

# +Pc the China Challenge

by George Verwer

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*George Verwer discusses the ongoing challenges and opportunities for ministry in China, emphasizing the importance of prayer and literature distribution through the Lagos ship visit.*

**Duration:** 58:03

**Scripture:** Luke 10:1-3, Luke 10:5-6, Luke 10:8-12, Luke 10:16

**Topics:** "China"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares their experience of visiting China and witnessing the poverty that still exists in the country. They also highlight the government's efforts to provide basic necessities like food and shelter to the people. The speaker mentions their interaction with the locals, including playing the piano and singing hymns, as well as discovering a table tennis club for young children. They also mention a church led by an 84-year-old pastor who requested one Bible for his congregation of one thousand, showing their dedication to the word of God despite challenges. The sermon emphasizes the importance of sacrifice and the impact of having access to the Bible in a country where it is scarce.

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## Transcript

Just about six weeks ago, my wife and I were coming out of China after a very short, unexpected one-day trip by bus into mainland China. And then we went over to Hong Kong, where we actually got more information, since it's the real center of so many of the ministries into China. And it was a result of that that I sent a letter or a telex back to Bromley, wondering if maybe we could arrange some kind of meeting, just for those who might be interested, especially in the light of the possible visit of the ship Lagos to China.

It was shortly after I left Singapore after ministry in Malaysia and Singapore and on the ship with the ship personnel Lagos out in the Philippines, which is really the main purpose of that trip, that Peter Conlon, together with Gotek Chin, one of our Mandarin-speaking staff members, went into China for a much longer trip and with definite contacts with top government-level officials. God had worked in a very amazing way to give us these contacts. And some people, even who have been involved in China ministries for many years, were utterly amazed at how God opened the door to Peter and Gotek Chin to meet with top government officials about the visit of the ship.

They have given some very definite encouragement toward the Lagos coming to China, though obviously it will be a very long and complicated process to ever get the necessary permissions. And Gotek Chin will be going back probably in April, this time invited by the government, to discuss further the possibility of

such a visit. Also Stella Chan, another OM team member, just had a letter from her, will in fact be going into China probably within the next couple of days for another visit.

What would be the purpose of this Lagos visit to China? Well, I think it's important to mention that the burden and vision for China came to us actually before the name Operation Mobilization ever came to us. So it goes back to the very earliest days, when some of us were students and we were in nights of prayer. One such prayer meeting back at the Moody Bible Institute, and we especially had this burden for China.

And Christian leader, Brother Greg Livingston, who's now the home director of the North African Mission, who was with us about 12 years, reminded me not so long ago that he remembers us praying over a map of China and actually assigning different key Chinese cities to pray for, specifically. And he shared that he was still praying for the city that he was given over 20 years ago. The burden and vision came to us for China before the burden and vision of India.

Because there were two main areas of the world that we were involved with or concerned about the most in our early days. First of all, the closed countries. This is why we went to Spain, because it was closed.

From Spain we launched into the Soviet Union, and that abortive effort actually led to the birth, to some degree, of what became Operation Mobilization. And then the vision expanded to a much wider range of countries. So the early vision was really for closed countries.

It was for places that others were not going to, to any great degree. And the second part of the vision was for the Muslim world. Even as far back as 1965, I wrote a series of chapters for a missionary book about Muslims in China.

And a little booklet was printed that some of you have seen about Muslims and Islam in Southeast Asia. And of course, to this day, there's a population of many millions of Muslims in China. So the burden and the vision for China goes back to the earliest roots of Operation Mobilization.

At the same time, we always sensed that at least for China, from what we could study, our ministry would have to be one of prayer. Prayer for the national church. Prayer for Chinese believers.

And to some degree, even this evening, with new challenges and new opportunities, our great burden is still prayer. Let me just mention a few other important items. I've written in my notes, in very big print, the China Inland Mission.

We at OM feel a great debt to this mission, now known as OMF. And you will find that many of the books on the book table are books written by people connected with the China Inland Mission, or about the founder of the China Inland Mission. One of the books I'd like you to get this evening is called China, the Reluctant Exodus.

The untold story of the withdrawal of the China Inland Mission from China. I believe truly a significant book about China that needs to be read by Phyllis Thompson. There are a number of other very key books about China which are being featured on the book table.

To China with Love, the lives and times of Protestant missionaries in China in those early days. The Chinese Church that Will Not Die by Mary Wang. Excellent, powerful book.

Leslie Lyle, a man that we have a lot of contact with, I think. He's not here tonight, is he, by any chance? But I know he had an hour on the telephone with Peter Conlon, especially since Peter Conlon was the first foreigner to meet with Ming Dao after he came out of prison just a few weeks ago. A man who had been in prison for 21 years and 8 months, Wang Ming Dao, author of many, many books in Chinese.

In fact, when I was looking through books recently in Singapore in Chinese samples of which I brought back to Bromley, I noticed that he was the author of about one-third of all the books. And this is another book that some of you will want to read, *New Spring in China*, by Leslie Lyle, just recently published, *A Christian Appraisal*. It says, This book is an attempt at an honest appraisal of Communist China from a Christian point of view, explains the author.

It is for the reader who may be bewildered by the Chinese puzzle and is looking for a simple outline of Chinese communism in theory and practice and its effect on the Chinese people. He was, of course, a missionary in China for many years. Another close friend of OM and of China is Jeffrey Bull, *When Iron Gates Yield*.

We just tend to think these days that everybody's already read this book. It's almost a Christian classic. But we've discovered in our surveys that Christian young people today don't read many Christian books.

And so I'm sure many of you have not yet read this outstanding Christian book, *When Iron Gates Yield*. Another new book on China, *The Chinese Connection*, especially for young people, an introduction by Brother Andrew. Of course, you all know *The Small Woman*, the story of Gladys Ullward.

And there's a number of other books about China. Can't take time to mention them all now. We'll mention a little more about those books later on.

We especially felt in the early days of our work, in the light of great missions like the China Inland Mission, that our job should be to stand behind these people in prayer. That if China ever opened, certainly it would be people from the China Inland Mission and others, especially overseas Chinese people, who would lead the way in terms of the action. But that any of us, even those of us who seem so unsuitable for places like China, couldn't be involved through prayer.

In speaking to 700 young people in Singapore, I was quite amazed to discover that it seemed that I knew more about China than most of them, even though they were all overseas Chinese. And many of them, I think at least 50 to 100, signed up for a Chinese prayer challenge letter that we hope to send out in the future, because there's such an interest in China. Many overseas Chinese are not even aware of how easy it is for them, especially to return to China, even to buy land or to study or to do something else.

So in a real way, our vision is still firstly one of prayer and one of encouragement. We just want to stand behind some of the existing groups that are involved in China. One of those groups is the China Research Organization.

I have one of their pamphlets that I'd be happy to show you at the end of the meeting. They have a number of leaflets about China. They have a China prayer letter that's free.

They have China in the church today. They have a magazine about China in Chinese. They have some occasional papers for those who really want to get into heavy studies.

Then they have some other material that comes out. This is led by Jonathan Chow, who I had a very wonderful time of fellowship with when I toured the China Research Institute. They have also launched a new China ministry to help evangelists within China and to begin to supply some literature in China.

I feel that the China Research Center is doing one of the most significant pieces of work for China. And for those of you who are interested in in-depth information and study, we would be happy to link you in to the China Research Center. Another group in Hong Kong that we feel is doing a significant work is Asian Outreach, who we will be working somewhat with if the ship is able to go into China.

I had a list of some of the materials that they have made available as one of the really pioneers of Chinese literature in simplified script. It's important to understand that most Chinese can still read the old script, but it's difficult, especially for the younger generation. The language has basically not changed so much in terms of speaking, but in terms of actual Chinese script.

That's why you will discover at present there is a demand for old Chinese literature, and there are many books translated into Chinese. But there's also demand for literature in the new script, especially for any kind of evangelism. And the new Bible, which Asian Outreach has published, they've worked on it for 10 years.

And this is a little list, again that I'd be happy to show some of you, of just a few of the materials in simplified Chinese. Not more than 20 pieces of literature are ready in simplified Chinese. So that's another enormous prayer challenge.

This ministry is led by Paul Kauffman, and also there are, of course, many Chinese people working together with him. I read recently in one of his prayer letters how he went back to some of the places he lived as a child. David Adeny also told of some experiences like this when he went back.

He has been one of the main ones to challenge us about China, as he was a missionary there as an author and was the chairman of the Lagos Ship Committee in Singapore, where he was a principal for many years of Discipleship Training Center. Then there's the Chinese Church Coordinating Office, and I had the opportunity to share at their devotions. Their main ministry has been to overseas Chinese, and it's amazing what God has been doing in building solid overseas Chinese churches all over the world.

And one of the greatest breakthroughs in the history of OM has been the entrance of this large number of Chinese background people into the work full-time. Over 120 Chinese young people are full-time in OM tonight. Many of these speak fluent Mandarin, the language of mainland China.

We don't believe this is an accident in God's sight and in God's working, and that one of our ministries in terms of China will be to give overseas Chinese young people the kind of training and spiritual foundation that we hope will enable them later on to move into an effective ministry in China, not necessarily with Operation Mobilization. Another major influence of OM in the Far East has been to challenge the Chinese Church and have an influence on the Chinese Church concerning cross-cultural evangelism outside of their own Chinese people. The tendency among Chinese churches is to think only in terms of evangelizing the Chinese.

In fact, in the main Chinese Christian Church magazine, one of the American missiologists said that this is really the main thing and that Chinese people don't need to think in terms of working outside their own culture. A message I gave in Hong Kong a few weeks ago is the exact opposite of this, as I very strongly

feel that Chinese people can be reaching out to the Muslim world, to Africa, to Turkey. We have a number already in Pakistan, even going to South America, and we feel strongly about this.

A number of the Chinese leaders have now expressed sympathy with this strong conviction of OM, and they will probably reprint the entire text of this rather strong message in the Chinese Church magazine within the next few months, which should bring a few interesting reactions. Keep in mind that if overseas Chinese people are to go back to China, they will in fact be engaged in cross-cultural evangelism, because apart from the face and the language, they are going to a totally different culture of people that have had over 20 or 30 years of a whole new culture. And this is why we feel cross-cultural evangelistic training is so essential, even for overseas Chinese.

We were just thrilled with the response to the ship visits to Hong Kong. The ship Lagos right now is in Taiwan, another one of the largest manpower sources for overseas Chinese people. Taiwan, and the same is true of Malaysia, are not really happy about their people going back to China.

I think it's against the law in Malaysia, but in fact when you go into China as an overseas Chinese, you don't even need your passport. They have other ways to welcome you, and so you can still go in to those countries. I think it's to understand some of the dangers as China becomes somewhat, I re-emphasize, somewhat of an open door, and I'll be bringing out some of these dangers later on in the evening.

As we think about a possible ship visit, I think it's important to understand what we would want to do. Number one, we would want to encourage the believers. I might insert here that if any of you are journalists or media people, that you somehow not put this into the press.

It probably won't do much harm, but we prefer not to take the chance, because so often the things get out of context, and so it may end up in the press. We would prefer to keep this rather quiet, even though of course it will all be done openly. It's just that people so easily get things mixed up.

There is no plan for any large-scale evangelistic invasion of China on the part of Operation Mobilization. Our burden is to go, first of all, to carry on an educational book exhibition, which we trust will allow at least a few Christian books. It will be a miracle, though in fact the Chinese government has shown an interest in this type of book exhibition.

We believe that with the ship Lagos, and people living together, and the Chinese government already knows that we're Christian, and what we practice in simple lifestyle and community living on the Lagos, that this will be a demonstration of the reality that there is in Jesus Christ. Chinese, Americans, Europeans, Africans, Australians, all living together on this ship. There's unlimited opportunity for personal work in China right now, whether you're a tourist, overseas Chinese, there's very little hindrance in just carefully sharing Christ personally.

We also would like the ship visit to be an encouragement to the Chinese Church. This will all be done by word of mouth. There would be no great publicity, but people traveling on the inside within China, once it becomes a reality, will just spread the word around, and they will come.

I met a lady in Hong Kong who had just come out of China, now working in Hong Kong. She heard with great joy and praise on the radio, one of the great ministries into China, about the ship Lagos ten years ago. And she just was so thrilled to know that there even was such a ship.

And of course, with so many Chinese young people working on the ship, it also has enormous possibilities. Keep in mind that many overseas Chinese do not speak Mandarin. Though even in Singapore right now, there is a major drive to get all the Chinese people in Singapore learning Mandarin, which is the main language of China.

Many overseas Chinese speak various dialects. Hong Kong, the people mainly speak Cantonese. The China Graduate School of Theology is all taught in Cantonese.

And so, even the Chinese have to do, in many cases, some language learning if they're going to be effective in mainland China. Keep in mind, of course, also in China, many people, especially older people, speak these dialects. There are many, many other non-mainline Chinese languages spoken in China.

I was just reading an article about these minority groups, like the Tibetans and the people up along the Mongolian border. Many, many other minority groups. And they represent some of the most unreached people in all the world.

Even if the ship does not go into China, there are great possibilities of teams, in a very informal way, going in from Hong Kong and just doing what they can to help and encourage the Church. We'll be talking a lot more about that later on. I think at this point, however, it would be good to go to our slide presentation, especially since I haven't seen it myself.

And we just wish that Peter could be with us in person this evening, as he is responsible for helping develop China, especially in connection with a ship visit. But we're happy that he made this tape, even when he was feeling ill. So we'll go to that right now.

Millions of Christians around the world have been praying for Communist China during the past 30 years. In March 1980, two of Operation Mobilization's ship line-up men made a visit to Communist China. Gotek Chin and myself, Peter Conlon, from England, were able to make this journey, which took us many thousands of miles, around mainland China.

We began our journey in Hong Kong, as we boarded this Communist Chinese train that was going to take us into Canton, the city on the Pearl River. And then from Canton, we flew up to Guilin City, central China, and from there on to Peking, many hundreds of miles north. And from Peking, across to the coastal city of Shanghai, before returning to Canton, and then back to Hong Kong.

The night before going into China, we packed our suitcases with Bibles and New Testaments and Gospel tracts, and asked that God would give us opportunities, not only to meet the government officials that we needed to meet with to discuss the visit of the Lagos, but opportunities of meeting His people wherever we went, and sharing the Gospel with those that had never heard the name of Jesus. Praise God, as we sped from Hong Kong to Canton on board this Communist train, our baggage was never searched, and we were able to take in the Bibles and hymn books and the tapes and many other things that we had brought for the Christians that we were to meet on the way. And arriving in Canton City, one of the first things you become aware of is that all that you've heard about China is partly true, but then there are changes taking place.

And even the green and grey Mao uniforms are now giving place to more brightly coloured jackets and clothes. And thoughts of Mao Tse-Tung being replaced by other thoughts. Mr. Gao was our Chinese guide for Canton, and we had many wonderful opportunities of sharing the Lord with him as we talked about his

life and about China.

He told us that you have to be 28 if you're a male in China before the government will allow you to get married, and 26 if you're a female. And we arrive now from Canton by air to the beautiful city of Guilin. One of the results of the Cultural Revolution was the removal of all signs of rank, and you can't really tell a general from a private except by the number of pockets in the tunic.

That apparently is the way you can now tell a person's rank. Our taxi driver in Canton, when asked what she would like from the West that we have that they don't have in China, she answered with one word, liberty. It's the older people in China that still remember Christianity, and it was some of the older folk that we talked to that told us about the church that was there in Guilin many, many years ago.

And they told us that now it had been turned into a printing press. In fact, during the Revolution, they took over the church and began printing communist propaganda from inside the church. After quite a search, we finally discovered there behind this modern building, you see the general outline of what was once the Evangelical Church in Guilin, and how sad to go inside and see the printing presses churning out the propaganda.

And where once hundreds of people had gathered and sang praises to the Lord Jesus and prayed together and fellowshiped and together, now just the clatter of the communist printing presses. Where once texts had been up on the wall, now just the thoughts of Mao Tse-tung. And where the cross had been, you now see the poster of Mao Tse-tung and Chairman Hua actually themselves beginning to disappear.

We asked the people in this printing press if they knew what the building had been used for in the early days, and they laughed and they said they thought it had been an American Jesus house. The following day, we departed by riverboat on a seven-hour journey, which would take us down the river to the famous limestone mountains of Guilin. And finally, we arrived at the village of Yangzhou, which is 2,000 years old.

And Goh-Tek Chin and I prayed that the Lord would give us an opportunity in this village to get away from the tourist group that we were with, and to meet the people. Children came to us wherever we were. Of course, they wanted their picture taken.

God gave us the opportunity of meeting this doctor who was the village doctor, and he told us that he had never, ever seen a Bible in his life. He had heard just a little about Christianity from what he called the past generation, but he said his generation knows nothing of Christianity. And when Tech Chin shared his testimony with him, Dr. Yang was visibly moved with what he heard, and said that he himself was searching for fulfillment in his life.

He very happily received a New Testament from us, and promised that he would read it. Back in Guilin that evening, we visited a local opera. No longer the revolutionary operas of the past 30 years, but during the past few months, the government have allowed the more traditional folk operas and love stories.

After the performance, we went backstage and had a chance to meet the stars and talk to them. And then the Lord gave us an unusual opportunity. In the theater was a piano, and we played the piano.

Tech Chin sang hymns, and the people loved it, and they invited us back the next night to be part of the program to play and sing some more hymns. Some of the older people appeared to recognize the tunes that we were playing. To my great delight, I discovered a table tennis club there in Guilin, and this

particular section is for training up to six-year-olds.

Then they have another section for up to 12-year-olds. And in China, the way they produce world champions is they get them when they're young and train them, and of course that's how they also train them in communism from a very early age. And then on from Guilin, a five-hour plane journey through Peking.

We really felt that people were praying for us on this journey, especially one night after midnight, and we were to visit this Christian brother and deliver scriptures to his home. And as we crept down this dark alleyway, suddenly a torch light flicked on, and a voice rang out, where are you going? What are you doing? And then in the same moment, floodlights illuminated the whole area, and then soldiers surrounded us. And I said to Teck Chin, quickly, ask them the directions for the Peking Hotel.

And he asked them in Mandarin where the Peking Hotel was. They started laughing and looking at me as a foreigner, and obviously lost and wandering around the alleyways off the Forbidden City. And finally the lights went out and they pointed us in the right direction, and off we went.

I discovered later that the lights were attached to the side of the building which we were next to, which was the main security headquarters for all of China. And we'd been caught wandering around the side walls of that security center. And then just a few minutes later, as we're walking back to the hotel, down a small road, one man came walking towards us, and it was this brother Wong.

He told us that he'd been in his home praying, and the Lord had just burdened him to, he thought there was something wrong, something had gone wrong. And so he left his home, and he went into the streets to search for us. And he found us, and we arranged then to meet him the following morning, and deliver scriptures to him.

And we felt many, many times on this trip that the Lord's hand of protection was upon us as people were praying. The following day we were able to go into the Forbidden City, which is the ancient home of the emperors of China. Now it's a tourist attraction.

Again in Peking, we found that the older people were happy to talk about Christianity, and the days before the Cultural Revolution. Here we are approaching the Wall of China, but before we get to the Great Wall of China, we find a remnant of the ancient Wall of China, the first attempt to build a wall across China. But then we now come to the Great Wall of China, the only man-made object visible from a satellite.

That's the statistic that the Chinese government give you, that it's the only man-made object that you can see from outer space, if you're looking at the world, at the globe. When we finally made it to the top of the wall, the Lord gave us a wonderful opportunity to have an open-air meeting, and share with these young Chinese students that were up there on the wall, and then to give them gospel tracts in their own language, which they of course were very excited to receive as a souvenir of our meeting with them. Brother Wong had given us directions for getting to the one and only church, at least the one and only government-approved church in Peking, which was opened last year.

It's a part of this building, and the morning we were there, 140 people packed the church room out, as we worship together. And the pastor, in the employ of the government, is welcomed by some of the Christians. He is suspected by others of being a government agent.

All we have to say is that the morning we were there, he preached an excellent message on sacrifice. One man came to that church service in desperate need of a Bible, and when asking the pastor afterwards if he could have a Bible, the pastor said, we have no Bibles. And Teck Chin, who understood what was going on, spoke to him and said, we have some Bibles that you can have.

And this man had traveled more than 400 miles in the hope of getting a Bible, and we were able to give him. The morning break of the golden shore, safe in the arms of Jesus, safe on his gentle breast, there by his love forsaken, sweetly my soul shall rest. All the way my Savior leads me, what have I to ask besides? Can't I doubt his tender mercy, whose life I dream I guide? Heavenly peace, divinest comfort, here by faith in him to dwell.

For I know water before me, Jesus with all things well. For I know water before me, Jesus with all things well. All the way my Savior leads me, cheers each winding path I train.

Give me grace for every trial, peace with weight and living bread. Though my weariest days may falter, and my soul a thirst may be, gushing from the rock before me, no offspring of joy I see. Gushing from the rock before me, no offspring of joy I see.

Little did my wife and I realize when we came out of China, and we took the risk of asking this meeting to be organized, that we would have such a testimony as we just had tonight. To many of you who are young and who perhaps do not know about China, it may not be as significant, but to some of you who have been around and perhaps even a few Chinese missionaries, then you know the significance of what we have just been able to see and witness. When I arrived in Hong Kong, it was just being whispered around the whole city confidentially that Ming Dao had been released from prison.

Truly this is a great challenge. Let's just commit this final 20 minutes of our time together to the Lord as we bring this challenge of China and the world to a close. Lord, just really guide us now as we come to the end of our time together, as we focus on your word, as we continue to consider other major facts about China and about the world.

I will just give you the praise in Jesus' name. Amen. Luke chapter 10, verse 1. After these things, the Lord appointed other 70, also and sent them two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself would come.

Therefore said He unto them, the harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few. Pray therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He would send forth laborers into His harvest. Go your ways, behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves.

Carry neither purse, nor bag, nor shoes, and greet no man by the way. And into whatever house you enter first, peace be to this house. And if the Son of Peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it.

And if not, it shall turn you or to you again. And in the same house remain eating and drinking such things as they give. For the laborer is worthy of his hire, though not from house to house.

And into whatever city you enter and they receive you, eat such things as they set before you. And heal the sick that are there and say unto them, the kingdom of God has come near unto you. But into whatever city you enter and they receive you not, go your ways out into the streets of the same and say, even the very dust of your city which clingeth to us, we do wipe off against you.

Notwithstanding, be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God has come near unto you. But I say unto you that it shall be more tolerable in the day of Sodom than for that city. What an amazing challenge.

The harvest truly is plenteous and the laborers are few. In Matthew 9, it's followed by that command, pray ye therefore, the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into the harvest. I come back from China and Hong Kong and that part of the world, first of all on a note of praise.

And I hope you will return to your home tonight. On a note of praise. God has greatly answered prayer in China all during these years.

In fact, they estimate today that there's still two to four million Chinese believers. Most of them have been meeting in secret. Many of them during the Cultural Revolution around 1966, many were imprisoned, some were killed, Bibles were burned in bonfires and every vicious wild thing that one could imagine in terms of persecution took place.

But now this is considered a great mistake by the present Chinese government. And they are very much open about saying that they don't believe this was right, that which took place in the so-called Cultural Revolution. It's an amazing thing how God protected his people during that time.

Many were put in prison and are only coming out of prison now. I met a doctor in Hong Kong, just out of prison, been there for some six or more years. No one knows, no one ever will know, the total story of all those who have been in prison for their faith.

But certainly that alone is a challenge that we cannot forget. Just this one testimony we've seen and heard on the screen, I believe should cause each one of us to search our own hearts about our own walk with Jesus Christ, and whether we're really committed to the kind of Christian faith these people know about, or perhaps just caught up in some culturally twisted, saturated, secondary type of Christianity that, as Tozer says, has little relationship to what we read about in the New Testament. So first of all, I come back with a note of praise.

Churches are opening. A number of the official churches are opening. Some of them are having attendance of one in two thousand people.

Some of the people in the underground or the house churches see this with mixed motives. The Three-Self movement again is coming into a more significant role, the sort of official church-control organization that originally persecuted especially some of the stronger evangelical leaders. The situation in China has always been complex and will continue to be very complex, and that's why I want to try to avoid any generalizations or heavy statements that I'm not sure about in my challenge this evening.

I have been researching China to a very small degree for many years. I especially have been doing my homework over the past weeks. The more I read, the more complex the situation seems to be.

Many people in their writings about China are very strong about the mistakes made by missionaries 30, 40, and 50 years ago. It's true, great mistakes were made. Someone pointed out that the excess amount of money in the early evangelization of China created weak Christians in some cases.

One out of every seven Christians in China was working for the missionaries to China or the institutions. Liberalism and liberal missionary work was very strong in China and quickly divided the church. Some of the groups in China went into extremes, and of course, no one will ever know all the stories.

I personally like to emphasize God's sovereignty. I'm sure missionaries have always made mistakes. I'm sure they made mistakes in the book of Acts as well.

I'm not excusing those things. It's not for me to do that, but I believe God sovereignly ruled, and though mistakes were made, the fact that there's 2 to 4 million, some say 10 million believers today is an indication of what God did and what has continued, especially through prayer over the years. I was told by one of the leading research authorities in Hong Kong that he had just been in an area, a province, where there were 1 to 2,000 house churches meeting.

Again, these statistics seem almost unbelievable. On the other hand, when we realize the size of China, one-fourth of all people in the world, I think then we can understand a little better some of these statistics and some of these important factors that we need to keep in mind. I was encouraged and challenged by this little article that I read in a periodical.

I was told of one church in Shanghai led by an 84-year-old pastor who could no longer walk because his feet were shot full of holes during the Cultural Revolution. He requested one Bible for his congregation of 1,000, saying they will copy the Bible in its entirety by hand. He said he would return the original copy if the Bibles were not readily available.

It seems unbelievable. And so I come back with a note of praise, but then also I come back with a burden to see the Scriptures going in to China. OM has been involved, and to some degree indirectly involved, in taking large quantities of Scriptures into a number of closed countries, about 10 closed countries over the past two decades.

Even when we first started in Spain, all of our distribution had to be carefully done through the post and through other methods. We have always had this strong conviction that the Word of God needs to go into every nation. If especially the National Church within China is requesting Scriptures, and if they are more than willing to make the connections to collect whole suitcases filled with Scriptures, then it would be a great mistake on our part not to supply them.

It will be complex. In some ways, it will be controversial. Keep in mind that at present, these Scriptures are not generally being smuggled in.

There may be some smuggling, but one of the instructions on one of the leading groups carrying Scriptures into China is, number one, do not try to hide literature in your luggage. We are not smugglers. People are just loading their entire suitcases with Bibles and just carrying them in.

And as far as I know, in most cases, they are not telling any lies. Generally, they're not asked to even open the suitcases. How long this will last, only God knows.

But certainly, this is the hour to take advantage. If you know anything about literature distribution into the Soviet Union, you will know that it is probably ten times that hard to get literature into the Soviet Union. I was with a man in Finland who used to carry it in on his body.

He was quite a heavy man and would go on radical, heavy diets, losing enormous amounts of weight, reload himself with Scriptures, and go into the Soviet Union. A number of women tried this as well, and some of them were caught. But no one knows all the heartbreak and all the struggles in attempting to get Scriptures into the Soviet Union.

At present, China is incredibly easy, and it doesn't even take any kind of smuggling operation. This will continue perhaps to be controversial, but almost all the major groups I was involved with in Hong Kong at present feel this is something we should be doing. Some feel that mainly we should just take Bibles.

One of the burdens and visions of OM has always been to try to emphasize, together with the Scriptures, other powerful Christian books, helpful books for pastors and Christian leaders, challenging books, and generally we have found that the national believers agree. They would like other books as well. So far there is very little material, and so one of our goals will be to work with a number of different groups in an attempt to see some outstanding Christian books going into the new script and distributed within China.

The most famous book in China, next to the Bible, is Mrs. Kalman's book, *Streams in the Desert*. Keep in mind also that many of the older Chinese believers especially can read the older Chinese books by Ming Dao and by many other men of God. So the challenge for literature is very, very great.

At present there is quite an enormous supply of literature in Hong Kong. One edition of 100,000 New Testaments, 70,000 remain. Most of the people agreed with me at present that the bottleneck again was distribution.

To go in as a tourist is expensive. In fact, generally speaking, any kind of work in China at present is expensive, travel and all the rest. And so it's not just a matter of trusting God to release finance for scriptures.

That generally comes somewhat easily, at least in some countries, but to also see God releasing personnel and also the finance that we may see people go into these countries, especially overseas Chinese. I also came back with this burden, which I've already touched on, to see overseas Chinese returning to China. In fact, Goh Teck Chin was the first person I was able to have a strong go at as he was planning to go off to seminary in the States for a year.

I felt quite strongly that I felt in the light of the challenge and the open door of China that such a move right now would be the height of the ridiculous, and I'm glad he agreed. This is the hour for overseas Chinese people, especially who have had some training like Goh Teck Chin, to think in terms of mainland China. Overseas Chinese people can go in very easily.

They can buy property. Many of them know the language, and it is an amazing opportunity. And I feel we must stand behind the overseas Chinese in every way possible.

Recruiting, challenging, encouraging, teaching, supplying with literature, buying suitcases. We have a good contact for suitcases. I just brought about 15 more back from Switzerland.

Whenever anybody gets a damaged suitcase with Swiss Air, they get a new one, and somehow, indirectly, OM gets the old one. We also have this burden to somehow launch a ministry of cassettes. Again, this is just beginning.

Ming Dao shared with Peter Conlon his vision for cassettes. There are not so many cassette recorders in China, but there are some. Cassette recorders can be purchased in Singapore at incredibly low prices.

In fact, I just purchased another 50 at less than 12 pounds sterling for a cassette recorder. We long to see cassette recorders and cassettes going throughout China. Some of you know about the burden we have for Super 8 film ministry.

Already, in sharing this with a few leaders in Hong Kong, it seems to be a fantastic possibility. Pilgrim's Progress is already in Chinese. Can you imagine the impact of Christian films within China? By using a Super 8 projector, you have something that's very small, can be carried in a briefcase the size of mine, and the film isn't much bigger than a reel-to-reel audio cassette.

And so we long to be able to do something in the area of Super 8 films. It'll be a long time, probably before video cassettes are very much used in Communist China. One of the things that hit me in the time that we were in and though we were there only a short time, we had a unique tour because it was overland to villages and towns.

And we saw several different villages and brigades, as they call them, the very unique Chinese work structure, and then quite a large city. And we just saw that this is still an incredibly poor country, very much reminded us in some ways of even villages within India. And if you think that China is some great advanced nation and have worked their way out of poverty, obviously you haven't been there.

The masses of China are still very poor. I think the miracle of China, and the government has to be given credit for that, is as far as we can see most people are eating. And most people have at least some degree of shelter.

It's a very, very big challenge when we think of one-fourth of the population in this particular condition. Some of the dangers I believe we will have to face, and I'm speaking now of the whole Church as we think of China, are something that I'd like to mention at this point. First of all, there's the danger of making the same mistakes as in the past.

I can't go into this in detail, but anyone interested in China should do research, should go through orientation, should study some of the problems, should get to know Chinese Communism, and should understand the wrong image that Christianity had back in 1947 and those years in many parts of China. I feel, and many other Christian leaders feel, this is important. Another great problem is the danger of a China bandwagon.

We don't want this meeting to be part of a China bandwagon, though the people who are using that expression, they need to be careful, because there's always a danger in making some strong pronouncement about avoiding the China bandwagon, that we will avoid China altogether. What does this man mean by bandwagon? We certainly must be interested in China. Some of us have been for many years, ex-Chinese missionaries who we've been involved with for two to three decades.

I don't think it's a bandwagon for these people. Men like David Adney, who's returning again within the next few months, are mature Chinese-speaking men. And so, this is an area where we need to find balance.

It will be a deadly mistake if at present we think that large numbers of Western missionaries can return to China. As far as we can see, there is no open door for standard Western missionary work in China. If that door does come, it will make the situation even five times more complex than it is at present.

Because a mad rush of all the different denominations, and all the different groups especially, who often fight among themselves, back to Communist China could be a very distasteful thing, and result in an enormous backlash that could even set the Church back. A greater need is to stand behind the National Church, to give them the tools to complete the job, to send in perhaps some people on short-term visits,

especially if they're delivering scriptures, or if they're in some specific ministry, especially after they've had basic training and orientation. One man who went into China and wrote something of China during the Cultural Revolution, and who saw the commitment and the discipline of the Red Guard, and then went back to Hong Kong, and compared it with the lethargy and the lack of discipline among the average Christian young person, felt that somehow there was a great imbalance between the kind of committed, fanatical Communists, and the kind of person we find shuttling in and out of the sanctuary in the 20th century.

Perhaps a study of the writings of A. W. Tozer, and men like Watchman Nee, Ming Dao, and others, would be basic in preparing people for a really effective and disciplined ministry within China. There could be a sudden change. This very easily could happen, which would result in even more people being in jail, and even some people who went in as overseas Chinese suddenly might find themselves unable to come back and facing prison or something else.

The situation, I'm sure, is unpredictable in a number of ways. Another danger is, I believe, giving too much publicity to China. I was frightened as I saw an advertisement in an American Christian magazine about a million Bibles for China.

Personally, I feel these kind of advertisements, which should give the impression that suddenly hundreds of people and millions of Bibles are going to come pouring into China, that if this kind of thing gets released and gets into China, could bring a quick backlash that will tighten things up. The fact of the matter is, we are nowhere near even getting toward the first million, as far as I can see in the research that's being done of most of the groups that are taking scriptures into China. We are talking about tens of thousands at present, maybe soon a couple hundred thousand.

But false impressions can be given. There will definitely, I believe, appear on the scene within the next year, totally false groups raising money for China. It happened in connection with the Soviet Union.

One of the most chaotic missionary fields and missionary enterprises I know of is the work into Eastern Europe. And it certainly will happen with China, because people who are just looking for easy money, probably in North America, and not over here, because that's where the big money is, they think anyway, there will be false or unethical groups raising money for China and for Bibles that probably will never get there. And I think we need a warning to do our homework and to do our research and to cry out to God that somehow wrong publicity will not go forward.

Another great challenge in connection with this whole work and also the vision God has given us is in connection with overseas Chinese. There are still millions and millions of overseas Chinese and most of them don't know Christ. Let's reach these people for Christ.

Let's increase all of our efforts to reach overseas Chinese with the realization as these people get converted to Christ, and this includes people from mainland China who are studying overseas, though they are only a small segment of overseas Chinese, it includes them. In some countries there are a lot of them. To see some of these people reached, converted to Christ, and sent back to their own country certainly would be one of the great miracles in answer to prayer.

Also, let us stand in fervent prayer for the continued radio ministry into China. The radio stations beaming into China are getting more letters back than ever before, and it really is an encouraging thing. This is a ministry that some of you have been behind for many years, and I trust that it will continue.

I trust that as we go to our homes we will be able to take a little extra time in prayer for China. You may think suddenly OM is going to become mainly at work in China. No, after we left China and we went back to our first love, the land of India, and God opened the way because we were on a ship, famous British ship, to spend two days in Bombay with our leaders who gathered together from all over the country.

The fact of the matter is what I saw in China, what I read about China, what I learned in Hong Kong, only gave me a deeper conviction that the primary target of our work and our manpower at present still must be the subcontinent of India. India is where China was, perhaps in the 1930s, in some ways wide open. Yet there are probably 200 million people in India that have yet to have the gospel, especially considering the 75% illiteracy rate.

Through a new advance forward with films, we hope to soon have 25 projectors and teams. Through an increase of literature, we placed another order for 15 million pieces of literature. Through the army of 350 dedicated workers in India, we are faced with an open door that is staggering to the imagination.

And I hope it doesn't seem like a contradiction because I hope it will just be a paradox that as we go from this meeting about China, it will be with a continued burden for India. Because this is a place where British people can go. You can be there by next October and you can stay there the rest of your life.

And you'll be accepted and you'll be understood. And it is by far still the greatest challenge facing the Commonwealth people, the only people who can go into India without much difficulty in the present situation. The challenge of India, together with Bangladesh, Pakistan, and the surrounding countries, even in terms of population, is almost as great as China.

And yet it's 100 times easier to reach a person in India for Christ right now than it is China. If we fail to reach India, I believe it will be a tragedy that bypasses anything that ever happened in China. Let's commit ourselves, yes to China, yes to India, to the Muslim world, but really to the whole world.

And this is our first burden for tonight. You've heard some information that up to now not many people have yet heard. What will you do with it? C.S. Lewis said we have the tendency to think but not to act.

We have the tendency to feel like when we see slides, but not to act. If we go on thinking and feeling without acting, someday we will be unable to act. I pray that none of us will get into that state when we think of challenges so ripe, so tremendous as China and as India.

For so many churches today, world missions is a matter of token commitment. It's been proven a hundred times over, but it is my prayer that those of us who have been brought together in God's providence tonight will go from here with a total commitment. As Maxwell says in his book, world missions, total war, and that demands total commitment.

Let us pray.

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