

Roma to the Nations 2015 – A strange combination or the “new normal” for global mission?

Jim Baker

“Roma to the Nations” was a unique gathering of people, each with a piece of a puzzle. It’s not assembled yet, but we know that it relates to things like the life-situation and future of 10-12 million Roma, justice for those at the margins, transforming communities through multiplying church plants, reawakening the church in Europe, motivating the global body of Christ for mission... How do all those parts fit into one picture?

“At the first such convocation, **Misha Bakic**, a Roma pastor from Serbia, summarized the sense of wonder that all experienced: “*It’s kind of like a “foolishness of God,” because in the world, you know, it doesn’t go together – Chinese and Roma people, how is that possible?*”

Between meetings, we spoke with **Melody Wachsmuth**, whose writings about the Roma¹ first caught the attention and imagination of Chinese mission leaders. We shared our paradoxical impressions: this novel collection of Chinese Christians from four continents, Roma from many European countries and a smattering of western mission leaders amazes us. It’s quite the peculiar patchwork. But, at a deeper level, it feels like *home* – these people, all of them, not just individually but the unique collective, have become *family*.



This ridiculous degree of diversity, oriented around reaching the most unlikely of peoples with the most impossible of expectations must be the work of the Holy Spirit. Who else could bring this inexplicable sense of unity, forbearance and shared hope?

We gathered to help Chinese churches understand the Roma, to motivate and mobilize them to engage in Roma ministry. They encouraged each other and heard and responded to the words and hearts of Roma leaders. And the Spirit moves among the Roma.² We hear first-hand accounts of miraculous transformations of communities that are beginning to have regional impact, churches in communities struggling in poverty and in-

justice sending out more evangelists and church planters than they can train.

But the Roma still suffer socially, culturally and spiritually from centuries of marginalization. The European church has yet to acknowledge its own complicity, past and present, in processes that deeply wound the Body. There are deep issues of trust, of human value, of power, of use of resources. All our worldviews are grounded in a context where it's "normal" to consider "Gypsies" as belonging only at the fringes, or worse. Changing these worldviews will be neither easy nor painless. Change will demand sacrifice.

It's a story of strengthening and beautifying the global bride of Christ, shifting missional moral authority from the former "centers" of power and resources to the new "creative core" of mission – at what once was thought to be the "margins." The spiritual revitalization of Europe is but one chapter in the next volume. But I believe God is authoring just such a story; because of that, I believe that the best days of the church in Europe lie not in its past, but in its future.

So, do these Chinese Christians see something we've been missing?

Pastor **Thomas Wang** of GCCI provides heart and encouragement for this unique cross-cultural engagement. His motivation is clear: *"We have come to pay a debt we owe."* He draws this sense of "gospel debt" from Scripture and the Chinese experience.

Paul saw himself "a debtor" to those who did not know. For Pastor Wang, ignoring the plight of 10-12 million marginalized people, unwelcome in most European churches and communities, would be defaulting on a debt.

Chinese pastors speak movingly of their appreciation for those who brought the Gospel to their people... and a profound sense of obligation to carry it to those now in a similar position to that of their ancestors when the Gospel came to them.

This drives their sense of outrage about the status quo – *"Millions of Roma have not heard the gospel... and our churches don't care! Roma Christians are often refused baptism in European churches, or, after baptism, they are refused membership. They say, 'We are treated like sub-humans.' They simply desire to be treated like people. That makes us feel guilty. The church of Christ should not behave like this. We attended a Roma church that meets in a shipping container! What a shame on the church that this is all they have."*

It's time to pay this debt. It is more than a settling of accounts. Learning more of how the Roma seem to fit into God's plans³, we are convinced that "investment" in Roma will reap massive spiritual return in the

economy of the Kingdom.

Inspiring and motivating the global Chinese church to reach out to Roma, Chinese pastors open the biblical heart and soul of this multicultural initiative. God uses Scripture – read and interpreted by believers from other cultures – to transcend the horizons of our own "knowledge."

Pastor **Kai Xing**, from the Hungarian Chinese Christian Church, shared that Philippians 2 speaks directly to mission: not just "generically", but to the Chinese church in mission to Roma:

Patterned after Christ's humility, we identify with the Roma

Patterned after Christ's obedience, we sacrifice for the Roma

Disciples of Jesus cannot be bystanders, because we enter into the mind of Christ. What touches Him, we feel. We must identify ourselves with His process of identifying with others.

Our vision is "very fragile." We only look after "our own"; we're not free with our resources. We don't have enough to expend on reaching out. This is not the heart and mind of Christ, who set aside His privilege, His glory, for us to receive the Gospel from Him.

When first visiting a Roma village, it seemed so humble and dirty. What a filthy place, I thought. But a second impression followed immediately: deep conviction for being more impressed by this superficial difference than I was with the filth of my own prejudiced, self-centered heart, compared to the heart and mind of Christ, who set aside EVERYTHING for me.

We cannot see the Roma (or anyone) with Christ's eyes until we allow Him to change our own filthy hearts. If our hearts do not change, our eyes do not change. If Christ's obedience is our pattern, then we must be willing to sacrifice, even die, for the Roma people. Otherwise, it's all superficial.

Our material and spiritual prosperity brings an "undeniable responsibility" to those in need around us.



We must transcend our ethnicity and give sacrificially to those in need around us.

Though neither Chinese nor Roma, God speaks to my heart – directly – through the pages of Scripture as my Chinese brother applies it to his own... I am moved to repent for the hardheartedness of my own people, my own “white” churches, as I see God move among the Chinese. And my heart melts with love for the Roma. Surely, this is what it means to be conformed to the pattern of Jesus. I am humbled to see Chinese brothers and sisters in Europe struggle with the burden of the Roma at the margins... while we in the West still remain insulated from such concerns.

Anne-Marie Kool is a scholar who studies the spiritual and cultural issues that tie together church, culture, history and Roma with deep reflection and heart. Her “studied recommendations”? *Outreach must begin with learning to ask questions*, starting conversations that move toward understanding of Roma history and culture. We will never can get all we need from books or lectures.

Stereotypes dominate our view of Roma history. These “constructed images” of the “other” are fantasies, not based in reality. These images lead to actions that coalesce into powerful patterns of prejudice and exclusion. To engage Roma, *we must move from stereotypes to stories*. This requires us to sit, to fellowship, to listen. The stories of figures like Clement Le Cossec are a treasure to the whole church, not just the Roma. Hearing the Roma’s stories (and seeing their connections to our own) connects to our own revival.

Learning stories is an important step in reaching people you don’t know. Neglecting this has led to an obvious over-reliance on imported methods. But reliance on imported *concepts* is far trickier to discern; the idea that “success is something that can be counted” influences how we see and pursue mission.

Scripture and history clearly show us that *revival arises from pain and suffering, not “success.”* True mission is always an interplay of incarnation and translation. It’s more than having and fulfilling a strategy. It’s about being His instrument. It’s about faithfulness.

Understanding Roma history and culture is hard, but it’s part of mission. Mission is more than tactics - it involves being an ambassador of Christ, walking the way of the Cross. Mission as strategic enterprise leads us into competition and rivalry. Mission as participation in God’s mission leads to new awareness, new partnerships, going deeper into the mind of Christ. *We must also confront the role of European churches* in the past and present abuse of the Roma.

Pastor **Hsu Lie** of the Chinese Christian Church of



Berlin is no stranger to either world mission or to the broader Chinese church, having taken part in evangelistic campaigns with Pastor Wang in eastern Siberia. Pastor Hsu reflected about the “*power of the Gospel*”. Though the “Gospel” is “good news,” it’s more than just the news itself, more than a message about a “ticket to heaven.” It’s more than the “good things” that we believers pursue to bring the good news.

The Gospel is also BIG POWER. To understand its power we need to grasp its essence. When Jesus is Lord of the church, his power is manifested – the only power that can transform entire societies. God expects the church to spread the Gospel – it will not spread “on its own.”

We often write and teach about the Gospel as if it’s human knowledge. We enclose the lion in a cage to admire it... forgetting he is the “king of beasts”! Let’s open the cage and let the lion of the gospel show its power instead of preaching it in our own power and expertise. This requires reliance on the Holy Spirit.

Such commitment to truth requires not just one church, but the whole body. The Chinese, Western, and Roma churches must UNITE to battle together. We were not designed to do it alone. When we work together, God leads us forward.

Awakened to my own complicity, I was profoundly moved by Pastor Hsu’s final statements to the Roma in the assembly. Responding to Dr. Kool’s presentation about how our own history relates to Roma history, he paused. As “a registered German church,” he said, “we need to apologize for how the German church did nothing to come to the aid of Roma during the holocaust, but actually increased their suffering.” Inviting the Roma leaders onto the platform, he asked with complete sincerity for their forgiveness and prayed for them.

We need not live in guilt, but move forward. “We need to go beyond staying in our own place and merely greeting one another.” Churches and mission organizations need to share information and plan together on how to reach and serve the Roma.

Listening to this Chinese pastor in Europe connect

with the hearts of other Chinese from around the world who have *come* to Europe was like listening in on a family conversation... but it is also a challenge, even a rebuke, to us of us from “the West.”

Grover Crosby, the English pastor from a multi-congregational church in Toronto that sent an extensive delegation from their Chinese congregation spoke on “*the inclusiveness of the Gospel*”. Inclusiveness is the heart of the gospel. The history of the church’s treatment of Roma notwithstanding, Jesus’ gospel plainly embraces all – *none* are excluded. Exclusion is inconsistent with God’s very character. Jesus came to “draw all people” to himself. Paul knew from inside experience that neither zeal, knowledge, nor bloodline alone leads to righteousness. The application is simple: sharing the Gospel involves sharing the conviction that “all people” includes the Roma.

Can we pursue mission in Europe without Roma being in the picture? We’ve done so right up to the present moment, pursuing mission and not challenging the exclusion of Roma. Principles of exclusion are a daily reality for millions of people in Europe – and we import them from our cultural contexts into our church cultures with scarcely a raised eyebrow. The gospel demands that we see and challenge exclusion (in structures, principles, adopted stereotypes) - beginning with our own closed doors and closed hearts.

Even seasoned missionary workers in Budapest, hearing about this consultation, seemed amazed:

“Chinese... coming *here*? To reach the *Roma*? Affirming their leadership?” But taking stock of the depth and breadth of what God is opening up through this movement, it may be time to “get over” the strangeness. God has always worked at the margins. God has always used the weak and outcast to confound the strong and self-confident. God has always delighted in disturbing our settled categories to confront us with His wisdom and amazing grace. If we are serious about mission being “from everywhere to everyone,” Roma to the Nations is not a “new thing”... it just might be a picture of the “new normal” for global mission.

1. <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2013/may/god-among-roma.html> and <http://www.internationalbulletin.org/issues/2013-03/2013-03-145-wachsmuth.html>
2. <http://www.newsweek.com/2014/10/17/how-roma-are-becoming-europes-new-moral-army-276033.html> and <http://www.charismamag.com/site-archives/126-features/the-spirit-moves-in-europe/559-reaching-europes-gypsies>
3. <http://www.wsj.com/articles/muslim-migrants-meet-christian-gypsies-1445556478>
4. http://www.clement-le-cossec.org/index.php?p=1_8_Missionary-stories

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From Bondage to Freedom

Grover Crosby

The words that keep ringing in my mind and spirit, coming away from the ROMA Conference held in Hungary, September 29 to October 2, 2015, are from the lips of Dr. Thomas Wang, “We owe a great debt to the ROMA people”. These words contain the authority of Scripture uttered by the Apostle Paul in Romans 1:14, “I am Debtor...” (KJV).

Dr. Wang went on to confess on our behalf, “we actually come with a degree of feeling guilty!” He began his presentation with this purpose; “We have come here to pay our debt to the ROMA people!” His words set the tone for the whole conference and ignited our hearts with God’s love for this Unreached People Group of twelve million.

A Canadian group from the Richmond Hill Christian Community Church recently visited a number of ROMA communities in Romania, Hungary and Serbia, including the writer of this article. During this visit, we learned much about these mysterious people. The following are some of our observations of this neglected People Group.

The ROMA (Gypsies) have been a neglected, despised, deprived, unwelcomed, misunderstood people who have experienced horrific exploitation and persecution for many centuries. They mainly live in Eastern Europe with Romania housing the largest percentage as compared to other European countries. There is a lot of mystery connected with them. In spite of all of this, they have maintained their traditions and a will to survive under tremendous odds.

Much research is available about their origins, experiences of rejection etc., so this article is not meant

to recount all they have suffered over 1500 years, but rather an attempt to summarize our experience and give a reason for hope to this distinct People Group. I have chosen four observations to explain our understanding and vision for these dear people.

Damaged

The Gypsies have endured many centuries of rejection, exploitation, slavery, persecution and even slaughter. Two million lost their lives in the concentration camps of Europe during the Second World War. They have been deprived of even the basic social services of the countries where they reside. Their children have been denied education, and jobs are temporary and menial. All these force them to survive by stealing, begging, and scrounging for daily food. For many of them, disease and squalor are their daily ration and reality.

This, and much more, have most certainly had a psychological effect on their minds. It causes them to act out in perceived unacceptable behaviour and aggression. It has solicited a backlash from their ethnic neighbours who see them as undesirables. Such conduct poses a continual problem for law enforcement agencies. They have turned to drugs and alcohol for solace, only exaggerating the communal problems created within and without.

Determined

In spite of the many disadvantages, the ROMA show great determination to not only survive, but also maintain their culture and dignity. They have accomplished that over a period of 1500 years of marginalization. The ROMA are a resilient people. They have an

ingenious nature about them, and think of creative ways to find employment and become self-sufficient. There is an enterprising side to them.

As we visited the various communities we could see, because of the gospel, the tremendous potential for these people to make a positive contribution to the society around them. Some government officials are recognizing these changes as well. A number of caring NGO's, who have come to their aid, are committed to helping them realize their dream of being accepted, educated, better equipped, and to some extent, assimilate into the broader culture.

Those emerging from dependency are raising their own animals for meat, growing their own crops, and developing ways to service the needs of the neighbouring population. In some cases, they are becoming business-people importing and selling basic products needed by the population at large.

Diverse

There is the tendency to cast the Gypsies into a mono-lithic negative image, unfairly inferring that they are all lazy, untrustworthy, crime ridden, and undesirable people. Nothing could be further from the truth! They are, in fact, a very diverse group of people.

There are those who live in deplorable conditions, and probably a minority among them who desire nothing better. However, there are a growing number who have emerged from this stereo-typical image and become good and honest citizens, hard working and honest people who own their own homes, run their own businesses, and are changing social standards to decency and trustworthiness.

We visited ROMA communities where the leaders have a desire to help the Europeans living near them, to have a burden to bring change for the better to their lives as well. Some of the educated leaders have been given an opportunity to immigrate to Western countries, but have refused because they feel called to be part of the transformation taking place in their own people through the gospel.

Thus, when we think of the ROMA as being diverse, you can find them at almost every level of the social order in Eastern Europe today. Quite a number are highly educated, proven leaders, speak several languages, are astute in the high tech world, and are bringing transformational change to their own people.

Desirous and Ready

The ROMA are open to friendship. One can understand their suspicion of strangers because of their history.

Nevertheless, in the 12-15 ROMA communities where we visited, we were welcomed by the leaders and found the local people friendly toward us. They welcomed us to their communities, displayed family unity, wanted to show us their homes, and shared with us their stories. Of course they were curious and invited us to share our stories of faith with them as well.

These precious people are part of God's creation with aspirations, dreams and hopes. They are seeking for the same opportunities in life that everyone else seeks. They respond quickly to genuine love and acceptance. They are an open non-threatening people.

The ROMA are open to the saving message of the gospel. Whole communities are being transformed by the gospel of Jesus. We visited one community where a major revival broke out and 700 ROMA people came to faith in Jesus and transformation was obvious. They shared their stories freely and with joy. They told us that where alcohol was once a major problem, it is now gone. The crime rate has almost disappeared. Policing of their community has been significantly reduced.

We found these same changes happening to different degrees in several ROMA communities. They are building better homes and the evidences of poverty are disappearing. Child marriages and labour has stopped and new standards are being set by the leadership who encourage the people to abandon these and a number of other oppressive practises from the past. Men are taking spiritual leadership in the home and church, and young people are clean cut and happy.

Leaders are being raised up from among the ROMA, and they are taking up the task of reaching their own people with the gospel of Jesus Christ. As we witnessed the changes from one community to another, it is our conviction that it is God's time for reaching the ROMA people with the saving message of salvation in Jesus.

With the involuntary poverty imposed on them, the ROMA Christians are hindered in their ministry due to limited resources. This is where the extended body of Christ is needed. With added resources, we can help them accelerate their mission to their own people. The Holy Spirit is working among them in miraculous ways.

"We are Debtor's...", is the Lord's clarion call for His people to start paying our debt to these formerly neglected ROMA people. The harvest is ripe among them. They are ready and open to receive the transforming gospel of Jesus. God is raising up gifted leaders among them. It is time for us to come alongside them and participate in the winning of this deserving Unreached People Group.

[The author is the English pastor of Richmond Hill Christian Community Church in Toronto.]

MY EXPERIENCE IN SERBIA

Aaron Chiu



In my first visit to Subotica, Serbia in September 2014 after the first Roma for the Nations Consultation, I was so touched by the need of the poor Roma communities. Most of their houses were so worn out, windows and doors were broken. Our team leader, Pastor Tibor Varga, a missionary from Argentina, told us that he had the desire to build multi-purpose stoves for some of the most needed families. I was so touched by his heart, thus made me to plan for my second visit. A brother from my church accompanied me for my second trip to Serbia on October 24 to November 1, 2015.

We were well-received by Pastor Tibor. We spent the first few days to visit several most needed families. After careful consideration, we decided to help in the following 3 projects:

Soup Kitchen

Thank God that a Christian family was willing to donate one of their rooms plus their yard for soup kitchen purpose. We decided using this room as kitchen and build a tent in the adjacent



open area as dining area. Thus, we can provide hot soup several times a week for the hungry people, especially during winter time. We were so happy to know that they have started the project with the limited money we left for them. This is a long-term project. They need continued support to buy bread and fuel.



Roof Repairing

Most of the roof and structure of their houses were in bad shape that rain and snow could easily come into the house during rain and snow seasons. We have hired several workers to help 6 families to temporarily repair their houses.

Stove Building

This was the major project that we worked on in this trip. We worked together with pastor Tibor in building one stove for one family. We collected some deserted bricks in construction sites and got mud by digging from the unoccupied ground. We built the stove from scratch. As we were not used to this kind of hard labor my friend and I felt exhausted. When our Roma friends saw our situation, they voluntarily came to help. We were so happy to see that one family had patterned after us to build a stove for themselves. This is what we would like to see. They need someone to demonstrate and teach them how they should help themselves.



I was so impressed by Pastor Tibor's love and concern for the Roma people. His whole family of 9 (7 children) is totally depended on his wife's salary as a high school teacher. He not only did not get pay from his work among the Roma people, in fact, he needed money to buy food to feed the hungry. I felt the burden of sharing their need to the outside world in the hope that God will move His resourceful children to care for this needy people. Could you be one of the supporters?

[The author is a minister of C & MA Grace Chapel in Hong Kong.]

850 from Mainland China Participated in Inaugural Mission China 2030 Conference



The Lausanne Movement reported that the first Mission China 2030 Conference was convened in Hong Kong on 28 September – 1 October 2015. This conference was led by urban house church leaders and attended by some 850 participants from mainland China. The Mission China 2030 vision is for China to send out 20,000 missionaries by the year 2030.

The Mission China 2030 vision was catalyzed by two main gatherings, the Third Lausanne Congress (Cape Town, 2010) and the Asian Church Leaders Forum (Seoul, 2013). Two hundred Chinese Christian leaders were invited to the Third Lausanne Congress, but were blocked from attending. Plans were then made to invite them to a separate gathering in 2013, the Asian Church Leaders Forum (ACLF).

It was at the Asian Church Leaders Forum that Pastor Daniel Jin (Executive Director of Mission China Today magazine) urged the Chinese church to work and pray to see 20,000 missionaries sent out from China by 2030: ‘Over the last 200 years, since the days of the earliest British pioneer Robert Morrison, some 20,000 missionaries have served in China.’ There was, he said, ‘a gospel debt to pay off’.

‘This first Mission China 2030 Conference is truly a turning point in Chinese church history,’ says David Ro, Lausanne International Deputy Director for East Asia and Mission China 2030 International Advisor. ‘The Chinese church has stood up in carrying the torch of world missions and sending some of the best from China to bless the world.’ Plenary speakers at the Mission China 2030 Conference included Luis Bush (author of the 10/40 Window, Transform World), Francis Chan (author of Crazy Love), Dr Bong Rin Ro (former ATA Executive Secretary and former WEA Theological Commission Chair), Rev Jaehoon Lee (Senior Pastor, Onnuri Church), Rev Abraham Cui (All-Nations Church in Shanghai and this year’s Mission China

2030 conference director), and Rev Daniel Jin.

Two hundred participants made missionary commitments at the conference. Pastors and missionaries attending the conference were asked to commission them in prayer. These were the first missionary commitments made toward the Mission China 2030 vision of 20,000 missionaries. The Lausanne Movement calls the global church to prayer for these men and women as they take their next steps in training and preparation.

On the final morning of the conference, Pastor Ezra Jin (Beijing Zion Church) received the Mission China 2030 flag on behalf of the Beijing Pastors’ Prayer Fellowship, a symbol of acceptance to host next year’s Mission China 2030 gathering. Pastors from different cities will continue to host annual gatherings until the goal of sending 20,000 missionaries from China by the year 2030 is reached.

The organizers of the conference put out a news release containing the following additional information.

The theme of the conference is ‘From Being Moved to Taking Action.’ The emphasis is not on ‘The Evangelization of China,’ but ‘A Missionaries Sending China.’

At the end of the conference, they proclaim a seven-point declaration:

1. We firmly believe that the central theme of the Bible is: God’s salvation plan for all people. (John 3:16)

2. We firmly believe that Jesus Christ is the only Savior. (Acts 4:12)

3. We firmly believe that world evangelization, disciple training, church planting, and theological training are the main mission ministry. (Matthew 28:18-20)

4. We firmly believe that mission ministry must rely on the power of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 1:8)

5. We firmly believe that in essence the Church is charged with the mission of world mission. (1 Peter 2:9)

6. We firmly believe that the motive and purpose of

► To P. 10

My Pilgrimage in Mission

Cindy Perry



To Nepal

Nepal was definitely the unknown for me, and as my father pointed out when holding up a globe – the farthest away from home I could get – literally half way around the world! Through my university friend who was working there I had received an invitation from a Nepali pastor to assist in discipling young women and develop youth ministry in their fledgling church. But I had no idea how much I had to learn myself first – I knew next to nothing of Hinduism or Buddhism, the dominant religions, didn't know the language or local culture, even how to dress appropriate, or how to bathe under an outside water tap! Realizing I was a learner first (teaching and discipling would come later), and learning to laugh at myself was one of my first big lessons. Also learning to cope with loneliness in a foreign land and hardly anyone from my own country to look to for friendship.

I soon had two new sets of mentors who helped me find my way – Pastor Nicanor & Elizabeth Tamang who introduced me to the growing Nepali church family in the country (no denominations at that time); and a Kiwi (New Zealand) couple with the International Nepal Fellowship (INF) who helped me get a visa and introduced me to the INF family of missionaries. The first few years were a rich mix of learning and reaching out, while gaining fluency in Nepali language, building ever deeper relationships with new Nepali friends, and serving the Nepali churches and young Christian organizations. In 1985 I was privileged to be asked by a group of Nepali leaders to research and write the history of the church in Nepal. I was humbled by their trust in me. With an excellent Nepali team the Nepal Church History Project, followed by the Nepal Church Survey Project, were carried out until I was forced to leave the country at the end of 1987. This was devastating, as I had put my heart and soul into this work. I returned home crushed in spirit and full of questions 'Why Lord?!' – But again, God had a plan that I didn't know about. During the following two years in the US the doors were opened for me to do an MA in Intercultural Studies at the Wheaton Graduate School. I had no money for this, but my heavenly

Father made a way! For my thesis I received excellent supervision in writing A Biographical History of the Church in Nepal using all the material collected in Nepal. This was published in Kathmandu upon my return in late 1989, and has now gone through several printings – all glory to God!

To the Wider Himalayan Region

I was just happy to be back in Nepal – but again things took a different turn than I ever imagined. I was encouraged by Professor Andrew Walls, who founded the Centre for the Study of Christianity in the Non-Western World, University of Edinburgh, to do more research and pursue a PhD under him. After consultation with Nepal church leaders I made a proposal to research the Nepali diaspora, which culminated in the publishing (again in Kathmandu) of *Nepali Around the World*. Again I wonder – how did that happen? It wasn't a part of my life plan. I certainly didn't have the money for overseas tuition, or sustenance, or all the travel involved for the research. But GOD..... And God's purposes went way beyond getting a Ph.D., although that has proved to be a wonderful tool. I had several job offers, but soon realized that a position and salary were not my desire – I was to return to the Himalayan region and use the knowledge gained for more eternal purposes. The Nepali diaspora was continuing to multiply, with Nepal's scattered in over 100 countries around the world – a nascent mission force in their adopted lands.

In late 1994 I thus returned to the Himalayan region and made my base in Siliguri, West Bengal, India – just across the eastern border of Nepal, and adjacent to the former Himalayan kingdom of Sikkim, and to Bhutan and the 7 states of North-East India. Himalayan Ministries(HM) was soon formed to follow-up the myriad practical ministry needs that had been revealed through my research, and to link the church in Nepal with growing diaspora churches. An exciting new direction was into Myanmar which was discovered to have a large Nepali population, but almost unknown to the outside world. HM was a wonderful launching pad for ministry into Nepali populated areas of India, throughout the Himalayan region, and among the Nepali



diaspora over the next 10 years.

About this time God brought an elder godly man into my life who became a mentor-friend – Rev. Dr. Thomas Wang, who was then serving as Chairman of the AD2000 & Beyond Movement. His guidance and encouragement were instrumental in the birthing of the Himalaya 2000 movement, which became popularly known as HIM-COE (Himalayan Congress of Evangelism). Under Rev. Wang's tutorage I had the privilege of serving as the International Coordinator from the first HIM-COE Conference in 1996 onwards. His life and example were a tremendous example to both myself and Nepali leaders throughout the Himalayas. The ripple effects of HIM-COE are still reverberating today – not least through the HIM-GLO (Himalayan Global) Summits, bringing together Nepali and other Himalayan leaders from around the world – first in Thailand, then Hong Kong, and in 2013 in Malaysia.

During those years a lot of transitions took place -- wonderful times of fulfilling service... new national ministries launched... a threatened court case by a trusted national colleague... a sabbatical to let things cool off and to seek God's direction after 25 years in the field... a celebration and closing of Himalayan Ministries as local partners attained sustainability... joining Development Associates International (DAI) as a Senior Consultant for the Himalayan Region... launching the Him-Lead (Himalayan Leadership) program among younger national leaders and watching it multiply in four countries... helping extend DAI's Masters in Organizational Leadership into Nepal, North-East India, Myanmar, and Bangladesh... a near fatal motorcycle accident in early 2014... But again, God had other plans.

2015 is my 35th anniversary of following Jesus in the Himalayan region, and my 64th birthday is soon approaching. Friends keep asking about my plans for retirement? But God keeps expanding my horizons. From January 2015 I was asked to help pilot a new regionalization plan within DAI by serving as the first South Asia Regional Director. My passion continues to be involvement in leadership development and walking alongside national leaders throughout South Asia -- delighting in all that GOD is doing in and through their lives.

(The author is the South Asia Regional Director of Development Associate International.)

From P. 8 mission are to, love God and to love people. (Matthew 22:36-40)

7. We firmly believe that the gospel not only has entered China, it will spread out from China. (Matthew 24:14)

Also there is a Plan of Action:

1. Set up a permanent organization to be the coordination platform for churches and mission agencies, tasked with organizing mission conferences, publishing mission periodicals, and conducting seminars on mission.

2. Conduct every year the 'Mission China 2030 Conference' mobilizing traditional house churches, house church groups, newly rising city churches, as well as individual Christians and Christian groups to participate in world mission. Support mission conferences of all scales conducted in different areas.

3. Publish <Mission Today>, <Mission China Journal>, etc. periodicals to spread the vision of 'Mission China,' to explore strategies for 'Mission China,' and to keep records of its movement.

4. Conduct special-topic seminars related to 'Mission China,' develop theology of missions, study mission strategies, tract general mission status, exchange mission experiences, in order to assist mission ministry.

5. Promote prayer movement for missions among ministerial workers prayer fellowships in various locations, and recruit mission prayer-warriors, and send out periodic prayer items, and conduct prayer concerts to ignite the

flame for a missions revival.

6. As mission ministry is long term endeavor, we must develop human resources in various mission areas, including strategists, motivators, educators, administrators, pastors, and missionaries sent out into the world.

7. Prior to seeing a viable mission movement, we need strong mission-oriented churches. Gather leaders and churches willing to commit to the movement of 'Mission China 2030' to be founders and members to work toward fulfilling the Great Commission.

8. Develop short-term mission opportunities and steadily helping Chinese churches to engage in on-field ministry, to hear the Macedonian call there and gaining practical mission experience.

9. Focusing on the '10/40 window' develop mission fields. Work among the Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, tribal and indigenous belief groups, and other unreached people groups. Send out missionaries to expand mission fields.

10. Construct mission network. We like to learn from more advanced and experienced mission oriented churches in the West, Korea, overseas Chinese communities, and other areas in the world, seeking their help and advice, and forming cooperative alliances.

11. Develop the model of mission through business venture. Mobilize mission-minded business people and entrepreneurs to go into mission fields with the goal of influencing and transform the communities with the gospel

(Adopted from LCWE news release and conference finding.).

World Mission News

Compiled by Samuel C.Y. Ling

Bibles: In 2014, the United Bible Societies distributed a record number of 34 million Bibles worldwide, as well as 428 million Scriptures that included Old Testaments, New Testaments, the Gospels, and some Bible portions. In war-torn Syria, more than 5 times as many Old and New Testaments were distributed as in 2010 before the civil war started. Due to the soccer World Cup, more than one fifth of Bibles (7.6 million), and more than two third of Scriptures were distributed in Brazil.

<Christianity Today, christianitytoday.com, December 2015>

Bolivia: Over ten years ago, an agency sponsored five children in a community full of gangs, dirty streets, and dreamless people. They were given scholarships to develop pastry-making skill and learn basic accounting. Together they started their own pastry business. Now, one girl at 23 years old is still chasing her dream to work in a hospital as a specialist, open a clinic to help poor people. And the entire community has changed, quiet with paved streets, and basic services. Most importantly, people are transformed by the gospel, now having dreams, eager to get educated, and serve the Lord.

<Food For the Hungry, www.fh.org, 12/14/15>

Gaza Strip: As any other of the 1.5 million Palestinians living here, one man was full of anger and hate toward Israel. He has suffered lost of land and family members killed. But he is transformed by the love of Jesus. He now loves Israel, loves the Jews, and wants to learn Hebrew in order to share the gospel with them. He said God puts him here for the purpose to reach out to the Jews who needs Jesus.

<Reuters News, reuters.com, 12/14/15>

Japan: An agency has launched the 2020 Vision for Japan: To deploy 100 church multiplication teams to start 1000 producing churches that will enfold 1,000,000 new followers of Jesus and send out 1000 missionaries to the major cities of Asia. This seems impossible. But the triple disaster, earthquake-tsunami-nuclear plant meltdown, has drastically changed the outlook of the nation. Christians of various denominations, along with missionaries all united together in the relief effort. Thus, kindle the ordinary Japanese' interest in Jesus. Some Japanese pastors even envision a goal of 10% Christian in the nation by 2024.

<Asian Access, www.asuanaccess.org, 12/10/15>

Lebanon: In a month when suicide bombers killed 43 people on the streets of Beirut, a Power to Change media conference united volunteers from 57 cooperating churches. City-wide ads on billboards and national TV and radio promoted free DVD and a book telling the stories of 12 well-known Lebanese whose lives and difficult situations had been changed by

encounters with Christ. Some 2,500 phoned in for copies of the DVD, with 1,200 of them from a region of 400,000 Syrian refugees.

<Sat-7, www.sat7usa.org, 12/8/15>

Iraq: A year ago, a 10-year old refugee girl, driven by ISIL terrorists from her home and lost everything, was interviewed on TV, where she asked God to forgive the terrorists. The video went viral. Recently the interviewer found her again, and learnt that two of her prayers last time were answered. She found her best friend and is in school again. In the new interview, the girls shared what they are most aware now: the Lord's Prayer, especially the phrases, 'on earth as it is in heaven,' and 'gives us our daily bread.' She sang one of her own songs, "My beloved Jesus captured my heart by His love. Glory be to God. With my love, Glory be to God."

<Sat-7, www.sat7usa.org, 12/3/15>

Indonesia: After praying how to reach their Muslim neighbors, a congregation decided to invite them to their prayer service to pray for them. 75 Muslims showed up, outnumbering the Christians 3 to 1. They kept coming for they are seeing prayers answered, and want to know more about Jesus.

<Forgotten Missionaries International, forgottenmissionaries.org, 11/30/15>

Laos: Though the constitution professes freedom of religion, it also is written loosely that 'The State respect and protect lawful activities of ...religious followers ... which are beneficial to the country and people.' So Christian worship services, prayer meetings, funeral and wedding services, etc. could all be violations. But Christmas celebration is still a time of joy, excitement and family gathering. It is estimated that some 10,000 people typically attend these celebrations. Within 2 years, 20% of these who hear the gospel accept Christ. The event bear fruit far into the future, as follow-up group visits and plant churches.

<Christian Aid Mission, www.christianaid.org 11/25/15>

Islamophobia: After recent attack by ISIL terrorists in Paris and California, the rise of anti-Muslim speeches in the Western nations has alarmed veteran missionaries in many mission fields. These uttering have intensified the persecution among Christians especially in Islam-dominated regions. To many Muslims the West is associated with Christianity, so anything Western is labeled 'Christian.' They react to anti-Muslim gestures by taking out their feelings on Christians among them.

<Open Doors USA, www.opendoorsusa.org, 12/15/15>

2016 Short-Term Mission Trip to Eastern Europe Serving Roma Communities

Date: May 6-8, 2016

Location: Roma communities in eastern Hungary

Team Members: european Chinese pastors

Purpose: Visit and serve Roma communities



Date: first week of July, 2016

Location: eastern Hungary

Team Members: members of Hungary Chinese Christian Church, Berkeley Chinese for Christ Church, and students of International Chinese Biblical Seminary in Europe

Ministries: Conduct youth and children camp, organize family seminars for Roma communities



Date: August 5-16, 2016

Location: northern Serbia

Purpose: to explore the possibilities of setting up the following services for Roma communities:

Pre-school and after-school programs, Community Health, Medical Service, Family Counseling, Farming, Produce marketing, House Remodeling

Qualification: Christian professionals who are willing to serve the Lord with their expertise

Quota: 8



Date: Sept 25-Oct 5, 2016

Location: Albania, Greece, Macedonia, Kosovo etc.

Purpose: Explore the needs and possible ministries

Qualification: Pastors and lay leaders who have the burden to get involved in holistic mission among Roma communities in these countries



**For detailed information please contact GCCI.
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