

ONE YEAR WITH THE GOPU TRIBE

The Gopu had been much neglected so we crossed over to their territory to translate a Gospel for them and itinerate among the people. Our center was Hsinshao. It was here our first child, Roxie, was born on July 4th, 1940. To be a wife and mother in these remote regions was no easy calling. There was little water available in the village. We had to scoop it from under a rock, being careful not to disturb the sediment. We actually bathed in the same water in a tub once a week.

When the time came for Roxie to appear, Cathie was in no condition to make the journey to the capital city hospital. The baby would have to be born in the mountain home. She proved to be an early bird, timing her arrival while I was away preaching. On my way home, however, I was wakened with a sense of danger, and, rousing my Gopu companions, we set off to do the two days' journey remaining over rough country in one day. I had a distinct impression things were not at all well.

I arrived home half an hour after the baby's birth, and things looked pretty grim. We had the Mission's efficient itinerant nurse, Daisy Kemp, with us. But a severe hemorrhage followed the birth, and Cathie was in danger. When the situation requires the skill of a doctor and no doctor is at hand, and no drugs or instruments are available, it is a tremendous strain upon a nurse, no matter how efficient she may be.

At this point one of the tribe's young men stepped in with a great act of devotion. He was fleet of foot and out of sheer love for the Lord and us, he set out to run to Kunming for the necessary drugs. Night and day he ran, nor did he stop for rest until he was back home with the medications. He collapsed on the doorstep out of sheer exhaustion on returning, but he had brought us the means of help in the nick of time. He soon recovered.

There were two months of convalescing for Cathie and that on a bed of thick boards overlaid with rice straw. Boards may be tolerable for a night, but they provide poor comfort when days drag into weeks. Roxie, too, gave us a scare. Mucus clogged her nasal passage. We tried a cold water plunge but became alarmed when the little one began to turn blue. Nurse Daisy spied a rubber tube on the table and this she pushed down the baby's nose, through the mucus and just in the nick of time. All I could say was "Thank you, Lord—and thank you, Daisy!"

As Cathie struggled to gain strength, we left for the Chinese city of Wuting

where good friends could nurse her back to some measure of strength. There we stayed for a time, during which I itinerated among the tribes, but we were advised to take furlough. This brought us by plane to Hong Kong and then by ship to Vancouver, Canada, where Cathie's parents lived.

A WEDDING IN CHINA

One of our Mission workers in the Salween valley, where Mr. J.O. Fraser pioneered among the Lisu tribe, and where John and Isobel Kuhn laboured, was Dr. Stuart Harverson—and a most unique character was the doctor. When his marriage was arranged to a Vancouver girl, he wrote me inviting me to be best man at the wedding in Kunming, capital city of the province. I was in the east of Yunnan; he in the far west. I had never met him, but his fiancé, Sally Kelly, with Isobel Kuhn and my wife, who all laboured in the western parts, were all known to each other before coming out to China—all were from Vancouver.

Stuart's mother in England was a lady of society—a very cultured lady, but of a strong and forceful personality. As a leader of the British suffragette movement, she was much against the apostle Paul for the place of subjection he gave to women in the Divine order of church conduct. She was not an easy person to witness to about spiritual matters, although in her younger days she had been an organist in a Church of England fellowship.

Mrs. Harverson, being a lady of considerable means, decided to come to China for the wedding of her son. Stuart met her in Haiphong, the port in Vietnam, and accompanied her on the train to Kunming. On the way, he told his mother that he had invited a certain Daniel Smith to be his best man in the hope she would be saved through my personal contact with her. He did not tell me this until after the wedding, and you can imagine how high her defences were raised and with what suspicion she would have me in her naughty eye. That certainly was not good psychology on the part of the doctor. It was a strike against me from the start.

Stuart was a brilliant doctor. His utter devotion to the Lord manifested itself in a complete contempt for all human pomp and show. He had lived among the poor Lisu as one of them. But everything he did in preparation for his marriage just irritated his mother. Instead of wearing a new or a well-laundered shirt he thought of turning his dirty one inside out. When Mrs. Harverson saw Sally stitching together what was to be her head-covering she

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almost passed out. The wedding was to be in the Mission Home, and Mrs. Harverson had to cut the train off her elegant dress in order to maneuver round the corners. The home was no cathedral. Sally, she thought, was not the high society girl she would have expected her son to marry—but Sally was gold of God nonetheless.

Things were not too pleasant for the wedding. They grew worse when Stuart chose for his wedding hymn,

*There were ninety and nine that safely lay
In the shelter of the fold,
But one was out on the hills away,
Far out from the gates of gold.*

Not good psychology either! When Stuart sent his choice of hymns to the Rev. Mr. Evans of the Methodist church, who was to conduct the ceremony, I recall that old-fashioned Methody preacher storming into the Mission Home with a face red as a beetroot,

“The Lord’s people are a peculiar people,” he cried, “but there’s no need to be eccentric.”

So the hymn was changed, and I suggested to Stuart it would be more advantageous in any attempt to win his mother if he ask her to choose the hymns.

During the ceremony, Mr. Evans forgot Stuart’s name, so he leaned over to me in the lineup and whispered, “What was this fellow’s name, again?”

The only church service with which Mrs. Harverson was familiar was the Church of England ritual. So when Mr. Evans called for prayer she knelt, as do the Anglicans, and the rest of us remained standing. I then fell to my knees to keep Mrs. Harverson company and to make her feel less singular.

Stuart—naughty man—had also arranged, unknown to me, for all the guests to walk out of the living room at 9:30 p.m. and so leave me alone with his mother. I knew nothing of this strategy and happened to be sitting next to the lady at that hour. Suddenly, everybody excused themselves for a little time, and left the room.

“Was this the wonder of the Lord’s ways?” I thought. But, as with Nehemiah, I lifted up my heart in secret prayer, and had a distinct registration that I was not to speak to her about her soul. So I talked about the flora and fauna and the geographical and historical interests of the province. She was charmed and friendly. After half an hour the guests returned thinking,

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no doubt, the work was done and that I had pleaded for her soul. The work was done indeed—all the Lord wanted me to do. One cannot stir up spiritual affections by carnal means and wire-pulling! Having made a friend of Mrs. Harverson, I was able to write her in a more convenient season about God's love to us in Christ.

But Stuart was a great missionary—one of the best and most zealous personal workers I have ever known. After leaving C.I.M., he and Sally laboured in North Africa, then built a sanatorium in Hong Kong. From there he wrote me about a burden for Vietnam, and I advised them to go. This was before the war, and they were there all through the war years and won high praise from the United States government for their tremendous work, both spiritual and medical, among the troops fighting there. Their last missionary venture was a hospital in Korea, and a recent letter contemplated their retirement. Well done, Stuart and Sally! I think all believers need more of that whole and exclusive devotion to our Lord and Saviour.

MY FIRST VISIT TO CANADA

As the Japanese war continued, we saw little chance of an immediate return to China, so at the insistence of friends I took ordination in the Baptist ministry, without attending seminary but passing all examinations, and this in order to take up a ministry at First Baptist Church, Penticton. This large town was in the fruit-growing district of British Columbia—a popular tourist resort in summer and situated at the head of the magnificent Okanagan Lake, which boasted its legendary monster, Oogopogo.

One of the most touching moments of my life occurred in Penticton. I had been visiting a sick deacon, and, after reading some Scripture and engaging in prayer, I was about to walk out of the door when I was arrested by the promptings of the Holy Spirit to look behind the screen around the only other bed in the ward. There I looked upon a man who seemed to be worn with the weariness of life.

“Well, old friend, how are you today?” I asked.

“I’m afraid I haven’t long to be here,” he replied.

“Oh. And are you ready for the great change? Do you know the Lord Jesus Christ as your Saviour?”

“No—but I would like to.”

Here was an earnest plea raising its head from a dying chamber and from

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a dying man who evidently felt the burden of his life, and no doubt the sins and transgressions of it. As I set forth the Saviour who had mercy to pardon all sins through His precious shed blood, to wipe away all tears of shame, and to give rest to the troubled soul, he cast himself on the Lord as His refuge, and grace sprang forth to gather him into the arms and heart of the Saviour. I read John 14:1-3 about the Father's house prepared in the heavens for him, and he laid back and whispered, "Ah, how good to have a home to go to!"

He lingered for three weeks, and I visited with him every morning. Each morning he begged me to read John 14:1-3, and again and again his response was the same. He seemed to appreciate home. Toward the end, he said he had a little money and would like to leave it to me.

"No, thank you," I said, "I would not accept money from a dying man."

"Could I leave it to your church?"

"No, thank you, not in these circumstances."

Then as by inspiration I asked if he did not have a wife. Tears now filled his eyes, and I could read some sorrow there.

"I have something to tell you. Twelve years ago I walked out of my home. My wife and children were Christians, but their company irritated me. I felt I didn't belong to that circle. I've never been back!" Then, with some longing he asked, "Would you do me a favor?"

"Yes, old friend, I'll do you any favor."

"Would you find my wife and tell her I'm sorry for leaving her and the children? But, oh, tell her I've found the same loving Saviour. Tell her I've got a home to go to in heaven and I'll be waiting for them when they come."

He died, and his last words were: "How good to have a home to go to!"

It took me several months to find his wife. When I found where she was, I wrote the whole story, and how the Lord in His grace had gathered her husband to Himself and brought saving joy and sweet rest to him before his departure.

"Mr. Smith," said one line of her beautiful letter. "Your letter is gold of God to me. We never knew where Daddy went, but we have prayed for him all these twelve years!"

One of my happiest memories during two years in Penticton was the Sunday afternoon Russian services. There were quite a number of Ukrainians working in the saw-mills whose English was not so good. A retired Ukrainian-speaking Pastor was persuaded to start services for these men, and this he was glad to do, though but in moderate health. Rev. Mr.

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Kravchenko was the pastor's name—a worthy man of God with a family of fourteen, if I remember rightly, and all saved of the Lord. He was a very gentle soul—great lover of the Lord and often preached from the Song of Solomon. Though I did not understand the language, I used to attend the services to imbibe some of his gracious spirit and love to Christ. His holy life was the parent of his own reputable character, and his good nature was considerably heightened by the grace of God, which made him tender-hearted and open-handed to relieve the needs of his little flock.

A good number were saved during his ministry, but I remember having to be schooled in the pronunciation of their long names before baptizing them. More than thirty years later I was ministering in a Vancouver assembly, and, in a session of prayer before the ministry when I rose to pray, a sister present thought, "Where have I heard that voice before—where have I heard that voice?" Then she recalled the voice of the former Baptist minister in Penticton, and afterwards we had a happy talk about those days. She was Mr. Kravchenko's eldest daughter. One of his younger ones, Lydia, went to the mission field and married a missionary doctor and, with him, had a very fruitful ministry.

At this point an invitation came to help a newly-formed organization called China Native Evangelistic Crusade. It was already in embryo form and in some ways was noble and generous in seeking to help the Lord's interests in China. Missionaries resident in China were few, and those on furlough could not return because of the Japanese invasion. Several business men who belonged to Christian Business Men's International conceived the idea of this Crusade with a view of assisting Chinese national churches in this time of stringency.

The thought was to appoint a Director of the work in China, and the Crusade here would raise funds. Among the leaders of this movement were two brothers—the doctors Jepson and Mr. Charles Joss of Seattle, all exceptionally fine Christian men. The brothers were colleagues both in business and in the work of the Lord, which is a beautiful thing to see as in the case of our Lord's chosen disciples, Andrew and Peter, James and John, and maybe Jude and the other James.

A committee was formed of business men, and they accepted my suggestion that Dr. Calvin Chao of Kunming, Yunnan, be Director. I had preached my first Chinese message before Dr. Calvin Chao in that city and knew him to be an exceptionally gifted man of God. One of my first tasks was to write

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Calvin's biography from notes he sent me, but my manuscript mysteriously disappeared in the files of the office.

The head of the deputation work in the west was a friend who was in the same C.I.M. party when we went from London, England, to China. He had written a book—a kind of blood and thunder—about the Japanese war and professed to be a confidanté of Generalissimo Chiang Kai Shek. The notable pastor of Moody Memorial Church wrote a foreword but afterwards withdrew his commendation when stories began to circulate questioning the honesty of some of the stories and when, in response to a private enquiry, the Generalissimo denied any knowledge of this missionary.

Whatever lay in the background was unknown to me, and I promised my support and that I would join the Crusade to help forward the Lord's interests in China. But after a message to the university students in a certain city, one of the business men, with little spiritual perception, chided me for being too spiritual and not practical enough. "That kind of message will never draw the money in," he said. I assured him that my message would not change and that I would not use my message to beg for money. I could see that, while many of these men were keen to raise funds to help China, they had little idea of missionary enterprise. This was not my place.

Since I was resident in Vancouver, I had often to cross over to the United States as most of the witness was in that country. When the Pacific Fleet came into Puget Sound at Seattle, the immigration authorities were very alert and very suspicious of any who crossed the border. When challenged one day, I was advised, since my work was mostly in the States, to apply for a permanent residence visa.

"I think," said the inspector, "we had better talk to the chief."

The chief was kind enough but explained their need for caution.

"So you would rather I return to Vancouver?" I suggested.

"That might be best in view of the restrictions," he said with profuse apologies.

But I immediately saw the hand of the Lord in it. The Crusade was not the Lord's work for me, and the chief inspector looked askance at me when, after his profuse apologies in sending me back, I thumped his table and said with a broad smile, "Praise the Lord, sir."

There was no doubt the Lord was hedging up my way and trying to show me His way. While trying to interest business men in Canada in this work, I was advised to contact a fine Christian man in Vancouver, by name of John McLaren of "the Brethren." John spent a good hour or two showing

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me spiritual principles for conducting the Lord's work, and when I came out of his office it seemed to confirm what the Lord had shown me in that assembly meeting in Singapore some years before.

Later I was called to serve a well-to-do and most spiritual group of believers in Winnipeg, Manitoba, who called their new chapel Bethesda. It was large and influential. I had served them over the winter, after which I was invited to be their permanent pastor. I begged for seven days to pray that I might find out God's will. During these seven days there was another of those remarkable interventions in my life by the Lord to set my feet in His own way—and it was not to be Bethesda Chapel.

In our China days, a missionary from another society working in South China brought his sickly wife to Yunnan to seek better health in a better climate. While his wife was being taken care of in our Mission home, Rutherford Spence came up the mountains to see the work of God among the tribes. Later, on their way home, they were caught by the Japanese and made prisoners in Hong Kong where Mrs. Rutherford died. In the year 1946, there was an exchange of prisoners, and Rutherford Spence came to Canada on the S.S. Gripsholm. His home was in Winnipeg, and hearing I was in the city he invited me to Timothy Eaton's grillroom where a welcome banquet was to be held for him. He wanted me to tell the more than one-hundred friends something about the visitation of God among the tribes.

But when Rutherford rose to introduce me, the Spirit of God moved upon him mightily, and he himself used all the available time in describing his own impressions. His was an anointed word, and the Lord's message came through to me distinct and clear. We were to return at once to China and the tribes. Straightway we set sail for England. The war was not yet terminated, but we were able to find a place on a ship sailing in large convoy with forty other ships, escorted by five destroyers. One of these ships, a tanker carrying high octane fuel, caught fire and disintegrated, spreading its fiery content wide over the ocean. All its crew perished, and had there been enemy submarines in the vicinity we would have perished with them.

MY FATHER'S WILL

After crossing the Atlantic we spent a few months in my home town—the only time I was to see my parents. The Baptist church had no minister, and the congregation asked if I would serve them. If I would do so, they would give us

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the manse to use while we were at home, and this was a tremendous boon to us as there had been so much destruction through bombing that accommodation was hard to find. It also brought my father back into church fellowship. He was proud to hear his son preach and himself made some new commitment of life to the Saviour. During this time my father asked me to assist him in writing his will. There was not a great deal of cash, but there was the house which could bring a fair price. He insisted that, since all my brothers and sisters were married and had fair provisions, and since I was in the Lord's work and with a "faith" mission, I have the larger share. I objected strongly to this, but was reminded by my father that the will was his and that he was dictating his own wishes. He was also of the old school which believed the eldest son had a kind of pre-eminence, and this was once law in certain parts of Britain.

In the course of time, about 1946, father died. We were in China at the time, and it was quite a few days after his decease that we received the news, being far away from civilization. My friend, Joe Wilkin, was executor of the will and wrote me about my share and asked how to transmit it.

But a younger brother's wife made objection. She was a shrewd business woman who had built up a very profitable business—a kind of money-lending affair by which customers could buy necessary purchases at dry goods shops, and then they would pay her over a period of time. There would, of course, be a certain percentage. When the lady heard the provisions of the will, it seemed totally unfair to her, especially since I had been away in a foreign land for some years.

Little did she know how much I had done for the family, for I would never see my mother in need, and I was twenty-five before leaving for China. I suppose to one who had never met the family, for she never did come to our home, it was the kind of thing which could throw suspicion on me as the writer of the will. I would not, therefore, unduly criticize her. And it may have been that, in her own background, there had been a withdrawal from all family associations.

But since Betty had never had any interest in the things of the Lord, I felt I had a duty to guard the honour of His name from any reproach. I did not want her to harbour a thought of suspicion that I, as a servant of the Lord, had a covetous eye or that I had influenced my father in the writing of his will. I therefore wrote my friend Joe and asked him to share my portion out among all the others as we were content to have the Lord alone look after our needs. Some short time afterwards thieves broke into my brother's

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house, and his wife lost all her jewels, and no doubt she had put much of her money into such things.

When he was young, James was an outstanding Sunday School scholar and always outstripped me in Scripture examinations, which were a feature of district Sunday Schools of all denominations. Certainly when my wife and I visited Betty for the first time while on furlough, she received us cordially. One has to be slow to judge a person's intentions and not to be too hasty in judging them covetous or greedy. But I felt it important that I, as a servant of the Lord, should avoid like the plague anything which would besmudge our testimony as to purity of purpose and spiritual design.

A WAR CASUALTY

My dear sister Grace, a registered nurse, as were all my sisters, was drafted in World War II and assigned to a post in Egypt. From what I could glean, and I never did get the whole story, she was lured into a desert place by an officer who tried to rape her. Grace was a very upright person and had high thoughts of the value of womanhood and that one's chastity was not to be trifled with. This experience was so traumatic that it affected her mentally. Discharged from the army in the course of time, she came home while we were there on furlough from China. We had come from Canada but were detained for a while in Thornaby because of the shortage of shipping and during which time I pastored the First Baptist Church, being still a Baptist minister. The effect of this disturbance in Grace's life was to turn her against those who loved her most, chiefly my father. She would go to the police station and report him for undue harassment and cruelty, but one visit from the police gave them understanding of her.

I spent some time counseling her and praying with her. But poor Dad had no idea of mental disorders and took it all so personally, which really hurt him. Then in a strange way, no doubt in answer to prayer, the Lord brought along a fine fellow who was once in the same Sunday School class as Grace. Bert married her knowing her difficulty and was very loyal to her. Grace had her lapses and occasional ebbs and flows in her marital affections, but they kept together and had two fine children who grew up to understand their mother and remained very kind and sympathetic to her.

The fear of rape affects many women. That fear is well-founded for none are immune. It is a monstrous cruelty, but in our day it is common to slough

it off almost as a joke, so degenerate has our society become. It is a crime which cries out for vengeance, but it is regarded by most judges as a minor breach of social standards and hardly worthy of punishment. A few strokes of “the cat” would cure most of it. Most men are cowards. They do not fear fines or imprisonment, but they do fear physical hurt.

ANOTHER JOURNEY TO CHINA

There were no passenger ships to the Orient, but the Mission managed to get me on a freighter which had been refurbished to carry one hundred and thirty passengers—mostly business men. I would have to go alone and leave my wife and children to come later. (Two brothers for Roxie had been added to the family by this time. Stuart was born in Kelowna, just prior to the Penticton ministry, and Martyn was born during our stay in England.)

I was given a cabin with five Roman Catholic priests. Six years of war service had put a severe strain on this ship, and it took five months to sail from London to Shanghai—a normal six weeks run. We were three weeks in Cairo, eight weeks in Singapore, and two weeks in Hong Kong for repairs, and we limped most of the way through sweltering heat at no more than six knots an hour.

As soon as the Catholic priests came on board, they tried to requisition the one small lounge for masses at six in the morning. The businessmen objected. They tried for five o'clock, but again there was objection. Finally a four o'clock hour was agreed upon. This gave me the cabin to myself for my morning devotions. All had to go out to build their own altars.

We had three little jousts along the way. I will mention them without comment.

The first was when the eldest came in after his mass and found me still on my knees in prayer.

“I never hear you say a prayer to the B.V.M.!” he stormed.

“We Christian believers, sir, pray to God the Father and to the Son, through the indwelling energy of the Holy Spirit. Who, pray tell, is the B.V.M.?” I asked.

“There you go,” he angrily exploded, “Don’t even know the Blessed Virgin Mary!”

The second word was with the youngest. He had just graduated from Rome seminary. He had fallen head over heels in love with the only single

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lady on board. He followed her steps at every turn and stayed out late on the deck each night, and so made himself an object of derision among the passengers, most of whom were nominal Protestants. When I warned him against this reproach on the Lord's name, he looked down on me with a wry little smile, and without the least concern, chuckled, "Mr. Smith, I think you will go to heaven. Although you haven't the truth, not being in the Catholic Church, you live the truth! And we will go to heaven, too, because, although we don't live the truth, we have the truth. I'll see you there!"

The third little joust was again with the older one. They had left some wafers on the bed after going out to mass one morning, and I peeked at them.

"Sir," I said to the old priest on his return, "may I ask you a question? After your priestly prayer these wafers are supposed by you to become changed into the actual body of Christ. Is not that what you believe?"

"That's it," he growled.

"I notice on the wafer the symbol of the cross, but round the cross are the words, 'Made in Ireland.' Was the body of Christ made in Ireland, sir?"

No comment.

During our two months at Singapore for repairs, all five priests contracted a very bad strain of ringworm. Though living so close to them the Lord kept me from it, and this appeared quite extraordinary to the priests. They looked upon me as specially favored of God and that His gracious hand was upon me with preserving care. It gave me a new talking point with them, and three of the five listened more attentively to my words of witness.

I preached a good deal at Bethesda Chapel—a Brethren assembly—in Singapore, where was a flourishing work under the fervent evangelistic outreach of Dr. G.D. James. As the war had come to an end, I was invited to preach at the Thanksgiving Service in the city, and at the close we had the joy of seeing British troops, Malaysians, and Chinese making solemn commitment to the Lord Jesus and entering His heavenly kingdom. What a glorious work salvation is! Jesus saves in every land and among all peoples—saves by rescuing from hell, by giving title deeds to heaven, by making men meet for heaven. That was a night much to be remembered!

A TRAGIC PLANE CRASH

Having spent so many months on the journey, I was not more than six months in western China before I had to return to Shanghai to meet my