

MISSION MOVEMENT OF THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY IN MAINLAND CHINA:
THE BACK TO JERUSALEM MOVEMENT
(DRAFT)

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I. Introduction

Christianity first appeared in China in the 7th Century through the efforts of Nestorian missionaries from Central Asia, followed by Catholic Missionaries. The Protestant branch of Christianity arrived in China in the early 19th Century along with the colonial expansion of Western countries in Asia.¹ The Christians or Christian community in China (hereafter in this paper referred to the Protestant Community in China) grew from a humble beginning of just a handful of converts in the early 1850s, to almost a million in 1949 after a century of labor by tens of thousands of missionaries sent from the West. These almost million Chinese Christians were an insignificant group in the midst of a Chinese population of 450 million at the time when the People's Republic of China was formed in October 1949. The majority of Christian-operated social institutions, such as schools and hospitals, still heavily relied on financial support from Western mission board and agencies. The Christian community in China, like all other religious groups, went through harsh periods of political suppression under the Communist Regime of the People's Republic and eventually ceased to exist in public. It was not until 1979 when the Chinese Government began to allow sanctioned religions to operate in the open, albeit with many restrictions, that Christian activities began to reappear. Since then Christians in China² recorded a phenomenal growth, from a mere 3 million in 1982³, estimated by the Government, to anywhere between 18 million⁴ to 80 million⁵ to the extremely high figure of 130 million.⁶ A reliable working figure is 35 to 40 million, including both the registered and unregistered Christian groups.⁷ The estimate of 35 to 40 million Protestants may err on the conservative side.

The growth of Christianity in China since the last two decades in the 20th Century till the first decade in this Century coincides with the global shift of Christianity from its traditional locations (particularly Europe and North America) of the Northern hemisphere to former Third World countries primarily located in the Southern hemisphere, such countries as South Korea, Nigeria, China and Brazil. It is in the latter countries where the fastest growing, and sometimes the largest Christian churches are to be found.⁸ Some authors now consider that, in absolute numbers, China may well become one of the major centers of Christianity in the 21st century by the sheer number of new converts, standing alongside Nigeria, Brazil and Korea.⁹

During the same period of time when the Chinese Christian community enjoyed the fastest growth, China as a nation emerged from economic obscurity with virtually no engagement with world trade and a large segment of population living under the absolute poverty line. It transformed itself into the world's third largest import-and-export entity since 2004¹⁰, and by February 2009 the largest holder of foreign reserve in the world with almost 2 trillion dollars holding.¹¹ During the past 25 years, the economic growth of China generated some astonishing figures: GDP went through a 15-fold increase, exports increased 55-fold, and foreign reserves multiplied by almost 5,000.¹² The rise of China generates global awareness, the Made-in-China goods flood the world market, and China's economic tentacles reach into virtually every country. With the recent global Financial Tsunami, China is in the limelight, as China seems to be the only major economic entity that could have sufficient financial capability to jump-start the global economy.

If we look at China's economic development and Chinese Christians' growth, we cannot ignore the possible ramifications on global mission as we compare the experience of Korea in Church growth and economic growth since the 1970s. Is it possible that the Korean experience in mission development—backed by strong economic and ecclesial growth during the 1970s, iconized by the Seoul Olympics in 1988, resulting in Korea becoming one of the largest missionary-sending countries in the world in recent years—can be applied to China? Some already speculate that the Christian community in China may one day become the world's largest exporter of missionaries, and that this mission force may be the one that will finally Christianize the 'last frontier' in missions.¹³ This last frontier is popularly known in evangelical Christian circles as the "10/40 window",¹⁴ an area which embraces the predominantly non-Christian region stretching from East Asia to the Middle East and North Africa.

The missiological notion that Chinese Christians will be the key player in the final hurdle of global evangelization runs parallel with the socio-political notion that China will be the ascending nation of the 21st Century dominating global affairs as USA had been in the 20th Century. As China exports shoes, refrigerators, television sets, language schools and construction laborers all over the globe, so it seems that the Chinese Christian communities will send missionaries to spread the Good News to every frontier in this world! Is this wishful missiological thinking based on the Korean paradigm of mission development *vis-à-vis* its contemporary national and ecclesial growth? Or could this missiological vision be merely a nationalistic desire of Chinese Christians fueled by nationalistic aspiration of a strong China reclaiming her former glory as the center of the world, hence paralleling a Chinese Church that would fulfill the Great Commission as the catalytic element ushering in the Eschaton for Christendom?

This paper intends to examine a current mission movement, originated in the Chinese Church and advocated by overseas mission agencies, which seems to promote such missiological vision. It is called the "Back To Jerusalem" (BTJ) Movement. The 'Back to Jerusalem Movement' is advocated by unregistered church networks in China, and promoted by Western Christian advocates in overseas, with the original aim of sending 200,000 Chinese missionaries to the Muslim world within 10 years.¹⁵ It has attracted attention among mission agencies worldwide, some of whom support this immensely ambitious project and regard it as the final leg in the global evangelistic relay of missionaries beginning with Occidental missionaries and now by Oriental missionaries before the End Time. It is the first major mission initiative among the Chinese Christian community in China to do cross-cultural and overseas mission work. This BTJ has already captured the imagination of mission leaders and has now become a growing movement with dozens of training centers and scores of students in various stages of training with many already serving in the mission field. Further, what fascinates missiologists is that the whole movement is a totally clandestine operation under the radar of the Chinese Government authority.¹⁶ It is involved primarily with non-registered Christian communities in China, hence technically all illegal and underground, and with field operations in countries that ban all missionary activities.

Given the difficult political and social context of Christian existence in China, namely the high degree of Governmental control on Christian activities and a highly regulated media that is allowed to publish only politically correct material (even those Christian materials available in the officially-sanctioned Christian communities), many sources used are from oral interviews and from personal observations with little or no "printed" record for security reasons as all of the activities of this BJM are technically illegal in the eyes of the authorities. There are some published materials but details such as names and places are omitted or are altered to protect the current operations. For ethical and political reasons, it is often necessary to respect the confidentiality of some sources. Despite the high degree of secrecy surrounding BJM, this writer believes that there are sufficient materials to do a preliminary analysis on the mission discipleship of this movement, and to assess the missiological implications of this mission movement of the Chinese Christian community in the context of Global mission. It is hoped that this sensitive fieldwork can shed valuable light on the contributions of Chinese Christian communities--often living under severe restrictions--to the global mission endeavor,

contributions which tend to be either totally ignored or grossly exaggerated in Western literature.

II. The Origin and the Background of the 'Back to Jerusalem Movement'

Chinese from the more developed central and coastal areas seldom traveled to the poorer western border areas until the Sino-Japanese War of 1937-1945 when millions of Chinese, especially students, were displaced to the hinterlands as the Chinese Nationalist Government retreated into interior provinces from the advancing Japanese Army. As many Chinese began to realize the underdevelopment of these regions, they organized programs to help develop the 'backyard' of the country as the base to build up defense capacity against the invading Japanese forces. It was also perhaps the first time that many Chinese Christians had the first hand experience on the living situation of the Northwestern border regions of China—which once had been a prosperous region of the Silk Road but desolated due to desertification. This region includes the contemporary Qinghai, Gansu, Ningxia, Inner Mongolia, Tibet and Xinjiang, mostly inhabited by national minorities such as Tibetans, Mongolians, Kazaks and Uygurs. Few Han Chinese would live there as this region was regarded as a frontier area, a wilderness for exiles, bandits and minorities, and ruled by local warlords. The largest among all these administrative regions is Xinjiang, with more than 1.6 million square Km bordering Tibet, Kashmir, Afghanistan, Russia and Central Asia countries.¹⁷ There were a few brave foreign missionaries living in these regions and a few Gospel outposts dotting the Silk Road.

About the same time in the 1940s, several Chinese Christian mission groups who, without knowing each other, all began to organize evangelistic team heading towards the Northwestern part of China. Some were targeting the Western Region or bordering regions in general, others were focusing on the Northwestern part in particular. These people were mostly from either the coastal areas like Shanghai or Shangdong Province, or from the Central areas like Henan or Jiangsu Provinces where Christianity was rather prospering in those areas. This paper will mention the few major ones, and study the last one in detail for the last one is critical to the missiological vision, though, not exclusive, of "Back To Jerusalem" which later became the legendary basis for the current BTJ Movement.

The Northwest Spiritual Band (Xibei Ninggong Tuan) was established by Revd Zheng Guquan from Shangdong Province who called upon people to dedicate their life to serve God living by faith, sharing all things in common, and with a vision to share the Gospel in the frontier of China, namely the Northwestern region.¹⁸ They relied on no formal support from any church or organization but solely on what God provided as they traveled towards the Northwestern direction. They did not require any formal training from their members, but just a dedicated spirit. This mission endeavourer in form of a Spiritual Band or spiritual fellowship was rather popular at that time as Chinese Christians generally thought that a Spiritual Band was spiritually superior to conventional mission groups since conventional mission groups often relied on regular church or denominational support. Further, it was also a reaction against foreign missionaries by the Chinese Christians as most of the missionaries got rather generous financial support from their home Board or Churches, and they lived usually in luxury compared to ordinary Chinese church workers who got a very meager salary from their missionary bosses.

The Northwest Spiritual Band would stop at towns and villages along the route and hold evangelistic meetings for a few days before moving on. They have no fixed itinerary, but rather a general sense of going to Northwestern areas, and they claimed to rely on the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Most of them experienced many hardships yet, from their hymns, they regarded these sufferings and hardships as something that they were proud of, and a necessary cost to pay in order to save souls for God.¹⁹ There was no specific goal or direction except a vague sense of evangelizing the whole world by pressing westward. In fact, few, if any member, knew what lay beyond the next town, much less beyond the border of China, as none of them carried any map!²⁰ They eventually arrived at Xinjiang in the late 1940s, the

vast frontier areas of China inhabited mostly by Muslims of the Uygur people who speak a Turkish dialect. The team members then scattered to different parts of Xinjiang to spread the Gospel if no church was established, or to help out the local church if there was already a church there. They worked among the Han Chinese and with virtually no work among the local Uygurs as none spoke the Uygur language. Almost all of the perhaps few dozen members were arrested by the new Chinese government in the early 1950s, and many spend long jail sentences as “anti-revolutionary elements” and some died in jail. A few are still alive and in their 80s. Some of their descendants carried on this evangelistic zeal, continuing the work of their parents despite the cost, often in life that their parents had paid.²¹

The Christian Native Evangelistic Crusade, CNEC, (later changed the name to Christian National Evangelistic Crusade) was established in 1942 at the then Provisional Capital of China, Chungking, with financial support from Christians in US and mission work operated by Chinese Evangelists. Two of their members, Li Kaiwan and his wife Ze Mingxia, originally serving in Yunnan Province, had requested to transfer to Xinjiang in 1945, just at the end of the Second World War. They felt the call to serve in Northwest China. They joined the CNEC but raised their own support, as Li was a senior official of the Postal Service in Yunnan, a tentmaker in those days. Later Li became the Commissioner for Postal Service of the Xinjiang Province. With the donation from then Governor of Xinjiang, General Zhang Zizhong, also a Christian, they established the first Christian Church in Urumuqi (then called Dihua), the capital of Xinjiang. Eventually the CNEC sent in more people, all were well trained in theology, and established at least 7 churches in Xinjiang by end of 1950²². They became the largest Christian group in the Province, giving shelter to other mission groups. All these Churches were mainly composed of Han Chinese with very few Uygurs. The CNEC was described in a prayer letter published by an American missionary in late 1950 as follows: “They are very closely associated with Mr and Mrs Li, whose ministry at Tihwa (or Dihua, now Urumuqi) will, we believe, if ever it is published, prove to be one of the most glorious chapters in the history of the Chinese Church...they are a group of fine consecrated men and women, most of whom have been trained in Bible school.”²³ Paul Li was ordained in 1946, the first Chinese ordained pastor of this Province. Before the Lis were arrested in the mid 1950s, they managed to run a small theological institute and many of the students were later arrested by the Government and sent as internal exiles to remote parts of the Province as factory laborers. Some managed to establish Christian community at places hitherto there had been no Christian presence, and eventually developed these communities into a Church, such as the Church in Altay just bordering Russia.²⁴ Paul Li spent some years in jail, like most of his colleagues, and later died in the 1960s. All of the churches established by the CNEC in the 1940s are still flourishing today.

The Chinese Christian Mission is a mission group, started just after the Second World War, based in Shanghai. By 1949, they had about a hundred missionaries all over China. A substantially large bloc of their missionaries was from Shangdong Province. They published a nationwide magazine promoting their work. Since 1947, they began sending workers to the Northwest and worked alongside with CNEC and The Spiritual Band. By the end of 1950, they had affirmed their mission goal in Xinjiang as mainly to target the Uygurs, not Han Chinese, as they observed that many other mission groups, such as The Spiritual Band and the later mentioned BTJ group, were evangelizing primarily among the Chinese, not those ethnic minority Muslims.²⁵ They made several expositional evangelistic trips into the remote part of Xinjiang. They began strategic planning, such language studies, methods to evangelize the Uygurs such as medical mission, and recruitment of suitable candidates. Their work was terminated in the early 1950s as the Communist regime put a halt to all mission work in China. Nevertheless, this group was perhaps the only one that made practical plans as well as focusing on the local population as mission target.

One of the smallest, certainly not the least important, was started by Revd Mark Ma in 1943 at a Bible School in Shaanxi after he received a series of visions with the following messages: The Chinese Church should assume responsibility to take the Gospel to Xinjiang

and, in order to complete the Great Commission, to the rest of the world. The pathway of the Gospel has spread in a westward direction, from Jerusalem to Antioch to all Europe, to America, then to the East, from Southeast China to Northwest China, and should carry on from Northwest China all the way back to Jerusalem. The remaining section of the territory is under the power of Islam and the hardest place to embrace the Gospel. This place kept for the Chinese Church as a portion of inheritance, so that the Chinese Church can claim it when the Lord returns. As the Chinese missionaries take the Gospel back to Jerusalem, they will stand at Mount Zion witnessing the return of Jesus Christ. Based on his vision, Revd Ma challenged the students at the Bible school to join and they formed a small Gospel Band called 'The Band that Spreads the Gospel all Over The Place' (*Pinzhuan Fuyin Tuan*). The Constitution noted Matthew 24:14 as the Band's motto, and the sphere of works was to spread the Gospel first to the seven provinces in the Northwestern region of China, then to the "seven countries on the borders of Asia: Afghanistan, Iran, Arabia, Irak, Syria, and Palestine."²⁶ At the last stanza of their Band's hymn, it was stated as: "The Gospel will be proclaimed back to Jerusalem with triumphal hymns. As we look upon from Mount Zion, we praise the Second Coming of Christ."²⁷ Soon, an American missionary in China, Ms Helen Bailey, who heard of Revd Ma's groups, began to promote this group in USA and UK by circulation newsletters via her friends with news of this group translated into English. It is in her first newsletter for this group that she called this Band the "Back to Jerusalem Band." Since then it has been known by this name in the English Speaking world, but not in the Chinese church.

Out of the perhaps few dozen who joined this Band, only three made any mention of Jerusalem on record as their mission desire or calling: Revd Mark Ma Ke (Ma Ke is Mark in Chinese), Ms Grace Ho (or He Enzhen), and Mr Mecca Zhao Maijia (Maijia is Mecca in Chinese). Revd Mark Ma Ke started briefly in Xinjiang and later settled in the interior part of China, Sichuan, for several decades. He never traveled anywhere further west than Urumuqi. Both Zhao and Ma noted in their testimonies that they had visions from God for reaching Jerusalem and desired to meet the Lord there.²⁸ Zhao went to Kashgar in 1949²⁹ and Ho joined him later. Zhao and Ho later married and felt the call to travel further west than other Band members, although still without a clear destination in mind in the late 1940s. In 1949-1950, they planned to go to Afghanistan because the local people had told them that that was the nation just west of China. However, the furthest they reached was Kashgar, still within China and several hundred kilometers from the Afghan border.³⁰ They both died a few years ago without ever leaving China. When this author interviewed Grace Ho in 2002, she had no idea that the Band's name was translated as "Back To Jerusalem Band" in English, much less the current BTJ Movement which claimed to be a continuation of the vision of this Band! However, after this writer's interview with Ho, a month later several BTJ Movement advocators visited Ho and they published a book in 2003 describing Zaho and Ho's experience in Xinjiang trying to realized their dream of preaching the Gospel back to Jerusalem.³¹

One of the original members of this group who was interviewed by the author in detail suggests that the Band had no particular destination in mind to begin with. They simply moved in a generally westward direction as they 'felt the call', without maps, travel plans or information on the region. He suggested that the reference made on preaching the Gospel back to Jerusalem in Band's Hymn was merely a slogan (c.f. Mt. 24:11) than a strategic objective of the Band. Despite their geographical and political naivety, more than half of them managed to reach and stay in various parts of Xinjiang. However, none of them had studied the local language since they had no particular ethnic 'target' group in mind.³² The exception perhaps was Mecca Zhao as he later studied Uyghur not for so much for evangelization but for something more practical in mind, he was re-trained as a seal carver and Kashgar is a bi-lingual city: Chinese and Uyghur.³³ Eventually all mission activity came to a halt in early 1950s in Xinjiang. Some of the Band members stayed in Xinjiang, merging members from other mission groups, and some other members left Xinjiang, such as the team leaders Revd Mark Ma.

III. Back To Jerusalem Movement and Current Status

One Member of the Northwest Spiritual Band, Simon Zhao, spent almost 20 years in jail in Xinjiang. He might have come across BTJ members during his brief work in the early 1950s. When he was released, he became somewhat of a legend among the Christian circle in Xinjiang because of the hymns and poems he wrote reflecting his many years of suffering for his faith which became a great source of comfort and encouragement for other believers.³⁴ Many came to him for spiritual advice. In the late 1990s at one of the church meetings by unregistered church groups in the Province (as some Christian groups were willing to take care of Zhao and they re-located him to Henen), Simon Zhao claimed he had a vision from God that the Chinese Church should preach the Gospel to the Islamic world eventually back to Jerusalem with similar theological justifications as what Revd Mark Ma had claimed in his vision almost half a century ago. In the mid 1990s, the Chinese Church was experiencing a rapid growing phase and at the same time was under extreme Government restriction. No one would have thought of doing mission outside of China as almost all efforts were for the survival for the Chinese Christian community in an atheistic regime hostile to Christianity. It seems to be the first major cross-cultural and cross-border mission initiated by the Christian community in China, a significant development especially in light of the fact that initiating bodies are all clandestine Christian groups operating in an underground manner.

These leaders of the unregistered churches made contact with Chinese churches abroad and, eventually with the mission agencies of evangelical circles, such as the Great Commission Center International.³⁵ A significant figure in this movement was Liu Zhenying, a.k.a. Brother Yun or the Heavenly Man,³⁶ who claimed to have united several unregistered church networks and to spread the 'Back to Jerusalem' vision. Following his escape from prison in China and escape to Germany in 1997, his vision has been popularized in evangelical circles outside of China through the writings of New Zealand missionary Paul Hattaway,³⁷ and was promoted by some independent mission agencies, such as the Open Door. In addition, the BTJ vision has been disseminated through hymns, books, websites, and enthusiastic discussions at mission conferences. In the process, the original idea of evangelizing the Muslim world has been transformed into a call for Chinese Christians to evangelize not only the Muslims but also all the undetached people-groups between China and Jerusalem, such as the Hindus and Buddhists.

Many North American Chinese church leaders act as brokers, linking the leaders from unregistered Christian groups in China with Western mission agencies eager to promote the BTJ vision. This BTJ vision called for massive mobilization of Chinese Christians, as many as 200,000, in 10 years time to be sent to evangelize the Muslim world as the last hurdle of the Great Commission. At the same time, the western mission agencies will provide financial support and training resources; a joint-venture outsourcing model began to emerge. Captivated by this fascinating idea, some groups have organized 'secret' international conferences to promote as well as to co-ordinate this movement. The fact that it would be held in secret reflects the clandestine nature of those groups from un-registered churches in China, as well as the often-illicit nature of evangelization work in most of the targeted Muslim nations. Therefore most of the discussions of these conferences are not available other than what remains circulated among the core players of this movement. But it would be correct to say that BTJ is a *movement* with a plurality of individual and institutional *agents* and a certain unifying *ideology*. There is no real center of this movement as no one single group can, although many tried to, exclusively to claim this movement.

Currently there are at least a couple dozen mission agencies who are actively involved in this movement, with more than a dozen training centers in China and at least another ten abroad, training potential BTJ missionaries; most of these training centers are funded by Western-based mission agencies. Many BTJ Chinese missionaries are already in Middle Eastern countries, and some 'vanguard teams' are in the Middle East establishing support bases and so-called 'caravan stations'. By 2009, Chinese BTJ missionaries could be found in at least 12 countries mostly in Islamic nations, with many more graduates from various training centers ready to be sent out. Their status in the host countries includes that of student,

tourist, business people, agriculture worker, beautician, shopkeeper, and contract worker. This Movement is gaining momentum as the numbers are growing and their presence is being felt in the mission field as more of these missionary candidates are sent out.

IV. The Assumptions for the Current BTJ Movement

The enthusiasm for the BTJ vision outside China seems to be a confluence of the centrality of Israel as a motif in evangelical millenarianism, especially in the United States, and Western fascination with the rise of China and its huge population especially with the reported high number of Christian converts ready to be deployed for mission fields. With the post 9/11 event, Christendom has also placed much more attention on the Islamic world, thus mission efforts to Moslems. The BTJ implicitly regards this Chinese movement as the 'last change of the baton' of global missions; the Gospel that traveled from the Middle East to Europe, and on to North America and thence (via Western missionaries) to East Asia, will now be returned to its starting-point at Jerusalem by the Chinese missionaries. In so doing, it will literally complete the mission-mandate of preaching the Gospel to the whole world, or circle around the world. This is not exactly a new idea for the Chinese Christians because some Chinese church leaders in the diaspora had promoted a similar ethnocentric missionary theme as early as the 1970s.³⁸ However it is a fresh idea for Christians in the unregistered churches in China which has hitherto no exposure to such theme on global mission.

The advocates, represented by Hattaway's book and website for this movement, put forward several arguments to justify this Chinese BTJ Movement regarding the Chinese missionaries as the last baton-carriers of global mission.³⁹ They are summarized as follows. Politically, China has no major political adversaries and is on good terms with virtually every nation. China does not label any other country as part of an axis of evil, and does not engage in name-calling towards any other nation. It can do business simultaneously with Cuba and USA, Iraq and Iran, the Palestinian Authority and Israel, Libya and the UK, North Korea and South Korea. Chinese nationals can go to countries where westerners have difficulty gaining access, especially Islamic and other nations which Christian missionaries would usually find hard to enter.

Experientially, Chinese Christians (especially those from the unregistered sector) have long endured harsh Government suppression and developed a sophisticated form of ecclesial existence to conduct clandestine activities. Such form of ecclesial existence would be rather suitable for new Christian converts in Islamic countries as most of these countries would regard such conversion as illegal and such religious activities to be suppressed by civil authorities. Therefore, the Chinese Christians can offer their experience to the Christian community in Islamic countries of how to avoid detection by the civil authorities.

Ecclesiastically, it is suggested since Christians in China practice a simple form of Christianity devoid of elaborate liturgical, diaconal and institutional structures, such an ecclesial form would therefore be simple to operate, flexible, and cost-effective. Such model of church operation would be suitable for planning new churches in an environment which is hostile to Christianity, such as Islamic countries. Therefore, by having Chinese missionaries, the mission field can operate a stripped down form of Church life ideal for the field situation.

Human resources wise, the Chinese Church also has an ample supply of experienced 'church-planters', as witnessed by the rapid growth of churches even in the hostile environment of Communist China. In addition, even though Christians are still a small percentage of the Chinese population, the absolute numbers are huge, creating a vast virtually endless supply of potential missionary candidates. This huge pool of missionary "laborers" can be easily tapped into and will continue to supply the demand from the field.

Economically, these Chinese missionaries are used to living frugally as most of them are living in the rural areas in China with rather low standard of living. They have also experienced economic hardship and can still manage to survive and to serve. Lifestyle and

living standards of Western missionaries in the field are often at par with Western expatriates in general. Such living standard may become a heavy financial burden for the mission-sending agency. With the same amount of money, a mission agency can easily employ a far greater numbers of Chinese missionaries to serve in the field, an ideal way to maximize the money.

Spiritually, Chinese Christians have also long accepted suffering as a part of Christian reality and are ready to be martyred without hesitation. In fact, one of the advocates, Brother Yun (a.k.a. the 'Heavenly Man') has even suggested that he is prepared to accept 10,000 Chinese martyrs in the first decade of the BTJ operation in order to crack open the Muslim world to the Gospel.⁴⁰ One thing that fuels this disposition for martyrdom is the Adventist belief; there is an eschatological assumption that Jesus will return once the gospel has been preached around the world ending in Jerusalem.

Missiologically, the idea of tens of thousands of Chinese missionaries roaming in the Middle East North Africa (MENA) region evangelizing in secret is extremely attractive to many Western Christians who are frustrated perhaps by the relative fruitlessness of Western mission endeavors among Muslims. As one veteran missionary in a Middle Eastern country told the author, "We have been so lonely laboring for many years with little result. We are so frustrated that we are tempted to jump at any idea, however berserk it may seem."⁴¹ Is it not the time to turn over the mission field from the hands of the missionaries of the Older Church to the missionaries from the younger churches, such as the Chinese missionaries? Is it not that the missionaries from the Older Church already had their chance for more than a Century with little result, and that they should allow others to have a hand in this field? Among the mission agencies, BTJ has been getting an increasing amount of international attention and financial support, especially from pro-Israel, Christian Zionist evangelical and charismatic mission groups.⁴²

Finally, the BTJ movement also draws some geopolitical attention, especially in the post-9/11 geopolitical context. In a hypothetical 'clash of civilizations' scenario between the West and the Islamic world, China would become a highly important 'third player' with which the United States wishes to be allied. David Aikman in his book entitled: *Jesus in Beijing* suggests that the BTJ Movement could be instrumental to ally USA and China to counter the global expansion of Islamic influence if a) Christians in China will increase to a point that China becomes a Christian-influenced or even a Christianized nation, like USA, and b) China would send out tens of thousand of missionaries to Christianize the current Islamic region from Central Asia to the Middle East. Since the rapid increase of Christian population is not an idea so far from reality, Aikman would therefore advocate the BTJ idea so that the geopolitical pattern in future would be the opposite of Samuel Huntington's original formulation of the 'clash of civilizations' thesis: instead of Western (Christian) culture confronting an alliance of Middle Eastern (Islamic) and Eastern (Confucian) cultures, the Muslim world might have to confront an alliance of East and West, both outside and within its own borders.⁴³ US would team up with China to check the growth of Islamic influence using Christianity as the force to change the global balance of power.

V. Reflections on these Assumptions

The BTJ movement has drawn divided opinion. Some regard it as a hoax⁴⁴ while others see it as a new mission mandate for 'Christendom'. In spite of the many accusations and refutations⁴⁵ (BTJ, 2005), mainly regarding the handling of finances and claims of authority over the movement, it has drawn endorsements from a growing number of mission agencies worldwide.⁴⁶ With the increasing attention paid to evangelization of the Muslim world, the BTJ movement has gained momentum, especially among overseas Chinese and in the unregistered churches in China. There are also international conferences - often held somewhat confidentially due to the sensitive nature of the content - to promote and coordinate efforts among agencies within the movement.⁴⁷ It is our intention to analyze the theological roots and arguments of this movement and to ponder the possible implications, should the

movement achieve a fraction of what it intends, for world Christianity and international relations.

It is valid that the Chinese churches have a vast supply of potential missionaries. Furthermore, the increasing surplus of Chinese farm workers, perhaps the largest bloc of unemployed or under-employed laborers in the world (numbering 150 million in 2008 and may well be around 250 million in 2009 due to the global economic downturn), may facilitate recruitment of missionaries among rural Christians. But church leaders in the Middle East have stressed that future missionaries to that part of the world should acquire some sort of professional status and have in-depth understanding of Islamic culture.⁴⁸ There are few Chinese Christians who meet those two criteria, especially with regard to quality training in cross-cultural issues.

This writer's personal observation with many BTJ trainees was that they are mostly young people from 20 to 25 years of age with an average education of junior school to senior high school. Only a few have some college education. Most of them come from rural areas with little experience in city life, and almost none had any cross-culture experience outside of China prior their joining the program for training. Almost all lack any professional skill. Also almost all of them, though rich in church ministry experience, had virtually no experience in the secular work place. When this author asked them what they would do in the field, most replied that God would provide them with a suitable status. Some suggested that they like to be a vendor because most of the Chinese in the Islamic world, if they have some money, would open small business such as shops and restaurant. If they lack professional qualification and money, they would become vendors, or cheap laborers—usually illegal—for small business or sweatshops. A missionary recently communicated with this author that he had encountered in Iraq a group of BTJ missionaries from rural China. To his surprise, they had no knowledge of Iraq and certainly none of Arabic. Furthermore, they were pig farmers, not the best profession for gaining acceptance in the Muslim world!⁴⁹ Finding it difficult to get work in their only profession, they subsequently left for another Middle Eastern country.

Some of those involved in training BTJ candidates have echoed such doubts about the suitability of many of their charges.⁵⁰ Other highly optimistic movements to mobilize huge numbers of global southern missionaries (such as the Overseas Filipino Workers) have simply not achieved the expected results.⁵¹ The long history of mission agencies reminds us that candidate selection is crucial in the success of any mission endeavor. Quality, not quantity, seems to count for more in the success of cross-cultural mission work. The potential impact of the BTJ on the Islamic world, at least in the immediate future, will be severely restricted by the limited availability of qualified candidates, rather than by the sheer quantity of missionaries sent.

There are also political and commercial repercussions. If thousands of Chinese BTJ missionaries, perhaps posing as vendors, do in fact flood the bazaars of MENA countries selling Chinese goods, giving testimonies, having home-based worship meetings and passing out tracts, would the local authorities turn a blind eye? Such an influx of missionaries would probably lead them to tighten restrictions on foreign activities in general, on Chinese in particular. The result could be intra-Chinese tension in those countries between those who are genuine merchants and those who are really missionaries. The negative impact on Chinese commercial activities, and the Chinese presence in general, in the profitable Middle Eastern market might prompt the Chinese authorities to take steps not to lose that lucrative market, which might in turn curb the flow of BTJ missionaries from the China side.

The spirit of missionary martyrdom emphasized by the BTJ, accustomed to persecution in China, might make them fearless in the face of the local authorities. But if any Islamic nation took severe measures against apprehended Chinese missionaries, such as execution, the result would be an international outcry, as well as international media coverage that would embarrass the Chinese government. Muslim fundamentalist groups might take some of those missionaries hostage, as in the recent case of Korean missionaries in Afghanistan, leaving the Chinese government no alternative but to use all diplomatic means available to rescue them, like the Korean Government had done. Should several such scenarios occur, China would have to deal with these issues affecting its relations with the Islamic nations, upon which

China depends for oil. The Chinese authority would certainly not trade the loss of Middle Eastern oil in exchange for Chinese Christian missionaries' right to evangelize in those countries. After all, China does not encourage religious development and would highly endorse economic development. The Chinese government might than find excuses to clamp down Christian activities to which they are currently turning a blind eye, and resort to shutting down BTJ training facilities in China as well as restricting the exit of potential missionaries from China. All these measures would have endorsement from the general public, just like the condemnation from the public at large towards those missionary-sending churches in Korea as the Korean Government had to bail out the captured missionaries from Afghanistan.

The BTJ is also subtly ethnocentric, if not racist. It claims the right for the Chinese to own the God-given honor of carrying the baton in the final leg of the round-the-world evangelistic relay marathon. Some Korean Protestants have claimed similar right, based on their high number of missionaries (probably one of the largest mission forces per capita in world Protestantism). Such ethnocentric visions of missionary 'chosenness' lack a sound foundation in Christian theology, for the mission mandate is given in the New Testament to all races of all nations in a co-operative manner. By interpreting divine calling as an exclusive Sino-centric privilege, or the so-called inheritance from God, there is a danger of repeating the racial superiority complex of the White Man's Burden which influenced nineteenth century Western missions.⁵² Would this BTJ Movement be a form of a 'Yellow Man's Burden,'⁵³ likely to generate similar tensions on the mission field as what the "White Man's Burden" had in the past? Currently, some mission leaders are trying to modify the BTJ movement into a general call for the Chinese unregistered churches to do foreign mission. They also try to downplay the Sino-centric element by stressing cooperation between East and West on this final leg of the global mission mandate.⁵⁴ However, such Sino-centric tone is still a strong favor of this movement.

The BTJ seems to emerge as a Christian analogue to the figure of China rising in the global international order. Domestically, the rising of Chinese nationalism, enhanced by the Beijing Olympiad, empowers the Chinese with a sense of confidence to encounter the world, such as more involvement in global affairs and more responsibility to global challenges in contrast to the closed-door policy in the past. The sending of Chinese Naval forces to protect the merchant fleet near the Somalia coast, and the Chinese peace keeping forces in Sudan, are current examples. Such nationalistic aspiration with global concern and global responsibility may easily translate into the evangelistic concern of Global Mission among the Christians in China, a form of nationalism in the Christian context. Internationally, the increasing influence of China in the world market share, and the idea of China as a politically neutral nation⁵⁵ suitable for global involvement, may also facilitate Chinese Christians to position themselves in global mission to co-work, if not to replace, the western missionaries currently in the field. However such assumption would be valid if China is perceived as a non-treating international force and China's national interests in global involvement would not be in conflict with local interests. Unfortunately, the increase of China's commercial presence in Islamic countries from Afghanistan to Mauritania, sometimes involving practices conflicting with Islamic tradition,⁵⁶ has already generated increasing amount of Sino-phobic sentiments out of fear of Chinese market dominance and of a deterioration of socio-religious values.⁵⁷ The Chinese Government's support to some of the regimes, such as Sudan and Zimbabwe, may cause resentment from the local population against the Chinese as well. Such fears will work against the Chinese BTJ missionaries, making it harder for them to be welcomed by local populations. It seems that mission work hitching on seemingly favorable political condition may easily backfire once the political tide has turned.

The argument of endless supply of missionary candidates seems to be based on the China's economic advantage of a massive pool of cheap labor translated into the mission context. This functions as a 'push' factor for the BTJ: in the job market tens of millions of Chinese peasants, with insufficient land to till at home and unable to settle in urban China, are 'available' for any kind of job available to make a better living than idling in the village. So

Christians among this rural population would go any place so long as there is a chance for a better livelihood like their non-Christian peasants. Currently already several millions of Chinese legally or otherwise have left China to seek a better living in more than 150 countries since the mid 1990s as China relaxed its exit requirement for its citizens. The Chinese peasants may have paid up to USD 20,000 for various middle men and bribes to get to a MENA country as contract labor, and he or she would have to pay back the loan with high interest through the first few years of hard labor before this worker can save any money. Should an opportunity arise for these rural Christian to serve overseas, as “missionaries” and all are paid for by mission agencies, there would certainly not be any shortage of applicants. In fact, most of these trainees whom this author had encountered experienced such opportunity to be selected for overseas mission as intensely competitive among applicants. How can the selection process be able to check the motive of the mission candidates to screen off those who just want a free ticket out of China?

From the economic perspective, the BTJ movement talks of a highly cost-effective scheme which is attractive to hard-pressed Western mission agencies eager for quick and sensational results which might elicit donor support. The financial cost of supporting one western missionary (plus family) can easily hire at least half a dozen Chinese BTJ workers! Outsourcing cheap labor-intensive jobs to labor pools of developing countries is a commercial trend to cut cost. Can this commercial method be employed in the mission field? In fact this outsourcing method has been in practice since 1943 in the mission field of China⁵⁸ as US donors contributed money, and the Chinese Church provided mission labor to reduce the cost of sending US missionaries to China. The debate was more rhetoric than administrative, whether those locally hired native staff are considered missionaries or not. However the BTJ Movement goes beyond the practice of hiring local labor to do the ground job, but hiring foreign (hence cheaper) labor for local work, a mercenary model indeed. Should that be the case, and it is already happening in the mission field, is it a new form of international co-operation in mission modeling after the commercial world? This “cost-effectiveness” idea has two problems: first, is it another form of racism as if Chinese BTJ missionaries could not have the same standard of living as the western missionary are currently enjoying? Are not all Christians created equal and should be treated equally? Second, would the mission agency replace those Chinese BTJ workers if cheaper source were available, say, from Vietnam or Nigeria? If one just takes this “cost-effectiveness division of labor” idea a step further, would it not develop into a contract bidding system for a mission project and the job would go to whichever Church group that can provide the best mission service with the lowest cost...say 10 missionaries for 10 years in A country with 10 churches built with at least 100 converts per church for x amount of money, with penalty cost lists? And the Church group that won such bid could sub-contract it to various groups? Who really owns the mission?

There is also the issue of legality. The writer has observed some of these BTJ missionaries enter a field illegally and remain so; others remain illegally after gaining their legal entrance. Some even use counterfeit travel documents to exit China and to enter other countries. Their good conscience about breaking or bending the laws is an extension of the legally dubious status of their churches within China itself. They often justify their dismissal of the legal system to the New Testament injunction to ‘obey God rather than men’ as many of them disregard the need to respect the law if such law hinders the spreading of the Gospel. How would this ethical issue be treated as these BTJ missionaries are operating illegally, trying to build up a clandestine group of converts who would be themselves be arrested as criminals if known by the authority and prosecuted under the law? Where would we draw the line?

VI. Conclusion

China is undoubtedly emerging as a major economic and political power in the international community. The Christians in China together with others from the Younger, hence mostly non-Western, Churches may in the future write the next Chapter of world

Christianity. However, the Christian community in China is but a minority group among 1.3 billion in the diverse Chinese population, and, unlike Korea, still far from being an influential social group even within the Chinese social milieu as most of them comes from the rural areas with limited education and professional skills. Although some may wish for a high figure of Christians in China, such high figure may easily translate into a community high in quantity but not necessary in quality such as spirituality. It takes time to develop spiritual maturity of a community.

The global mission initiative of the Chinese Church is still in its infancy beginning with this BTJ movement originated more than a half a Century ago by a handful of enthusiastic Chinese evangelistic with the misnomer of “Back To Jerusalem” slogan by an American lady. This legacy, almost forgotten, recycled by current Chinese Church leaders perhaps anachronistically, becomes the historical justification that God had long intended Chinese to take up such honorable task at the End Time. There are a few similarities which link the past and the current BTJ Movement: a Sino-centric wish, a vague strain of Christian Zionism, a proactive millenarianism, and perhaps a hint of Apostolic Catholic Movement, and an undefined mission objective other than the idea of ending up eventually in Jerusalem without the specific objectives, i.e. what does it mean to evangelize people along the route all the way from China to Jerusalem?

The current BTJ Movement differs from the previous one by incorporating the current global marketing trend, business model, political ascension of China, and the shifting of centrality of Christendom to the Younger Churches into the picture favoring this Movement. Further, this Movement is further fueled by enthusiastic promotions, personal visions, and a secular business model rather than on serious theological reflections and critical missiological and spiritual considerations.

There are many serious issues yet to be tackled. For example, the increasing presence of large numbers of missionaries from Mainland China in Muslim- dominated areas may cast a different picture for such proselytizing activity is currently regarded as illegal within the context of these nations. Eventually there will be conflicts between these missionaries and civil authorities, and with local religious communities. These conflicts involving Chinese citizens would probably force Chinese authorities to face a political dilemma: to protect its citizen as a responsible nation, or to keep strategic political relationships with these nations. These types of seemingly religious incidents, such as trial or execution of such missionaries may lead to legal matters and end in political and diplomatic crisis. It would also lead to some embarrassing questions: Would China defend religious liberty by protecting its citizens as they conduct proselytizing activities in other countries, like most developed nations do? Yet at the same time, China’s record on religious liberty is far from ideal! It appears that the consequence of this BTJ Movement may easily go beyond the religious, and enters into the complex realm of international politics, a situation that the original advocators might not have considered.

The severe lack of qualified pastoral workers within China due to the rapid growth of Christianity in the past twenty years compounded with the strong Governmental control on normal development of the Church also hinders the availability hence of recruiting of qualified BTJ candidates. The dubious motives of many of these mission candidates within the current Chinese social trend of migration to overseas, the clandestine style of operation lacking accountability and transparency on financial and administrative matters, and the ethical issues with the law both in China and in the mission field, all these factors further cast doubt on the idea that the BTJ will bear strong influence on the development of global Christianity. It appears that the current BTJ Movement are founded more on enthusiastic desires of Western mission groups, nationalistic aspirations of the Chinese, opportunistic mission leaders, the threat from the global expanding Islamic influence, and the mythologized Christian community in China, with the political hedge on the rising of China as the new global power. It will require a lot more serious missiological and spiritual groundwork before it can become a credible and sustainable mission movement bearing impact on global Christianity.

Endnotes

¹ There was a Christian presence in China for centuries prior to the coming of the Protestant missionaries. Nestorian Christians first arrived in the seventh century (see Li Tang, *A Study of the History of Nestorian Christianity in China and its Literature in Chinese*, Frankfurt am Main; New York: Peter Lang, 2004), followed by Franciscans in the fourteenth century. The Jesuit missions began in the late sixteenth Century, see Michela Fontana, *Matteo Ricci: Un Gesuita alla Corte dei Ming*, Milano: Mondadori, 2005) and Russian Orthodoxy in the eighteenth century. Finally, Protestant missionaries appeared on the scene with the arrival of Robert Morrison in 1807.

² This paper deals only with the Protestant community in China. The smaller Catholic community is, like the Protestants, split into recognized and unrecognized sectors, which in the Catholic case are dominated by the complicated issue of the diplomatic tension between the Chinese state and the Vatican.

³ Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, Document # 19. *The Basic Viewpoint on the Religious Question During Our Country's Socialist Period*, 31 March 1982, at Donald MacInnis, *Religion In China Today: Policy and Practice* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1989).

⁴ Amity Foundation, "Church Statistics" Section in *Amity News Service* at <http://www.amitynewsservice.org/page.php?page=1230>

⁵ D. B. Barrett, and T. Johnston, *World Christian Trends* (Pasadena, California: William Carey International University, 2001).

⁶ Qwei Ya, "The Equivocal Relations Between the Chinese House Churches and Chinese Government," in *Voice of America*, January 28, 2009, as quoted by China Aid Association, 27 February 2009, see www.chinaaid.org.

⁷ From the mid-1980s to the mid-2000s, the China Christian Council and the Chinese Protestant Three-Self Patriotic Movement Committee also known as the Three-Self Church, Official Church, or Registered Church, see Kim-kwong, Chan, entry of "Chinese Protestant Three-Self Patriotic Movement Committee" in J. G. Melton and M. Baumann edited, *Religions of the World: A Comprehensive Encyclopedia of Beliefs and Practices*, Vol. 1: A-C (Oxford: ABC-CLIO), pp. 251-252, printed 30 million copies of the Bible and overseas Christian groups brought in at least another 10 million copies. There is also an unknown number of Bibles which are printed privately in the country. This suggests that the estimate of 35 million Protestants may err on the conservative side. See also A. Hunter and K.K. Chan, *Protestantism in Contemporary China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 66-71.

⁸ The largest congregation in the world is generally regarded as the Yoido Full Gospel Church in Seoul, South Korea. It has 860,000 member in 2008, see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yoido_Full_Gospel_Church.

⁹ P. Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 90.

¹⁰ W. Gong, 'Our Country's Exports has, the first time, exceeded USD 1,000 billion,' in *Remin Ribao* [People's Daily] (15 November 2004), see <http://news.sina.com.cn/c/2004-11-15/04444237319s.shtml>.

¹¹ X. Wang "Imports to Get Forex Fund Boost," in *China Daily*, 19 February 2009, see <http://www.cdeclips.com/en/nation/fullstory.html?id=15655>.

¹² China President Hu Jintao's speech at Yale University on 22 April 2006, see <http://www.peacehall.com/news/gb/intl/2006/04/200604220826.shtml>.

¹³ D. Aikman, *Jesus in Beijing: How Christianity is Transforming China and Changing the Global Balance of Power* (Washington, D.C.: Regency Publishing Inc., 2003), pp. 285-292.

¹⁴ The 10/40 Window extends from 10 degrees to 40 degrees north of the equator, and stretches from North Africa across to China, containing the bulk of the non-Christian population of the world, see <http://1040window.org/main/whatis.htm>.

¹⁵ P. Hattaway, *Back To Jerusalem: Called to Complete the Great Commission* (Carlisle: Piquant, 2003). This book, along with the www.backtojerusalem.com Website, becomes the main advocator of this movement. In 2003, this BTJ website suggested to mobilize 200,000 Chinese missionaries within 10 years and this figure has reduced to 100,000 since 2006.

¹⁶ For Chinese Government's policy and regulations on religion, see K.K. Chan and E. Carlson, *Religious Freedom In China: Policy, Administration, and Regulation-A Research Handbook* (Santa Barbara, California: Institute for the Study of America Religion/Hong Kong: Hong Kong Institute for Culture, Commerce and Religion, 2005).

- ¹⁷ This region has undergone tremendous political changes along with rising and falling of nations, changes of names of places and cities, and re-drawing of administrative boundaries. For the sake of convenience, this paper uses the current name and political boundaries with parenthesis to include the former name of a particular location known in the historical period as mentioned in this paper. For example, Urumuqi, the current capital of Xinjiang (Dihua), as it was called before 1950.
- ¹⁸ Personal interview with Cu Hongbao, the surviving co-worker of Revd Zhang Guquan, Urumiqi, July 2002, and later personal letter from Cu dated 15 July 2002.
- ¹⁹ K.K. Chan and A. Hunter, *Prayers and Thoughts of Chinese Christian* (London: Mowbray, 1990), pp. 71-72.
- ²⁰ Personal Interview of a surviving member of the Band, Elder Zheng Jinting, at Hami, Xinjiang, July 2004.
- ²¹ T. Yamamori and K.K. Chan, *Witnesses to Power: Stories of God's Quiet Work in a Changing China* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2000), pp. 1-7.
- ²² Li Kaiwan, "Church Report of Xinjiang," in *Zengdao (True Way) Magazine*, 30 November, 1950, back inner cover. Liu Songsan of Chinese Christian Mission also reported the work of CNEC in 1950, confirming Li's report of continuous church development in that Province, see Liu Songsan, "Evangelistic Journey in Xinjiang," in *Evangelism Quarterly*, No. 14, pp. 23-26.
- ²³ H. R. Thompson, *Chinese Back To Jerusalem Band News Letter* No. 11 (April, 1950), p. 7.
- ²⁴ For example the Church in Altay was established by a lady, a student of Paul Li, who were arrested as Christians and sent to the then remote town at the Sino-Soviet border. She worked at the local shoe factory and spread the Gospel in secret. She is now the head of the Altay Church, personal interview, name withhold for security reason, July 2004.
- ²⁵ Liu Songsan, "Who will save the descendants of Ishmael?" in *Evangelism Quarterly* No. 13 (October 1950), p. 25.
- ²⁶ H. Bailey, *The Chinese Back To Jerusalem Evangelistic Band, A Prayer Call*, mimeograph, no date, no place, (cira, 1950), p. 6.
- ²⁷ A. J. C. Wang, *Silk Route Mission: Story of a Heroic Couple* (Taipei: Campus Evangelical Fellowship, 2003), pp. 184-185.
- ²⁸ Bailey, pp. 6-7. Also Mecca Zhao had claimed to have three Divine revelations on the fate of the Band and of some of their colleagues including Ms Helen Bailey, recoded on p. 11. All of his prophecies were wrong!
- ²⁹ H. R. Thompson, *Chinese Back To Jerusalem Band News Letter* No. 10 (December 1949), p. 3.
- ³⁰ Personal interview with, Grace He Enzhen, in Kashgar, Xinjiang, August 2002.
- ³¹ Wang, *Silk Route Mission: Story of a Heroic Couple*.
- ³² Interviews by the author with Revd Huang Ziqing, an original member of the BTJ Band, in Xinjiang in August 2002, August 2003 and August 2006, and in Liaoling in April 2004.
- ³³ Personal interview with Grace Ho Enzhen, 2002.
- ³⁴ Chan and Hunter, pp. 18-19, 26-27.
- ³⁵ See www.gcciusa.org.
- ³⁶ This Brother was name known to the Christian circle by this book: Brother Yun and P. Hattaway, *The Heavenly Man* (London, Monarch, 2002).
- ³⁷ Hattaway, *Back to Jerusalem: Called to Complete the Great Commission*.
- ³⁸ The last stanza of CCCOWE theme song (Chinese Coordination Center of World Evangelism founded in 1976 by Disaporic Chinese Christians) suggests that the Chinese Christian would carry the last baton of this Global Evangelism task from the western missionaries before the final triumph of the Lord, see www.cccowe.org. The Great Commission Center International (www.GCCUISA.org) also advocates such a theme by portraying the global missions movement as encircling the world, with the last leg being directed by Asians from the Far East, Front Cover, *Great Commission Bi-Monthly*, No. 48, February 2004.
- ³⁹ Hattaway, *Back to Jerusalem*, pp. 94-134.
- ⁴⁰ Editor, "Interview with Paul Hattaway - A Captive Vision," in *Christianity Today*, April 2004, p. 84.
- ⁴¹ Interviewed in April 2004 (name and place withheld for security reasons).
- ⁴² For security reasons, identity of organization, individual and places are not mentioned except those with consent from the individual or those had already appeared in open publications.
- ⁴³ D. Aikman, *Jesus in Beijing* pp. 194-206.
- ⁴⁴ The word used spontaneously by a leading historian of Chinese Christianity, name withheld, upon hearing mention of the BTJ during an academic conference in 2006.
- ⁴⁵ BTJ, Foundation UK, *The Back To Jerusalem Foundation: Statement*, mimeograph, (December 2005), pp.1-4.

⁴⁶ For example, *China Source* (a mission bulletin on missions and China) devotes an entire issue to the BTJ (vol 7, No. 1, Spring 2006).

⁴⁷ Participants of these conferences agree not to divulge information about the content of the sessions or the identity of the other participants, because of the sensitive nature of mission work in Islamic nations. Therefore the author, who has attended some of these conferences, is unable to enter into sensitive details beyond the generic information given in the text.

⁴⁸ Anonymous, "Interview from the Land of the Pharaohs," *Back To Jerusalem Bulletin* No 2 (December, 2004), pp. 7-8.

⁴⁹ Personal communication, 31 January 2005 (identity withheld).

⁵⁰ For example, there have been many trainers of BTJ candidates in a Southeast Asian country (names withheld). In addition, in 2006, 2007 and 2008 the writer author interviewed many trainers studying in various BTJ training centers. Most of them commented that candidates from rural areas lack the basic skills for living in urban environments. While many have rich ministerial experience, few are able to acquire the professional skills which would enable them to get secular jobs in foreign cities. In 2007 and 2008, this writer has also visited many BTJ mission candidates in the mission field.

⁵¹ The writer author has noticed the high level of missionary activity among Filipino workers in Hong Kong, with at least 80 churches, but little if any has gone beyond the Filipino community.

⁵² S. L. Duffy, "19th Century Colonial World," see <http://www.loyno.edu/~seduffy/imperialism.html>. 2006.

⁵³ P. Nyiri, "The Yellow Man's Burden: Chinese Migrants on a Civilizing Mission," in *China Journal* Vol. 56 (2006), pp. 83-106.

⁵⁴ In an international BTJ conference held in August 2006, participants (both Chinese and non-Chinese) from various mission agencies and church networks agreed that the BTJ is more a challenge to Chinese Christians to do cross-cultural mission rather than just to preach along the route from China to Jerusalem.

⁵⁵ This French author advocated such popular view, E. Izraelewicz, E. *Quand La Chine Change Le Monde* (Paris: Editions Grasset et Fasquelle, 2005).

⁵⁶ Many Chinese restaurants in the Middle East sell alcoholic drinks and some, like those in Kabul, also operate brothels using the restaurant as a front. Most of the patrons are expatriate workers with the UN or with relief and development agencies. For example, see J. Huggler, 'Chinese Prostitutes arrested in Kabul 'Restaurant Raids,' in *The Independent (On Line)* 10 February 2006.

⁵⁷ D. Tao 'Afghan expels 'Chinese Restaurant-Brothel,' *Phoenix Weekly* Vol. 24, no. 229 (25 August) pp. 44-46, reported anti-Chinese sentiment in Muslim countries such as Mauritania, Mali and Niger, where Chinese operate brothels under the façade of restaurants.

⁵⁸ In the early 1940s, a group of business people in Seattle set up a mission agency (the Christian Native Evangelism Crusade, mentioned earlier in this paper) with a similar idea of hiring nationals to do mission work paid by a foreign mission agency. The main argument was a pragmatic business one: the cost of supporting a foreign missionary in China was the same as that of hiring at least 10 local mission workers. It was a controversial mission practice at that time. The agency later changed its name to Partners International, while maintaining the same policy. See <http://www.partnersintl.org/about/history.php>.

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