

HOW IT ALL BEGAN

Duncan McCullum McRoberts, a missionary from Bangor, Northern Ireland, was witness to the horrors of war in China – women raped, children bayoneted, refugees machine-gunned, everything destroyed.

McRoberts (1912 – 2000) made amazing journeys across China, narrowly avoiding death on many occasions, and in his book '*While China Bleeds*' records in detail both the suffering and the resourcefulness of the ordinary Chinese people.

This experience filled him with a deep desire for a strong China, where Chinese could truly be free to rule themselves, and for China to know Christ. In prescient words he says:



Duncan McRoberts

"Although bleeding China has lost millions of human lives – cities, towns and villages have been destroyed, yet China's gains stretch forth into the future. This bloodshed has brought about national unity and national consciousness. Millions of soldiers and civilians have travelled over hundreds of miles which they before never knew were in China. A new spirit, a new life is emerging. From a backward and conservative country it is safe to believe that China will emerge as one of the most progressive nations of the new world. Economic relations between China and our countries will probably be very close. China will utilise some foreign technical advice but the developments of new China will largely rest with the peoples of China."

In the same way, McRoberts saw that the future of the Chinese Church must also be in Chinese hands. Long before Communism drove out foreign missionaries, and isolated the Chinese Christians, McRoberts saw that "the job of carrying the Gospel to China's millions will largely be accomplished by trained Spirit-filled natives."



DR N A Jepson

When McRoberts was evacuated from the war-zone to North America, he spoke readily of his experiences in China, and his vision for a new wave of Christian activity in China.

This brought him to the attention of Dr. Nis. Alvin Jepson (1888-1951), a chiropractor and well-known preacher. For 20 years Jepson had been advocating the vision of enabling national Christians to serve their own people, but had lacked real means to translate that to action.

McRoberts' ideas and Jepson's were a perfect, God-inspired match.

The key element of their vision was that Chinese leaders, not expatriate missionaries, would recruit, select, train, send out and direct the workers.

Working with the China Inland Mission from 1936 in Chintehchen, Kiangsi (now Jingdezhen, Jiangxi Province), McRoberts had seen a godly Chinese Pastor, Pastor Yin, mobilising believers who were well-grounded in the Scriptures into preaching bands sent to far-flung communities. After moving to the Oriental Missionary Society in 1939, McRoberts saw similar highly-effective work based around Chongqing where, working with a Chinese colleague, 15 preaching points were rapidly established.

Working to convert, envision, equip and release Chinese evangelists was not totally new, but in the 1940's was an idea whose time had definitely come; and which must now be done on a much larger scale. Putting the primary leadership in Chinese hands was a more revolutionary turning-point. Chinese Christians were ready to take more responsibility, and very soon they would have to do so, to an unanticipated degree.

Dr Jepson was founder and leader of the Christian Businessmen's Committee. Through his contacts, businessmen such as Cephas Ramquist, Krist Gudnason, Cecil Kettle, Einer Anderson and Charlie Cooper put their considerable influence behind the developing plan, and in Seattle in 1943 the China Natives Evangelistic Crusade (CNEC) was born.

Initially the office work was done by Dr. Jepson's nurse/receptionist, but later a small office was rented in the same building and Jepson's elder daughters, Bonnie and Ruth, looked after the day-to-day work.

Dr Jepson was succeeded as President of CNEC in 1951 by Cecil Kettle, and from 1956 by Harry R. Smith. The first representative in Canada, Rev. Dan Smith of Vancouver, was appointed in mid-1944.

After the formation of CNEC, Duncan McRoberts divided his time between China and the USA. Meetings which challenged people with the need of China and the new situation there were held all over America.

On one occasion he found himself sharing a Chicago bedroom with a young American evangelist. After a time working together, the evangelist came to feel that his future might be in China, where his wife's parents had also been missionaries. In due course he applied to join CNEC, but was rejected by the

Board. Dr Jepson told him "I'm sorry we can't accept you. I know that God has a mighty ministry for you at home and around the world, but not in China." Prescient words – for the young evangelist was Dr. Billy Graham!

After the war a sister-organisation to the Seattle-based CNEC would be founded in the U.K., in October 1946, with Rev. H. W. Fife as chairman. The first U.K. headquarters was in Angola House, Worthing. This was adjacent to the horticultural nursery business run by Fred's brother Lionel and today, curiously, the house is used by a children's day nursery

This was followed by Australia (1953), Canada (1963) and later Japan (1984).

In the USA, in 1955 Dr. David J. Laurie, Glasgow-born and for nine years minister of Carrubers Close Mission in Edinburgh, was appointed the first Executive Director of CNEC, then based in Menlo Park, California. Laurie's teaching and prophetic ministry in churches and conferences across North America made CNEC well-known for the first time. From 1958, he was assisted by English-born former SIM missionary Fred Whale, and his wife Grace,

Further help came from McRoberts' father-in-law, Rev. F.J.T. Savage (1889 – 1973). Fred Savage was born in north London and trained in Bedford for the relatively new career of electrical engineer (A.M.I.E.E.), specialising in Control Gear and in charge of a Test facility for new equipment.

Later the family moved to the south coast.

Whilst members of Worthing Tabernacle church, the Savage family were challenged by the need of China through the preaching of E. J. Blandford, founder of the North West Kiangsi Mission. Fred heard a distinct voice calling him "I want you".

Accordingly, in October 1913 Fred Savage left Worthing to give his life to China. With him on the SS 'Simla' was a group including his parents and Miss Geraldine Holms.

Miss Holms came from missionary stock. Her father, Fitzgerald Holms, was a missionary with the South American Missionary Society, serving first in Pernambuco (1884-97) - where Geraldine was born in 1892 - and later in Santos (1897-1915), where he planted a church. Reports in SAMS minutes show her father as a hard-working and gifted evangelist and port missionary. Her father's noteworthy service to yellow fever sufferers might have been an important preparation for the circumstances Geraldine was to encounter in China and Hong Kong.

Geraldine and her siblings had been sent to England to study at the school for missionaries' children founded by the Regions Beyond Missionary Union. Geraldine had strong childhood memories of RBMU's famous founder, Dr. Henry Grattan Guinness. The Savage family would accommodate children from the

school for their summer holidays and, when she was 10, Geraldine and her sister first came to stay with them.

The new arrivals in China entered a challenging situation. Protestant missionary work in Kiangsi Province had begun only in 1867 and the North West Kiangsi Mission by Messrs. Blandford and Molland in 1885. The work was initially centred on Kiukiang (Jiujiang), then a Treaty Port on the Yangtze with a British consulate.

The rapidly-growing number of workers moved out into unreached areas and met considerable local opposition. Just seven years before the Savages arrived, other members of the mission, Harry & Octavia Kingham and their young daughter Grace, from Birmingham, had been beaten to death in Nanchang.

By 1913 Kiangsi (now Jiangxi) was in a state of civil war, with frequent battles between several different armies and, in between, widespread brigandage. Violence, robbery, epidemics, famine and floods were commonplace. The Savages would several times be driven from different places by the violence, losing their entire possessions on several occasions.

Reports from the time also speak of working together with pioneering Chinese evangelists, and a commitment to providing Bible training and education for children.

"At Wuchen, their chief centre, they have a large hall capable of seating 500 people, also an excellently organized adult Sunday school attended by some hundreds of persons, the Chinese leaders being mainly responsible for the work. In this city they have a capital boarding-school for boys and girls. There are in all eleven stations with a staff of about thirty -five workers". (from 'The Chinese Empire: A General and Missionary Survey' by Marshal Broomhall: London 1907)

By 1912 the North West Kiangsi Mission had were 7 schools and a Bible School at Wucheng alone, with 8 Western personnel, working closely with 10 Chinese evangelists. All these elements were building blocks for the development of the vision of WorldShare. By 1920, the North West Kiangsi Mission had work in over 20 locations.

For the first two years the Savages were at Wucheng, on Poyang Lake, for language training. After language study Fred and Geraldine were married (September 1915) – in the church at Kuling, with their marriage registered later by the British consul in Kiukiang (now Jiujiang). Four children would be born to them in China.

In 1922 the practical Fred Savage built a motor boat, which he named 'Peace' with which he could visit and preach in riverside communities. This remarkable craft was the first of its kind seen in the region and caused much amazement. It became home to the growing Savage family for long periods.

From Wucheng the Savages went to Tsing-An Hsien and then (after a furlough in the UK) from 1923-1927 they were at Wuning Hsien (near Jiujiang) in Jiangxi

Province (where they are recorded in a 'Directory of Protestant Missions', produced in Shanghai in 1921).

In 1927 the missionaries were evacuated from much of Jiangxi because of escalating violence, and the Savages returned to Shanghai and eventually went on furlough.

When they returned in 1929, they were located in Kuling, a beautiful and popular resort area on Mt. Lushan, where they were until 1933 – by which time the North West Kiangsi Mission was experiencing some difficulties.

Fred began to wonder why God had caused him to spend years studying engineering, and also how to provide for his growing family, and for the large number of ministries in China he wanted to assist. Then, amazingly, the British shipping firm of Butterfield and Swire desperately needed someone with engineering qualifications, who both spoke Chinese and understood the local situation.

Fred Savage and his family moved for this job to Shanghai, but arranged for the support they received from churches in England to be used to support Chinese evangelists and Bible teachers with whom they continued to work. These preachers would become amongst the first workers when CNEC was formed.

Alongside his engineering duties, Fred and Geraldine also managed a home for missionaries in Shanghai, and enabled many new arrivals to adjust to life in China. Meantime, their daughter Winnie was at the mountain resort of Kuling, often cut off from her parents by fighting. Whilst there, she met Duncan McRoberts, visiting for a break from the extreme heat of the plains, who impressed as an energetic and gifted preacher. He had travelled extensively through the war torn areas, reuniting families and giving practical and spiritual help, and seeing the aftermath of many horrific atrocities.

In 1938 the Savage children at last managed to rejoin their parents in Shanghai, and Winnie and Duncan were married there the following year. Duncan became ill as a result of his hardships, and was evacuated to the United States, arriving shortly before the attack on Pearl Harbour.

The Savages lived in Shanghai until 1943 when the Japanese put them (with over 700 others) in the infamous Yangzhou internment camp "C" (the former American Episcopalian Boys School), where they were for two and a half years (March 1943-October 1945). An inquiry in 1946/7 showed that Yangzhou 'C' camp suffered great shortages of food supplies, clean water, medical supplies, heating. Life was hard, cold and miserable.

The camp was renowned for its remarkable community spirit. The prisoners organised themselves in to various committees to provide public services and Fred Savage served on the Public Health and later took charge of the Public Works Department.

In this position Savage was instructed to convert a bath-house into living quarters for some Belgian internees. He was also allowed to use some of the

old doors to provide a private area for the Belgian women. However, an NCO, Tanaka, who was in charge of the camp's supplies, was not notified and accused Fred of misappropriating the doors. For this, Tanaka beat him and made him kneel in an excruciating position in below-freezing temperatures on snowy ground for several hours. His son brought him an extra coat, but was severely beaten by the guards. Fred was only released after protests by the internee doctors, and was in hospital for many days.



Part of Yangchow 'C'

Because of its remoteness, and the delicate political situation in the area at the end of the war, Yangchow 'C' was possibly the last internment camp to be liberated, in September 1945. The Savages were amongst the first to be returned to Shanghai. But very soon Fred and another former internee returned, as employees of the American forces, to take charge of the desperate food situation for the remaining internees until all left in October.

The Savage family returned to living in Shanghai and in 1946, Fred and Geraldine Savage began working for CNEC.

Added to 30 years' experience in China, Fred had solid business management instincts, perhaps partly inherited from his father, J. E. Savage, a London accountant (and elder at Highgate Road Baptist Chapel) who retired early to begin horticultural businesses in Sussex.

J.E. Savage and his wife also gave themselves to mission service in China, where he is recorded serving in Shanghai in 1921, providing hospitality and administration services for missionaries. Mrs. Eva Savage, who lost her sight, became a noted evangelist to the blind..

Fred Savage's sound practical common-sense, allied to the fiery McRoberts' zealous vision, were critically important elements in building the new mission in China and in the West.

REALISING THE DREAM

The first need of the new organisation was for a gifted Chinese leader to head up the work in China. That man was Rev. Calvin Chao, who readily accepted the invitation to lead the new work.

Calvin Chao (Zhao Junying 1906-1996) was the son of a municipal magistrate. He was influenced by American missionaries in childhood (especially James and Sophie Graham, pioneer Presbyterian missionaries at Tsingkiangpu - now Huaiyin), but at Hangzhou University (where he was deeply influenced by the current trend of Chinese patriotism, anti-colonial and pro-science liberalism) that he became profoundly sceptical about Christianity.



Fred & Geraldine Savage and family 1922

However, after contracting tuberculosis he was confined to hospital in Lianyungang and became obsessed with thoughts of death. It was as a result of this that he turned to Christ. Attending a meeting of the Bethel Evangelistic Band in 1931, addressed by Andrew Gih (Ji Zhiwen 1901-1985) Chao felt that God had directly touched his life and he responded.

During the 1930's Chao became a very well-known leader of the Chinese Church. Along with John Sung, Wang Mingdao, Watchman Nee, and Andrew Gih, he was responsible for many people turning to Christ, especially high school and university students.

This new generation of young Chinese Christians would help to strengthen the Chinese so that it would eventually be able to withstand the onslaught of Communism after 1949.



Calvin Chao

Chao accepted the invitation to lead CNEC in China.

One part of the work focussed on university and college students. Many Chinese student movements around the world can trace their origins to this activity. For

example China Inter-Varsity was inaugurated in July 1945 at a conference in Chongqing drawing 160 representatives from 40 of China's 60 universities. (This conference was funded through a generous C.N.E.C. supporter in the USA – his gift of \$500 was one of the largest received to that point). Some students had travelled up to 21 days to attend.

Calvin Chao became General Secretary of China IV and was present to represent Chinese student ministry at the founding conference of the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students in Boston in 1947.

Amongst fellow-workers with China Inter-Varsity was CIM missionary David Adeney, who describes the great impact Christianity was making on students in China in the late 1940's. At a student conference held in very difficult conditions near Nanjing in July 1947 he writes: *"On the first morning Calvin Chao spoke on the need for repentance. Afterwards the platform was filled with students confessing their sin. Later in the day a large number responded to the call for men and women who would not only believe Christ, but follow him faithfully to the end."*

Throughout the first five years, evangelistic and Bible-teaching rallies and conferences in many Chinese Universities and Colleges were a central feature of C.N.E.C.'s work.

Chao felt led to base the work initially in Guiyang, the capital of Guizhou Province, and a major crossroads city.

Many Chinese were fleeing from the Japanese invaders to Guiyang and other western cities. The early days of the work were frequently interrupted by air-raid alarms.

Doris Lu was the first worker recruited as secretary to Calvin Chao, and to prepare materials for English-speaking Chinese. Workers reached out to Guiyang and other areas, many working with minority tribal peoples.

Shortly however, as the Japanese advanced, the headquarters was moved to Chongqing, in Szechuan Province. Dr Chia Yu Ming, Principal of the Spiritual Training Seminary, was very impressed by C.N.E.C.'s vision, and allowed the new ministry to have premises on the seminary campus. The staff and their families moved from Guiyang to Chongqing in a hired bus – a difficult and dangerous journey across wartime China.

The first C.N.E.C. students began training in Chongqing in autumn 1945. Some students travelled long distances including from the east coast and at least one (Naomi Hoh) from a remote part of Tibet.

C.N.E.C.'s first pieces of equipment in China was a battered typewriter, on which a new Christian publication; "The Crusade" was prepared for regular publication, followed shortly by "The Footsteps Monthly".

CNEC also sent out evangelistic teams: 'preaching bands'. By 1945 there were 22 workers in service, forming 9 such bands - and 22 more in training.

Workers were sent to various towns in Guizhou and Szechuan, and teams to Xian, in Shaanxi Province, and into Gansu Province. People were brought to Christ and churches planted.

Prominent in the work in Shaanxi and Gansu was Rev. Enoch Ma, a former bandit and nationalist soldier, who first turned to God on the battlefield.

Plans were being made to reach Tibetan communities in southern Xinjiang.

Reports from these early days speak repeatedly of successful meetings with individuals and large crowds, despite difficult post-war conditions, poor roads, and often appalling weather. Many of the team members came from eastern cities, and had left behind comfortable conditions to volunteer for hard service, because of the call of God. One worker reports taking five days by bus to cross part of the Gobi Desert – the previous bus had been attacked and robbed and all passengers killed!

Work was also begun in hospitals and prisons, and through evangelistic advertisements in newspapers.

In 1945 Calvin Chao reported that work had begun in a fifth province, at Urumqi (then known as Di Hua), Xinjiang. Mr. Paul Lee (Li Kaiwan), a Christian postal worker, and his wife, Constance Che (Ze Mingxia), moved there to work and witness. They were the first Christian workers in a vast area where missionary work had become impossible in 1938. Both had already seen service in Yunnan.

They joined the CNEC but raised their own support, as Li was a senior official of the Postal Service in Yunnan, a tentmaker in those days. Later Li became the Commissioner for Postal Service of the Xinjiang Province. With the donation from then Governor of Xinjiang, General Zhang Zizhong, also a Christian, they established the first Christian Church in Urumuqi (then called Dihua), the capital of Xinjiang.

Their first meeting, held in May, 1945, attracted 16 local people. Attendance quickly grew to 30 despite much opposition. The first baptisms, of six people, took place in December 1945. Special services in March 1946 attracted over 100 people. Later the work expanded along the Silk Road to Qitai and Qumul. In September 1946 plans were underway to reach 8 further places where tiny groups of Christians were calling for help. By 1947, services were also being held in Arabic, for those from Muslim backgrounds, and in Russian, for communities of immigrants who had fled that land. Such refuge was short-lived however, as Chinese Communist Armies, aided by the Red Army, were already conquering large parts of the province.

Eventually the CNEC sent in more people, all were well trained in theology, and established at least 7 churches in Xinjiang by end of 1950. They became the largest Christian group in the Province, giving shelter to other mission groups. The CNEC was described in a prayer letter published by an American missionary in late 1950 as follows: "They are very closely associated with Mr and Mrs Li, whose ministry at Tihwa (or Dihua, now Urumuqi) will, we believe, if ever it is

published, prove to be one of the most glorious chapters in the history of the Chinese Church....they are a group of fine consecrated men and women, most of whom have been trained in Bible school."

Paul Li was ordained in 1946, the first Chinese ordained pastor of this Province. Before the Li's were arrested in the mid 1950s, they managed to run a small theological institute and many of the students were later arrested by the Government and sent as internal exiles to remote parts of the Province as factory labourers. Some managed to establish Christian community at places hitherto there had been no Christian presence, and eventually developed these communities into a Church, such as the Church in Altay just bordering Russia. The Altay church was founded by a Christian lady, a disciple of Paul Li, who faithfully led the congregation for over 20 years.

Paul Li spent some years in jail, like most of his colleagues, and later died in the 1960s. All of the churches established by the CNEC in the 1940s are still flourishing today (2004)

(This example shows CNEC deeply involved in the beginnings of the Back to Jerusalem Movement).

In 1945 C.N.E.C. took over the running of Holy Light School, founded in 1942 by Ernest Yin to provide Christian education in Chongqing – the beginnings of a concern for children within the ministry which has endured throughout its history.

In 1946, with the war over, and refugees returning home, Chao was considering moving back to eastern China, to establish Bible Schools in Shanghai and Nanjing.

In 1948 there were 70 evangelists, (and 100 in training) and work in Xinjiang, Gansu, Szechuan, Guizhou, Shaanxi, Guanxi, and Zhejiang. By 1949 there were 129 evangelists, 60+ evangelistic bands touring the country with the message of Christ, 236 workers in training, four Bible colleges and an orphanage, covering work in 12 Provinces.

Active plans were being made for further growth in Guizhou and Yunnan. Bible studies were taking place daily in dozens of towns and villages. In view of what was shortly to come, these studies were extremely important. Reports from the last pre-Communist days speak of growing numbers becoming Christians, a strengthening of the spiritual life of believers, churches planted and more volunteers for training.

News reached CNEC in mid-1948 that Rev Tsang An-taing, graduate of their Shanghai Bible Institute, had been amongst a group of church leaders crucified by Communists in the Hwang-hsien area. He may have been the first directly connected with CNEC to die for his faith.

EXPULSED TO GROW

By 1949 the Communist takeover of China was assured, although it would be some time before Communist power was felt in every district.

Initially, church life and church planting continued almost unchanged. Progressively however, foreign missionaries were expelled, and attempts began to oblige the church to submit to the Party and the new state.



Refugee meeting

In February 1950 an edict required churches to be totally independent of foreign organisations – self-governing and self-supporting. CNEC's work was better placed than most to continue, as it had before, under local Chinese leadership.

Reports from mid-1951 speak of 62 baptisms in Guizhou, in Szechuan, and of blessing amongst the Yi people in Yunnan and on Hainan Island. New evangelistic bands were formed in Jiangxi province. But things were becoming ever more difficult.

Reports began to trickle in of arrests and worse. By 1951 at least six C.N.E.C.-trained Christian workers had been martyred for their faith. In that year evangelist Tsai Ming wrote *"By the Grace of God, I have decided to stay and work for God, no matter how difficult the situation might become. Please pray for me in the future."*

The Communist tactic was often to try to infiltrate and seize control of churches and Christian organisations, and turn them into a mouthpiece for the government.

By 1951 C.N.E.C. was still in intermittent touch with over 100 pastors who were now entirely self-supporting. After this however, contact was lost except for occasional letters from former-CNEC workers (even as late as 1976), often smuggled out, or occasional CNEC workers or church members who escaped to Hong Kong.

In 1958 a new phase dawned when many churches were closed. This was associated with Mao Zedong's catastrophic 'Great Leap Forward' - a five-year economic transformation which resulted in famine and deaths estimated by scholars at between 20 and 43 Million Chinese!

The principles of trusting national Christians would now be tested in the most difficult of circumstances. For forty years, under the most severe persecution, faithful Chinese Christians maintained their faith and their churches. Despite horrific persecution and very many martyrdoms, the Church in China grew

numerically during the communist era. This was achieved by the Chinese themselves, dependent not on expatriate missionaries but only on the Holy Spirit.

There could be no greater proof that McRoberts' was right.

What of CNEC? Very soon it was very soon no longer possible to continue to work inside China. The Board had foreseen this eventuality and in 1950 had sent Fred Savage to Singapore, Malaya and Thailand to investigate work with Chinese there. There were many Chinese refugees, flooding into Hong Kong (which received over 2 Million refugees), Burma, Thailand and elsewhere. Later, many moved on to Singapore.

CNEC first opened an office in Hong Kong in early 1949, believing that this was a temporary measure to overcome growing communication difficulties in China.

Hong Kong was full of refugees, with abject poverty alongside the great affluence of the business centres. Many who had lost all turned for solace to drug addiction. Prostitution, gambling, smuggling and other crime was widespread. Calvin Chao and others moved to work there.

Help was given to destitute and despairing people, living initially wherever space could be found, and later in huge unsightly and dangerous refugee camps. Buildings were of wood, and many lives were lost when fires ravaged whole areas of the camps.

By 1952, four churches had been planted amongst the refugees: at Castle Peak, West End Village, Red Cliff and Chrysanthemum Village.



Outreach meeting

Later, primary and secondary schools were founded, Bibles printed and Christian books published, clinics started etc. Bible training was offered to those who felt the call to become evangelists and, following the pattern established in China, the South East Asia Evangelistic Band was formed.

In 1956, CNEC's newsletter reported the first replacement of refugee shanties with the high-rise apartments which were to become so ubiquitous in Hong Kong, and also the spectacular success of Billy Graham's first Hong Kong mission.

In 1951, Calvin Chao and Mrs Faith Chao, together with Fred Savage, visited Thailand, Malaya and Singapore and the ministry soon extended to those

countries. Calvin Chao's meetings in Kuala Lumpur attracted over 350 nightly. In all these countries refugees from China were seeking refuge.

There was a continued emphasis on training. Rev. John Lu writes: *"whilst Rev. Chao and Mr. Savage were in Singapore, a group of young people approached them and asked if it were possible to open a Bible Seminary. After much prayer and discussion with the Chinese pastors of different denominational churches, they all agreed and felt that it was the will of God to go ahead and establish such a school where Christian workers could be trained and sent out to preach the Gospel of Christ."*

Following requests from the Chinese Inter-Church Union of Singapore, in 1952 Calvin Chao helped establish and became first Principal of Singapore Bible College, with just 8 students. CNEC provided three lecturers and covered the running costs. Until 1959 was supported almost entirely by CNEC. It is today the largest Bible College in Southeast Asia, extremely influential in developing top-quality leaders for burgeoning churches. It now serves of 500 students from 25 countries.

In 1953 CNEC helped to found the Bible Institute of Hong Kong. Rev Alfred Chow, who had been Principal of C.N.E.C.'s training college in Shanghai, now fulfilled that same role in Hong Kong, ably assisted by Vice-Principal, Rev. Andrew Song.

Also in 1953 the name was changed to Chinese Native Evangelistic Crusade, to reflect a focus on the Chinese diaspora throughout the region. An office was opened in Singapore to improve co-ordination of the work throughout Southeast Asia.

Calvin Chao later helped to found the Youth Gospel Centre in Manila, Philippines and in the early 1950's he also began broadcasting to China through the Manila-based FEBC station – the beginning for C.N.E.C. of a long-tradition of Christian broadcasting..

Calvin Chao and his family moved to the USA in 1956, and shortly afterwards left CNEC to continue work amongst Chinese in California. This great man of God was instrumental in founding an American-Chinese church denomination ("Chinese for Christ") and in 1986 a large seminary in southern California (now the 'Calvin Chao Chinese for Christ Theological Seminary').

Alongside Calvin Chao, Rev Chang Hsueh Kung had been one of the first leaders of the work in China. Prior to joining CNEC he had been Vice-President of North China Theological Seminary and regarded as one of China's foremost theologians. This renounced evangelist and Bible teacher worked hard to prepare the Church for the coming persecution. Leading CNEC's Ta'i Tong Theological Seminary in Nanjing, Chang Hsueh Kung was determined to remain in China, despite the Communists. By early 1947 it was becoming ever more difficult to provide food for the students, and teachers were increasingly harassed. In 1948 Chang had to move the entire college to Changsha in Hunan

province, as Nanjing fell to the communists, and later to Guilin (Guangxi). (The sister-college in Shanghai moved further west to Guizhou) Nevertheless he was able to travel to speak at evangelistic rallies in Xian, attended by thousands, at which many found Christ.

Later he became one of the leaders of the house-church movement. despite being forced to live in Manchuria, away from his family in Guilin, and despite ferocious persecution. Chang Hsueh Kung died in detention. But the Church maintained the Christian faith throughout the years of Communism, full of invisible latent energy.

Chang Hsueh Kung sent his son Chang Bao-wha to Hong Kong to make contact with Fred Savage and CNEC, in order to receive training for Christian ministry. Chang Bao-wha (Paul Chang) eventually became the leader of CNEC's Singapore-based work, throughout the Southeast Asian peninsula, in Kalimantan and, eventually back into China itself. As Singapore has grown, ministry coordinating office has itself become a major resource centre for the work, (recognised since 1998 as a full Affiliate alongside the national offices mentioned above).

When contact within China was possible again, after 1979, growth was rapid and eventually a complex network of partnerships was formed with networks representing many thousands of Chinese churches. China remains our first and largest commitment. The amazing resilience and growth of the Chinese Church is a constant reminder of the vision and fortitude of our forebears in this work.

FROM CHINA TO THE WORLD

Duncan McRoberts had seen, as early as 1943, that Chinese Christians were ready and able to take the greater role in sharing Christ with their countrymen. By 1960, it was becoming evident that the Church in other countries was growing and maturing in the same way. In that year the name was changed to Christian Nationals Evangelism Commission to reflect a concern for the wider world.

1960 saw many changes as Fred Savage and his wife retired from the work, and Rev. Allen Finley was appointed as Executive Director.



Allen and Ruth Finley

Finley combined vision and administrative gifts with a deep understanding and compassion for the challenges faced by ministry leaders in developing countries. Under his leadership, CNEC began to expand.

Amongst the first new partners were: ENI/AICA/Ministry of Hope, in Liberia, led by Bishop Augustus Marwieh (1961); TESCA (later the Instituto Evangelico America Latina, in Guatemala, led by Virgilio Zapata (1964) and the Philippines Missionary Institute, led by Rev. Arsenio Dominguez (1968). All three, though much larger in size, continue to receive help with vital projects today. Allen and Ruth Finley would give over 43 years' service to our organisation.

In 1963 – 20 years since its origin - the ministry was assisting 500 Christian workers, and sponsoring around 1,500 children. Our partners started many new churches that year. The 1963 'Daily Prayer Manual' illustrates work in Hong Kong, Taiwan, Macau, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand and further afield in Liberia, Mexico, India and Cyprus.



UK Council 1966

The British Executive Council in 1963 was based in Worthing and later Eastbourne, and chaired by Rev. W.H.P. Goodchild.

The longstanding Organising Secretary, Miss Doris Dowsett, was active in finding new sources of support.

Shortly afterwards, the UK Board was enlarged and strengthened, meeting mainly in Northwood, London; and a new phase of growth in the UK began.

By 1964, CNEC's partner ministries had planted 110 new churches, including 40 in pre-1949 China.

In 1965, the number of children studying in schools assisted by CNEC was 7,000. This grew to 13,500 by 1973.

In 1968, Guatemalan partner ministry leader, Dr. Virgilio Zapata, was instrumental in a nationwide evangelistic campaign, supported also by the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, which brought together over 800 churches, and saw 35,000 Guatemalans commit themselves to Christ. In 1976 the role of the evangelical church was cemented when CNEC was able to enable our partner ministry to provide major help to the thousands hurt and made homeless by a devastating earthquake. CNEC provided a 200-bed hospital and fed up to 30,000 people each week.

By 1973 the number of Christian workers assisted had grown to 1250.. In addition to those places listed above, there was now work in Nigeria, Zaire, Zambia, India, Sri Lanka and Brazil.

INTO A DIFFERENT WORLD

By 1980 it was widely evident that the churches of the developing world were growing fast in numbers and maturity, at a time when churchgoing in most western countries was showing a consistent decline in the face of burgeoning materialism.

This had several consequences: the cause of assisting national missionaries was no longer a 'minority interest' in the church, and more and more churches and mission societies began to move in our direction.



Secondly, western churches began to understand that Christians from the developing had a voice to proclaim their own challenging and distinct theology, interpreted through very distinct non-Western cultural understandings. What could the leaders of these new dynamic churches have to contribute to reviving flagging Christianity in the West? What would it mean when the Church in the Global South overtook its northern neighbour in size, confidence and influence?

For CNEC, by 1983, there were 80 separate partner organisations, working in 41 countries.

The UK office would move from Hertfordshire to Chadwell Heath in London, and in 1991 to Bawtry Hall in South Yorkshire. We moved to our present home at Armstrong House in 2010.

The period since 1983 has seen continuous growth and development. There has first of all been a growth in our understanding of our task of partnership – reflected in a range of books and articles and most recently in the 'Covenant of Partnership' available elsewhere on this website. Our North American colleagues were instrumental in the foundation of the Coalition on the Support of Indigenous Ministries (COSIM) and WorldShare carries our particular viewpoint into many UK inter-mission and inter-charity committees.

There has been a growth in the breadth of our contribution to the global church, represented for example by our sponsorship in 1987 of COMIBAM (Congreso Misionero Iberoamericano) which continues to play a major part in establishing the Latin American missions movement.

There has been great development in the help we have been able to offer to our partner ministries – not just funding or physical resources, but with a whole range of transferable skills to help the partner organisation grow in their stability and capacity, and to help their staff develop personally and in ministry.

There has been great development in our understanding of how we can address the needs of the World. CNEC began with a primarily evangelistic impetus, though this was soon joined by ministry to the immediate physical needs of the Chinese refugees. Today, through its partners, we make manifest the love of

Christ in a huge variety of ways – still in evangelism and church-planting, and by training leaders for the new churches – assisting preachers, literature and digital media publication, Christian radio and television and much more.

Our longstanding holistic involvement in education and medical care has expanded to include feeding and income generation programmes; programmes for women, for prisoners, for AIDS-victims, and for the marginalised. Since 1998 we have been heavily involved in bringing relief to the victims of wars, famines and natural disasters.

Finally, there has been development in our understanding of our role, and how we can best fulfil it. In 1987, parts of the global organisation changed its name from Christian Nationals Evangelism Commission to 'Partners International', and in 1997 our UK office followed suit by changing to 'WorldShare'.

The aim in each case was the same: to express our fellowship in service with our partners in the cause of the Christian Gospel. We do not aspire to lead, expecting them to follow. We do not aspire to be rich westerners whose resources make things possible for the poor. We do not have an agenda which we employ people to pursue. Rather, we and our partner organisations are united as equal partners in a joint adventure of faith.

From 1943 until 1992 decisions had been taken jointly for the entire organisation by a single managing body, with an International Office based in the USA. In that year however, we recognised that our vision could be fulfilled even more strongly by allowing each of the Affiliate offices more autonomy, and a process of decentralisation began. Each of the Affiliates assents to certain common understanding and standards, and there is a great deal of working together. However, each is free to pursue directions and priorities as they feel God guiding, within our overall vision. This has proved a stimulus to even more growth. Diversity has produced a more dynamic synergy.

By 2009, we are assisting an aggregate 122 partner organisations working in 58 countries. We serve 673 distinct ethnic groups, of which 456 have little or no local Christian witness. In 2008, over 2,200 new churches were planted and over 397,000 people in great need were helped in practical ways.

Our partnerships now include ministries in Sub-Saharan Africa, North Africa and the Middle East, Central Asia, East Asia, Southeast Asia, the Indian subcontinent, Europe and Latin America.



WorldShare and each of our Affiliate offices continues to aspire to fulfil the vision of Duncan McRoberts, Dr. Jepson, and the other founders : to see indigenous

Christians in China and elsewhere mobilised, equipped and enabled for Christian service within their communities.

This approach emphasises the essential unity of the Body of Christ, and God's commitment of His purpose jointly to all His people. Vision and relationship are key elements.

We believe that, the Christian Gospel is the most powerful agent of transformation for a needy world, and that local churches, operating wholly within their culture and national identity, can be the agents of radical change. Through their ministry, this change will be compassionate, contextual, highly effective and lasting.

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