Taylor was only twenty years old when he sailed for the Middle Kingdom in 1853. He was a man of simple, daring faith, who attempted the impossible. He gave little attention to the establishment of institutions although he did believe in the efficacy of medical work. His mission was inter-denominational, conservative in theology, and operated on faith principles for support. He formed the China Inland Mission (CIM) in 1865 (Bacon 1983:5-6). The missionary philosophy of Hudson Taylor was that the Gospel should be spread through evangelistic witness and preaching to the remotest corners of the empire as quickly as possible. CIM soon became the largest missionary organisation in China and its workers covered the region from one end to the other (Brown 1921:33). Hudson Taylor once said "If I had a thousand pounds, China should have it, If I had a thousand lives, China should have them".

After Hudson Taylor there were many more missionaries that came to China. As the focus of this report is not primarily on China and in order to limit the length of this Chapter, only some of the pioneering missionaries in the China's history have been covered here.

2.5 WHY THE CHINESE HAD REFUSED THE GOSPEL

2.5.1 Colonialism in China

When we see a visitor and a robber entering our house at the same time, we may perceive both of them as robbers. In the same way, many people felt

that the missionaries brought imperialism into China, in the guise of the Gospel. The gospel was just a “Trojan Horse” that was used in order that colonialism may be introduced into the region to suppress the Chinese. Quite a number of Chinese felt that the missionaries were spies and lackeys of their empire that tried to colonise the country. This led to serious misunderstandings. Mission work was compared to the Muslim’s “conversion by the sword” tactics; thus the majority of the Chinese harboured hatred towards the Christians.

2.5.2 The Opium War and Unequal Treaties (1839-1860)

The colonial system was introduced into China by the treaties of Nanjing and Tientsin. From the standpoint of many Chinese patriots today, both Christians and non-Christians, Marxists and otherwise, the missionary movement was compromised by its association with the colonial powers and the treaties which they forced upon the Chinese people in the mid-1800s. Events of this time cast a long shadow into the future and affected the reputation of the Christian missions in China for the next hundred years.

As trade increased and opium became a serious social problem, anti-opium campaigns began to spread. In 1839 a new incorruptible commissioner of trade at Canton began to enforce the prohibitions against all opium imports. Meeting resistance from the merchants, he detained three hundred and fifty foreign traders in the Canton Factories for six weeks until they agreed to deliver up their cargoes of opium. Twenty thousand chests of opium were publicly burned. However, this caused the Western powers to fight for their rights of trade. The Chinese had to back off.

In 1979 Zhao Fusan, from the Institute for the Study of World Religions in Beijing, charged that "Christian mission paved the way for colonial aggression into China". Bishop K H Ting (Ding Guangxun), president of the China Christian Council often made the same point (Brown 1921:27).

2.5.3 The Chinese Boxers

In 1898 the government ordered the mobilisation of local militia, the "I Ho Tuan" ("Righteous Harmony Fists", given the name of "Boxers" by Westerners), to defend China against foreign encroachments. The "Boxers" in Shantung Province adopted the slogan, "Protect the country, destroy the foreigner". Reports came into the capital city of Peking that a thousand Roman Catholics had been massacred; that English missionaries were killed and about the destruction of a Presbyterian mission station. When the Dowager Empress gave her encouragement, the movement spread to other provinces.

The Dowager Empress sanctioned these attacks as a declaration of war. Against the moderate counsel of some advisors, she issued an edict on June 24 ordering the killing of all foreigners throughout the empire. More than 30,000 Roman Catholic Chinese and 47 foreign priests and nuns were killed. The number of Protestants who lost their lives is estimated at about 1 900 Chinese, 134 missionaries and 52 missionary children (Brown 1921:37).

Again the Western powers retaliated. China was forced to accept defeat and to pay for the damage done. The so-called Boxer Rebellions were not primarily anti-missionary or anti-Christian but anti-foreign. However, the missionaries and Christian converts suffered the most because they lived in

isolated regions and as such were exposed. In spite of their good works, the missionaries had not been able to rid themselves of the taint of 'foreignness'. Christianity thus was seen as a foreign religion. The China Inland Mission, whose missionaries had been widely scattered, lost many workers and much property but refused to accept payment for damages. They said, "We should forgive them". This really touched many Chinese and opened peoples' hearts to the Gospel.

It is significant that the first modern President of China, Sun Yat-Sen, studied at a mission school and was baptised when he was 18 years old. The second President, Chiang Kai-Shek, was a Christian and married a pastor's daughter. They were all the fruit of Western missionary work.

2.6 THE CHINESE CHURCH TODAY

2.6.1 The Growth of the Church in China

This growth since 1977 has no parallels in history. Researchers estimate there to be 30 to 75 million Christians in 1990. The State Statistical Bureau in China confidentially estimated 63 million Protestants and 12 million Catholics in 1992. Comparing this to the estimated 1 812 000 Protestants and 3 300 000 Catholics in 1949, most of the growth is in the unofficial house fellowship networks and through the work of itinerant preachers and numerous local revival movements (Johnstone 1993:164). Praise God for this wonderful work.

Even the religious policy of the Communist government boggles the mind and defies easy generalisations. Who could have foreseen that after 15 years of obscurantism and the scourge of the Cultural Revolution, more than 2 000 official Protestant churches could have been opened, in addition to hundreds of thousands of informal house meeting points. More than 1,5 million Bibles were printed and even such books as “Bible Stories” and “Pilgrim’s Progress” were printed by the government’s Social Science Press as illustrations of the Western cultural heritage. It has been reported that the initial reprinting of 200 000 copies of *Pilgrim’s Progress* was sold out in just three days (Adeney 1985:7).

Johnstone (1993) alludes to the following elements that could be accredited for this amazing growth:

- **140 years of sacrificial seed-sowing**

Thousands of missionaries have eventually born fruit. At one stage there were 8 500 Protestant missionaries, 1 000 of these being with CIM (OMF). Their labour was not in vain! Yet it was seen wisest by the Lord to remove them before the harvest and that He alone gets the glory!

- **Millions of intercessors** had travailed in prayer for the long-delayed breakthrough.

- **The manifest bankruptcy of Communism**

Colossal blunders and changes in Party policy over 35 years have disillusioned the people. The fall of cult leaders and the failure of promises for

a better future have created a vacuum that only the Gospel can fill. The Church of the Lord Jesus is larger than the Communist Party of China. Ironically, Mao Zedong has unwittingly become the greatest evangelist in history. The nepotism, corruption and factionalism of the present Communist Party have become repugnant to the majority of the population.

- **The Christians stood firm** in what was probably the most widespread and harshest persecution the Church has ever experienced. The persecution purified and indigenised the Church as opposed to the more recent efforts that were targeted to weaken and destroy it. In the 1960s, Wenzhou City in Zhejiang was selected as a model for the campaign for renouncing religion. Nonetheless, it is now one of the most Christian cities in China where Christians officially numbered 300 000 (Johnstone 1993:164).

- **Search for Truth among the educated.**

The tanks at Tiananmen Square crushed any ideas of an idolatrous trust in democracy as a solution and led large numbers of young people to faith in Christ since 1989. The old religions of China have not attracted them, but the claims of Christ have. In the past the growth had mostly been seen among the poor and the rural population. Now, every stratum of society has been affected.

- **The waves of revival** followed every man-induced or natural disaster. The love and testimony of Christians, as well as the power of the Holy Spirit have played their part and manifested in miracles, healing and exorcisms.

- **The fruitfulness of Christian radio** and the remarkable faith of those who continued broadcasting into China for years with little visible evidence of response undoubtedly have played an important role also (Johnstone 1993:165).
- **Barriers to the Gospel have been broken down** by the suffering and distress caused by wars and revolutions during the twentieth century. The harness of the old religions of Taoism, Buddhism and philosophical Confucianism has been broken and the mistrusted “foreignness” of Christianity dissipated (Johnstone 1993:165).

2.6.2 Why Chinese are Reluctant to Participate in Missionary Work

Among the reasons given for the initial reluctance of Chinese Christians to become involved in world mission are the following.

- **The Chinese philosophy**

According to Confucius’ teaching, one should mind one’s own business first, then move on to influence one’s family, one’s society and stop at one’s nation. Never go beyond that.

- **There is more emphasis on personal virtue** than on social ethics, making it difficult for the Chinese to reach out.

- **Worldview**

The Chinese worldview stops at their nation and does not include other nations.

Their worldview is therefore focused on things Chinese only. They would label people outside of China as “Foreign Devils”.

- **Very strong Patriotism**

The Chinese people have a very strong sense of patriotism and are not really willing to become integrated with other nations.

- **Family orientation**

Whenever Chinese go to other countries, they generally feel inclined to work among a Chinese brotherhood instead of working among their adopted country's people.

- **Chinese view of the church**

They focus mainly on family matters, instead of having a kingdom mind. They think in terms of their church, their family and their relatives in their church and not necessarily God's view of their church. They have little regard for the universal church. (Chi-Min Tan, Fuller professor interviewed in 1998).

- **To brave dangers**

Chinese are not like Western missionaries who are willing to take risks and go out to strange lands. One seldom finds Chinese explorers because they normally prefer to follow someone who has experience.

- **Unfinished evangelical work**

As China is the largest mission field in the world, the Chinese churches remain committed to local evangelical work. There is much in-house unfinished work

that needs to be done.

- **Afraid to learn another language**

Chinese are generally not encouraged to learn a new language.

- **Lack of companionship**

Chinese are characterised by doing it alone and lack companionship. They usually find it difficult to work with other Chinese. The only teamwork that they are accustomed to is that of “Family Team Work”.

- **Self-centeredness**

Most Chinese are very self-centered. The word China means “Center Kingdom” i.e. the centre of the world and even that of the universe. All outsiders were regarded as barbarians, foreign and inferior (Dehoney 1988:16).

- **Different mission strategy**

The missionaries of Korea chose to conduct church planting and world missions at the same time. Therefore, the Korean church also conducted world mission at a very early stage. On the other hand, missionaries in China generally did not teach the converts to have a world mission mind. They emphasised the witness to their own people. In the first 40 years therefore, hardly any Bible College had mission courses. At that time, Western missions never accepted any Chinese to join their mission. They were pure white organisations (Lai Chan, 1998 Interview).

- **Problem of children's education**

Arranging proper education for children is very difficult on the mission field. Thus, missionaries may not be able to stay for as long as they wish if they do not have sufficient back-up systems. The children's education problems forced them to leave the field (Chi-Min Tan, interviewed in 1998).

- **Passport problems**

This fundamental problem restricts the free movement of Chinese in and out of their country.

- **Fifty years under persecution**

Mao Zedong believed according to Marxist ideology that "religion is the opium of the people" (Adeney 1985:11). Ever since the Revolution the Communists have emphasised the fact that missionaries are agents of imperialism. It has been often stated that the early Christian missionaries entered China at the point of the bayonet. In 1949 China became communist. Many Christians, Pastors and missionaries lost their lives or were thrown into prison².

² During the Cultural Revolution (1966-1969) church windows were smashed, pews were burned and crosses were taken down. Pastors were required to act as a "walking exhibit", wearing a placard around their necks detailing one or more "crimes" they have committed. Often, they were also made to wear a tall hat similar to a dunce cap. People were paraded as a means of revealing in open public their offences against the Revolution. Many Christians were humiliated and some were beaten to death. Communist cadres and Red Guards searched every house for Bibles, hymnals and other Christian literature. At one time, over twenty YMCA and YWCA secretaries were gathered and forced to kneel in public in front of a pile of burning Bibles. A large crowd stood around and watched this horrendous spectacle. As the flames intensified and exerted their heat towards the victims, they cried out in pain because of the excruciating torment. It was such a pitiful sight. After the Cultural Revolution, there were no more open church meetings. Many Christians hid their Bibles in mountain caves.

2.7 CHINA AND MISSIONS

In a report from the Fuller World Mission Center, Professor Wagner was quoted as saying: “In 2025 AD the largest missionary sending country will be China”.

Adeney adds that

“Based on the most conservative estimates, the church of Jesus Christ in Mainland China has grown more than tenfold since the missionaries left at the end of the 1940s. In comparison, the Church in the free world of the West has had no real growth during the same period. In many places, there was decline instead” (1985:12).

This church is very strategic. Many underground church members had given their lives to the Lord in past decades. Their faith is vibrant and new. The next step for them will be to formally get trained at Bible Colleges with an emphasis on world mission. Thus equipped, they may go out as missionaries. The conversion of the Chinese people (1/5 of the world's population) is a great priority. The Holy Spirit may well choose this very route to spread His salvation to all the nations of the earth.

2.7.1 The Chinese Mission Movement

The emigrant Chinese population is estimated to be at least 56 million. Of these, 28 million live in the four Chinese majority territories/states of Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macao and Singapore. The remaining 28 million reside in over 100 nations around the world. Worldwide speaking, the movement of Chinese turning to God is very significant and highly visible (Johnstone 1993:165).

The process of Chinese migration is significant. According to the Chinese Coordinating Centre of World Evangelisation (CCCOWE)'s report, Chinese people have been migrating to Korea, Japan, Vietnam, Burma, Malaya, India and other nearby Southeastern Asian regions since the Han Dynasty (202 BC-220 AD) (CCCOWE 1980:13). Since the Sung to the Yuan Dynasty (960-1368 AD) some Chinese migrated to the Philippines, Indonesia and as far as the Middle East. In the late 18th century, which is the time of the Ch'ing Dynasty, many "coolies" (labourers) were sold to Europe and America.

Takaki pointed out that there were two major waves of Asian immigration to America, the first wave in 1848 and the second wave in 1965 (1989:406-471). The news that gold could be picked up in Californian streams sparked the gold rush in 1848. According to the study of Thomas Chinn and Stanford Lyman, the population of the immigrant Chinese in America was 4 825 in 1850, which grew to 237 292 in 1960 (Chinn 1969:19). However, the Immigration Act of 1956 abolished the national-origins quotas and provided for the annual admission of 170 000 immigrants from the Eastern Hemisphere and 120 000 from the Western Hemisphere. This new immigration law produced a

massive increase in Asian immigration. In 1980, the Chinese population jumped to 812 200.

When the Communists took over Mainland China in 1949, the Chinese churches and Christians faced a persecution that was unprecedented both in scope and force in Chinese church history. A mass exodus of Chinese took place in 1949 and many of the Chinese Christians also left their home country. Thomas Wang compares the exodus of Chinese Christians out of Mainland China as one of the "moves" of God in a gigantic game of chess. He writes, "Is God not making another 'move' today? The Chinese have been settling around the world for a long time, but in the last 30 years this number has increased, among them there are many Christians. These have in one way or another planted churches. The Lord has in his mercy sprinkled an unprecedented number of Chinese churches around the world. In this we see His handiwork" (Wang 1992:11-12).

Historians called the migration before 1949 as the "General Migration of Chinese overseas" and the one after 1949 as the "Specific Migration of Chinese Christians". According to the CCCOWE's Research Department, in 1992 there were 56 million Chinese residing overseas and the number of Overseas Chinese Christian churches were 6 639 (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Number of Chinese and Chinese Churches outside of China

Region	Chinese Population	No of Chinese Christian Churches	No of Chinese Christians

Asia	52 102 000	5 625	1 080 639
Europe	540 000	110	12 000
North America	2 425 472	780	138 800
Latin America	477 300	45	N.A.
Oceania	230 000	69	8 335
Africa	68000	15	695
Total	55842732	6644	1240469

(CCCOWE 1992:7-8)

2.7.2 The Mission Expanding Phase (1980-1994)

Whilst there were 5 000 overseas Chinese churches in the mid-eighties, how many of these churches responded to the great commission? Rev Wang estimated that there were at least 10% of the Chinese churches involved in missions, whereas Rev Kenneth Lo considered that the number could be as low as 5%. Edmond Mok, the Executive Secretary of the Hong Kong Association of Christian Missions, believes that the actual situation probably lies somewhere in between. He suggests that the percentage of the mission-involved overseas Chinese Churches was between 5% and 10% in 1985 and 10% to 15% in 1989 (Mok 1992:16). Rev Hay-Him Chan, the Executive secretary of the CCCOWE, pointed out that there were 7 000 overseas Chinese churches in mid-1993 and only 650 churches were involved actively in missions (Chan 1993:2-4).

During the 2nd International Chinese Christian World Missions Seminar under

the theme "Nations Wait, Let's Go!" and sponsored by CCCOWE in Hong Kong, 284 overseas Chinese pastors and mission executives from 22 countries gathered together. They reviewed the past and present situations and discussed the future direction of the Chinese overseas missions. The speakers included Dr James Taylor, Dr Gail Law, Dr Philemon Choi, Dr Titus Loon, Dr Cyrus Lam, Dr Tjandra and Rev Chan Fong. In the seminar some important data were highlighted: in mid-1993, there were 301 Chinese missionaries who worked in Africa, Asia, America and Europe. They were engaged in church planting, pastoral care, training and social work. They served as career missionaries, tentmakers or short-termers.

2.7.3 The New Missionary Movement

With these emigrant Chinese Christians the mission strategy is somewhat different. The traditional missionary had to study at Bible College; they had to learn a new language; they had to learn anthropology, cross cultural; communication, Islam, folk religion, they had to join a mission; adjust to a new culture; and find financial support.

The Chinese who were born and brought up in another country, for instance in Indonesia, Malaysia or the Philippines, are spared the painful task which many missionaries had to face in learning a new language, culture or customs. For example, the Indonesian Chinese, had already "put on" another culture on top of the Chinese culture. These overseas Chinese therefore have an added advantage. All they need to do is to study at a Bible College for three years and then they could become missionaries. The point is made that emigrant

Chinese Christians are an extremely strong missionary force.

2.8 CONCLUSION

- Chinese culture, in essence, is family oriented. This is a common element of the culture of many Third World countries around the world. This similarity in culture will make it easier for the Chinese to adapt in the mission field of 3rd world countries
- The predominant religions of the Chinese people are Buddhism and Folk Religion. In many ways they closely resemble Hinduism and African Traditional Religions. This similarity allows Chinese missionaries to go out to the mission field and understand easily the various religious backgrounds of African peoples.
- China is still a very poor country. There are many underground churches that mushroomed as a result of the communist persecution. These churches are experiencing the miraculous workings of God. Most of these Christians are fully committed and are willing to sacrifice for Christ. Once sent out to work, the Chinese missionaries from these churches are prepared to die in the field without any doubts or hesitation. This is very different to the Taiwan missionaries, or the Western missionaries, who worry about support, kid's education and a salary (Lai Chan, interviewed in 1998, Principal of Dau-Sen Seminary).

- The Chinese people have been in touch with the Western missionaries for more than 200 years now. In all this time, they have come to know both the good and bad approaches used by Western missionaries. Similar to other peoples from Third World countries, they can consider themselves as recipients of the good and the bad. When they go out to be missionaries as well they could take these experiences as good examples to learn from. They should adopt the good points of western missionaries, but try to avoid repeating the mistakes that they made.
- When the early western missionaries came to China, they were regarded as spies and were accused of ushering in the Opium War. Many people therefore were wary of missionaries and wondered whether they might have ulterior motives. They were described as those who came like angels, but carried guns and bombs behind their backs. Today, when Chinese churches send Chinese missionaries all over the world, it is without a colonialist attitude. When Chinese missionaries go out, they act as Christ's servants and serve the people in the field. The Chinese will never forget historically painful experiences brought about by colonisation, but this should become a driving force instead. As Confucius once said, "Do not do to others what you don't want others to do to you"... a lesson that is also thoroughly Biblical.
- The lessons learnt in Chinese history have become a great benefit for the Chinese people and for the work of Chinese missionaries. The Third World Mission is geared to reach out to the various people in Third World Countries. Whilst many Arab countries may resent the Americans and other Christian countries, they do not have the same resentment for the Chinese people.