Collaboration, Christian Mission and Contextualisation: The Overseas Missionary Fellowship in West Malaysia from 1952 to 1977

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ABSTRACT

The rise of communism in China began a chain of events which eventually led to the largest influx of Protestant missionaries into Malaya and Singapore in their history. During the Malayan Emergency (1948-1960), a key part of the British Government's strategy to defeat communist insurgents was the relocation of more than 580,000 predominantly Chinese rural migrants into what became known as the 'New Villages'. This thesis examines the response of the Overseas Missionary Fellowship (OMF), as a representative of the Protestant missionary enterprise, to an invitation from the Government to serve in the New Villages. It focuses on the period between their arrival in 1952 and 1977, when the majority of missionaries had left the country, and assesses how successful the OMF was in fulfilling its own expectation and those of the Government that invited them.

It concludes that in seeking to fulfil Government expectation, residential missionaries were an influential presence, a presence which contributed to the ongoing viability of the New Villages after their establishment and beyond Independence. It challenges the portrayal of Protestant missionaries as cultural imperialists as an outdated paradigm with which to assess their role. By living in the New Villages under the same restrictions as everyone else, missionaries unconsciously became conduits of Western culture and ideas. At the same time, through learning local languages and supporting indigenous agency, they encouraged New Village inhabitants to adapt to Malaysian society, while also retaining their Chinese identity.

It goes on to argue that the OMF, through its network of new and existing churches, and the parachurch organisations it was involved with, contributed in three ways to the growth of Christianity among the Chinese population in West Malaysia. Through its pioneer church-planting in the New Villages it facilitated the establishment of countercultural Christian communities. Its support of these Chinese-speaking churches laid the foundation for later growth. Through evangelism and discipleship of English- and Chinese-educated young people, and pastoring English-speaking urban congregations, the OMF was able to meet a strategic need and further support the growth of Christianity among Malaysian young people. The wide range of ministries it was involved with, enabled it to influence the growth of local leadership throughout West Malaysia. This new generation of leaders, influenced by the conservative evangelical theology of OMF missionaries, was able to develop a contextualised Malaysian Christianity that effectively responded to the postcolonial situation they found themselves in.

DECLARATION

This thesis does not contain any material that has been previously submitted for an award at an Institute of Higher Education either in the United Kingdom or overseas.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AOG	Assemblies of God
CBMS	Conference of British Missionary Societies
CSCNWW	Centre for the Study of Christianity in the Non-Western World
CIM	China Inland Mission
CNEC	Christian Nationals' Evangelism Commission
CO	Colonial Office
CWP	Christian Witness Press
CMC	Chinese Methodist Church (Chinese Annual Conference of the Methodist Church in Malaysia)
CMS	Church Missionary Society
CTC	Christian Training Centre
CU	Christian Union
CUP	Cambridge University Press
DVBS	Daily Vacation Bible School
EBC	Evangel Book Centre
EFC	Evangelical Free Church
ELCM	Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malaysia
IFES	International Fellowship of Evangelical Students
ISCF	Inter-School Christian Fellowship
LCMS	Lutheran Church of Malaysia and Singapore
MBC	Malaya (later Malaysia) Baptist Convention
MCA	Malayan (later Malaysian) Chinese Association
MCC	Malayan Christian Council
MCM	Methodist Church in Malaysia
MCP	Malayan Communist Party
MNLA	Malayan National Liberation Army, often mistranslated as the Malayan Races Liberation Army (MRLA)
MPAJA	Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army

MBS	Malaysia Bible Seminary
NA	North American (incorporating both the USA and Canada)
NVCC	MCC New Village Coordinating Committee
OMF	Overseas Missionary Fellowship
OUP	Oxford University Press
PCM	Presbyterian Church in Malaysia
RK	Religious Knowledge
SOAS	School of Oriental and African Studies
SU	Scripture Union
STM	Seminari Theoloji Malaysia
STBS	Short Term Bible Study
SPG	Society for the Propagation of the Gospel
SBC	Southern Baptist Convention
TNA	The National Archives
TTC	Trinity Theological College
ULCA	United Lutheran Church in America
UPPBS	Upward Path Postal Bible School
YFC	Youth for Christ

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

Between 1945 and 1965, what had been known as British Malaya and British Borneo emerged as the independent, but contiguous, countries of Malaysia and Singapore. The process of decolonisation involved the contested objectives of the British Government, and the Asian communities in the country. In 1947 the Federation of Malaya and the Colony of Singapore conformed to Furnivall's concept of a plural society, where different ethnic groups live side by side but operate separately, maintaining their own religion, culture and language.[1] As Table 1 shows, none of the three main ethnic communities at that time had a clear majority. Their differing needs led to the development of communal politics, where each group sought to meet the needs of their constituency.

Table 1: 1947 Population

	Malaya (000)	Singapore (000)	Total (000)	
Malay	2,427.8	115.7	2,543.5	43%
Chinese	1,884.5	730.1	2,614.6	45%
Indian	530.6	69.0	599.6	10%
Other	65.1	26.0	91.1	2%
	4,908.0	940.8	5,848.8	

Source: 1957 Census

For the British, according to Tim Harper, the objectives of decolonisation were the establishment of a viable nation-state and the protection of its national interests.[2] The first step in achieving these goals was the creation in 1946 of the Malayan Union. This vision of the future was, however, rejected by the Malay community. In response an alternative, which recognised the special status of Malays, was negotiated. The Federation of Malaya was established in 1948 and celebrated *Merdeka* (Independence) on 31 August 1957.

A far greater threat to the British vision of the future came from the predominantly Chinese, Malayan Communist Party (MCP), which sought to establish, through revolution, a communist republic. A prolonged battle with communist insurgents

[1] J. S. Furnivall, *Colonial Policy and Practice: A Comparative Study of Burma and Netherlands India* (London: CUP, 1948), p. 304.
[2] T. N. Harper, *The End of Empire and the Making of Malaya* (Cambridge: CUP, 1999), p. 358.

began when a state of Emergency was declared in June 1948. It was only in 1960, three years after *Merdeka*, that the Emergency officially ended. Then, in September 1963, the states of Sarawak and Sabah (formerly British North Borneo), together with the island of Singapore, were combined to form the country of Malaysia. Singapore subsequently withdrew in 1965 to become its own independent nation-state.

A key part of the British Government's strategy to defeat the communist insurgents was the resettlement of 589,662 predominantly rural Chinese peasants in 517 New Villages.[3] These Villages were surrounded by a barbed wire perimeter fence and were under twenty-four-hour guard. At the height of the Emergency a curfew operated from 6pm to 6am. These measures were taken to deprive the communists of vital supplies and intelligence, and to re-establish control over the rural fringes.

While events were unfolding in Malaya, missionaries in China were coming to terms with the prospect of the end of Western Christian mission in the country. After the communist takeover of China in 1949, some Protestant mission agencies still hoped to remain in China under the new regime. However, by the end of 1950 it became clear that this would not be possible, so in 1951 the remaining agencies withdrew.

The China Inland Mission (CIM) was the largest of those agencies. Its *raison d'être* was taking the Christian message to the inland provinces of China. This conservative evangelical mission, founded in England by Hudson Taylor in 1865, was unconventional in a number of ways that distinguished it from other agencies. While most mission societies in China were linked to a particular denomination and only accepted ordained clergy, the CIM was interdenominational and took the radical step of accepting single women and laymen. It followed what it called 'the faith principle' when it came to finances. While it depended on voluntary donations from supporters, it followed the principle of not publicly soliciting funds. Instead, CIM missionaries were to depend on God to meet their needs. This belief was summed up in the maxim attributed to Taylor that 'God's work done God's way will never lack God's supply'. In

[3] Malayan Christian Council, 'A Survey of the New Villages in Malaya' (Kuala Lumpur, 1958), School of Oriental and African Studies Archives [UK]: CBMS/01/E/76/04, and revised in 1959, hereafter referred to as 'the MCC Survey (1958)' and 'the MCC Survey (1959)'. See Table 4.

addition, to break down cultural barriers, Taylor also took the controversial step of requiring that CIM missionaries adopt traditional Chinese dress and learn Chinese.[4] Withdrawal from China presented the CIM with a unique problem as its only field of service was China. What was it going to do?

This set of circumstances led in 1951 to a collaboration, based on mutual interest, between mission agencies and the British Government.[5] The Government needed Resettlement Officers and voluntary workers, and mission agencies saw the opportunity of presenting the Christian message to a previously unreached group in Malayan society. With the New Villages being established, British authorities took the bold step, in this majority Muslim country, of inviting Western Christian mission agencies to commit significant resources and people to these Villages. As a result, according to John Roxborogh, 'Malaya became a focus of Western missionary concern for the only time in its history'.[6]

Although numbers were not as large as the British Government had hoped, Malaya and Singapore experienced the biggest influx of Protestant missionaries in their history. In addition to missionaries from existing denominations, this new wave included missionaries from denominations and interdenominational mission agencies that had never sent missionaries in any numbers before. They included Asian evangelists as well as Western missionaries and, while the majority came to work among rural Chinese in the New Villages, others also became involved in ministry in urban centres. CIM was one of those mission agencies. After reinventing itself as the Overseas Missionary Fellowship (OMF) in 1951, and surveying the needs of the country, it became the biggest provider of missionaries to the New Villages.[7]

[4] See Daniel Bays, *A New History of Christianity in China* (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 2012), pp. 68–69 and Herbert Kane, 'The Legacy of J Hudson Taylor', *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, 8.2 (1984), pp. 74–78.

[5] Andrew Porter, 'Church History, History of Christianity, Religious History: Some Reflections on British Missionary Enterprise since the Late Eighteenth Century', *Church History*, 71.3 (2002), 555–84 (pp. 563–67).

[6] John Roxborogh, 'The Presbyterian Church', in *Christianity in Malaysia: A Denominational History*, ed. by Robert Hunt, Lee Kam-Hing, and John Roxborogh (Petaling Jaya, Selangor: Pelanduk Publications, 1992), pp. 75–106 (p. 95).

[7] In 1951 the organisation changed its name. In the home countries, it would be known as the CHINA INLAND MISSION Overseas Missionary Fellowship, and in the new fields, as the OVERSEAS MISSIONARY FELLOWSHIP. In 1965 the name of the Mission was officially changed to the Overseas

Its commitment after Independence grew and in 1959 it exceeded 100 missionaries for the first time. It continued to assign more than 100 missionaries until 1967.

These missionaries arrived at a time of unprecedented change in the country when Christianity was in crisis. The influence of established denominations, through their control of Christian educational institutions, was being taken away as schools were nationalised by the Malaysian government. At the same time, improved access to education and growing urbanisation exposed an increasing number of Malaysian young people to a Western secular worldview, which discarded any need for religion. Within the church there was a severe shortage of trained clergy and in 1966 the Malaysian government introduced new visa regulations limiting missionaries to a maximum of ten years in the country.[8] Yet in spite of these challenges, Christianity in West Malaysia not only survived but grew. Census statistics show that the percentage of non-Malay Protestant and Catholic Christians increased in the twentieth century from 3.5% in 1911 to 5.3% in 1970 and continued to rise in the twenty-first century to 7.6% in 2010 (see Appendix 1). According to Raymond Lee and Susan Ackerman, the Christian community, and evangelical Protestants in particular, responded in a highly effective manner to the postcolonial mission field they faced.[9]

1.2 Literature Review

The role of Protestant missionaries in the formation of Malaysia has the potential to impact two main groups of scholars. The first are those interested in events and agents of change that shaped the modern nation-states of Malaysia and Singapore. They include military historians, who are specifically interested in the military conflict between communist insurgents and the government, and those who are more broadly interested in the impact on the nation-state of the forced relocation into the New Villages of more than 10% of the country's population.

Missionary Fellowship. It subsequently changed its name again in 1993 to OMF International. In referring to the organisation, the CIM or the Mission will be used up to and including 1951, and the OMF or the Fellowship thereafter.

[8] Ibrahim Bin Ali, 'Immigration and Missionaries', *The Straits Times*, Singapore, 8 October 1966.

[9] Raymond Lee and Susan Ackerman, *Sacred Tensions: Modernity and Religious Transformation in Malaysia* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1997), p. 133.

The second group are those interested in the factors that have influenced the growth of Christianity during this period. They include sociologists and Christian historians, who seek to explain the resilience of Christianity in the postcolonial era, as well as those who are interested in the impact of Christian mission in the New Villages in particular. Probably the most developed area of study has been the Emergency.

THE MALAYAN EMERGENCY

Extensive research has been carried out on the Emergency to determine what can be learnt from the counter-insurgency techniques that were used against the communists.[10] According to Karl Hack, most discuss the relative importance assigned to population control and other coercive steps taken to control the New Villagers, persuasion and 'winning hearts and minds', and the ability of General Sir Gerald Templer to lead, organise and unify opposition to the insurgents.[11] Templer was appointed High Commissioner of Malaya in 1952 and his role in the Emergency is hotly debated. This area of study was reinvigorated in 2003 when the perspective of Chin Peng, the leader of the MCP, was published.[12] Hack used insights from the book to support and update his thesis that the campaign 'turned the corner' in 1950-51.[13] This view challenges the consensus that the Emergency reached a stalemate in 1951 and it was during 1952-54 that the momentum changed.

In all this analysis there is little focus on missionaries and their role. A number of commentators mention the presence of missionaries involved in social and medical work once the New Villages were established. Richard Stubbs for example

[10] Studies on the Emergency include: Anthony Short, *The Communist Insurrection in Malaya, 1948-1960* (London: Muller, 1975); Richard Stubbs, *Hearts and Minds in Guerrilla Warfare: The Malayan Emergency, 1948-1960*, East Asian Historical Monographs (Singapore: OUP, 1989); Richard Clutterbuck, *The Long Long War : The Emergency in Malaya, 1948-1960* (London: Cassell, 1967); John Cloake, *Templer, Tiger of Malaya: The Life of Field Marshal Sir Gerald Templer* (London: Harrap, 1985); John Coates, *Suppressing Insurgency : An Analysis of the Malayan Emergency, 1948-1954* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1992); and France, Centre de doctrine d'emploi des forces, and Division Recherche et retour d'expérience, *Winning Hearts and Minds: Historical Origins of the Concept and Its Current Implementation in Afghanistan* (Paris: CDEF-DREX, 2011).

[11] Karl Hack, '"Iron Claws on Malaya": The Historiography of the Malayan Emergency', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 30.1 (1999), 99–125.

[12] Chin Peng, Ian Ward, and Norma Miraflor, *My Side of History* (Singapore: Media Masters, 2003).

[13] Karl Hack, 'The Malayan Emergency as Counter-insurgency Paradigm', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 32.3 (2009), 383–414.

acknowledges that missionaries were actively recruited and that this led to 'a small but steady stream of missionary workers being sent out to the New Villages'.[14] Antony Short goes the furthest to analyse their impact when he writes:

> Most of them specified in their reports that their work was evangelistic as well as medical or educational and although this may possibly be considered an ulterior motive it is hard to avoid the conclusion that without the work of these voluntary associations the New Villages would have rotted away.[15]

Chin Peng makes no mention of missionaries. There are a number of possible explanations for this, the most likely being that he either had little knowledge of them or felt they were not relevant to the outcome of the conflict. Having said this, he does recognise that resettlement was a major disruption to the party's strategy.[16]

The New Villages

The creation of the New Villages was an important part of the Government's strategy in its war against communist insurgents. Once established, the focus of concern turned to the sustainability of the New Villages and the need to incorporate these rural dwellers into the nation.[17] Paul Markandan, in 1954, recognised that the success or failure of the New Villages would have a greater long-term impact on the country than the Emergency itself.[18] In his assessment, he considered the future of the New Villages was in the balance. In his opinion, their survival and development was an urgent social and economic problem that was not being adequately addressed. He saw the biggest challenge was to integrate New Village inhabitants into Malayan society or in his words to 'Malayanise the New Villages'.[19] While recognising the

[14] Stubbs, p. 161; See also Kumar Ramakrishna, *Emergency Propaganda: The Winning of Malayan Hearts and Minds, 1948-1958* (Richmond: Curzon, 2002), p. 128; and Cloake, p. 280, who both acknowledge the contribution of medical services provided by missionaries.
[15] Short, *The Communist Insurrection*, p.400.
[16] *Dialogues with Chin Peng: New Light on the Malayan Communist Party*, ed. by Chin Peng and Karl Hack (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2004), pp. 153–55.
[17] See E. H. G. Dobby, 'Resettlement Transforms Malaya: A Case-History of Relocating the Population of an Asian Plural Society', *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, 1.3 (1952), 163–89; Victor Purcell, 'The Position of the Chinese Community in Malaya', *Journal of The Royal Central Asian Society*, 40.1 (1953), 70–81; John Fleming, 'Experiment in Democracy: The New Villages in Malaya', *International Review of Mission*, 45.177 (1956), 101–8; Kernial Singh Sandhu, 'The Saga of the "Squatter" in Malaya: A Preliminary Survey of the Causes, Characteristics and Consequences of the Resettlement of Rural Dwellers during the Emergency between 1948 and 1960', *Journal of Southeast Asian History*, 5.01 (1964), 143–77; and Ray Nyce, *The New Villages of Malaya: A Community Study*, ed. by Shirle Gordon (Singapore: Malaysian Sociological Research Institute, 1973).
[18] Paul Markandan, *The Problem of the New Villages in Malaya* (Singapore: Donald Moore, 1954).
[19] Markandan, p. 30.

strategic importance of having people living in the New Villages to counteract communist activity, he makes no mention of missionaries.

Later commentators have been more critical and focused more on the challenges of ethnicity in the New Villages.[20] They explore how the Villagers became victims of communal politics because the New Villages were identified as 'Chinese'. They highlight government neglect and are concerned for the survival of the New Villages.

Harper is one historian who has analysed the contribution of missionaries. He examined late colonialism in Malaya from the perspective of social and economic change. He recognised the importance of resettlement and emphasised the social force of colonial intervention. He suggested that the colonial government responded to the Emergency by seeking to encourage the creation of community and tried to win people over through social and political developments. In relation to the Chinese, this took the form of resettlement, which he suggests addressed a number of issues. Firstly, it sought to solve the 'squatter' problem by bringing squatter Chinese into mainstream life. The New Villages were designed to give squatters a stake in the country and a role in local democracy. Secondly, it enabled the re-establishment of Chinese leadership. Whether resettlement was designed to do this, as Harper suggests, is debatable. Thirdly, the protection of the New Villages provided the opportunity to offer an alternative to the 'temptations of Communism and ethnic particularism through the spread of Christianity'.[21]

Harper concludes that attempts to bring squatter Chinese into the life of the nation met with mixed success. The ability of the New Villagers to obtain land titles was of dubious value when compared with the economic freedom they previously enjoyed

[20] See Francis Loh Kok-Wah, 'Chinese New Villages: Ethnic Identity and Politics', in *The Chinese in Malaysia*, ed. by Lee Kam-Hing and Tan Chee-Beng (New York: OUP, 2000), pp. 255–81; Cheah Boon-Kheng, 'Ethnicity in the Making of Malaysia', in *Nation-Building: Five Southeast Asian Histories*, ed. by Wang Gung-Wu (Singapore: ISEAS Publications, 2005), pp. 91–115; Voon Phin-Keong, 'The Chinese New Villages in Malaysia: Impact of Demographic Changes and Response Strategies', *Journal of Malaysian Chinese Studies*, 12 (2009), 73–105; and Phang Siew-Nooi and Tan Teck-Hong, 'New Villages in Malaysia: Living Conditions and Political Trends', *Malaysian Journal of Chinese Studies*, 2.2 (2013), 17–27.

[21] Harper, p. 359. This conclusion is based on his analysis on pp. 183-87.

in the rural fringe, where they could choose the land they farmed. Involvement in local village councils was met with a lukewarm response by New Villagers, who were independent and not particularly community minded. In relation to the impact of Christianity he writes, 'Even the limited successes of expatriate missionaries were less significant than that of independent churches who saw Christianity as a vehicle for Chinese identity'.[22] This conclusion raises a number of questions. On the one hand it recognises missionaries were influential, independent churches were important, and Chinese identity was significant. On the other hand, the relationship between Christian mission and the establishment of New Village communities is not clear and requires further consideration. Harper's comments also highlight the importance of looking beyond independence when assessing their impact.

Christianity in Malaysia

A second area of interest is scholarship focused on Christianity in the post-war period. This includes both Singapore and West Malaysia because the history of the two countries was so closely intertwined until their separation in 1965. Sources include those that present an overall history of the Christian church,[23] and those that focus on a particular denomination.[24] While these sources are written predominantly for Christians and, from the perspective of research, tend not to be sufficiently critical, they do highlight significant themes and issues that need to be considered.

Sng in his history of the Protestant church in Singapore, recognises that the arrival of foreign missionaries and Asian evangelists from China in the 1950s had a significant

[22] Harper, pp. 359–60.

[23] Bobby Sng, *In His Good Time: The Story of the Church in Singapore, 1819-2003*, 3rd edn (Singapore: Graduates' Christian Fellowship, 2003); John Roxborogh, *A History of Christianity in Malaysia* (Singapore: Armour Publishing, 2014).

[24] Alan C. Herron, 'A History of the Protestant Christian Churches in West Malaysia and Singapore' (unpublished postgraduate dissertation, University of Otago, 1977); Ng Moon-Hing, 'History and Mission of the Anglican Chinese Church in West Malaysia' (unpublished undergraduate dissertation, STM, 1989); Robert Hunt, Lee Kam-Hing, and John Roxborogh, *Christianity in Malaysia: A Denominational History* (Petaling Jaya, Selangor: Pelanduk Publications, 1992); Earnest Lau, *From Mission to Church: The Evolution of the Methodist Church in Singapore and Malaysia; 1885-1976* (Singapore: Armour Publishing, 2008); Tee Heng-Peng, 'From China to Malaysia: A Study of the Development, Growth and Rooting of the Presbyterian Church in Malaysia from 1946 to 1975' (unpublished doctoral thesis, SEAGST, 2016).

impact on the growth of a new generation of churches in Singapore.[25] He also highlights important demographic changes in the country, which produced a new generation of Singaporeans who were born and educated in the country. They were looking to the future and were much more open to change than their parents. New parachurch mission organisations, like Youth for Christ (YFC) and the Inter-School Christian Fellowship (ISCF), grew rapidly as they presented the Christian message and this new generation of young people responded.

The focus of John Roxborogh is on the history of Protestant and Catholic Christianity in East and West Malaysia. He devotes a section to the Emergency and the New Villages and concludes that the work done was significant.[26] He mentions the OMF as one of the major sources of missionaries in the New Villages and how they worked with different denominations throughout the country. He then highlights how the MCC New Village Coordinating Committee (NVCC) managed the activities of 217 resident missionaries from eight different missions.[27] He also recognises that the OMF shifted its emphasis in the 1960s to urban churches and leadership training.[28] His conclusions raise a number of questions, which the summary nature of his book is unable to answer. For example, what criteria were used to determine the work was 'significant' and what factors contributed to this significance?

The post-war period is also of interest to sociologists, who want to understand the resilience of religion in Malaysia in the face of secularisation.[29] While Christianity is a minority religion in pluralist Malaysia, it is included in these studies. Raymond Lee

[25] Sng, pp. 210–18.
[26] Roxborogh, *A History of Christianity in Malaysia*, p. 85.
[27] In Hunt, Lee, and Roxborogh, the significance attributed to the work of New Villages varied considerably across the denominations. The Lutheran Church of Malaysia and Singapore, for example, was born out the Emergency, and the New Village work features prominently. For the much larger Methodist Church, on the other hand, the New Village work does not rate a mention.
[28] Roxborogh, *A History of Christianity in Malaysia*, p. 115.
[29] Gordon Means, 'Malaysia: Islam in a Pluralistic Society', in *Religions and Societies: Asia and the Middle East*, by Carlo Caldarola (Berlin; New York; Amsterdam: Mouton, 1982), pp. 445–96; Susan Ackerman and Raymond Lee, *Heaven in Transition: Non-Muslim Religious Innovation and Ethnic Identity in Malaysia* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 1988); Judith Nagata, 'Chinese Custom and Christian Culture: Implications for Chinese Identity in Malaysia', in *Southeast Asian Chinese: The Socio-Cultural Dimension*, ed. by Leo Suryadinata (Singapore: Times Academic Press, 1995), pp. 166–201; Lee and Ackerman; Diana Wong and Ngu Ik-Tien, 'A "Double Alienation": The Vernacular Chinese Church in Malaysia', *Asian Journal of Social Science*, 42.3–4 (2014), 262–90.

and Susan Ackerman, in their influential book, attribute the survival and growth of Christianity in Malaysia in the post-war period to the growth of indigenous leadership, nurtured by three American evangelical organisations in the 1960s, and the arrival of the charismatic movement in the country.[30] According to them, it is the emergence of indigenous urban middle-class English-speaking lay leaders that has enabled the Church to effectively respond to the postcolonial situation it faced.

More recently Diana Wong and Ngu Ik-Tien have highlighted the failure of the above analysis to take into consideration vernacular-speaking churches, including those in the New Villages. While they consider the results of the work of missionaries disappointing, they do recognise that they did reach a new stratum of Chinese society and nurtured a number of influential leaders.[31] They argue that it was the provision of Christian workers and literature from diaspora Chinese Christian networks, with centres in Hong Kong and Taiwan, that enabled vernacular-speaking migrant churches in Malaysia to grow. Their analysis also highlights how important the language of education is to the development of cultural identity.

Christian Mission in the New Villages

We turn now to the New Villages from the perspective of Christian mission. Over the years there has been a steady stream of mission narratives based on the experiences of missionaries in the New Villages.[32] These accounts describe evangelistic and social work carried out in order to celebrate the spread of the Christian message. Other early publications were written to inform Christians, predominantly in their home countries, of the needs in Malaya and the evangelistic challenges faced by

[30] Lee and Ackerman, p. 128.
[31] Wong and Ngu Ik-Tien, pp. 271–72.
[32] These include OMF missionaries Mary Welander, *Learning to Trust* (Private Publication); Gillian Hunt, *All the Pieces Fit* (Singapore: OMF, 1987); Sadie Custer and Loraine Custer Czarneke, *God's Vagabond: The Autobiography of Sadie Custer* (Littleton, CO: OMF Books, 2006); Anne Walker, *Crumbs of Bread* (Christchurch, NZ: Private Publication, 2008); Amy Moore, *Malayan Story [Electronic Resource]: The Story of the Start of the Work of the China Inland Mission / Overseas Missionary Fellowship in Malaya in the 1950's*, ed. by Ray Moore (Kyema Publishing, 2011); Missionaries from other mission agencies; Kathleen Carpenter, *The Password Is Love: In the New Villages of Malaya* (London: Highway Press, 1955); Asian missionaries; G.D. James, *Missionary Ventures in Malaysia* (Epping, NSW: G.D. James Multi-Media, 1984); Hansa Shah, *Called to Serve: The Story of Iris Fong* (Private Publication, 2001). An interesting variation is a fictional narrative by Amy McIntosh, *Journey into Malaya*, 2nd edn (London: Camelot Press Ltd, 1957).

missionaries.[33] A more limited number of summaries of the mission work of the OMF in Malaysia have been written. They evaluate the activities of the Fellowship.[34] While these works provide important source material concerning missionary activities in the New Villages, their evaluation of the impact of the work done is limited. One exception to this is the doctoral thesis written by Rev Dr John Fleming, who was an ex-China Church of Scotland missionary based in Singapore.[35] His thesis looks in detail at the growth of the Chinese Church in the New Villages in Johore between 1950-60 and provides important detailed information and analysis of the work of different mission agencies including the OMF in the state.

In addition to the above is a small body of literature of particular relevance to this research. In it missionaries discussed the exodus of Christian mission from China and the decision of mission agencies to come to Malaya.[36] They explore the relationship between mission agencies, the Chinese Communist Party and the British Government and provide important insights into the factors that led to missionaries coming to Malaya. While written by missionaries, Rev George Hood in particular attempts to provide a broader more critical view of events.

Only three scholars have made Christian mission in the New Villages the focus of their studies. The work of David Khoo and Wong Kow-Cheong are in the form of undergraduate dissertations and Lee Kam-Hing's are two journal articles. While both the dissertations and articles are limited in scope and depth, they do analyse the influence of missionaries. Khoo, who was the first to look at Protestant missionaries

[33] Francis Healey, *Malaya* (London: Edinburgh House Press, 1951); George Hood, *Malaya: The Challenge* (London: Presbyterian Church of England, 1958); Anne Hazelton, *Malaya: The Golden Chersonese*, Fields of Reaping, 9 (London: CIM, 1957).
[34] Alan Cole, *Emerging Pattern: CIM Work within the Diocese of Singapore and Malaya* (London: CIM, 1961); Elizabeth Goldsmith, *Against All Odds: God at Work in an Impossible Situation* (Milton Keynes: Authentic Media, 2007); Wong Woay-Ern, *When Flowers Bloom within Barbed Wires* (Kuala Lumpur: Bridge Communication, 2008).
[35] John Fleming, 'The Growth of the Chinese Church in the New Villages of the State of Johore, Malaya 1950-60: A Case Study in the Communication of the Gospel to Chinese Converts' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Union Theological Seminary, 1962).
[36] Phyllis Thompson, *China: The Reluctant Exodus* (Sevenoaks, UK: Hodder and Stoughton and the OMF, 1979); George Hood, *Neither Bang nor a Whimper: The End of a Missionary Era in China* (Singapore: Presbyterian Church of Singapore, 1991); David Huntley, 'The Withdrawal of the China Inland Mission from China and Their Redeployment to New Fields in East Asia' (unpublished doctoral thesis, TTC, 2002).

and their work in the New Villages, is a teacher from Singapore.[37] Wong, a pastor from East Malaysia, builds on this work but looks more narrowly at the work of the OMF in the southern states of West Malaysia.[38] The third contributor Lee is a retired history professor.[39] The scope of Lee's articles is similar to that of Khoo but he is a historian and has the advantage of access to a greater wealth of primary material.

Khoo's primary focus was on the collaboration between the British Government and mission agencies. He recognises that they took considerable risks in working together. The Government invited Christian missionaries at a time of delicate political negotiations, and the missionaries, who had to leave China because of their perceived collusion with the Government there, were willing to again work with the Government in extremely difficult circumstances. He concludes that both reaped qualified gains. The authorities received volunteer aid in resettling Chinese squatters, though not the Resettlement Officers they asked for. The missionaries had freedom to share Christianity but with the unwanted stigma of Government association.

Wong's analysis benefits from the writer's knowledge of churches founded by the OMF and from interviews conducted with New Village Christians, who lived and worked with the missionaries. He begins by looking at factors that influenced the coming of missionaries to Malaya, and then discusses the problems faced by OMF missionaries in the New Villages and the initiatives they took to overcome them. He highlights existing Chinese religious beliefs as the biggest barrier missionaries faced, and the importance of religious observance as a community activity that affirmed Chinese identity.

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[37] David Khoo Sheng-Li, 'Winning Hearts and Souls: Missionaries in the New Villages during the Malayan Emergency' (unpublished undergraduate dissertation, National University of Singapore, 2004).

[38] Wong Kow-Cheong, 'The Origin and the Development of the Overseas Missionary Fellowship New Village Work During the Malayan Emergency' (unpublished undergraduate dissertation, STM, 2008).

[39] Lee Kam-Hing, 'Western Missionaries in Chinese New Villages in Malaya, 1951 to 1960', in *The Contribution of the Churches during the Malayan Emergency*, by Ng Moon-Hing (Kuala Lumpur: Bridge Communications, 2009), pp. 62–89; Lee Kam-Hing, 'A Neglected Story: Christian Missionaries, Chinese New Villagers, and Communists in the Battle for the "Hearts and Minds" in Malaya, 1948–1960', *Modern Asian Studies*, 47.6 (2013), 1977–2006.

Wong concludes that while the tangible results were small, there were important intangible results. He suggests that the statistics should be read as indicative of a breakthrough in Christian mission in West Malaysia. He points to the lives of missionaries as role models of Christian discipleship that deeply impacted those they served. He highlights in particular children, who were influenced by the missionaries but whose impact was only felt a generation later. While his conclusions are biased towards missionaries he obviously holds in high regard, his recognition of the latent impact they had raises the question of timing. Most assessments of the work of missionaries, including Wong's, conclude at the end of the Emergency in 1960. Missionaries however, continued to work in Malaysia until the mid-1970s, which suggests the need to look beyond 1960 to adequately assess their influence.

Lee is concerned with the relationship between Christian mission and the colonial state and the events that led to Government-supported missionary activity. In his analysis he raises the issue of whether the mission agencies saw their role as part of the 'Western civilizing mission overseas'.[40] This deserves further investigation as this collaboration in Malaya fits the classic description of missionaries as agents of Western imperialism. He does conclude that missionaries did positively influence the establishment of the New Villages when he writes,

> It was the improvement in living conditions through welfare and educational work such as those carried out by the missionaries which gradually transformed disparate and politically-alienated squatter groups into a community that now held new political hope and expectations.[41]

Lee also recognises that the missionaries saw their work as distinct from the government's military and political objectives. He concludes that in terms of their own objectives these missionaries made a positive contribution in two ways. Firstly, churches were planted that became the foundation for later growth, and secondly, the New Village work strengthened the Chinese-speaking churches in rural and semi-rural areas and encouraged ecumenical cooperation.

[40] Lee Kam-Hing, 'A Neglected Story', p. 1986.
[41] Lee Kam-Hing, 'A Neglected Story', p. 2005.

To complete the picture, it is worth highlighting that missionary work in the New Villages did not go unnoticed by the other faith communities in the country. We only have brief glimpses, which tend to exaggerate the impact of missionaries, but we do find an account of a Buddhist missionary who struggled against the 'onslaught of Christian missionaries' in the New Villages.[42] Basri in his analysis of Islamic dawah and Christian mission recognises Christianity as a 'major bulwark against the onslaught of Communism' and ascribes the dramatic leap in the Christian population by the 1970s to the New Village work.[43] Whatever the motivation, these examples do give voice to the perspectives of other faith communities.

This review suggests there is still much work to be done. While scholars have acknowledged the presence of Western missionaries, and in some cases assessed their influence in the New Villages, none has made them the focus of their study.[44] In addition, only Harper has provided any support for his conclusions. Likewise, most historians of Christianity in Malaysia have recognised their presence but disagree over their importance. Some, like Roxborogh, see them as significant, while others do not even mention them. Three writers have made missionaries the focus of their study. Their analysis, however, is limited and all three terminate their analysis at the end of the Emergency in 1960. This thesis addresses the above weaknesses and breaks new ground by taking the focus beyond 1960.

1.3 Statement of Objectives

The number of Protestant missionaries in West Malaysia grew significantly in the 1950s as mission agencies responded to the Government's invitation to work in the New Villages. This influx of mission agencies arrived at a formative time in the country's history. The literature review above suggests that a comprehensive appraisal of their impact has not yet been carried out.

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[42] 'Life Story of Ven Dr K. Sri Dhammananda: Nation Building', 2014 <http:// www.ksridhammananda.com> [accessed 6 September 2014].
[43] Ghazali Basri, *Christian Mission and Islamic Dawah in Malaysia* (Kuala Lumpur: Nurin Enterprise, 1992), pp. 18, 26.
[44] This is not the case elsewhere. See John Stuart, *British Missionaries and the End of Empire: East, Central, and Southern Africa, 1939-1964* (Grand Rapids, MI; Edinburgh: Eerdmans, 2011).

The objective of this thesis is to build on the limited work to date on Protestant mission in the post-war period in Malaysia, through original research into the contribution of the OMF, the mission agency which provided the largest number of missionaries to work in the New Villages. It will begin by taking a fresh look at the role of Protestant mission agencies in the formation and establishment of the New Villages. The New Villages were the product of colonial intervention and Protestant missionaries were active participants. In order to arrive at a more complete understanding of their contribution, existing arguments over the impact of this collaboration will be reassessed along with the ongoing impact of the Chinese New Villages in the plural society of Malaysia.

The thesis will then evaluate the contribution of the OMF to the growth of Christianity in Malaysia. It argues that the initial objective of the OMF was pioneer church-planting and the biggest challenge they faced was the powerful influence of Chinese Religion on the worldview of New Village residents. It uses new innovative quantitative research to summarise the results of the OMF's pioneer church-planting, before assessing how successful missionaries were in establishing indigenous countercultural Christian communities in the New Villages.

In the 1960s the OMF's strategy expanded beyond the New Villages to include English- and Chinese-educated urban Asian young people. These young people were growing up in the midst of unprecedented social and political change and during a time when they had increasing access to higher education. As a result, missionaries found them much more open to considering alternative worldviews. OMF missionaries became involved in both church-based and parachurch ministries to reach and disciple this group in society. This thesis will, for the first time, explore the impact of this missionary activity, and in doing so challenge existing interpretations and shed new light on the reasons for the growth of Christianity in Malaysia.

After the Second World War, Protestant churches in Malaysia faced the daunting challenge of adapting to a postcolonial situation, in which they represented marginalised religion. This thesis reviews the specialised parachurch ministries the OMF started or participated in, and presents the current arguments used to explain how Protestant churches effectively responded to these challenges. It then builds on and refines existing arguments by demonstrating how the strategy of the OMF, its conservative evangelical ethos and its training and discipleship of local leaders, contributed significantly to the ability of Christians to adapt and transform themselves into contextual Malaysian congregations.

Figure 1: 1953 Map of the Federation of Malaya

1.4 Scope and Methodology

The OMF divided missionaries it sent to Malaya geographically into two fields. The North Malayan Field was made up of Anglican missionaries and worked in collaboration with the Diocese to plant Anglican churches. It worked among New Villages in the state of Perak and its headquarters was in the small town of Tapah.[45]

The South Malayan Field was much larger and worked in the states of Johore, Pahang and Selangor.[46] Its headquarters was in Kuala Lumpur and it included missionaries from a variety of countries and Protestant denominations. While the Field

[45] The OMF also worked with one church in Penang. Because only one church is involved it has been included with those in Perak.

[46] The OMF also worked in two villages in the state of Malacca (now spelt Melaka). Because the number of villages is so small, they have been included with other villages in Selangor.

cooperated with different denominations, it was free to establish churches independently from a particular one.

A review of the number of Christian workers in 1959 highlights the significance of the OMF's presence in the New Villages. As Table 2 shows, the OMF represented 45% of all Christian workers and 69% of the European missionaries. It had the largest number of missionaries in each of the states it worked in and the greatest breadth of coverage

Table 2: 1959 Resident Missionaries in the New Villages

	Johore	Pahang	Perak	Selangor	Kuala Lumpur	Other	Total		European	Asian
OMF	21	22	26	17	7	4	97	45%	97	
ULCA[47]			19	14	1		34	16%	12	22
CNEC[48]	6		5				11	5%		11
Methodist	2	1	12	7	2	4	28	13%	8	20
Anglican (CMS)	6		7	12	4		29	13%	15	14
Presbyterian	14						14	6%	6	8
Other	2					2	4	2%	2	2
	51	23	69	50	14	10	217		140	77

Source: Calculated from the MCC Survey (1959)

across the states where the majority of New Villages were established. Through studying its work, it is therefore possible to build up a more reliable and comprehensive view of the mission work carried out in the New Villages when compared with studies that rely on findings from one village, one denominational mission, or one state.

SCOPE

By focusing on the OMF, certain boundaries to the scope of the work need to be recognised. Firstly, the focus is West Malaysia, which includes nine Malay states and the former crown colonies of Malacca and Penang. [49] They were brought together as the Federation of Malaya in 1948 and gained independence in 1957.

[47] United Lutheran Church in America (ULCA).
[48] Christian Nationals' Evangelism Commission (CNEC).
[49] From 1955 the Mission began sending workers to staff Chefoo school, a school for the children of missionaries located in the Cameron Highlands in the state of Pahang. While they clearly had an impact in the area and are mentioned in relation to All Souls Church, they have not been included in

Secondly, the period covered will start when the OMF established missionaries in West Malaysia in 1952. It continued to send missionaries and in 1962 the number reached its peak of 124. After 1967 due to visa restrictions, the number of missionaries began to reduce and this review concludes in 1977 when the number of missionaries had reduced to twenty-two.

The OMF is a conservative Protestant mission agency so this analysis will focus, thirdly, on its impact on Protestant Christianity. While included together in census statistics, Protestant denominations and the Roman Catholic Church operated quite independently in the New Villages and in Malaya. Where relevant, their activities will be discussed, but this thesis will not include the Catholic Church.

This research will also restrict itself, fourthly, to the growth of Christianity among the ethnic Chinese, who represent the largest non-Malay population in West Malaysia. One of the reasons the OMF wanted to come to Malaysia was because the majority of the New Village residents were Chinese. While it did later broaden its focus to include the ethnic Indians, the vast majority of its resources were focused on Chinese.

When looking at the growth of Christianity among the Chinese, it is important to recognise the linguistic differences within the Chinese community. When the OMF arrived, they found that most Chinese, especially the older generation in the New Villages, spoke Chinese dialects.[50] Later, when they moved into urban areas, they met more Mandarin- and English-educated Chinese, who spoke Mandarin or English at home. One of the results of this sub-ethnic linguistic diversity is that churches in Malaysia often have different congregations based on language. It is important therefore when assessing the growth of the ethnically Chinese church to include both English- and Chinese-speaking churches in the analysis.

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this review. From 1968 OMF missionaries also began to be sent to East Malaysia. They have also been excluded from the scope of this review.

[50] Strictly speaking they are not dialect but distinct languages. However, for the sake of consistency they will be referred to as dialects.

METHODOLOGY

This thesis follows a historical approach, which incorporates both qualitative and quantitative methods. It includes a review of secondary sources and the evaluation of a range of primary sources, some of which will be used for the first time. The three most important OMF sources are the archives at the UK National Headquarters in Borough Green, Kent, the archives at OMF's International Centre in Singapore, and the private records of Fred and Jessie McClymont.

These archives contain a range of unpublished records including letters, circular prayer letters, minutes of committee meetings and conferences and other miscellaneous reports. An important source are articles contributed by missionaries to the OMF's magazine, which was distributed to its supporters around the globe. The title of the magazine varied over the period under study and will be referred to as *The Millions*.[51] It was written to inform and encourage readers to continue to support the Fellowship and this inevitably impacted what was included and how it was presented. Findings therefore need to be evaluated critically. It does however, provide an invaluable source of basic information as well as revealing the perspective of OMF missionaries on particular issues.

A more candid appraisal of events can be found in the in-house publication for members of the OMF called *The Field Bulletin*, which will also be reviewed. This publication provides important insights into the OMF's culture and mission strategy. The personal experiences of OMF missionaries can also be found in a number of missionary narratives mentioned in the literature review (see footnote 32). In addition, each OMF member was required to write a regular prayer letter to their supporters. They provide a fascinating window into the life of a particular missionary and some are held at Borough Green.

As this is an exercise in contemporary history a number of OMF missionaries who worked in West Malaysia are still alive today. A small part of this project will involve

[51] In the United Kingdom the magazine was called *China's Millions* up to 1951, then simply *The Millions* from 1952, and finally *East Asia Millions* from 1958. The name changes varied however from country to country. Unless otherwise specified, references will refer to the UK edition.

interviewing past OMF missionaries about their experiences in West Malaysia. While Tosh highlights the pitfalls of using oral history, he recognises that oral testimony can provide an invaluable supplementary source that can confirm and elucidate information found in written sources.[52]

In addition to OMF sources, another source of information can be found in institutions that hold the archives of inter-mission organisations, mission agencies and individual missionaries. Two important archives in this regard are the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in London and the Centre for the Study of Christianity in the Non-Western World in Edinburgh. Included in the SOAS collection are copies of the MCC Survey (1958) and the revised edition in 1959. This Survey gives a detailed account of each New Village and the missionary work being carried out in them. These important sources provide an alternative perspective of the OMF that enables a more accurate picture to be developed.

Files located at The National Archives (TNA) provide the Government's perspective of the Emergency in general and Chinese squatter resettlement in particular. Of particular interest are a limited number of files that relate to approaches made by the government to mission agencies for workers. The perspective of the Malaysian Government after independence is more difficult to ascertain. When looking at the imposition of visa restrictions, for example, the only sources available, apart from the OMF, are public announcements in newspapers.

A major area of concern in this research is being able to access the perspective of resettled Chinese. This study is limited to English written sources. It is therefore dependent on the judicious use of secondary sources written in English by Malaysian Chinese from their perspective.[53] The problem, however, as Khoo points out is not

[52] John Tosh, *The Pursuit of History*, 5th edn (Harlow, UK: Pearson Education, 2010), pp. 319–21.
[53] Khoo Soo-Hock, 'The Dilemma of New Villages in Malaysia', *Ekistics*, 46.277 (1979), 235–38; Francis Loh Kok-Wah, *Beyond the Tin Mines: Coolies, Squatters, and New Villagers in the Kinta Valley, Malaysia, c. 1880-1980* (Singapore; New York: OUP, 1988); Lim Hin-Fui and Fong Tian-Yong, *The New Villages in Malaysia: The Journey Ahead* (Kuala Lumpur: Institute of Strategic Analysis & Policy Research, 2005); Tan Teng-Phee, 'Like a Concentration Camp, Lah: Chinese Grassroots Experience of the Emergency and New Villages in British Colonial Malaya', *Chinese Southern Diaspora Studies*, 3 (2009), 216–28; Wong Woay-Ern; Wong Kow-Cheong.

that there are available sources that are not being consulted but that very few written sources exist.[54] He maintains that missionaries, who lived in the New Villages and had an intimate knowledge of life in them, have preserved in their writings a rare and valuable glimpse into the life of resettled Chinese that would otherwise have been lost. Care will therefore be taken to ensure that, in the evaluation of sources, the views of Chinese New Villagers are represented as fairly and prominently as possible.

Quantitative data will be used to substantiate findings and support conclusions. This will include official census statistics on religion and the MCC Surveys. Innovative use has been made of information found in the 'Prayer Directory of the Overseas Missionary Fellowship', which until 1970 was produced annually. The Directories give the names and location of all OMF missionaries, their nationality, their home country, the year they joined and any qualification they had. From this information, it is possible, for the first time, to establish accurate statistics of the number of OMF missionaries in West Malaysia and the New Villages they worked in.

The results of collating this data can be found in Appendices 2 and 3. Appendix 2 shows all villages, new and existing, where the OMF placed resident workers for more than a year. Appendix 3 shows all existing churches where the OMF placed a resident missionary for more than a year. While there is a level of approximation involved, and the tables assume a worker was resident for the whole year in one location, by taking the entire population of missionaries, it is possible to build up an overall picture of where the OMF invested its time. These tables will be used to provide support and corroborate findings from other sources.

1.5 Structure and Content

This thesis is split into two major sections. The first is focused on the initial strategy of the OMF when it arrived in Malaya and the work they did in the New Villages until the end of the Emergency in 1960. It begins by looking at the contextual and institutional factors that influenced the Mission's strategy in chapter 2. In chapter 3 the section moves on to look at the consequent challenges' missionaries faced in the

[54] Khoo Sheng-Li, pp. 38–39.

New Villages. With the scene set, chapter 4 then details the medical, social and educational services provided by missionaries as well as highlighting the impact they had through living as residents in the Villages. It then assesses how successful Protestant missionaries were in fulfilling government expectations and contributing to the establishment of the New Villages.

The first section concludes in chapter 5 by asserting that a worldview shaped by Chinese Religion was the biggest challenge faced by missionaries in the New Villages. It then describes the evangelistic work carried out by OMF missionaries in order to present and advocate for a Christian worldview. It concludes with a summary showing the encouraging number of centres the OMF were engaged with in 1960 across the states of Perak, Johore, Pahang and Selangor.

The second section concentrates on the post-Independence years from 1957-77 and the impact of the OMF on the growth of Christianity in West Malaysia. It begins in chapter 6 by showing how the OMF's strategy adapted after 1960 in response to the changes it was experiencing. This change of strategy led to three priorities being developed. The first involved consolidating 'Village Work' and the remainder of the chapter looks at the impact of the OMF on vernacular-speaking Chinese.

The second priority involved the OMF expanding the scope of its ministry to work with existing denominational churches and encourage evangelism among English-speaking Chinese young people. The impact of this work on English-speaking Asian congregations is presented and assessed in chapter 7.

The need to broaden the Mission's focus to include discipleship and involvement in specialised ministries is the third priority identified. Chapter 8 describes the specialised parachurch ministries that OMF missionaries became involved with. It then evaluates how, through these ministries and its network of churches throughout the country, the OMF influenced and encouraged local leadership and supported the setting up of contextual Malaysian churches.

PART I: THE EMERGENCY (1948-60)

2. COLONIAL COLLABORATION

Figure 2: 1949 Margaret Hollands

Margaret Hollands believed God wanted her to be a missionary in China and she responded by joining the CIM. When she joined, she had a Bachelor of Arts degree and three years teaching experience.[1] *She was one of the '49ers', that is, one of forty-nine CIM missionaries to arrive in China in 1949. She set out, knowing that the country was in turmoil, but trusting that this was where God wanted her to be. By October she was based in Chungking, engaged in learning Chinese. In the same month, communist forces took the city. Little did she know then, how short her time in China would be, or that within two years, she would find herself living in the classroom of a school, not in China but in Scudai New Village, Malaya.*[2]

This chapter looks at the contextual and institutional factors that led to Hollands leaving the inland provinces of China, and the CIM sending her to teach and live in a New Village in Malaya. While the key observable factor was an invitation from the government, the history of the CIM and its experience of withdrawing from China had a far greater impact on the strategy it adopted. The trauma of leaving China and the challenge of communism deeply affected many CIM missionaries, and they came to Malaya determined to correct the perceived failures of the past. The existing Protestant community in Malaya was also significant. Their presence required the CIM to work with other denominations in a way it had not done in China, and this also contributed to the Mission's focus on the New Villages.

[1] Margaret Hollands, 'Introducing…', *The Millions*, September-October Supplement 1949, p. 2.
[2] Margaret Hollands, 'Resettling in a Settlement', *The Millions*, January 1952, p. 3.

2.1 Invitations from the Government

During the Emergency, the British Government approached Christian mission agencies for help. The nature of their request changed over time and began with Sir Henry Gurney, the High Commissioner, inviting Chinese-speaking missionaries to become teachers and Resettlement Supervisors.

Chinese-speaking Teachers and Resettlement Supervisors (August 1950)

In 1950 Gurney was short of Chinese-speaking personnel in his civil administration.[3] He also needed to counter the promotion of communist teaching in Chinese-speaking primary schools. In July, he contacted the US government with a view to recruiting Chinese-speaking American teachers, who had lost their jobs in China when the Korean War started.[4]

When Gurney heard that British missionaries were also withdrawing from China, he instructed the Colonial Office (CO) in August to approach mission agencies to find suitable candidates to work, 'in the Education Department and as Welfare Officers among Chinese squatters'.[5] The CO approached the Conference of British Missionary Societies (CBMS), the coordinating body of more than forty Protestant British missionary societies, the YMCA, the Catholic Church, and the Church of Scotland. The CO offered to employ missionaries full-time, on two- to three-year contracts.[6] The importance Gurney attached to this request can be seen in his offer, while visiting London, to attend the October meeting of the Far East subcommittee of the CBMS.[7]

The initial response was not promising. This was partly because the number of missionaries available was far smaller than expected. At the same time, mission agencies were also extremely wary of responding positively because of their

[3] *Malaya: Part II: The Communist Insurrection 1948-1953*, ed. by A.J. Stockwell, British Documents on the End of Empire, B (London: HMSO, 1995), III, p. 174, document 199.
[4] Telegram from Sir H Gurney to the CO, 29 July 1950, The National Archives [UK]: CO 717/209/3.
[5] Telegram from Sir H Gurney to the CO, 17 August 1950, TNA: CO 717/209/3.
[6] Telegram from Commissioner General (South East Asia) to CO, 28 August 1950, TNA: CO 717/209/3.
[7] Letter from CO to Secretary of the CBMS, 23 September 1950, TNA: CO 717/209/3.

experience in China, where they were labelled agents of imperialism.[8] They did not want to be seen to be collaborating with the Government.

Gradually the emphasis of Gurney's request shifted from Chinese-speaking teachers to the need for Resettlement Officers.[9] Victor Purcell recognised the influential position of Resettlement Officers and the importance of having good personnel in the role. In his opinion, a New Village reflected the personality of its Resettlement Officer. A good officer was one who put his heart into the village and did not treat his role as merely a job to make a living. He concluded, 'I place high amongst the good resettlement officers a number of missionaries who were previously in China and who have a knowledge of the Chinese language'.[10]

What is not clear is how many missionaries actually became Resettlement Officers. Purcell's comments may indicate that more missionaries were employed than has previously been recognised. Ray Dawson, an ex-China missionary, who became a Resettlement Officer, claimed he recruited twenty of the fifty-four Resettlement Officers needed at the time, although Hood doubts that all were ex-China missionaries.[11] What we do know is that at the end of March 1952, there were fifty-five Resettlement Supervisors, and of them, forty had been recruited overseas and that two were ex-CIM missionaries.[12] While the number of ex-China missionaries was never as high as hoped, Resettlement Officers were in an influential position, and missionaries may have played a greater role in the operational phase of resettlement than has been recognised.

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[8] George Hood, *Neither Bang nor a Whimper: The End of a Missionary Era in China* (Singapore: Presbyterian Church of Singapore, 1991), pp. 149–50.
[9] In the Federation of Malaya, *Resettlement and the Development of New Villages in the Federation of Malaya, 1952* (Legislative Council Paper No. 33 of 1952), pp. 3–4, a distinction is made between Resettlement Supervisors, who were responsible for a number of New Villages, and Assistant Resettlement Officers, who were responsible for a particular village. The title Resettlement Officer can refer in the literature to either a supervisor or assistant, depending on the context.
[10] Victor Purcell, 'The Position of the Chinese Community in Malaya', *Journal of The Royal Central Asian Society*, 40.1 (1953), 70–81 (p. 72).
[11] Hood, *Neither a Bang nor a Whimper*, p. 151.
[12] See Federation of Malaya, p. 4, Elizabeth Goldsmith, *Against All Odds: God at Work in an Impossible Situation* (Milton Keynes: Authentic Media, 2007), p. 4, and Leslie Keeble, 'Evangelist at Large', *The Millions*, April 1957, p. 40.

This request is also evidence of Gurney's early concern for the welfare of the people being resettled. He was looking for Resettlement Supervisors that not only spoke Chinese but had a genuine concern for the people involved. It challenges the view of Kumar Ramakrishna, who maintains that the Government's only concern, during this phase of the Emergency, was security.[13]

Residential Missionaries Providing Services (February 1952)

With resettlement nearing completion, the Government recognised the need for 'aftercare'. The scale of development envisaged however, was beyond the human resources of the British Government. As Harper put it, 'The aspirations of colonial power had overreached its means'. [14] To be able to supply the desired social, educational and medical services, the Government turned to voluntary associations for help. Two weeks after arriving in Malaya, in February 1952, the new High Commissioner and Director of Operations, Sir Gerald Templer, wrote to the CBMS:

> I am absolutely convinced that we must do much more in all these respects in the Chinese resettlement areas if we are to influence these half-million people in the right direction. These resettlement areas are fruitful soil for any seed, wheat or tares. They are the most important battlefields for the soul of this country to-day […] From the point of view of Government (quite apart from that of the Christian Faith) the most effective people to exploit this opportunity are missionaries, because they have no axe to grind politically […] We want evangelists, and doctors and nurses and teachers.[15]

Whereas Gurney's request, sixteen months previously, had been for missionaries to enter government service, Templer recognised that mission agencies preferred working independently of the Government. Indeed, some mission societies were already sending missionaries.[16] The OMF, for example, already had nine workers in resettlement areas and six were in transit when Templer wrote to the CBMS.[17] These

[13] Kumar Ramakrishna, '"Transmogrifying" Malaya: The Impact of Sir Gerald Templer (1952–54)', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 32.01 (2001), 79–92 (p. 81).
[14] T. N. Harper, *The End of Empire and the Making of Malaya* (Cambridge: CUP, 1999), p. 183.
[15] Letter from Sir G Templer to the secretary of the CBMS, 25 February 1952, SOAS Archives [UK]: CBMS/01/E/76/04.
[16] Letter from Mr F Mitchell (CIM UK Director) to CO, 9 November 1951, TNA: CO 1022/378.
[17] 'List of workers already in the New Fields', *The Millions*, Feb 1952, p. 15.

mission agencies wanted to make it clear that the decision to work in 'resettlement areas' was based on the needs they saw and not the request from Templer.[18]

Mission societies were also very concerned about receiving financial support from the Government and were well aware of how it would be perceived by others. In the end some did accept funds, in the form of grants-in-aid, for services requested by the Government. Whether these funds significantly impacted the number of missionaries that came to the New Villages, as Michael Northcott claims, is debatable.[19] While funding was important, the challenge for most mission societies was finding suitable candidates. For the OMF, its decision to work in the New Villages was based, as we shall see, on the opportunity to evangelise a previously unreached group in society, not the promise of Government funding.

The Government engaged with a wide range of voluntary associations to get the help they needed. The importance Templer placed on these groups can be seen in his establishment of the Chief Secretary's Coordinating Committee. This committee, in addition to representatives from church denominations and mission agencies, included the British Red Cross, St John's Ambulance and the Boy Scouts, and representatives from the Malayan Chinese Association (MCA) and the Government Central Welfare Council. It was set up to prevent overlapping of the work of voluntary bodies and to ensure facilities being provided were adequately funded.[20]

When the CO, on behalf of Gurney, first contacted the CBMS, their biggest need was for people who spoke Chinese and understood Chinese culture. In contacting mission agencies, they hoped to recruit into government service, teachers and Resettlement Officers. This they were able to do, although it is difficult to determine the extent to which they were successful. A subsequent approach by Templer had different expectations. The request now, was for missionaries to provide social, educational and medical services in the New Villages. Government funding would be available for

[18] Hood, *Neither a Bang nor a Whimper*, p. 150.
[19] Michael Northcott, 'Two Hundred Years of Anglican Mission', in *Christianity in Malaysia: A Denominational History*, by Robert Hunt, Lee Kam-Hing, and John Roxborogh (Petaling Jaya, Selangor: Pelanduk Publications, 1992), pp. 34–74 (p. 59).
[20] Federation of Malaya, p. 17.

these services and missionaries would also be free to engage in evangelism and pioneer church-planting. A significant number of mission agencies responded to this request and by 1959 more than 200 missionaries were resident in the New Villages, some of whom were engaged in providing services needed by the Government.

2.2 The CIM's Withdrawal from China

While the CIM was not a full member of the CBMS, it is likely it knew about Gurney's request for missionaries in August 1950.[21] At that time, however, it had more than 600 missionaries based in China and was still hoping that communist China would allow them to remain and continue to serve in the country.[22]

The Situation in China

At the same time however, missionaries in China were coming under increasing pressure to leave. In May, a group of Chinese church leaders met with Premier Zhou En-Lai to discuss the religious policy of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). The result was what became known as 'The Manifesto'. It accepted that Western imperialism had used Christianity to further its ends and that foreign influence had to be eradicated from the church. It landed like a bombshell in the Protestant mission community. Then in June the Korean War began. From the perspective of the CCP, the war was interpreted as expansionist America threatening the revolution and China's sovereignty. Propaganda against the West and anti-missionary rhetoric intensified. Chinese Christians came under increasing pressure to distance themselves from Western missionaries, irrespective of their personal feelings.

The CIM's initial response to the Manifesto had been to say that they were not represented among the leaders who met with Zhou En-Lai. The Mission also claimed that, 'Since the churches associated with C.I.M. were already to all intents and purposes independent on both counts, we did not feel the new orders affected us intimately'.[23] Two events in early December 1950, however, finally convinced the

[21] Hood, *Neither a Bang nor a Whimper*, p. 62.
[22] A. J. Broomhall, *Hudson Taylor & China's Open Century: Book Seven: It Is Not Death to Die!* (London: Hodder and Stoughton and the OMF, 1989), p. 566.
[23] Phyllis Thompson, *China: The Reluctant Exodus* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1979), p. 46.

Mission that it needed to leave.[24] The first was when a trusted leader from Zhejiang asked them to go, and the second was when the Mission was informed by Marcus Cheng (Chen Chong-Gui), President of Chungking Theological Seminary and a respected national leader, that their lecturers were no longer required.[25] On 21 December Arnold Lea, a Deputy China Director, wrote to members advising of the need for a partial withdrawal, and then at a staff meeting, on 2 January 1951, the decision to leave all centres was announced. In the end, the main reason for leaving was the need to protect Chinese Christians from being associated with missionaries.

One of the features of the CIM, which set it apart, was that both its headquarters and its decision-makers were based in China. Additionally, it followed a policy called 'Director Rule'. As David Huntley explains, 'CIM was not a democracy. While he is expected to consult other directors, it is the General Director, not a committee who directs'.[26] This should have enabled the Mission to respond quickly, decisively and in a more informed way to the changes that were taking place.

Unfortunately, in April 1950 the General Director, Bishop Houghton, was forced for health reasons to leave China and was recuperating in Australia. In his absence John Sinton deputised. Taking the Mission's key decision-maker away from China during this critical period in 1950 had serious repercussions. It left an unclear situation concerning the level of authority Sinton and the other directors in China had. While they were in a better position to make decisions, they were unable to do so. Between July and December, it became clear to Sinton and the other directors in China that staying was not going to be possible.[27] Houghton, however, continued to insist on the Mission remaining in China. While, given the ethos of the Mission, the decision not to leave was the right one, in hindsight, greater flexibility should have been given to the directors in China concerning the decision to withdraw, and to allow missionaries, who because of a particular local situation needed to leave, to do so.

[24] Thompson, p. 54.
[25] Daniel Bays, *A New History of Christianity in China* (Chichester, UK: John Wiley & Sons, 2012), p. 140.
[26] David Huntley, 'The Withdrawal of the China Inland Mission from China and Their Redeployment to New Fields in East Asia' (unpublished doctoral thesis, TTC, 2002), p. 28.
[27] Huntley, pp. 63–64.

THE KALORAMA CONFERENCE (FEBRUARY 1951)

Having decided to evacuate China, the Mission then needed to consider its future. A conference was arranged in Kalorama, Melbourne, Australia, near where Houghton was convalescing. It was here in February 1951 that the future direction of the Mission was decided by seven men, the majority of whom, ironically, were based outside China.[28] The conference decided that the Mission should continue with a focus on overseas Chinese (i.e. Chinese outside China). At the same time it would not exclude other ethnic groups. The conference also emphasised the hope of returning to China in the future, and its continuing commitment to praying for the country.

Not everyone in the CIM supported the decision. Some, including Leslie Lyall, had written to the conference recommending that the Mission close down. For the directors in China, who had literally given their lives to serve in China, the decision felt as if the Mission was abandoning China and Chinese Christians in their time of need. How could their leader so quickly look to possible new fields? In the end, the decision to continue was not dependent upon the feelings of those in China, but on the level of support it had in its sending countries. In retrospect, the Home Directors were probably the best people to make that decision. According to Fred Mitchell, the UK Home Director, 'Our supporters love and trust the Mission and, if in answer to prayer we were guided to undertake new work, would rally to its support'.[29]

Requests from outside the Mission for missionaries to work with diaspora Chinese both supported the decision of the conference and highlighted unmet needs in the region that the CIM could respond to. A number of these requests came from Malaya and Singapore, most likely through Sinton having spent two days in Singapore *en route* to Australia.[30] A request to establish a Bible Institute in Singapore and an invitation to second a CIM missionary to the InterVarsity Fellowship in Malaya and

[28] They were: Bishop F. Houghton the General Director, Mr J. Sinton, a China Director, and five Directors from different sending countries: F. Mitchell (England), Rev J. Griffin (North America), Mr J. Robinson (South Africa), Mr J. O. Sanders (Australia) and Rev H. Funnell (New Zealand).
[29] 'Minutes of the Meeting of Directors of the CIM', 12-17 February 1951, Kalorama, p. 3, McClymont Papers: Folder 6.
[30] Huntley, p. 72.

Indonesia were highlighted in the final report to CIM supporters.[31] A request from the British Government, 'for administrators, welfare workers and medical helpers', is the CIM's first recorded contact with the Government.[32] It appears in the minutes, but perhaps because of its sensitive nature, did not appear in the final report. The minute also suggests that the British Government, as early as February 1951, had broadened the scope of its invitation. They were now willing to support missionaries in resettlement areas, who remained members of their mission agency.

As the Kalorama conference progressed, the lack of time for adequate consultation, and the need for a better understanding of the 'new fields', was recognised. The conference therefore resolved to hold a number of 'conferences of missionaries' to consult with and gather the views of CIM missionaries around the world. At the same time, it agreed that survey teams should be sent to a number of countries to evaluate whether there were unmet needs, which God was calling the CIM to respond to.[33]

Lyall was asked to conduct the survey of Singapore and Malaya. While not convinced that the Mission should continue, he eventually agreed, writing, 'Perhaps I could make a small contribution to the furtherance of world missions without committing myself to a future with CIM'.[34] He arrived in Singapore on 16 April 1951 and for the next month and a half conducted the survey, which included an exploratory trip with Bishop Houghton to Johore at the end of April and a more extensive journey through Malaya in May.

Lyall's final survey report was comprehensive and identified a range of unmet needs in Singapore and Malaya. In addition to sending workers to resettlement areas, he also recommended sending workers to towns without churches, engaging in work among English- and Mandarin-speaking young people, and setting aside workers as

[31] Bishop Frank Houghton, 'If It Be Thou…', *The Millions*, April 1951, p. 40.
[32] 'Minutes of the Meeting of Directors of the CIM', Kalorama, Melbourne, 12-17 February 1951, p. 8, McClymont Papers: Folder 6.
[33] The countries recommended were Formosa (Taiwan), Singapore & Malaya, Thailand, Philippines, Japan and Indonesia.
[34] Leslie T. Lyall, 'Memoirs of L. T. Lyall', p. 179, OMF Archives [UK], Borough Green, Kent.

itinerant evangelists and Bible teachers.[35] While recognising the ban on proselytising Malay people, he did identify the need to reach out to this ethnic group. He also identified the urgent need for an evangelical Bible Seminary, while cautioning that the CIM was not in a position to initiate anything. He recommended that it should be ready to contribute staff when requested.

His report in *The Millions* indicates that the survey may have changed his personal outlook on the future of the CIM. He wrote,

> the fact that a large section of the Chinese population of Malaya hitherto inaccessible to the gospel messenger is now brought together near main highways in settlements where the administrative authorities are begging- yes begging- the missionary come and work, is deeply significant.[36]

The CIM was being asked to engage in pioneer missionary work with rural unreached Chinese. For many in the CIM this situation was clear evidence of divine guidance. While God was closing the door to work in China, he was opening the door to work with unreached diaspora Chinese in Malaya. In the end, Lyall remained a missionary in the Mission and continued to advocate for Christians in China.

The Bournemouth Conference (November 1951)

One of the challenges of an international mission like the CIM was meeting together. In November 1951, the Bournemouth Conference of CIM leaders was held. Before it, however, at least fourteen local 'conferences of missionaries' were held throughout September and into October. These meetings were held in cities from sending countries to which missionaries had returned, in North America, Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom, as well as in the emerging fields of Japan and Malaya. The largest meeting was held in Hong Kong, where over sixty members of the Mission were waiting to return home. They all deliberated over an identical comprehensive agenda. It covered: lessons from the past, the possibility of unmet needs in the countries around China, a new name, administration of the Mission, the status of the Bournemouth Conference, education of missionary children, and the

[35] Leslie Lyall, 'Malaya Survey Report for the CIM', p. 10, McClymont Papers: Folder 6.
[36] Leslie Lyall, 'The Summons of a Great Need', *The Millions*, July 1951, p. 73.

relationship with associate missions.[37] The consensus at these local conferences was that the policies of the CIM were correct but that they had not always been followed. They recognised that some of the criticism of the Chinese church was valid and needed to be addressed.

There were two main areas of concern. The first was the differences in the standard of living between missionaries and national Christian workers. This was aggravated by missionaries living in compounds isolated from the people they served. CIM missionaries accepted this had been the case and needed to be rectified. The second was the accusation that they created dependence by employing national Christians and funding large institutions, which were dependent on the CIM for continuing financial support. What Hood called 'the immobilisation of Christian forces by the tyranny of property ownership'.[38]

During the discussion, opinions differed. Many in the OMF believed that their policy of planting churches that were self-governing, self-financing and self-propagating had been followed and that CIM churches were not dependent on the Mission. On the other hand, they did support national workers and did own a substantial portfolio of property and recognised how this was perceived by others. Going forward they did not want to promote the possibility that missionaries were imposing external control.

These concerns can be seen in the decisions made at the Bournemouth Conference. At the conference, it was confirmed that the Mission would continue. It would have a new name and a new headquarters in Singapore. In the 'Summary of Decisions', which were attached as an appendix to the meeting minutes, was a section entitled 'Principles of indigenous work to be carried out'. Here issues faced in China were addressed. The following decisions were made in relation to buildings:

> (a) Buildings. That renting of unpretentious buildings is to be our policy, … That no Mission dwelling be on the same compound as a church building. That no building for the church be provided by the Mission.[39]

[37] High Leigh, UK, Conference of Missionaries Minutes, September 17-20, 1951, OMF Archives [UK].
[38] Hood, p. 200.
[39] Bournemouth Summary of Decisions, p. 6, OMF Archives [UK].

Other sections also included decisions that impacted missionaries in Malaya:

(b) Financial Assistance. Feeling that we must not deny national Christians the privilege of looking to God to supply their needs, that no Mission money be used for national workers…

(g) Form of Baptism. In any area where there is no Church, the Field Council will decide what form of Baptism will be taught in that area. However, the Church as it grows must be free to make its own decision…[40]

When CIM missionaries arrived in Malaya they were eager to avoid the accusations they faced in China and this had a significant impact on their strategy. They emphasised the importance of living with the people in the New Villages and living at the same level as those they came to serve. They resisted owning property and refused to employ local believers. They also did not want to place themselves in a position of control, when it came to the form of church government. This was a difficult balancing act. On the one hand, the missionaries wanted the church to make the decisions, but on the other, the new believers had no experience to draw on and often relied on advice from the missionaries.

That the missionaries in Malaya were committed to this strategy can be seen in the 'Guiding Principles and Illustrative Practices for the work on the South Malayan Field' which was completed in 1959.[41] Even after eight years it showed a commitment to the decisions made in Bournemouth. The document reiterates the OMF's commitment to letting the church make its own decisions regarding the form of church government, and not funding buildings or local workers. Along with self-governing and self-financing was a commitment to self-propagation and emphasising the importance of sharing the gospel.

These principles were not always easy to apply in practice. The OMF was the only mission in the New Villages which did not work with Chinese co-workers.[42] It also troubled some new workers joining the OMF, who saw the benefits of employing local partners. Seeing Asian evangelists and European missionaries working together did have an impact and helped to break down barriers in the New Villages. Fred

[40] Bournemouth Summary of Decisions, pp. 6-7, OMF Archives [UK].
[41] Moore, 'Guiding Principles and Illustrative Practices for the work on the South Malayan Field', McClymont Papers: File 2.
[42] See Table 2, p. 17.

McClymont also found it difficult to explain the Mission's policy of only renting property. Locals could not understand the economic sense of only renting property when it could be purchased for the equivalent of three years' rent.[43] In the Mission's eagerness to allow local congregations to grow themselves, they sometimes left a church too early. The Cha'ah Christian Church, for example, was the first to be established by the Mission. It was left in 1956 but the OMF had to return when the church needed its help.[44]

The experience of communism in China also impacted the perception of how long they would be able to stay in Malaya. When CIM missionaries first arrived in 1951, the outcome of the Emergency was still in the balance. Many at that time subscribed to the Domino Theory that saw the inevitable tide of communism sweeping down from China and eventually engulfing the whole of Southeast Asia. It was only a matter of time before communism would take over Malaya. This meant that the initial focus of missionaries was on mass evangelism.[45]

2.3 Protestant Christianity

Assessment of the state of the Protestant Church in Malaya and Singapore at the start of the Emergency is hampered by the lack reliable statistics. While censuses were taken in 1931 and 1947, comprehensive statistics on religion were not gathered. Instead the government statistician estimated the number of adherents to Catholic and Protestant Christianity, based on historic trends, to be 101,000 in 1931 and 120,000 in 1947.[46] Without relying heavily on these statistics it is safe to conclude that Protestant Christianity survived Japanese occupation commendably well. While the number of Protestants increased, the percentage of Christians probably remained about the same or slightly lower than before the war. The majority of Christians were

[43] Personal Interview with Fred McClymont, February 2014.
[44] Amy Moore, *Malayan Story [Electronic Resource]: The Story of the Start of the Work of the China Inland Mission/ Overseas Missionary Fellowship in Malaya in the 1950's*, ed. Ray Moore (Kyema Publishing, 2011) p. 42.
[45] Bobby Sng, *In His Good Time: The Story of the Church in Singapore, 1819-2003*, 3rd edn (Singapore: Graduates' Christian Fellowship, 2003), p. 212.
[46] Moroboë V. del Tufo, *Malaya, Comprising the Federation of Malaya and the Colony of Singapore: A Report on the 1947 Census of Population* (London: Crown Agents for the Colonies, 1949), p. 124.

located in the Straits Settlements and large towns in the Western states, and comprised European expatriates, and Chinese and Indian immigrants.[47]

The diversity of languages and dialects spoken by migrant groups led to congregations that were organised along ethnic and linguistic lines. Ethnolinguistic distinctions were institutionalised and mirrored the plural society, of which they were a part.[48] As a result, separate Chinese- and Tamil-speaking congregations were established. The only multi-ethnic services were English-speaking. In Malaya, the medium of education chosen by parents directly affected a child's future cultural identity and determined which congregation a Christian attended.[49]

Existing Denominations

Of the seven denominations identified in a 1948 survey, four were connected to one particular ethnic and linguistic group.[50] The Mar Thoma Syrian Church served migrants from Kerala in India, who spoke Malayalam, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malaysia (ELCM) attracted Tamil speakers, who had immigrated from southern India. Two Presbyterian Churches served different ethnolinguistic groups. The Presbyterian Church of England consisted of four congregations and was focused on serving the spiritual needs of the British Presbyterian community, and the Chinese Presbytery of Malaya was linked to the Teochew-speaking Chinese from the Chaoshan region in Guangdong. By 1938 they had nine congregations in Singapore and ten in Johore. Each congregation operated independently and relied on pastors from China. Herron notes, 'native preachers were all from China and strictly speaking were as "foreign" in Singapore as the English missionaries'.[51]

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[47] Lyall, 'Malaya Survey Report', p. 9, McClymont Papers: Folder 6.
[48] Raymond Lee and Susan Ackerman, *Sacred Tensions: Modernity and Religious Transformation in Malaysia* (University of South Carolina Press, 1997), pp. 117–18.
[49] Tan Chee-Beng, 'Socio-Cultural Diversities and Identities', in *The Chinese in Malaysia*, ed. by Lee Kam-Hing and Tan Chee-Beng (New York: OUP, 2000), pp. 37–70 (pp. 56–60).
[50] V. A. Chelliah and Alexander McLeish, *Malaya and Singapore: Survey Directory of Churches and Missions in the Federation and Colony*, 2 (London: World Dominion Press, 1948).
[51] Alan C. Herron, 'A History of the Protestant Christian Churches in West Malaysia and Singapore' (unpublished postgraduate dissertation, University of Otago, 1977), p. 186.

The Methodists and Anglicans were the two largest denominations. The Anglican Church had been in the country the longest and had established churches in the main urban centres. These churches were predominantly expatriate and usually led by an ordained missionary. The denomination was slow to develop vernacular congregations and, while recognising that in some cases the work was initiated by a chaplain, Northcott highlighted that these ministries grew through the work of migrant Indian and Chinese, who trained in their 'home countries'.[53] These congregations met separately from the English ones. In Penang the Tamil congregation was not permitted to use St George's for their services and a separate chapel and parsonage were built behind the church for them.

Table 3: 1948 Protestant Christians and Missionaries

	Christians	Church Workers	
		European	Asian
Methodist Church	18,109	39	100
Anglican Church	16,302	41	23
English Presbyterian Church	2,000	2	
Chinese Presbyterian Church	6,000	10	24
Mar Thoma Syrian Church	750		2
ELCM	1,000		1
Christian Brethren	1,950	26	15
Other	1,350	39	34
Total	47,461	157	199

Source: Post-war Survey of Malaya and Singapore[52]

English-medium schools were seen as an important way to propagate Christianity and were the most obvious evidence of a missionary presence. While the Presbyterians, Anglicans and Brethren all started schools, it was the Methodist Church that was the most successful in developing a network of English-medium schools in Singapore and throughout Malaya. They were supported by the British Government in the form of gifts of land and grants-in-aid. According to Lee and Ackerman, they worked in collaboration with the Government to inculcate an ethic of 'active asceticism', which prepared students, 'to assume a variety of occupational roles in the emerging colonial capitalist economy'.[54] From these schools, English-speaking 'Wesley Churches' were

[52] Alexander McLeish carried out two surveys of Christianity in Malaya and Singapore in 1938 and 1948. They provide invaluable statistics on the pre- and post-war situation for Protestant Christianity. The statistics on the number of Protestant Christians, however, cannot be relied on. It is clear that arbitrary judgements have been made on the relative sizes of the Catholic and Protestant communities. The reconciliation of the survey figures with the 1931 census is not convincing and indicates the incompleteness of the numbers shown.

[53] Northcott, p. 39.

[54] Lee and Ackerman, p. 119.

started. While predominantly ethnically Chinese, they were multicultural and included Indians, Eurasians and Europeans.

The Methodist Church also developed independently monocultural Chinese- and Tamil-speaking Methodist congregations. These congregations were usually led by pastors trained in their 'home' country and included migrant Christians. In the case of Sitiawan, the town itself was started by a group of Foochow Methodists, who migrated *en masse*.[55] An important stimulus to the growth of Chinese-speaking migrant congregations, was the ministry of John Sung, a famous Chinese itinerant evangelist whose preaching brought revival in the 1930s.[56]

The seventh denomination with a presence in the country was the Christian Brethren, which has a surprisingly long history in the country. Unlike other denominations, it did not have links with a particular migrant group from either India or China. The Brethren are also non-conformists, and have a tradition of keeping themselves separate from the government. These features made it harder to establish churches, so while the denomination was supported by a significant number of missionaries, growth was modest.[57]

Training National Leaders

In 1948 these seven denominations where supported by 165 Asian pastors and evangelists.[58] This was less than the 227 church workers reported in 1938. Most of the decrease was due to a reduction of sixty in the number of church workers in Methodist churches. The statistic highlights the lack of national Christian workers. Lyall observed that, 'there are insufficient trained men to supply even the existing churches'.[59] What was needed were places to train Christian workers in the country.

[55] Diana Wong and Ngu Ik-Tien, 'A "Double Alienation": The Vernacular Chinese Church in Malaysia', *Asian Journal of Social Science*, 42.3–4 (2014), 262–90 (p. 269).
[56] Sng, pp. 172–79.
[57] Lee Kam-Hing, 'The Christian Brethren', in *Christianity in Malaysia: A Denominational History*, by Robert Hunt, Lee Kam-Hing, and John Roxborogh (Petaling Jaya, Selangor: Pelanduk Publications, 1992), pp. 107–41.
[58] This figure equals the total shown in Table 3 of 199 less the 34 shown in the 'others' row.
[59] Lyall, 'Malaya Survey Report', p. 9, McClymont Papers: Folder 6.

Prior to the Second World War, very little theological teaching was available. Most denominations relied on imported ministers for all their congregations, Chinese-, Tamil- and English-speaking. This was understandable as many came to the country as sojourners, only expecting to stay a few years. In addition, it was hard to justify the cost of setting up theological training in Malaya when training was already available in 'home' countries. Only the Methodist Church made any real effort to start training institutions for national believers and this it did with mixed success.[60] It was not until 1948 that Trinity Theological College (TTC), an interdenominational seminary, was set up in Singapore. This seminary was a collaboration between the Methodist, Anglican, Presbyterian and Lutheran Churches and English was the initial medium of teaching.[61]

Comity in the New Villages

While the number of national church workers decreased, the number of European missionaries had almost recovered to pre-war levels. Table 3 shows a total of 157 European missionaries in 1948, which compares favourably with the 161 recorded in 1938.[62] When the OMF arrived, along with other new mission agencies, they found that churches were already established in the main urban centres. If they were to work in the country, then they needed to work with the missionaries already there.

As the number of missionaries working in the New Villages increased, it became clear that oversight was needed. The result, in early 1952, was the NVCC. It played a central role in coordinating the work of Protestant missions and churches and ensuring comity was observed in the New Villages. The NVCC's connection with the MCC however, presented a problem for the OMF's South Malayan Field. The OMF had a policy of not joining groups associated with the World Council of Churches or its local representative the MCC, and the NVCC was organisationally under the MCC. In the end the OMF did join based on a precedent set in China and a narrow definition of

[60] Robert Hunt, Lee Kam-Hing, and John Roxborogh, *Christianity in Malaysia: A Denominational History* (Petaling Jaya, Selangor: Pelanduk Publications, 1992), pp. 164–65.
[61] John Roxborogh, *A History of Christianity in Malaysia* (Singapore: Armour Publishing, 2014), p. 88.
[62] Alexander McLeish, *A Racial Melting Pot: Religion in Malaya* (London: World Dominion Press, 1940).

the NVCC purpose 'to clear our entry into villages with the government and other church groups in the area'.[63]

From the NVCC's perspective the OMF was seen as being difficult and divisive. Even after the OMF join the committee, John Fleming, secretary of the MCC, was unhappy. In July 1952 he wrote to CBMS in London expressing his misgivings. His main concern seems to be that the OMF would start churches that do not follow the 'forms of church life' found in the existing church groups in Malaya. He did not want the OMF to start, 'individual congregational groups of Christians that would insist on adult baptism and lay dispensation of Holy Communion'.[64]

The OMF's relationship with the NVCC evolved as it sought to work in comity with other missions and at the same time preserve its independence. It wanted to be free to start self-governing churches that could choose whether to become part of an existing denomination or not, and in 1954 it concluded that its continued membership would compromise this independence. The OMF resigned from the NVCC committee but continued to attend as a non-voting member. Roxborogh is correct when he observes that the resignations made very little difference in reality.[65]

On the other hand, by resigning, the OMF did assert its independence and this had practical implications. Firstly, it enabled it to start the self-governing churches it wanted. In doing so, it did produce some churches, which did not follow the forms of church life of existing churches, as Fleming feared. Secondly, it encouraged the OMF to focus its attention on the New Villages. Even though Lyall had identified a wide range of unmet needs in cities and towns, its desire to maintain comity contributed to the OMF not working where existing missions were already present. And thirdly, it led to some duplication. Christian literature was produced by the OMF as well as the MCC, and both the MCC and the OMF purchased a gospel van for open-air meetings.

[63] Letter from Sanders to Archbishop Mowll, 3 August 1954, OMF Archives [SG]: AR 5.1.5 Box 1.6.
[64] Letter from Fleming to the CBMS, July 1952, SOAS Archives [UK]: CBMS/01/E/76/02.
[65] John Roxborogh, 'The Story of Ecumenism', in *Christianity in Malaysia: A Denominational History*, ed. by Robert Hunt, Lee Kam-Hing, and John Roxborogh (Petaling Jaya, Selangor: Pelanduk Publications, 1992), pp. 277–322 (p. 292).

Huntley suggests that the issue between the OMF and the MCC was mainly due to a difference in the theological understanding of ecclesiastical unity.[66] He pointed to a distinction between a top-down and a bottom-up approach to ecclesiastical unity. The top-down approach was taken by the ecumenical movement and organisations like the MCC. It began with visible unity and then aimed to work together to resolve theological differences. The bottom-up approach, taken by the OMF, focused on spiritual unity and concentrated on cooperation across denominations in evangelism and Christian service. While this explanation is simplistic in assuming a single cause, it does highlight the importance of theology to the OMF in formulating its policies. It was genuinely concerned that liberal theology associated with the MCC would harm the kind of churches they hoped to plant. While happy to work with evangelicals from other denominations, it felt it necessary to protect the churches it had planted by separating from those it perceived to be liberal.

A New Anglican Field

The North Malayan 'Anglican' Field reflected the interdenominational character of the OMF. In China the CIM operated its own Anglican field in Eastern Szechuan (Sichuan). This Field had its own CIM Bishop and was staffed by CIM missionaries. These missionaries wanted to continue to work together and, at the Bournemouth Conference, they were given permission to establish a new Anglican field. After unsuccessfully approaching the Bishop of Borneo, they accepted the offer from Bishop Baines to work in Malaya in southern Perak.[67] They were allocated the area between the border with Selangor and the town of Ipoh.

By coming to Malaya under a Bishop, OMF missionaries had the advantage of not having to decide the form of church government new churches would have. In addition, the Anglican Church was a member of the MCC, and this meant they did not have the same problems as the South Malayan Field relating to the NVCC.

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[66] Huntley, pp. 30–33.

[67] For the initial approach to the Bishop of Borneo see letter from George Williamson, Field Superintendent, to Anglican CIM missionaries, 20 March 1952, OMF Archives [UK]; for reference to the invitation from Bishop Baines see letter from Percy Moore (Field Superintendent) to Rowland Butler (OMF Director), 19 December 1953, p. 4, OMF Archives [SG]: AR 5.1.5 Box 1.6.

On the other hand, OMF missionaries faced their own distinctive challenges in south Perak. In China they were able to act independently because the country was so large. This was not the case in Malaya, where the OMF had to relate to other Anglican mission agencies. While the Fellowship had much in common with the Church Missionary Society (CMS), they were very different from the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG), which placed a strong emphasis on the place of ordained ministry and the sacraments. While the OMF operated exclusively in the New Villages in isolation from SPG missionaries, this did not pose much of a problem. Steven Abbarow notes, however, that as time went on and the OMF was asked to move into the towns, tensions between the mission agencies began to appear.[68] This tension was a particular challenge for ex-China missionaries, who had not experienced it before. According to Rev John Hewlett, later missionaries who were ordained in the UK, Australia and New Zealand were used to the challenges of working in a Diocese that contained both high and low church clergy.[69]

OMF missionaries also faced the challenge of trying to 'serve two masters'. The issue involved who was responsible for the placement of OMF missionaries. OMF leadership believed they should be solely responsible for the designation of its workers. The Bishop, on the other hand, questioned the ability of ordained Anglicans to faithfully fulfil their ordinations vows if their ministry was being directed by the OMF and not their Bishop. His main concern, however, appears to have been the imbalance between the number of workers. J. O. Sanders, the General Director of the OMF, wrote, 'they (the Diocese) had three workers in the towns which had a greater population than the areas in which we (the OMF) have 23 workers'.[70]

According to Alan Cole, this disagreement did eventually mark a shift in policy in South Perak. He suggests that the North Malayan Field was, after a number of years,

[68] Steven Abbarow, 'Leadership and Laity in the Emerging Anglican Church in Peninsular Malaysia with Respect to the Three Missionary Societies SPG, CMS and OMF' (unpublished undergraduate dissertation, STM, 1989), pp. 52–53.
[69] Personal Interview with John Hewlett, December 2012.
[70] Letter from J. O. Sanders (General Director) to Arnold Lea (OMF Director), 28 February 1956, p. 1, OMF Archives [SG]: AR 5.1.5 Box 1.6.

'moving into a new pattern of missionary work'.[71] One of the changes he highlights is the movement to working from central stations in small towns rather than living in the New Villages as they had first done. While still involved in New Village ministry, ordained Anglicans were also responsible for Anglican congregations in the towns.

New Mission Agencies

When the OMF first arrived in Malaya in 1951, the existing denominations had churches in the main urban area, which were supported by 157 Protestant missionaries. These denominations also contributed to the missionary work in the New Villages. Of the 217 resident workers shown in Table 2, thirty-one European missionaries and forty-two Asian evangelists were from existing denominations.

At the same time, the withdrawal of missionaries from China encouraged a number of mission agencies to send workers in significant numbers to Singapore and Malaya for the first time. This new wave came from denominational and interdenominational agencies and included Asian Christian workers as well as European missionaries. They included American missionaries from the United Lutheran Church in America (ULCA), the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), and the Assemblies of God (AOG). The latter two had been present in Malaya and Singapore before the Second World War but the number of missionaries increased significantly after it. With the exception of the ULCA, their focus was on the cities and towns and they did not work in the New Villages. The ULCA was focused on ethnic Chinese, having been invited by the ELCM, and it ended up working in the New Villages as well as urban areas.

The two interdenominational mission agencies were the OMF and the Christian Nationals' Evangelism Commission (CNEC). The focus of the CNEC at the time was empowering local Asian workers for mission through Western financial support. They were instrumental in setting up the Singapore Bible College and worked in Singapore as well as the New Villages. The OMF had the largest number of workers and was the only agency that started out being exclusively focused on the New Villages. The OMF

[71] Alan Cole, *Emerging Pattern: CIM Work within the Diocese of Singapore and Malaya* (London: CIM, 1961), p. 35.

was made up of exclusively European workers and complemented the work of CNEC, who were exclusively Asian.

Together in 1959, these new mission agencies provided 109 European missionaries and thirty-five Asian evangelists and pastors in the New Villages. In addition, an increasing number of missionaries and Asian Christian workers from the ULCA, SBC and AOG were working in Singapore and in urban areas in Malaya. While this influx of missionaries was not as large as expected, it came at a critical time in the region's development. Sng emphasises how the situation they faced in Southeast Asia in the 1950s could not be compared with that of the previous century. Important changes, 'made the region a different world'.[72] These new mission agencies had the advantage of arriving just as migrant populations in Singapore and Malaya were becoming more settled communities. They were also comprised of missionaries with experience of Asian cultures and they came, in the case of China, with Chinese evangelists and pastors who were escaping from mainland China.

2.4 Conclusion

A number of factors shaped the way the OMF transmitted their message. The work they did needed to satisfy the British Government, who invited them. Keeping medical clinics staffed and running was a constant challenge for Field Superintendents. This collaboration with the Government, however, was one of convenience, which did not last. It provided the initial impetus to missionaries going to the New Villages, but it was merely one factor in shaping the strategy of the OMF. Uncertainty over who would prevail in the fight against communism, and fear that what had happened in China would happen again, drove OMF missionaries to focus on trying to reach as many people as possible as quickly as possible. Experiences in China also affected their methods. Rather than working from mission stations, they were determined to live with the people in the New Villages. They were also wary of creating any form of dependence on the finances of the OMF. As a result, they adopted a policy of not employing locals and renting rather than purchasing property.

[72] Sng, p. 211.

The personality of the OMF also had an impact. Its interdenominational character and evangelical ethos created tensions. Its commitment to planting self-governing churches was seen by some as trying to start a new denomination. This was resolved in Perak through the creation of the North Malayan 'Anglican' field but continued to be a source of tension between the OMF and the NVCC south of Perak. Its evangelical ethos also created challenges. In the South Malayan Field this was seen in the OMF's equivocal relationship with the NVCC. While interaction was needed to maintain comity and obtain access to New Villages, the OMF did not want to be seen to be associating with what it considered a liberal organisation. In the North Malayan Field, it was seen in its relationship with existing clergy, who came from a high church background. The need to cooperate with SPG missionaries with a very different theology was a new experience for the OMF, who operated autonomously in China.

Missionaries engaged in a range of activities that comprised 'Village work'. When they arrived in a New Village, they usually began with language study and going door to door giving out tracts and inviting people to hear the Christian message. This daily contact was supplemented by evangelistic campaigns. Where there was a need, the OMF worked with the Government and set up medical clinics. The Fellowship also experimented with using small towns as a base from which it visited a number of Villages. While this appeared to be more efficient and reached more Villages, it did not have the same impact as living in the New Villages.

In the following two chapters we will focus on the experience of rural Chinese migrants during the Emergency, the challenges they faced as a result of relocation, and how they responded to the missionaries' message. It will include a review of the medical, social and literacy work done by missionaries in the New Villages and the impact they had. Then in chapter 5 we will look at the direct evangelistic work the Fellowship engaged in up to the end of the Emergency in 1960.

PART I: THE EMERGENCY (1948-60)

3. MISSIONARIES IN THE NEW VILLAGES

When ex-China missionaries came to Malaya, the picture they were presented with was of an unreached group of Chinese living in rural villages where there was an open door to Christian missionaries. While this was, ostensibly, similar to the work of the CIM in the inland provinces of China, all was not what it appeared. This chapter will begin by reviewing the origins of the New Villages. It will then describe the expected and unexpected challenges faced by Protestant missionaries, before reviewing the work the missionaries did to fulfil Government expectations.

3.1 THE GOVERNMENT CREATION OF THE NEW VILLAGES

CHINESE SQUATTERS BETWEEN THE WARS

The 'Squatter Problem' had its roots in the economic recession that followed the First World War. During this time, many Chinese workers lost their jobs and retreated to the countryside to make a living by cultivating plots of land on the edge of the forest. The Malay population was very resistant to non-Malays owning land and it was difficult for these rural Chinese peasants to acquire land legally. As a result, many became 'squatters'. While the term technically referred to Chinese who illegally occupied vacant land, it came to be used by the British Government as a general term for all rural Chinese peasants.[1]

[1] Kernial Singh Sandhu, 'The Saga of the "Squatter" in Malaya: A Preliminary Survey of the Causes, Characteristics and Consequences of the Resettlement of Rural Dwellers during the Emergency between 1948 and 1960', *Journal of Southeast Asian History*, 5.1 (1964), pp. 145-6. Sandhu estimates that, of the 573,000 people relocated to New Villages, 300,000 were squatters but 273,000 were legitimate land occupiers.

The number of squatters fluctuated. Between 1918 and 1920, when economic conditions improved many squatters returned to urban centres, but when the price of rubber plummeted between 1930 and 1932, numbers increased again. It is estimated that by 1940 there were around 150,000 squatters in the country.[2]

JAPANESE OCCUPATION

The Japanese occupation dramatically increased the number of squatters and intensified existing ethnic tensions, as the Japanese clearly favoured Malays over Chinese and Indians.[3] The Chinese were treated with particular brutality and were subjected to a number of atrocities. An operation known as *Sook Ching* (purification through suffering), involved the systemic detention or execution of thousands of Chinese. In order to avoid starvation and Japanese aggression, many Chinese fled to the edge of the jungle, bringing them into contact and competition with rural Malay. By 1945 the number of squatters had increased to over 400,000. After the war, the number of squatters again reduced but in 1948 they still exceeded 300,000, more than twice the pre-war figure.

The most successful armed resistance during the Japanese occupation was led by the MCP. They retreated into the jungle and slowly built up, with the help of the British, a fighting force known as the Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army (MPAJA). The MCP recruited squatters into the Anti-Japanese Union (later called the *Min Yuen* during the Emergency) to provide supplies, intelligence and recruits for the MPAJA. This resulted in growing support for the MCP among rural Chinese, and at the same time, heightened ethnic tension as hostility grew into armed fighting between the largely Malay police and the largely Chinese MPAJA.

On their return to Malaya in September 1945, the British Military Administration struggled to regain control of a traumatised and ethnically polarised society. Having achieved the immediate goal of defeating the Japanese, the MCP turned its attention

[2] Lim Hin-Fui and Fong Tian-Yong, *The New Villages in Malaysia: The Journey Ahead* (Kuala Lumpur: Institute of Strategic Analysis & Policy Research, 2005), p. 25.
[3] Barbara Watson Andaya and Leonard Andaya, *A History of Malaysia*, 3rd edn (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), p. 263.

to establishing a communist republic. It began with a campaign of 'peaceful agitation', uniting workers through the formation of the General Labour Unions, and organising strikes and rallies throughout the country. During 1947 direct strike action intensified. Industrial unrest continued to escalate and turned violent. Then on 16 June 1948 five people were killed including three European planters. The Government responded by declaring a state of Emergency on 18 June and the following month the MCP was declared illegal.

The MCP had initially hoped to lead a popular uprising against the British, but when these hopes faded, it retreated into the forest and its military arm, the renamed Malayan National Liberation Army (MNLA), supported by the *Min Yuen*, began using guerrilla tactics to destabilise the country. The 'Squatter Problem', which started out as an economic challenge and social issue in the country, had now become a political problem and a security risk as well.

COUNTER-TERROR (1948-49)

The initial response of the British Army, according to Karl Hack, was to adopt a counter-terror strategy to nullify the military threat of the MNLA.[4] The Government quickly realised that the insurgents were dependent on support from the *Min Yuen*, and the policy of counter-terror was extended to the civilian Chinese population.[5] Intimidation, mass arrests, the threat of deportation, and the destruction of property were used to coerce the Chinese population into supporting the Government.[6]

The situation was not helped by the Government's unsympathetic view of the Chinese and their lack of representation. As Gurney recognised, the situation had not been helped by the abolition of the Chinese Protectorate after the war.[7] This

[4] Karl Hack, 'Everyone Lived in Fear: Malaya and the British Way of Counter-Insurgency', *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 23.4–5 (2012), 671–99 (p. 673).
[5] *Malaya: Part II: The Communist Insurrection 1948-1953*, ed. by A.J. Stockwell, British Documents on the End of Empire, B (London: HMSO, 1995), III, pp. 73–77, document 168, references a conference held on 12 September 1948 that identified the squatters as the insurgents' source of food, and considered measures to control them.
[6] Huw Bennett, '"A Very Salutary Effect": The Counter-Terror Strategy in the Early Malayan Emergency, June 1948 to December 1949', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 32.3 (2009), 415–44.
[7] Stockwell, III, p. 89, document 172.

department had been responsible for all aspects of Chinese affairs and contained officers who spoke Chinese and were advocates for Chinese concerns. While its abolition was intended to encourage the ideal of non-communal Malayan citizenship, it meant that the Chinese population was no longer represented to the Government. Few Government officials now spoke Chinese or understood their fears and concerns.

Countering terror with terror inevitably led to abuse of the civilian population, the most horrific of which was Batang Kali in December 1948, when twenty-four unarmed Chinese civilians were killed.[8] It is important that this and other abuses during this time are acknowledged and condemned. At the same time, Hack counsels the need to place this incident within the context of the rest of the Emergency and not to overcompensate for earlier self-congratulatory accounts, which emphasised the minimum use of force.[9]

The British were fortunate that many Chinese were illegal immigrants and could be threatened with repatriation to China. Gurney was an advocate of repatriation and by the beginning of 1950 more than 10,000 had been deported.[10] Hack suggests that this option provided a safety valve that enabled hardcore communist sympathisers to be removed from the country.[11]

While at the time, the Government believed their policy of counter-terror was effective, it had in fact alienated the civilian squatter population. This alienation together with communist success in China in 1949, ensured a steady stream of MNLA volunteers. According to Field Marshal Sir William Slim, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, by the end of 1949 the battle against insurgents had reached a stalemate.[12] While the British were able to break up large insurgent groups, they had not been able to stem the support the MNLA obtained from squatters.

[8] Hack, 'Everyone Lived in Fear', p. 681.
[9] Hack, 'Everyone Lived in Fear', p. 694.
[10] Chin Low-Choo, 'The Repatriation of the Chinese as a Counter-Insurgency Policy during the Malayan Emergency', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 45.03 (2014), 363–392.
[11] Hack, 'Everyone Lived in Fear', p. 693.
[12] Stockwell, III, pp. 173–74, document 199.

POPULATION AND SPATIAL CONTROL (1950-51)

Slim also recognised that, 'the suppression of the communist bandits is much more a matter of civil than military action'.[13] As the number of violent incidents climbed sharply in 1950, more in the Government realised the importance of bringing squatter areas under effective administrative control. This led to the appointment of Sir Harold Briggs as a Director of Operations. According to Hack, with his appointment the second stage of the Emergency, which involved population and spatial control, began. The 'orthodox' historiography of the Emergency has always recognised that the roll-out of the 'Briggs plan' from May 1950 was a decisive factor in the eventual success of the campaign.[14]

The objective of the plan was to restore law and order throughout the country. This was to be achieved through the resettlement of unprotected Malayan citizens into locations where it was possible to provide security and protection from the MNLA. The plan involved a combined operation of civil, military and police personnel and was a massive undertaking that needed extensive financial and human resources. It took a while for momentum to build. Resettlement had been used, to a limited extent, in the first phase of the Emergency, and when Briggs arrived in March 1950, 18,500 squatters had already been resettled.[15] By the end of 1950 a further 60,000 were added. This was significant but was slower than had been hoped.

The Briggs plan began gathering momentum in 1951 and from July to October 1951, a record 224,000 people were moved into New Villages.[16] The timing was fortuitous. As the plan was being implemented, the war in Korea broke out and Malaya benefited from a commodity price boom, which increased wages in both the mining industry and rubber plantations. This did much to offset the costs of resettlement.

The MNLA responded to the pressure on them by intensifying their offensive operations. The number of violent incidents instigated by the terrorists increased,

[13] Stockwell, III, p. 173, document 199.
[14] Hack, 'Everyone Lived in Fear', p. 674.
[15] Federation of Malaya, *Resettlement and the Development of New Villages in the Federation of Malaya*, 1952 (Legislative Council Paper No. 33 of 1952), p. 2.
[16] Lim Hin-Fui and Fong Tian-Yong, p. 32.

and the number of Government security casualties reached record highs. The MNLA were able to strike a significant blow on 6 October, when they ambushed and killed Gurney. By the end of 1951, government morale was low and many interpreted the rise in incidents negatively, concluding that the situation at the end of 1951 had 'nearly reached a deadlock'.[17] According to Hack, the understanding of most commentators was that at the end of 1951 the campaign remained at a stalemate.[18]

Hack, on the other hand, argues that the increase in violent incidents was evidence of a last-ditch effort by the MNLA to prevent resettlement. The increase in terrorist activity was not the failure of the Briggs plan but evidence that the tide of the Emergency had turned and resettlement was having the desired effect of cutting off the support of the *Min Yuen*.[19] This is supported by the testimony of Chin Peng, the Secretary-General of the MCP, who confirmed that their October 1951 Directives were made in response to the impact of the Briggs plan. These directives broke the MNLA into smaller groups and shifted attention away from violent sabotage and intimidation to focus on protecting their supporters and producing their own food.

This thesis supports Hack's conclusion and argues that the Briggs plan reached a critical mass with the resettlement of 224,000 people between July and October. At this time, the number of people resettled became sufficient to materially affect the support communist insurgents received from the *Min Yuen*. While the consequences of population and spatial control were not felt until later, the turning point was reached by the end of 1951.

OPTIMISATION (1952-54)

Resettlement was a deeply intrusive and coercive process and commentators have rightly highlighted the inevitable inefficiencies and corruption that resulted from forcibly resettling so many people so quickly.[20] It was resented by many squatters but proved to be a necessary precursor to improving their life. Templer, when he arrived

[17] Stockwell, III, p. 324, document 257.
[18] Hack, 'Everyone Lived in Fear', p. 674.
[19] Hack, 'Everyone Lived in Fear', pp. 674–75.
[20] T. N. Harper, *The End of Empire and the Making of Malaya* (Cambridge: CUP, 1999), pp. 176–79.

in 1952, began by implementing a more persuasive policy aimed at winning the 'hearts and minds' of the New Village inhabitants. With his arrival the Emergency entered its third and final stage.[21] By March 1952, resettlement was well on its way to completion, with the number of people in New Villages having reached 423,000.[22]

Templer was able to successfully build on the foundations laid by Gurney and the Briggs plan. He arrived when morale was low. He provided the resolve and belief that the Government were following the right strategy, and showed the commitment and energy needed to see it implemented.[23] As both High Commissioner and Director of Operations he was able to improve cooperation between the civil and military arms of the Emergency and remove significant organisational inefficiencies. At the same time, he improved intelligence gathering operations and revitalised the Information Services of the Government.

Templer also identified the resettlement areas as the most important battlefields for the hearts and minds of the people. If the New Villages were to establish themselves and thrive, a broad socio-economic plan to build sustainable communities was needed. A plan presented to the Federal Legislative Council in May recognised this:

> The foundations of a better life in the new villages will be not only freedom from fear but also water supplies and sanitation, schools and dispensaries, the growth of civic sensibility and pride in communal as well as individual achievements.[24]

To provide the needed services, Templer turned to voluntary assistance, the greater part of which was Christian.[25]

Regroupment and Relocation

Statistics on the scale of resettlement vary. One of the reasons for confusion was that the Briggs plan included two forms of resettlement. The first entailed the private *regroupment* of mining and estate labourers into fortified areas on their employers'

[21] Hack, 'Everyone Lived in Fear', p. 673.
[22] Federation of Malaya, p. 6.
[23] Kumar Ramakrishna, '"Transmogrifying" Malaya: The Impact of Sir Gerald Templer (1952–54)', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 32.01 (2001), 79–92.
[24] Federation of Malaya, p. 7.
[25] Harper, pp. 182–83.

properties. The responsibility and cost of *regroupment* were borne by the employers. Sandhu argues that *regroupment* numbers reported were grossly understated. He estimates that as many as 650,000 people were resettled in this way.[26]

Table 4: 1957 Total Number and Population of New Villages

	Number of New Villages			New Village Population Original				1957	1957	
	Opened	Closed	1957	Chinese	Malay	Indian*	Total	Total	Census	
Perak	157		157	173,117	18,959	14,156	206,232	241,614	1,221,446	20%
Johore	101	2	99	125,146	17,421	4,471	147,038	171,866	926,850	19%
Selangor	64	1	63	98,964	5,897	1,899	106,760	134,976	1,012,929	13%
Pahang	47	2	45	34,400	1,415	717	36,532	45,242	313,058	14%
Negri Sembilan	41	1	40	26,536	3,568	438	30,542	35,031	364,524	10%
Malacca	17		17	8,098	1,026	26	9,150	10,804	291,211	4%
Kedah	33		33	17,804	3,652	2,207	23,663	26,709	701,964	4%
Kelantan	44	22	22	2,290	12,308	-	14,598	17,809	505,522	4%
Penang & PW	9		9	12,230	390	320	12,940	14,706	572,100	3%
Perlis	1		1	444	-	56	500	682	90,885	1%
Terengganu	3		3	1,707	-	-	1,707	1,780	278,269	1%
	517	28	489	500,736	64,636	24,290	589,662	701,219	6,278,758	11%

* = while predominantly Indian, a small number of Thai and Sakai settlements are also included

Source: Calculated from the MCC Survey (1959)

Our focus however is on the second form of resettlement, the *relocation* of dispersed rural settlers to protected New Villages by the Government. Estimates of the number of *relocated* New Villages and their population vary considerably depending on the source used and the definition of relocation.[27] Table 4 is based on recalculated figures from the MCC Survey (1959), which is used because of the greater level of detail it provided on each New Village and its subsequent fortunes.[28] The figures compare

[26] Kernial Singh Sandhu, 'Emergency Resettlement in Malaya', in *Chinese New Villages in Malaya*, by Ray Nyce (Singapore: Malaysian Sociological Research Institute, 1973), pp. xxix–lxv (p. Li). This estimate can be contrasted with Sandhu's reported figures for *regroupment* areas of 25,344 and Malay *regroupment* areas of 6,767, p. xLviii.

[27] See note 40, Sandhu, 'Emergency Resettlement in Malaya', p. Lxiv.

[28] When recalculating the figures, a number of assumptions have been made. Where a Village has been absorbed into an existing settlement and only the initial population was given, the population growth is assumed to be static. For Perak, the opening population was not given. It has been calculated based on the recorded percentage increase in population and the split of races is based on the number of families from each race. Also, the MCC Survey classified new settlements by type and by their form of governance. Of the 585 new settlements, 68 were classified as *regroupment*

favourably with those calculated by Sandhu,[29] and the Table shows the breakdown by race of the New Villages when they were established, and the population in 1957.

The MCC Survey (1959) statistics imply that the original estimate of 300,000 squatters after the war was significantly understated. Sandhu suggests the difference was due to the relocation of large numbers of other rural dwellers and legitimate land occupiers. [30] Whatever the reason, the number supports Harper's claim that resettlement was, 'the greatest developmental project undertaken by any colonial government'.[31] Relocation affected the whole country and, in 1957, directly impacted the lives of 11% of the country's population. The impact on the Chinese community was even greater. An estimate of the number of Chinese involved suggests that as many as one in four Chinese in the country had been relocated.[32]

Table 4 shows that the five states most affected by relocation were Johore, Pahang Negri Sembilan, Selangor, and Perak, where the percentage of the population affected ranged from 10 to 20%. It also shows that while 85% of those relocated were Chinese, nearly 90,000 Malays, Indians and other ethnic groups were also involved.

Forced relocation involved tremendous uncertainty and upheaval, as well as feelings of injustice. It is difficult, however, to find a balanced assessment of the effect of relocation on the predominantly Chinese rural peasants who were moved. Military historians like Clutterbuck present resettlement as part of a successful strategy that defeated the communist insurgency.[33] Others see the settlers as victims of colonial oppression. Tan, for example, quotes the description of the New Villages as

either by type (6) or by their form of governance (62). As our focus is on the New Villages, these 68 *regroupment* areas have been excluded from the figures.

[29] Sandhu, 'Emergency Resettlement in Malaya', p. xlviii puts the number of New Villages at 480, with a population of 572,917.

[30] Sandhu, 'Emergency Resettlement in Malaya', p. xli.

[31] Harper, p. 8.

[32] This percentage is based on an estimate because we do not know the percentage of the New Village population that was Chinese in 1957. We do know that the percentage when the New Villages were opened was 85% and we know the number of Chinese from the 1957 census was 2,333,756. If we assume a similar percentage to when the New Villages were opened, then that equates to 25.5% of the Chinese population of Malaya.

[33] Richard Clutterbuck, *The Long Long War: The Emergency in Malaya, 1948-1960* (London: Cassell, 1967).

'concentration camps' in the title of his article and claims that 'the long-term systematic denial of human rights' during the Emergency has been ignored.[34]

It is dangerous to generalise based on the particular experience of a person or people in one Village. There were a range of factors that had an impact on the reaction of New Village settlers to relocation. These include the position that rural peasants were in before relocation. Some 'squatters' had settled legally, and some were making a sustainable living. Others had retreated to the jungle out of necessity. They went to avoid starvation and because of the lack of opportunities elsewhere. For them squatting was a temporary solution until a better option came along.

The experience of relocation itself also varied significantly. For some it was an orderly process in which they were compensated by the Government for the move and where the New Village provided the resources they needed to continue to make a living. For others it involved the destruction of their homes and loss of land and livelihood. Of particular importance was the suitability of land for growing crops.

The level of support a Village gave to communist insurgents was another factor that varied considerably. The Government categorised Villages as red, pink or white depending on the perceived level of cooperation with insurgents. The category had a direct impact on the level of restrictions it experienced with tougher curfews imposed on those considered red.[35] As the Emergency progressed, the removal of restrictions was an incentive offered to Villages in white areas.

3.2 Challenges Faced by OMF Missionaries

In the previous chapter we examined the circumstances that led CIM missionaries to accept the invitation from the British Government in Malaya to come and work in the New Villages. It looked at how the invitation, the experience of CIM missionaries in

[34] Tan Teng-Phee, 'Like a Concentration Camp, Lah: Chinese Grassroots Experience of the Emergency and New Villages in British Colonial Malaya', *Chinese Southern Diaspora Studies*, 3 (2009), 216–28.
[35] Percy Moore, 'Report from South Malaya', *The Millions*, May 1954, p. 47.

China, and the existing Protestant missionary community in Malaya shaped the strategy of the OMF.

In this chapter we have reviewed how the Government created the New Villages and clarified the scope and scale of relocation. While on the surface the work of the OMF in the New Villages should have been very similar to their work in the inland provinces of China, in reality, circumstances were very different. Although they were prepared for some of the challenges they faced, others were unexpected.

THE COMMUNIST THREAT

While the turning point of the Emergency may have been reached at the end of 1951, this was not known at the time. Settlers in the New Villages still faced intimidation from communist insurgents on one side and the distrust of the British Government on the other. It was a time of great insecurity when people did not know whom to trust. Tan records the statement of a New Villager about that time: 'You just kept silent, away from both sides, the local *Min Yuen* and the government informants, otherwise you will get into trouble one day'.[36] Many from the New Villages, have stories of the dangers they experienced.[37]

Life in the New Villages at the beginning was dominated by the Government's need to maintain security and prevent access to the insurgents. The Villages were enclosed by a barbed wire fence and the no-man's land around the village was floodlit at night. Everyone carried an identity card, and it needed to be constantly produced. Villages were also subject to daily gate curfews. At times, when there was significant communist activity, house curfews were also enforced. Controlling access to food was an important reason for resettlement and this included rationing of basic food items and the searching of squatters when they left the Village.

[36] Tan Teng-Phee, p. 226, quoting from an interview in March 2008.

[37] See Wong Kow-Cheong, 'The Origin and the Development of the Overseas Missionary Fellowship New Village Work During the Malayan Emergency' (unpublished undergraduate dissertation, STM, 2008), p. 37; and Tan Teng-Phee, p. 228.

When OMF missionaries arrived, they also came with doubts about the outcome of the Emergency and they faced the same physical threat from communist insurgents. This threat, as a 'clear and present danger', diminished over time. While no missionaries were attacked or injured by communists, memoirs of missionaries living in the New Villages often tell of being woken up at night by the sound of gunfire or bombs as well as rarer close encounters.[38]

While members of the MCA and home guard were targeted, missionaries were not. There are a number of possible reasons for this. Perhaps they were ignored because they were providing services valued by the community and targeting them would have given the British damaging propaganda.[39] Or, it may have been that killing a European would have focused unwanted attention on the village. In addition, many of the missionaries were women and may not have been seen as a threat. Whatever the reasons, Chin Peng makes no reference to them in his memoirs.[40] Khoo concludes, 'Had Communist forces been stronger, the situation may have been very different'.[41]

While the missionaries were not targeted by communist insurgents, they were still viewed with suspicion and distrust by settlers, many of whom deeply resented British interference in their lives. Wong suggests this resentment can be traced back to China and the unequal treaties of the nineteenth century.[42] The level of animosity varied from Village to Village, depending on the level of support for the MCP, the perceived level of security, and the services available in the New Village compared with their previous situation. Missionaries were guilty by association. It was generally assumed that they were spies for the British Government and rumours circulated against them.[43] In some places, parents forbade their children from joining Sunday school and one New Villager remembers young people throwing stones onto the zinc roof of

[38] Mary Welander, *Learning to Trust* (Private Publication), pp. 15–17.
[39] Kumar Ramakrishna, *Emergency Propaganda: The Winning of Malayan Hearts and Minds 1948-1958* (Routledge, 2013), p. 130.
[40] Chin Peng, Ian Ward, and Norma O Miraflor, *My Side of History* (Singapore: Media Masters, 2003).
[41] David Khoo Sheng-Li, 'Winning Hearts and Souls: Missionaries in the New Villages during the Malayan Emergency' (unpublished undergraduate dissertation, National University of Singapore, 2004), p. 30.
[42] Wong Kow-Cheong, p. 29.
[43] Ethel Barkworth, 'Barren Earth and Jungle', *The Millions*, February 1955, p. 14.

their house at night.[44] Generally however, anti-foreign feeling was expressed though hostile stares and a passive lack of engagement.[45]

Missionaries were in a difficult position. Like everyone else in the Village, they had been instructed to inform the authorities of communist sympathisers. On the other hand, they did not want to be seen as informers and keeping quiet was a way of developing trust. While it is unlikely that anyone would put in writing that they were informers, there is no evidence of deliberate collusion with the British Government in the memoirs of OMF missionaries. Probably the biggest motivation to keep quiet, however, was fear. Welander remembers a night when her next-door neighbours were visited by their communist insurgent son. She writes, 'We lay quiet and neither of us ever mentioned our fears about our neighbours to anyone'.[46]

Chinese Religion

For the missionaries the biggest ideological challenge, however, was not communism but religion. Central to the culture and values of the Chinese in the New Villages was *huaren zongjiao* (Chinese Religion).[47] This umbrella term covers a range of beliefs and practices. Beliefs were drawn from a mixture of three traditions: Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism. To this is added the practice of worshipping the *shen* (supernatural deities) and spirits. These *shen* can be worshipped in temples and at home and include major gods like *Guanyin* (the Goddess of Mercy) and *Guandi Ye* (the God of War), who are universally recognised, as well as other localised deities and *shen* linked with a particular dialect or occupation. As well as worshipping the *shen*, it is also necessary to placate the spirits. Closely connected to worship of the *shen* is the

[44] Wong Kow-Cheong, p. 36.
[45] Elizabeth Goldsmith, *Against All Odds: God at Work in an Impossible Situation* (Milton Keynes: Authentic Media, 2007), p. 12.
[46] Welander, p. 17.
[47] The subject of Chinese Religion in Malaysia is well researched. See Alan C. Herron, 'A History of the Protestant Christian Churches in West Malaysia and Singapore' (unpublished postgraduate dissertation, University of Otago, 1977), pp. 35–51; and more recently Tan Chee-Beng, 'The Religions of the Chinese in Malaysia', in *The Chinese in Malaysia*, ed. by Lee Kam-Hing and Tan Chee-Beng (New York, NY: OUP, 2000), pp. 282–315.

practice of ancestor veneration. This is done to meet the needs of the ancestors in the afterlife and to express filial piety and devotion.

This eclectic mix of beliefs and practices can appear haphazard and inconsistent to those with a Western understanding of religion, but Chinese Religion is a practical religion that pragmatically meet a number of needs. Confucianism provides guidance for moral decisions, Buddhism and/or Taoism is a worldview in which to place life and death, ancestor worship a way to express filial piety, and the worship of *shen* and spirits a way to ensure bad fortune does not befall you.

An important distinction is made in Chinese Religion between the folk religion of the masses and the philosophical beliefs of the educated.[48] While folk religion believes in thaumaturgy and that *shen* have the power to influence daily life, the educated focus on philosophical teaching and dismiss many practices as superstition. In Malaysia this distinction can be seen in the national census. Those that focus on the philosophical teaching of the Buddha tend to identify themselves as Buddhist compared with folk religionists, who tend to identify themselves as belonging to 'Confucianism/Taoism/ other traditional religion'.[49] The majority of New Village settlers were followers of Chinese folk religion. Herron identified that one of the tendencies of migrant groups is to become very conservative and continue to practise the traditions that were common when they left their home country.[50] This was the case for New Village Chinese migrants. Missionaries, who had been in China, found that they held on to their religious beliefs even more strongly than in China.[51]

Wong highlights how Chinese Religion was also important for affirming communal Chinese identity.[52] This happened particularly during annual religious festivals, where communal worship was followed by a feast, which everyone was expected to attend and contribute to. Not participating was considered disrespectful and also placed the fortune of the village at risk. Social pressure to conform to community values made

[48] Herron, pp. 36–37.
[49] Tan Chee-Beng, 'Socio-Cultural Diversities and Identities', p. 301.
[50] Herron, p. 38.
[51] Anne Hazelton, Malaya: *The Golden Chersonese, Fields of Reaping*, 9 (London: CIM, 1957), p. 19.
[52] Wong, p. 39.

it very difficult for individuals to convert to Christianity. Chapter 5 will look more closely at the challenges of a Chinese worldview shaped by Chinese Religion.

The Language Barrier

While the Chinese in Singapore and in the cities and towns of Malaya spoke Mandarin or English, this was not the case in the New Villages. The majority of Chinese in the New Villages were immigrants or the children of immigrants from China.[53] Few had been to school or were literate and most relied on the Chinese dialect they spoke. Lyall, in his survey, recognises the need to learn new dialects (Hokkien, Cantonese) but may not have fully appreciated the challenge this would present. It is clear from missionary memoirs that learning dialects was essential in order to communicate. Sadie Custer, a veteran in China for thirteen years, found when she arrived in the New Villages that her fluent Mandarin was no help to her.[54]

The Chinese in the New Villages came from a variety of *fangyanqun*, or 'dialect groups' that originated from the provinces of Fujian (Fukien), Guangxi (Kwangsi) and Guangdong (Kwangtung), in southeast China. Missionaries from the Anglican and Presbyterian Churches, who had worked in these provinces, were already familiar with some of the dialects spoken.[55] This was a challenge for the OMF, however, who had not worked in these coastal provinces, and had to start learning from scratch.

The main dialects spoken in the New Villages were Hokkien, Cantonese and Hakka. Hokkien originated from southern Fujian and the city of Xiamen (Amoy). This dialect group were the first to come and settle in Malaya and represented the largest dialect in the country. The Cantonese came

Figure 3: Map of Southeast China

[53] Stockwell, III, pp. 76–77, document 168.
[54] Sadie Custer and Loraine Custer Czarneke, *God's Vagabond: The Autobiography of Sadie Custer* (Littleton, CO: Lammermuir House Publishing, 2006), pp. 211–12.
[55] George Hood, *Neither Bang nor a Whimper: The End of a Missionary Era in China* (Singapore: Presbyterian Church of Singapore, 1991), p. 152.

to Malaya from the provinces of Guangdong and Guangxi and are particularly linked to the city of Guangzhou (Canton). They came to Malaya attracted by the tin-mining industry and can be found in the tin-mining states of Perak, Selangor and Negri Sembilan. While Hakka speakers came through the Southeastern provinces, they originally migrated from further north in China. Unlike the other major dialects, they are identified by the language they speak, not where they come from. In addition to these three main dialect groups, a number of other dialects can be found in Malaysia. They include, Hainanese, Hockchiu, Teochew and Kwongsai.

The situation was further complicated by the fact that the New Villages were not made up of homogenous groups, so that several Chinese dialects were often spoken within a particular Village. While a Village may have a majority of Hokkien speakers, there were times when it was people from another minority dialect that came to the missionary meetings. While OMF missionaries were committed to learning the local language, it was a challenge to decide which dialect to learn. Wong observed that language acquisition was not helped by missionaries frequently being moved from one Village to another.[56] He suggests this was because of CIM's policy of entering new territory as soon as possible and doing widespread evangelism. While this may have been an influence, a more likely explanation was a different policy of the mission. In order to maintain their links with their supporters in their home country, the OMF, like most mission agencies, had a policy of missionaries returning to their home country every fifth year for what was called 'furlough'. As a result, missionaries frequently had to be moved to cover those going on furlough.

Living Conditions

The climate and living conditions in the New Villages were another unexpected challenge.[57] In China missionaries were used to living in Mission compounds in more temperate climates. They were also not used to living in a tropical climate where mosquito-borne diseases like malaria and dengue were common. The perpetual heat and high humidity proved very draining, and on top of all this, there was little

[56] Wong pp. 33-34.
[57] Goldsmith, pp. 14–18.

personal privacy. Walls were thin and they were watched wherever they went. For Europeans, used to protecting their privacy, this for many was, surprisingly, one of the biggest challenges of all.

As we have seen in the previous chapter, the OMF was committed to living with, and at the same level as, the people they came to serve, and this was a challenge in the New Villages. When they arrived, they found that housing was poor and basic, made of wood with two or three rooms and a zinc sheet for roofing. Floors were either made of concrete or often were just bare earth. At the beginning there was no electricity or running water with Kerosene lamps for light and wells for water. Toilet facilities were basic, and scorpions and snakes often made appearances.

Hood interpreted this as an attempt by ex-China missionaries to 'purge their feelings of guilt' because of the accusations they faced in China.[58] While he may have seen their response as an overreaction, it is clear from the decisions at Bournemouth and the subsequent policies of the South Malayan Field, that OMF missionaries were influenced by their experience in China and were determined to live according to the indigenous principle as a result. The decision was not an easy one and not all missionaries were suited to village life. For some the pressure was too much, leading to exhaustion and, in at least two cases, to a nervous breakdown.[59]

3.3 The Response of Missionaries to Government Expectation

The situation that created the New Villages produced communities that were deeply suspicious of outsiders and resentful of the British Government that forced their relocation. Missionaries did not foresee the level of resistance they would face. While they were prepared for the communist threat, they did not anticipate either the language barrier that would need to be overcome or the strength of existing religious beliefs. Living conditions and the climate were another unexpected challenge that made every day a struggle.

[58] Hood, p. 152.
[59] Goldsmith, p. 85.

When OMF missionaries arrived, they engaged in a range of activities to overcome these challenges. Included in 'Village Work' were some activities that also met the needs of the Government. Missionaries were asked to provide social, educational and medical services in the New Villages and this they did to varying degrees. Living in the New Villages also had an impact that will be considered.

Social and Educational Work

When it came to social work it appears that little coordinated work was done. The MCC Survey (1958) lists a range of activities that were considered. They included the provision of old people's homes, creches and youth groups. While in places individual missionaries were involved in social work, what is presented in the Survey are ideas for the future rather than things that were currently in operation.

The biggest contribution Protestant mission made in the area of education was through their existing network of primary and secondary mission schools. One of the advantages of relocation was that the New Villages were placed close to main roads and often to larger urban centres. As a result, a number of New Villages benefited directly through children being able to travel to schools in towns nearby.[60]

Protestant mission agencies did not have the same direct impact when it came to establishing schools in the New Villages. When a Village was large enough to support a primary school, one was built that was usually either supported by the Government or subsidised by a Chinese association. While mission agencies were not normally involved, they did start at least four schools in Johore and Perak.[61]

Missionaries also provided informal literacy classes in Mandarin and English. According to Nyce, 'Literacy work is undertaken in almost every village having a resident evangelist'.[62] The type of class depended on the specific need in the Village and ranged from adults learning to read and write in Mandarin to children wanting

[60] Malayan Christian Council, 'A Survey of the New Villages on Malaya' (Kuala Lumpur, 1958), p.15, SOAS Archives [UK]: CBMS/01/E/76/04.
[61] Malayan Christian Council, 'A Survey of the New Villages in Malaya', p. 15.
[62] Ray Nyce, *The New Villages of Malaya: A Community Study*, ed. by Shirle Gordon (Singapore: Malaysian Sociological Research Institute, 1973), p. 168.

to learn English. These informal classes gave missionaries an opportunity to serve the community and establish relationships. The contribution of missionaries to the social work and educational work carried out in the New Villages was useful but did not have a significant impact.

Medical Clinics

The provision of medical services was a major challenge to the Government. Short highlights the lack of adequate services in 1952.[63] However, by 1959, the situation had been turned around. With the assistance of the voluntary associations a comprehensive system of clinics had been set up. Table 5 shows that, on average, 92% of the New Village population had access to a medical clinic. This coverage was not restricted to 'Chinese' Villages but covered all Villages under the responsibility of the Government, including those where the majority of the population was Malay.

Table 5: 1959 New Village Access to Medical Clinics

	Static Clinic		Mobile Clinic		None		Total		% Coverage	
	No.	Pop.	No.	Pop.	No.	Pop.	No.	Pop.	No.	Pop.
Perak	14	58,918	91	142,125	52	40,571	157	241,614	67%	83%
Johore	19	55,480	80	116,386			99	171,866	100%	100%
Selangor	19	79,365	40	54,242	4	1,369	63	134,976	94%	99%
Pahang	6	11,412	31	30,394	8	3,436	45	45,242	82%	92%
Negri Sembilan	5	5,279	34	28,460	1	1,292	40	35,031	98%	96%
Other States	7	6,379	68	59,350	10	6,761	85	72,490	88%	91%
	70	216,833	344	430,957	75	53,429	489	701,219	85%	92%

Source: Calculated from the MCC Survey (1959)

It is in this area that missionaries made their biggest contribution. This was the first time in the country's history that medical work became a focus of Protestant missionary attention. Staffing Government clinics and running their own mission clinics became an important part of their work. Static clinics were established in strategic New Villages and provided a permanent service. More common, however, were mobile clinics that were responsible for visiting a number of Villages. Sometimes these clinics operated from a New Village and at other times from an existing town. In 1958 Protestant mission agencies were responsible for 32% of the medical clinics

[63] Anthony Short, *The Communist Insurrection in Malaya, 1948-1960* (London: Muller, 1975), p. 399.

operating in Perak and the Catholic church was responsible for a further 18%. The Government was responsible for the other 50%.[64]

Table 5 shows that by 1959, 85% of the 489 New Villages were receiving some form of medical care although the majority was given through mobile services. Lee highlights that there were insufficient medical units in many New Villages, particularly in Perak and Pahang.[65] This is somewhat misleading as the comment is based on the number of Villages in these two states. When the population of the New Villages is taken into account, in most states, medical coverage exceeded 90%, and while lower than other states, coverage in Perak was still 83%.

Since the founding of the CIM, the Mission had been linked with healthcare. Its founder, Hudson Taylor, was himself a doctor and during its time in China it actively established hospitals. In Malaya, the OMF explored the possibility of doing the same thing and in 1952 offered to start their own 60-bed hospital.[66] The Government was not enthusiastic as the move could set a precedent and they were also concerned with how the Malay Muslim community would react. In the end it did not go ahead and the OMF started one in Thailand instead.

A significant portion of OMF missionaries in Malaya had medical training, although there were only ever two medical doctors. In 1953, for example, 35% of the fifty-four missionaries in the country had medical training. Over time this percentage dropped but even in 1959 it stood at 25%. This enabled the OMF to staff a number of clinics. In some cases, government clinics had been taken over, and in others, the OMF started new ones. In the South Malayan Field, Percy Moore, the OMF Superintendent of the South Malayan Field from 1953 to 1959, agreed to staff four static clinics, two in Selangor (Sungei Way, Serdang) and two in Johore (Bukit Siput, Bekok). Although the North Malayan Field was smaller, it had the services of Dr Max Gray and ran an

[64] Malayan Christian Council, 'A Survey of the New Villages in Malaya', p. 11.
[65] Lee Kam-Hing, 'A Neglected Story: Christian Missionaries, Chinese New Villagers, and Communists in the Battle for the "Hearts and Minds" in Malaya, 1948–1960', *Modern Asian Studies*, 47.6 (2013), 1977–2006 (p. 1993).
[66] Mitchell to Webster 26 August 1952, TNA [UK]: CO 1022/378.

additional two static clinics in Mambang Di-Awan and Bidor. From these two clinics, a further fourteen villages were visited.[67]

For Moore, the need to fulfil the Fellowship's commitment to staff clinics was a constant challenge. It was difficult to find nurses who were both willing to be involved in full-time clinic work and spoke the prevailing Chinese dialect. A particular challenge was finding replacements when a nurse went on furlough. In 1954, of the fifteen missionaries who were trained nurses, only seven were involved in full-time clinic work. Some were married with families, and others, while happy to run 'unofficial' clinics, did not feel called to full-time nursing.[68]

For the OMF, healthcare was very much linked with evangelism. When Mary Welander arrive in Malaya, she was sent to work in the Government clinic in Bekok. Her experience was typical of OMF missionaries working in a clinic. It involved consultations, in the dialect of the patient, followed by treatment. At the beginning there was frustration at not being able to communicate and requiring a translator. Then there was the constant demand for their services and the need to convince patients to follow the instructions given. Later, however, it provided an open door when visiting homes in the village. Posters with gospel messages were placed in prominent places in the waiting rooms and, while people were waiting for treatment, tracts were handed out. In some clinics missionaries even stuck gospel messages on the prescription bottles of patients.

The Fellowship recognised its obligation to the Government to provide the necessary support for the clinics it ran and took this responsibility seriously. On the other hand, apart from the offer to start a hospital in 1952, they did not seek to develop this area of ministry or expand the number of clinics they were responsible for. This was partly because, in the end, the use of missionaries was an interim solution until adequate

[67] Dr Max Gray, 'A Doctor in Malaya', *The Millions*, March 1957, p. 26.
[68] Moore to Lea (Overseas Director), 3 December 1954, OMF Archives [SG]: AR 5.1.5 Box 1.6.

Government personnel could be trained to replace them. It was also due to the OMF's theological position.

One of the sources of the OMF's reluctance to have healthcare dominate its ministry in Malaya can be traced to the Fundamentalist-Modernist controversy in the 1920s. This controversy involved disputes over biblical authority, higher criticism and evolution. It split the Christian community into conservatives or fundamentalists on one side and liberals or modernists on the other. Missionaries in China and the CIM found themselves on the frontline of this debate. In supporting the formation of the Bible Union of China, the CIM became advocates for the conservatives.[69] The split led to liberal missionaries concentrating missionary resources on education and bringing about social reform, whereas conservative missionaries concentrated on evangelism, church-planting and seeking to alleviate social problems.

In Malaya, evidence of this split can be seen in the OMF's withdrawal from membership of the NVCC, because of its links with MCC. Roxborogh, however, argues that this split was not so much theological as racial, linguistic and cultural. He points to the fact that although considered liberal, the MCC was very involved in evangelism, and the OMF, which considered itself conservative, had offered to build a hospital, which was only indirectly evangelistic.[70]

While it is true that both liberal and conservative missionaries were involved in medical work and evangelism, the distinction between alleviating social problems and social reform was significant. They represent two very different understandings of the relationship between Christianity and society. Those with a liberal theology prioritised the need to transform society. As a result, the provision of education and healthcare was a strategy that aimed to bring about this social transformation. Those with a conservative theology sought to transform society though developing countercultural communities. For the OMF, social action, like the provision of medical

[69] Daniel H. Bays, *A New History of Christianity in China* (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 2012), p. 106.
[70] John Roxborogh, 'The Story of Ecumenism', in *Christianity in Malaysia: A Denominational History*, ed. by Robert Hunt, Lee Kam-Hing, and John Roxborogh (Petaling Jaya, Selangor: Pelanduk Publications, 1992), pp. 277–322 (pp. 292–93).

clinics, was focused on alleviating social problems. Its main concern, however, was establishing Chinese Christian congregations.

Table 6: 1959 New Villages by Predominant Ethnicity

	No.	Pop.
TOTAL NEW VILLAGES	489	701,219
Less Malay New Villages	102	53,937
Available New Villages	387	647,282

Source: Calculated from the MCC Survey

Living in the New Villages

In addition to medical clinics, communities were also impacted by the presence of Asian and European Protestant missionaries. As well as residing in the New Villages, visiting nearby Villages significantly increased the number of people they engaged. Due to political and religious sensitivities, missionaries were prohibited from working in predominantly Malay Villages. Table 6 shows that this reduced the number of Villages they were able to visit to 387, which contained a population of just over 647,000.

A statistic that is commonly quoted by commentators from the MCC Survey (1959), claimed that Asian and European missionaries were working in 333 New Villages.[71] This figure cannot be correct, unless it includes Villages only visited to provide medical care. According to the detailed statistics by Village, which are summarised in Table 7, the actual number of Villages that missionaries were resident in was 92 and the number of Villages that were visited for evangelistic work was 118.[72] Focusing just on the number of Villages, as we have seen, can be misleading. While just over half

Table 7: 1959 New Villages with Resident and Visiting Missionaries

	Resident		Visiting		None		Total		% Coverage	
	No.	Pop.	No.	Pop.	No.	Pop.	No.	Pop.	No.	Pop.
Perak	25	97,972	46	66,838	40	62,459	111	227,269	64%	73%
Johore	28	84,506	31	46,093	27	29,112	86	159,711	69%	82%
Selangor	22	87,057	19	31,295	14	10,430	55	128,782	75%	92%
Pahang	10	19,211	15	16,875	14	7,809	39	43,895	64%	82%
Negri Sembilan	3	4,529	1	1,190	29	25,592	33	31,311	12%	18%
Other States	4	7,220	6	5,798	53	43,296	63	56,314	16%	23%
	92	300,495	118	168,089	177	178,698	387	647,282	54%	72%

Source: Calculated from the MCC Survey (1959)

[71] See Lee Kam-Hing, 'A Neglected Story', p. 1992; and John Roxborogh, *A History of Christianity in Malaysia* (Singapore: Armour Publishing, 2014), p. 85.

[72] Malayan Christian Council, 'A Survey of the New Villages in Malaya (Revised)' (Kuala Lumpur, 1959), pp. 21–46, SOAS Archives [UK]: CBMS/01/E/76/04.

(54%) the New Villages were in contact with missionaries, a better measure of coverage is population, and the Table shows that 72% of the available New Village population lived in these Villages. The proportion is even higher in the four main states affected by relocation. Selangor was the highest with 92% of the population in contact either with a resident missionary or through visits.

The OMF was uniquely qualified to provide a balanced view of the contribution of Protestant missionaries to the New Villages. It was the major contributor to the mission work in the New Villages throughout the Emergency. Hood reported that, at the end of 1952, there were 111 missionaries either living in the New Villages or involved in evangelistic or pastoral work, and fifty-three (48%) were from the OMF. Seven years later they were still providing ninety-seven (45%) of the 217 missionaries (see Table 2). The Fellowship also had the broadest spread of missionaries, giving it a better overall perspective of the work. While the Presbyterian missionaries were based in Johore and Lutheran missionaries concentrated in Perak and Selangor, the OMF had the largest number of missionaries in the four main states of Johor, Pahang, Perak and Selangor, where the largest proportion of New Villages were located.

A unique feature of the OMF's contribution was that all their missionaries were Europeans. Unlike all the other mission agencies, it did not have any Asian workers. This was partly because the CIM had not worked in the south-eastern provinces of China and did not have contact with Christians who spoke the Chinese dialects found in the New Villages. The ULCA, for example, who had worked in Guangdong, was able to bring Chinese evangelists from Hong Kong.[73] The main reason, however, was the policy of not employing local workers, which was agreed at Bournemouth. This policy, as we have seen, was introduced because of experiences in China and was motivated by a desire not to exert financial control over local churches that were planted. It did, however, make it more difficult to break down barriers between the missionaries and New Villagers. Seeing Chinese and Europeans working together was a powerful witness to the inclusiveness of their message.

[73] Jeremy Fisher, *A String of Pearls* (Hickory, NC: Private Publication, 2012), p. 17.

Living in the New Villages was unexpected and a surprise to the Villagers. Their experience of Western foreigners was as a ruling elite who seldom mixed with the indigenous population. They were the *tuans*, the masters, who owned estates and lived in large houses with servants. Here were Westerners, who not only mixed with the New Villagers, but lived in the same housing and conditions and under the same restrictions as themselves. Wong suggests that living like this helped to change the Villagers' perception of missionaries.[74]

It was almost universally believed that the missionaries were government spies, when they first arrived. Over time, by living with the New Villagers, they were able to demonstrate that this was not the case. Villagers were welcomed into their homes and their lives were on display twenty-four hours a day. Through this openness they showed they had nothing to hide. For those who were willing to get to know missionaries, this went a long way towards dispelling the view that they were spies.

Staying in the Villages also placed missionaries in a vulnerable position. The New Villages were on the front line in the battle with the communists but missionaries, many of them single women, still took up residence in them. Chinese New Village migrants had a reputation with the government of being people that could not be trusted and were potentially part of the *Min Yuen*. By staying unguarded in the Village, missionaries demonstrated a level of trust in the community. In doing so they put their safety in the hands of the Villagers. Living and interacting with those in the New Villages presented other ways of developing trust. A good example was David and Phyllis Day, who chose to have their third daughter delivered in Cha'ah New Village rather than going to a hospital in a bigger town. This decision, to trust the Chinese New Village midwife, is still remembered by her.[75]

To be able to communicate, missionaries needed to learn a local Chinese dialect. As we have noted already this was a challenge as residents of the New Villages spoke a range of dialects. This commitment contributed to the missionaries earning the trust

[74] Wong Kow-Cheong, p. 43.
[75] Wong Kow-Cheong, p. 46.

of New Village inhabitants. According to Markandan, the New Villagers were proud of their dialects and cultural heritage. A person who spoke English and required a translator, was considered to be 'a running dog of the government'.[76] Those who were willing to learn the Village dialect were seen in a different light. It was concrete evidence of the desire of the missionaries to meet the Villagers on their own terms.

It is easy to underestimate the impact of living and interacting on a daily basis with New Village residents. Wong is one who recognises it when he writes, 'It was through living transparent lives among the villagers and speaking their dialects that the missionaries were able to break down prejudices, mistrust and suspicions which were necessary for genuine friendship and trust to develop'.[77] While his conclusions are biased towards missionaries he obviously regards highly, his analysis is informed by interviews with actual New Village Christians. He recognised that for genuine relationships to develop, missionaries needed to earn the trust of those they said they came to serve.

[76] Paul Markandan, *The Problem of the New Villages in Malaya* (Singapore: Donald Moore, 1954), p. 21.
[77] Wong Kow-Cheong, p. 45.

PART I: THE EMERGENCY (1948-60)

4. THE NEW VILLAGES IN A NEW COUNTRY

During the 1950s, the New Villages became a permanent feature of the Malayan landscape. While New Village settlers continued to face issues related to security, land tenure, quality of life and political status, they were beginning to find their place within society. The British administration had worked to improve the services provided in the Villages, Independence as the Federation of Malaya in 1957 offered them a permanent place in this new country, and their physical security improved with the formal ending of the Emergency in 1960. At the same time, Independence placed in power a Malayan Government with its own agenda, consisting of politicians influenced by memories of Chinese-Malay conflict during the Emergency and back further, to Japanese occupation and its aftermath.

This chapter reviews the establishment of the New Villages and their impact on the country. It examines the intentions and influence of Protestant missionary societies and their missionaries, the connection with government policy and its elements of colonialism and cultural aggression, and the nature of the relationship that they developed with Chinese migrants in the New Villages. It also reviews the fortunes of the New Villages after Independence in order to understand the reasons for their initial growth and subsequent stagnation.

4.1 THE NEW VILLAGES ESTABLISHED

The establishment and growth of New Village communities, in the Federation of Malaya, has been viewed in a variety of ways. Early assessments of relocation from a British perspective concentrated on the ability of the government to win 'hearts and minds' in the New Villages and how well they were integrated into Malaysian society.

The Impact of Relocation

While relocation was still taking place in 1952, Ernest Dobby presented the New Villages as a positive working alternative to communism. It brought squatters, 'within the orbit of normal administration and normal protection by police' and 'they were provided with the amenities of a well-ordered life'.[1] He acknowledged the impact of relocation on the squatters, but perhaps underestimates the trauma experienced when he refers to 'the admitted nuisance and hardships of resettlement'.[2] In presenting this perspective he was echoing the intentions of Templer and the Government. His assessment recognised that relocation offered the opportunity to bring into Malayan society a group that had, until now, remained on the periphery.

Two years later, based on research during the middle of 1954, Paul Markandan was far more critical.[3] He considered relocation a military failure, as it had not stopped the *Min Yuen* supplying resources to the communists. It was also a failure in terms of addressing the social and economic challenges of the 'Squatter' problem. He concluded that the New Villages would not survive after the Emergency and quoted an elder from one of the Villages: 'the settlers would prefer to leave whatever amenities are provided for them and return to their old homes'.[4] While Purcell and Carnell want to temper the overly optimistic view of Dobby,[5] Markandan goes to the opposite extreme. He underestimated the impact of the positive benefits provided. Time has shown his conclusions were premature, but his analysis showed that the fate of the New Villages was still unclear in the middle of 1954.

The first missionary to write about the ongoing social and political challenges of the relocation was John Fleming. Writing at the end of 1955, he concludes that while

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[1] E. H. G. Dobby, 'Resettlement Transforms Malaya: A Case-History of Relocating the Population of an Asian Plural Society', *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, 1.3 (1952), 163–89 (p. 166).
[2] Dobby, p. 169.
[3] Paul Markandan, *The Problem of the New Villages in Malaya* (Singapore: Donald Moore, 1954).
[4] Markandan, p. 19.
[5] Purcell and Carnell visited Malaya in August and September, 1952. Victor Purcell, 'The Position of the Chinese Community in Malaya', *Journal of The Royal Central Asian Society*, 40.1 (1953), 70–81, questions the wisdom of punishing villages that help the Communists. Francis G. Carnell, 'Communalism and Communism in Malaya', *Pacific Affairs*, 26.2 (1953), 99–117, at a higher level questioned the ability of the British Government to build an independent nation from the existing communal societies.

relocation improved the security situation, it now needed to 'develop into a successful social experiment in local democracy'.[6] The challenge of integrating this rural Chinese population into a Malayan society, still needed to be addressed.

By 1958 the New Villages were here to stay. Field work for the MCC Survey (1958) was conducted in 1957 and it is clear, in the report, that the New Villages were being treated as permanent settled communities.[7] The purpose of the Survey was to determine how best to expand the work being carried out in them. It showed the survival rate was surprisingly high. Only 5% of the New Villages had closed and 489 were still viable. In addition, the overall relocated population had increased at an annual growth rate of 5.9% to 701,219.[8]

At the same time, relocation permanently altered settlement patterns in the country, by accelerated urbanisation in the country generally, and among the Chinese in particular. Between 1931 and 1947 the urban population (i.e. people living in settlements with over 1,000 inhabitants) grew at a rate of 0.7% per annum, from 14.6% to 26.5%.[9] This percentage more than doubled to 1.6% in the next ten years during relocation, so that by 1957, 42.5% of the population were classified as urban. For the Chinese, this trend was even more pronounced. Already in 1931, 26.7% of the Chinese population were classified as urban. For the next sixteen years this percentage increased at a rate of 1.0% per annum to 43.1% in 1947. The growth rate, however, tripled to 3.0% over the next ten years, and in 1957, 73.0% of the Chinese population lived in urban areas, including New Villages with a population of more than one thousand. It is a testament to the adaptability of the New Villagers that they were able to establish urban communities having come from a rural market-gardening lifestyle at the forest edge.

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[6] John Fleming, 'Experiment in Democracy: The New Villages in Malaya', *International Review of Mission*, 45.177 (1956), 101–8 (p. 103).

[7] Malayan Christian Council, 'A Survey of the New Villages in Malaya' (Kuala Lumpur, 1958), p. 21, SOAS Archives [UK]: CBMS/01/E/76/04.

[8] See Table 8, p. 87.

[9] Statistics taken from Kernial Singh Sandhu, 'Emergency Resettlement in Malaya', in *Chinese New Villages in Malaya*, by Ray Nyce (Singapore: Malaysian Sociological Research Institute, 1973), pp. xxix–Lxv (p. Lv–Lviii).

In the years that followed Independence, the communist threat diminished and in 1960 the end of the Emergency was declared. The barbed wire fences were torn down, curfews and searches became a thing of the past, and New Villagers were free to return to their previous rural agrarian lifestyle. While it is true that some New Villagers struggled and did return, the vast majority of the people in the New Villages chose to stay. By 1970, when the next census was taken, it was clear that the New Villages were thriving. As shown in Table 8, of the original 517 New Villages, 465 (90%) were still functioning, and the population had grown to 1,023,035. This equated to a healthy annual growth rate of 2.9%. It is difficult not to conclude that the goal of integrating migrant Chinese into Malaysian society had been achieved.

A number of options were available to rural Chinese migrants at different times after the war. Some had returned to China, either deported by the Government or by choice. Others had joined the effort to bring about a communist republic by joining the MCP or becoming part of the *Min Yuen*. In the end, however, the majority chose to stay in the New Villages and take their chances in the new country of Malaya.

Factors that influenced New Village Settlers

In 1962 Sandhu conducted a survey in the states of Perak, Pahang and Johore to find out why the settlers had decided to remain.[10] He is the only commentator to summarise the views of the Chinese migrants themselves and it is significant that at the top of the settlers' concerns was security. After the insecurity of the Japanese occupation and the years of the Emergency it is not surprising that a major factor that encouraged people to stay was the greater security they enjoyed. Even in 1962, they were still concerned by the lack of security in rural areas. This may not have only been because of the communist threat. The increase in the number of Chinese squatters during the Japanese occupation aggravated racial tensions between Chinese and Malay. Andaya highlights how this influx brought Chinese agriculturalists into closer contact and potential competition with rural Malays.[11] The threat of conflict with

[10] Sandhu, p. lvii.
[11] Barbara Watson Andaya and Leonard Andaya, *A History of Malaysia*, 3rd edn (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), p. 262.

rural Malays may have also contributed to safety concerns. One of the most attractive features of the New Villages then, was the security they provided.

A second factor was stability. Villagers were concerned with the cost of moving back to the jungle's edge but also with the fact that in rural areas they may be forced to move again. On the other hand, in the New Villages they had the prospect of having legal possession of the land they lived on and farmed. Permanent titles, in the form of thirty-year leases, were offered to settlers. The process of obtaining these titles was often preceded by the application for a Temporary Occupation Licence, which required annual renewal. Short leases of only thirty years were offered because the Government was not sure of the long-term viability of the New Villages. Land ownership was also a delicate issue. Malays objected to Chinese owning land. In addition, the issuing of titles was a State responsibility, and this led to any Federal policy being implemented unevenly across the states. Much depended on whether the Government had been able to purchase the land on which the village stood.

Thirdly, the amenities and social environment were attractive to the settlers. The availability of services like water and electricity were important incentives. Bringing together isolated rural dwellers also made services like schools and medical care possible. These improved both the quality of life of the New Villagers and the future prospects for their children.

A fourth factor not mentioned by the settlers but affecting all Chinese in Malaya, was the closing of China's border. In 1946, when the Malayan Union was proposed, Chinese migrants were ambivalent about the offer of citizenship. Many were concerned about what would happen to their Chinese citizenship if they became citizens of Malaya.[12] At the time, Chinese in Malaya identified themselves as *Huaqiao* or 'Hua sojourners'. They were 'overseas Chinese', who could potentially one day return to their country of origin. By the time Independence came, the border to China was closed. Returning to China was no longer an option and these sojourners needed to settle permanently in Malaya. Since Independence, there has been a gradual shift

[12] Andaya and Andaya, p. 272.

in perspective so that Chinese in Malaysia now refer to themselves as *Huaren*, which means 'Hua people'. They have become 'Chinese Malaysians'. The emphasis is now on their local identity.[13]

4.2 The Role of Protestant Mission

While relocation brought rural Chinese migrants into mainstream Malayan society and gave them a stake in the country, the contribution of Protestant mission agencies to this, and their relationship with the Government, has not been fully explored. Gurney and Templer went to great lengths to attract Christian missionaries to Malaya, and by 1959, at least 217 were working in the New Villages. While some commentators have acknowledged this missionary presence, only Anthony Short, as we have already seen, suggests that they might have had an impact on the survival of the New Villages.[14] This lack of interest may be partly attributed to the desire of mission agencies not to publicise their relationship with the Government. They were conscious of how it could be perceived. It may also be because commentators were simply unaware of their presence, or they were aware, but considered missionaries irrelevant. Khoo suggests another possible reason for their absence in the narrative was their unconventional value system.[15] Missionaries were problematic figures and it was easier to ignore or dismiss their involvement than engage with it.

Agents of a Colonial Civilising Mission

More recently historians have begun to explore the influence of Protestant missions.[16] Harper stands out as the one who recognised the 'pronounced, although unevenly felt' impact of missionaries in the New Villages.[17] He highlights how the Government turned to Christian voluntary associations to help implement its New

[13] Tan Chee-Beng, 'Socio-Cultural Diversities and Identities', in *The Chinese in Malaysia*, ed. by Lee Kam-Hing and Tan Chee-Beng (New York: OUP, 2000), pp. 37–70 (pp. 37–38).
[14] See Chapter 1, pp. 5-6 for details.
[15] David Khoo Sheng-Li, 'Winning Hearts and Souls: Missionaries in the New Villages during the Malayan Emergency' (unpublished undergraduate dissertation, National University of Singapore, 2004), pp. 39–40.
[16] See Kumar Ramakrishna, *Emergency Propaganda: The Winning of Malayan Hearts and Minds, 1948-1958* (Richmond: Curzon, 2002) and from a Christian perspective Lee Kam-Hing, 'A Neglected Story: Christian Missionaries, Chinese New Villagers, and Communists in the Battle for the "Hearts and Minds" in Malaya, 1948–1960', *Modern Asian Studies*, 47.6 (2013), 1977–2006.
[17] T. N. Harper, *The End of Empire and the Making of Malaya* (Cambridge: CUP, 1999), p. 185.

Village 'aftercare' plan and how, by doing so, Protestant mission agencies became 'a conduit for new colonial projects'.[18] This kind of language alludes to a classic collusion of a cultural imperialistic nature between a colonial government and Christian mission. All the ingredients were there: a vast social experiment, government-funded mission work, and a common enemy, 'communism'. They were both fighting for 'hearts and minds' in the New Villages and worked together to indoctrinate a traumatised, homogenous and captive audience that was ripe for change.

Harper is keen to explore the relationship between Christian mission and communism. He suggests that the goal of mission agencies was 'Visions of a Christian Social Order'.[19] He argues that this objective was motivated not only by old notions of a colonial civilising mission but by the more recent anti-communist theology of people like the theologian Reinhold Niebuhr. Niebuhr's social theology advocated the need for Christians to be engaged in society in a way that was vehemently anti-communist and promoted a democratic and capitalistic agenda. Harper is concerned here with the effect missionary efforts to spread Christianity were having on the culture of the inhabitants of the Chinese New Villages.

Agents of Cultural Aggression

Before evaluating Harper's use of cultural imperialism as a paradigm for understanding the role of Christian mission in the New Villages, it is important to draw a distinction between two different uses of the term. One is focused on cultural domination, *in the absence* of direct political control, in the postcolonial era. The second use refers back to the time when countries were under the direct political control of an imperial power. Ryan Dunch in his critique of cultural imperialism traces this use back to Chinese nationalists in the 1920s,[20] where it referred to the 'cultural aggression' of missionaries in the nineteenth and early twentieth century in China. In this understanding, imperialism took three forms: political, economic and cultural. Missionaries were imperialist agents of the cultural arm of this coordinated

[18] Harper, p. 183.
[19] Harper, p. 184.
[20] Ryan Dunch, 'Beyond Cultural Imperialism: Cultural Theory, Christian Missions, and Global Modernity', *History and Theory*, 41.3 (2002), 301–25 (p. 314).

intentional imperialist project. While Harper's discussion is concerned with the first use of the term, New Village migrants were concerned with the second.

According to nationalist and communist propaganda, Christian conversion and missionary education were designed to create a compliant Chinese population that would passively accept foreign economic and political control. While missionaries may appear altruistic, education and healthcare were simply more deceptive ways of achieving imperialistic goals. Ex-China missionaries were well aware of the accusation that they were 'agents of imperialism' and in Malaya did all they could to disassociate themselves from the Government.[21] The OMF's implementation of the 'indigenous principle' was their attempt to show they did not have ulterior motives, but for many in the New Villages imperialistic collusion was assumed, irrespective of the actions taken by missionaries.

The use of this understanding of cultural imperialism is based on the premise that the imperial power had, and wished to maintain, political and economic control of a country. The irony in Malaya was that the colonial Government was actively working towards Independence, which was achieved in 1957, a mere six years after missionaries first arrived. It is difficult to argue that missionaries were deployed in the New Villages to assist the Government in maintaining control, when independence was its goal. In addition, the government actively prevented Christian missionaries from evangelising Malays. If missionaries were part of a coordinated imperial plan, it is difficult to understand why all ethnic groupings would not be subjected to a similar form of cultural aggression.

Agents of Change

Harper, however, is not concerned with motives and the level of collusion between the Government and mission agencies during the colonial period. He is interested in the second use of the term, 'cultural imperialism', which focuses on the impact of missionaries irrespective of who had political control. As Dunch put it, 'the attitudes

[21] George Hood, *Neither Bang nor a Whimper: The End of a Missionary Era in China* (Singapore: Presbyterian Church of Singapore, 1991), pp. 149–51.

of missionaries are beside the point when it comes to the crucial question of their *effect* on indigenous cultures'.[22] He points to the research of Jean and John Comaroff, who asserted that it was the missionary encounter with the host culture that is relevant. Based on their study of the interaction between the Tswana people of southern Africa and missionaries, they argued that it was through a range of everyday practices and daily interaction that missionaries influenced the lives of the Tswana people. It was through measuring time with a clock, competing claims about rain-making, the use of a plough in farming, and the introduction of written language that the Tswana experienced a 'colonisation of consciousness'. The interaction was not only wide-ranging, it was hegemonic in character. As they wrote, 'the mission, by its very presence, engaged all Tshidi in an inescapable dialogue on its own terms'.[23]

The research of Robert Woodberry also supports the assessment that missionaries were influential agents of change. In his comprehensive and global statistical study, he argues that the presence and activities of conversionary Protestants, 'fostered conditions that made stable representative democracy more likely – regardless of whether many people converted to Protestantism'.[24] He looked at the historical evidence to highlight the involvement of Protestant missionaries in developing mass printing and mass education, in initiating voluntary organisations and colonial reforms, and in championing religious liberty. While these were unintended consequences of their actions, he argues that conversionary Protestants, through them, laid the foundation for democratic nation-states to develop. Both the Comaroffs and Woodberry also highlight the need to recognise the importance of worldview and religion and to take more seriously the influence of missionaries.

It is important to recognise that there is a significant difference in the period of analysis of both Comaroffs and Woodberry and the length of missionary presence in the New Villages. The Comaroffs were looking at the interaction of missionaries

[22] Dunch, p. 310.
[23] Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff, 'Christianity and Colonialism in South Africa', *American Ethnologist.*, 13.1 (1986), 1–22 (p. 15). The Tshidi referred to are a sub-group of the Tswana.
[24] Robert D. Woodberry, 'The Missionary Roots of Liberal Democracy', *American Political Science Review*, 106.2 (2012), 244–74 (p. 245).

dating back to the 1820s, and Woodberry, likewise, was interested in the impact of Protestant missionaries since the inception of the modern missionary movement in the early nineteenth century. By way of contrast, Protestant mission in the New Villages lasted a mere twenty-five years.[25]

Nevertheless, the changes experienced by migrant Chinese in the New Villages were profound. Our recalculated figures in Table 7 show that 46% (300,495) of the New Village population were in daily contact with a resident Protestant missionary, and a further 26% (168,089) were in regular contact through missionaries visiting their Village. Harper highlights how these Villagers went from having little contact at all with colonial bureaucracy to becoming the focus of its intense scrutiny.[26] It should also be noted that missionary interaction with the New Villages continued well after Independence in 1957. As we shall see in Part II, while the scope of the OMF's activity grew beyond the New Villages in the 1960s, it remained committed to the New Villages during its time in the country. These insights suggest that greater weight should be given to the presence and activities of missionaries in the New Villages and support Harper's assessment that the impact of Protestant missionaries was pronounced but unevenly felt.

An Inadequate Model

Should we conclude therefore that Protestant missionaries in post-Second World War Malaya were the cultural imperialists Harper suggests? Did they exercise hegemonic power over Chinese migrants, as colonisers of consciousness in the New Villages? Dunch argues that cultural imperialism is an inadequate model for understanding the interaction between cultures in general, and for assessing the role of Protestant missionaries in particular. He discusses a range of problems and then summarises them into three main issues:

> It [cultural imperialism] is intertwined with essentializing discourses of an imagined national or cultural authenticity; it disregards or slights the agency of the "acted upon"; and, by conceptualizing cultural transitions in terms of coercion, it reduces a complex set of interactions to a dichotomy between

[25] In 1952 thirteen OMF missionaries were stationed in the South Malayan Field. Twenty-five years later in 1977 there were still a total of twenty-one OMF missionaries serving in Peninsular Malaysia.
[26] Harper, pp. 195–96.

> actor and acted upon, and skews our gaze too much towards looking for subjugation, collaboration, or resistance, or, even less usefully, towards fruitless debates about motives and unsupportable distinctions between cultural exchange and cultural imposition.[27]

His first concern is that many postcolonial evaluations idealise an 'authentic' pre-colonial cultural voice, which is then destroyed by foreign cultural domination.[28] Stanley also identifies this tendency, and points out that Western commentators, who assume, 'indigenous cultures prior to the missionary impact were in a condition of static perfection', are themselves being culturally imperialistic. Their assumption is based on the premise that 'non-Western societies knew nothing of change or innovation until brought into contact with the modernizing West'.[29] This may be what Harper is implying when he suggests that the New Villagers were better off enjoying the economic liberty of their lifestyle as pioneer cultivators at the forest edge.[30]

Dunch's second concern is the failure of cultural imperialism to adequately incorporate indigenous agency. Related to this is his third, which is the way acculturation is reduced to a dialogue between oppressed and oppressor. His concern highlights the need for a way to approach intercultural communication that incorporates a wider understanding of the interrelationships involved. This approach needs to recognise indigenous agency and accept that the host culture may appropriate missionary communication in a variety of ways. It also needs to be able to recognise that modernity was a global phenomenon, where missionaries were not only agents of the spread of modernity but products of it as well.[31]

In Malaya this approach is further complicated by the role of the Malay population. They represent a third agent that needs to be considered when assessing the development of the New Villages. When they were established, the New Villages received services not provided to Malay villages. This difference in treatment had a

[27] Dunch, p. 318.
[28] Dunch, p. 305.
[29] Brian Stanley, *The Bible and the Flag: Protestant Missions and British Imperialism in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Leicester, UK: Apollos, 1990), p. 170.
[30] Harper, p. 359.
[31] Dunch, p. 318.

significant impact on the relationship between the New Villages and the Malay-dominated Government after Independence.

A More Inclusive Approach

These weaknesses suggest the need to move beyond cultural imperialism to a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between the British Government, the Malay population, Chinese New Villagers and Protestant missionaries. Dunch begins by arguing that, if we are to take indigenous agency seriously, then we should prioritise indigenous self-understanding over other assessments.[32] While this approach does not resolve the postmodern problem of relativism, it does avoid Western postmodern critiques and acknowledges the importance of the host society in any assessment.[33] One of the consequences of accepting indigenous priority is that it allows acculturation to become a conversation rather than an ultimatum. Rather than concluding that Chinese Christians in the New Villages must be 'running dogs' of imperialism, it opens up the possibility that they can be a legitimate sub-ethnic minority group, who chose to embrace a Christian worldview.[34]

Dunch then uses the work of Arjun Appadurai on the cultural dimension of globalisation, to argue that globalisation had both a homogenising and a differentiating effect:

> While standardization and homogenization – through the construction of supposed "universal" standards and normative categories from Greenwich Mean Time to human rights – have been one aspect of globalization, cultural differentiation and heterogeneity have not only persisted in the face of globalization, they have actually been *produced* by it.[35]

Dunch argues that missionaries were active agents, on the one hand, in spreading universal standards, and on the other, in encouraging cultural differentiation within and between societies. If this is the case, then a more wide-ranging appreciation of acculturation and the contribution of missionaries becomes possible.

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[32] Dunch, p. 323.
[33] Dunch, p. 317.
[34] See Chapter 5, 'One more Christian, one less Chinese', pp. 103-105.
[35] Dunch, pp. 318–19.

While there are dangers in focusing on motives, they are important in determining outcomes. By having differing goals, it is possible that Protestant missionaries were able to influence society in ways that subverted the goals of colonial governments and enabled cultural differentiation. Woodberry highlights that missionaries did publicise colonial abuses and through the development of mass printing and mass education were able to disperse power and provide the resources for indigenous groups to challenge colonialism.[36]

When we apply this approach to the New Villages it is clear that missionaries had a homogenising effect. Through their daily routines Protestant missionaries introduced an emphasis on modern rationality, the benefits of science and technology, the autonomous individual, and the secular nation-state. Chinese migrants had been exposed to some of these ideas through their own culture and, when living on the jungle edge, through their sporadic contact with towns. In the New Villages, however, they became immersed in its pervasive influence. Through operating medical clinics, missionaries offered a new way to approach illness that challenged traditional views. Through offering language classes in English and Mandarin, they presented a positive approach to education that prioritised the different skills and abilities needed in a modernised world. And, possibly most important of all, through their emphasis on conversion as an individual personal choice, they supported the modern concept of the autonomous individual needed for capitalism to thrive.

This approach recognises that missionaries were also affected by the homogenising effects of globalisation. In particular, they struggled with the secularising influence of modernity, which marginalised religion. This struggle, which can be seen in the debate between conservative and liberal Christians over the power of God to intervene in the daily lives of people, is explored further in the next chapter.[37]

Missionaries were also influential in the process of cultural differentiation within and between societies. The level and nature of that influence, however, cannot be

[36] Woodberry, pp. 253–55.
[37] See Chapter 5, 'Supernatural and this worldly', pp. 100-103.

generalised and is dependent upon the missionaries themselves and upon the response of the particular host society. In the New Villages that influence was shaped by the origins of the New Villages and the migrant nature of the inhabitants on the one hand, and by the 'indigenous principle' and the commitment to understanding local languages and culture by the OMF and other mission agencies on the other.

A distinctive feature of the New Villages was that they were created for a specific temporary military purpose. As we have already seen, among the challenges faced by missionaries were the suspicions of the village inhabitants. Khoo, however, points out that all strangers were treated this way regardless of their origins.[38] This is understandable given the dislocation of relocation and the experience of Japanese occupation prior to that. While distrustful of strangers, they were open to those who would help them. As the New Villages became established and more services became available, the New Villagers appreciated the improvement and over time transformed these artificially created settlements into permanent communities.

Another distinctive feature of the New Villages was they were predominantly populated by migrant Chinese. This presented a challenge when the border with China closed and they became Malayan citizens. They needed to work out what 'malayanisation' meant for them. Did it involve acculturation with the rural Malay around them, or adapting to a Western culture and learning English, like the Chinese in the towns and cities? And what did it mean for the Chinese culture they brought with them and the dialects they spoke? It was during this crucial time that missionaries came to the New Villages.

When they came, missionaries stood out as the only ones who were willing to learn local Chinese dialects. This was not the case with government officials, politicians or the Malay community. By doing so, missionaries affirmed the language and culture of the communities they engaged with. In some cases, this was the explicit goal of the mission agency. For the OMF the goal of translating their message to make it

[38] Khoo Sheng-Li, p. 26.

understandable in the host culture, was expressed in the 'indigenous principle'.[39] So, while missionaries were critical of some aspects of local culture, it is misleading to stereotype all missionaries as destroyers of culture.[40] This relationship between culture and religion will be explored further in the next chapter.

The process of language and cultural acquisition took time, required local translators, and involved prolonged relationships with members of the community. It may even be the case, as Harper suggests, that Chinese New Villagers found in Christian churches a way of maintaining Chinese identity.[41] This review suggests that missionaries, by living in the New Villages and learning local Chinese dialect, supported cultural differentiation. Through engaging in translation, missionaries encouraged Chinese New Villagers to retain their cultural distinctiveness and develop their own distinct Chinese New Village culture. In doing so, however, they also reinforced ethnic divisions in the country.[42]

From their inception, the New Villages were the unfortunate focus of ethnic tension. Relocation created communities that were classified according to the dominant ethnic group, even though many Villages contained a mix of races. Wang L.-H. suggests that the British Government did this deliberately because they mistrusted the Chinese.[43] It is more likely, however, that practical and logistic reasons, including ease of administration, were more important. It is also true that Malay leadership objected to the presence of missionaries in Malay New Villages and this may also have influenced the classification of villages by ethnicity. In this way missionaries could be prohibited from working in villages that were predominantly Malay. The situation was not helped when the Federation of Malaya, a dominant *ethnie* model of nation-building, was proposed by the Government.[44] The result was that

[39] L. C. Wood, 'Indigenous Principles', *The Field Bulletin*, May 1954, pp. 45-47.
[40] Dunch, p. 322.
[41] Harper, p. 360.
[42] John Roxborogh, 'The Story of Ecumenism', in *Christianity in Malaysia: A Denominational History*, ed. by Robert Hunt, Lee Kam-Hing, and John Roxborogh (Petaling Jaya, Selangor: Pelanduk Publications, 1992), pp. 277–322 (p. 292).
[43] Wang L.-H., 'New Villages Growing Old in Malaysia', *Habitat International*, 12.2 (1988), 35–42 (p. 39).
[44] Cheah Boon-Kheng, 'Ethnicity in the Making of Malaysia', in *Nation-Building: Five Southeast Asian Histories*, ed. by Wang Gung-Wu (Singapore: ISEAS Publications, 2005), pp. 91–115 (pp. 96–104).

communal politics played a significant role in Malayan society after Independence and the New Villages became one of its victims.[45]

4.3 SUSTAINABILITY

After Independence and the end of the Emergency in 1960, the fortunes of the New Villages changed. Statistics show that the number of New Villages stabilised at 450 at the beginning of the twenty-first century. This represented an exceptional 87% of the original Villages started. The population, however, fluctuated and suggests three distinct phases in the life of the New Villages to date. Table 8 shows that during the establishment phase, between 1954 and 1957, the compound annual growth rate was 5.9%. Then between 1957 and 1985, the second phase was one of rapid growth, when the population more than doubled. The third phase was one of deceleration and stagnation between 1985 and 2002 where a nominal growth between the mid-1980s and mid-1990s was followed by the population contracting significantly from the mid-1990s. It is this reduction in population that has reignited contemporary study of the New Villages. While this concern goes beyond the scope of this dissertation, study of the fate of the New Villages has influenced the way the establishment of the New Village has been presented.

Table 8: 1954-2002 Number and Population of the New Villages

	New Villages No.	%	New Villages (000)	CAGR* %
1954	517		590	
1957	489	95%	701	5.9%
1970	465	90%	1,023	2.9%
1985	452	87%	1,650	3.2%
1995			1,681	0.2%
2002	450	87%	1,256	-4.1%

Source: 1954, 1957 Table 4 (MCC Survey (1959)).

Source: 1970, 1985, 1995, 2002 Lim Hin-Fui & Fong Tian-Yong (2005), pp. 53, 55.

** = Compound Annual Growth Rate*

POPULATION GROWTH

The statistics show that during their second phase of life, the New Villages thrived and grew at a compound annual rate that outpaced the national average of 2.6%. While the New Villages benefited from the rapid population growth in the country after the Second World War, Wang points to the relatively higher fertility rates in the New Villages, when compared with urban Chinese, to explain the higher than average

[45] Wang L.-H., p. 39.

growth rates.[46] Francis Loh suggests that this growth was also partly due to the villagers themselves who were able, through their ingenuity and resourcefulness, to overcome the problems and challenges of life in the New Villages. He also points to the support of political parties at various times, who championed the local concerns of the New Village inhabitants.[47]

As the Emergency ended and restriction on movement was lifted, the New Villages became caught up in the process of rapid urbanisation taking place in the country. Closer study shows that the growth potential of a New Village very much depended on its location and its ability to take advantage of the changes occurring in the economy. [48] At least two groups of New Villages developed. Some 'urban' villages, located near large urban centres, did well. Located close to employment in the cities and large towns, they benefited from migrants coming in. Others in semi-urban and semi-rural settings did not fare so well and became the source of migration. It was these Villages that were most adversely affected by the change in the country as an economy based on agriculture and mining transformed into an urban industrial one.

Protestant missions continued to operate in the New Villages after independence. Recommendations in the MCC Survey (1958) show that missionaries were looking to increase their involvement in the New Villages.[49] According to OMF prayer diaries, the number of resident missionaries reached its peak in 1959, when seventy-eight missionaries were placed in the New Villages, and numbers remained over forty until after 1965. Even after that, OMF missionaries continued to be involved in 'Village Work' through visiting Villages and supporting the training of leaders.[50] The presence of these missionaries, however, is not acknowledged by recent work looking at the sustainability of the villages.

[46] Wang L.-H., p. 37.
[47] Francis Loh Kok-Wah, 'Chinese New Villages: Ethnic Identity and Politics', in *The Chinese in Malaysia*, ed. by Lee Kam-Hing and Tan Chee-Beng (New York: OUP, 2000), pp. 255–81 (p. 273).
[48] Loh Kok-Wah, 'Chinese New Villages: Ethnic Identity and Politics', p. 262.
[49] Malayan Christian Council, 'A Survey of the New Villages in Malaya', p. 21.
[50] See Part II, which focuses on the OMF's work after the end of the Emergency.

Rather than recognising this phase of growth as evidence that the British government's aftercare programme, with the support of missionaries, was a success, the period between relocation and 1970 is presented as one of neglect and deteriorating conditions. No distinction is drawn between the actions of the British Government and the post-Independence Malaysian Government that followed. Loh concludes, 'The NVs were badly neglected for at least the first twenty years after they had been established'.[51] This he does by arguing that the British Government was only interested in relocation as a security measure and that little effort was made to improve the lack of facilities in the New Villages that existed once relocation was completed. His analysis was unaware of the MCC Survey (1958), which documents how the situation had significantly improved through the efforts of the Government and voluntary associations by 1958.

Lim Hin-Fui and Fong Tian-Yong also present the period after relocation as one of neglect and hardship, where the only outside assistance given to the New Villagers came from the MCA. They support their argument by presenting, as representative, a rural New Village in Perak, where 'Unable to endure the suffering and life in the "camps"', families that could left.[52] Their evidence is accurate but misleading. While there were cases where the population in a New Village had fallen, the MCC Survey (1959) showed that between relocation to the New Villages and 1957, the New Village population in Perak had on average grown by 17.2%. While it may help their case to portray the New Villages as having been neglected from the start, it is not supported by either the robust growth of the New Villages in the first twenty-five years of their existence, or by evidence of the aftercare programme implemented by the British Government, or by the assistance of missionaries, who continued to work in the Villages after Independence. This is not to say that there were not systemic problems that did ultimately threaten the sustainability of some New Villages. What the evidence suggests, however, is that it was the inability of the post-Independence

[51] Loh Kok-Wah, 'Chinese New Villages: Ethnic Identity and Politics', p. 266.
[52] Lim Hin-Fui and Fong Tian-Yong, *The New Villages in Malaysia: The Journey Ahead* (Kuala Lumpur: Institute of Strategic Analysis & Policy Research, 2005), p. 36.

communally-motivated Malaysian Government to adequately to address these problems, that has led to the current situation.

POPULATION STAGNATION

When the post-Independence Malaysian Government came to power, it set about transforming the country from one that relied on agriculture and mining into a modern industrial nation. One of the consequences of this focus was mass migration from the rural communities to urban centres.[53] This included people from the Chinese New Villages as well as an estimated 19,000 traditional rural Malay villages. The sustainability of these rural communities became a national issue that needed to be addressed. At the same time, the new Government also wanted to eliminate economic disparity between ethnic groups. As a result, much of its efforts were focused on the development of Malays in both rural and urban areas.

After the race riots of 1969, these objectives were made explicit through the establishment of the New Economic Policy in 1971.[54] In urban areas this policy focused on industrial development through investment in industrial estates. In rural areas the focus was on agricultural development. The Federal Land Development Authority was established to improve the economic status of rural communities.

The Chinese New Villages suffered from being too small to be towns and too big to be villages. Many, based on having a population of over 1,000, were classed as towns, without having the infrastructure normally associated with a town. Wang suggests that the New Villages were excluded from benefiting from industrial development funding because they lacked investment opportunities compared with other urban centres. They were also effectively excluded from receiving rural development funds by being classified as towns. This was in spite of the fact that many New Villages were rural and agricultural in nature. While these are the reasons given for the exclusion of the New Villages from the Government's main development programmes, others

[53] Voon Phin-Keong, 'The Chinese New Villages in Malaysia: Impact of Demographic Changes and Response Strategies', *Journal of Malaysian Chinese Studies*, 12 (2009), 73–105 (p. 80).
[54] Wang L.-H., p. 40.

see this as evidence of ethnic discrimination against the Chinese.[55] Whatever the motivation, the result was a lack of investment for a prolonged period of time. This combined with the growth of the New Villages has led to a deterioration of conditions in some rural and semi-urban Villages and raised concern for their ongoing viability.

One of the systemic problems created by the artificial nature of the New Villages was land ownership. Communal politics can also be discerned in the protracted way the issue of land titles was dealt with. Obtaining legal title for housing and farming land was an ongoing issue from the inception of the New Villages. Obtaining permanent title was a drawn out and stressful process for settlers. It was further complicated by the fact that Federal policy was not consistently implemented across the different states. As a result, many settlers ended up occupying land illegally. It was reported in 1977 that less that 45% of households had permanent titles or approved applications for their homes.[56]

New Villagers with permanent title experienced further anxiety when their initial thirty-year leases came up for renewal in the 1980s. This concern brought them to the attention of the nation. In response the Malaysian Government announced that all those with existing titles would be able to extend them for a further thirty years. Land is an emotive issue for the Malay population. While delays in resolving the issuing of permanent title can be attributed to a complex bureaucratic process across heterogenous states, it may also indicate a reluctance on behalf of Malays to allow immigrant Chinese a stake in what they perceive to be their country.

The plight of the New Villages has also been hampered by the lack of an influential political advocate. While much is made of the link between the founding of the MCA and the New Villages, the MCA have not consistently received their support. Loh suggests that political support in the New Villages was not so based on class or communal politics but on the level of support shown to local socio-economic issues.[57]

[55] Wang L.-H., pp. 39–40.
[56] Khoo Soo-Hock, 'The Dilemma of New Villages in Malaysia', *Ekistics*, 46.277 (1979), 235–38 (p. 236)
[57] Loh Kok-Wah, 'Chinese New Villages: Ethnic Identity and Politics', p. 273.

This can be seen in support in the New Villages for opposition parties like the Socialist Front and the People's Progressive Party in the 1960s.

Poverty in the Chinese New Villages came to the attention of the nation in the aftermath of the race riots in 1969 and a resurgence of communist activity around the same time.[58] As a result the New Villages were placed under the responsibility of the Ministry of Housing and Local Government and funds were allocated for their development. This brought renewed support for the MCA. While funding benefited the New Villages, it exemplified the communal approach taken by the Government. Rather than including them in an overall programme to address rural poverty, they were classified as a 'Chinese' problem and placed in a department where the minister is always ethnically Chinese, perpetuating racial divisions in the country.

4.4 Conclusion

Resettlement was an expensive and complicated Government project that created an enduring legacy in the country. By 1957, it had established 489 New Villages with a growing population of over 700,000. When the Emergency officially ended in 1960, the vast majority of New Village inhabitants chose to remain. They were attracted by the security of the New Villages, the possibility of obtaining legal title to the land they lived on and farmed, and the quality of life. They also recognised that return to China was no longer an option and their future lay in their identity as Chinese Malayans.

While the British Government went to considerable lengths to encourage Protestant missionaries to work in the New Villages, few have considered the impact of their presence. Harper is an exception. He uses the modern definition of cultural imperialism to conclude that Protestant missionaries, initially working in tandem with the colonial Government, were effective colonisers of consciousness in the New Villages. This collaboration was not only motivated by establishing a Christian social order, but by twentieth century need to combat the social evils of communism.

[58] Loh Kok-Wah, 'Chinese New Villages: Ethnic Identity and Politics', pp. 258–59.

Chinese migrants in the New Villages were also suspicious of the cultural imperialistic influence of missionaries. They were concerned, however, with the role of Protestant missionaries, when China was under the political control of western powers. There, missionaries were portrayed as part of a coordinated imperialistic plan to retain power. The accusation by communist insurgents in Malaya that Protestant missionaries were imperial agents was difficult to sustain, however, when the colonial Government was actively working towards independence. It also does not explain why Malays and non-Malays were treated differently by the government.

The research of the Comaroffs and Woodberry support Harper's conclusion that Protestant missionaries had a pronounced but evenly felt influence on the New Villages. They highlight how missionaries, through their presence and interaction with the host culture, were active agents of change in those cultures, often in unintended ways. Our review of the MCC Survey (1959) also supports this conclusion. It shows that by 1959, 72% of the New Village population was in regular contact with a Protestant missionary. While the number of missionaries involved was not large, and length of interaction was relatively short, it was a time of intense change and challenge for migrant Chinese. Christian missionaries were a distinctive presence in the New Villages and their influence requires further consideration.

While the evidence supports the conclusion that Protestant missionaries were active agents of change in the New Villages, this dissertation challenges the use of 'cultural imperialism' as an adequate model for understanding the interaction between missionaries and Chinese migrants. It seeks to move beyond cultural imperialism to a more nuanced appreciation of their contribution. Dunch proposes a model that prioritises indigenous agency and recognises that missionaries not only had a homogenising effect but also had the potential for cultural differentiation.

Through their presence in the New Villages, their involvement in 'mundane daily practices' and the medical and education services they provided, missionaries entered into relationship with Chinese settlers and contributed to the homogenising effects of modernity. Their involvement in cultural differentiation was shaped by the

origins of the New Villages, the migrant nature of the host society, and the commitment of missionaries to learning local Chinese dialects and understanding their culture. While relocation was an extremely difficult process with notable failures, migrant Chinese managed over time to transform settlements, set up to provide security, into permanent New Village communities. The indigenous policy of the OMF encouraged local leadership to contextualise the Christian message for themselves. In doing so missionaries affirmed their Chinese identity and encouraged retention of their cultural distinctiveness.

The available evidence supports the claim that, by 1957, the Chinese New Villages were in a better socio-economic position than Malay villages and greater recognition of the work of the British Government needs to be given. It is also clear from the MCC Survey (1958) that mission agencies were looking to increase their involvement in the New Villages after Independence, even though they were no longer a priority of the Malaysian Government. If missionaries were influential in establishing the New Villages, it is reasonable to expect their influence in the New Village to continue as their numbers were sustained into the mid-1960s. Their continued presence and influence help explain the continued growth of the New Villages into the 1980s.

After Independence, the Chinese New Villages continued to be a focus of ethnic tension and became the victim of communal politics. While the lack of investment in the 1960s and 70s had not yet taken effect and was masked by the success of urban New Villages, semi-urban and rural Villages were suffering. A number of factors contributed to the stagnation experienced since the mid-1980s. They include the persistent post-Independence neglect by the Malaysian Government. Whether by accident or design, the New Villages have not benefited from Government development programmes. The failure of the Government to address systemic problems that arose from the artificial nature of the New Village communities, is another factor. This is exemplified by the inability of politicians to find a solution to obtaining secure title to the land that New Village settlers live on and farm. The New Villages have also suffered from not having a Chinese party in the Government to consistently advocate for them. The communal party tasked with representing them,

the MCA, failed in the twentieth century to do so. The current situation threatens the ongoing viability of the New Villages in the twenty-first century and much depends on whether action is taken to address the issues identified.

PART I: THE EMERGENCY (1948-60)

5. CHANGING WORLDVIEWS

At the end of the Emergency, OMF missionaries had been in the country for nearly a decade. So far, the focus has been on the work they did, along with other Protestant missionary societies, to fulfil government expectations, and the impact this had on society. While they influenced the incorporation of New Village Chinese citizens into a new independent country, that was not why they came. From this point on, the focus will be on the OMF and its contribution to the growth and development of Protestant Christianity in West Malaysia.

One of the challenges faced by missionaries in the New Villages, which was identified in chapter 3, were the beliefs and values held by the Chinese. These beliefs and values shaped the Chinese Religion worldview of migrant Chinese. If OMF missionaries were to establish local indigenous Christian communities, then these beliefs and values needed to be challenged and replaced with Christian ones.

This chapter looks at three important areas where these worldviews clashed. It then discusses how OMF missionaries engaged New Village settlers with the claims of Christianity, as well as specialised parachurch ministries they were involved in. The chapter concludes with a review of the progress the OMF had made in establishing countercultural Christian communities by the end of 1959.

5.1 COUNTERCULTURAL CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES

When OMF missionaries came to Malaya seeking to establish indigenous churches, they recognised the importance of the beliefs and values of the people they engaged with, not just their social circumstances. As Khoo observed, 'Religion and the supernatural governed the lives of New Villagers just as much as the communist

threat or Emergency Regulations did, and missionaries took this seriously'.[1] Harper also recognised the importance of latent forces in society. He stresses how underlying beliefs 'take on real import and meaning for communities' and shape the way they respond to change and relate to other communities within society. While social scientists debate the extent to which ethnicity and communalism are, 'artificial constructions that disguise more fundamental conflicts within society, such as those created by the dynamics of class and prebendalism',[2] missionaries are focused on changing the religious beliefs and values that shape a person's worldview.

The desire of missionaries to change the beliefs and values of a person, raises the controversial and complex issue of the relationship between religion and culture. Culture is a notoriously difficult concept to define.[3] The definition adopted by the 1978 Willowbank Report on 'Gospel and Culture', which was drawn up by a select group of thirty-three evangelical thinkers from around the world, is particularly relevant because it reflects the understanding of evangelical missionaries such as those working with the OMF. It states:

> Culture is an integrated system of beliefs (about God or reality or ultimate meaning), of values (about what is true, good, beautiful and normative), of customs (how to behave, relate to others, talk, pray, dress, work, play, trade, farm, eat, etc.), and of institutions which express these beliefs, values and customs, which binds a society together and gives it a sense of identity, dignity, security, and continuity.[4]

This definition can be divided into a society's invisible underlying beliefs and values, which make up its worldview on the one hand, and the visible expressions of that culture, seen in its customs and institutions, on the other. It recognises that religion and culture are intertwined so that changing religious beliefs has profound cultural implications. It also sees religion as not so much a visible expression of culture, but rather, as a force that determines beliefs and values that in turn shape customs and religious practices. And in this sense, Christianity, as Stanley points out in quoting the

[1] David Khoo Sheng-Li, 'Winning Hearts and Souls: Missionaries in the New Villages during the Malayan Emergency' (unpublished undergraduate dissertation, National University of Singapore, 2004), p. 37.
[2] T. N. Harper, *The End of Empire and the Making of Malaya* (Cambridge: CUP, 1999), p. 361.
[3] See Paul Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1985), pp. 30–52 for a discussion of the concept of culture.
[4] Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, 'The Willowbank Report: Consultation on Gospel and Culture (LOP 2)' (Wheaton, IL: Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, 1978).

Willowbank definition, is an inherently imperial religion. Christians believe that the Christian message 'makes absolute demands upon all people and all cultures'.[5] It follows that in seeking to change the religious worldview of Chinese migrants, missionaries would, if successful, also be changing aspects of their culture.

At the same time, this definition does distinguish between beliefs and culture; they are not the same thing. While the Willowbank Report recognises that the gospel message has cultural implications, it also recognises the danger of seeking to replace the host culture with that of the missionary. It highlighted that the gospel message is countercultural and critiques culture. When it encounters a culture, the Christian message affirms what is good in that culture. At the same time, it also challenges aspects of the culture, which are not consistent with its message.[6] The goal is to establish countercultural Christian communities. While OMF missionaries did not express these concepts in the same terms, their desire to implement the 'indigenous principle' expresses a similar desire to see indigenous Christian communities that were authentically Chinese.[7]

In seeking to change worldviews and establish countercultural communities, OMF missionaries looked for changes in the customs and religious practices of their contacts as evidence of a change in their beliefs and values. When a contact in the New Villages acted counterculturally it was seen as a breakthrough by missionaries. This was not because the person was replacing Chinese culture with Western culture but because it was evidence that his or her underlying beliefs and values were changing. While some missionaries did advocate complete rejection of particular customs, others tried to find ways of participating that would not compromise a Christian worldview. When accounts of OMF missionaries and testimonies of Malaysian Chinese Christians are reviewed, they highlight three important features of the worldview of Chinese Religion that clashed with Christianity.

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[5] Brian Stanley, *The Bible and the Flag: Protestant Missions and British Imperialism in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Leicester: Apollos, 1990), p. 184.
[6] Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, section 5C entitled 'Cultural barriers to the communication of the Gospel'.
[7] L. C. Wood, 'Indigenous Principles', *The Field Bulletin*, May 1954, pp. 45-47.

Filial Piety

The first of these was the need to show love and respect for parents and ancestors as taught by Confucius. The importance of filial piety and family cannot be over-emphasised. It is a foundational value in Chinese society. In the New Villages, this value was expressed through three main religious practices.[8] The first was the worship of ancestors along with other *shen* (gods) in the home. This was done by burning joss sticks and offering food to them. The second was through annual events including the anniversary of a person's death and *Ching Ming*, an annual festival when the dead are remembered and worshipped. During this festival the graveyard is visited and cleaned by the family. Often, offerings are made and spirit (paper) money burnt to meets the needs of the family member in the afterlife. Most important though, was following Chinese funeral rites at the death of a family member. This included different elements depending on the family. Usually, before the funeral ceremony, the body is brought home and mourners visit to pay their respects. This involves the burning of joss sticks and bowing in the direction of the deceased. After the funeral ceremony, the body is taken to the graveyard and buried, and a further ceremony carried out. At this time paper cars, houses and money are burnt as an offering to the deceased to help them in the afterlife.[9]

These practices are open to a range of interpretations. John Cheong, in his study of Christian engagement with Chinese death practices in Malaysia, highlights that not all Chinese understand these practices in the same way.[10] Some nominally follow them either as part of Chinese tradition, or as a sign of filial piety, or merely to meet group expectations. Others, however, perform them in the belief that the deceased either becomes a *shen*, who will look out for their future, or a spirit, whose needs must be met through offerings or they may cause harm.[11] Most members of the New Villages would fall into this latter group. To not participate in these religious practices

[8] John Cheong, 'Christian Engagement with Chinese Death Practices in Malaysia', *Journal of Asian Mission*, 9 (2007), 117–37.
[9] Amy Moore, 'Praying Through the Wall', *The Millions*, July-August 1955, p. 58.
[10] Cheong, pp. 118–19.
[11] Margaret Hollands, 'A Good Work Begun', *The Millions*, July-August 1953, p. 55.

caused serious offense, particularly if you are were the oldest son, who was responsible for leading the rest of the family.

When someone decided not to participate in Chinese funeral rites or in the annual *Ching Ming* ceremony in particular, this was seen as a sign in the community that the person had become a Christian. This was certainly the case in Sungai Suloh.[12] Tan Song-Hoo was a Christian and the eldest son of the family. He attended his father's funeral but refused to worship him. This was interpreted by the village as a lack of filial piety and resulted in him, his family and the church being ostracised by the rest of the community. Young people from the community, who had been coming to the church, were prevented for fear that they too would become unfilial.

The underlying Christian belief that clashed with these practices was not the need to show love and respect for family. The Bible is very supportive of families. So much so that the Ten Commandments include the command to honour your father and mother (Exodus 20:12). The underlying belief that was clearly prohibited in the Bible was worshipping idols (Exodus 20:3-6). Many new Christians felt it was wrong to participate in actions that could be interpreted as worshipping or venerating the ancestors. This was a costly stand to take but was a clear indication to the missionaries that the person was embracing a Christian worldview.

Supernatural and This Worldly

The second was the belief that *shen* have the power to influence the daily lives of people. This belief was widely held in the New Villages and was expressed in a variety of religious practices.[13] At home it was seen in the regular worship of the *shen* and the ancestors. Generally, this would include first lighting a joss stick and offering it to the sky to the supreme deity, *Tian Gong* (The God of Heaven). This is then followed by making an offering to the altar of *Tian Guan* (Heaven Sphere Official), which is kept outside the house. Then offerings are made to the altar(s) inside the house. Normally

[12] Betty Cox, 'The Village that had a Second Chance', *The Millions*, February-March 1960, pp. 24-25.
[13] See Tan Chee-Beng, 'The Religions of the Chinese in Malaysia', in *The Chinese in Malaysia*, ed. by Lee Kam-Hing and Tan Chee-Beng (Shah Alam, Selangor: OUP, 2000), pp. 282–315 (pp. 284–96) for a more comprehensive description.

an altar is placed in the living room and the patron deity of the family placed in the centre. To the right are other gods that are worshipped in the house and on the left, an altar to the ancestors. Joss sticks are lit and food the family is going to eat, is first placed in front of the altar. As well as worshipping at home, followers also worshipped the gods in temples usually during major festivals including Chinese New Year, *Zhonguan Jie* (The Hungry Ghosts Festival), and *Ching Ming*. While festivals were merely a time for celebration and reunions for some, many also believed they were an important way of placating the gods.

Temples were also visited when a worshipper needed help. Simple divination, the equivalent of casting lots, or the use of spirit mediums, magicians and priests, were used to meet a variety of needs. These needs ranged from important life choices, auspicious dates for events and help with exams results, to pleas for healing from sickness and the exorcism of malevolent spirits.

Evidence of a change in beliefs was seen in the need to discuss whether a Christian should eat food that had been offered at the household altar.[14] Passages that prohibited the worship of idols (Exodus 20:3-6) were studied along with the teaching of Paul that idols have no power but the beliefs of other need to also be considered (1 Corinthians 8). This led many to conclude that they could not eat such food.[15]

Another clear sign was when a family decided to destroy the altars in their house.[16] This was a big step to take and was often done privately at night so as not to draw attention. It was a very visible step that could be observed by everyone in the village. Most significant however, were occasions when people experienced what they believed to be the answer to prayers to God for healing or the exorcism of an evil spirit. OMF missionaries recount a range of situations where these 'power encounters' occurred and the impact they had on the New Village community. They recount times when a person was healed as a result of the 'power encounter'[17] but

[14] Margaret Fisher, 'A Dark Tunnel', *The Millions*, May 1958, p. 51.
[15] Mabel Williamson, 'Goldie Wants to Know', *The Millions (North American (NA) Edition)*, October 1955, p. 133.
[16] Annette Harris, 'Kerosene and Crowbar', *The Millions*, December 1954, p. 107.
[17] Phyllis Day, 'Malaya', *The Millions*, September 1955, p. 76.

also times when they were not.[18] These encounters had an impact on New Village communities and brought to the attention of the New Villagers the claims of the Christian message.

How these 'power encounters' were interpreted depended on a person's worldview. Hiebert highlights this by contrasting a Western worldview with an Indian one and suggests that a Western worldview is unable to cope with what he called the 'excluded middle'.[19] He argues that a Western worldview divides issues into those that are 'natural and this worldly', which are the domain of science and rationality, and those that are 'supernatural and other worldly', which are the domain of religion and speculation. What missionaries encountered in Africa and Asia, however, were worldviews that had a middle category of issues that were 'supernatural and this worldly'. This category included how to deal with misfortune, accidents, disease, and circumstances beyond their control. The explanation and solution to these kinds of issues were found in the practice of thaumaturgy, through divination, curses, and by consulting spirit mediums and witches.[20] This clash of worldviews created a dilemma for missionaries. On the one hand the Bible reflects a similar worldview. A key element of Jesus' ministry, for example, included exorcisms and healing (see Mark 1:32-34). On the other hand, their cultural upbringing had taught them that divination and magic should be discounted as superstition.

OMF missionaries from China came to Malaya having engaged with this dilemma. Their strong belief in God's providence together with a high respect for the authority of the Bible led them to recognise the need to accept and address issues that were 'supernatural and this worldly'. In doing so they needed to allow their Western worldview to be critiqued by the gospel message, in the same way that they were using it to critique culture in the Chinese New Villages. The appropriate biblical response to belief in spirits in the New Villages was to proclaim Jesus as the supreme authority in the supernatural realm.[21] At the same time, they also recognised the

[18] Mary Welander, *Learning to Trust* (Private Publication), pp. 37–38.
[19] Paul Hiebert, 'The Flaw of the Excluded Middle', *Missiology*, 10 (1982), 35–47.
[20] Margaret Hollands, 'Power of Darkness', *The Millions*, January 1955, p. 3.
[21] Marion Parsons, 'From Idols to the Living God', *The Field Bulletin*, Vol. 19, 1957, pp. 118-119.

need for discernment. Hiebert warns against a Christianised form of animism in which spirits and magic are used to explain everything.[22] Jesus' role is not to replace the *shen* they used to go to. The Christian worldview is neither secular nor that of Chinese Religion. It takes seriously spiritual realities but more importantly focuses on a God who is in control of all areas of life this worldly and other worldly, supernatural and natural. By refusing to eat food offered to idols, destroying their altars and by seeking God's help for healing and in situations of spirit possession, New Village Christians demonstrated how Christianity was changing their worldview.

"One more Christian one less Chinese"

The third element was the belief that Chinese culture and Chinese Religion were inseparable. Accepting Christianity was interpreted as a rejection of being Chinese. Chinese Christians were labelled the 'running dogs' of imperialism. Over time in Malaysia this identification of Chinese Religion with Chinese culture changed. One of the factors that has affected this change is the influence of the secular worldview. Many educated Chinese in Malaysia are unhappy with what they see as superstition in the ritualistic aspects of Chinese Religion. This has led to a range of responses. The majority have sought to revitalise Buddhism by focusing on 'the teachings of the Buddha, and its practical application to life in modern society today'.[23] Some, known as 'free thinkers', have rejected religion all together, and yet others have become Christians. 'Chinese Christian' is no longer an oxymoron but a legitimate subcategory within Chinese society. Tan Chee-Beng, a Malaysian anthropologist, writing on religion in Malaysia notes that while becoming a follower of other faiths does involve an adjustment to Chinese cultural life 'becoming Christian does not threaten Chinese ethnicity'.[24] Dunch also highlights recent sociological and anthropological studies elsewhere in the world, which also demonstrate that it is possible for a person to be part of the Chinese community and at the same time have Christianity as a

[22] Hiebert, 'The Flaw of the Excluded Middle', p. 46.
[23] Trevor Ling, 'Revival Without Revivalism: The Case of the Buddhist of Malaysia', *Sojourn: Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia*, 7.2 (1992), 326–35 Quoted in Tan Chee-Beng, p. 300.
[24] Tan Chee-Beng, 'Socio-Cultural Diversities and Identities', p. 309.

fundamental element of their identity.[25] In Malaysia today it is possible and much more acceptable to be a Chinese Christian.

In the New Villages in the 1950s, however, Chinese Religion and culture were inextricably linked. Wong highlights how Chinese Religion was also important for affirming communal Chinese identity.[26] Non-involvement in major religious festivals was far more evident in a small community, where it was common for the whole village to participate. Significant social pressure could be exerted on families to comply with community expectations. In the family context, it was the desire for Christian baptism that brought the most resistance from the family. Families were often not so concerned if members went to missionary meetings and events, but they objected strongly if a person wanted to be baptised. For many in the community it was seen as a rejection of the person's Chinese cultural identity. While, as we have discussed, this attitude did change, for OMF missionaries this costly decision was a clear indication that a person wanted to be identified as a Christian.

In seeking to change a person's worldview, OMF missionaries looked for changes in behaviour that indicated a change in beliefs and values. These changes included: refusing to take part in worshipping household gods and ancestors by not eating food offered to them, not participating in the worship of the gods and ancestors during important annual festivals like *Ching Ming* and *Zhonguan Jie*, and not worshipping a dead relative during the funeral and death rites of a family member. It was also seen when someone sought guidance in life, healing and exorcisms through prayer to the God of Christianity rather than through divination, magic and spirit mediums, and most clearly, when they wanted to be baptised.

It is significant that adopting these elements of a Christian worldview involved the redirection rather than the rejection of Chinese values and beliefs. Firstly, Christianity affirmed filial piety in the value it places on family and its respect for parents. What it challenged was when this respect moved on to the belief that ancestors were a

[25] Ryan Dunch, 'Beyond Cultural Imperialism: Cultural Theory, Christian Missions, and Global Modernity', *History and Theory*, 41.3 (2002), 301–25 (p. 323).
[26] Wong, p. 39.

spiritual force to be addressed. Secondly, a Christian worldview affirms the belief that God is involved in this world in natural and supernatural ways. It, however, challenges the belief that God can be manipulated and bent to human will through offerings or magic. It also recognises Jesus is the supreme ruler over the supernatural world, so the gods and ancestors no longer need to be feared or appeased. And thirdly, a Christian worldview requires that ultimate allegiance must be given to God. This however is not at the expense of either national or ethnic identity. The promise at the end of the Bible is of a multicultural community 'from every nation, tribe, people and language' (Revelation 7:9).

5.2 New Village Work

Once the decision was made to work in the New Villages, the OMF began sending missionaries. By April 1952, it had thirteen workers stationed in four New Villages and one town.[27] Three of the Villages were in the state of Johore and one was in Selangor. Over the next twenty-five years a total of 256 OMF missionaries were sent to the North and South Malayan Fields in West Malaysia.[28] Figure 4 shows that numbers grew rapidly over the first three years and that after 1955 the numerical growth was more modest. Between 1955 and 1970 the OMF maintained a core group of over eighty missionaries in the country, with numbers exceeding one hundred between 1959 and 1967. It shows that OMF missionaries continued to have a presence in the New Villages well after Independence and the end of the Emergency.

While missionaries were all Europeans, they came from all over the world.[29] Just over half were from the Europe. The overwhelming number were from the United Kingdom, but they also included one German, two Dutch and three Swiss. Between a quarter and a third came from the United States and Canada. They represented the next largest contingent. The remainder came from the southern Hemisphere. The

[27] The town of Kluang in Johore was used as a based to reach seven resettlement areas. See Doris Madden, 'Malayan Cross-section', *The Millions*, June 1952, p. 49.
[28] The OMF also started a boarding school in the 1950s called Chefoo in the Cameron Highlands, Pahang. In the 1970s over twenty missionaries were based there to teach and look after missionary children from all over Southeast Asia.
[29] In 1965 the OMF began accepting members from Asia but none was posted to West Malaysia.

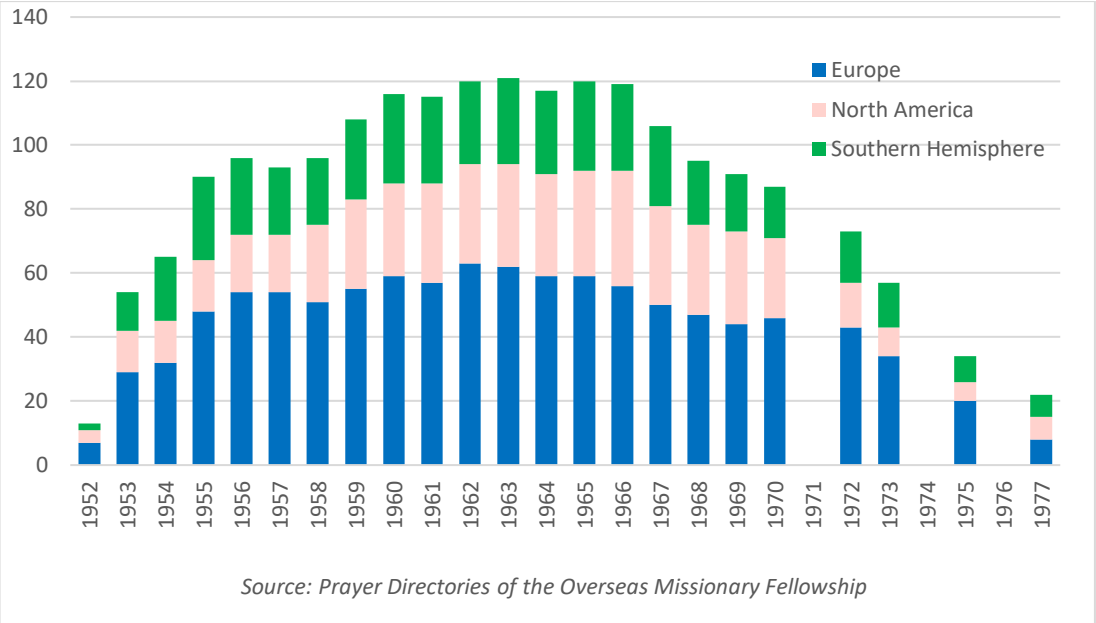

Figure 4: 1952-77 OMF Missionaries by Nationality

Largest group here was from Australia followed by New Zealand and then South Africa. While the North Malayan Field, with its focus on Anglicans, had a much more British influence, the South Malayan Field was a more diverse international and interdenominational community. This brought its challenges when it came to the type of church to plant, but it did give the South Malayan Field the freedom to work with likeminded people in a range of denominations.

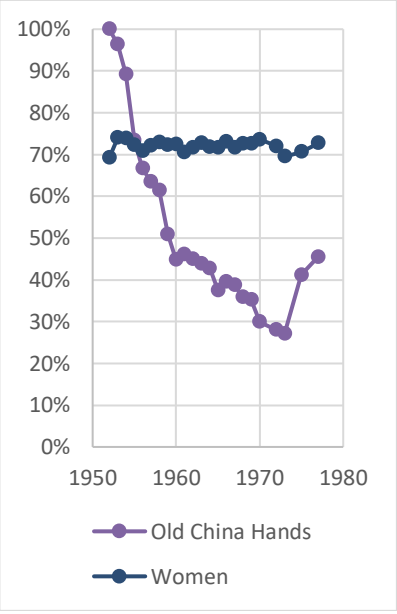

Figure 5: 1952-77 Percentage Old China Hands and Women

Another key statistic is the percentage of women that came to Malaysia. Throughout its time in West Malaysia, over 70% of the missionaries were women. Khoo highlights the irony of this imbalance.[30] He points to the CIM Survey report, which recommends that two men are sent who will, 'best be able to decide the suitability or otherwise of the conditions for women workers'.[31] This imbalance brought a number of challenges that, as we shall see, had an impact on mission strategy.

[30] Khoo Sheng-Li, p. 23.
[31] Lyall, 'Malaya Survey Report', p. 10, McClymont Papers: Folder 6.

Chapter 3 addressed the medical, social and educational work missionaries performed, and the impact they had through living in the New Villages, under the same condition as everyone else. This chapter is focused on the other evangelistic work that took place in the New Villages, which comprised the 'Village Work'. It includes the visitation and weekly meetings held, special evangelistic meetings that were organised, informal literacy classes, and children's and youth work.

House-to-house Visitation and Weekly Meetings

When entering a New Village, OMF missionaries would begin by personally visiting all the homes. Missionaries spent a lot of time and energy in this hot and often thankless task. After canvassing their own Village, they would then go and do the same in neighbouring ones. Then at special times in the year, like Christmas, Chinese New Year and Easter, special tracts would be printed and again each house in the Village would be visited. The objective was to saturate the area with a general understanding of the Christian message. Some questioned the effectiveness of this strategy but, in the early 1950s, missionaries did not know how long before they would have to leave.

This strategy also allowed the missionaries to identify any existing Christians in the Village. Wong highlights how important they were to the successful establishment of a church.[32] The OMF's preference for working in pioneer situations, where other mission societies were not working, however, meant that the New Villages they went to often did not have many existing Christians.[33] Fleming, for example, records that in the eight New Villages in Johore where OMF missionaries worked, there were only five existing Christians. In contrast Presbyterian missionaries worked in forty-three New Villages where there were already 189.[34]

[32] Wong Kow-Cheong, 'The Origin and the Development of the Overseas Missionary Fellowship New Village Work During the Malayan Emergency' (unpublished undergraduate dissertation, STM, 2008), p. 54.
[33] David Huntley, 'The Withdrawal of the China Inland Mission from China and Their Redeployment to New Fields in East Asia' (unpublished doctoral thesis, TTC, 2002), p. 163.
[34] John Fleming, 'The Growth of the Chinese Church in the New Villages of the State of Johore, Malaya 1950-60: A Case Study in the Communication of the Gospel to Chinese Converts' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Union Theological Seminary, 1962), p. 205.

On a typical visit, missionaries would go out individually or in pairs, armed with Christian tracts, Bible posters and gospel pictures.[35] If no one was home, a tract would be left at the house. When someone was home, they would try to communicate why they were there. Most responded with indifference and some with hostility. But a few showed some interest and when that was the case, the missionary would tell a Bible story using a poster, invite them to a Sunday meeting in their home, and leave a tract for the family to read. Communication at the beginning was difficult. The missionaries were dependent on the ability of the family to understand Mandarin or English. At other times translators were found and over time the main dialect in the Village was mastered.

Initially, weekly Sunday meetings were held in, or sometimes outside, the home of the missionary. Before the meeting a record player was sometimes used. Gospel recordings of sermons and evangelistic messages in different dialects, as well as gospel songs, would be played to attract people. It was one way of overcoming the language barrier.[36] Meetings would include singing, prayer and a sermon. If numbers got too large for the home, then classrooms and community halls were used.

While the professed strategy of the OMF was to evangelise families, this was difficult. When visiting, often men in the family were out working. An additional challenge was that a significant majority of OMF missionaries were women. It was not considered appropriate in New Village culture for a single woman to speak to a man. Annette Harris, in her summary of the first four years of the OMF's activities in Malaya, suggests that one of the reasons there were few male converts was because the majority of OMF missionaries were women.[37] On the other hand, as women, they were able to draw alongside mothers and grandmothers left at home during the day. They provided a listening ear for them to share their hopes, fears and problems. This was a way of showing care and concern that also made possible deeper conversations concerning beliefs.

[35] David Priston, 'The Gods are Still on the Doors', *The Millions*, March 1955, pp. 21-22.
[36] Norah Rowe, 'These are our own words!', *The Millions*, November 1954, pp. 90-91.
[37] Annette Harris, 'Planting the Gospel in South Malaya', *The Millions,* December 1955, p. 106.

Evangelistic Meetings

The other important element of the OMF's strategy was the use of outdoor evangelistic meetings. These meetings were an opportunity to reach men in the village and provided an important complement to house-to-house visitation. They involved an evangelistic team visiting a New Village for between three days and two weeks. Other mission agencies included Asian evangelists in their teams. This enabled them to challenge the stereotype that Christianity was a Western religion. This was not possible for the OMF. Instead, where feasible their teams included local believers, who would volunteer to help with translation and give their testimony. The OMF was also able to work with Bible college students from Singapore.[38] This helped to provide a good ethnic mix in the evangelistic team and gave the students an opportunity to gain valuable experience in speaking and running meetings.

The evangelistic programme would include singing, testimonies of people who had become Christians, musical items, a talk focusing on a Bible story, and an evangelistic message. To hold people's attention Cecil Gracey, a missionary, who was also an artist, would make a charcoal drawing to illustrate his evangelistic message.[39] The most popular way of holding attention though was through showing movies. In 1954 a 'gospel van' was purchased and this enabled religious films and film strips to be shown. The van was equipped with a public address system, tape recorder for recording testimonies, a film projector and screen, a record player with records in a range of dialects and a generator to run the equipment and provide lighting for night meetings.[40] The ability to show movies was still a novelty in this pre-TV era. The meetings were entertaining, different and provided a break from the routine of Village life. The OMF was not the only one with a gospel van. In addition to the MCC, who had a similar van, the Government also had a fleet of vans touring the New Villages to communicate government propaganda.

[38] Norah Rowe, 'Malayan Missionary Journey, *The Millions*, October 1953, p. 82.
[39] 'Malaya', *The Field Bulletin*, Vol. 16, July 1954, p. 61.
[40] Cecil Gracey, 'A Gospel Van in the New Villages', *The Millions*, October 1954, p. 84.

An Evangelistic committee was set up in 1956 to manage the use of the van and organise evangelistic programmes in the New Villages.[41] It split the South Malayan Field into the three main states of Johore, Pahang and Selangor. In each state, an evangelist and someone to care for the equipment and van was appointed and plans were made to visit two New Villages in each state for a fortnight. Through these outdoor evangelistic meetings and house-to-house visitation, OMF missionaries were able to disseminate a general understanding of the Christian message in the New Villages they were responsible for. While the number becoming Christians was not large and over time interest tailed off, a growing number in the New Villages now had some idea of who Jesus was and the message he proclaimed.

Children and Youth Work

In addition to weekly meetings for adults, missionaries also began regular Sunday school meetings for children, and this is where OMF missionaries had their greatest success. It was often easier for the missionaries to communicate with the children because they were being taught in either English or Mandarin at school. Many missionary accounts about life in the New Villages include mention of the enthusiastic response of children to the attention given to them. In March 1952, Winifred Rand reported that forty to fifty children were attending Sunday school.[42] Children were taught Bible stories using pictures and other aids and songs, which they loved to sing during meetings. In Sungei Chua New Village, handwork classes proved an effective way of engaging children.[43] Older teenagers were also catered for. Bible study meetings were popular and in Serdang two classes were set up to improve reading. As the groups developed, Youth Days in English and Mandarin were also run.[44] They gave young people in different New Villages an opportunity to meet one another. The programme on these days was varied with evangelistic talks and Bible studies as well as games, competitions and other recreational activities.

[41] Minutes of Malayan Evangelistic Committee, 20 Jan. 1956, OMF Archives [SG]: AR 5.2.7 Box 1.7.
[42] Winifred Rand, 'Camp for Jungle Dwellers', *The Millions*, March 1952, p. 22.
[43] Barbara Hovda, 'Crumbling Barriers', *The Millions*, July-August 1955, p. 66.
[44] Marion Parsons, 'Youth Work', *The Millions*, November 1955, p. 101.

While some children were forbidden by parents from coming to missionary meetings, for many others it was a free form of childcare.[45] A significant number of children listened to what they were taught and ended up wanting to become Christians. This created problems at home, when they refused to eat food offered to household gods and wanted to be baptised. Many, however, overcame initial resistance at home and parents noted an improvement in the behaviour of their children after attending missionary meetings. Traditional gender roles in Protestant churches at the time meant that the Sunday school was often left to women to run, while church meetings were dominated by men. As a result, women had more experience working with children as well as seeing the value of this work. The high percentage of women in the New Villages may be one of the factors then, that contributed to the OMF's success in reaching children.

LITERACY

Missionaries tried a variety of other ways of connecting with New Village inhabitants. They visited schools, held cooking classes, and ran house-parties for young people. The biggest need they observed, however, was literacy. Alan Cole, writing on literacy observed that, 'only one quarter to one half of the kiddies go to school at all, and lots only get to primary school'.[46] For those that are illiterate he recommended the use of posters and pictures with a few simple Chinese characters to explain simple Bible stories. Children who did go to school learnt Mandarin, and for them tracts in simple Mandarin were recommended. Cole advised, 'please avoid literary Chinese like the plague, and likewise literary quotations and 4-character phrases'. To improve literacy in adults, resident missionaries offered classes in written Mandarin and also in English. While of varying quality, these classes gave missionaries the opportunity to get to know better their New Village neighbours. Some also started lending libraries in their homes to encourage reading.

[45] Margaret Heale, 'Two Villages of North Malaya', *The Millions*, December 1953, pp. 95-96.
[46] Alan Cole, 'Literacy in Malayan New Villages', McClymont Papers: Folder 14.

5.3 Specialised Ministries

In addition to 'Village Work', the OMF also invested resources in two specialised ministries, which were not location-based.

Literature

At the Bournemouth Conference in 1951 one of the conclusions reached was that 'the preparation of Christian literature should have high priority in all our work'.[47] As a result, Christian Witness Press (CWP) was set up in Hong Kong. It produced a large volume of literature for all the countries the OMF worked in, including the New Villages in Malaya. This included posters and charts with pictures, as well as a range of tracts in a variety of languages including Chinese, Tamil, English, and Malay.[48] They were used extensively in Malaya with thousands of tracts being distributed each year.

Another important way of engaging literate Chinese in the New Villages was through an illustrated magazine in Chinese called *Dengta* (Lighthouse). It was designed to introduce non-Christians to the gospel.[49] First published in September 1956, by 1960 it had a global circulation of 23,000. OMF missionaries encouraged people to buy copies and take out annual subscriptions. The magazine finally finished publication in 1971 after 174 issues.[50]

It is in the area of literature that we see the OMF's first departure from Village Work. Ken and Vera Price were put in charge of literature production and came to Malaya in 1954. While based in Kuala Lumpur they discovered a small locally sponsored Christian bookshop and offered to help. They ended up managing the Evangel Book Centre (EBC), stocking the shop with CWP literature as well as supplying OMF missionaries with the literature they needed. In doing so they not only provided a service for missionaries but also made Christian literature more available to Christians and enquirers in the capital as well.

[47] Minutes of the Bournemouth Conference, 'Summary of Decisions', p.3, OMF Archives [UK].
[48] CWP illustrated leaflets and tracts in a variety of languages, McClymont Papers: Binder 1.
[49] Gordon Dunn, 'Lighthouse – Magazine for the Masses', *The Millions*, October 1958, p. 101.
[50] 'Good-Bye to "Dengta"', *The Millions*, January-February 1971, p. 6.

Bible Correspondence Courses

Very soon after arriving in Malaya, the OMF recognised the need to provide enquirers and new believers with an opportunity to study the Bible. Percy Moore was the South Malayan Field Superintendent from 1953 to 1959. He and his wife Amy joined the CIM in 1931. In China, Bible correspondence courses had been used and Moore wanted to provide something similar in Malaya.[51] He was also concerned when he discovered a pastor had completed a course run by the Seventh Day Adventists, a group he considered heretical in some of its teaching.[52] This motivated Moore to look for a course that was 'without doctrinal bias'. In 1955 he heard of the 'Light of Life' course material being used in India. This was a twenty-four-lesson course based on the life of Christ in John's Gospel. He found the course valuable because it was written using very simple language, had a biblical focus, was progressive in its teaching, and was focused on reaching non-Christians. Permission was obtained from India for CWP to print the material and the Light of Life Bible Correspondence School was started. Courses were initially offered in English and Chinese, and later Tamil was added.

The courses proved popular and were particularly attractive to young people wanting to learn English. Further courses were added based on the Gospel of Mark, the Synoptic Gospels and the book of Acts. They were advertised in the English and Chinese press, but the most effective means of distribution was through the recommendation of the network of OMF missionaries throughout the country. While targeted at non-Christians, they were also popular among new Christians, and existing believers who described themselves as backsliders.[53] By 1959 a committee had been set up with workers from the North and South Malayan Fields and the running of the correspondence school was recognised as a separate ministry requiring a full-time worker.

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[51] Amy Moore, Malayan Story [Electronic Resource]: *The Story of the Start of the Work of the China Inland Mission / Overseas Missionary Fellowship in Malaya in the 1950's*, ed. by Ray Moore (Kyema Publishing, 2011), p. 48.
[52] Percy Moore, 'Developments in Correspondence Courses', *The Field Bulletin*, Vol. 22, 1960, p. 44.
[53] Letters from correspondence course students, McClymont Papers: Folder 14.

It was difficult to gauge the impact of these courses. They proved an effective form of evangelism but possibly their biggest impact was on new and existing believers. The courses gave them a forum to ask questions that they did not feel comfortable asking in a church setting. In doing so they grew in their understanding of, and confidence in, a Christian worldview and grew into effective church members.

5.4 Progress in the New Villages

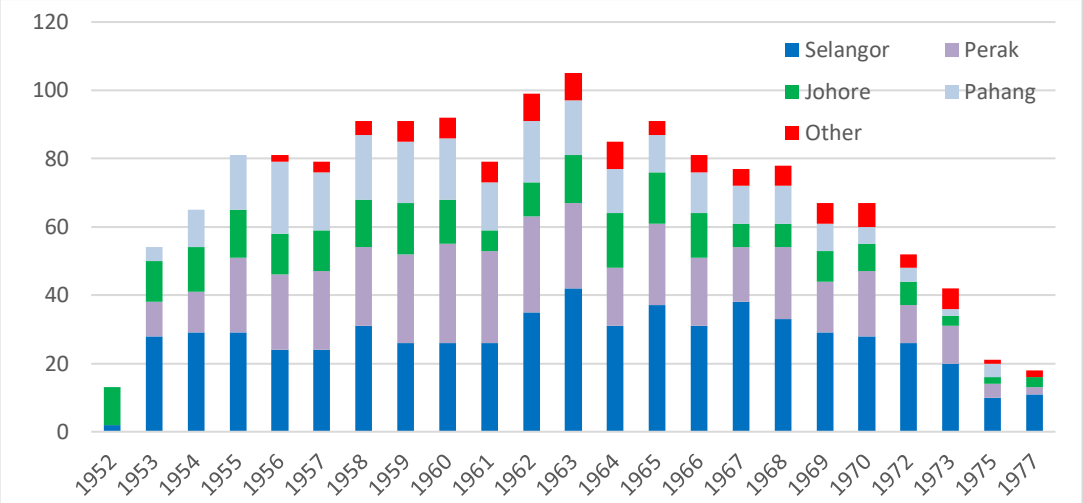
The impact of OMF missionaries in the New Villages is usually assessed in terms of conversions and number of independent indigenous churches they established. This approach, however, is problematic and closer scrutiny suggests a more nuanced understanding is needed. It fails to appreciate the challenges of pioneer church-planting and the time needed to build relationships. The aim of the OMF was twofold. Firstly, to see individuals embrace a Christian worldview to the point of being baptised, and then, secondly, to see these individuals grow into contributing members of a countercultural Christian congregation. Missionaries were dependent upon people appropriating their message and found pioneer evangelism took longer than anticipated. My father, Fred McClymont, maintained that bringing someone from not knowing anything about Christianity to be a contributing church member usually took at least seven years.[54] Wong supports this when he highlights that the first baptisms in Sungei Jan and Serdang took between two and three years.[55]

During their time in Malaya, OMF missionaries came in contact with more than a hundred different New Villages. This contact took many forms including: sporadic visits to give out tracts, regular mobile medical clinic visits, regular weekly or monthly visits to support existing Christians, as well as being resident in a Village. This analysis is the first to comprehensively assess all the Villages where OMF missionaries were resident for at least two consecutive years (See Appendix 2). It was decided to focus on these Villages because they are the ones where missionaries were most likely to

[54] As we have seen, the process of establishing a church could proceed more quickly when existing Christians were already present. The progress to someone being baptised could also be accelerated if a person already had some understanding of Christianity. This was rarely the case in the New Villages, however, where many had not heard the name Jesus Christ before the missionaries came.
[55] Wong Kow-Cheong, p. 51, footnote 134.

have an impact. They were also the Villages we have the most information about. While missionaries made an impact on Villages they visited, the information on these Villages is much more fragmentary.

A further consideration when assessing the impact of the OMF is the geographical spread of its missionaries. Figure 6 shows the spread of OMF missionaries across the four states where the New Villages had the biggest impact. The OMF was the only mission organisation with a significant number of residential missionaries in all these states. Our analysis will look at the situation in each state as they varied considerably. In both Johore and Selangor, the South Malayan Field worked in areas where a range of other denominations were present. While in Pahang, they were effectively the only agency working in the state. In Perak, the North Malayan Field was linked to the Anglican Church. What follows is an assessment of the progress the OMF had made in establishing indigenous countercultural Christian communities by the end of 1959.



Source: Prayer Directories of the Overseas Missionary Fellowship

Figure 6: 1952-77 OMF Missionaries by State

THE SOUTH MALAYAN FIELD: JOHORE, PAHANG, SELANGOR (AND MALACCA)

The South Malayan Field opened in 1951 and covered all missionaries not in Perak. It contained at least 75% of the missionaries OMF had in the country. It was also a more diverse group than the North both in terms of nationality and denominational origins. Unlike the North Malayan Field, the South was not linked with a particular denomination. Their preference was to work in Villages where other denominations had not been and plant their own churches, churches which conformed to the principles and practices defined at the Bournemouth Conference. At the same time Harris highlights that they were also willing to work with likeminded churches from existing denominations.[57] Table 9 highlights four churches, where work was started by the OMF, but after a few years, responsibility was handed over to another denomination.

Table 9: Work Started and Passed on

No.	New Village	State	Resident	Church
7	Bekok NV ⊕	Johore	1953-55	Bekok Presbyterian Church
310	Kemansur (Bentong)	Pahang	1953-59	Bentong CMC[56]
574	Pandamaran	Selangor	1953-55	Pandamaran CMC
596	Sungei Chua (Kajang)	Selangor	1952-56	Kajang CMC

A report in March 1955 reveals that missionaries in the Field were in an optimistic mood. It described that the number of centres with resident missionaries was growing and that seven organised congregations had been planted.[58] Looking back, a four-stage pattern in the New Villages was discerned. It started with a period of curiosity when they arrived. People, especially children, were interested in hearing presentations of the gospel and finding out what brought these Europeans to their Village. This was followed by a period of opposition. During this stage people were suspicious of their motives and their connection with the Government and often prevented their children from attending meetings. They concluded, 'It has usually taken six months to a year to "live down" suspicion and by Christian living, visiting in the homes, and service to the community to become accepted as new-villagers'. The third stage was one of harvesting. This was when individuals, and occasionally families, began embracing a Christian worldview. The final stage involved baptising

[56] While officially known as the Chinese Annual Conference of the Methodist Church in Malaysia, churches within the conference are referred to as Chinese Methodist Churches (CMC).
[57] Annette Harris, 'Planting the Gospel in South Malaya', *The Millions*, December 1955, p. 106.
[58] 'Malaya', *The Field Bulletin*, March 1955, p. 29.

believers and building sustainable congregations. While they recognised that in many Villages they were still in the tough initial stages, they were quietly confident that the 'power of the Gospel and prayer' would overcome any obstacles that arose.

With the development of small congregations, the need for practical guidelines for setting up a church became necessary. In response, the Field Council produced, after much discussion, the 'Guiding Principles and Illustrative Practices for the work on the South Malayan Field'. This document advocated the formation of what are now identified as 'independent churches'.[59] In contrast to denominational churches, the guidelines supported the baptism of believers only, the lay distribution of Holy Communion and a congregational form of church governance.[60] While it is clear that the OMF wanted to develop an association of independent churches in Malaya, they recognised that it was ultimately the local church's responsibility to decide how it would relate to other churches and organisations.[61]

An advantage of this type of church was that it was not capital intensive. It did not require paid, ordained clergy or even a church building. OMF missionaries began church meetings in the front room of their rented 'shop-lot' houses and encouraged everyone in the church to be involved in evangelism and preaching. This may well have influenced the Malaysian phenomenon of 'shop-lot' churches, although difficulties in obtaining approval to build churches from the government is probably a more important factor. Success in developing self-sustaining countercultural Chinese communities varied in the different states.

1. JOHORE

The two main denominations with congregations in the State of Johore before the Emergency were the Presbyterians and Methodists.[62] The Chinese Presbyterian Church had established a number of congregations speaking Chinese dialects, in

[59] 'Guiding Principles and Illustrative Practices…', McClymont Papers: File 2.
[60] Wong Kow-Cheong, p. 51.
[61] 'Guiding Principles and Illustrative Practices…', McClymont Papers: File 2.
[62] V. A. Chelliah and Alexander McLeish, *Malaya and Singapore: Survey Directory of Churches and Missions in the Federation and Colony*, 2 (London: World Dominion Press, 1948), pp. 24–25.

towns and villages towards the south of the state. The Methodist Church, on the other hand, had a mix of Chinese- and Tamil-speaking congregations. In order to observe comity most of these congregations were further north.[63] The only English-speaking congregation was Anglican. St Christopher's Church in Johore Baru was mainly set up for expatriate Europeans.

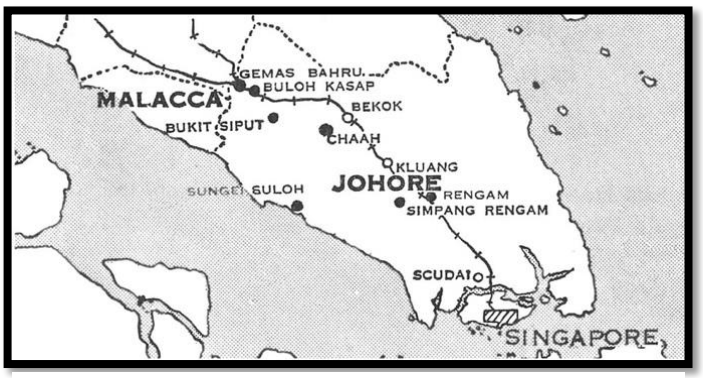


Figure 7: 1959 Map of Johore

When pioneer work was set up in the New Villages, established denominations had two significant advantages. Firstly, they had established churches in the towns, which could be used as a base for visiting Villages and supporting any new churches that emerged. Fleming highlights how the Presbyterian church in Muar was used as a base for visiting New Villages around it.[64] Secondly, it enabled the churches in some places to start work in Villages with existing Christians, and in some cases, churches. This was possible because a number of New Villages were formed from or added to existing villages. As a result, both the Methodist and the Presbyterian Church already had congregations in places where New Villages were set up.[65]

The OMF on the other hand wanted to work in New Villages 'where no Christian work had been done previously and no local church already existed'.[66] Having said that, its most notable success in Johore was a church that was built around Christians that were already living in the Village. The New Village of Cha'ah was one of the first Villages that the OMF went into. It progressed quickly into a viable congregation and

[63] Fleming, 'The Growth of the Chinese Church…', pp. 191–92.
[64] Fleming, 'The Growth of the Chinese Church…', p. 193. This explains how the Presbyterian church was able to visit so many Villages.
[65] See Chelliah and McLeish, pp. 24–25, which lists Methodist churches in Jementah (32) and Tangkak (126-7) as well as Presbyterian churches in Paloh (74) and Senai (105).
[66] Annette Harris, 'Planting the Gospel in South Malaya', *The Millions*, December 1955, p.106.

became a model for the mission.[67] A church building was built by the members and in 1957 the Fellowship left what it saw as a three-self indigenous church.

Johore was the first state where the OMF sent missionaries. After experimenting in a number of different locations, by 1955 they had settled residential missionaries in five New Villages.[68] They also had workers in the town of Kluang, which was used as a base for visiting New Villages. Harris, in her summary at the end of 1955, classified Cha'ah and Buloh Kasap as two Villages where local congregations had been established.[69] In the remaining Villages individuals had become Christians and small 'cottage meetings' were held, but numbers were insufficient for a local church to be organised. This was the case in Scudai, Simpang Rengam and Bukit Siput.

By the end of 1959, the OMF had expanded into seven Villages. While it had withdrawn from Scudai in 1956,[70] it opened up work in the New Villages of Rengam and Gemas Bahru, as well as the small Village of Sungei Suloh, where a small church had been started.[71] In contrast to other states, the MCC Survey (1959) records that the OMF was only visiting two New Villages, Batu Anam (5) and Sungei Sayong (123).[72] This was partly due to the Presbyterian Church, which had taken responsibility for the majority of the Villages in the state and was visiting thirty-one.

Table 10: Johore Villages Opened

No.	No.	New Village	Town/Village
1.	**18**	Buloh Kasap	
2.	**19**	Cha'ah	
3.	**112**	Simpang Rengam	
4.	**16**	Bukit Siput ⊕	
5.	**94**	Rengam	
6.			Sungei Suloh
7.	**24**	Gemas Bahru	Gemas Town, NS

2. PAHANG

The situation in Pahang was very different from other states where the OMF worked. A survey of churches in 1948 lists only three churches in the whole of the state, all Methodist. There was a Tamil congregation in Kuantan, and two Chinese

[67] Winifred Rand, 'A year in Cha'ah New Village', *The Field Bulletin*, Vol. 15, March 1953, pp. 11-14.
[68] Bukit Siput (16), Buloh Kasap (18), Cha'ah (19), Scudai (100), Simpang Rengam (112).
[69] Annette Harris, 'Planting the Gospel in South Malaya', *The Millions*, December 1955, p. 106.
[70] Wong Kow-Cheong, p. 53.
[71] Tan Chin-Yau and Lena Tan, *Tracing the Background and History of the Early Sungai Suloh Church* (Batu Pahat, Johore: Private Publication, 2012).
[72] Malayan Christian Council, 'A Survey of the New Villages in Malaya (Revised)' (Kuala Lumpur, 1959), pp. 21–27, SOAS Archives [UK]: CBMS/01/E/76/04.

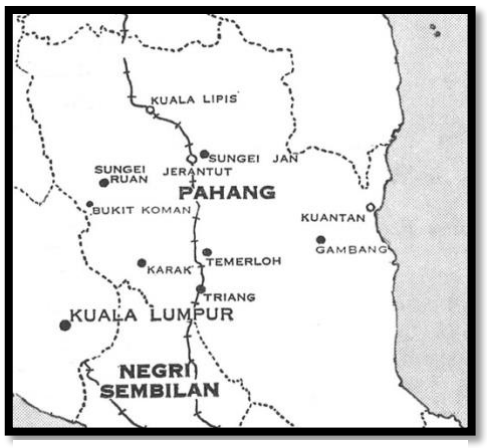


Figure 8: 1959 Map of Pahang

congregations in Raub and Bentong. It was also a state where OMF missionaries dominated. Of the twenty-three resident missionaries in the state, all except one were from the OMF. It was by far the least reached of the states that the OMF worked in.

The first New Village occupied by the OMF in Pahang was Kemansur in 1953. It was a Village where the OMF cooperated with an existing church. In this case, the New Village was attached to the town of Bentong, where the Chinese Methodist Church (CMC) already had a congregation.[73] In 1960, after having resident missionaries in Kemansur for seven years, responsibility for the congregation was handed over to the Bentong church. After starting in Kemansur, this New Village was quickly followed in the next two years by the five others: Karak, Termerloh, Triang, Sungei Ruan, and Sungei Jan. Gambang was added in 1958 and Bukit Koman in 1959, so that by the end of 1959, the OMF had residents in a total of eight Villages. Missionaries were also visiting a further nineteen, seven of which in cooperation with the CMC.[74]

As in other places, missionaries experienced both encouragements and setbacks over the years. Slowly they saw a few people become Christians and cottage meetings were started. These were followed by regular weekly prayer meetings, Sunday schools for the children and Bible studies and camps for the young people. Eventually, viable congregations were established with local leadership, and buildings were purchased or built.

Table 11: Pahang Villages Opened

No.	No.	New Village	Town/Village
1.	**310**	Kemansur	Bentong
2.	**308**	Karak	
3.	**354**	Temerloh	
4.	**357**	Triang	
5.	**288**	Gambang	
6.	**347**	Sungei Jan	Jerantut
7.	**350**	Sungei Ruan	
8.	**284**	Bukit Koman	Raub

[73] Annette Harris, 'Planting the Gospel in South Malaya', *The Millions*, December 1955, p.106.
[74] Villages with an (*) were jointly visited by the OMF and the CMC: Chamang* (286), Jerantut Malay & Indian Settlements (293), Jerantut Ferry (294), Jerkoh (295), Kemayan (311), Kerayong (Chinese) (312), Ketari* (315), Lubok Tamang (320), Manchis* (321), Mengkarak (325), Mengkuang* (326), Padang Geroda (329), Perting* (337), Repas* (338), Sang Lee (340), Sungei Dua (345), Sungei Lui (348), Sungei Penjuring (349) and Telemong* (Kuala Padah) (353).

3. Selangor and Malacca

Selangor was the most populous state in the country. As a result, it was the focus of substantial missionary attention. A number of missionaries from the ULCA, the Anglican CMS and the Methodist Church, as well as the OMF were based in the state. By 1953, the OMF had been allocated six New Villages. In two of them, Sungei Chua and Pandamaran, missionaries worked with the CMC. In Sungei Chua a church had been built, but according to Norah Rowe, it had been closed because of threats from communists in the Village.[75] OMF missionaries reopened it and handed responsibility for the church over to the denomination five years later in 1957. There was also a CMC in Pandamaran, where the OMF worked for three years until 1955.[76]

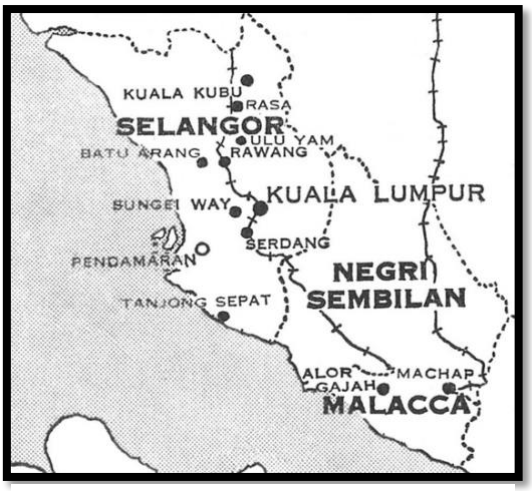


Figure 9: 1959 Map of Selangor, Malacca and Negri Sembilan

Table 12: Selangor & Malacca Villages Opened			
No.	No.	New Village	Town/Village
1.	**601**	Sungei Way (Seri Setia) ⊕	
2.	**587**	Serdang (Seri Kembangan) ⊕	
3.	**536**	Kuala Kubu Bahru	
4.	**578**	Rawang	
5.	**603**	Tanjong Sepat	
6.	**225**	Machap Bahru, Malacca	
7.	**560**	Kalumpang (Serjantung)	
8.	**577**	Rasa (Chuang)	
9.	**609**	Ulu Yam Bahru	
10.			Alor Gajah, Malacca
11.			Batu Arang

Over the next few years a further five New Villages and two small towns were opened so that by 1959 the OMF was operating in nine New Villages (one in the state of Malacca) and two small towns (one in the state of Malacca). From these Villages the OMF were visiting a further seven Villages.[77] As in other states, communities of varying strengths grew and developed.

[75] Norah Rowe, 'The Church Bell Rings Again', *The Millions*, July-August 1952 Supplement, p. 2.
[76] Cecil Gracey, 'A Gospel Van in the New Villages', *The Millions*, October 1954, p. 84.
[77] Batang Kali (540), Ijok (555), Kampong Gurney (563), Kerling New Village (566), Kuang (569), Kundang (570), and Ulu Yam Lama (610).

THE NORTH MALAYAN FIELD: PERAK

The North Malayan Field was set up to work with the Anglican Church in southern Perak. When it arrived, most churches in the state were either English- or Tamil-speaking.[78] Chinese mission work had begun in Ipoh and a few Chinese families worshipped in Kampong Tawas (then known as Tassek), but there were no other Chinese-speaking Anglican congregations in the state.[79] The OMF arrived in 1953 and by 1955 had resident workers in seven New Villages, including Ringlet in Pahang. George Williamson, the Field Superintendent, decided that the small town of Tapah would make a good centre for the Field, and a suitable house was rented in the Indian quarter.[80] Medical work began in two Villages with the arrival of Dr Max Gray and his wife Irene.[81] They initially started with clinics in two New Villages. By 1955, they had taken responsibility for two groups of Villages from the British Red Cross. The first group were scattered around the New Village of Mambang Di-Awan, where the Grays lived, and the second was around Bidor, where three OMF missionaries with nursing training were based in a bungalow built for the Red Cross.

Figure 10: 1959 Map of Perak and Penang

Gradually this pioneer work developed. Over time small groups of believers were formed, regular 'cottage meetings' held, and where possible congregations were established. Of the New Villages where the OMF was resident, congregations were started in Bidor, Mambang Di-Awan and Slim River as well as in the town of Tapah. On the other hand, the OMF was not able to start churches in either Jeram or Lawan Kuda. In response to this lack of progress, resident missionaries in these two New Villages moved to the nearby small towns of Malim

[78] See Chelliah and McLeish, pp. 30–33.
[79] Anthony Dumper, *A History of the Parish of South Perak* (Ipoh, Perak: Charles Grenier & Co, 1953).
[80] George Williamson, 'Home in North Malaya', *The Millions*, January 1953, p. 5.
[81] Margaret Heale, 'Following the Red Cross', *The Millions*, May-June 1956, pp. 60-61, and Dr Max Gray, 'A Doctor in Malaya', *The Millions*, March 1957, p. 26.

Nawar (1957) and Gopeng (1959) respectively. Cole recognised that in doing so, the policy of the Field was changing when he writes, 'we would still work the New Villages whose need had called us to Malaya, but we would now often do it from the local town that was the natural centre for that New Village'.[82] A further development at this time was a desire to start work in New Villages north of Ipoh. After surveying the area, Marion Parsons moved into Selama in August 1959.[83] She planned to use the small town as a base to reach the surrounding district. The OMF's engagement with the New Villages in Perak reached its peak in 1959 when the OMF was reported to be operating in four New Villages and four existing villages or small towns.

Table 13: Perak Villages Opened

No.	No.	New Village	Town/Village
1.			Tapah
2.	**389**	Bidor ⊕	
3.	**505**	Slim River	
4.	**523**	Tapah Road	
5.	**411**	Jeram	Malim Nawar
6.	**465**	Lawan Kuda	Gopeng
7.	**470**	Mambang Di-Awan ⊕	
8.			Selama

In addition to the Villages where OMF missionaries were resident, the Fellowship regularly visited New Villages close to them, and also visited some with a mobile medical clinic. The MCC Survey (1959) identifies twenty-one New Villages visited by OMF missionaries.[84] It is difficult, however, to gauge the level of contact missionaries actually had with these Villages. For some, the MCC Survey (1959) is the only evidence these Villages came in contact with OMF missionaries. For others we have evidence from OMF sources of evangelistic work and in some cases of the development of regular meetings. A report in 1959, for example, mentions the presence of two or three Christians in Kampong Coldstream. Another reports 'cottage meetings', held in the home of a Christian, being run in Langkap.[85] While our assessment is focused on locations where the OMF had residential workers, it is important to recognise that missionaries did have an impact on Villages they visited.

[82] Chelliah and McLeish, pp. 24–25.
[83] George Williamson, 'Home in North Malaya', *The Millions*, November 1959, p. 106.
[84] Ayer Kuning (374), Behrang Station (387), Behrang Ulu (388), Bidor Station (390), Bukit Pagar (394), Changkat Papan (399), Chenderiang (401), Kampong Coldstream (426), Kuala Bikam (459), Kuala Slim (462), Langkap (464), Nam Fatt Yin (474), New Kopisan (475), Pekan Getah (481), Pekan Pasir (483), Sungei Kroh (512), Sungkai (517), Tanah Mas (519), Temoh (527), Trolak (529), Tronoh Mines (532).
[85] See George Williamson, 'In South Perak New Villages…', *The Millions*, February 1959, p. 21, and Amy Harper, 'Village in 'Oil Town Parish'', *The Millions*, February 1961, p.15.

5.5 CONCLUSION

At the end of 1959, the MCC Survey (1959) was focused on the future. Harry Haines was able to conclude in the preface, 'we look forward with confidence to maintaining this program, even after the emergency is over'. While the report recognised the need to improve and deepen existing work being done, its main focus was on where to open up new work. Our review shows that the OMF approached the new decade with a similar optimism. It was encouraged by the enthusiastic response of young people. The Bible correspondence course was providing a valuable way for new Christians to develop their understanding of the Bible and Christianity. The gospel van gave the Fellowship the ability to run out-door evangelistic programmes anywhere in Malaya and its network of New Villages throughout the states provided locations where these meetings could take place. As a result, a large percentage of the New Village population came in contact with the Christian message for the first time. At the end of 1959, the OMF had workers placed in thirty-four centres, twenty-seven New Villages and seven existing villages or towns. While establishing viable congregations was taking longer than expected, like the MCC, it was looking to expand its work.

Table 14: 1960 Centres with Resident OMF Missionaries	*New Villages*	*Village/Town*	*Total*
Perak	4	4	8
Johore	6	1	7
Pahang	8		8
Selangor	9	2	11
TOTAL	27	7	34

Within five years, the situation had changed dramatically. In 1965, James Metcalfe reported that, after working for fourteen years in the southern states, about 300 people had been baptised and there had been no increase in the seven organised churches reported in 1955.[86] The OMF were now only resident in nineteen centres, which was just over half the 1959 total. The next chapter will explore how this happened by considering the impact of external changes taking place in the country, as well as the internal challenges that the OMF faced.

[86] James Metcalfe, 'Pioneering in Malaya', *The Millions*, July-August 1965, pp. 90-91.

PART II: POST-INDEPENDENCE (1957-77)

6. THE OMF IN THE NEW VILLAGES

From 1955, the communist threat in Malaya diminished and this had a significant impact on the New Villages. Firstly, it allowed the country to progress towards independence. On 31 August 1957, it celebrated 'Merdeka Day' and the Independence of the Federation of Malaya. As we have already seen, the focus of the new Malaysian government was communal, and the 'Chinese' New Villages were no longer a Government priority. Malay politicians had questioned the money that was spent on services for the New Villages. They felt that they had benefited from the Emergency at the expense of their own people. Now that they were in power, the focus shifted to addressing the needs of rural Malays. While missionary work carried on, it was now being done without the support of the Government.

Of even greater influence was the end of the Emergency itself. Although the Emergency did not officially end until 12 July 1960, the government had begun relaxing its security restrictions well before then. As New Villagers were given freedom to move, many joined in the urban migration taking place in the country. They left semi-rural and semi-urban New Villages for greater opportunities in urban centres. The OMF's preference for working in un-evangelised Villages meant that most of the New Villages they worked in, fell into these two categories. This had a devastating effect on the churches they were trying to establish. This migration inevitably included Christians from the small cottage meetings that OMF missionaries had so carefully nurtured. Without a stable population it proved extremely difficult to gather sufficient converts to establish viable congregations. Williamson highlights

the challenges of building up strong churches with permanent leadership when the population was constantly on the move.[1]

6.1 The OMF's Response to a Changing World

These changes in the country brought both challenges and opportunities for mission agencies. OMF missionaries reacted to these changes in different ways and this created tensions within both Malayan Fields. Evidence of this can be seen in the notable resignation of two new workers from the Fellowship. Both Rev Peter Young and Rev Dr Alan Cole were Anglican new workers who joined the North Malayan Field in the 1950s. After starting language studies in 1954, Peter Young wrote to the Field Superintendent George Williamson to ask to be assigned to work with Tamils.[2] This he was allowed to do and from there he developed an effective ministry among English-speaking Indian and Chinese students. In order to continue this ministry however, he had to resign from the OMF in 1957. Alan Cole and his wife joined the OMF in 1956 and began work in Teluk Anson. He was asked to join the faculty of TTC, which was seen by the OMF as too liberal. As a result, he resigned from the Fellowship and joined the CMS before starting to teach at TTC in 1962. Both maintained a good relationship with the OMF but found its focus on the New Villages too narrow.

One of the major causes of this friction stemmed from the very different perspectives of CIM missionaries who had been in China and were affectionately known as 'old China hands', compared with new workers who joined the mission after 1952. Rose Dowsett highlights how the background of new workers was very different from that of old China hands. She writes, 'These new workers stood in sharp contrast to the raw, young, inexperienced men and women who had joined the CIM before the war'.[3] The new workers were older than in the past and more experienced, with many having seen military service. In addition, many had professional training as doctors, nurses, lawyers, teachers and in some cases Bible teachers. Dowsett's observation is supported by statistics from workers in Malaya, which show that, of the new workers

[1] George Williamson, 'On the Spot in Northern Malaya', *The Millions*, May 1966, p. 43.
[2] Young to Williamson, 28 November 1954, OMF Archives [SG]: AR 5.1.5 Box 1.6.
[3] Rose Dowsett, '"Making All Things New"- or Did We?', *Mission Round Table: The OMF Journal for Reflective Practitioner*, 14.1 (2019), 10–15 (p. 14).

who went to Malaya, 34% had other qualifications (BA, BSc, etc) compared with 17% of old China hands. On the other hand, the overall percentage with medical qualifications dropped from 24% among old China hands to 18% of new workers. This can partly be explained by the initial focus on medical clinics in the New Villages, which no longer became necessary as the Emergency ended and healthcare in the country improved. These new workers also had a different approach to authority. In sharp contrast to the authoritarian culture of CIM, they had been trained to ask questions and not simply accept what they were told. In 1960, the number of new workers outnumbered old China hands for the first time.[4] While leadership remained firmly in the control of old China hands, these new workers were wanting to have their voices heard. How this clash of cultures manifested itself differed in the two Malayan Fields.

Table 15: Missionaries with Medical and Professional Training

	Old China Hands		New Workers	
	No.	%	No.	%
Medical Training	25	24.0	27	17.5
Other Qualifications	18	17.3	53	34.4
	43	41.3	80	51.9
Total	104		154	

The Tenth Annual South Malayan Field Conference

In the South Malayan Field, this tension was seen in the village versus town debate. This debate is recorded in the minutes of the 1961 Annual South Malayan Field Conference. Many of the OMF missionaries who came to the conference were disappointed and discouraged. The Superintendent, David Day, summed up their feelings when he spoke in his opening address from Psalm 107:27, 'they were at their wits' end'. The impact of the end of the Emergency was being felt. The statistics from his yearly report revealed, 'no marked progress in the growth of the church or in the emergence of national leaders'.[5] In addition to the lack of progress in the 'Village Work', relationships between missionaries were strained.

At the conference, disagreement surfaced as the need to set centennial year objectives was discussed. Each field, in preparation for the centennial of the CIM-

[4] See Figure 5, in Chapter 5.
[5] James Metcalfe, 'South Malayan Field Conference 1961', *The Field Bulletin*, 1961, p. 72.

OMF in 1965, had been asked to consider its future objectives. The original objectives had been shaped by the Emergency and its cessation made this discussion particularly relevant in Malaya. The possibility of 'working the villages from a distance' was first raised by Arnold Lea, the OMF's Overseas Director, when he was asked for his suggestions.[6] In the following business session, the focus then changed from residence in the New Villages to opportunities for ministry in the towns of Malaya. This divided the members of the Field into those who were pro-villages and those who were pro-towns. In an effort to bring unity Fred McClymont suggested that the Field should think in terms of 'strategic centres'.[7] In the end the conference agreed a resolution that, 'provision should be made for teams of workers to live in strategic centres in order to promote more intensive evangelism and teaching'.[8]

Many of those who were pro-village were old China hands. They were committed to pioneer church-planting in the New Villages using Chinese dialects. One of the reasons they were attracted to Malaya in the first place was because they saw the invitation to work in Malaya as God's providential provision when they were forced to leave China. They wanted the focus to continue to be on the New Villages. As we have seen, the OMF struggled to know how best to relate to existing churches in Malaya and their preference was to go where other churches were not working. This explains why one of the strongest objections to 'going into towns' was how they would maintain comity with the other denominations.[9] They were reluctant to work where they had not been invited.

At the same time, as we have seen, they wanted to correct what they saw as mistakes made in China. This included a commitment to living in the New Villages with the people. Their concerns therefore were immediately raised when the possibility of 'working the villages from a distance' was suggested. The fact that ministry in the towns may involve English and Mandarin was also a concern. A fundamental principle for many in the OMF was the need to learn the language of the indigenous people

[6] South Malayan 10th Annual Field Conference Minutes, 1961, p. 4, McClymont Papers: Folder 1.
[7] South Malayan 10th Annual Field Conference Minutes, 1961, p. 5, McClymont Papers: Folder 1.
[8] South Malayan 10th Annual Field Conference Minutes, 1961, p. 6, McClymont Papers: Folder 1.
[9] South Malayan 10th Annual Field Conference Minutes, 1961, p. 5, McClymont Papers: Folder 1.

they were seeking to reach. Cole summarised the feelings of old China hands when he wrote, 'we have an inborn distrust of work in English, lest it be more superficial than work in the true mother tongues of the people'.[10] It took time for some to accept that, for the younger generation in Malaya, their mother tongue was English.

On the other side of the argument was the majority of new workers who were pro-town. They could not understand the reluctance of their senior colleagues to take up the opportunities they saw in the towns. They had not been through the reluctant exodus from China and could not understand the intransigence of older workers, who wished to remain in the New Villages when so little progress was being made. While they were much more open to accepting the need to change the objectives of the Field to match the changing circumstances they faced, at the same time, they failed to appreciate the strategic importance and impact of living in the New Villages.

While the actual decisions made at the conference were not significant in themselves, the conference marked a turning point for the Field, as it accepted the need to broaden its vision beyond the New Villages. While this was still difficult for some to accept, most recognised the need for change. More importantly for the missionaries, it represented a time when energy and determination were renewed and relationships restored. As John Edwards writing nearly twenty years later put it:

> The tone was one of hopelessness…One lady missionary said to the Chairman, 'I move that we go to prayer'. As we prayed some began to weep. Then one and another began to confess to God and to each other about secret bitterness, envy, misunderstandings etc. Meetings were abandoned and given to prayer and confession as the Lord directed.[11]

While this may not have been the experience of all, it is clear that it was a significant conference for many. In concluding the conference, Mr Day recognised this when he placed on record, 'its deep gratitude to God for his special dealings with us during these past days…'.[12] It was not until the following year that the Centennial objectives were finalised and the impact of this conference was more clearly seen.

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[10] Alan Cole, *Emerging Pattern: CIM Work within the Diocese of Singapore and Malaya* (London: CIM, 1961), p. 37.
[11] 'Wits' End Corner', *The Millions (Centenary Edition)*, April-June 1980, p. 24.
[12] South Malayan 10th Annual Field Conference Minutes, 1961, p. 6, McClymont Papers: Folder 1.

The North Malayan Field

In the North Malayan Field, the Fellowship's focus also changed over time, but the reasons for these changes were different. As in the South Malayan Field, the initial focus of the Field was on evangelism and the New Villages. Unlike the South Malayan Field however, their work also fell under the responsibility of Bishop Baines and what was, at the time, the Diocese of Singapore. This meant there were no comity barriers to working in existing villages and towns. It also meant that the Bishop wanted, understandably, to have some control over where OMF workers were placed. His big concern was the lack of trained clergy in the Diocese and the number of churches without a resident minister. As a result, in 1955, the OMF assigned Rev Robert Harper to St Luke's Church in Teluk Anson. While still involved in the New Villages, now the OMF also had pastoral responsibility for an Anglican congregation.

Looking back over the preceding years, Cole suggested in 1961 that the Field was 'moving into a new pattern of missionary work'.[13] This new pattern, with the establishment of local churches, had begun focusing on discipleship and training local leaders. It was a pattern that was moving towards the use of 'central stations' rather than living in the New Villages. It may well be that Lea's suggestion to 'work the villages from a distance' came from the example of the North Malayan Field. These centres had the advantage of being able to continue New Village work from a distance and, at the same time, take the opportunity to work with English-speaking young people from schools in these larger centres. It also meant, 'an acceptance of spiritual responsibility for running Anglican services in English in these areas'.[14] Cole goes on to say that this was a responsibility that the OMF neither asked for nor wanted. This change however, resulted in the Fellowship being drawn in to meet the needs of the Diocese in the towns.

One of the consequences of working in towns was the need to work with others in the Anglican Church. As we have seen, this was a challenge for old China hands, who had operated independently of other Anglicans in China. Their preference was to do

[13] Cole, p. 35.
[14] Cole, p. 37.

the same in Malaya and when they started pioneer church-planting in Perak this was possible. The Diocese of Singapore, however, was nowhere near the size of Eastern Sichuan (Szechuan), and when the OMF were drawn into the towns they had no option but to interact. As we have already noted, this created tension between OMF and SPG missionaries. At the same time, it did mean that the focus of frustration was outside the Fellowship and this led to less-strained relationships within it. According to John Hewlett, new workers were used to working in their home countries with Anglicans who did not share their conservative evangelical convictions.[15] As a result, they were better equipped to deal with working within the existing Anglican hierarchy in Malaya and were more open to changing the focus of the field. In the end both the North and South Malayan Fields moved in a similar direction but for different reasons. It was at the eleventh annual field conference that this change in focus was articulated through the South Malayan Field Centennial objectives.

South Malayan Field Centennial Objectives

The eleventh annual conference of the South Malayan Field took place between 16 and 23 February 1962. After spending time hearing reports on various ministries, discussion of the Centennial objectives began on Tuesday, 20 February. Over the next three days, seven 'work objectives' were debated and agreed.[16] In addition, a proposal, agreed on the final day, was significant. These deliberations marked not so much a change in approach as a broadening of the OMF's focus in Malaya, and paved the way for a significant change in their activities. An analysis of these work objectives suggests that they fell into two main categories. The first category involved church-based activities, where missionaries worked as part of a local congregation. Only work objective two on 'Village Work' relates to this category. The second category included all the remaining work objectives and focused on specialised ministries that had an impact beyond a particular local church.

The objective dedicated to 'Village Work' emphasised the Fellowship's continuing commitment to establishing New Village churches, while at the same time limiting

[15] Personal Interview with John Hewlett, December 2012.
[16] See Appendix 4 for the South Malayan Field Centennial objectives.

that commitment going forward to 'existing churches in our areas'.[17] With the Emergency over it became increasingly clear that expanding the Village Work was not an option. At the same time the majority of missionaries demonstrated an openness to working with other denominations in larger towns. This had been discussed and agreed the year before. What had not been clarified was the language that would be used. The assumption then had been that Chinese-speaking churches were the focus. On the last day of the conference, after discussing the 'Tamil Work' objective, a debate on the possibility of English-speaking work among Indians and Chinese developed. The result was a proposal that the Superintendent and Field council 'investigate the possibility of establishing English work among English-speaking Asians in Malaya'.[18] This was slowly to develop into a significant ministry in both the North and South Malayan Fields.

The OMF's response to the changes taking place in the country resulted in three priorities developing. The first, which will be the focus of the remainder of this chapter, was the consolidation of the Village Work. The second was the expansion of its work into existing churches in the towns where trained clergy were needed. This will be the focus of the next chapter. The third involved an expansion of its work to include both Evangelism and Bible teaching. While a small number of missionaries had been assigned to specialised ministries in the 1950s this increased significantly in the 1960s and is the focus of chapter 8.

6.2 Village Work: Establishing New Village Churches

After 1960, the OMF struggled against the effects of urbanisation on rural and semi-urban villages. The expectation that indigenous churches would follow a four-stage linear progression towards independence, which had been outlined in 1955, did not match actual experience. In reality, missionaries experienced times of progress as well as setbacks. New Villagers remained resistant to their message and missionaries found that some Villages were more open than others.

[17] Appendix 4.
[18] South Malayan 11th Annual Field Conference Minutes, 1962, p. 6, McClymont Papers: Folder 1.

The South Malayan Field: Johore, Pahang, Selangor (and Malacca)

At the 15th South Malayan annual conference in February 1966, Ewan Lumsden used his superintendent's report to assess the progress of the Field in attaining their Centennial objectives. While there were a number of encouragements, including Eileen Cheng joining the 'Village Work' as the first full-time Asian church worker, he reported that the OMF had withdrawn from four Villages during 1965 because of a shortage of personnel.[19] This brought the total number of Villages that the Fellowship had withdrawn from by the end of 1965 to fifteen, which represented more than a third of all the Villages they entered. This was not consolidation but retrenchment. Lack of personnel and progress meant that the OMF began to focus on those Villages, which, they believed, had the best chance of developing into independent indigenous churches. Lumsden also recognised the slow progress they were making in establishing indigenous churches in Villages where there were still resident missionaries. He believed the problems were internal rather than external and wrote, 'we must be fiercely critical of our church-building methods'.[20]

The Field was also debating whether churches founded by the OMF should either be encouraged to form an association, or come under the responsibility of another denomination, or remain independent. At the 14th annual conference the year before, a recommendation was proposed that, 'The conference recommends that steps be taken to encourage O.M.F. founded churches to form, on a state-wide basis at first, an association of churches for fellowship and matters of government representation. Each participating church would remain completely autonomous'. [21] After 'much discussion' the recommendation was not agreed. Instead, an alternative statement, 'We will take more positive steps to foster fellowship between the emerging churches and other groups of like faith' was proposed and agreed. This

[19] South Malayan 15th Annual Field Conference Reports, 1966, p. 4, McClymont Papers: Folder 1. The four centres were Machap Bahru (April), Kalumpang (June), Sungei Ruan (June) and Bukit Pasir (November).
[20] South Malayan 15th Annual Field Conference Reports, 1966, p. 4, McClymont Papers: Folder 1.
[21] South Malayan 14th Annual Field Conference Minutes, 1965, p. 4, McClymont Papers: Folder 1.

recommendation was sufficiently vague to allow missionaries the freedom to recommend their own preference to churches with which they were associated.

This issue became more pressing in July 1966, when the Malaysian Government unexpectedly issued new immigration regulations. As part of their process of 'Malaysianisation' it began limiting the length of time that missionaries could work in Malaysia to ten years. The MCC report in 1958 had noted the possibility that the Malayanisation may make Christian work more difficult but concluded,

> there is no doubt about the extremely high repute in which Christian social and medical and education work is held by government officials, even though most of them are Moslems. A trust and goodwill is being built up that will be more valuable than ever in future Christian work in the newly independent country.[22]

It appeared that those who had voiced concerns were justified in doing so. At the 1967 South Malayan Field conference, the Field was reminded of the importance of not leaving churches alone. If possible, churches should be encouraged to form an association of OMF-founded churches. This was still the preference. The alternative was to join in an association with an existing evangelical group.[23]

At first it was unclear when the ten years started. Was it from when the missionary first came to Malaya or did it apply from when the regulations were issued? After making enquiries, two bishops obtained a verbal agreement from Tun Rasak that the 'Ten-year Rule' would begin from January 1967 and would not be retroactive.[24] This concession, however, was never written down. These regulations effectively brought to an end large scale mission work and marked the beginning of a more gradual, but equally regrettable, exodus from Malaysia. In the end it was 'Malaysianisation' not communism that forced OMF missionaries to leave.

After the race riots in May 1969, the Malaysian Government began to strictly apply, retroactively, the Ten-year Rule and the gradual decline in numbers of OMF missionaries from 1966 became a more rapid descent after 1971. All 'Village Work'

[22] Malayan Christian Council, 'A Survey of the New Villages in Malaya' (Kuala Lumpur, 1958), pp. 9–10, SOAS Archives [UK]: CBMS/01/E/76/04.
[23] South Malayan 16th Annual Field Conference Minutes, 1967, p. 3, McClymont Papers: Folder 1.
[24] Southern Field Council Minutes, 8-9 February 1970, OMF Archives [SG]: AR 5.2.7 Box 1.7.

came to an end by 1972 and by 1977 there were less that twenty missionaries in Malaysia. After twenty-five years in West Malaysia, how successful were OMF missionaries in establishing the independent indigenous churches they wanted? As we shall see, some states fared much better than others.

1. JOHORE

Progress was slow in Johore. In March 1962, after having missionaries in Rengam for five years, Cecil Gracey wrote, 'Rengam can be considered to be a "barren spot" humanly speaking. There are a few professing Christians with little or no life'.[25] The lack of progress resulted in the OMF pulling its missionaries out of Simpang Rengam and Bukit Siput in 1960, Sungei Suloh in 1961, and Rengam by the end of 1962.

Table 16: Johore Villages

No.	New Village	Town/Village	Church	Language
7	Bekok		Bekok Presbyterian	Chinese
18	Buloh Kasap		Buloh Kasap CMC	Chinese
19	Cha'ah		Cha'ah Christian Church	Chinese
100	Scudai		Resident 1952-55	Chinese
112	Simpang Rengam		Resident 1953-59	Chinese
16	Bukit Siput ⊕		Resident 1954-59	Chinese
		Sungei Suloh	Resident 1957-60	Chinese
94	Rengam		Resident 1957-61	Chinese
14	Bukit Pasir		Resident 1963-65	Chinese
5	Batu Anam		Resident 1964-67	Chinese
24	Gemas Bahru	Gemas Town, NS	Resident 1957-70	Chinese

Missionaries based in Kluang continued to support small groups of Hakka-speaking believers in Kluang, Rengam and Simpang Rengam. They shared how the future of these groups were in the balance as members moved to larger urban centres.[26] At the same time, it placed Don and Betty Brookes in the New Village of Bukit Pasir for the first time in 1963. Then the following year, after visiting the New Village of Batu Anam for a number of years, a resident worker was placed there. In 1966 regular meetings were being held in Batu Anam and six young people were baptised.[27] Neither of these placements, however, proved successful and the New Villages were vacated in 1966 and 1968 respectively.

[25] South Malaya Prayer Bulletin, March 1962, p. 2, McClymont Papers: Folder 1.
[26] South Malaya Prayer Bulletin, February 1966, p. 6, McClymont Papers: Folder 1.
[27] South Malaya Prayer Bulletin, February 1966, p. 4, McClymont Papers: Folder 1.

OMF missionaries worked in three places linked to Gemas. The town of Gemas straddles the border of Johore and Negri Sembilan. As a result, Gemas Bahru New Village was located in Johore while Gemas New Village and the small town of Gemas were situated in Negri Sembilan. Over the years the Field had missionaries in all three locations starting with Gemas Bahru New Village, which had resident missionaries in 1957 and 1958. Missionaries them moved to Gemas New Village from 1959 to 1961, before being based in Gemas town from 1962 until 1970. The work in Gemas developed over time to include groups of both Chinese- and Tamil-speaking Christians.[28] For all their efforts from 1957 to at least 1970, however, there is no evidence that a sustainable congregation was established.

This left only two Villages where congregations were able to be established. Cha'ah was the first independent indigenous church that the OMF planted. The Fellowship was excited when in 1957 resident missionaries left the Village because the church was able to operate without their assistance. This is what OMF missionaries had worked for. Unfortunately, subsequent problems in the church required their return in 1960. The Fellowship continued to work with the church and by 1966 the Cha'ah Christian Church was again independent of missionaries. In Buloh Kasap, a congregation was established and chose to become part of the CMC. It had links with and was supported by the CMC in nearby Segamat.[29]

Of the eleven centres where the OMF placed resident missionaries in Johore, work was started in one New Village, Bekok, but then, after three years, responsibility was passed to the Presbyterian Church in Malaysia (PCM), and two developed into independent Chinese congregations. While Hollands adds that OMF churches were founded in Gemas and Batu Anam, there is no other evidence to corroborate this.[30] This lack of progress may have been one of the contributory factors that led to the OMF placing very few missionaries in New Villages in the state. After 1966, resident missionaries could only be found in Batu Anam and Gemas town.

[28] South Malaya Prayer Bulletin, December 1966, p. 3, McClymont Papers: Folder 1.
[29] Personal Interview with John Edwards, 16 October 2019.
[30] Margaret Hollands, 'Malaysia: OMF's First 25 Years', *The Field Bulletin*, 1979, p. 32.

2. PAHANG

The state of Pahang was the most remote that the OMF worked in. It also became the most successful, though congregations were not established in all the New Villages they occupied. In 1961 the mine that supplied work to Bukit Koman was closed and in 1964, OMF missionaries left. Sadie Custer was posted to Sungei Ruan for four years. A veteran from China, she tells how resistant the Village was to the Christian message and how it became known as 'The Ruins'.[31] While at one stage she had a class of thirty-five young people meeting regularly for a Saturday night Bible club, the Fellowship was unable to establish a viable congregation.[32] After having missionaries in Sungei Ruan for eleven years, the Village was vacated in 1965.

Table 17: Pahang Villages

No.	New Village	Town/Village	Church	Language
310	Kemansur	Bentong	Bentong CMC	Chinese
308	Karak		Karak CMC	Chinese
354	Temerloh		Termerloh Chapel (Gospel Hall)	Chinese
357	Triang		Triang Christian Church	Chinese
288	Gambang		Gambang CMC	Chinese
347	Sungei Jan	Jerantut	Jerantut Christian Church	Chinese
284	Bukit Koman	Raub	Resident 1959-63	Chinese
350	Sungei Ruan		Resident 1954-64	Chinese

The Fellowship was, however, able to establish five congregations in the remaining Villages with resident missionaries. Slowly local leaders were appointed, and churches began to operate independently. The first church where this happened was Sungei Jan New Village, near the town of Jerantut. The last year that resident missionaries were stationed in Jerantut was 1965. There was continued contact and support and a local worker was sent to help the church. By 1971 the congregation had its own building and parsonage, although it was also reported that there were divisions within the church.[33] Missionaries withdrew from Gambang New Village in 1967, and by 1971 they too had an OMF-trained worker to support them. They were followed by Triang, Termerloh and Karak so that by 1972, the OMF no longer had any resident workers in Pahang New Villages.

[31] Sadie Custer and Loraine Custer Czarneke, *God's Vagabond: The Autobiography of Sadie Custer* (Littleton, CO: Lammermir House Publishing, 2006), p. 212.
[32] Custer and Czarneke, p. 220.
[33] 'An OMF View of West Malaysia', *The Millions (NA Edition)*, August-September 1971, p.147.

The initial objective of the Field was to establish an association of OMF churches. It was realised, especially after the implementation of the Ten-year Rule, that this was no longer an option. Instead, each church was encouraged to either remain independent or link up with an existing denomination. In the end the congregations in Gambang and Karak joined the CMC. In 1968, the Termerloh congregation became the Chinese department of the Christian Brethren and the congregations in Triang and Jerantut, initially joined the CNEC, but later became independent churches.

The results made Pahang the state where the OMF was most successful in establishing contextual Chinese-speaking churches. Of the eight New Villages they entered congregations were started in five, and work was started in a sixth, Kemansur, before being passed on to the CMC in 1960. The establishment of these churches was also strategic. Until the OMF came to the New Villages, the state had hardly been touched by Christian mission. Outside Kuantan, the state capital, churches had only been planted in two towns.

3. Selangor and Malacca

Table 18: Selangor & Malacca Villages

No.	New Village	Town/Village	Church	Language
574	Pandamaran		Pandamaran CMC	Chinese
596	Sungei Chua	Kajang	Kajang CMC	Chinese
601	Sungei Way (Seri Setia) ⊕		Sungai Way Christian Church	Chinese, English
587	Serdang (Seri Kembangan) ⊕		Serdang Christian Church	Chinese
536	Kuala Kubu Bahru		KKB Church (Gospel Hall)	Chinese
578	Rawang		Rawang Christian Church	Chinese
603	Tanjong Sepat		Tanjong Sepat CMC	Chinese
225	Machap Bahru, Malacca		Macap Baru Baptist Chapel	Chinese
560	Kalumpang (Serjantung)		Resident 1954-59	Chinese
577	Rasa (Chuang)		Resident 1956-60	Chinese
609	Ulu Yam Bahru		Resident 1959-60	Chinese
		Alor Gajah, Malacca	Resident 1956-60	Chinese
		Batu Arang	Resident 1959-61	Chinese

In Selangor and Malacca, while they continued to visit, the Field began reducing the number of its residential centres. Between 1960 and 1962 two existing Villages, Alor Gajah in Malacca, and Batu Arang were vacated as well as three New Villages (Kalumpang, Rasa, Ulu Yam Bahru). This left six New Villages where missionaries continued to focus their attention. Slowly they were able to leave these congregations as they were able to operate independently.

Two of the OMF's most successful church plants were Sungei Way and Serdang, where the Fellowship operated medical clinics. Both were classified as 'new settlements' in the MCC Survey (1959), but in reality, were urban villages that attracted inward migration and later became suburbs of the greater Kuala Lumpur conurbation. This helped greatly in enabling the church to become independent. Progress was not always smooth and at one stage the Sungei Way Christian Church was struggling and required the supported of the nearby Brethren Life Chapel.[34] Eventually though, the church was able to start two congregations. In addition to the dialect-speaking congregation, the OMF also helped start an English-speaking one.[35] The third strong independent church was in the New Village of Rawang. Not only was it located near a larger town, but it was also located near a Christian training centre and benefited from the help of students and staff training there.

The three other New Villages were semi-rural and struggled. When it became clear that the OMF would be leaving the country, they were all encouraged to link with established denominations. The congregation at Kuala Kubu Bahru joined the Christian Brethren, the believers at Tanjong Sepat, the CMC, and the church in Machap Bahru became a Baptist Chapel. In total, Selangor and Malacca had the highest number of Villages with resident OMF missionaries. Of the thirteen centres where the OMF placed workers, in two, work was started and then passed to the CMC, in three, independent churches were formed, and in another three, congregations were started and eventually joined different denominations.

The North Malayan Field: Perak

While the North Malayan Field was not party to the Centennial objectives in the South, it was subjected to the same pressures of urbanisation. The first casualty of this pressure was Tapah Road New Village. It was withdrawn from in 1960 and missionaries, as part of the Field's forward movement, went instead to the town of Selama in northern Perak. After only three years, however, they also withdrew from

[34] Elizabeth Goldsmith, *Against All Odds: God at Work in an Impossible Situation* (Milton Keynes: Authentic Media, 2007), pp. 138–49.
[35] 'An OMF View of West Malaysia', *The Millions (NA Edition)*, August-September 1971, p. 146.

Selama. With hindsight it is clear that the Field failed to fully appreciate and respond to the impact of the end of the Emergency.

Missionaries in the Field remained committed to the New Villages. For the next five years, they continued to place resident missionaries in six centres to help nurture the small Christian communities they started. It was only after 1964 that the number of resident missionaries began to reduce. Like the South Malayan Field, it reduced the number of centres it worked in and began to focus on those with the best chance of survival. Malim Nawar (1965) was first to be vacated, and it was followed by Gopeng (1967) and Mambang Di-Awan (1968). While the OMF no longer had resident missionaries, these villages were still visited regularly.[36]

Table 19: Perak Villages

No.	New Village	Town/Village	Church	Language
		Tapah	Emmanuel Church	Chinese, English
389	Bidor ⊕		St Andrew's Mission	Chinese
505	Slim River		St Paul's Church	Chinese, English
523	Tapah Road		Resident 1953-59	Chinese
		Selama	Resident 1960-62	Chinese
411	Jeram	Malim Nawar	Resident 1953-64	Chinese
465	Lawan Kuda	Gopeng	Resident 1955-66	Chinese
470	Mambang Di-Awan ⊕		Resident 1954-67	Chinese

In three centres, however, churches were started.[37] The New Village of Slim River was located next to a town by the same name. The OMF was able to establish both a Chinese- and English-speaking congregation, and in 1957 St Paul's Church building was completed. When the Field arrived, it used the small town of Tapah as its base. Over time small Chinese- and English-speaking congregations were started. Originally the church met in the home of the missionaries but as numbers grew, a bigger building was needed. In 1962 a new church was built, with OMF missionary Rev Donald Temple as the minister. Progress was slow in Bidor New Village, where the OMF ran a medical clinic. Eventually a small Chinese-speaking congregation began meeting and, after a number of years, a house was purchased and altered so that churches services could be held. The building was named St Andrew's Mission House.[38]

In her report Hollands identifies six locations where the Fellowship started churches. Our review, however, shows that out of the eight locations that had resident workers,

[36] 'An OMF View of West Malaysia', *The Millions (NA Edition)*, August-September 1971, pp. 146-147.
[37] Fred Collard, 'Countdown in West Malaysia', *The Millions*, January-February. 1975, pp. 4-5.
[38] Goldsmith, pp. 93–94.

the OMF was only able to start three churches. While this may appear disappointing, it is important to remember that before the Fellowship arrived there were only two Chinese-speaking churches in the state.

SUMMARY

When the OMF and other Protestant mission agencies arrived in Malaya, the New Villages presented them, quite literally, with a captive audience. In seeking to establish indigenous churches they did not, however, anticipate the level of resistance they would face. Having witnessed the communist takeover of China, they were well aware of the challenge communism posed. What they were not prepared for, were the challenges of learning new Chinese dialects and the living conditions in the New Villages. The biggest challenge they faced though, was the commitment of New Village inhabitants to Chinese Religion.

From a materialistic perspective, Protestant missionaries had little to offer prospective converts. Fleming recognised that those who become Christians in the New Villages of Johore, 'were not following any popular line, which would confer on them any social benefit. The situation was indeed quite the reverse of this'.[39] OMF missionaries were committed to the 'indigenous principle' and pioneer church-planting, both of which made establishing congregations more difficult. By following the indigenous principle, they would not employ local Christians or buy property. While this distanced them for the accusation of producing 'rice Christians', it did not make their task any easier. In addition, by focusing on New Villages that had not had contact with other denominations, most of the Villages they were allocated, fell into the category of rural or semi-urban. These Villages were the ones most susceptible to outward migration when movement outside the New Villages became possible with the end of the Emergency. With the weight of circumstances against them there seemed little hope that any indigenous congregations could be established.

[39] John Fleming, 'The Growth of the Chinese Church in the New Villages of the State of Johore, Malaya 1950-60: A Case Study in the Communication of the Gospel to Chinese Converts' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Union Theological Seminary, 1962), p. 408.

This is the first comprehensive evaluation of the work of the OMF in West Malaysia. It shows that results varied significantly across the different states that the OMF worked in. Our analysis includes four churches where the Fellowship was involved at an early stage in the genesis of the congregation. While it is possible to argue that these churches were the responsibility of their respective denominations, they have been included because of the important role of OMF missionaries, at a critical time in their establishment. Overall, the OMF made a significant contribution to the growth in the number churches in three of the four states they worked in. The OMF were most successful in Pahang, where they were involved in establishing congregations in six of the eight New Villages they were allocated. By way of contrast, in Perak, the North Malayan Field was only able to establish three churches from the eight centres they worked in. These three churches, however, more than doubled the number of Chinese congregations in the state. The OMF's work in Selangor benefited from the proximity of a number of its New Villages to Kuala Lumpur and larger towns. It was in this state that it started the most congregations. In Johore, however, the OMF had its lowest success rate of 27%. It was only involved in the setting up of three Chinese-speaking congregations in the state.

Table 20: Summary of Village Work	Johore	Pahang	Selangor	Perak	Total
Villages vacated before 1960	1				1
Villages vacated between 1960-65	4	2	5	3	14
Villages vacated after 1965	3			2	5
	8	2	5	5	20
Church started	2	5	6	3	16
Work started and passed on	1	1	2		4
Total Villages with OMF residents	11	8	13	8	40

It must have been heart-breaking for OMF missionaries to have to vacate a New Village and in total they vacated twenty. Of those twenty nearly three-quarters were left in the six years following the end of the Emergency. Leaving each one felt like a failure, especially given the number of years missionaries had invested in them. In five of the vacated Villages the OMF had spent more than ten years in residence. This was difficult to accept, especially when their colleagues were experiencing the phenomenal growth of the church in Sumatra.[40]

[40] South Malayan 15th Annual Field Conference Reports, 1966, p. 2, McClymont Papers: Folder 1.

On the other hand, their focus on pioneer church-planting had an impact on previously unreached rural Chinese-speaking communities. As a result, OMF missionaries were involved in contributing to the growth of the indigenous Chinese-speaking churches in Malaysia through the establishment of twenty churches across the states they worked in, a 50% success rate. They had chosen rural pioneer evangelism and, while it may have been reasonable, according to their own Christian worldview, for them to expect a positive response to their message in each of the Villages they worked in, it was probably unreasonable to expect that they would have a 100% success rate in establishing independent indigenous churches. Their role, as facilitators, meant they were dependent upon the response and commitment of people in the New Villages for the Christian message to take hold. That it did in those twenty villages, is as much a testament to those who embraced their countercultural message as it is to their efforts. Seen from this perspective the establishment of each of these congregations was a remarkable achievement.

6.3 Vernacular-speaking Chinese Churches

During the 1950s, the OMF concentrated its resources on evangelism and church-planting in the New Villages. Medical Clinics were set up and resident missionaries were placed in as many Villages as possible. Although the Fellowship broadened its focus in the 1960s, it continued to organise evangelistic gospel van meetings and place missionaries in the New Villages. Appendix 2 shows its commitment to the forty New Villages that had resident missionaries. Arguably, the OMF's biggest contribution to the growth of the Malaysian church were these twenty dialect-speaking Chinese congregations in the New Villages.

For all their work however, twenty churches from the forty New Villages they were resident in, does not appear to be a great return. To date the assessment of the impact of missionaries in the New Villages has been mixed. Diane Wong and Ngu Ik-Tien argue that a major omission from existing sociological research on the growth of Christianity in Malaysia, is the growth of the vernacular church.[41] This is a valid

[41] Diana Wong and Ngu Ik-Tien, 'A "Double Alienation": The Vernacular Chinese Church in Malaysia', *Asian Journal of Social Science*, 42.3–4 (2014), 262–90.

criticism of Lee and Ackerman, who base their analysis on urban English-speaking Malaysian churches and do not include the New Villages or Chinese-speaking churches in their analysis.[42] Judith Nagata does acknowledge, 'those converted in the rather coercive environment of the Chinese New Villages' as one of her categories of Christians, but then explicitly excludes them from her analysis.[43] She goes on to focus exclusively on urban ethnically Chinese churches.

The opinion of Roxborogh, the leading historian of Malaysian Christianity, has changed over time. In 1989 he accepted that a 'good number of churches trace their origins to this period' while acknowledging that some considered 'the modest results were disappointing'.[44] A few years later he went much further to claim that 'their success in church-planting changed the face of Malaysian Christianity',[45] before more recently concluding that the work in the New Villages was significant without elaborating further.[46] Wong and Ngu in their analysis of the growth of vernacular migrant churches do recognise the influence of foreign missionaries in the New Villages. They conclude that, 'in view of the huge resources deployed, the harvest was somewhat meagre'.[47] The Lutheran Church of Malaysia and Singapore (LCMS) is seen as the most notable success.

According to Wong and Ngu, the main reason for the meagre harvest was the resistance of the New Village populace to the missionaries. This resistance was formed from their attachment to Chinese Religion and their suspicions that the missionaries were spies of the Government. They also suggest that the outcome might have been better if the vernacular migrant churches had been involved, but that because of the coordinating role of the MCC, local churches did not get involved.

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[42] Raymond Lee and Susan Ackerman, *Sacred Tensions: Modernity and Religious Transformation in Malaysia* (University of South Carolina Press, 1997), pp. 114–33.
[43] Judith Nagata, 'Chinese Custom and Christian Culture: Implications for Chinese Identity in Malaysia', in *Southeast Asian Chinese: The Socio-Cultural Dimension*, ed. by Leo Suryadinata (Singapore: Times Academic Press, 1995), pp. 166–201 (pp. 172–73).
[44] John Roxborogh, *A Short Introduction to Malaysian Church History*, Malaysian Church History Series, 1, 2nd edn (Kuala Lumpur: STM and the Catholic Research Centre, 1989), p. 11.
[45] John Roxborogh, 'The Story of Ecumenism', in *Christianity in Malaysia: A Denominational History*, ed. by Robert Hunt, Lee Kam-Hing, and John Roxborogh (Petaling Jaya, Selangor: Pelanduk Publications, 1992), pp. 277–322 (p. 291).
[46] John Roxborogh, *A History of Christianity in Malaysia* (Singapore: Armour Publishing, 2014), p. 85.
[47] Wong and Ngu Ik-Tien, p. 270.

While suspicions of liberal theology in the MCC may have played a small part, it is clear that the main reason vernacular migrant churches did not become more involved was their lack of available resources.[48] After the Second World War local churches struggled to meet their own needs and were not in a position to be involved in additional evangelistic work.

Wong and Ngu conclude that the New Village mission work did contribute by bringing in Christian converts from a new stratum of Chinese society and that some of these converts became influential leaders in postcolonial Christian society. They go on to argue however, that it was Chinese evangelists, originally from mainland China, that had the biggest impact on the growth of the Chinese-speaking congregations. They point to the rapid growth of Christianity in Hong Kong and Taiwan as large numbers of Chinese Christians migrated from China before the country closed its borders. Over time these two places became centres of a diasporic network of Chinese Christians, and it was this network that stimulated and supported the growth of migrant churches and the newly planted churches of the 1950s.

Lee Kam-Hing is one commentator who has a more positive view of the contribution of Protestant mission in the New Villages. He concludes that the mission work in the New Villages was significant in two ways. Firstly, it became the seeds for further mission work which resulted, as shown in Table 21, in the establishment of 165 churches in the New Villages in 2002. This represented 37% of the total number of New Villages and 44% in the four states where the OMF worked and the majority of the New Villages were

Table 21: 2002 New Village Churches

	No. Total	No. Church	%
Perak	134	50	37%
Johore	84	42	50%
Selangor	45	26	58%
Pahang	55	21	38%
Total	318	139	44%
Other States	132	26	20%
WEST MALAYSIA	450	165	37%

Source: Lim and Fong, *The New Villages in Malaysia: The Journey Ahead*, p. 129.

[48] Tee Heng-Peng, 'From China to Malaysia: A Study of the Development, Growth and Rooting of the Presbyterian Church in Malaysia from 1946 to 1975' (unpublished doctoral thesis, SEAGST, 2016), p. 114.

located. Secondly, it strengthened the Chinese language churches, particularly those in rural and semi-rural areas.[49]

This thesis has highlighted, as Lee and others have done, the challenges missionaries faced in the New Villages. It has also emphasised the need for commentators, and indeed the missionaries themselves, to better appreciate the pioneer nature of the work they were engaged in. OMF missionaries were not in a position to compel a response. While the services provided and other eudemonistic enticements may have influenced some, these advantages were more than offset by the intense pressure from family and the community to conform to religious norms and to maintain their Chinese identity. These inducements would not have been sufficient incentive for people to remain Christians, especially after missionaries left.

Our research shows that the two most important factors, which contributed to success in establishing a Christian congregation, were its location and if Christians were already present in the Village. Ultimately though, the churches that survived did so because the New Village believers were convinced of the veracity of the Christian worldview they had embraced. It was the beliefs and values that sustained their continuing commitment to Christianity after the missionaries left. As such each of the twenty congregations started in the New Villages was a remarkable achievement of the New Villagers themselves. OMF missionaries were catalysts in this process. Through their evangelistic activity they witnessed to and commended a Christian worldview to their New Village neighbours. Then as a few people took steps towards accepting a Christian worldview, their perseverance, evangelistic activities, and willingness to endure setbacks and disappointments became an example for these new believers to follow.

[49] Lee Kam-Hing, 'A Neglected Story: Christian Missionaries, Chinese New Villagers, and Communists in the Battle for the "Hearts and Minds" in Malaya, 1948–1960', *Modern Asian Studies*, 47.6 (2013), 1977–2006 (p. 2005).

PART II: POST-INDEPENDENCE (1957-77)

7. THE OMF AND CHINESE CHURCHES

In the previous chapter the impact of the OMF on dialect-speaking Chinese in the New Villages was examined. The second priority identified, during the South Malayan 11th annual conference in 1962, which is the focus of this chapter, was the desire to establish work among English-speaking Chinese and Indians. While this was a notable departure from the Mission's initial objective when it came to the country, it showed that it recognised the changing environment it was working in.

Contributing to the urban migration taking place in the country were many Asian young people. Most New Villages only had a primary school, so those who wanted to go on to secondary school, needed to move into towns and cities.[1] Often this education was in English, so it became a popular language to learn. Missionaries throughout the country were struck by the openness to Christianity they found among young people. In contrast to the limited response from adults in the New Villages, missionaries were encouraged by the number of young people that became Christians through the camps, house-parties and 'youth days'. When these young people migrated to larger urban centres, to take advantage of educational and vocation opportunities, OMF missionaries did not want to lose contact with them.

At the same time, this focus outside the New Villages highlighted the shortage of ordained ministers in the country. Prior to the Second World War very little training in Malaya was available for Asian Christians. Most denominations relied on importing ministers from China and India to serve Chinese and Tamil congregations in the country. Only the Methodist Church made any real effort to start training institutions

[1] Elizabeth Goldsmith, *Against All Odds: God at Work in an Impossible Situation* (Milton Keynes: Authentic Media, 2007), p. 103.

for local believers and this it did with mixed success.[2] It was not until 1948 that TTC, an interdenominational seminary, was set up in Singapore. And it was not until 1952 that training was offered in Mandarin.

On 16 September 1963, the idea of expanding the Federation of Malaya to include Singapore, Sabah (formerly North Borneo), and Sarawak became reality with the formation of Malaysia. While this development was significant, the withdrawal, or expulsion, depending on one's perspective, of Singapore from the rest of Malaysia in 1965, had an even greater impact. Not only was TTC in Singapore, but so also were the headquarters of most of the mainline denominations. The separation from Singapore forced denominations to set up headquarters in Malaysia and this added to the demand for trained clergy. The OMF were reticent to break comity agreements and work in towns where other denominations were already present. Seconding ordained ministers to existing churches enabled the OMF to maintain comity, and meet the need for English-speaking clergy until local leaders could be trained.

7.1 Ministry in Urban Centres

OMF missionaries were wary of ecumenical efforts to bring about the visible unity of the Church, but they did subscribe to a spiritual unity. This allowed them to work with members of other denominations with a similar conservative evangelical theology. In response to the lack of ministers in the country, they wanted to be able to accept opportunities, when they arose, to work with 'likeminded' Christians from existing churches. While cooperation with existing denominations took time to develop, by 1967, 'English Work' was an accepted ministry and, remarkably, the OMF was working with the PCM, the CMC, and the Diocese of West Malaysia.[3] In addition, OMF missionaries played a significant role in the establishment of three churches in the capital, Kuala Lumpur.

[2] Robert Hunt, Lee Kam-Hing, and John Roxborogh, *Christianity in Malaysia: A Denominational History* (Petaling Jaya, Selangor: Pelanduk Publications, 1992), pp. 163–68.
[3] South Malayan 16th Annual Field Conference Reports, 1967, p. 3, McClymont Papers: Folder 1.

The Presbyterian Church in Malaysia

When the OMF first arrived in Malaya, it signed an agreement to work with the PCM to reach Chinese-speaking adults in the New Villages. This they did in Pontian and later in Bekok, but nothing really developed from there. At about the same time, OMF directors from Singapore began travelling to Johore on weekends to preach to English-speaking congregations.[4] Then, while she waited for her Indonesian visa, Dorothy Marx gathered a few English-speaking children together in Kluang and taught them Bible stories.[5] This was the genesis of an English-speaking congregation in the town. In the middle of the 1960s, at the request of the PCM, the OMF began supplying pastors for English-speaking congregations in Kluang, Muar, Batu Pahat, and for one year, Johore Bahru.[6] The congregations, to begin with, consisted of the English-speaking children of church members, but quickly new Christians were added. What excited the missionaries was not only the opportunity to act as mentors for these existing Christian young people, but also the opportunity for evangelism among educated English-speaking young people in the towns.

Table 22: The Presbyterian Church in Malaysia

City/Town	State	Church	Languages
Kluang	Johore	Gereja Agape	English
Batu Pahat	Johore	Gereja Grace	English
Muar	Johore	Gereja Emmanuel	English

Missionaries based in these three towns reported in 1966 their involvement in a full range of evangelistic meetings and youth programmes. They took part in Sunday church services as well as weekend Sunday schools for children, Bible studies for young people, and mid-week women's meetings. In addition, some taught Lower Certificate in Education Scripture classes in schools, ran youth camps in the holidays, and in Kluang and Batu Pahat, participated in hospital visitation.[7] The OMF recognised this work as a strategic opportunity and continued to supply the pastors in Muar, Kluang and Batu Pahat for at least seven years until trained Malaysian pastors took over. They arrived at a time when there was a shortage of mature English-speaking Christians to provide leadership.[8] Through their involvement in events and their

[4] Margaret Hollands, 'Malaysia: OMF's First 25 Years', *The Field Bulletin*, 1979, p. 35.
[5] Goldsmith, pp. 191–92.
[6] South Malayan 15th Annual Field Conference Reports, 1966, p. 3, McClymont Papers: Folder 1.
[7] South Malaya Prayer Bulletin, February 1966, pp. 5-6, McClymont Papers: Folder 1
[8] South Malaya Prayer Bulletin, December 1966, p. 3, McClymont Papers: Folder 1.

example they encouraged non-believers to become Christians, Christians to become active members of the church, and active members to consider full-time Christian ministry. In doing so the OMF were able to achieve quickly what they struggled to do in the New Villages. They established growing indigenous English-speaking congregations with local leadership. This had a significant impact on the growth of Presbyterian churches in Johore.

The Chinese Methodist Church

The OMF worked with pastors from the CMC throughout its time in Malaysia. This cooperation began in the New Villages in the 1950s, where work started by the OMF was subsequently handed over to the CMC. In the previous chapter, we identified four churches in this category, three of which, Pandamaran, Sungei Chua (Kajang) and Kemansur (Bentong), became CMC churches. It is also noteworthy that of the sixteen New Village churches started by the OMF, four, Buloh Kasap, Karak, Gambang, and Tanjong Sepat, chose to come under the responsibility of the CMC.

In 1965 the OMF also began to second workers to existing CMC churches. Workers were placed in Segamat, where they split their time between building up an English-speaking congregation in the town and supporting Chinese-speaking New Village cottage meetings in the area. By the end of 1966, missionaries reported the growth in the work among young people. A Bible class had developed, and thirty young people were members of the Scripture Union (SU).[9] In the same year John and Fay Edwards were posted to Tanjong Karang. Through the efforts of a Christian family and the support of the Klang CMC, a church building was purchased in the village.[10]

Table 23: The Chinese Methodist Church

City/Town	State	Church	Languages
Segamat	Johore	Segamat CMC	English
Tanjong Karang	Selangor	Tanjong Karang CMC	Chinese
Banting	Selangor	Banting CMC	Chinese, English

The Edwards were able to see this Hokkien-speaking church grow and become established in the following three years. Then from 1970 to 1973 the Edwards were posted to Banting CMC, where they saw the church grow and were encouraged by the 'thriving

[9] South Malayan Prayer Bulletin, December 1966, p. 3, McClymont Papers: Folder 1.
[10] South Malayan Prayer Bulletin, February 1966, p. 3, McClymont Papers: Folder 1.

youth groups and Sunday school'.[11] In Banting the Edwards worked with both Hokkien- and English-speaking congregations.[12] Overall, the OMF was involved in the establishment and/or growth of eleven CMC congregations. While the majority were Chinese-speaking, Segamat and Banting also had meetings in English.

The Diocese of West Malaysia

The denomination that the OMF worked most closely with, however, was the Anglican Church. In 1953 they were invited by Bishop Baines to establish an Anglican field in South Perak. While their focus was the New Villages, they were also aware of the shortage of ordained ministers in the Diocese. In 1955 a precedent was set when Robert Harper was appointed as vicar of St Luke's Church in the town of Telok Anson (Intan).[13] Over the next twenty years, OMF missionaries oversaw both the establishment of Anglican Chinese congregations, and the transformation of English-speaking expatriate churches into English-speaking indigenous Asian ones.

Over time, changes in society and within the North Malayan Field began to have an impact. The number of missionaries that joined the Field, who had not been in China, increased. They were used to working as evangelicals within a mixed Anglican Church and had not experienced expulsion from China. As a result, they were more open to working in existing churches and better equipped to deal with the Anglican hierarchy.[14] At the same time, missionaries were excited by the openness to the Christian message they found among the English-speaking young people they met. As a result, they saw being appointed to English-speaking town churches as an opportunity for evangelism rather than succumbing to the role of 'staid vicars'.[15]

During the 1960s, the Field began accepting new opportunities to work with existing churches in the towns. By 1966 OMF missionaries could be found seconded to English-speaking congregations in four churches across three states. As we have

[11] 'An OMF View of West Malaysia', *The Millions (NA Edition)*, August-September 1971, p. 146.
[12] Personal Interview with John Edwards, 16 October 2019.
[13] Peter Atkins, 'The Church in Teluk Anson', *The Millions*, December 1970, pp. 118-119.
[14] Personal Interview with John Hewlett, 2 September 2019.
[15] Alan Cole, *Emerging Pattern: CIM Work within the Diocese of Singapore and Malaya* (London: CIM, 1961), p. 37.

already noted, work at Telok Anson began in the previous decade in 1955. Robert and Amy Harper continued to work in St Luke's Church for fourteen years and the town became a centre for the OMF. Workers used it as a base for visiting nearby New Villages and new missionaries were sent there to learn Chinese. During these years the Harpers built up the English-speaking congregation and in 1957 a separate Chinese-speaking service was started.[16] In 1970, the work was taken over by Peter and Ruth Atkin, who were based in Telok Anson until 1975. In 1965, the OMF was also assigned to All Saints' Church in Taiping. The Hewletts moved to Taiping and, soon after their arrival, started a Sunday evening youth service. The following year John Hewlett was appointed vicar.[17] Over time the English congregation grew, and a small Hokkien-speaking fellowship was also nurtured.[18]

Table 24: The Diocese of West Malaysia

City/Town	State	Church	Languages
Telok Anson (Intan)	Perak	St Luke's Church	English, Chinese
Taiping	Perak	All Saints' Church	English, Chinese
Georgetown	Penang	St Paul's Church	English
Kuantan	Pahang	Church of the Epiphany	English
Tanah Rata	Pahang	All Soul's Church	English

In the state of Penang, OMF missionaries began working with a Chinese pastor in Nibong Tebal. This developed so that from 1964 to 1973, an OMF couple were assigned to work with the English-speaking congregation at St Paul's Church in Georgetown.[19] The fourth church the OMF seconded workers to, was the Church of the Epiphany in the state capital of Pahang, Kuantan. Richard and Helen Salmon took responsibility for this church in 1966 and for the next nine years saw the congregation grow and develop.[20] By taking up these four opportunities, OMF missionaries helped these European migrant churches transform into national Asian congregations. They were able to provide leadership during this transition period and filled the gap until local English-speaking ministers were trained.

All Soul's Church in the Cameron Highlands was started at the end of the 1950s. It was distinctive in that it was not the result of residential evangelistic work by OMF

[16] Sadayandy Batumalai, *A Brief History of the Anglican Church in West Malaysia 1871-2001* (Ipoh, Perak: Private Publication, 2001), p. 101.
[17] Gillian Hunt, *All the Pieces Fit* (Singapore: OMF, 1987), p. 96.
[18] Personal Interview with John Hewlett, 2 September 2019.
[19] Malcolm Duthie, 'Penang: Pearl of the Orient', *The Millions*, January-February 1974, p. 6.
[20] Personal Interview with Richard Salmon, 20 December 2019.

missionaries. It could best be described as a European migrant church set up to meet the needs of the expatriate community. It came out of a collaboration between European residents in the Cameron Highlands, the British Army, and the Anglican Church, including OMF missionaries. The land was donated by a local European resident, the church building was a donated army Nissen hut, and the first service, which was held in September 1958, was officiated by George Williamson from the OMF.[21] It was English-speaking and although there was no resident minister, it came under the responsibility of the OMF. It was also supported by Chefoo School, a school set up for children of OMF missionaries in Malaysia and surrounding countries. Staff would regularly take church services and the school pupils formed a significant portion of the congregation. OMF missionaries were involved in the establishment of one further Anglican church, St Gabriel's Mission Church in Kuala Lumpur. Kuala Lumpur presented a variety of opportunities for the OMF and eventually it was involved in the establishment of three congregations in the city.

KUALA LUMPUR

In 1959, Peter Young started an English-speaking evening service at the school where he was teaching.[22] This congregation of young people became the St Gabriel's Mission Church. In 1966, the Bible study for parents and relatives of St Gabriel's members who spoke Chinese became a separate Chinese-speaking congregation. Young, a former OMF missionary, arranged for OMF workers to be seconded to work in the church from 1964 to 1977. While mainly focused on the English-speaking church, Audrey Crammond was also involved with the Chinese-speaking congregation. According to Tan Jin-Huat, OMF missionaries made a significant contribution.[23]

The South Malayan Field was based in Kuala Lumpur and naturally, missionaries living there began contributing to the churches they attended. In particular, the OMF worked with a Christian worker called Yap On Tham.[24] In 1958, he began a meeting

[21] Batumalai, pp. 103–8.
[22] Tan Jin-Huat, *The Revd Peter John Young: Pioneer, Pastor, and Pal* (Petaling Jaya, Selangor: AB Publication, 2015), p. 12.
[23] Tan Jin-Huat, p. 22.
[24] Goldsmith, pp. 150–51.

Table 25: Kuala Lumpur Churches Linked with the OMF			
City/Town	**State**	**Church**	**Languages**
Kuala Lumpur	Selangor	Christian Grace Church (KL)	Chinese
Kuala Lumpur	Selangor	Emmanuel (EFC)	English
Kuala Lumpur	Selangor	St Gabriel's Mission Church	English, Chinese

in the Setapak area called the Christian Meeting Place. The congregation was Chinese-speaking and met in a shop-lot.[25] At the same time, Yap invited the OMF to help start an English-speaking congregation. The Fellowship responded by sending Ken and Vera Price and soon a congregation of forty, mainly made up of students, was meeting regularly. In 1964 the church divided over the use of charismatic gifts and Yap led a group to join a charismatic church. The remaining members of the two congregations began meeting at 74 Jalan Haji Hussein. By 1966 the English-speaking congregation had become known as the Emmanuel Christian Centre.[26]

In 1969 the Chinese-speaking congregation registered itself as Grace Christian Church and the English-speaking congregation became part of the Evangelical Free Church (EFC) and changed its name to Emmanuel EFC.[27] OMF workers continued to support the two congregations. Hollands records that the OMF continued to provide 'advisors' for Emmanuel EFC and from 1971 it began to also provide one for Grace Christian Church.[28] In 1975 the two congregations went their separate ways with Emmanuel EFC moving to Wangsa Maju. Grace Christian Church subsequently planted four other congregations, and in 1993, now called Christian Grace Church (KL), moved to its present location on Lorong Titiwangsa 2.

These churches were a help when Christians from the New Villages where the OMF worked, migrated to Kuala Lumpur. Margaret Hollands reported how Grace Church provided a safe haven for many young Chinese-speaking Christians, who came to Kuala Lumpur from the New Villages.[29] The church ran a Chinese New Year camp for between 150-200. This included members from the church as well as Christian young

[25] Correspondence with Rev Lock Sai-Kiew, an OMF member in Malaysia, who interviewed Rev Wong Kim-Swee, the pastor of Christian Grace Church (KL) from 1971-2010.
[26] South Malayan Prayer Bulletin, February 1966, p. 3, McClymont Papers: Folder 1.
[27] Loh Soon-Choy, 'Evangelical Free Church', in *Christianity in Malaysia: A Denominational History*, ed. by Robert Hunt, Lee Kam-Hing, and John Roxborogh (Petaling Jaya, Selangor: Pelanduk Publications, 1992), pp. 259–68 (pp. 262–64).
[28] Hollands, 'Malaysia: OMF's First 25 Years', p. 39.
[29] Margaret Hollands, 'Happy New Year', *The Millions*, August-September 1977, pp. 74-75.

people from the New Villages. In the same way, English-speaking students were directed to Emmanuel EFC, and Anglicans to St Gabriel's. Through these churches the OMF was able to direct rural contacts to likeminded churches in the city and continued to support and help them to grow in their understanding of Christianity.

SUMMARY

The OMF was involved in pioneer church-planting in the New Villages and work with existing congregations. Most analysis, however, has focused on the former. Their work with existing congregations has been overlooked by the Fellowship itself as well as by commentators, although Roxborogh does acknowledge a change in the OMF's emphasis in the 1960s.[30] This work was significant because it was done in response to interest shown by Asian young people and to meet an existing need in churches. For a few churches, the OMF oversaw the transformation of an existing expatriate church into an Asian English-speaking one. The majority, however, were new congregations of churches located in towns and cities with English-medium secondary schools. These congregations consisted largely of young people, who were either new Christians, or children with Chinese-speaking Christian parents.

By responding to the needs of young people and the denominations, the OMF saw the work progress much more quickly than in the New Villages. It led to the OMF having an impact on a further eighteen congregations in fourteen churches.[31] These churches were spread across the states of West Malaysia, included both Chinese- and English-speaking congregations, and were from the three largest denominations in the country. In four Anglican churches, OMF missionaries were able to facilitate the transformation of migrant expatriate congregations into Asian English-speaking ones that included a whole new generation of Christians. In three churches they also started Chinese-speaking congregations. In Johore, the OMF worked with second-generation English-speaking youth and helped establish new congregations within three existing Presbyterian churches. In the Methodist Church, however, the focus

[30] John Roxborogh, *A History of Christianity in Malaysia* (Singapore: Armour Publishing, 2014), p. 115.
[31] See Appendix 3.

was on helping to establish Chinese-speaking churches and on two occasions English-speaking congregations.

Table 26: OMF Congregation-Based Mission Work	Johore	Pahang	Selangor	Perak	Penang	TOTAL	Anglican	Methodist	Presbyterian	Other
Congregations started	2	5	7	5		19	5	4		10
Work started and passed on	1	1	2			4		3	1	
Existing Congregations	4	2	7	4	1	18	9	4	3	2
Total	7	8	16	9	1	41	14	11	4	12
Chinese-speaking	3	6	12	5		26	6	9	1	10
English-speaking	4	2	4	4	1	15	8	2	3	2

Overall, the OMF was involved in the development of forty-one different congregations, as Table 26 shows. What stands out is the breadth of coverage of their work. The Table also shows that, while the Fellowship had a reputation for wanting to work by itself and set up independent churches, nearly three-quarters of the churches it was involved with, in fact became members of existing mainline denominations. It also helps to put the OMF's contribution in a particular state into its broader context. So, while in Perak, the Fellowship was only involved in five Anglican churches in the New Villages, this analysis shows that they actually contributed to fourteen congregations in nine different Anglican churches across four different states. The Table also highlights the fact that the Fellowship made a significant contribution to Chinese-speaking Methodist churches. In total, it contributed to eleven different congregations across three different states. Looking at existing churches with which the OMF worked, as well as their pioneer church-planting, helps to give a more complete picture of their contribution.

7.2 Congregation-Based Ministry in West Malaysia

Explanations for the growth of Christianity in the post-war period to date have concentrated on urban English-speaking Asian churches. Lee and Ackerman argue that it was the dual orientation towards subjective spiritual experience and active

asceticism of English-educated urban middle-class non-Malays that shaped the development of contemporary Christianity in the country.[32]

In their analysis, the aftermath of the Second World War and decolonisation created a crisis in Christianity that saw the breakup of what they called the 'Enlightenment model' of Christian mission. This model relied on the influence of Christian schools run by mainline Protestant denominations. When these were taken over by the Government after Independence, Christianity lost its institutional influence. At the same time, this model placed control in the hands of foreign missionaries and left little room for the training of local leaders. While the lack of trained Asian clergy was recognised after the war with the setting up of TTC, the country suffered from a persistent lack of trained local clergy. Independence also eventually led in the 1970s to the departure of missionaries, and Christianity was marginalised even further in the 1970s and 1980s as the Government pursued a programme of Islamisation.

Yet despite all these challenges, Protestant Christianity in West Malaysia grew. The explanation of Lee and Ackerman for this surprising scenario was the emergence of indigenous lay leadership, and Malaysians embracing the charismatic movement in the mid-1970s. They contrasted existing mainline Protestant missionaries with the arrival of American evangelical Protestant missionaries in the 1960s. They highlight, in particular, three American evangelical organisations which helped nurture a new generation of lay leaders. These organisations encouraged lay ministry and employed professional marketing and management techniques.

It was the arrival of the charismatic movement in the mid-1970s, however, which was most decisive in the growth of Christianity. According to Lee and Ackerman, 'The charismatic movement provided a locus of meaning for the indigenisation of Christianity'.[33] They conclude,

> Through the charismatic movement, Christianity is reconstituting itself in informal institutional settings and providing laymen with broad scope to

[32] Raymond Lee and Susan Ackerman, *Sacred Tensions: Modernity and Religious Transformation in Malaysia* (University of South Carolina Press, 1997), p. 120.
[33] Lee and Ackerman, p. 128.

> exercise the spiritual power and leadership needed to rekindle enthusiasm among many demoralized Christians'.[34]

What emerged was a vibrant indigenous English-speaking church built on a combination of professionalism and personal religious experience and guided by a lay leadership that was sensitive to the demands of their postcolonial situation. No mention is made of the Emergency, of the missionaries who arrived in the country after the war, or of Chinese-speaking churches.

Sng has a broader perspective and is one writer who does highlight the impact of missionaries who arrived in Singapore in the 1950s.[35] He recognises that these new missionaries came from existing denominations as well as a group of newer missions. His main focus though, was on the missions that were new to Singapore. His analysis looks in detail at the CNEC, the Malaya Baptist Convention (MBC), and the LCMS. These three groups of churches preferred to work independently and proceeded to establish a new generation of churches. Sng concludes, 'Anyone studying the history of the church in Singapore cannot but be impressed by the contributions made by these three groups of churches'.[36] He also acknowledges the arrival of the OMF, although he limits their usefulness to helping Chinese-speaking churches by providing personnel to help start English-speaking congregations.

This thesis clearly demonstrates that any assessment of the growth of Christianity in West Malaysia needs to include both rural and urban churches and to cover both Chinese- and English-speaking congregations. It also needs to include the contribution from all the mission agencies that came to the country in the 1950s. The previous chapter concluded that it was the work of Protestant missionaries in the New Villages that had the biggest impact on the growth of rural Chinese-speaking churches. Analysis of Table 1 shows that both new and existing mission societies worked in the New Villages. While new missions including the OMF, the ULCA and the CNEC made up two-thirds of the resident missionaries, missionaries from the

[34] Lee and Ackerman, p. 130.
[35] Bobby Sng, *In His Good Time: The Story of the Church in Singapore, 1819-2003*, 3rd edn (Singapore: Graduates' Christian Fellowship, 2003), pp. 210–18.
[36] Sng, p. 217.

existing mainline Protestant missions including the Methodist, Anglican, and Presbyterian Churches made up the remaining third. It is also significant that thirteen of the congregations that the OMF was involved with joined one of the three mainline Protestant denominations.

While the overwhelming majority of rural churches were Chinese-speaking, the situation in urban areas was more complex. Existing mainline denominations already had churches in the towns and cities and many of these churches had both English- and Chinese-speaking congregations. In addition to their own missionaries, it was to these congregations that the OMF sent its workers. New missions also contributed to the growth of Chinese- as well as English-speaking churches in town and cities. Two denominational mission agencies, who did not work in the New Villages, but sent missionaries to larger urban centres were the SBC and the AOG. In addition, the ULCA was the one denominational mission who worked in both the New Villages and urban centres. While their work began slowly in the 1950s, it picked up pace in the 1960s.[37]

As we have seen, young people, post-Independence, were growing up during a time of increasing educational opportunities, and unprecedented social and political change. These Chinese Malaysian young people consequently experienced a clash of worldviews. Raised by parents with a worldview shaped by Chinese Religion, they were now being exposed, as they joined the tide of urban migration, to a materialistic and individualistic secular worldview. This new worldview provided a compelling explanation for the material world they lived in but dismissed the spiritual world they had grown up in as ignorant superstition. While many embraced this new secular worldview, a minority were not convinced. While it was able to answer questions of 'what' and 'when', they found the answers to 'who' and 'why' less compelling.

Christianity offered an integrated worldview that made room for the spiritual world they had grown up in and offered an alternative perspective on modernity. A perspective that could 'withstand the fragmentation and disenchantment pervading

[37] Hunt, Lee Kam-Hing, and Roxborogh, pp. 229–58.

advanced industrial society'.[38] A number of OMF missionaries and commentators recognise that this new generation were more open to changing their worldview than their parents.[39] It was this openness, which OMF missionaries encountered in the 1950s in the New Villages,[40] and in towns and larger urban centres in the 1960s, that led to the growth of the Church. It is especially significant that this growth occurred before the arrival of the charismatic movement in the 1970s, and in both English- and Chinese-speaking churches. While the impact of the three evangelical organisations identified by Lee and Ackerman in the 1960s may have been important, it was the foundations laid by missionaries who arrived in the 1950s that enabled growth to take place among congregations throughout the country in the 1960s.

7.3 Chinese Christians in West Malaysia

A thorough review of census statistics supports this understanding. It shows that the percentage of Chinese who identify themselves as either Catholic or Protestant Christians more than doubled from 1.5% in 1931 to 3.5% in 1970, and then more than doubled again to 7.2% in 2010. When these figures are broken down by state, however, they reveal a diverse picture. They show that the former Straits Settlements states of Penang and Malacca had the highest percentage of Christians. This is not surprising as these two states have had the longest exposure to Christian mission. The percentage of Chinese Christians in these two states has grown steadily throughout the twentieth century from 2.9% before the war to 4.8% in 1970.

The area with the least growth has been in the northern, Malay dominated states of Kedah, Kelantan, Perlis and Terengganu, which have the smallest Chinese populations. While the percentage of Chinese Christians grew to 2.2% in 1970, this

[38] Lee and Ackerman, p. 122.

[39] See Sng, pp. 221–25 and Wong and Ngu, pp. 274–75, who highlight that this openness was among both English- and Chinese-educated young people.

[40] Both Derek Tan, 'The Assemblies of God', in *Christianity in Malaysia: A Denominational History*, ed. by Robert Hunt, Lee Kam-Hing, and John Roxborogh (Petaling Jaya, Selangor: Pelanduk Publications, 1992), pp. 229–42 (p. 237), and Percy Moore, 'Seaside Camp and Church in the jungle', *The Millions*, 1957, p. 116 recount in their own way spiritual breakthroughs at youth camps in 1957.

Table 27: Number and Percentage of Chinese Christians in the States of West Malaysia

	1911		1921		1931		1970		2010	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Straits Settlements										
Penang	2,296	2.1%	3,285	2.4%	4,889	2.9%	18,344	4.2%	59,096	8.8%
Malacca	224	0.6%	1,236	2.7%	1,839	2.8%	10,301	6.5%	13,960	6.7%
	2,520	1.7%	4,521	2.5%	6,728	2.9%	28,645	4.8%	73,056	8.3%
Federated Malay States										
Perak	2,713	1.2%	2,949	1.3%			22,427	3.4%	63,651	9.2%
Selangor	2,677	1.8%	2,782	1.6%			28,976	3.8%	158,246	7.5%
Negeri Sembilan	479	1.2%	971	1.5%			5,522	3.0%	8,006	3.6%
Pahang	103	0.4%	52	0.2%			2,600	1.7%	15,370	6.7%
	5,972	1.4%	6,754	1.4%	9,200	1.3%	59,525	3.4%	245,273	7.6%
Unfederated Malay States										
Johore			993	1.0%			15,152	3.0%	70,179	6.8%
Kedah			345	0.6%			3,672	2.0%	6,084	2.4%
Kelantan			52	0.4%			1,349	3.5%	1,432	2.8%
Perlis			-	0.0%			230	1.2%	326	1.8%
Terengganu			8	0.1%			674	3.0%	1,234	4.7%
			405	0.5%	3,113	0.9%	5,925	2.2%	9,076	2.6%
WEST MALAYSIA	8,492		12,673	1.5%	19,041	1.5%	109,247	3.5%	397,584	7.2%

Source: Based on Census data.
Figures for the Straits Settlements 1921 and 1931 involve estimates to exclude Singapore.

was significantly less than in other states. It is also notable that growth since then has been marginal and in 2010 was only 2.6%.

Analysis of these statistics demonstrates the significant and sustained growth of Chinese Christians after the war in the four former Federated Malay States and Johore. In fact, by 1970, these states had grown to 3.4%, and Johore to 3.0%. This was between two and a half and three times the percentage before the war. Significantly, this growth has continued at a similar pace into the twenty-first century. The three states with the largest number of Chinese Christians in 2010 were Perak, Selangor and Johore. While it is not possible to distinguish between urban and rural growth in these states, it is significant that it happened outside the major entrepots of the nineteenth century and in states where the majority of New Villages were located. Pahang, the other state with a significant New Village population, was a particular success. It went from having effectively no Chinese Christians before the Second World War to having 1.7% by 1970 and an impressive 6.7% by 2010.

These statistics confirm that Christianity among the Chinese grew significantly between the war and 1970. This growth was not spectacular, when compared with the indigenous church in East Malaysia, but it established Chinese Christians throughout the country as a legitimate sub-category within the wider Chinese community. While numbers include Catholics, and this growth was undoubtedly influenced by a range of factors, the impact of the influx of missionaries after the war deserves greater consideration. This thesis suggests that the Protestant mission work in the New Villages, led by the OMF, contributed significantly to the growth of the rural Chinese-speaking church by 1970.

It also suggests that this growth was also influenced by the influx of English- and Chinese-speaking young people into urban areas, who became Christians and joined a range of urban churches in the 1960s. Missionaries from denominations new to the country, as well as ones already there, were strategically placed to nurture and disciple English-speaking Asian congregations. The OMF contributed to this growth through its support of English-speaking Presbyterian and Anglican congregations, as well as Chinese-speaking CMC ones. While charismatic meetings may grab academic attention, it was New Village followers of Jesus who were prepared to stand up to the pressure of society and their family, and young people who were open to new ways of looking at the world, that had an enduring impact and laid the foundation for growth into the twenty-first century.

PART II: POST-INDEPENDENCE (1957-77)

8. THE OMF AND CONTEXTUAL MALAYSIAN CHURCHES

The OMF's congregation-based work altered slowly, but significantly, in the 1960s in response to changes in the country. This, however, was not the most significant change. Soon after its arrival in Malaya, the Fellowship appointed workers to specialised ministries, which were not based in a particular New Village or local church. These ministries had a more general impact on Protestant Christianity in the country. In 1954, for example, Mr and Mrs Price were appointed to work with the CWP to facilitate the distribution of Christian literature in the country. The third priority identified at the South Malayan Field's 11th annual conference in 1962 was the need to increase the number of missionaries appointed to specialised ministries, especially ones focused on discipleship. This chapter looks at how these specialised, parachurch ministries grew in the 1960s, and their impact.

8.1 SPECIALISED MINISTRIES

THE EVANGELISM AND BIBLE TEACHING DEBATE

At the 1960 South Malayan Annual Field Conference, the future strategy of the Field was discussed and the relative merits of what they referred to as 'Evangelism' and 'Bible Teaching' were debated. The Field concluded that both were essential. But after nearly a decade of focusing on evangelism, proclaiming the gospel in the New Villages, they concluded that 'there is a need to aim at "stepping up" our Bible teaching ministry'. [1] Missionaries wanted to see people who were not merely 'converts', assenting to the truth of the Christian message, but 'disciples', who actively lived out the implications of embracing a Christian worldview. While

[1] South Malayan 9th Annual Field Conference Minutes, 1960, p. 4, McClymont Papers: Folder 1.

widespread gospel proclamation throughout the country would continue, the Field would, prioritise discipleship and the training and equipping of new Christians. OMF missionaries recognised that to do this, they would need to appoint workers to specialised ministries, even if this was at the expense of work in the Villages.[2] The delegates went on to recommend the appointment of a full-time Bible teacher, a youth work coordinator, and a coordinator for the Bible correspondence courses.

Two years later, the Centennial Work Objectives also reflect this change in focus and the need to appoint workers to specific ministries. [3] The continuing need for gospel proclamation can be found in the first work objective as well as the fifth, which was focused on literature. The importance of discipleship can be seen in the work objective focused on 'Bible Teaching', but also in the objectives focused on 'Youth Work' and 'Children's Work'. The last work objective was focused on 'Tamil Work'. While a number of OMF missionaries learnt Tamil to work with Tamil-speaking Indians, their work is beyond the scope of this investigation.[4]

Centennial Work Objectives

1. Evangelism
2. Village Work
3. Youth Work
4. Children's Work
5. Literature Work
6. Bible Teaching
7. Tamil Work

Figure 11: 1965 Summary of Centennial Objectives

Apart from 'Village Work', all the rest of the objectives involved the appointment of full-time workers to specific ministries. This change in focus was also reflected in the way missionaries defined themselves. In the 1950s OMF missionaries were described according to their New Village. All were involved in evangelism and church-planting; it was their location that distinguished them. During the 1960s this changed as

[2] South Malayan 9th Annual Field Conference Minutes, 1960, pp. 4-5, McClymont Papers: Folder 1.
[3] Appendix 4.
[4] This investigation is focused heuristically on the impact of the OMF on Chinese Malaysians. In reality, the OMF's ministry to English-speaking young people included both Indians and Chinese. Through working in the New Villages, the Fellowship recognised the need to share the gospel with the Indian population. They began to do this by arranging for two couples from the Strict Baptist Mission to be seconded from India to Malaya. Later a total of fourteen OMF missionaries were appointed to Tamil work. The South Malaya Prayer Bulletin, March 1962, p. 2, McClymont Papers: Folder 1, and the South Malaysia 19th Annual Field Conference minutes in September 1971, OMF Archives [SG]: AR 5.2.7 Box 1.7, give a brief summary of the kind of work they were involved in. Also, Elizabeth Goldsmith, *Against All Odds: God at Work in an Impossible Situation* (Milton Keynes: Authentic Media, 2007), pp. 178–89.

missionaries increasingly became defined by their ministry.[5] For example, from 1963, the North American edition of *The Millions* began publishing a list of missionaries according to the work they were doing. While the majority in Malaysia still came under the heading, 'Evangelism and Church Up-building', an increasing number had specialised ministries.[6]

THE OMF'S EXIT STRATEGY

The introduction of the Ten-year Rule in 1967 and the subsequent strict application of this rule from 1970, affected all workers in the country, including those in specialised ministries. It prompted a special meeting of what was now called the Southern Field Council in February 1971, where the future strategy of the Field was reassessed.[7] With visas to enter Malaysia becoming more difficult to obtain, the Field agreed to focus its attention on three priorities: cooperation with churches, seconding workers to service organisations like the SU, and the continuing support two strategic OMF ministries. The goal, in these three areas, was to work themselves out of a job. Although the Council was not optimistic that this could be achieved for the two OMF ministries, the primary aim was to train young people, 'with a view to hand over ministries to nationals in the next few years'.[8] Work in the New Villages was no longer a priority. As far as church work was concerned the priority was now working with likeminded churches. At the same time, the OMF would continue prioritising strategic ministries. The Field Council, as in 1960, explicitly affirmed the importance of evangelism, while also prioritising the seconding of workers to parachurch organisations and OMF ministries, where the focus was discipleship.

8.2 PROCLAMATION

From its arrival in Malaya, the OMF had prioritised evangelism. At that time, it was not clear how long it would be able to stay, so it wanted to propagate the Christian message as widely as possible, as quickly as possible. The two main ways it did this

[5] During the 1950s, most names in the annual OMF Prayer Directory were listed according to the New Village a missionary resided in. By the 1960s, however, this changed to show the type of ministry they were engaged in.
[6] 'Weekly Prayer Cycle', *The Millions (NA Edition)*, February 1963, p. 25.
[7] Field Council Minutes, February 1971, OMF Archives [SG]: AR 5.2.7 Box 1.7.
[8] Field Council Minutes, February 1971, p. 2, OMF Archives [SG]: AR 5.2.7 Box 1.7.

were through holding evangelistic meetings throughout the country, and through the distribution of Christian literature. In the 1960s, OMF missionaries continued to develop these two activities.

EVANGELISM

The first Centennial objective was 'Evangelism'. Throughout the 1960s and until at least 1972, the Evangelism committee continued organising van campaigns.[9] The number of meetings held each year depended on the timing of other activities and availability of speakers. During the height of Konfrontasi, the OMF was not given permission to hold open-air meetings.[10] In their place, smaller indoor meetings were organised. These restrictions, however, were lifted in September 1966.[11] My parents reported in 1967 that, 'some 140 nights of open-air evangelism' were arranged in at least twenty towns and villages.[12] By 1968, the OMF were on their third gospel van. They were prepared to run open-air meetings wherever they were asked. Evidence of the Fellowship's openness to working with others and in larger towns can be seen in evangelistic meetings being held in the town of Batu Pahat, and in their working with a Methodist minister at Mentakab to run evangelistic meetings there.[13]

For more than twenty years the OMF persevered with van campaigns. Their effectiveness was debated at annual conferences, especially when the novelty of the meetings had worn off and numbers attending decreased. At one conference the method was questioned. It was suggested that the 'evangelism in depth' method used in South America would be more successful.[14] At another, it was suggested that local Asian speakers should be used more often.[15] Finally, however, the Field acknowledged it had a responsibility to present the Christian message to as many people as possible regardless of the response they received. The gospel van

[9] Evangelism Committee Minutes: 1962-68 and 1970-72, McClymont Papers: Folder 8.
[10] The *Konfrontasi* was a violent conflict between Malaysia and Indonesia between 1963-66. It grew from Indonesia's objection to the formation of Malaysia with the inclusion of Sabah and Sarawak.
[11] Personal News and Prayer Letter, 2 April 1967, McClymont Papers: Folder 2.
[12] Personal News and Prayer Letter, 10 December 1967, McClymont Papers: Folder 2.
[13] Evangelism Committee Minutes, 30 October 1962, McClymont Papers: Folder 8.
[14] South Malayan 10th Annual Field Conference Minutes, 1961, p. 6, McClymont Papers: Folder 1.
[15] South Malayan 15th Annual Field Conference Minutes, 1966, p. 2, McClymont Papers: Folder 1.

continued to be used until the number of missionaries reduced to a level where maintaining it was no longer viable.

A further development, which the OMF supported, was the running of mass evangelistic meetings in the capital, Kuala Lumpur. These meetings were not only an opportunity for widespread evangelism, they also provided an invaluable opportunity for Christians from different denominations to meet and work together. In 1967, the Asian Evangelists Commission arranged for a week of evangelistic meetings under the heading 'Jesus Saves'. They attracted around 4,000 people each evening, with almost 5,000 attending the final evening.[16] This form of Christian witness reached its zenith in 1969 when Kuala Lumpur hosted the Grady Wilson Malaysia Campaign from 19 to 26 January. Meetings were held in Stadium Negara and around 10,000 attended the closing meeting, for what was reported to be, 'the largest Protestant gathering in the history of the Christian Church in Malaysia'. [17] As part of the follow-up for the meetings, enquirers were encouraged to sign up to receive an OMF correspondence course. By June that year more than 800 people had done so.[18]

Literature Work

The OMF had a policy of prioritising the production and distribution of Christian literature. In Malaysia this resulted in OMF missionaries managing the EBC in Kuala Lumpur. In addition to selling books, the centre supplied literature directly to missionaries throughout the country as well as to churches the missionaries had connections with. The stated goal of the Fellowship was to transfer the ownership and management of EBC to local Christians as soon as possible, [19] and this they were able to do in 1974. In 1968, the OMF opened a second Christian bookshop in Ipoh called the Christian Literature Centre. It was staffed by OMF missionaries from the North Malayan Field until it was eventually taken over by the SU when the missionaries left.[20]

[16] Personal News and Prayer Letter, 10 December 1967, McClymont Papers: Folder 2.
[17] 'Home and Abroad', *The Millions*, March 1969, p. 23.
[18] 'Prayer Calendar', *The Millions (NA Edition)*, June 1969, p. 111.
[19] South Malayan 16th Annual Field Conference Minutes, 1967, p. 4, McClymont Papers: Folder 1.
[20] Margaret Hollands, 'Malaysia: OMF's First 25 Years', *The Field Bulletin*, 1979, p. 33.

The OMF was able to set up an effective literature distribution network thanks to its missionaries based in villages and towns throughout the Peninsula. The two bookshops also encouraged Christians to set up a bookstall in their own church and sell books there. By 1969, forty-six bookstalls in churches throughout the country were being supplied.[21] In addition, several mission centres set up lending libraries that encouraged people to borrow and read Christian books. Al and Doris Mace, for example, took over a free library started in Alor Gajah by previous OMF missionaries. The library contained Christian books in Chinese, and to this they added an English section. They reported that in the first nine months of 1960 they had loaned out over 1,000 books.[22] While their efforts by themselves were not significant, these libraries, together with the work of missionaries throughout the country, contributed to the Fellowship's ability to introduce people to the Christian faith through literature, as well as providing literature to the growing literate Christian population.

Two missionaries, in particular, saw literature's potential. Harold Wik was an outstanding example of an itinerant colporteur. He travelled widely selling the *Dengta* magazine and other Christian literature in towns and villages. Over a period of four and a half years he was able to sell 16,000 copies of *Dengta* and collect 1,700 subscriptions for the magazine.[23] Mary Welander, after many years working in the New Villages, turned her attention to young people throughout the country. She also travelled throughout Malaysia selling Christian books. Her focus was on schools. She reported in 1968 that she was able to sell books worth £7,000 to more than 60,000 young people in schools across the country.[24] Their example inspired a number of other missionaries at different times to become colporteurs.

After a number of years of selling books, Welander began a new challenge. In 1959 the OMF sponsored the setting up of a Christian Writers' Course designed in the Philippines. This course had been subsequently revised into a ten-lesson

[21] Mary Welander, 'Two Thousand Boys Buy Books', *The Millions*, June 1969, p. 54.
[22] Al and Doris Mace, 'They Read our Books', *The Millions*, March-April 1961, p. 33.
[23] Harold Wik, 'Evangelizing through Literature', *The Millions*, November 1962, p. 109, and 'Colporteur', *The Millions*, June 1974, p. 58.
[24] Mary Welander, 'Two Thousand Boys Buy Books', *The Millions*, June 1969, p. 54.

correspondence course that was available throughout Southeast Asia and administered by the OMF from its international headquarters in Singapore.[25] In 1971 Welander moved to Johore Bahru and took over responsibility for administering this course. During the next six years, more than a thousand students, from nine different countries including Malaysia, complete modules. At the end of this time, she was able to find local Christians in each of these countries, who were able to take over responsibility for running the course in their country. In Malaysia she was able to pass her students on to the editor of the Malaysian Christian magazine, the *Asian Beacon*.[26] Through the work of Wik, Welander and others, the OMF was able to engage Malaysia's literate population and made Christian literature available to thousands for the first time. Their work provided Christians with literature to help them mature in their understanding of Christianity, and in Welander's case, to inspire local Christians to write their own Christian literature.

8.3 Discipleship

It was in the area of discipleship, however, that the change in priorities had the biggest impact. The number of workers appointed to 'Bible Teaching', 'Youth Work' and 'Children's Work' increased significantly in the 1960s. We begin by looking at the 'Bible Teaching' work objective of the South Malayan Field and how that objective translated into missionary activity.

Bible Teaching

The goal of this Centennial objective was the development of effective preachers in literate Bible-loving churches.[27] The Field identified three areas where it wanted to intensify its efforts. The first was the development of its Bible correspondence courses. In the 1950s, the OMF started the Light of Life Bible correspondence course as an evangelistic tool but also to help increase biblical literacy. It was now firmly established in both Malaya and Singapore. The second area was something new. It involved the appointment of an itinerant Bible teacher to tour the country with a

[25] Mary Welander, 'Inspiration and Perspiration', *The Millions*, February-March 1977, p. 8.
[26] Mary Welander, *Learning to Trust* (Private Publication), p. 82.
[27] Appendix 4.

view to providing systematic Bible teaching for New Village Christians. The biggest commitment, however, was in the area of Christian training, both residential and part-time. The Field invested significant resources into the establishment of Christian training in both Chinese and English.

CORRESPONDENCE COURSES

Motivated by the importance of adapting material to suit the needs of Malaya, and the desire to have greater control over the content, the OMF relaunched its correspondence courses as an OMF ministry in 1960. It was renamed the Upward Path Postal Bible School (UPPBS) and numbers enrolling grew quickly. In 1963 the first Malaysian worker was appointed, and by the following year marking courses was the main ministry of four OMF missionaries. Four courses were offered, each one progressively more challenging than the last. The first course on the upward path was the Gospel of Mark. The Gospel of Luke was second, and became popular with secondary school students, when it became a topic for students studying Religious Knowledge (RK). The third course was the book of Acts, and the most stretching was the fourth, on Paul's two letters to the Thessalonians. The UPPBS at this stage had 900 active students and 1,000 had completed the course on Mark.[28]

The UPPBS was popular in Singapore and was used successfully in prisons.[29] Minutes from a committee meeting in April 1971 show that the number of courses had grown to seven and the number of students had grown from hundreds to thousands. There were now 3,919 active students in three language streams (2,793 English, 871 Chinese and 255 Tamil).[30] Over time the OMF began handing over the running of courses to local Christians. OMF missionaries served on the committee and helped with marking, but by 1974 the ministry was fully nationalised, and responsibility had been handed over to the local SU.[31]

[28] Kenneth Price, 'Climber on the Upward Path', *The Millions*, October 1964, pp. 95-96.
[29] Kenneth Price, 'Not This Book Again!', *The Millions*, December 1963, p. 120.
[30] Upward Path Postal Bible Courses Committee Minutes, 4 Feb. 1971, OMF Archives [SG]: AR 5.2.7 Box 1.7.
[31] Hollands, 'Malaysia: OMF's First 25 Years', p. 33.

The UPPBS was strategic because it did not depend on students staying in one location. When families moved, they were able to continue taking the courses wherever they went. When the Emergency ended, many, who left the New Villages for opportunities in larger urban centres, were still able to receive teaching and guidance through the courses they took, and more importantly through the relationship that often developed with their marker.

ITINERANT BIBLE TEACHING

In order to improve biblical understanding in the New Villages, the OMF appointed in 1961 a full-time itinerant Bible teacher to run Short Term Bible Study (STBS) weeks. One of the aspirations of the Centennial objectives was 'the increased exercise of each workers gifts' and in Sadie Custer they found the ideal person to take on this role. She had already spent four years working in the tough New Village of Sungei Ruan, as well as having prior experience running Bible study courses in China. She could teach in both English and Mandarin. By the end of her first year, she had run STBS weeks in twenty-two centres with an average attendance of nine.[32]

For the next eleven years, until 1972, she continued this itinerant ministry throughout the country. Over time her influence extended beyond the New Villages for which the OMF were responsible. She was willing to working with other denominations and ran courses wherever she was asked. This included the Presbyterian church in Muar and Methodist churches in Mentakap and Raub.[33] The Bible Class report from the 1966 annual conference recorded that during the previous year thirty STBS weeks had been run and of those, twelve had been in non-OMF centres. It is ironic that the average attendance in these churches was twenty-nine compared with fifteen in the eighteen OMF New Village churches visited. Her ministry gave her a broad perspective of the OMF's work in the New Villages. While her consistently positive

[32] South Malayan 11th Annual Field Conference Minutes, 1962, p. 1, McClymont Papers: Folder 1.
[33] Sadie Custer and Loraine Custer Czarneke, *God's Vagabond: The Autobiography of Sadie Custer* (Littleton, CO: Lammermir House Publishing, 2006), pp. 229–36.

Christian outlook on life clearly influenced her perspective, her autobiography gives a flavour of how small congregations in rural Malaya developed during the 1960s.[34]

CHRISTIAN TRAINING

The most important development in the OMF's strategy, however, was the provision of local Christian training. The idea for a Malayan Christian training centre had its origins at a seaside youth camp at Morib, Selangor, in 1957. At that meeting more than thirty young people indicated a commitment to go into full-time Christian ministry, but only three had the necessary qualification for seminary training.[35] This highlighted the need for a Bible school for New Village Christians, who did not have the education needed to go to a traditional Bible college or seminary. In response to this need, Malaysian Christians leaders, working with the OMF, began evening classes in 1959. Unfortunately, these classes, although popular, had to close a year later due to a lack of teachers.

Soon after, however, the possibility of residential study became a reality. A property was leased and on 6 May 1961 the Christian Training Centre (CTC) in Rawang was opened. It was an experiment in community living that combined work and study with practical ministry. The focus was on developing Christian character and as a result it was run very differently from a traditional Bible college. Entry requirements focused on the spiritual rather than the academic. Applicants needed to be over seventeen, members in good standing with a Protestant church, and have a clear testimony and consistent Christian life. The only academic requirement was the ability to read and write Mandarin.[36]

Students were expected to work as well as study. The initial plan was for students to work as rubber tappers in the morning and study in the afternoon, but this proved impractical. In the end, with the help of Harold Wik, a missionary with a BSc in agriculture and animal husbandry, a farm was set up that included poultry, breeding

[34] Custer and Czarneke, pp. 227–80.
[35] CTC Rawang Newsletter, 15 October 1963, McClymont Papers: Folder 7.
[36] CTC Rawang Newsletter, November 1967, p. 2, McClymont Papers: Folder 7.

pigs and growing vegetables and fruit.[37] Students were paid fifty dollars per month to work four hours a day, six days a week on the farm. They enrolled in a two-year course that was made up of three terms of approximately three months. Later on, a third, more advanced year, was added.

Slowly the number of graduates grew. In 1965 Eileen Cheng became the first CTC Rawang graduate to become a full-time Christian worker, when she took responsibility for the Triang church.[38] Over time the CTC outgrew the property in Rawang and in 1968 a property near Serendah was purchased and permission to build applied for. In July 1971, David Day was able to report that, 'Over the past ten years seventy students from all over Malaya and Singapore have come to us from forty-five different churches, representing all the major denominations'. [39] Thirty-three completed the standard two-year programme and seven the extended three-year one. The report concluded that at the time of writing seventeen former students were engaged in full-time church work and four had gone on to further studies.

In November 1971, however, the decision was made to close the CTC Rawang in its present form and in July 1972 it held its eleventh and final graduation.[40] Three reasons were given for the closure. The first, and most important, was the continuing difficulties in obtaining government permission to build. Secondly, it was argued that few of the graduates had made the expected contribution to the local church that had been hoped, and thirdly, there was not sufficient demand for the type of worker being produced.[41] However, while the number of graduates was not large, it was perhaps too early to judge their effectiveness. Wong Woay-Ern, with the benefit of hindsight, recognised the close rapport that developed between students and faculty living and working together, when he wrote:

> When I talked about the [Rawang Christian Training C]entre with pastoral worker Qiu Zhen (求真), Huang Fu Cai (黄福财), Pastor Pu Rui Sheng (蒲瑞生), and sister Zhang Wu Mei (张伍妹), again and again, what I heard was not how much knowledge or skills they had acquired, but how God had broken their lives

[37] Goldsmith, p. 153.
[38] South Malayan 15th Annual Field Conference Reports, 1966, p. 3, McClymont Papers: Folder 1.
[39] CTC Rawang Newsletter, August 1971, p. 7, McClymont Papers: Folder 7.
[40] 'Tribute to Rawang', *The Millions*, September 1972, p. 75.
[41] Minutes of a Special Meeting of Field Council, 24 Nov. 1971, OMF Archives [SG]: AR 5.2.7 Box 1.7.

> and rebuilt them through their life at the centre, and how God had prepared them for the arduousness and hard work of a life of service. It would not be an exaggeration to say, the centre was like millstone, which ground the grain of simple and unadorned lives into lives of commitment and Christlike service![42]

The closure of CTC Rawang, however, was not the end of the OMF's involvement in Christian training. Within a year, and with the support of Chinese church leaders, the Malaysian CTC was up and running in Klang, with David Day as principal. Classes were taught in Mandarin, and an English section was added in 1974. The centre continued to operate until 1977, when David and Phyllis Day returned to the UK. The time was now right for a Bible college using Mandarin to be established in Malaysia. The same local Chinese leaders, who supported the setting up of the Malaysian CTC, now led the establishment of what became the Malaysia Bible Seminary (MBS). Classes began in January 1978 with students who had not yet graduated from the Malaysian CTC.[43]

At the same time, the OMF also supported theological training in English elsewhere. This began in 1970, when the Selangor Evening Bible School was opened, with OMF missionary, Gerald Haynes, as its principal. The school was set up to provide theological training for lay leaders in Malaysian churches. Classes were in the evening to allow working people to attend. A year later in 1972, the name was changed to the Malaysian Evening Bible School and a three-year syllabus announced.[44] The courses were a collaborative effort: they were sponsored by the Malaysian Fellowship of Evangelical Students, classes were held at Luther House in Petaling Jaya, and the teaching material was supplied by London Bible College. Full-time study in English also became an option when Pusat Latihan Kristian Malacca was opened in 1976.[45] OMF missionary Peter Warner was its first principal. In different ways then, the Fellowship sought to stimulate and encourage theological training in both Chinese and English in Malaysia. It recognised that if the Malaysian church was to become truly indigenous, it needed to be able to train its own workers.

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[42] Wong Woay-Ern, *When Flowers Bloom within Barbed Wires* (Kuala Lumpur: Bridge Communication, 2008), p. 111, translated by Richard K. Wang.
[43] Hollands, 'Malaysia: OMF's First 25 Years', p. 37.
[44] Fellowship of Evangelical Students Newsletter, July 1970, McClymont Papers: Folder 7.
[45] 'West Malaysia', *The Millions*, April-May 1976, p. 32.

CHILDREN'S WORK

During the 1950s, OMF missionaries worked with children and youth in the New Villages with varying levels of success. The MCC Survey (1958) highlighted the need for a more intentional focus on Christian youth work.[46] In response, two of the OMF's Centennial objectives concentrated on children and young people.

The 'Children's Work' objective was concerned with the evangelisation of primary school children. It recommended that at least two workers be appointed to promote more effective teaching in Sunday schools and outreach through children's holiday programmes in the form of Daily Vacation Bible Schools (DVBS). In 1966, Harris reported that Sunday school teachers' training had been held in seventeen churches and that 169 active or prospective teachers had attended in 1965. The training had been in both English and Mandarin and had been conducted in churches started by the OMF as well as existing churches from other denominations.[47]

This training evolved over time into three courses, which covered the basic practicalities of teaching a lesson and organising a Sunday school as well as studies in child psychology. Marion Parsons reported that seventeen courses were taught in 1980 and that 210 Sunday school teachers attended. In total over the years, at least one thousand teachers had attended these courses. The training gave teachers the skills and confidence to try for themselves. As one teacher wrote, 'We would never have had the courage and the know-how to open up a branch Sunday school if we had not had the seminar training'.[48] This training not only improved the quality of teaching, it also emphasised to Christians in both the New Villages and existing churches that reaching children with the Christian message was just as important as reaching young people and adults.

Parsons was also involved in another project, which made a strategic contribution to the Church in Malaysia. In the 1970s the Malaysian Government vigorously promoted

[46] Malayan Christian Council, 'A Survey of the New Villages in Malaya' (Kuala Lumpur, 1958), pp. 13–14, SOAS Archives [UK]: CBMS/01/E/76/04.
[47] South Malayan 15th Annual Field Conference Reports, 1966, p. 2, McClymont Papers: Folder 1.
[48] Marion Parsons, 'We would never have had the courage…', *The Millions*, 1981, pp. 62-63.

the use of Bahasa Malaysia as the national language. The OMF realised that the Malay language would become more widely used in the future and that Sunday school materials in Bahasa Malaysia were needed. Parsons was part of a combined OMF and SU committee tasked with producing this material.[49] The project was successfully completed in 1976, when the first edition of the six-year Sunday school curriculum in Bahasa Malaysia was completed.[50]

DVBS programmes were run for children during the holidays and proved to be very popular. They were the second area highlighted by the Field and were an effective way of introducing the Christian message to children. The programmes were varied and included singing, games, Bible stories and craft projects. The Field found that running a DVBS programme along with the Sunday school teachers' training provided an immediate opportunity for teachers to put into practice what they learnt. In 1965 six churches combined Sunday school teachers' training with a DVBS programme, which more than 400 children attended. In 1970, Gerard and Helen Haynes worked with the Petaling Jaya EFC to run a DVBS programme, which attracted on average 150 children each day. While running the programme required a lot of work, they found that it not only introduced children to Christianity but also provided a way for church members to become involved in ministry.[51]

YOUTH WORK

If the focus of children's work was on primary school children, then the focus of youth work was on secondary school and beyond. The 'Youth Work' objective highlighted the need for OMF missionaries to be appointed full-time 'to develop a comprehensive program of Christian work amongst the youth'. This comprehensive programme included church-related activities like youth groups and church camps. At the same time in the 1960s it began to also include school-related activities.

In the 1950s the OMF had begun running youth camps for New Village young people. These camps had proved a very successful way of engaging young people with the

[49] OMF/SU Committee Minutes, 3 Aug. 1971, OMF Archives [SG]: AR 5.2.7 Box 1.7.
[50] 'Malay Sunday School lessons', *The Millions*, June-July 1976, p. 56.
[51] Helen Haynes, 'Vacation Bible School', *The Millions (NA Edition)*, June 1970, pp. 116-117.

claims of the Christian faith and they continued to run them in the 1960s. In his superintendent's report, Ewan Lumsden comments on the growth of work among young people and thanked God for well attended youth camps in Johore (Segamat) and Pahang (Kuantan).[52] In the north, Gillian Hunt described speaking at a junior camp for twenty-seven children aged between eleven and fifteen in Perak.[53] In addition, camps for other groups and purposes began to be arranged and the OMF provided speakers. For example, Keith Ranger spoke at a successful 'Muggers' camp', for students wanting to cram for exams. It attracted twenty-five thirteen- to fifteen-years-olds. He later went on to speak at a SU camp in Perak. These camps not only provided a place where the children could become Christians, but they also helped prepare them for the opposition they would face when they returned home.[54]

One of the challenges for missionaries was that children often needed to move if they wanted a secondary school education. While most New Villages and small towns had a primary school, few were large enough to warrant a secondary school. At the same time, when they moved, it presented an opportunity for school-based work in towns with secondary schools. One group that responded to this opportunity was the SU. According to Tan Jin-Huat, this group sent its first worker to Singapore in 1958 and was officially registered as a society in Malaya in 1961.[55] One of their main tasks was helping to start and support Christian Union (CU) groups in secondary schools. They worked with Christian teachers to get permission from school headmasters to begin a Christian group at the school. Then, when a group was started, they provided speakers and Bible study material. The CU groups were evangelistic and also offered support for Christian young people. OMF missionaries provided a ready-made network in their efforts to start CU groups.[56] Peter Young, who had involved OMF missionaries in the planting of St Gabriel's Mission Church, was a facilitator. He was

[52] South Malayan 15th Annual Field Conference Reports, 1966, p. 4, McClymont Papers: Folder 1.
[53] Gillian Hunt, 'Four years from Zero', *The Millions*, September 1965, p. 107.
[54] Keith Ranger, 'Muggers' Camp', *The Millions*, July-August 1973, p. 68.
[55] Tan Jin-Huat, *The Revd Peter John Young: Pioneer, Pastor, and Pal* (Petaling Jaya, Selangor: AB Publication, 2015), p. 28.
[56] David Bok, *OMF and Parachurch Organisations in Malaysia*, May 1987, p. 1, STM Archives [MY].

the first Chairman of the SU council, and in 1970, the first full-time general secretary. He actively encouraged the OMF involvement with the SU.

The OMF supported this work by seconding workers to the SU, acting as advisors and speakers for CU groups, and, when permitted, selling Christian literature in schools. Daphne Roberts, who was seconded to SU, believed that OMF missionaries could best support this work, 'as catalysts to stimulate Christian teachers in their area and help them to see the tremendous possibilities of witness in schools'.[57] The SU was very successful starting CU groups in mission schools, and had some success in getting permission to have CU meetings in government schools, as long as their meetings were not advertised. Over time, work among English-medium schools grew. In 1971, Roberts reported that the SU had six staff workers and had expanded to fifty-four affiliated school CU groups.[58] It was also reported that a Christian girls' high school, most probably Bukit Bintang Girls School, had over 300 students in its CU.[59]

The OMF found that Chinese-medium secondary schools were much more resistant to starting groups. The 'Youth Work' objective specifically mentioned Chinese high schools and Doris Madden had been seconded to the SU to work with students from Chinese-medium secondary schools. In 1966, the superintendent's report noted that in spite of persistent attempts, there was a lack of progress when it came to reaching students in these schools.[60]

Missionaries were also in demand as RK teachers in mission secondary schools, where they were able to teach classes out of normal school hours. While for most, this was a part-time responsibility, for others it became their main ministry. Gillian Hunt was first asked to teach RK to students at All Saints Anglican School in Kamunting. Students were studying for the Lower Certificate in Education, an important qualification at the time, and RK was one of the subjects they could take. She later went on to have a fruitful ministry teaching at Bukit Bintang Girls School in Kuala

[57] Daphne Roberts, 'Youth Predominant', *The Millions*, July-August 1968, p. 64.
[58] South Malaysia 19th Field Conference Minutes, 20-25 September 1971, p. 1, OMF Archives [SG]: AR 5.2.7 Box 1.7.
[59] Marvin Dunn, 'God at Work in Malaysia', *The Millions*, January-February 1974, p. 6.
[60] South Malayan 15th Annual Field Conference Reports, 1966, p. 4, McClymont Papers: Folder 1.

Lumpur.[61] While restricted to English-medium schools, the OMF was able to support the growth of the SU at a critical time in its development, through its network of missionaries, seconding workers to local CU groups, and teaching RK classes.

Over time a strong relationship developed between the SU and the OMF. Both were seeking to engage young people and a significant proportion of OMF missionaries came from countries where the SU was already established. As well as supporting the growth of CU groups, the two interdenominational organisations also collaborated in translating Sunday school material into Bahasa Malaysia. Then in the 1970s, when the OMF was looking to hand ministries over to national Christians, it was to the SU that they passed responsibility for the UPPBS. The SU also took responsibility for the Christian Literature Centre in Ipoh and later opened up a number of other SU Christian bookshops.[62]

SUMMARY

In the 1960s the OMF began appointing an increasing number of its missionaries to specialised ministries. Bok called these ministries parachurch and suggested that the OMF played a strategic part in the development of the parachurch movement in Malaysia. [63] Parachurch organisations are defined as, 'Voluntary, not-for-profit associations of Christians working outside denominational control to achieve some specific ministry or social service'.[64] These organisations have not always had an easy relationship with denominational churches. They were looked upon with suspicion by some local churches because they worked outside denominational control. Rather than complementing and assisting the church in achieving its goals, parachurch organisations can be perceived as providing an alternative Christian community that intentionally or unintentionally replaces the church. The OMF, itself a parachurch organisation, experienced these tensions. Evidence can be seen in the relationship

[61] See Gillian Hunt, *All the Pieces Fit* (Singapore: OMF, 1987), pp. 55–60, 118–27.
[62] Hollands, 'Malaysia: OMF's First 25 Years', p. 33.
[63] David Bok, *OMF and Parachurch Organisations in Malaysia*, p. 1.
[64] Robert Dean Linder and others, *Dictionary of Christianity in America* (Downers Grove, Ill.: Inter-Varsity Press, 1991), p. 863.

between the MCC and the South Malayan Field, and in the North Malayan Field, when the Fellowship insisted on maintaining control over the designation of its workers.

On the other hand, these parachurch ministries enabled the Fellowship to provide support to their network of New Village churches. Gospel van campaigns provided a focus for evangelistic activities, while training of Sunday school teachers helped churches to run their Sunday schools more effectively as well as run DVBS during the school holidays. The organisation of youth camps that covered a state, provided interested young people scattered among different New Villages with a place to meet others in a similar position to themselves. The camps provided an opportunity to talk through common issues they faced, providing mutual support.

Specialised ministries in Chinese also offered Christians in the New Villages an opportunity to understand their Bible better. The UPPBS courses provided a vital first step in beginning to read and understand the Bible for themselves. Sadie Custer and her Bible teaching courses gave congregations throughout the country an opportunity to see how to apply biblical principles to their lives. And the establishment of CTC Rawang then provided a possible next step for those who wanted more in-depth discipleship training. It also led to a small but influential number becoming full-time Christian workers.

When OMF missionaries began to work with existing churches in larger centres, the influence of these parachurch ministries began to extend beyond the OMF's network of congregations. This move brought them into contact with Chinese and Indian Christians, who were mainly English-speaking. At the same time Mandarin was becoming the *lingua franca* of Chinese-educated young people and old China hands were able to resurrect their Mandarin from China. These specialised ministries provided an opportunity for the OMF to work with conservative evangelical Christians from different denominations and take advantage of the interest in Christianity being shown by young people throughout the country. These developments benefited existing denominations in the country, but their contribution has rarely been acknowledged among denominational histories of Christianity in Malaysia.

This opportunistic ecumenism can be seen in the OMF arranging evangelistic van meetings in partnership with local denominational churches in Johore and Selangor. Literature work benefited the entire Protestant community by making Christian literature available through bookshops and colporteurs. The OMF, through its network of missionaries, was also able to support the setting up of bookstalls in a wide range of churches across the country. Sadie Custer's itinerant Bible teaching ministry quickly included existing churches that were, ironically, often better attended than those she held in OMF-linked churches. The OMF's Sunday school teachers' training courses and later on the Christian Writers Course were also attended by Christians from a range of denominations. The UPPBS courses were of course available to anyone and all the Chinese- and English-medium Christian training that the OMF developed was interdenominational.

The OMF's collaboration with the SU was particularly strategic. At this time of social change, many young people chose to embrace a secular worldview as 'free-thinkers', while others remained loyal to the worldview of the Chinese Religion of their parents. Through the CU groups, OMF missionaries and other Christians were able to offer a third, alternative Christian worldview that addressed the cognitive dissonance this dichotomy created. In doing so they helped bring a new generation of young people into the Protestant church. While the number of missionaries involved in parachurch ministries was not large, they had a strategic impact. The OMF's presence throughout West Malaysia, at this critical time in the church's development, allowed them to play an important role. The OMF and local Christians in the SU were able to provide support and take advantage of the openness to change of Chinese young people, at a time when there were few indigenous leaders. The CUs provided young people with a forum where they could explore the Christian worldview. For those that embraced Christianity, the CU groups also provided an opportunity to learn, grow and serve.

The focus of the OMF on leaving a healthy indigenous church and the pressure of visa restrictions prompted their missionaries to focus on working themselves out of a job, which for the most part they were able to do. Ironically their success in passing on these ministries contributed to a lack of recognition of the part they played. They

themselves would probably not have wanted to take the spotlight. If we are to have a better understanding of how and why Christianity has grown among the Chinese minority in West Malaysia, however, a better appreciation of their impact is needed.

8.4 Contextualised Malaysian Churches

A major challenge faced by English- and Chinese-speaking Chinese churches after the war was the need to transform themselves from migrant and mission churches[65] into contextual three-self Malaysian ones, who were able to respond to emerging postcolonial Malaysian society. This process had begun during the Japanese occupation when local Christians led congregations and maintained services during the war.[66] After the war, although it was never going to be the case, things appeared to be returning to the way they were. Missionaries in the existing denominations returned and the connection between Malaya and China remained strong. Even in 1948, Chinese concern that they might lose their Chinese citizenship if they became Malayan citizens, led to equivocal support for the Malayan Union.[67] In the same year, the Chinese Presbyterian Church showed where its loyalties lay by taking steps to become part of the Presbyterian Church of Christ in China. In reality though, the post-war period and decolonisation marked the end of the existing model of Christian mission and precipitated a crisis for Christianity in Malaya.

Over time, however, events in China and Malaysia produced the conditions needed for contextual English- and Chinese-speaking Chinese churches to develop. The rise of communism and the closing of China's borders cut the umbilical cord migrant churches had with 'home'. As a result, it was no longer possible to import trained clergy from China. At the same time, Malaya was moving towards independence and this brought with it the possibility of becoming a Malayan citizen and an identity reoriented towards Malaya. Independence also saw the British Government, which had treated the church with a 'favoured status', replaced with a Malayan one that

[65] Diana Wong and Ngu Ik-Tien, 'A "Double Alienation": The Vernacular Chinese Church in Malaysia', *Asian Journal of Social Science*, 42.3–4 (2014), 262–90 (p. 264).
[66] John Roxborogh, *A History of Christianity in Malaysia* (Singapore: Armour Publishing, 2014), pp. 68–70.
[67] Barbara Watson Andaya and Leonard Andaya, *A History of Malaysia*, 3rd edn (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), p. 272.

proceeded to marginalise Christianity. In doing so it also brought to an end the Church's damaging link with colonialism.

According to Lee and Ackerman one of the reasons Christianity has been able to adapt and thrive in postcolonial Malaysia was its ability produce a new generation of indigenous lay leaders.[68] These leaders were influential in developing Malaysian churches that were sensitive to, and able to take advantage of, their local context. Lee and Ackerman highlight the arrival of two American parachurch organisations Navigators, DAWN and the AOG in the 1960s.[69] They argue that the focus of these evangelical organisations on training local lay leaders, their emphasis on evangelism, and their willingness to operate outside a church context, were instrumental in encouraging the development of lay leadership.

This thesis argues that the three evangelical organisations highlighted by Lee and Ackerman were part of a broader influx of missionaries into the country in the 1950s and 60s. It was the combination of denominational and parachurch organisations that arrived after the war in the 1950s and then grew further into the 1960s that was decisive in developing indigenous leaders. These new missionaries came with a range of denominational missions including the ULCA, the SBC, and the AOG. This influx also included a range of international parachurch agencies like the SU, Navigators, the OMF and the CNEC. These new mission agencies were able to encourage the development of a contextual Malaysian Christianity in a number of ways.

One of the common characteristics of the new denominational missions (ULCA, SBC, AOG) that arrived after the war was a congregational form of government.[70] Although the OMF and the CNEC were interdenominational, the churches they planted in the New Villages were also congregational in character.[71] This led to churches started by

[68] Raymond Lee and Susan Ackerman, *Sacred Tensions: Modernity and Religious Transformation in Malaysia* (University of South Carolina Press, 1997), p. 123.
[69] Lee and Ackerman, pp. 125–30.
[70] The form of government in the Lutheran Church varies around the world. The missionaries who came to Malaysia were predominantly from the United States, which followed a more congregational form of governance.
[71] 'Guiding Principles and Illustrative Practices…', pp. 7-10, McClymont Papers: File 2.

these missions acting more independently than those of established denominations. OMF missionaries, many of them women, adapted to their situation and ran Sunday cottage meetings from the front room of their homes. They modelled a form of church that required minimal financial resources but encouraged maximum participation. The missionaries devoted much of their time to training and encouraging New Village Christians to understand and live out their faith. Without the support of an existing network of churches, greater emphasis was placed on the need for all members to be involved in evangelism and service in the church and less on the need for ordained clergy. The OMF's concern to train local leaders carried on into the 1960s. While they lamented the slow progress in establishing local leaders,[72] over time leaders in the New Villages and in towns did emerge.

A second characteristic that these mission organisations had in common was the priority they gave to theological education. As the number of Christians grew, every one of them invested in some form of training for local Christians. The MBC (Malaya Baptist Theological Seminary opened in 1954) and the AOG (Bible College of Malaya opened in 1960) both established seminaries to train their own ministers that are still in operation today. The OMF (CTC Rawang, open from 1961 to 1971) and the LCMS (Lutheran Bible Training Institute, open from 1956 to 1962)[73] both established training centres that met a need for a limited period of time. They then supported the establishment of interdenominational seminaries, MBS and Seminari Theoloji Malaysia (STM) respectively, which emerged in the late 1970s. The OMF and the CNEC were also involved in the establishment of what became the Singapore Bible College in 1952. These mission agencies recognised that for Christianity to survive in Malaysia, it would need to be led by indigenous Christians.

Lee and Ackerman argue that the arrival of the charismatic movement from America in the mid-1970s was an important factor in the indigenisation process. Through the movement, local lay leaders were able to combine Christian teaching with a charismatic ideology to produce an indigenous Christianity which met thaumaturgical

[72] South Malayan 15th Annual Field Conference Reports, 1966, p. 4, McClymont Papers: Folder 1.
[73] Jeremy Fisher, *A String of Pearls* (Hickory, NC: Private Publication, 2012), p. 16.

needs of Chinese Malaysians.[74] This thesis argues that this clash of worldviews was already taking place in the New Villages in the 1950s, where fear of the *shen* was prevalent. It suggests that the emphasis of OMF missionaries on scriptural authority and the experience of old China hands led them to accept the reality of supernatural this worldly forces, while at the same time proclaiming Jesus' authority over this realm.[75] The result was a contextualised Christianity based on biblical teaching rather than the syncretistic religion described by Lee and Ackerman.

The arrival of the charismatic movement in Malaysia was divisive and elicited mixed reaction from the Protestant Christian community. At one extreme were those who strongly opposed the movement and these were most prevalent in existing mainline denominations. Often associated with a liberal theology that supported Enlightenment rationalism, they rejected the anti-intellectualism and emotionalism of the movement. At the other extreme were those who eagerly embraced the movement, some of whom undoubtedly embraced the syncretistic religion Lee and Ackerman described. This thesis suggests that the OMF and other conservative missionaries were able to influence emerging local Christian leaders they mentored. As a result, these new leaders were able to develop a contextual Malaysian Christianity that accepted the authority of Jesus over the spiritual world, while also rejecting thaumaturgical attempts to manipulate that authority.

The OMF was one of a number of evangelical mission organisations that came in numbers to West Malaysia for the first time in the 1950s. These mission agencies began by establishing churches in the New Villages and in urban areas. As the situation in the country changed, they were the most effective in helping Protestant Christians adapt to the postcolonial situation they faced. Their congregational form of governance encouraged lay participation and involvement. They also recognised the importance of training local clerical and lay leadership. Their commitment can be seen in the range of training institutes they set up in the 1950s and 60s. Their

[74] Lee and Ackerman, p. 129.
[75] Marion Parsons, 'From Idols to the Living God', *The Field Bulletin*, 1957, pp. 118-19.

conservative theology was also influential and enabled emerging leaders to engage critically with the charismatic movement.

The OMF, as an interdenominational mission, was in the distinct position of being able to influence and encourage the formation of new churches and the transformation of existing ones into contextual three-self churches. Through its indigenous principle the Fellowship was prohibited from paying local workers or buying property. While this was frustrating, and at times felt counterproductive, it did impress upon New Village Christians the need to be self-financing. Its stress in the 1960s on discipleship and the importance of the 'Bible Teaching' objective, encouraged churches to be self-governing. Correspondence courses and itinerant Bible teaching encouraged lay participation and the need for the whole congregation to grow in their understanding of the Christian faith. By setting up the CTC Rawang they modelled the importance of local training. They also encouraged new Christians to be self-propagating. This they did initially though encouraging new Christians to be involved in evangelistic activities, but more significantly, through their example. This example was seen as missionaries lived in the New Villages, when they took young people to youth camps and as they lived with students at the CTC Rawang.

9. CONCLUSION

The rise of communism in China set in motion events which eventually led to the largest influx of Protestant missionaries into Malaya and Singapore in their history. The objective of this thesis has been to evaluate the contribution of one of those mission agencies, the OMF. It has focused on West Malaysia and on the Chinese population, who are the largest non-Malay ethnic community on the Peninsula. It began by reassessing the sociological impact of relocation during the Emergency, the establishment of the Chinese New Villages, and the role of Protestant mission agencies. It then went on to review the impact of OMF missionaries on the growth of Christianity among the Chinese in West Malaysia.

9.1 THE CHANGING STRATEGY OF THE OMF

This comprehensive exploration of the work of the OMF in West Malaysia identified three distinct phases. The first focused on evangelism and pioneer church-planting in the New Villages. OMF missionaries took up residence in the New Villages and came under the same restrictions as everyone else. While their presence was the result of an invitation from the British Government, their strategy was most influenced by the ethos of the Fellowship and the recent experience of its missionaries in China. These old China hands were determined to correct the mistakes made in China. They were committed to the 'indigenous principle' and fostering congregations that were self-sustaining and not dependent on the finances of the OMF. They were committed to living in the New Villages, learning local Chinese dialects, and working in Villages where missionaries had not been before.

The second phase developed out of the OMF's response to changes brought about by Independence in 1957 and the end of the Emergency in 1960. These changes impacted both the North and South Malayan Fields and made the establishment of New Village congregations even more difficult. The end of the Emergency brought an end to the restricted movement of New Village inhabitants. As a result, many from rural and semi-urban villages joined the migration to larger urban centres. At the

same time, the government changed to one that was no longer interested in supporting the development of the Chinese New Villages.

While New Village work became more difficult, opportunities were opening up in larger urban centres. The country was beginning to feel the impact of greater access to education as generations of young people, educated in English and Mandarin, joined the urban migration and began exploring what it meant to be a Chinese Malaysian. At the same time, the lack of locally trained Asian clergy was a concern. Prior to the Second World War, Protestant denominations relied on clergy trained in China to pastor Chinese-speaking congregations. It was only after the war that TTC and Singapore Bible College were set up in Singapore to train local clergy and even then, they were unable to keep up with demand. The situation became even worse when Singapore separated from Malaysia in 1965. This parting led to the existing denominational churches needing to establish headquarters in Malaysia, which in turn added to the demand for appropriately trained clergy. The OMF's strategy was also impacted by a new generation of missionaries. While the old China hands were committed to continuing the Fellowship's work in the New Villages, these new workers were more open to change and to taking advantage of the new opportunities that were presenting themselves in towns.

The three priorities of the second phase of the OMF's work in West Malaysia emerged during the South Malayan Field conference in 1962. The first was a continued commitment to the New Villages. The focus now, however, was on developing existing New Village work rather than expanding into new areas. The second priority grew out of a recommendation that came near the end of the conference. This recommendation proposed that the Field 'investigate the possibility of establishing English work among English-speaking Asians in Malaya'. It challenged two taboos. Firstly, most English-speaking Asians were based in towns and cities. This challenged the Fellowship's pioneer focus of not working where other churches were operating. Secondly, using English went against the OMF's policy of learning local languages.

While the first two priorities involved congregation-based ministry, the third resulted in OMF missionaries becoming involved in specialised parachurch ministries. This priority was prompted by a debate at the 1960 Field conference, two years earlier, over the relationship between proclamation of the gospel message and discipleship, i.e., how to live out what you believe. As a result, missionaries were set aside to focus on training and equipping new Christians. When the Centennial objectives were agreed in 1962, three of the seven involved appointing full-time workers to specialised ministries, which focused on discipleship training. By 1968, the number of missionaries allocated to specialised ministries was equal to the number involved in congregation-based ones.

The third phase of the OMF's ministry was more an exit strategy. It resulted from Malaysian Government restrictions and growing ethnic tension in the country. The Protestant mission community were shocked and profoundly affected by the introduction in 1967 of the Ten-year Rule. At first the regulations were applied in a sympathetic way, but as ethnic tensions in the country grew and boiled over in 1969, the Government became progressively stricter in its application of the regulations. At a special meeting in 1971 the strategy of the Fellowship was reassessed. The main priority in the exit phase became the training of local people to take over the ministries the OMF were involved in. Resources would focus on two main areas. The first was the English-speaking congregation-based ministry where the goal was to train young people to take over the role of evangelistic and pastoral leadership. Where the OMF was involved in specialised parachurch ministry, the goal was to leave an established ministry led by national Christians.

The ministry of the OMF in Malaysia was notable for the breadth of coverage of its work both geographically and in terms of the range of ministries. It worked in a disproportionate number of rural and semi-urban New Villages in the key states of Perak, Selangor and Johore, and stands out as the main mission agency to operate in Pahang. This placed it in a distinctive position only comparable with the Methodist Church, who were involved in a similar breadth of states although their numbers were far smaller. During the second phase of its ministry the scope of its work

broadened to include larger towns and cities, where it worked with different denominations and through a range of parachurch organisations. As a result, it had an impact on dialect-speaking, and later Mandarin-speaking churches as well as English-speaking Asian churches in West Malaysia.

9.2 Relocation and Protestant Mission

Resettlement played an important part in the defeat of communist insurgents during the Emergency. Through it more than half a million Chinese rural dwellers were integrated into Malaysian society. Until recently, the influence of Protestant missionaries on relocation to the New Villages has received little attention. Harper is one who has recognised their influence. His analysis accepts the supposition that Christian missionaries acted as cultural imperialists who colluded with the British Government to manipulate the 'hearts and minds' of vulnerable Chinese New Villagers. His analysis adds a contemporary twist to this trope by recognising the Cold War influence of the anti-communist theology of Reinhold Niebuhr, which further cemented the relationship between Church and State. This thesis agrees with his assessment that missionaries were influential but argues that a more nuanced understanding of acculturation, which moves beyond cultural imperialism, is needed. This new understanding needs a framework that is able to take appropriate account of indigenous agency and recognise both the culturally homogenising and culturally differentiating impact missionaries had.

Attention to indigenous agency highlights the fact that most of the Chinese in Malaya, while indigenous to Asia, were migrants that had come to the country in search of a better life, but also with the expectation that they would eventually return to China. Also, because the individual experiences of resettlement varied widely, it is dangerous to draw conclusions based on the experiences of one person or Village. Evidence of the response of New Villagers to the changes brought by relocation is found in their growth and the decision of the majority of the population to remain once the Emergency was over. This is not to say that there were not problems or serious shortcomings, but it does recognise that the Villagers were active agents, who chose to remain when they were no longer compelled to. That the New Villages were

viewed positively can also be seen in the resentment expressed by the Malay population over the facilities and services that were provided.

Protestant mission agencies including the OMF, through their presence and the provision of medical and other services, were active agents of change in the establishment of the New Villages. The OMF played an influential rather than decisive part in the integration of New Village settlers into Malaysian society as Chinese Malaysian**.** Their continued presence after Independence contributed to the sustained growth of the New Villages in the 1960s. At the same time, the division of the New Villages, according to their dominant *ethnie*, led to them to being labelled Chinese New Villages and as a result they became victims of communal politics. OMF missionaries lived in New Villages, learnt local Chinese dialects and interacted with settlers. This, in addition to their desire to follow the indigenous principle, affirmed Chinese culture and paradoxically supported the New Village residents in retaining their Chinese identity.

9.3 The Growth of Protestant Christianity in West Malaysia

The prospects for Christianity after Independence and the end of the Emergency were not good. A colonial Government, which had allowed mission work to take place in the New Villages, was replaced by one that proceeded to marginalise Christianity and promote Islam. As mission schools were nationalised, mainline Protestant denominations were stripped of their institutional power and removed from the centres of influence. Their ability to respond to these changes was hampered by rigid hierarchical structures and dependence on mission support and leadership. Churches suffered from a lack of local ordained clergy and a linguistically divided church that was dependent on imported leadership.

Decolonisation led to an exodus of the expatriate community. While other races in the country had historic links to different world religions, this exodus left Christianity without any such link. In addition, rapid urbanisation and industrialisation exposed people to a Western secular worldview, which challenged the credibility of all religious understandings of the world including Christianity.

Yet despite these challenges, Christianity among the Chinese population in West Malaysia grew and continues to grow. This thesis argues that the influx of missionaries into Malaya in the 1950s, including many who had worked in China, was a vital catalyst to this growth. These missionaries were experienced, familiar with Chinese culture and included a number of Chinese evangelists and pastors. They included representatives from mainline churches, denominations new to the country, and evangelical parachurch organisations like the OMF. While many of these new missionaries cooperated together in the New Villages, others operated independently in urban centres.

In the early years, these missionaries concentrated on establishing dialect- or Mandarin-speaking churches. This was difficult pioneer work among a traumatised community, still recovering from the effects of the Japanese occupation and dealing with the ongoing threats of the Emergency. Progress was slow but eventually churches were established in the New Villages and larger urban centres. As the number of second-generation English-educated Christians grew, mission work was then extended to include English-speaking congregations. This linguistic division led to congregations joining two distinct social and cultural networks.

The trend that had the biggest impact on the growth of the church after the Second World War was the increasing openness of non-Malay Malaysian young people to Christianity. This openness was first experienced by missionaries in the 1950s and grew as young people joined the urban migration in the 1960s. It arose from the cognitive dissonance they experienced as the worldview of their childhood, shaped by Chinese Religion, collided with the Western secular worldview they encountered through their education and modern urban lifestyle. For these young people, it was the integrated Christian worldview, rather than the later enticements of charismatic experience, that drew them to embrace Christianity.

This thesis supports the argument that evangelical Protestants were the most effective in responding to this growing interest in Christianity. Three characteristics stand out. The first was the evangelical emphasis on scriptural authority. This enabled

missionaries to take seriously and affirm the spiritual world that Chinese young people had grown up in. It also gave these young Malaysian Christians the tools needed to discern between acknowledging the authority of Jesus over the spiritual world and avoiding syncretism and merely replacing the *shen* with Jesus as the object of thaumaturgical manipulation. The evangelical focus on discipleship and training all church members to be involved in evangelism and ministry was also influential. It encouraged the training of a new generation of indigenous leaders, who were able to respond thoughtfully to postcolonial Malaysia. It is clear that the lives of a number of Malaysian leaders were deeply impacted by the example of sacrificial service they saw in OMF missionaries.[1]

This thesis has also highlighted the importance of the congregational form of government modelled by the LCMS, MBC, AOG and the OMF. This more flexible form of governance allowed congregations to respond more quickly to changing circumstances and develop contextually appropriate churches – ones that could operate from a shop-lot, that were open to women in leadership, and did not depend on a rigid distinction between clergy and laity. While the growth of this new generation of churches has been highlighted,[2] this thesis recognises that evangelical Protestants were also present in mainline denominations. OMF missionaries worked with established Presbyterian, Anglican, and Methodist churches, encouraging greater lay involvement and evangelism among young people.

The OMF was part of this influx of new missionaries in the 1950s, and their contribution to the growth of Christianity is only now, with this thesis, being appropriately recognised. Through its network of new and existing churches and the parachurch organisations and ministries it established and was involved with, OMF missionaries were instrumental in the growth of both the Chinese- and English-speaking divisions of Chinese Christianity in West Malaysia.

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[1] Elizabeth Goldsmith, *Against All Odds: God at Work in an Impossible Situation* (Milton Keynes: Authentic Media, 2007), pp. 52, 69, 122, 136, 171, 176.
[2] Bobby Sng, *In His Good Time: The Story of the Church in Singapore, 1819-2003*, 3rd edn (Singapore: Graduates' Christian Fellowship, 2003), pp. 210–18.

CHINESE-SPEAKING CHRISTIANS

The OMF's engagement with dialect-speaking Chinese in the New Villages lasted more than twenty years. Appendix 2 shows that during that time, OMF missionaries were resident in forty new or existing villages and towns. In 1959, 45% (ninety-seven) of the missionaries were from the OMF, making it by far the largest contributor to the New Village work. Through its evangelism and pioneer church-planting, it acted as a facilitator, strengthening and supporting rural Chinese-speaking churches and laying the foundation for later growth.

In the 1960s, the Fellowship continued to evangelise and support villages where they had started work, through the use of the gospel van for evangelistic meetings and the distribution of Chinese Christian literature. It also broadened its focus to include discipleship and developing Christian leaders. The most important way it did this was through the formation of the Mandarin-medium CTC Rawang. Through this centre, OMF missionaries were able to disciple New Village Christians and train national leaders. While numbers were small and progress slow from the perspective of the missionaries, this training proved life-changing for the forty who graduated from the two-year programme.[3] The involvement of missionaries in parachurch ministries also provided support to the New Village network of churches. The itinerant Bible teaching ministry of Sadie Custer, the Chinese section of the UPPBS courses, and the training of Sunday school teachers, all encouraged lay participation and impressed on the whole congregation the importance of growing in their understanding of the Christian faith.

Ultimately, OMF missionaries were involved in or responsible for the creation of twenty New Village churches. While some of these churches remained independent, the majority joined existing Protestant denominations. Many in these new congregations were first generation believers, who after resisting family and community pressure, were the first in their family to embrace and commit themselves to a Christian worldview. The establishment of each of these twenty

[3] Wong Woay-Ern, *When Flowers Bloom within Barbed Wires* (Kuala Lumpur: Bridge Communication, 2008), p. 111.

congregations is a witness to the commitment to Christianity of these New Village believers, which continued after the missionaries left. These congregations are significant because they represent a breakthrough for Christianity among a previously unreached segment of Chinese society.

The change in strategy in the 1960s also brought the OMF into contact with Chinese-speaking young people in larger urban centres. During this time Mandarin was slowly becoming more widely spoken.[4] This enabled the OMF to reach a new group of literate Chinese through the Christian literature it distributed, including the *Dengta* magazine. The Fellowship also became involved in establishing and supporting urban Chinese-speaking congregations. In Selangor, the Edwards were influential in establishing and supporting Hokkien-speaking Methodist churches in Tanjong Karang and Banting. In Perak, small Chinese-speaking Anglican congregations were nurtured in Teluk Anson and Taiping, and the OMF supported Chinese-speaking Christian young people from the New Villages who migrated to Kuala Lumpur through introducing them to Christian Grace Church (KL). Through its parachurch ministries and existing churches, the OMF contributed to the growth of Christianity among urban Chinese-speaking youth.

These findings highlight the need for further research in this area. Diana Wong and Ngu Ik-Tian have already argued that greater attention needs to be paid to the growth of the vernacular Chinese Protestant church in West Malaysia.[5] Their analysis, however, depends on a distinction between what they call Mission and Migrant churches, which can be problematic, and focuses on the impact of just one Chinese lay parachurch organisation, the Bridge. Greater understanding of the factors that have stimulated growth in both rural and urban areas is needed along with their relative contributions. Further work is also needed to explore the relationship between parachurch organisation and the growth of Christians congregations.

English-Speaking Chinese Christians

[4] Diana Wong and Ngu Ik-Tien, 'A "Double Alienation": The Vernacular Chinese Church in Malaysia', *Asian Journal of Social Science*, 42.3–4 (2014), 262–90 (p. 274).
[5] Wong and Ngu Ik-Tien.

The OMF's involvement with English-speaking Asian congregations developed in the 1960s out of the need of mainline Protestant churches for English-speaking clergy and from the growing interest in Christianity of English-speaking Chinese and Indian young people. Appendix 3 shows that OMF missionaries were involved in starting or supporting twelve urban English-speaking congregations. In some cases, they oversaw the transformation of a predominantly expatriate congregation into an ethnically Asian one. For the majority, however, they helped establish English-speaking congregations attached to existing Presbyterian or Anglican churches.

Their work was significant because it enabled mainline denominations to grow by responding positively to the interest in Christianity shown by Chinese young people in urban centres. Change is not easy for any organisation and it was especially difficult for mainline Protestant denominations in postcolonial West Malaysia. Through its conservative evangelical emphasis, the OMF was able to assist willing denominational churches in making that change. By encouraging lay leadership and evangelistic involvement of all church members, OMF missionaries supported the congregations they were part of in responding effectively to their changing circumstances.

The OMF's involvement in English-medium parachurch ministries complemented its congregation-based ministry and included both evangelism and discipleship. The OMF supported mass evangelistic meetings in 1967 and 1969. It also supported Christian bookshops in Kuala Lumpur and Ipoh, bookstalls in churches, and colporteurs in schools, all of which promoted the distribution of Christian literature. The OMF's most strategic contribution during this time came through its collaboration with the SU, which was particularly successful in establishing CUs in English-medium secondary schools. They became forums where young people could explore the Christian faith outside of a church context, as well as grow in their understanding of Christianity. With its network of church contacts, the OMF was able to support and encourage CUs throughout the country.

The OMF was also involved in a number of ministries that were focused on Bible teaching and discipleship. The most strategic was their UPPBS courses. In 1971

English was the most popular language, with more than 2500 active students. Sunday school teachers' training in churches provided another means of training young people to understand the Bible better while providing a way of serving in the church. The OMF also collaborated with local Christians to provide theological training in English. In the early 1970s what became the Malaysian Evening Bible School (MEBS) offered evening classes, which provided training for lay leaders in Kuala Lumpur. Then in 1976 the OMF was also involved in the opening of Pusat Latihan Kristian, which provided full-time training in English.

Through its involvement with English-speaking congregations and parachurch ministries, like the SU, the OMF was able to support an integrated form of mission that began with outreach to Chinese youth in the New Villages and in English-medium secondary schools through CUs. This was followed up with Bible teaching taught through the CUs, through the UPPBS courses, through Sunday school teachers' training, and later through the MEBS. The focus of the OMF was to help young people to mature and become active members of local congregations.

The OMF was one of a number of parachurch organisations in the 1960s which along with evangelical denominations were able to respond effectively to Asian young people searching for answers to the big questions of life. As a result, a generation of new Christians joined the church. Incoming denominations like the AOG and the MBC grew quickly. The work of the OMF and other parachurch organisations like the SU and Navigators, contributed to this growth as well as to the growth of existing denominational churches like the Anglican and Presbyterian Churches.

This thesis has highlighted the need to recognise the ethnic and linguistic divisions within the church. Further research in this area could include a study of Indian Christianity in West Malaysia and the factors that have influenced Tamil-speaking churches. Also of value, would be a study of what has influenced Indians to attend English-speaking congregations. Greater use and analysis of available statistics from the Government is another area of further research. While no distinction is made

between Catholic and Protestant Christianity, there is still much to be learnt from analysing where Christianity has grown since 1970.

This thesis supports the conclusion that the influx of missionaries in the 1950s and the growth of interest in Christianity among non-Malay Asian young people in the 1960s provided the conditions needed for the percentage of Chinese Christians to more than double between 1950 and 1970. It indicates that the OMF contributed both quantitatively and qualitatively to this growth. Critical to the growth of any worldview or religion is the need for conversion growth. The OMF through its work in the New Villages was able to contribute to the conversion growth of the Chinese-speaking churches throughout its time in the country. In addition, through its work with existing urban congregations, it was able to contribute to the conversion growth of English-speaking Chinese churches in the country. Qualitatively, it was able, through its advocacy of a conservative evangelical Protestantism, to mentor and encourage a new generation of local leadership, who developed a contextual Christianity that effectively adapted to the post-Independence world they faced. Rather than the caricature of cultural imperialists desperately trying to maintain control, these missionaries acted as catalysts supporting the growth of emerging national leaders of a contextual national church.

‘To abandon the hope of speaking truthfully about reality is to abandon the adventure of life’ (Lesslie Newbigin, *Truth to Tell: The Gospel as Public Truth*, p. 4)

APPENDIX 1: POPULATION STATISTICS

	WEST MALAYSIA											SINGAPORE	EAST MALAYSIA	MALAYSIA		
YEAR	Chinese	%	Indian	%	Other	%	Total Non-Malay	%	Malay	TOTAL	%			TOTAL	%	
1911	693,228	1.2%	239,169	5.8%	40,333	28.5%	972,730	3.5%	1,366,321	2,339,051	1.5%	305,439		2,644,490	1.9%	
1921	855,863	1.5%	439,172	5.0%	43,068		1,338,103		1,568,588	2,906,691		420,004		3,326,695		
1931	1,284,888	1.5%	570,987	3.9%	68,011		1,923,886		1,863,872	3,787,758		559,946		4,347,704	2.3%	est.
1947	1,884,534		530,638		65,080		2,480,252		2,427,834	4,908,086		940,824		5,848,910	2.1%	est.
1957	2,333,756		696,186		123,342		3,153,284		3,125,474	6,278,758		1,445,929		7,724,687		
1970	3,117,896	3.5%	933,250	8.4%	66,298	46.9%	4,117,444	5.3%	4,663,284	8,780,728	2.5%		1,658,702	10,439,430		
1980	3,630,542	3.3%	1,087,561	7.5%	66,416	39.1%	4,784,519	4.8%	6,102,194	10,886,713	2.1%		2,183,659	13,070,372	6.4%	
1991	4,249,417		1,379,247		732,410		6,361,074	5.6%	8,436,727	14,797,800	2.4%		3,582,000	18,379,800	8.1%	
2000	5,098,447		1,732,667		417,568		7,248,682	7.4%	11,274,950	18,523,632	2.9%		4,751,058	23,274,690	9.2%	
2010	5,509,302	7.2%	1,892,322	5.9%	1,758,312	10.9%	9,159,936	7.6%	13,409,409	22,569,345	3.1%		5,764,790	28,334,135	9.2%	

The Table above shows the percentage of Christians by ethnic group. This is the most helpful statistic with which to analyse trends. A number of factors, however, make it difficult to gather comparable statistics. They include:

- Figures are based on census data where no distinction is made between Catholic and Protestant Christians.
- Statistics up to 1957 include the Straits Settlement of Singapore, and after that date the East Malaysian states of Sabah and Sarawak. Both Singapore and East Malaysia have a higher percentage of Christians than West Malaysia and their inclusion distorts the figures.
- After the 1911 census, comprehensive statistic on religion were not gathered again until the 1970 census. In 1921 and 1931 the question of religion was only asked for the Chinese and Indian population. An estimate of the total number of Christians in West Malaysia and Singapore was made by the statistician based on historic trends. He estimated the total number of Catholic and Protestant Christians in West Malaysia and Singapore in 1931 was 101,000 in 1931 and 120,000 in 1947 (Census 1947, p. 124.)
- From 1980 on, the statistical impossibility that the entire Malay population is Muslim, is assumed.

APPENDIX 2: LIST OF VILLAGES WITH RESIDENT OMF MISSIONARIES

NV.	New Village	Village/Town	State	Church/Residence	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1972	1973	1974
Work Started and Passed On																										
007	Bekok		Johore	Bekok Presbyterian Church		2	2	3																		
310	Kemansur	Bentong	Pahang	Bentong CMC		2	3	3	4	2	2	3														
596	Sungei Chua	Kajang	Selangor	Kajang CMC	2	8	4	5	2																	
574	Pendamaran		Selangor	Pandamaran CMC		2	2	2																		
Churches Started																										
		Tapah (E)	Perak	Emmanuel church		2	2	2	2	4	4	5	5	5	5	2	2	3	2	2	2	3	4	3	3	
389	Bidor		Perak	St Andrew's Mission		3	2	4	3	5	3	2	3	2	2	3	2	4	3	2	1	+	+			
505	Slim River (E)		Perak	St Paul's Church			2	3	3	2	2	2	2	4	4	2	2	2	2		+					
018	Buloh Kasap		Johore	Buloh Kasap CMC		2	2	1	2	2	2	3	3	1	3	4	1									
019	Cha'ah		Johore	Cha'ah Christian Church	2	4	2	2	4			2	2	1	2	2	2	2								
308	Karak		Pahang	Karak CMC			2	3	3	2	2	2	2		2		2	2	2	2	2		1			
354	Temerloh		Pahang	Temerloh Gospel Chapel			2	2	3	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	3	1	1	1			
357	Triang		Pahang	Triang Christian Church				3	5	3	3	2	3	3	4	3	3	1	2	2	3	2				
288	Gambang		Pahang	Gambang CMC							2	2	4	2		4	2	2	2							
347	Sungei Jan	Jerantut	Pahang	Jerantut Christian Church				2	2	2	3	2	2	2	3	2		2								
601	Sungei Way (Seri Setia) (E)		Selangor	Sungei Way Christian Church		3	3	2	2	3	2			1	2	2	2	2	+	+						
587	Serdang (Seri Kembangan)		Selangor	Serdang Christian Church		3	3	5	6	4	6	4	3	2	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	2				
578	Rawang		Selangor	Rawang Christian Church		2	2	2	1	3	3	2	3	3	4	4	+	+						1	1	
536	Kuala Kubu (Ampang Pechah)		Selangor	KKB Gospel Chapel		2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	4	4	2	1	2	1						
603	Tanjong Sepat		Selangor	Tanjong Sepat CMC						1	1	1	1		2	4	2	2		2	2	1	2			
225	Machap Bahru		Malacca	Machap Baru Baptist Chapel							2	2	2	3	3	3	2									

+ = Resident missionary involved in different ministry

(E) = English-speaking congregation started in addition to a Chinese-speaking one

APPENDIX 2: LIST OF VILLAGES WITH RESIDENT OMF MISSIONARIES

NV.	New Village	Village/Town	State	Church/Residence	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1972	1973	1974
	New Villages Vacated																									
100	Scudai		Johore	Resident 1952-55	2	1	1	2																		
112	Simpang Rengam		Johore	Resident 1953-59		1	1	1	2	2	2	2														
016	Bukit Siput		Johore	Resident 1954-59			2	3	3	2	2	1														
560	Kalumpang (Sejantung)		Selangor	Resident 1954-59			4	3	3	2	2	2														
523	Tapah Road		Perak	Resident 1953-59		3	1	2	1	1	1	2														
577	Rasa (Chuang)		Selangor	Resident 1956-60					2	2	2	2	3			2										
609	Ulu Yam Bahru		Selangor	Resident 1959-60								2	2													
094	Rengam		Johore	Resident 1957-61	2					2	2	2	2	2												
284	Bukit Koman	Raub	Pahang	Resident 1959-63								2	2	2	2	2										
411	Jeram	Malim Nawar	Perak	Resident 1953-64		2	2	2	2	2	4	2	2		2	2	2									
350	Sungei Ruan		Pahang	Resident 1954-64			2	2	3	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	2									
465	Lawan Kuda	Gopeng	Perak	Resident 1955-66				3	1	2	2	3	4	2	2	2	1	1	1							
470	Mambang Di-Awan		Perak	Resident 1954-67			3	4	5	4	5	5	5	4	3	3	2	2	3	2						
005	Batu Anam		Johore	Resident 1964-67	2												1	1	2	2						
014	Bukit Pasir		Johore	Resident 1963-65												2	2	2								
024	Gemas Bahru	Gemas, NS	Johore	Resident 1957-70			2			2	2	2	2	2	3	3	4	2	2	2	2	2	2			
	Existing Villages Vacated																									
	Alor Gajah		Malacca	Resident 1956-60					2	3	2	2	2													
	Sungei Suloh		Johore	Resident 1957-60						2	2	2	2													
	Batu Arang		Selangor	Resident 1959-61								4	2	+												
	Selama		Perak	Resident 1960-62									3	2	1											

APPENDIX 3: CHURCHES WITH RESIDENT OMF MISSIONARIES

Den.	Village/Town	State	Church	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1972	1973	1975	1977
Existing Churches																									
Anglican (E, C)	Teluk Anson (Intan)	Perak	St Luke's Church			2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	
Anglican (E)	Cameron Highlands[1]	Pahang	All Soul's Church	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Anglican (E)	Georgetown[2]	Penang	St Paul's Church										2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2		
Anglican (E, C)	Taiping	Perak	All Saints' Church													2	2	2	2	+	2	2	2		
Anglican (E)	Kuantan	Pahang	Church of the Epiphany														2	2	2	2	2	2		2	
Anglican (E, C)	Kuala Lumpur	Selangor	St Gabriel's Mission Church													1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1		1
PCM[4] (E)	Kluang	Johore	Gereja Agape														2	2	2	2	2	2	2		
PCM (E)	Batu Pahat	Johore	Gereja Grace												2	2	2	1	1	2	2	2			
PCM (E)	Muar	Johore	Trinity[3]													2	2	2	2	3	2	1		2	
CMC[5] (E)	Segamat	Johore	Segamat CMC													2	1		1	1	1	1			
CMC (C)	Tanjong Karang	Selangor	Tanjong Karang CMC													2	2	2							
CMC (E, C)	Banting Town	Selangor	Banting CMC																		2	2	2		
(C)	Kuala Lumpur	Selangor	Grace Christian Church																			1	1	1	1
(E)	Kuala Lumpur	Selangor	Emmanuel Christian Centre														2	2	2					+	+

[1] = 339 Ringlet New Village (1953-59)

[2] = Nibong Tebal (1962-63)

[3] = now Gereja Emmanuel Muar

[4] = Presbyterian Church in Malaysia

[5] = Chinese Methodist Church

+ = Resident but involved in specialised ministry

E = English-speaking congregation

C = Chinese-speaking congregation

APPENDIX 4: SOUTH MALAYAN FIELD, CENTENNIAL OBJECTIVES

SOUTH MALAYAN FIELD – CENTENNIAL OBJECTIVES
Accepted at Field Conference – February 1962

A. Spiritual Objective. "I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Jesus Christ my Lord ….. that I may know Him …. " (Phil. 3 8-11)

B. 'Skills' Objectives. "A specialist who has no need to be ashamed."
(II Tim. 2 15)

1. Increased knowledge of the Word and skill in using it.
2. Increased knowledge of the language and facility in communicating the truth.
3. Increased knowledge of local customs and habits as a help to winning men and women.
4. Increased exercise of each worker's gifts.

C. Work Objectives.

1. Evangelism. The clear presentation of the Gospel to every Chinese in the areas for which we have accepted responsibility.

2. Village Work. That all the existing churches in our areas should develop to the point where they have leaders manifesting spiritual gifts and taking the responsibility for ministry and leadership, reaching out in evangelism to surrounding areas, and able to continue in this way without the help of resident workers.

3. Youth Work. The establishment of regular youth work in all our centres, and the appointment of at least two full-time workers leading a comprehensive programme of Christian work amongst the youth of our field, with special attention to the Chinese High Schools.

APPENDIX 4: SOUTH MALAYAN FIELD, CENTENNIAL OBJECTIVES

4. Children's Work. At least two full-time workers to promote more effective S.S. and D.V.B.S. work throughout the field, with emphasis on the evangelisation of primary school children and the training of S.S. teachers.

5. Literature Work. The undertaking of a more vigorous campaign of literature distribution throughout the field, and the appointment of a full-time literature worker to co-ordinate and promote our literature programme.

6. Bible Teaching. To intensify our Bible teaching ministry by means of expository preaching in the centres, correspondence courses, systematic Bible classes, special series, Bible conferences, and the Christian Training Centre. A team of two workers engaged full-time in the itinerant Bible teaching work. The development of effective preachers in each group and the emergence of some national Bible teachers and evangelists, in literate, Bible-loving churches.

7. Tamil Work. The designation of at least one male missionary (other than S.B.M. seconded personnel) to Tamil work. The carrying out of an even more intensive evangelism and colportage, especially in areas where the participation of Indian Christians can be expected.
   The carrying on of a Bible teaching ministry within existing churches, wherever openings may offer.
   The maintenance of present Tamil Correspondence Course work and its expansion as personnel allows.
   The continuing of follow-up work in connection with "Good News" Tamil Radio broadcasts.
   The establishing of at least one Tamil-speaking church.

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