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RELIGION, ETHNICITY AND RACE:
THE MISSION OF THE
OTAGO CHURCH TO THE CHINESE
1860–1950

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A thesis submitted for the degree of
Master of Arts in History
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ABSTRACT

The influx of Chinese goldminers into the Otago province during the 1860s presented a challenge to the European Church, in that the opportunity for evangelistic outreach could not be ignored. Moreover, as the "heathen Chinee" allegedly posed a threat to religious and social mores, conversion to Christianity appeared to be the best means of combatting this danger.

This thesis seeks to explore the struggle between religion, ethnicity and race: the conflict between Christianity, with its associated social values, and traditional Chinese culture. It examines the nature of the Chinese experience in New Zealand, particularly with regard to public and parliamentary hostility. Against this background, the efforts of various denominations to confront the Chinese challenge are investigated. As the Presbyterian Church and their missionary, Reverend Alexander Don, were at the forefront of the Mission, their contribution is the main focus.

A formidable number of obstacles, posed largely by Chinese culture, severely hindered the effectiveness of evangelistic outreach. I examine these obstacles, as well as the charge that Don was a racist. The answer to the latter is a qualified one. While not without his prejudices, the missionary gradually learned to appreciate many aspects of Chinese culture. He also criticised the racism prevailing within European society, tirelessly defending Chinese rights. In return, "Teacher Don" earned more trust and respect for New Zealand's Chinese community than almost any other European of his time. Although in terms of his own evangelistic aims the Mission might be judged a failure, as few Chinese were converted, in terms of this wider perspective Don’s efforts proved to be more successful.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am indebted to a number of people, especially family and friends, for their continuing interest and encouragement. Special gratitude is owed to Dr John Stenhouse whose clear perspective often saved me from myself. A constant source of guidance, encouragement and support, I am forever grateful. Thanks are also due to Professor Erik Olssen whose initial guidance proved invaluable. The listening ear and patient smile were much appreciated. Indeed, the entire staff of the History Department at one time or another provided welcome encouragement and have earned my high regard. Lastly, my undying gratitude to the staff of the Hocken Library whose constant patience and willingness to help never ceased to astound me.

Susan Chivers.
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Appendices to the Journal of the House of Representatives  AJHR
Canton Villages Mission  CVM
Dictionary of New Zealand Biography  DNZB
New Zealand Parliamentary Debates  NZPD
INTRODUCTION

Lured by the discovery of gold in 1861, thousands of miners flocked to the province of Otago. Among this number were several thousand Chinese miners, and although relatively late arrivals, they soon comprised a large and distinct group. Set apart not only by physical appearance but also by culture, worldview and religion, the Chinese remained a conspicuously detached and unassimilated community. New Zealand society did not react favourably to this Chinese presence and when the 1870s saw an economic downturn, fear of competition in the workplace caused racist sentiment to escalate, while the government implemented restrictive legislation.

Although sympathetic to the social climate, the Church in Otago endeavoured to launch an evangelistic mission to the so-called 'heathen Chinese'. Denominational interest in such a mission varied markedly. Some simply ignored the evangelistic opportunity, while others failed to practice what they preached. Of all denominational evangelistic activity, the Presbyterian Church was the most consistently energetic among the Chinese. With Reverend Alexander Don at the forefront of the Mission, the Christian Gospel was taken to the Chinese.

As sojourners rather than settlers, the Chinese were remarkably resistant to cultural change. While gradually adopting European dress, and some manners and customs, they resisted religious assimilation. Nevertheless, over time the practice of idol worship was abandoned while traditional philosophies such as Confucianism and Buddhism found little relevance in Western urbanised society, thus Chinese religion became dysfunctional. However, this did not cause a wholesale reorganisation in the direction of Christianity, although hostile opposition to its doctrines was broken down. It was not until families were reunited in the late 1930s that the Chinese community was placed on a more healthy footing, thereby encouraging assimilation to all elements of Western society.

Throughout the nineteenth century most references to the Chinese were racist, bigoted and scaremongering. Newspapers are an excellent source of such attitudes. Although the goldfields' papers are almost exclusively anti-Chinese, they add little to the historiography beyond revealing the extremes to which bigotry could go. The Otago Daily Times, in comparison, is an invaluable source in that it provides a more balanced view of the issue, reflecting all sides of the
question. Moreover, Christian periodicals such as the New Zealand Presbyterian (later the Outlook) not only provided a religious perspective on race relations but also interesting commentary on the Mission to the Chinese and its progress.

The twentieth century saw social attitudes become more racially tolerant and so valuable studies into Chinese immigration, assimilation, restrictive legislation and race relations were produced. Among the main published works is Ng Bickleen Fong's *The Chinese in New Zealand. A Study in Assimilation*, the first detailed examination of the changing Chinese community. The theme of assimilation is also explored by Stuart Greif's *The Overseas Chinese in New Zealand*, which investigates the degree of Chinese assimilation into European society and the elements of traditional culture which have been retained. Opium and Gold by Peter Butler provides important insight but the lack of footnotes seriously hinder further investigation. Most recently, James Ng, a Dunedin Doctor, has produced several absorbing articles which seek to view the question from a Chinese perspective.

Unpublished theses worthy of note include Neville Ritchie's "Archaeology and History of the Chinese in Southern New Zealand during the Nineteenth Century", an extremely detailed investigation of the Chinese mining community, while J.M. Tuck's "The Devil's Half-Acre 1900-1910" and Niti Pawakapan's "The Chinese in Dunedin between the 1920s and the 1940s" provide useful information regarding urban settlement. The issue of race relations and parliament's reaction to Chinese immigration are well investigated by Buckingham's "The Report of the Chinese Immigration Committee 1871: With Respect to Some Aspects of Public Opinion in the Otago Province" and Forgie's "Anti-Chinese Agitation in New Zealand 1887-89. Its Results and Causes."

However, the most important source in the study of Chinese history in Otago is undoubtedly the records of Reverend Alexander Don, compiled during his Mission to the Chinese. His diaries provide exceptionally detailed information not only relating to religious matters but also to social, demographic and historical ones. Further insight into the Christian Mission is provided by Don's *Memories of the Golden Road*, Reverend George McNeur's publications and Margaret Moore's unpublished thesis "The Chinese in New Zealand". Records held in Hanover Street Baptist Church regarding the Baptist Mission also provided valuable information.

This thesis is an attempt to use these sources to investigate the spectrum of denominational activity among the Chinese and the social climate which impinged on this activity and its progress. Of special interest is the Presbyterian Mission and the role of Reverend Don, which has excited some
controversy. While contemporary sources had a tendency to hero worship Don, Dr James Ng approaches the issue from a Chinese perspective and has done much to redress the balance by emphasising the missionary's failings. Unfortunately, this perspective has led at times to an overly critical portrayal of Don and his efforts - indeed Ng compares him to Richard John Seddon, parliament's leading anti-Chinese campaigner.1 Although no investigation can be undertaken in complete detachment and impartiality, I hope to provide a more balanced study of the issues involved, avoiding both extremes. While Don's Mission was initially characterised by a lack of tolerance and sympathy, he increasingly came to value many elements of traditional Chinese culture and developed a deep relationship with his flock. Indeed, the missionary became their most vocal defender, criticising the sinophobic racism within his own society. Thus, paradoxically, Don was converted by those he sought to convert.

1 J. Ng, The Presbyterian Church of New Zealand and the Chinese, Christchurch, Presbyterian Historical Society, 1987, p.9
CHAPTER 1
THE CHINESE CHALLENGE:
A CALL TO ARMS

The 1860s saw the fledgling religious settlement of Otago enter a phase full of challenge. The discovery of gold and the subsequent influx of miners heralded a number of changes, primarily economic, establishing Otago as the foremost province in New Zealand. Included among these challenges was the introduction of a substantial Chinese presence. Society perceived this 'invasion' as a threat to the colony's economic and moral well-being. The Church's reaction, while not altogether dissimilar, was prompted by evangelical fervour to wage war against Chinese pagan religious traditions and to convert them to Christ.

I THE CHINESE INTRODUCED

(i) The Discovery of Gold

The year was 1861 and the obscure Church settlement of Otago was about to be propelled to the forefront of New Zealand's economic and political life by the discovery of gold. Otago's native inhabitants, the Maori, had long known about the "yellow metal" to be found in the interior and even the new colonists were aware that the province's waterways contained certain amounts of gold, but it was not until Gabriel Read discovered substantial quantities in Tuapeka that the gold rush began in earnest. Whereas in 1861 Otago's population was just over

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27,000, within two years that figure had increased by over 40,000. Otago’s transition to prominence, especially in economic terms, was well under way.

(ii) The Invitation

Such a fever pitch of gold mining activity could not be maintained indefinitely and the blow eventually came in 1864 with the discovery of rich deposits of the precious metal in Nelson and the West Coast. Thousands of sojourner gold miners abandoned their claims in Otago in search of richer prospects further North. Thus, the population of the province suffered a substantial blow – Central Otago’s population alone fell from a healthy 15,000 in early 1864 to just 7,000 in April 1865.

The gold mining industry was undergoing an important transformation from fever pitch level to a more regular, if less spectacular, industry. The ensuing economic downturn sent shock waves through the province but nowhere were they felt more strongly than in the business community. While the Provincial Council believed the mining population would return once the West Coast rush was over, the business sector remained unconvinced. In their opinion, an immediate infusion of replacement miners was necessary to counteract any further economic downturn. The solution to this problem was first advanced by Otago’s Chamber of Commerce who proposed in 1865 that the immigration of Chinese miners from the Australian goldfields should be encouraged. This proposal was quickly translated into a resolution to the effect that

... the goldfields are being deserted by miners and consequently labourers are wanted by claimholders who have invested capital in machinery; large tracts of land have only been partially worked; and the Chinese in Victoria having confined their attention principally to ground abandoned by Europeans, it is presumed they will follow that course here. The Chinese also are excellent tillers of the soil, and will aid greatly in developing the horticultural and agricultural productiveness of the province. They are temperate, frugal and well behaved. And lastly, as

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2 Statistics of New Zealand, 1861 and 1863
3 E. Olssen, A History of Otago, Dunedin, John McIndoe, 1984, p.64
5 Otago Witness, September 30, 1865, p.10, c.4-5
they are large consumers of produce they will, if settled among us, promote the prosperity of the mercantile and trading classes.\(^6\)

The resolution was duly adopted, although not unanimously, and while this opposition to Chinese immigration gained little support within the Chamber of Commerce, it gained a great deal more support in the community at large. For example, public meetings were held at Tuapeka and Weatherstones protesting against the immigration of Chinese on both economic and moral grounds. It was argued that their presence would not only cause vile, immoral practices to take root in the colony but that the aliens would also transfer all their earnings to China, thereby reinforcing the economic downturn rather than aiding in its removal.\(^7\) However, these arguments made little impact on the Chamber of Commerce, who were convinced that the Chinese would greatly improve the province’s revenues, and on September 27 a deputation was sent to the Provincial Council asking that an official letter of protection for Chinese miners be circulated in Australia. After some close questioning, the resolution was accepted and a written notice of protection was agreed upon. Thus in 1865 the Provincial Government extended an official invitation, with an accompanying pledge of protection, to Chinese in the Victorian goldfields encouraging them to emigrate to New Zealand in order to rework the Tuapeka fields.\(^8\)

They did not have to wait long. In February 1866 the first twelve Chinese miners arrived in Dunedin. By 1867 almost 5% of the province’s population consisted of Chinese miners\(^9\) and in that same year the Chamber of Commerce was directly responsible for the importation of a further 1,219 Chinese from Australia.\(^10\) To the Chinese working the Victorian goldfields, Otago’s invitation must have appeared very attractive. In contrast to Australia, where anti-Chinese sentiment was rapidly increasing, New Zealand did not have a history of violence against Chinese nor was discriminatory legislation imposed. Perhaps more importantly, favourable rumours had been circulating throughout the

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\(^6\) Ibid, c.4

\(^7\) Ibid, c.4-5

\(^8\) Ibid, September 30, 1865, pp.13-14

\(^9\) New Zealand Census 1867

\(^10\) D. Lemon, Tuapeka Fields: A Tribute to a Golden Past, Dunedin, John McIndoe, 1985, p.38
Australian goldfields regarding the extent of New Zealand's gold reserves.\textsuperscript{11} As a result, Chinese immigrants quickly established themselves on the Otago goldfields and by 1871 Customs' returns and Wardens' reports indicated that these immigrants made up around 40\% of the mining population in Tuapeka and the Lakes District combined.\textsuperscript{12} Between 1878 and 1881 the colony's Chinese population peaked at just over 5,000.\textsuperscript{13} Of that number around 80\% made their living from goldmining, while the remainder became gardeners, labourers or businessmen.\textsuperscript{11}

(iii) The Immigrants

The cultural background of Otago's newest immigrants was radically different from the experience of New Zealand's predominantly European population. It was this difference in cultural backgrounds, and the ensuing lack of understanding, which was the key to much antipathy between the two races. China's history is one of political and cultural domination of East Asia. It formed the ancient centre of what was once one of the greatest areas of civilisation in the world.\textsuperscript{15} China's neighbouring states were less advanced and less powerful and so the Chinese developed an ethnocentric view of the world, one which served to reinforce a belief in the superiority of their culture, religion and social system. However, this belief did not translate into a spirit of nationalism, in the Western sense. The Chinese were well aware that the nation state was vulnerable to periodic displays of force by neighbouring barbarians (the term for all non-Chinese peoples) but they were also well aware that the conquerors were quickly conquered and effectively denationalized by exposure to China's superior culture. Indeed the Manchu Dynasty, which ruled China from

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{11} N. Ritchie, "Archaeology and History of the Chinese in Southern New Zealand during the Nineteenth Century", PhD, Otago, 1986, p.14
\item \textsuperscript{12} P. Buckingham, "The Report of the Chinese Immigration Committee 1871", PgDip, Otago, 1974, p.8. Also see the Warden's reports in the Otago Daily Times, February 22, 1871, p.3, c.3-4 which details a very high Chinese population in comparison to the European mining population.
\item \textsuperscript{13} Statistics of New Zealand 1879-1882
\item \textsuperscript{14} New Zealand Census 1878-1881
\item \textsuperscript{15} J.K. Fairbank & E.O. Reischauer, China: Tradition and Transformation, Australia, Allen & Unwin, 1973, p.2
\end{itemize}
the seventeenth century, exemplified the way in which invading barbarians underwent the process of "sinicization", thereafter seeking simply to maintain the traditional order.\textsuperscript{16}

Therefore the Chinese attitude may be described as "culturalism", in that loyalty was attached to culture and tradition rather than any political unit. Moreover, this emphasis encouraged veneration of the traditional custodian of ancient culture and time-honoured customs - the family. It was the family group, the clan, which was of utmost importance. The family, rather than the State, the Church or even the individual, formed the most significant unit in Chinese society. This had a practical basis as it was the extended family that provided economic support, education, security and social contact.

By the nineteenth century, social conditions were deteriorating and both domestic and foreign pressures were beginning to affect the traditional cohesiveness of family and clan. For example, the strain placed on natural resources by an ever-increasing population and a high birth rate caused great hardship. As much of China's arable land was situated near the Coast, these areas became heavily over-populated. There was barely enough food to feed the millions if harvests were good, but in times of drought or flood, famine was widespread. The pressure of population also meant that land was placed at a premium. Indeed, the average peasant would often have to support an extended family on no more than one third of a hectare of land, while paying an exorbitant rental for the privilege.\textsuperscript{17} The domestic situation was further impaired by the Manchu Dynasty's apparent inability to rule effectively. Various abortive revolutions against the government, such as the Taiping Rebellion, often caused chaos in the provinces. Moreover, Manchu authority was further challenged by Western encroachment and outbreaks of hostility, such as the Anglo-Chinese Wars of 1839-1842 and 1856-1858, which heightened the social and economic chaos.

The human cost was high - lives were lost, properties devastated, many forms of taxation were increased, military service was enforced and a decline in exports only served to reinforce the economic difficulties China found itself in.

In the face of such hardships, respect for filial duty came to the fore. It was a son's responsibility to care for members of the extended family and in nineteenth century China this was becoming increasingly difficult. As a result, when news reached China of a spectacular gold rush in California, many began

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid, p.211

\textsuperscript{17} Ritchie, p.9
to see emigration as a solution to their problems. Traditionally the Chinese government had forbidden emigration not only because of the need to protect the family unit, and therefore public morals, but also because it was perceived as disloyal to the Empire.\(^8\) Thus, until 1859 emigration was officially forbidden by the Chinese government under pain of punishment of death, although by the mid-nineteenth century this had become something of a dead letter.\(^9\) In any case, economic realities soon overwhelmed political loyalties and thousands of young men left their homes, not in the pursuit of individual wealth, but rather to fulfil a filial responsibility to their families.

It is interesting to note that the place of origin for the vast majority of emigrants was the southern seaboard provinces - Kwangtung and Fukien. These areas became the main exit regions for two main reasons: firstly, Kwangtung and Fukien had never been fully subdued by the alien Manchu Dynasty. A certain degree of independence and autonomy had been retained as they were the areas furthest, in geographical terms, from Peking, the centre of government. Secondly, the significance of the international port of Canton, on the seaboard edge of Kwangtung, cannot be underestimated. It gave the Cantonese an important point of contact with the West by means of a developing maritime trade. Exposure to western ideas and technology was felt more forcefully in this region and, as a result, the people became more open to the world beyond. Nevertheless, while these factors encouraged emigration, they were by no means solely responsible for the phenomenon - the real catalyst was the grim realities of life in mid-nineteenth century China.

While the process of emigration was by no means simple, at least one thing was certain - the destination. Before long a mass migration to the Californian gold fields was under way. The nature of the Chinese experience in America proved to be of some significance, to the extent that it created a pattern which was later reproduced in both Australia and New Zealand. For example, as the Chinese were late arrivals to the Californian gold fields, they were obliged to rework claims abandoned by Europeans - this was to become a notable characteristic of the Chinese mining method.\(^{20}\) Moreover, once the gold reserves diminished, many Chinese embarked on new careers as launderers,

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\(^8\) S. Greif, _The Overseas Chinese in New Zealand_, Singapore, Asia Pacific Press, 1974, p.3

\(^9\) Ritchie, p.11

\(^{20}\) Greif, p.11
market gardeners, and later as retailers,\(^{21}\) the very occupations which became areas of Chinese expertise both in Australia and New Zealand. Another persistent feature of this pattern, was the heated controversy produced by their presence. The Chinese miners were subjected to hostile attitudes, restrictive legislation and abuse, both verbal and physical.

Once the Australian gold rush gained momentum, the colony soon found itself with a substantial Chinese population and the patterns established in California were reproduced. Once again immigrants chose to rework abandoned claims and, when times became hard, they turned to laundering, market gardening or retail ventures. The Chinese also continued to form isolated communities, principally because of the persistence of prejudice, often violently expressed, and restrictive legislation.\(^{22}\) Indeed news of the prolonged hostility in California predetermined Australian attitudes to the extent that peaceful coexistence became impossible.\(^{23}\)

By the 1860s news of the Otago gold rush was circulating the Victorian gold fields. Within a short space of time, New Zealand had a new class of immigrants and a new pattern of race relations imitating that of America and Australia, although with less intensity. While the Chinese migrants who initially made their way to New Zealand were almost exclusively from Australia, within a few years a pattern of chain migration was established.\(^{24}\) This involved the pioneer migrants sending word back to relatives in China, encouraging them to seek their fortune in the "New Gold Hill". As a result, immigrants began to arrive in New Zealand directly from China, completely ignorant of Western culture, unable to understand the English language and not as immune to European hostility as seasoned miners.

These Chinese emigrants shared a number of identifiable characteristics. Firstly, they were almost exclusively men: young, fit and healthy. This was essential if they were to pass the stringent medical examinations at the points of arrival and departure.\(^{25}\) Moreover, life on the goldfields was by no means without its share of hardships. Secondly, it appears that the majority of these

\(^{21}\) Ibid, p.11
\(^{22}\) For example see Otago Witness, September 23, 1865, p.9, c.3-4
\(^{23}\) Greif, pp.12-13
\(^{25}\) P. Butler, Opium and Gold, New Zealand, Alister Taylor, 1977, p.8
men were unmarried, although statistics are somewhat unreliable in this area, as Chinese miners were automatically registered as single unless proof was provided to the contrary. Undoubtedly, a significant percentage of emigrants left behind wives and children - often forever.

**TABLE 1: The Conjugal Condition of Chinese Males in New Zealand Between the Ages of 20 to 65 1874-91**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>UNMARRIED</th>
<th>MARRIED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1874</td>
<td>4,754</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1878</td>
<td>3,895</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>4,794</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1886</td>
<td>4,349</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>4,141</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Even among those immigrant miners who were married, no consideration was given to the option of their wives accompanying them to the goldfields. It was tacitly accepted by Chinese society, in accordance with Confucian propriety, that women would remain behind in order to fulfil filial duties, especially the ongoing care of ageing parents. Practical difficulties also prevented female emigration: often men could barely find the resources to pay for their own fare let alone that of a dependent, while the ancient tradition of foot binding made dealing with goldfield conditions an impossibility for many women. Moreover, while the law forbidding emigration had become something of a dead letter for men, it was more stringently enforced in the case of women - the government perhaps reasoning that if wives remained in China then the young men would return all the more quickly. Indeed, Chinese miners were sojourner in outlook, intending to remain in "barbarian" lands for as short a space of time as was necessary to generate wealth. Thus, as it appeared that families would only be apart for a limited period, the incentive for women to accompany their husbands was not strong. As a result, New Zealand's ratio of Chinese men to Chinese women was exceptionally disproportionate.

26 New Zealand Census 1874-1891
27 Ritchie, p.11
### TABLE 2 New Zealand’s Chinese Population 1874–1913

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>MALE (%)</th>
<th>FEMALE (%)</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1874</td>
<td>4,814 (99.95)</td>
<td>2 (.05)</td>
<td>4,816</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1878</td>
<td>4,424 (99.8)</td>
<td>9 (.2)</td>
<td>4,433</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1886</td>
<td>4,527 (99.7)</td>
<td>15 (.3)</td>
<td>4,542</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1892</td>
<td>4,426 (99.6)</td>
<td>18 (.4)</td>
<td>4,444</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1894</td>
<td>4,128 (99.6)</td>
<td>17 (.4)</td>
<td>4,145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896</td>
<td>3,701 (99.2)</td>
<td>28 (.8)</td>
<td>3,729</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1898</td>
<td>3,433 (99.1)</td>
<td>31 (.9)</td>
<td>3,464</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>3,043 (98.9)</td>
<td>34 (1.1)</td>
<td>3,077</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1902</td>
<td>2,761 (98.9)</td>
<td>31 (1.1)</td>
<td>2,792</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1904</td>
<td>2,794 (98.8)</td>
<td>35 (1.2)</td>
<td>2,829</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1906</td>
<td>2,609 (97.6)</td>
<td>64 (2.4)</td>
<td>2,673</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1908</td>
<td>2,937 (98)</td>
<td>61 (2)</td>
<td>2,998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>2,637 (97.1)</td>
<td>78 (2.9)</td>
<td>2,715</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1913</td>
<td>2,404 (95.5)</td>
<td>112 (4.5)</td>
<td>2,516</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Finally, the immigrants shared a background of poverty in that they were almost without exception from the uneducated peasant class, which had obviously felt China's economic downturn most severely. Moreover, certain clans from within this class were disproportionately represented in migrant numbers, which is no doubt directly attributable to the effectiveness of chain migration. This common background of poverty also ensured a common goal - the pursuit of wealth.

(iv) The Arrival

The condition of the Chinese immigrants on arrival in the colony was often dangerously low, especially among those who had come directly from China. These migrants arrived in New Zealand wearing their native costumes, largely ignorant of the English language and often in poor health. For example, the Otago Daily Times noted the case of twenty one Chinese, recently arrived on the "Guiding Star", who were immediately admitted to hospital suffering from scurvy and dysentery - six later died. In fact, the condition of these immigrants was so universally poor that in 1877 new arrivals were automatically

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28 Statistics of New Zealand 1875–1914

29 Butler, p.41

30 Otago Daily Times, October 11, 1871, p.2, c.1 & October 16, 1871, p.2, c.5
placed on Quarantine Island and their clothing burned as a precaution against the risk of any infectious disease being spread.\textsuperscript{31}

Once in Dunedin, the immigrants would go to Chinese-run stores and boarding houses in parts of Stafford and Walker (now Carroll) streets. There they were provided with the necessary miner's gear: clothing, blankets, shovels, pans and rice were all procured from Chinese businesses, usually paid for with I.O.U.'s to be redeemed at a later date by Central Otago gold.\textsuperscript{32} Then came the arduous journey into the goldfields, sometimes in wagons but usually on foot. Once the group reached the mining townships they would scatter, often in clan groups, to various diggings.

\textbf{(v) Settlement and Mining}

From Wardens' reports it seems clear that initially the Chinese concentrated themselves in the Mt Ida, Dunstan and Tuapeka areas, reworking claims abandoned by European miners. Then, around 1869, they moved overland to the Lake Districts, including Queenstown and Arrowtown, in search of better prospects.\textsuperscript{33}

As the Chinese came from a different environment, they rejected some of the traditional elements of the European mining lifestyle. For example, while most European miners used tents, the Chinese preferred the permanence of small huts. These were built from a combination of the cheapest and most convenient materials: sod, canvas, stacked schist rock or flattened-out iron drums, while the most enterprising Chinese utilized rock overhang as a roof and back wall. Nevertheless, they did adopt European clothing as it was more rugged than their traditional dress and better suited to mining conditions - it also meant they drew less attention to themselves. The Chinese generally kept themselves well-groomed, contrary to public opinion, and maintained their traditional queue (pigtail), although as the years passed many cut their hair short in accordance with European styles.

Most Chinese lived together in small settlements, tending to isolate themselves away from European centres of population. This natural tendency

\textsuperscript{31} Ibid, April 14, 1877, p.2, c.6

\textsuperscript{32} G.H. McNeur, The Church and the Chinese in New Zealand, Dunedin, The Presbyterian Bookroom, 1951, p.11

\textsuperscript{33} Wardens' Reports, Otago Daily Times, 1866-1871
was reinforced not only by European hostility but by an official by-law issued in 1867 which prohibited Chinese from settling within existing Tuapeka townships.\textsuperscript{34} As a result, Chinese camps began to develop just outside European settlements. The township of Lawrence was a prime example of such development: by 1883, on an acre of land just west of the town, there were sixty to seventy buildings housing more then five hundred Chinese. The \textit{Tuapeka Times} described the settlement as 'narrow, dark, dingy, constructed of boards, kerosine tins and sugar bags.'\textsuperscript{35} Arrowtown had a similar settlement which consisted of a large social hall, two Chinese stores as well as a large area under cultivation. Its population was small in comparison to other goldfield towns but during winter outlying Chinese came in to stay with friends thus increasing numbers substantially. Cromwell also housed a booming Chinese settlement. Established in the area by 1866, there were soon Chinese storekeepers at the upper end of the main street. Beyond these shops, on the banks of the Kawarau River, was a residential area known as Chinatown. In the heyday of the goldmining era it was a lively settlement, but the closing of the stores in the early 1900s had a detrimental effect on Chinatown and by 1920 it was deserted.

The \textit{Otago Daily Times} claimed in 1869 that 'Dunedin enjoys the reputation [among the Chinese] of being the best spot in the Australasian Colonies for making money in a short time ...'\textsuperscript{36} Certainly it may be said that the Chinese immigrants enjoyed relative success in their goldmining ventures. Indeed a miner could expect to earn around 15 to 20 shillings per week, after expenses (around 8–10 shillings). Thus, if they managed to save £45 per annum a five year stay would net them between £150 and £250.\textsuperscript{37} In fact, it is estimated that within a period of ten years over 60% of the miners returned home wealthy men, at least by Chinese standards.\textsuperscript{38} Nevertheless, financial reward could only be gained by hard toil and it was this aspect of the Chinese character - their industry, patience and ability to work long, hard hours - that most impressed contemporaries. The \textit{Western Star}, a Riverton newspaper, praised the Chinese for such perseverance, and although 'they might have been slow but they were

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{34 W.R. Mayhew, \textit{Tuapeka: the Land and its People}, Christchurch, Otago Centennial Historical Publications, 1949, p.90}
\footnote{35 Lemon, p.38}
\footnote{36 \textit{Otago Daily Times}, October 1, 1869, p.7}
\footnote{37 Butler, p.43}
\footnote{38 Ritchie, p.61}
\end{footnotes}
industrious without thought of time. They knew no hours." However, Reverend Alexander Don later observed that the Chinese miners worked these long hours only when they were doing well: if the returns were low then so were the hours of work.

While European miners increasingly turned to what the Otago Daily Times termed 'elaborate mechanical appliances', the Chinese persevered in mining surface gold. Instead of chancing their luck on untried ground, they continued to rework abandoned claims, in order to ensure a steady income. The most frequently employed methods of gold extraction were panning, cradling and ground sluicing although the method preferred by individual miners depended to a large extent on the conditions. For example, if their claim was small with little running water, a cradle was used to separate gold from waste. However, where there was a plentiful supply of running water, Chinese miners preferred the sluicing method. A sluice box was placed in a tailrace down which a mix of water and goldbearing dirt was sent. The sluice caught most of the gold while the excess dirt was carried away by the water. As long as miners had a ready supply of running water and were winning some kind of return, no matter how small, then they seldom gave up the claim until it was virtually exhausted.

(vi) The Response from Society and State

The cultural gap between the Europeans and the Chinese immigrants was enormous. Mutual understanding was a necessity for peaceful coexistence and yet was seldom attained because of this same gap.

An early indication of Otago's response to the Chinese presence appeared in 1857 when a rumour circulated to the effect that Chinese miners from Victoria were beginning to make their way to New Zealand. In response, an Anti-Chinese Vigilante Committee was formed but as not even one Chinaman arrived, the

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41 Otago Daily Times, September 14, 1869, p.2, c.3
agitation and talk of "Mongolian filth" died down. Nevertheless this response, born solely from the fear of what could be, was an ominous sign.

The Chinese issue once again came to the public's attention in 1865 when the Chamber of Commerce's resolution to invite Chinese miners to Otago was announced. The mining community was particularly vocal on the issue and angry public meetings were held in Tuapeka and surrounding districts condemning the action. However, economic interests quickly triumphed over public antagonism and the invitation was officially issued.

As Otago's Chinese population grew so did European hostility. Nevertheless, while the response was, for the most part, negative there were those who came to be impressed by the Chinese character, describing the immigrants as 'a splendid type of manhood, fearless, conservative and perfectly independent and men, generally speaking, whose word was their bond.' However, the existence of more enlightened attitudes by no means altered the public's general antipathy towards the Chinese miners. Ill-feeling continued to grow throughout the late 1860s and well into the 1870s. In 1871 the Arrowtown District Miners' Association circulated a petition throughout Otago which stated that unless parliament put a stop to the influx of Chinese, the province would see 'bloodshed and anarchy or the total exodus of your petitioners from this colony.' Moreover, antipathy towards the Chinese was not limited to petitions and angry public meetings: often that anger would spill over into verbal and physical abuse. For example, a West Coast mining town drove away a group of Chinese newcomers to the district. A mob gathered, stoned them and chased them out of the township, so the Chinese sought the relative safety of a campsite some way from town. Unfortunately, that night heavy rains caused the river to break its banks and the Chinese were swept away in the ensuing flood. In another incident a group of miners set upon a lone Chinaman: they cut off his queue, forced him into a barrel and proceeded to roll him around town. The occupant only escaped when the barrel finally burst but the harm was already done. Although his body eventually recovered, his mind did not and he was

42 C. Price, The Great White Walls are Built: Restrictive Immigration to North America and Australia 1836-1888, Canberra, Australia National University Press, 1974, p.13

43 From the Western Star, quoted in the Records of Early Riverton and District: Centenary Celebrations 1837-1937, p.66

44 Butler, p.17

45 Otago Daily Times, February 20, 1872, p.2, c.4
subsequently incarcerated in the Lunatic Asylum. Such incidents were even encouraged by some members of the public. Indeed, a speaker at an Invercargill meeting said that although 'he did not say to them [the audience] that they were to kill a Chinaman when they met him, ... he did say that the Chinese had a right to pay for coming amongst them.' Although the violence was on a limited scale in comparison to that of America and Australia, there was sufficient persecution of the Chinese for the Superintendent of Otago, James Macandrew, to issue a “Proclamation of Police Protection over Chinese Miners” in 1868.

Notice is hereby given, that the Chinese having come to Otago under a promise made by successive Superintendents, that those who came will be fully protected, the Provincial Government is determined to fulfil that promise, and the police are enjoined to keep protective watch over the Chinese population in their respective districts, and in case of their being made aware of any injury having been illegally inflicted on any of the Chinese population, to lose no time in bringing the perpetrators thereof to justice.

Unfortunately, this proclamation did little to prevent further persecution of Chinese miners.

The reasons behind such widespread public antipathy were many and varied. It is not altogether surprising that the mining community was responsible to a large extent for the anti-Chinese agitation. They had been much influenced by the Australian miners who provided negative commentary concerning the Chinese character and their impact on Australian society. Moreover, concern was voiced regarding Chinese competition for a gold supply that appeared to be dwindling.

Among non-mining sectors of the community the apprehension became just as strong. It was widely believed that the Chinese were unclean, uncivilised heathen, harbouring diseases which would infect their European neighbours and holding morals detrimental to the youth of this fair colony. Indeed, one of the strongest fears was the effect their allegedly vile and alien practices would

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46 Ibid, February 3, 1868, p.4, c.3 & p.5, c.3-4
47 Ibid, October 11, 1871, p.3, c.5
48 Otago Provincial Gazette, February 12, 1868, p.39
49 For example, Otago Provincial Gazette, March 4, 1868, p.88
50 Buckingham, p.5
have on the colony's morals. As the Chinese community was exclusively male, they were accused of homosexuality and sexual perversions, especially with regard to children, although there was little evidence to support claims.\(^51\)

Certainly there was much concern over the issue of intermarriage and the detrimental biological consequences of this.\(^52\) Fears were also voiced regarding the perceived Chinese addiction to the vices of gambling and opium smoking. Perhaps most irrational of all was the argument that the immigration of Chinese miners was just the beginning of a process that would see mongolian hordes sweep across the face of the earth, overwhelming numerically inferior populations. As the Otago Daily Times warned, 'we know that in past ages, hordes of the uncivilised have been the means of nearly extinguishing learned and cultivated nations.'\(^53\)

Many newspapers only served to encourage these irrational fears. The goldfields' papers almost universally demonstrated a strong dislike of the "heathen Chinese". The Westland Observer was 'well aware that Chinamen are not desirable neighbours, and can fully appreciate the dislike evidenced towards them by our miners...'.\(^54\) The Arrow Observer by 1871 had labelled Chinese miners 'the enemy' and were making their own prejudices clear - 'We would gladly turn out the Chinese tomorrow, but it cannot be done.'\(^55\) The Wakatip Mail stated that 'the new Chinese immigrants are extremely cunning, and to be dreaded ... they appear to have been tutored before leaving China, as they seem prepared for every emergency'.\(^56\) In contrast, the Otago Daily Times provided a more balanced approach, reflecting both liberal and conservative opinion. This was no doubt easier for urban-based newspapers, like the Otago Daily Times, Evening Star, and the Otago Witness, than for smaller publications with a large miner readership. While the Otago Daily Times was sometimes prone to racially inflammatory reporting,\(^57\) there was at least an attempt to provide a more

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\(^{51}\) Butler, p.56

\(^{52}\) J.B. Condliffe, Problems of the Pacific, Honolulu, Institute of Pacific Relations, Second Conference, 1927, p.148

\(^{53}\) Otago Daily Times, April 5, 1871, p.3, c.2

\(^{54}\) Ibid, June 8, 1865, p.4, c.6

\(^{55}\) Ibid, August 4, 1871, p.2, c.4

\(^{56}\) Ibid, August 28, 1871, p.2, c.5

\(^{57}\) For example, Otago Daily Times, March 23, 1891, p.2, c.4
balanced view of the issue. Indeed there were serious, factual reports of the Chinese lifestyle, thereby enabling some European misapprehensions to be dismissed.\textsuperscript{58}

The State's response to the Chinese presence was less extreme. Despite the outcry, Otago's Provincial Council was not moved, perhaps due to the fact that it was less influenced by public attitudes than by the province's businessmen, who were more than happy with the economic impetus provided by the influx of Chinese miners. This point was well illustrated when a vocal representative of the miners, Charles Edward Haughton, argued that the introduction of Chinese was detrimental to the colony and should be restricted: his opponents in turn moved that the introduction of lawyers and Scotsmen was equally detrimental to the colony and should be reduced.\textsuperscript{59}

Nevertheless, from 1868 the central government kept a close watch on immigration numbers, as well as the activities of the Chinese and their relations with Europeans in Otago.\textsuperscript{60} By 1871 anti-chinese sentiment was so strong that a Select Committee was established to investigate the nature of Chinese immigration, its effect on the colony and whether restrictive legislation was necessary.\textsuperscript{61} Thirteen members were elected to the Committee, including Charles Haughton, Member of Parliament for Wakatip and the main anti-chinese agitator in parliament. The evidence presented to the Committee was of a largely subjective nature, except for some Wardens' reports and official police figures.\textsuperscript{62} Nevertheless, few witnesses condemned the Chinese outright. Doctors gave the Chinese a clean bill of health by confirming they were no more likely to spread disease than any other group of immigrants. Moreover, Wardens' reports largely agreed that the Chinese presence seemed to have had little adverse effect on law and order: indeed disturbances were more likely to be initiated by Europeans than Chinese. Most adverse comments were based on the serious racial conflicts that had arisen on the Californian and Victorian goldfields – however those whose statements were based on observations of the

\textsuperscript{58} For example, \textit{Otago Daily Times}, February 3, 1868, p.4, c.3

\textsuperscript{59} Price, p.95

\textsuperscript{60} \textit{New Zealand Parliamentary Debates}, (NZPD), vol.10, 1871, p.47

\textsuperscript{61} NZPD, vol.10, 1871, pp.150-1

\textsuperscript{62} Buckingham, p.21
Chinese in New Zealand made few negative comments.\textsuperscript{63} As a result, the Committee found that the Chinese were industrious and frugal; that their presence entailed no special risk to health, morality or security; and that no considerable number were likely to settle.\textsuperscript{64} Thus, a mere two months after the Select Committee was first established, it reported to the House of Representatives 'that there have been no sufficient grounds shown for the exclusion of the Chinese; and that no sufficient case has up to the present time been made out to require the Committee to propose that legislative action should be taken having for effect the exclusion of the Chinese or the imposition of special burdens upon them.'\textsuperscript{65} However, it is interesting to note that despite the Committee's findings anti-Chinese sentiment was growing within parliament, as the report was only adopted by a small majority.

\textsuperscript{63} Appendix to the Journals of the House of Representatives, (AJHR), 1871, H-5

\textsuperscript{64} Ibid, 1871, H-5B

\textsuperscript{65} Ibid, 1871, H-5B
II THE CHRISTIAN MISSION TO THE CHINESE

(i) The Church’s Initial Reaction to the Chinese

Otago had been colonised under the direction of Reverend Thomas Burns and Captain William Cargill, who sought to make the province an essentially Presbyterian settlement. Most colonists at least professed a belief in God and so the prominence of the Church gave Otago much of its early character. Although the arrival of miners in the 1860s somewhat disrupted this Puritan-type settlement, much to the consternation of conservative colonists, the level of church attendance continued to increase throughout the remainder of the century.\textsuperscript{66} Indeed, over 90\% of the population acknowledged some degree of religious affiliation, although it is likely that the majority were not actively involved in church life.\textsuperscript{67}

The arrival of the Chinese in the mid-1860s was met with mixed reactions by the Otago church. Many simply denounced the immigrants as “pagans”, “heathens” and “idolaters” whose presence could only be detrimental to the moral standing of the province.\textsuperscript{68} On the other hand, there were those within the Church who were motivated by a missionary desire to spread the message of Christ to the heathen of the world – and what better opportunity than when they were on your very doorstep. It proved to be this evangelistic movement which eventually prevailed, although the attitude of self-righteous horror was by no means destroyed.

The Church had two main aims with respect to the Chinese. The first was spiritual salvation: it was their duty to convert the Chinese to Christianity or at the very least raise their awareness about the Bible. As the Chinese were removed from their homeland and regular “pagan” influences, it was hoped that an increased responsiveness to the Christian gospel should logically follow. Moreover, the Church was not only interested in the spiritual welfare of the immigrants but their social acceptability as well.\textsuperscript{69} In other words, the concern

\begin{footnotes}
\item[67] Price, p.17
\item[68] Otago Witness, September 30, 1865, p.10, c.4
\item[69] James Ng, The Presbyterian Church of New Zealand and the Chinese, Christchurch, Presbyterian Historical Society, 1987, p.4
\end{footnotes}
to civilize was as strong as the need to christianize. As The Evangelist explained, the Chinese were 'a sphere of work which demands the earliest attention of Christians', and if due attention was not paid, then 'the results arising from such a heathen population in the midst of us may be most disastrous to the morality and religion of the rising generation'.

Thus, the motivation behind Church interest was not merely the evangelistic spirit; there was also an element of self-preservation.

(ii) China's Traditional Religious and Cultural Outlook

In a comparative sense, it could be said that the Chinese were not a religious people. Institutional religion, with divinely ordained rules of conduct, traditionally played a much less significant role in China than in most Western civilizations. Religion, as such, focused more on the world of nature and relationships between fellow men, rather than the elusive world of the supernatural. The Chinese did understand the idea of divinity but such sacred character was usually bestowed on forms of nature, such as mountains. Thus, it was rather an abstract concept, seldom personified.

There are four identifiable parts to traditional Chinese religion, each separate and yet interrelating to a certain extent. The first of these is ancestor worship, one of the most influential and extensive of China's religions.

Ancestral worship is the only one that is entitled to the name of the national religion of China, as the dead are the object of worship by rich and poor, young and old, throughout the length and breadth of this immense empire. The Chinese are willing to relinquish any other form of religion and worship, but this is so interwoven with the texture and fabric of their everyday life, and has such a firm hold on them, that scarcely anything short of the miraculous forces them to give it up.

Veneration of ancestors was a regular ritual in family life. Small shrines were established in homes and food was regularly left for the dead. Festivals were also set aside to worship ancestors as in, for example, the All Souls' Feast, the

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70 The Evangelist, January 1, 1870, vol.11, no.1, p.4

71 M.J. Moore, "The Chinese in New Zealand", MA, Otago, 1930, pp.7-8
purpose of which was to feed and clothe doubles of the dead.\textsuperscript{72} This type of
religion meant the system became family-centred rather than orientated towards
an external God. However, veneration of ancestors was by no means motivated
by reverence or affection for the dead, but rather fear of the spirits' power for
evil. Family prosperity depended on the happiness of deceased ancestors in the
spirit world. Thus, such ritual was designed to placate the spirits and ensure
good luck. As one contemporary observer noted, 'they are kept all their lifetime
in fear, not of death, but of the dead.'\textsuperscript{73}

In addition to ancestor worship, there were three philosophies that largely
dominated Chinese thinking and had an enormous effect on China's cultural
history. The first of these, Confucianism, had perhaps the most profound impact
of all. Little is known of Confucius himself, since he left virtually nothing of his
ideas in writing. However, his followers recorded his most important sayings and
the result was a code of ethics which came to dominate Chinese philosophy. This
provided a detailed plan for human conduct which would lead to harmonious
relationships and a peaceful society. Family relationships were especially
emphasised, as were virtues such as benevolence, righteousness, wisdom,
propriety and fidelity. Thus, the philosophy stressed the practical, day-to-day,
mundane aspects of life; it was not a supernatural religion. Confucius seems to
have worked on the theory that man could not fully understand life, therefore
it was illogical to suppose that he could understand the afterlife.\textsuperscript{74} The Chinese
developed a very pragmatic outlook and, as a result, the Christian message of
rewards in Heaven or punishments in Hell had little effect on a people
principally concerned with the here-and-now.

Nevertheless, the Chinese population, especially the masses, were not wholly
satisfied by an essentially rational, this-worldly philosophy alone. The spiritual
dimension was satisfied by two other systems of thought - Buddhism and Taoism.
Founded in India by Guatama Buddha in the sixth century B.C., Buddhism spread
to China in the first century A.D. The original Buddhism found little place for
God or gods and was primarily a system of ethics. Enlightenment consisted of
acquiring the Four Truths: the fact of pain or ill; that pain has a cause; that
pain can be ended by practising the Noble Eightfold Way (right views, right,

\textsuperscript{72} Butler, p.80

\textsuperscript{73} J.S. Dennis, \textit{Christian Missions and Social Progress}, vol.1-3, New York,
Fleming H. Revell Co., 1897, p.302

\textsuperscript{74} D. Bodde, "Dominant Ideas", ed. H.F. MacNair, \textit{China}, Los Angeles,
University of California, 1946, p.18
intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration); such spiritual perfection leads to Nirvana, a blissful state of insight and release for the bonds of self. Included in this doctrine were two fundamental beliefs: that of karma, where all deeds exact reward or punishment either in this life or the next; and that of reincarnation, according to which one is reborn in a happy or painful existence based on past deeds. The purpose of Nirvana is to finally break this chain of karma. Latter variations of Buddhism developed an elaborate hierarchy of demons, the ritual of which appealed to the masses, as did the existence of a supernatural power to which to turn in times of need and the reassurance of life after death.75

Taoism, originally a mystical and rather complex philosophy, also developed into a more supernatural religion. Indeed, it affirmed that every human action was affected by the supernatural realm, either for good or bad, and so a whole system of magic, myths, charms, spells and demonology developed. This philosophy, with its emphasis on the spiritual world, developed a close affinity with ancestor worship, as did Buddhism, with its explanation of life after death. Therefore, the Chinese did not lack an understanding of the supernatural; on the contrary - they had a vast number of gods, heavens and hells to believe in. The problem confronting Christian missions was the lack of a monotheistic philosophy. There was no concept of one omnipotent deity; no divine creator; no idea of an exclusive god.

A further obstacle to conversion presented by the multiplicity of Chinese philosophies was a remarkable religious tolerance. Ancestor worship, Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism complemented rather than competed with one another. Thus, to the Chinese mind, different religions were not necessarily exclusive and so tolerant compromise was typical of their attitude. Firm in the belief that mutual forbearance would be observed, the Chinese migrants continued to practice their various forms of religion in New Zealand, establishing shrines and joss-houses, and continuing to observe festivals such as the Winter Solstice, the Chinese New Year and the Moon Festivals.76 While Christianity was perceived as largely ineffective and irrelevant, there was no thought of spreading the teachings of Confucianism or Buddhism, as this would only serve to turn father against son as Christianity had in China. But by the same token, they expected not to be "bullied" for their lack of Christian beliefs.

75 Ibid, pp.23-24

76 Ng Bickleen Pong, The Chinese in New Zealand: A Study in Assimilation, Hong Kong, Hong Kong University Press, 1959, p.51
To love what people hate, and to hate what people love - in loving and hating outraging human nature - from the very constitution of things it cannot but happen that calamity will come upon the person who acts thus...

Why not live in peace together? Those whose ways (or paths) differ cannot plan for one another. Let us then rove at ease along our respective ways - you on yours, us on ours - without suspicions.**

One other long established cultural tradition is worthy of note, especially with regard to the notion of mutual tolerance. In the 1600s Jesuit missionaries, through a process of compromise, initially met with success in China. However, in 1724 Emperor Yung-cheng commanded active suppression of Christianity in response to a growing suspicion of the political motives of the foreign missionaries.** Missionaries and their congregations were persecuted and those who did not renounce their faith were forced into hiding. Thus an anti-Christian tradition became implanted in popular Chinese thinking. Although in 1844 and 1846 the ban on Christianity was lifted, the resulting rise in missionary activity coincided with a restoration of Confucian teachings and so anti-Christian feeling was as strong in the nineteenth century as ever before.** Thus, while the Chinese preached religious tolerance, they were as opposed to Christianity as the West was to "pagan" religions.

This antagonism to Christianity was reinforced by China's cultural attitudes. The Chinese figuratively divided the world into two categories. In one category were those states who were members of the Chinese confederacy by virtue of shared cultural ties - "the Middle Kingdom" - while the rest of the world fell into a group that was considered more or less barbarous.** Chung-kuo, or the Middle Kingdom, was thought to symbolize civilisation at its best and its superior power, size, resources and history generated an assumption of Chinese superiority. Indeed, their attitudes were as thoroughly ethnocentric as those found among Victorian Britons. As a result, Western culture and religion was held to be inferior and so the Church had to confront immigrants with a long

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**Translated by Rev. Don from the Chinese Australian Herald. The Outlook, November 2, 1895, vol.II, no.40, p.47


**Fairbank & Reischauer, pp.249,251,287 & 319

established tradition in various systems of thought, who, while prepared to tolerate the presence of Christianity, were resistant to its teachings. Each side was convinced of the superiority of their own religion and the encompassing way of life. The stage was set for a profound cultural clash.

(iii) The Presbyterian Mission

The arrival of a large number of Chinese miners over a relatively short period presented the Church in Otago with a very real challenge. That challenge was accepted most readily by the Presbyterian denomination, which had displayed an interest in mission almost from the founding of Otago in 1848. Indeed, as soon as the Presbytery was officially established, attention turned to the fulfilment of their evangelical doctrine. This interest gradually produced creative results, in that three new missions were established - one to the New Hebrides, one to the Maori and, most importantly, one to the Chinese.

In 1867, only one year after the formation of the Otago Synod (which also incorporated Southland), the Minister of Knox Church, the Reverend D.M. Stuart, directed the Synod’s attention to the large numbers of Chinese in the province and their spiritual needs. Stuart had embarked on a tour of Central Otago mining centres, where the large number of Chinese made him aware of the evangelical challenge right on the Church’s doorstep.\footnote{G.H. McNeur, \textit{The Chinese in our Midst}, Christchurch, Presbyterian Women’s Missionary Union, 1951, p.5} He carried this challenge to the Otago Synod and, as a result, a resolution was passed proposing that a Mission be established, the purpose of which would be to spread the Good News of the Gospel among Chinese immigrants. The power to act on this matter was delegated to the Foreign Missions Committee, whose first action was to advise other denominations of their intentions. Their aim was that the Mission should be an interdenominational effort - Chinese were to be converted to Christianity rather than any particular denomination. However, while other churches offered moral support, tangible help was not forthcoming.\footnote{James Ng, "Rev. Alexander Don: his ‘good harvest’ reaped at last", \textit{Otago Daily Times}, September 24, 1983, p.23} From there, the Committee turned to the successful Presbyterian Mission in Victoria for assistance. While they could not spare any of their experienced workers, they did send an appeal to China on behalf of the Synod
for an educated and trained Chinese catechist. Unfortunately, all prospective candidates were being incorporated into the expanding Christian mission within China.

It was a further two years before the services of a Chinese catechist who had been trained in Melbourne were finally secured. Paul (Wan) Ah Chin was described as 'active ... [with] a very kindly disposition'\(^{83}\) and was soon based in Lawrence in the midst of a large Chinese settlement. He not only preached every Sunday afternoon to a small congregation of around twenty in their native tongue, but also regularly visited those living in Dunedin. By 1873 he had six converts, three of whom were baptized,\(^{86}\) and according to the Chinese Mission report the catechist was 'labouring with fidelity, zeal and success'.\(^{85}\) Indeed, during his short time with the Presbyterian Mission Paul Ah Chin converted approximately thirteen Chinese in total.\(^{86}\) At face value, the missionary appears to have been tremendously successful, and yet by 1874 he had resigned. The cause of this sudden departure is unclear. It has been suggested that Paul Ah Chin was discouraged by a lack of success,\(^{87}\) but in comparative terms he was unusually successful: indeed it was many years before the Church Missionary Society could claim even one baptized Maori convert. Moreover, he continued to labour among the Chinese throughout 1875, although remaining unconnected with the Presbyterian Mission.\(^{88}\) The problem may have been caused by conflicting perceptions as to what "conversion" actually entailed. As the Chinese were remarkably religiously tolerant, it is possible that they adopted the message of Christianity without necessarily changing their lifestyle. The Synod would require a higher standard of commitment and thus dissension may have occurred. Certainly, conversion rates were unusually high, even in comparison to those of later Chinese catechists, and Synod reports do indeed admit that there was some friction between the Church hierarchy and the catechist.\(^{89}\)

\(^{83}\) Ibid

\(^{84}\) A. Fraser "The Social Work of the Presbyterian Church in New Zealand Up Till 1930", MA, Otago, 1933, p.95

\(^{85}\) Otago Daily Times, January 16, 1872, p.2, c.3

\(^{86}\) James Ng, "Rev. Alexander Don: his 'good harvest' reaped at last", Otago Daily Times, September 24, 1983, p.23

\(^{87}\) Mayhew, p.191

\(^{88}\) Fraser, p.95

\(^{89}\) G.H. McNeur, The Church and the Chinese in New Zealand, p.14
Nevertheless, as no further details were forthcoming, any theory as to the cause of the problem must remain speculative.

The Foreign Missions Committee once again embarked on the trail for a missionary to the Chinese. At the time, Reverend George Smith, who had fifteen years of mission experience in China, was visiting Otago. Taking advantage of this opportunity, the Committee offered Reverend Smith the position and although he declined, he did offer to lay the matter before his fellow missionaries in Swatow, China. After another long wait the Committee was finally informed by a Reverend H.L. McKenzie, the minister at Swatow, that they could not spare anyone to meet the Synod's needs. However, he did suggest, as an alternative option, that a young Otago minister be sent to China in order to train specifically for the task. This proposal met with much support from the Synod, but was not acted upon at this time as it coincided with an offer of help from the Reverend Hugh Cowie who, due to his wife's ill-health, was in the process of returning to New Zealand from seventeen years with the English Presbyterian Mission at Amoy. Although Mrs Cowie died during the journey, Reverend Cowie decided to fulfil his obligations and in 1876 he was inducted as the Chinese missionary at Lawrence. At the same time, Paul Ah Chin's services were once again secured. He was encouraged by the prospect of a colleague and the Synod was encouraged by the prospect of a supervisor. However, once again the Mission encountered problems. Reverend Cowie could not make himself understood, for while most of the Chinese miners used the Cantonese dialect, he spoke Fukienese. The Committee had been aware of this discrepancy but, in their ignorance, thought the missionary would simply "pick up" the dialect. Unfortunately, the difference was so great it was comparable to learning another language. Thus in 1877 Reverend Cowie resigned, as did a frustrated Paul Ah Chin who severed all ties with the Mission and left for Australia.

By this time, the Foreign Missions Committee felt the only viable option was to accept Reverend McKenzie's earlier suggestion. Thus, they recommended that the Synod offer a position for a young student or minister to go to China and train specifically for the task ahead. The Synod adopted this proposal but the vacancy remained open for some time and, as a result, by the late 1870s the Presbyterian Mission had ground to a halt.

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90 Fraser, p.97
(iv) Further Denominational Involvement

During the 1860s, the extent of most denominational involvement with the Chinese Mission was largely confined to moral support for the Presbyterian Mission. The Methodists, for example, were by no means unaware of the expanding goldfields population. Indeed, they were involved in Church planting in the Central Otago area and acquired an additional five Ministers to cope with the influx of miners. Nevertheless, they did not develop an official focus on the Chinese miners, preferring to concentrate instead on New Zealand's native "heathens" - the Maoris.

In contrast, the Anglican Church in Otago was more open to the missionary impulse; indeed they had supported efforts in Melanesia, particularly Samoa and Tonga, since 1849. This evangelical spirit gained a new impetus with the arrival of Bishop Nevill in the early 1870s. In his address to the Synod in 1874, the Bishop indicated that attention should be turned towards establishing a Mission Fund to support missionary activity in Melanesia and that 'to this should be added the claims of the 4000 Chinese dwelling in our midst.' Unfortunately, Bishop Nevill had a reputation for trying to do too much too soon and was initially regarded as something of a young "upstart". As a result, the resolution was not adopted by the Anglican Synod. Nothing more was said concerning a Chinese mission until 1875, when an amendment was proposed during a debate on the Melanesian Mission. It was suggested that 'with a view to enlarging the area of the mission work of the Diocese the following be adopted ... That the [Mission] fund shall be appropriated in such proportions as may from time to time be decided by the Diocesan Synod towards -

(a) the Melanesian Mission;
(b) Mission to the Chinese;

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91 Rev. D. Hickman, Before 1848 and After: A Brief Survey of Methodism in Otago, Devonport, Otago Southland Methodist Executive, pp.6-7
92 P. Fairclough, The Early History of Missions in Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand Bible Tract Society, 1952, p.473
93 G.N. Stanton, "The Bishop of Dunedin, the Anglican Church and Polynesia", BA(Hons), Otago, 1961, p.1
94 Church of England, Dunedin Diocese, 1874, Third Synod, Second Session, p.11
95 J.B. Meikeljohn, "The Anglican Diocese of Dunedin", MA, Otago, 1964, p.115
96 Dunedin Diocese, Third Synod, Second Session, p.11
After some debate the amendment was carried as a substantive resolution.

Unfortunately, by 1876 the Standing Committee, which had been delegated authority to act in this matter, reported that it had been unable to find a suitable missionary clergyman for the Home Missions. Nevertheless, they informed the Synod that 'the Bishop has, however, taken initiatory steps towards the appointment of a catechist for the Chinese, and of a clergyman for the Maoris of this Diocese, and the Committee hopes that the needful funds for these objects will be provided by offertory or otherwise in the Diocese.' 98 By 1877 the Bishop was able to announce the beginning of a more systematic work amongst the Maori under the direction of one of their own race, a Mr Ngara. However, it seemed that plans for a Mission to the Chinese had come to a standstill.

As a result, Anglican contact with the miners seems to have been limited to the efforts of individual clergy and Bishop Nevill's frequent tours around Central Otago. During these tours, he seemed to focus largely on his European parishioners; visiting, preaching, confirming and baptising. However, the Bishop did make a point of visiting his Diocese's first Chinese convert, Leung Chung, who was later baptised.99

The other denomination in Otago capable of establishing a Mission to the Chinese was the Catholic Church. Roman Catholicism made a late start in Otago. It existed only in a makeshift form until 1871, when Bishop Moran arrived to officially establish the new Diocese of Dunedin. By all accounts, the Bishop was something of an uncompromising individual and his views often roused hostility. Indeed, he seems to have been responsible for a wave of anti-Catholic, anti-Irish prejudice among many Protestants.100 Nevertheless, Moran was not easily daunted and in 1873 founded his own publication, The Tablet, in order to put across the Catholic view point free of censorship. However, the Bishop was a product of the times and, like most of his contemporaries, was hostile to the Chinese presence. Indeed he encouraged irrational fears, arguing that it was in the Church's interest 'to be resolute in opposing all attempts to flood those

97 Dunedin Diocese, 1875, Third Synod, Third Session, p.26
98 Dunedin Diocese, 1876, Fourth Synod, First Session, p.26
99 Bishop Nevill, Diocesan Notebook, Hocken Library
100 E.R. Simmons, A Brief History of the Catholic Church in New Zealand, Auckland, Catholic Publications Centre, 1978, p.64
colonies with Chinese.¹⁰¹ Many of the Bishop's attitudes revealed a distinct lack of Christian love and were certainly not evangelistic in nature.¹⁰² Thus, while the Church was active in its mission to Europeans and even the Maori,¹⁰³ there was a complete lack of official impetus regarding a Mission to the Chinese. The evangelical challenge was ignored by the Catholic hierarchy and so any mission activity was left in the hands of enterprising individual Catholics.

Thus, in the initial stages, the Presbyterian denomination alone responded actively to the challenge represented by the Chinese presence. The Methodists appeared apathetic, the Catholics antagonistic, while the Anglicans were simply unable to put theory into practice. As a result, Chinese traditional beliefs by and large remained secure, easily weathering the initial Christian "onslaught".

¹⁰¹ The Tablet, May 20, 1881, vol.IX, p.4
¹⁰² Simmons, p.65
¹⁰³ Ibid, pp.22–27, 28–33
CHAPTER 2
A RENEWED OFFENSIVE

The late 1870s saw the Chinese population move towards urban centres and while increased contact enabled some European attitudes to mellow, the majority became more vehemently anti-Chinese largely because of economic competition. The State followed this lead and embarked on a campaign of restrictive legislation. This increase in anti-Chinese sentiment was matched by a decrease in evangelistic activity among most denominations. The Presbyterian Church alone gained momentum during the 1880s, largely due to the efforts of their newest missionary recruit, Alexander Don.

I THE CHINESE

(i) Demographic Trends

The boom years of Chinese mining reached a peak during the 1870s and 1880s, but by the end of this period most of the easily worked surface gold had been recovered. As a result, larger scale mining operations, which were predominantly European-owned, began to dominate the industry. Apart from Sew Hoy, the successful dredging pioneer, most Chinese remained isolated from the more complex, yet lucrative, mining techniques. Thus, the goldfields began to experience a gradual but steady depletion of Chinese miners. Whereas in 1881 the population was still well over 3,000, within a period of five years that figure was more than halved.¹

While hundreds returned to China, many more were prepared to stay and continue seeking their fortune - although not necessarily in the goldmining industry. Many Chinese began to drift into small business ventures which encouraged an ever-increasing drift towards urban centres. The North Island

¹ New Zealand Census 1881 & 1886
claimed a large number but many simply moved to the city closest at hand - Dunedin. Thus, whereas in 1874 there were only 89 Chinese resident in Dunedin and its surrounding suburbs, by 1896 that figure had increased more than fourfold to 384.

(ii) Social Reaction

This numerical depletion of Chinese miners somewhat mitigated European hostility, as did increasing contact, caused by Chinese seeking work to supplement their income. Their honesty and hard work in fulfilling obligations to employers won them the grudging respect of some Europeans. Nevertheless, these small steps did not significantly erode the anti-Chinese sentiment prevalent among the majority of the population. Volatile public meetings remained a forum for European hostility and the Chinese continued to suffer from frequent displays of ridicule and abuse. Young Europeans found a new form of entertainment, wandering through Chinese settlements jeering at the inhabitants, smashing windows and possessions as they went. Indeed, even in many of the newspapers name-calling was commonplace; references were made to "Celestials", "the Flowery People", "John Chinaman", "Chows", or simply "the heathen Chinese". General harassment was the order of the day. For example, in 1884 a petition was circulated in Lawrence complaining about the odour permeating from the Chinese camp. The petitioners were of the opinion that it was 'high time the Chinese were taught to adopt civilised manners and customs, and to keep from polluting the atmosphere to the danger of their European neighbours.' The Sanitary Inspector dutifully surveyed the settlement and indeed found it to be in a deplorable state but, as the County Council decided there was no immediate risk to the nearby European population, no steps were taken. However, harassment could also take a more dangerous form, as

2 Ibid

3 C. Price, The Great White Walls are Built: Restrictive Immigration to North America and Australasia 1836-1888, p.95

4 W.R. Mayhew, Tuapeka: the Land and its People, p.129

5 For a more detailed examination of the various forms of discrimination see N. Ritchie, "The Archaeology and History of the Chinese in Southern New Zealand during the Nineteenth Century", pp.69-72

6 Otago Daily Times, April 14, 1884, p.3, c.3
demonstrated by a series of outrages perpetrated in Alexandra. Mobs of twenty
to thirty Europeans gathered on several separate occasions and invaded the
Chinese settlement, smashing doors, windows and possessions. Miners could not
go outdoors at night for fear of attack. One Chinaman disappeared altogether.
Another unfortunate soul was tied hand and foot while his bed and clothing
were set alight. It was widely held that the reason behind these attacks was
the firm foothold the Chinese had gained within the township, but as the
Reverend Don remarked, the most disturbing element was 'the apathy with which
these fiendish outrages were viewed by the European community in general.'
While such behaviour was certainly not actively encouraged, neither was it
actively discouraged. There was a notable lack of action on the part of the
authorities, although language difficulties frequently hampered the legal
process in such cases. Needless to say, resentment among the Chinese
community was very strong, but instead of retaliating they simply rebuilt their
settlement some distance away.

The Chinese drift to metropolitan centres encouraged a dramatic rise in
urban racial hostility. Although the influx of Chinese miners initially excited
much controversy, the urban population had gradually become ambivalent - that
is until a marked increase in the urban Chinese presence was observed. Hostility
resurfaced once again and the old arguments were revived with even greater
intensity. For example, there was a long-standing belief that the allegedly
insanitary habits of the Chinese posed a danger to public health. This gained
greater momentum with the rumour that the Chinese were responsible for an
outbreak of leprosy in America. Fears of moral decline were also revived,
thanks to inflammatory statements from newspapers like the New Zealand Herald,
which declared 'we know for a fact that, as a race, they are steeped in oriental
vices of untold evil, and of the most degrading kind, in the presence of which

7 A. Don, Annual Inland Tour 1893-4, pp.25-6
& Annual Inland Tour 1896-97, pp.18-21

8 Ibid, 1893-4, p.26

9 Ibid, 1896-7, p.20

10 For example see the Otago Daily Times, September 6, 1869, p.2, c.5

11 Annual Inland Tour 1896-7, p.21

12 Otago Daily Times, 6 March, 1888
the foundations of the morality of civilisation would be sapped.'\textsuperscript{13} The irrational fear of being overwhelmed by hordes of migrating Asians also resurfaced, finding support among politicians such as Sir George Grey, who argued that if immigration was not soon halted 'the whole of the Pacific will be overwhelmed.'\textsuperscript{14}

Nevertheless, this resurgence of anti-Chinese sentiment did not rely solely on conventional arguments, but was exacerbated by several newer factors. Economic arguments soon moved to the forefront of the anti-Chinese debate as it was in this area that society perceived the most direct threat to their own personal interests. Indeed, it is interesting to note that an economic downturn was commonly followed by an outbreak of agitation and restrictive legislation.\textsuperscript{15} Essentially, an increasingly urban Chinese population was viewed as competition in the European labour market. Such arguments were not without validity, for the Chinese did work for low rates of pay, but the case was considerably overstated.

It had long been argued that the Chinese were draining the colony of its wealth by saving and sending their money home rather than spending it in New Zealand. Arguments like this gained more influence in depression-era Otago. A decline in mining returns saw the Chinese competing with Europeans in a shrinking job market. As they worked for cheaper rates of payment, it was feared that the Chinese would not only claim European jobs but, as a result of this competition, cause an overall reduction in wages. It was therefore the urban working class who moved to the forefront of anti-Chinese agitation during this period, strenuously opposing any addition to the labour supply, while unions began to agitate on behalf of their members for the total exclusion of Chinese.\textsuperscript{16} Indeed, the Dunedin Branch of the "Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners" was one of the first unions to advocate that action be taken against Chinese immigration.\textsuperscript{17} Restrictive measures were favoured, for the most part, especially some form of taxation.\textsuperscript{18}

Fears and suspicions mounted to the extent that anti-Chinese sentiment

\textsuperscript{13} A. Forgie, "Anti-Chinese Agitation in New Zealand 1887-89. Its Results and Causes", MA, Otago, 1969, p.33

\textsuperscript{14} New Zealand Herald, 10 May, 1889, p.36

\textsuperscript{15} S. Greif, The Overseas Chinese in New Zealand, p.35

\textsuperscript{16} E. Olssen, A History of Otago, pp.105-6

\textsuperscript{17} Otago Daily Times, May 7, 1888, p.2, c.7

\textsuperscript{18} Ibid, October 5, 1871, p.3, c.7
sometimes overflowed into public outbursts of hostility. For example in May of 1888 the "Te Anau" and its Chinese passengers arrived at Port Chalmers only to be greeted by an angry group of around 300 to 400 - a 'howling and hooting mob, who hurled stones and strong language with true British vigour'. The Chinese immigrants chose to remain with the ship which soon moved on to Greymouth. Thus, the Depression years, and indeed beyond, were characterised by a growth of anti-Chinese antagonism.

(iii) Parliament's Anti-Chinese Campaign Begins

Such widespread agitation could not go unnoticed and the government soon began to take an active interest in Chinese immigration. Leaders of the parliamentary anti-Chinese campaign saw the problem, for the most part, in terms of economic competition, and its results for the colony's standard of living, although the need to maintain racial purity was also a major concern. Parliamentary records reveal that while appeals to alleged moral dangers received little support in parliamentary debates, such arguments were useful in manipulating public support for restrictive legislation.

The Chinese question first came to prominence in 1878 when Members of Parliament representing the West Coast goldfields demanded that restrictions be placed on Asian immigration. Support was also forthcoming from prominent members such as Sir George Grey, who was eager to see New Zealand become the guardian of European civilization in the Pacific region. However, the general consensus at this time was that the Chinese presence did not pose a serious problem to the colony and the matter was therefore dropped.

Nevertheless, agitation resurfaced once again in 1880 when a private bill to prohibit Chinese immigration was introduced by the Member for Wellington, Mr W. Hutchinson. It is interesting to note that it was at this point that Richard John Seddon came to the forefront of agitation against the Chinese - it was to be a long and distinguished career. The ensuing legislation, the 1881 Chinese

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19 Ibid, May 12, 1888, Supplement

20 Ibid, May 9, 1888, p.2, c.8


22 Price, p.201
Immigrants Act, was admittedly a much toned-down version of the original bill, but it did signal the beginning of discriminatory legislation. The Act instituted a £10 poll tax on every Chinese immigrant and limited ships to one Chinese passenger per 10 tons of burden. In the following year, the Chinese Mining Exclusion Bill was introduced with the intention of excluding Chinese from working the goldfields altogether. However, this proposal gained little support largely because, as parliamentary records reveal, the government was still divided over the necessity for legislation. Nevertheless, by the late 1880s opposition to the Chinese had grown considerably stronger, and in 1888 the Chinese Immigrants Act was passed. The limit of Chinese passengers per ship was raised to one for every 100 tons and penalties for smuggling or exceeding that limit were also increased. Moreover, in 1888 a Quarantine Proclamation was issued declaring China to be infected with the dangerously contagious small-pox disease and, as a result, strict quarantine measures were to be enforced on all passengers who touched at this port.

These first steps in what was to become a series of legislative restrictions quickly began to have the desired effect. The Chinese population was naturally diminishing as the rush of the gold era drew to a close, thus it was a case of shutting the stable door after the horse had bolted. Nevertheless, the legislation did drastically affect the level of Chinese immigration into New Zealand.

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23 T.D.H. Hall, "New Zealand and Asiatic Immigration", New Zealand Affairs, Christchurch, Institute of Pacific Relations, 1929, p.93

24 New Zealand Gazette, 1888, p.578
TABLE 3 The Number of Chinese Entering New Zealand 1876–1890

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>NUMBER OF IMMIGRANTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Legislation = 1876</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>imminent = 1877</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1878</td>
<td>1,025</td>
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<tr>
<td>1879</td>
<td>329</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act enforced = 1881</td>
<td>1,029</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1882</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1883</td>
<td>44</td>
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<tr>
<td>1884</td>
<td>84</td>
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<td>1885</td>
<td>94</td>
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<tr>
<td>1886</td>
<td>239</td>
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<tr>
<td>1887</td>
<td>354</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amendment = 1888</td>
<td>308</td>
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<tr>
<td>1889</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thus, by the 1890s the government was well on the way to a White New Zealand policy, and showed no sign of turning back from the path of anti-chinese restrictive legislation.

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25 *Statistics of New Zealand 1877–1891*
(i) The Lack of Impetus

The Church’s Mission could not escape unscathed from the increasing opposition to Chinese during the last quarter of the century. Indeed the wave of anti-Chinese agitation, both in government and society, had a dampening effect on Christian evangelistic enthusiasm. While many denominations in America and Australia had active Chinese Missions during this period, New Zealand churches were, on the whole, only making half-hearted attempts to convert the "heathen" within their midst. Unfortunately, their faith did not provide immunity against the feeling of the times and thus the general increase in anti-Chinese sentiment took its toll on congregations, many of whom were not convinced of the appropriateness of the Mission in the first place. While a minority were still concerned for the Chinese’s soul, the vast majority simply accepted Chinese traditional religion as yet another incompatible difference with Western society. This increasing apathy and lack of support was to result in the suspension of many burgeoning Chinese Missions.

The Anglican denomination in Otago, under the instigation of Bishop Nevill, intended to establish a strong Mission both to the Maori as well as the Chinese. However, while the Maori Mission was placed under the leadership of Mr Ngara, plans to employ a Chinese catechist stalled. It seems that the Anglican Diocese was under severe financial strain, which was only made worse by the onset of the 1880s Depression. Thus the Mission fund, which supported the New Hebrides, Maori and Chinese missions, was in a very poor condition. Few Churches or Parishes were financially able to support Synod resolutions by contributing to the Fund. Moreover, the Church Missionary Society’s grant to the Mission Fund of £35 per annum was discontinued. As the Diocese was under such financial strain, priorities had to be reassessed and the impetus to Home Mission was lost. An attempt was made to continue the work of the Maori Mission but it proved too heavy a burden and before long the stipend set aside for Reverend Ngara fell into arrears. In 1881 it was abandoned. Although the Chinese Mission

26 New Zealand Presbyterian, July 1, 1885, vol.VII, no.1, p.6

27 Church of England, Dunedin Diocese, 1879, Fifth Synod, First Session, p.32

28 Dunedin Diocese, 1879, Fifth Synod, First Session, p.71 & 1881, Fifth Synod, Third Session, p.29
remained a part of the standing resolutions, it was deprived of its initial emphasis and lack of finances meant the idea was abandoned for all intents and purposes.

While the Anglican Mission was in part thwarted by the lack of financial support from its parishioners, there also seemed to be a corresponding lack of enthusiasm among the Church hierarchy. These reservations may have originated in part from the turmoil that followed the founding of the Maori Mission, when it was claimed that Bishop Nevill had "jumped the Presbyterian claim". No little hostility was raised and the issue was argued back and forth in local newspapers. Therefore, it is possible that the Synod was not eager for a repeat occurrence with the Chinese Mission, which was becoming increasingly Presbyterian dominated.29

Thus, a number of factors combined to undermine the best of Anglican intentions, with the result that their Mission to the Chinese never really got under way. By the time Anglican finances improved, the Chinese population had not only dwindled, but the Presbyterian Mission was adequately energetic to render an Anglican Mission unnecessary.

Although the Anglican Mission to the Chinese proved to be less than effective, they at least accomplished more than many denominations during this period. The Methodist Mission, for example, confined itself to social work and evangelistic outreach among Europeans. All thoughts of converting heathen were directed towards overseas missions, where financial contributions were, for the most part, the only requirement.

The Catholic Church was also isolated from the Chinese, largely by the wall of prejudice so prevalent during the latter decades of the century. There was little contact, little understanding and, despite the verbal, physical and legislative attacks being directed against the Chinese, the Catholic Church never once raised its voice in their defence.30 Indeed, the Catholic magazine The Tablet fully supported such attacks, describing the Chinese presence as a dangerous threat which would necessarily result in the degradation and destruction of the colony.31 Catholics did not appear to perceive any


30 E.R. Simmons, A Brief History of the Catholic Church in New Zealand, Auckland, Catholic Publications Centre, 1978, p.88

31 The Tablet, June 15, 1888, p.17
opportunity for evangelism, but instead encouraged agitation against Chinese immigration.

The prospect is a very unwelcome one, for not only is the Chinaman an unprofitable, and unclean, and most uninteresting neighbour in every respect ... [but he must] exercise a most degrading influence over the tone of our colonial society generally. It is in the interest of us all the to be resolute in opposing all attempts to flood these colonies with Chinese.32

Thus it appears that the Catholic leadership did not merely ignore the evangelistic opportunities, but actively encouraged anti-Chinese sentiment. Yet, in spite of this, a small proportion of Chinese miners registered as adherents of the Catholic faith.33 No doubt this paradox may be explained by the active mission within China itself: a mission which extended more deeply into the hinterland than the Protestant equivalent. Following the precedent set by pioneering Jesuit missionaries, they adopted the Chinese language, dress and lifestyle. As a result, Catholics presented less of a cultural challenge to the Chinese and were thus greeted with more success, although by the latter decades of the nineteenth century Protestant missions were making more of an impact.34 Nevertheless, Catholicism was the strongest, if the least demanding, of denominations in China during the period that many emigrants were preparing to leave. Thus, the success of this mission may account for the apparent adherence of some Chinese immigrants to Catholicism - it appeared a little less foreign and a little more familiar, thus encouraging denominational attachment. Nevertheless, such adherence was by no means encouraged by Otago's Catholic Church.

As a result, much of the Church's mission to the Chinese during this period was unofficial, intermittent work carried out by individual clergymen or willing helpers. For example, a few Salvation Army members succeeded in attracting to their meeting some of the Chinese they had come into contact with.35 Moreover, various clergymen often took an interest in the Chinese miners within their

32 Ibid, May 20, 1881, pp.3-4
33 Almost 15% of Chinese Christians between 1874 and 1881 registered as Roman Catholics. New Zealand Census, 1874, 1878, & 1881
34 J.K. Fairbank & E.O. Reischauer, China: Tradition and Transformation, pp.287-8, 344
35 New Zealand Presbyterian, December 1, 1883, vol.V, no.6, p.105
parish and sometimes were able to accomplish various tasks on their behalf. Nevertheless, despite such isolated outbursts of goodwill, there was no official, concerted Mission from the majority of Church denominations.

(ii) The Presbyterian Mission Enlists Alexander Don

One denomination alone voiced concern, even resentment, over the apparent ambivalence and inactivity of Otago Churches. As other Missions faltered, the Presbyterian Mission was left to shoulder much of the burden for the Chinese.

The means of supporting the missionary have been derived almost exclusively from the Presbyterian Church, while the other churches, as such, have done nothing. We are only aware of one instance in which any of the churches but the Presbyterian have contributed to this purpose. Surely the other churches, which are all equally interested in the work, might lend their help. If they cannot undertake the support of missionaries by themselves, they ought at least to send their contributions to the Presbyterian Church, and encourage them to engage more labourers.

The Presbyterian Mission had ground to a halt in 1877 as the call for a missionary to be trained in China remained unanswered. Nevertheless, persistent planning and heavy expenditure guaranteed their continued dedication to the project, unlike many other denominations. Their efforts were rewarded in mid-1879, when a young teacher by the name of Alexander Don volunteered to take up the position and, as the Mission Committee deemed him to be 'in all respects suitable', his offer was accepted. It was this young man who was to become the backbone of the Presbyterian Mission and the leading exponent of Christianity to New Zealand Chinese.

In many ways, Don's background prepared him for the Mission he was to undertake in later life. He was born in Ballarat, Australia on January 22, 1857, the eldest in a family of ten. His father, John Don, had first been lured from his

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36 For example, James Morris. See A. Don, Memories of the Golden Road, Dunedin. A.H. & A.W. Reed, 1936, pp.303–4

37 P. Butler, Opium and Gold, p.83

38 New Zealand Presbyterian, August 1, 1879, vol.I, no.2, p.33
home town of Auchterarder, Scotland in the early 1850s by the golden reputation of the Victorian goldfields. Thus, Alexander Don spent his early years in the neighbourhood of Ballarat and was reputedly a bright child. By the age of four he had tackled the alphabet and before he turned six was apparently absorbed by such classics as Robinson Crusoe. He was soon attending a public school and by the time this young man was eight his attention had been captured by the mathematical and scientific branches of learning. Yet merely a year later, having just passed the sixth standard, Don left his school days behind. The family had fallen on hard times and Don, as the eldest, was expected to contribute. Thus, for some years the young boy found employment in a variety of jobs, all involving hard toil. For the first eighteen months, Don was employed on his grandfather's farm, while the next year was spent cutting timber in the Bullabrook forest. This was followed by six months work in a foundry, at the end of which time Don found employment in the mining industry, stamp-feeding at a Bendigo mining battery. Mid-nineteenth century mining conditions were not only dangerous but arduous, especially for young boys. While the men only worked an eight hour day, the boys worked eleven hours on the day shift and thirteen hours when on night duty, every alternate week. The only break in a shift was the twenty minute meal time. Although exceptionally strenuous, this work was to provide Don with valuable experience. He not only understood, but had first-hand knowledge of the type of life a miner led. Thus the Presbyterian Mission to the Chinese was not led by some upper-class do-gooder who had little idea of the Chinese miner's lot. This was a man who could relate to their working lives.

During this period, Don continued to exercise his intellectual faculties by means of the "riddler" column in a weekly publication the Melbourne Leader. To find the solutions he would search through dictionaries, encyclopedias and atlases, and in this way his education was continued after a fashion.

The turning point in Don's life came when the stamper battery in Lower Huntly at which he was working was visited by the Reverend W.H. Fitchett, who conducted a series of evangelistic meetings over the length of a week. It was at this point that Alexander Don was converted to Christianity. He began to regularly attend Church as well as the Bible Class meetings conducted by Mr Lachlan Fraser, the local bank manager. Under his influence, Don began to attend night school where he caught the attention of Mr J. Blyth, the

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39 Otago Daily Times, November 3, 1934, p.14, c.5
40 Ibid
schoolmaster at Huntly. After a brief acquaintance, during which time Don's eagerness to improve his education grew, Mr Blyth went to Don senior and suggested that his son was more than capable of undertaking teacher training. Arrangements were quickly made and at age fifteen Don returned to school.

After three months of study he passed the examination entitling him to become a trainee teacher. Within six years Don, a fully qualified teacher, had taken up the position of assistant teacher in Bendigo's largest school. During the intervening period, he had continued to develop a good memory as well as analytical skills, especially by means of various scientific pursuits such as entomology.\(^1\) The methodical habits established during this period proved to be invaluable in his subsequent study of the extremely complex Chinese language. At the same time, Don found opportunities for Christian service in the Huntly Sabbath School and as precentor\(^2\) of the local church. A Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) was also established in Bendigo and Don not only served on the first Board of Management, but was later elected corresponding secretary.

The next turning point in Don's career came in 1877 when he heard Dr John G. Paton speak on the impact of the New Hebrides Mission. This generated in Don an enthusiasm for mission work and when Dr Paton later visited Victorian churches appealing for volunteers, Don offered his services. He was advised to go to Otago, as the local Presbyterian Synod was looking for a missionary to send to the New Hebrides. Don eventually accepted this advice and, after much correspondence with the Otago Education Board, he finally arrived in Dunedin on January 12, 1879. Don took up the position of second assistant at the Port Chalmers school, with responsibility for a Standard III class consisting of 71 pupils! He also became involved in various field sports, such as cricket, football and running, as well as writing regular articles on New Zealand life for the Australian press.\(^3\)

However Don's original purpose in coming to Otago had been hindered in that the position of missionary to the New Hebrides had been filled by a Mr O. Michelson. Nevertheless, he was informed that the Synod was also seeking a young missionary willing to be sent to China in order to learn Cantonese, that he might then return to establish an effective mission to the Chinese in Otago.

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\(^1\) Dictionary of New Zealand Biography, (DNZB), p.217
\(^2\) The precentor lead the choir and congregation during the worship
\(^3\) DNZB, p.217
Don was by no means unaware of the Christian mission to the Chinese. The Sunday School he had attended as a child had shared quarters with a Chinese catechist and as an eight year old boy he had been witness to the baptism of seven Chinese by a missionary from the New Hebrides. Moreover, Don's mining background had helped educate him as to the character of the Chinese miner, as well as the considerable racial agitation that followed them. These experiences, combined with an ardent enthusiasm for mission work, prompted him to offer his services to the Foreign Missions Committee, who quickly accepted him.

Thus, within the same year Don was on the move once more. He arrived in Canton on October 29, 1879 and remained there for sixteen months training under the guidance of the American Presbyterian Mission. Essentially, the dilemma confronting Don was the exceedingly complex nature of the Chinese language. China has two distinct languages - one written, the other verbal. While the written language does not vary over the empire (although its complexity makes it almost a life-long study), the spoken word varies from place to place. Thus, for example, a person speaking the pure Cantonese dialect might not be understood a mere hundred miles away. The difficulty caused by the variation in dialects is further exacerbated by the use of tones in the Chinese language, to the extent that one word can have many different meanings. For example, the word "wān" in a high even tone means "warm"; in a low even tone means "clouds"; and in a high rising tone translates as "sure". Taking these difficulties into account, Don initially calculated that the language could be fairly well acquired in three years. Unfortunately, a succession of trips into the hinterland and a dangerous attack of small-pox in 1880-1881, reduced his study time to ten months in total. As his grip of the Cantonese dialect was by no means sure, the missionaries in Canton advised him to employ a language teacher as the only practical way of expanding his knowledge. Mr Ng Ping-Lun was subsequently appointed, on behalf of the Foreign Missions Committee, to accompany the missionary back to New Zealand and assist him in his studies. During his three year tenure, Ng Ping-Lun was to provide invaluable assistance not only as a teacher but also as a translator. In the meantime, however, Don's musical ear, methodical habits, good memory, training as a teacher and established patterns of hard work enabled him to make the most of his time in China. While his primary aim was to acquire the basics of the Cantonese dialect,

44 Otago Daily Times, November 3, 1934, p.14, c.5
45 New Zealand Presbyterian, September 1, 1881, vol.III, no.3, pp.45-6
Don also wanted to gain a deeper understanding of Chinese character and customs. His desire to immerse himself in their way of life ran so deep that he even went to the extent of becoming a volunteer member of the Shameen Canton Fire Brigade in 1880. His time in China made a lifelong impression on him and encouraged a sympathy for the country and its people which would continue to sustain him throughout his Mission.

On March 20, 1881 Don left China and headed for Victoria. While in Australia, he gained some practical experience by accompanying a Mr Youngman, who ran the Wesleyan Mission to the Chinese. He also made time for an important visit to an old friend in Bendigo. Both had been members of a united evangelistic choir, and, after the settlement of a certain important question to their mutual satisfaction, Don returned to New Zealand. By then it was autumn of 1881 and time to enter the Theological Hall for further training. As this was the only formal theological training Don received, his religious education was somewhat meagre. After a brief year's study the real task began.

In January, 1882 Don began his mission amongst the small Chinese population based in Dunedin, preaching to them in their own tongue. However, the Reverend James Cameron, Minister at Riverton, had begun to take an interest in the Chinese population at nearby Round Hill which, with a population of around five hundred, was one of the biggest Chinese mining centres in New Zealand. He therefore made a submission to the Foreign Missions Committee requesting that the missionary be stationed at Riverton. The Committee, having established there was indeed a sizeable Chinese population in the area, accepted the proposal and within a few months Don found himself stationed at his first Mission post.46

One of his first actions was to finally settle that important Australian matter by bringing his bride-to-be to New Zealand. In 1883 Alexander Don and Amelia Warne, daughter of Francis Warne of Bendigo, were married at Warepa.

Don was stationed at Riverton, eleven miles from Round Hill which was for all intents and purposes a Chinese town. He quickly established weekday services in Riverton, as well as a Sunday service three out of every four weeks. Round Hill meetings were held in the upstairs room of a Tea House, where there was a weekday service three weeks in the month and a Sunday service every fourth week.47 Initially, interest seemed high — indeed one Sunday service saw an

46 A. Fraser, "The Social Work of the Presbyterian Church in New Zealand up till 1930", pp.99–100

47 New Zealand Presbyterian, May 1, 1882, vol.III, no.11, p.207
impressive attendance of 150 Chinese.\textsuperscript{48} Attendance was also good at the English classes Don established in Riverton. Indeed the local Chinese were soon volunteering to subscribe money to build a permanent meeting house in Riverton.\textsuperscript{49} By March 1883, a mission house and Church, easily accommodating a hundred hearers, had been opened. This coincided with the baptism of Don's first convert, James (Cheun) Ah King, thus the first Mission report painted an encouraging picture - 'at both places [Riverton and Round Hill] he has found ready access to the Chinese, several of whom have shown a great desire to become acquainted with Christianity.'\textsuperscript{50} Once the Church was opened more services were established in Round Hill with meetings now held each alternate Saturday and Sunday. However, it seems that from mid-1883 the initial enthusiasm generated by the arrival of the missionary and the opening of the Church had died down. As a result, attendance began to drop, although a corresponding decline in the overall population of the settlement must also be taken into account.\textsuperscript{51} Nevertheless, after two and a half years of mission work the average attendance at services was only seven.\textsuperscript{52}

Don encountered many problems during this initial stage. On a personal level, he was still in the process of perfecting his understanding of the Cantonese dialect, while also acquainting himself with Chinese customs and mindset. On another level, Don's "parishioners" were well ensconced in their own traditions and philosophies, thus Christianity carried little weight. Indeed, as one honest miner explained it 'Ah Don no good - him not belong my church.'\textsuperscript{53} To make matters worse, Chinese disdain for the West had turned into bitter hatred, as memories of the recent Opium Wars were still fresh in their minds. Nor did the missionary's passionate involvement in the temperance movement make the relationship any easier, as alcohol was often an integral part of the miner's diet.\textsuperscript{54} As a result, the response to Don's message ranged from apathetic

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{48} Ibid
\item \textsuperscript{49} Ibid, November 1, 1882, vol.IV, no.5, p.87
\item \textsuperscript{50} Ibid, May 1, 1882, vol.III, no.11, p.207
\item \textsuperscript{51} Ibid, July 2, 1883, vol.V, no.1, p.3
\item \textsuperscript{52} Ibid, August 1, 1885, vol.VII, no.2, pp.25-6
\item \textsuperscript{53} Ibid, September 1, 1884, vol.VI, no.3, p.43
\item \textsuperscript{54} A.K. Davidson & P.J. Lineham, Transplanted Christianity: Documents Illustrating Aspects of New Zealand Church History, Auckland, College Communications, 1987, p.47
\end{itemize}
indifference to almost open resistance. This opposition was displayed in a variety of ways, but often in a very subtle manner. For example, it may have appeared that the construction of the Church in Round Hill was prompted by Chinese enthusiasm, however the miners later confessed that they 'did not like Mr Don to be preaching in their shops, and so built a church to get rid of him'. Don, who was not altogether surprised by this information, merely viewed it as the roundabout lengths to which the Chinese would go in order to avoid conflict and yet still achieve their own ends. Opposition also surfaced to Don's weekly news-sheet, which consisted of translated newspaper items concerning China: because the Empire's weaknesses were described, the miners decried the news as deceitful Western propaganda. Moreover, hostility was also generated when Don became a Court interpreter. The missionary often acted as translator for Chinese defendants in legal or mining disputes, and his ability to understand Cantonese meant that the Chinese who spoke English were unable to translate as "freely" as before. This caused much hostility in some sectors of the community, but many had long been suspicious of the honesty of these interpreters and so Don came to be frequently called on in this capacity. Nevertheless, the missionary continued to encounter animosity, sometimes subtle, sometimes direct. Indeed it was this honest approach that he preferred: "open opposition, as being something tangible, is preferable to secret opposition or even to indifference." Thus, the lack of progress essentially stemmed from an inflexible conviction, on both sides, in the rightness of their own beliefs, which ultimately doomed the Riverton Mission to failure.

In the meantime, the Foreign Missions Committee had been active on Don's behalf in securing the services of a Chinese catechist for the Mission. In 1886 Kwok Wai Shang arrived from Canton and was immediately stationed in the Riverton area. He was paid £75 per annum, just over a third of which came from Don's personal income. Kwok Wai Shang proved to be an extremely diligent and enthusiastic worker, earning favourable reports from both his own people and Christians in the district. However, it is interesting to note that the catechist initially encountered much opposition from his fellow countrymen: opposition

55 New Zealand Presbyterian, July 1, 1884, vol.IV, no.1, p.4
56 Ibid, September 1, 1882, vol.IV, no.3, p.46
57 Ibid, August 1, 1885, vol.VII, no.2, p.26
58 Fraser, pp.101-2
which Don regarded as being 'inseparable from his position'. The Chinese miners assumed that Kwok would preach Confucian doctrine but when he proclaimed the Christian message, thus apparently betraying his Chinese heritage, their response was all the more hostile.

1886 proved to be a year of change. Not only was Don officially ordained as a Presbyterian Minister but, once Kwok Wai Shang was established in Riverton, he was transferred to Lawrence. This was to be Don's new Mission base from which he would cover the goldfield districts, involving a sizeable, if somewhat scattered Chinese population. This was the time when his knowledge of the language would be put to a crucial test.

The Mission in Lawrence was quickly established with the Presbyterian Church vestry providing a central meeting place for Chinese in the area. Moreover, Don soon began to extend his outreach by establishing regular meetings in places such as Waitahuna, Waipori, and Adam's Flat. However, Don realised that of the approximately 3,000 Chinese in Otago, he and his catechist were only reaching around 850 with regular meetings. Thus, he conceived the idea of undertaking an annual inland tour to visit the scattered Chinese miners, thereby giving another estimated 1,800 the opportunity of hearing the Gospel.

The first of many Annual Up-country Tours (later named Inland Tours) was undertaken in November 1886. The journey usually lasted three to four months, during which time Don kept extremely accurate records, revealing extensive coverage of the Chinese goldfields' population.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Places Visited</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>People Seen</th>
<th>Attendance</th>
<th>Total Travelled (miles)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1886</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1887-88</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>1,258</td>
<td>1,030</td>
<td>448</td>
<td>1,772</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1888-89</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>1,380</td>
<td>1,150</td>
<td>490</td>
<td>2,067</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1889-90</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>1,214</td>
<td>1,070</td>
<td>387</td>
<td>1,752</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

 Much work had to be done in preparation for these annual tours. Advertisements were sent ahead to Chinese stores, settlements and friends, while a suitcase was

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58 New Zealand Presbyterian, August 2, 1886, vol.I, no.2, p.21
59 Ibid, February 1, 1887, vol.I, no.8, p.147
60 A. Don, Annual Inland Tours, 1886-1890
packed and dispatched to central places so that necessary items were never far from reach. Don’s tours always had a Biblical theme running throughout and thus text and sermon topics had to be selected well beforehand. The missionary was a strong supporter of audio-visual evangelism, in that he carried a series of brightly drawn Biblical pictures, at the top of which were sermon headings in large Chinese characters. Don also carried with him an umbrella, which doubled as a walking stick; a camera, thereby providing an important pictorial record of the times; and a strong leather bag weighing between fourteen to twenty pounds, which contained items such as an almanac, tracts, a small medical chest, compass, barometer, notebook and, most importantly, Don’s own directory of the Chinese in Otago. Just before the missionary entered a mining camp he would sit down, bring out this directory and refresh his memory about the names, family information and other newsworthy items of the settlement. He would then sally forth greeting the Chinese with their proper names and amazing them with his incredible feats of memory.

Each tour covered a distance of approximately two thousand miles, some of which were travelled on trains, some on horseback, but over half were undertaken on foot. The journey encompassed all types of terrain and all types of weather from blazing sun to fog, hail, sleet, rain and sometimes even snow. As Don testified, ‘let me dispel the notion some folk have that this Tour is a sort of picnic.’ Once the missionary arrived at a mining camp, arranging a meeting could take hours or even days of walking to find outlying miners, unless an interested party had already made the arrangements. Each individual had to be given a personal invitation to the service, in keeping with Chinese tradition, and as many had to travel a sizeable distance in order to reach the central meeting place, often Don did not begin until as late as 9 p.m. The services were held in a variety of locations, ranging from miners’ huts, to Chinese stores, to inns and opium dens, although seldom in European churches as the Chinese had a strong objection to this, as did many Europeans. The lesson usually went for an hour, after which time the Chinese assembled for what was for many the real reason behind their attendance, a chance to gather round Don and discuss items

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62 G.H. McNeur, The Church and the Chinese in New Zealand, p.22
63 Annual Inland Tour 1890-91, pp.1,13-14
64 Ibid, 1896-97, p.2
65 Ibid, 1890-91, p.7
66 New Zealand Presbyterian, March 1, 1888, p.167
of interest, personal or general. The miners lived isolated lives and relied on regular visits from the missionary for news of the outside world, especially China. Don also relayed messages between friends in different camps, as well as letters to and from China. Indeed, he often wrote letters for the miners, who were largely illiterate.

As there were a number of obstacles blocking the path to Christian conversion, the cultivation of a strong, trustworthy relationship between the missionary and his chosen flock became one of the most important methods Don used to overcome resistance. Following the advice and example of the apostle Paul, he became all things to the Chinese in order to win them over. These efforts soon produced results and before long the miners had affectionately named him "Jesus Don" and "Teacher Don". As Reverend George McNeur, pioneer missionary to the Canton Villages Mission, testified in 1883, 'few men thus set apart for Christian service have so thoroughly taken the form of a servant as did Alexander Don in dealing with his scattered parishioners.'

Initially, Don had encouraged a strong relationship with the Chinese so that his message might have a wider, less hostile audience. However, this developing relationship had a further unforeseen effect in that Don began to experience a deeper understanding and sympathy for the Chinese, their culture, and their situation in New Zealand. This increased understanding significantly affected many of his attitudes and reactions to the Chinese and their way of life. For example, while Don stood firmly against the widespread addiction of opium smoking, he was able to recognise that many 'resort to the drug to soothe the pangs of despair' caused by their hard, isolated mining lifestyle. Therefore, he turned to attacking the cause of the problem rather than simply berating the effect. Don not only performed personal tasks for the miners, but also provided a sympathetic ear and his understanding of the Chinese grew further as he listened to the stories of the 'childless, friendless, aged and poor, in a distant foreign land'. Don also became the champion of Chinese rights, helping the miners deal with the intricacies of the legal system and its red tape. For example, even after death, he would represent their interests by ensuring the

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67 A. Don, Memories of the Golden Road, p.12
68 Ibid, p.8
69 Annual Inland Tour 1893-94, p.21
70 Ibid, 1890-91, p.17
safe transfer of any mining profits to their families. The missionary also displayed commendable cultural sensitivity in supporting those traditional Chinese practices, such as wearing the queue, which did not directly interfere with the success of his Christian message.

I very strongly advocate the retention of the queue. I believe that its removal creates a needless barrier between the Chinese Christian and the heathen, and gives the latter occasion to object to Christianity, because it destroys his nationality.

Hard experience and a deepening relationship with his flock taught Don to appeal to Chinese culture and tradition rather than attack it. In order to provide a bridge for communication between the different faiths, he suggested that Christianity and traditional Chinese religions contained certain common elements. One such example was the philosopher Mo Tzo, who established a doctrine condemning war and expounding universal love. He also introduced the idea of supernatural gods who rewarded good and punished evil. This doctrine was largely forgotten until nineteenth century missionaries in China resurrected the philosophy in order to show that Christianity and ancient Chinese ideas were not diametrically opposed. Don was well acquainted with this method and used it to much effect - indeed, he was told by one miner that a sermon had been especially effective 'because you spoke of Sun Shuh-Ngao and others of ancient history.' As the Chinese did not recognise the authority of the Christian Bible, Don was often forced to find proofs from ancient Chinese philosophers supporting his message. During one sermon, for example, the missionary emphasised that suffering helped both individuals and nations become great. This idea caused much disagreement among the congregation and it was not until Don quoted the Chinese philosopher Mencius in support of his argument that the miners were satisfied. Moreover, Don silenced many an opponent to Christian doctrine by quoting from Confucius, who acknowledged

71 Ibid, 1892-93, p.6

72 A. Don, Under Six Flags, Dunedin, J. Wilkie and Co., 1898, p.57

73 D. Bodde, "Dominant Ideas", in China, ed. H.F. MacNair, p.20

74 Annual Inland Tour 1890-91, p.13 - for other examples see Annual Inland Tour 1890-1891, p.3 & Annual Inland Tour 1894-95, p.23

75 Ibid, 1890-91, p.3
that 'the people of the West have their sages'.

Thus, by drawing on ancient Chinese philosophies, Don was able to assail the belief that Christianity was irrelevant because of its comparative youth and Western origins.

Of all the methods used by Don to counter Chinese hostility, perhaps the most effective of all was simple persistence. Even when he had a congregation of one, which was not an altogether infrequent occurrence, that single miner got the full sermon. Indeed, the missionary's unflagging energy and capacity for work was a well-documented characteristic.

Very few are his equals in staying power. Only a calm and steadfast faith in Jesus Christ and His Gospel ... could have nourished in him amid his singularly difficult work a zeal that never tires, a courage that never falters, a hopefulness that is always radiant.

High praise indeed, but the length of the tours, the mileage covered and the extremes he went to in order to reach as many Chinese as possible testifies to his devotion to the task. It was this perseverance that began to earn him the grudging respect of the miners.

No matter how effective these methods may have appeared on a surface level, the real test lay in whether the miners became more accepting of the Christian Gospel. Don's diaries, which give honest, detailed and relatively balanced accounts of the Inland Tours, certainly show an increasing interest, respect and friendliness towards the missionary himself. As a result, each year there seemed to be less and less hostility and more and more readiness to hear his Message.

Contemporaries who accompanied Don on various tours testified to this growing respect. Reverend William Mawson, who later became an active member of the Chinese Mission, remarked 'How the faces of these lonely souls would light up when they saw "Teacher" Don!'. Reverend McNeur, testified that 'to hear the glad shout of welcome and see the lighting up of Chinese faces as he approached

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76 Ibid, 1894-95, p.23
77 McNeur, p.23
78 J. Chisholm, Fifty Years Syne, Dunedin, J. Wilkie and Co., 1898, p.203
79 M. Moore, "The Chinese in New Zealand", p.79
80 A. Don, Memories of the Golden Road, p.12
claim or hut, revealed the place he had won in their lives.81

While the cultivation of this relationship of mutual respect enabled Don to gain further access to the Chinese, it did not guarantee that the Christian Gospel was received with any more enthusiasm. His persistence and obvious concern for the miners certainly encouraged higher attendances at his meetings, but this was by no means an indication that they actually accepted what they heard. Indeed, the Chinese response varied widely and such a range of excuses were employed to avoid the services that Don even made a note of his admiration for one miner who, instead of 'giving a false reason, which, under the circumstances nine out of ten Chinese would have done'82, was honest enough to admit that he simply did not want to attend the meeting. Thus, the Mission services could vary from 'the two or three gathered together in the Master's name, [to] the thirty or forty, of faces aglow with interest or devoid of passion or marked by disapproval.'83

Therefore, despite the relationship Don had worked to build up with his Mission flock, even after some years of diligent toil there were only a handful of Christian converts. Numerically, the Mission was not achieving a high rate of success. Nevertheless, churches in Dunedin continued to provide the necessary financial support and were satisfied that the Mission was going well, perhaps due in part to Don's undoubted abilities in the public relations department.

Mr Don ... is diligently and we believe successfully, operating on the Chinese residing within our bounds ... [and] his work is bearing visible fruit. One Chinaman is about to be received into the church by baptism, and two more are candidates for the ordinance.84

However, while churches were in part supportive of the Mission, there was still a great deal of prejudice against the Chinese, especially among Central Otago congregations, which resulted in either a lack of support, complete ambivalence, or sometimes outright hostility. For example, objections were raised in Tuapeka

81 G.H. McNeur, The Chinese in Our Midst, p.9
82 Annual Island Tour 1890-91, p.2 - for examples of the range of excuses see p.9
83 Ibid, 1892-93, p.1
84 New Zealand Presbyterian, December 1, 1882, vol.IV, no.6, p.105
to Chinese services being held in the new Presbyterian Church on the grounds that they were not baptised.

I think our leading churchmen ought to see into this matter; if they do not, they will find a great many who will rather stay at home than mix with a set [i.e. the Chinese] who only go there [Church] to cloak a host of hideous sins.\(^{87}\)

In the ensuing debate, Don attacked the Church's decision as ignorant and uncharitable, stating that he felt ashamed at the 'rarity of Christian charity'. His opinion was ridiculed in the Western Star,\(^ {86}\) and even the New Zealand Presbyterian carried his objections 'with some reluctance' and advised the 'acceptance of the situation'.\(^ {87}\) However, Don eventually gathered enough support in the Christian community for the Church to reverse its earlier decision. Nevertheless, such opposition created much resentment among the Chinese - and their missionary.

When we got the resolution of the session ... and heard the remarks of the Chinese, we felt as if our own flesh had been pierced, knowing that much harm had been done to the work.\(^ {88}\)

Debate erupted once again in 1885 when there was some controversy over the column "Our Chinese Mission" in the New Zealand Presbyterian. Several readers expressing racist sentiments, repeatedly asked for it to be omitted as regular reports on the Chinese Mission were felt to be inappropriate and unnecessary.\(^ {89}\) Moreover, editorials reveal that the publication itself seemed to be against the Mission.

\(^ {85}\) Western Star, September 6, 1882
\(^ {86}\) Ibid
\(^ {87}\) New Zealand Presbyterian, December 1, 1882, vol.IV, no.6, p.106
\(^ {88}\) Ibid
\(^ {89}\) Ibid, January 1, 1885, vol.VI, no.7, p.23
We cannot hide from ourselves that really nothing is being accomplished - scarcely, as far as we can see, an impression made. The Chinese mind seems to be pre-eminently difficult to access ... to be totally out of sympathy with European and Evangelical ideas ... the Chinamen there are steeped to the very eyes in spiritual apathy, ignorance and superstition ... little better than animals, with appreciation of nothing but money ... men into whose dark natures there cannot enter a glimmering perception of the idea or spirit of the mission which has gone in search of them. The probability is that we have among us the very dregs of the Chinese towns and villages ... There seems at least room for considering whether we should longer devote the funds ... to so desperate an undertaking as reaching these impenetrable natures ... 9

The New Zealand Presbyterian, in the midst of such opposition, was at least right about one thing - the Presbyterian Mission was having few practical results. While at the forefront of what was easily the most active denominational Mission, Don was still encountering not only opposition but, what was perhaps even harder to combat, apathy - both from the Chinese and the Church. Moreover, it was clear that the Chinese population was becoming increasingly urbanised, thus a goldfields' mission, which had never met with much success, was in need of review. It was time for a change in tactics.

90 Ibid
FIGURE 1: Reverend Alexander Don Outfitted For His First Annual Inland Tour, 1886
Sketch Map
ILLUSTRATING "Our Chinese Mission"
[Sketch by A.M.]
--- Route by rail, coach &c. --- on foot.
SCALE: 1 INCH = 12 MILES.

New Zealand Presbyterian, Supplement, March 1, 1888
CHAPTER 3
THE URBAN BATTLEFIELD

I THE URBAN CHINESE PRESENCE

(i) Demographic Trends

The 1890s saw the structure of the Chinese community altered by a number of demographic changes. The initial transformation was a rapid decline in the colony's Asian population; a factor especially noticeable in the Otago region.

GRAPH 1 The Population of Chinese in New Zealand

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1 New Zealand Census & New Zealand Statistics 1889-1902
The second modification was a significant shift in occupation. As the goldfields were largely exhausted, the vast majority of Chinese were forced to abandon their claims. The lucky ones had sufficient savings to return home, but others chose to supplement their earnings by remaining in New Zealand. Unfortunately, the range of options were somewhat limited. As one contemporary noted, 'the Chinese were waiting for jobs, any jobs ... Most of the jobs were labouring and the wages were lower than the white people's ones. Jobs were always part time. If you could get a full-time job, you were lucky.'\textsuperscript{2}\textsuperscript{2} In the face of such scarce employment prospects, many Chinese decided to establish their own small businesses. Typical areas of speciality became market gardening, laundering and fruit and vegetable retailing.

This change was both accompanied and encouraged by an urban northward drift, resembling that of the population as a whole. By the early years of the twentieth century, few urban centres which did not have at least a small Chinese population.\textsuperscript{3}\textsuperscript{3} Northern areas, particularly Wellington and Auckland, were beginning to experience for the first time the effects of such a population in their midst.

Due to both a lack of finance and a poor knowledge of English, the urban Chinese population tended to congregate in one area - usually low rent and sub-standard. Thus businesses, food halls, gambling houses, opium dens and accommodation (usually Chinese-run boarding houses) would all confine themselves to one small area.\textsuperscript{4}\textsuperscript{4} In Dunedin, this precinct was colourfully known as the "Devil's Half-Acre". The Maitland, Maclaggan and Princes Street area formed a concentrated zone of slum housing, at the heart of which was the Devil's Half-Acre centring on Walker (now Carroll), Hope and Stafford Streets. It is interesting to note that the concentration of Chinese in the area was not responsible for this notorious appellation, as it had long been a centre of brothels and criminal activity. After the gold rush era, the section was largely unused except for vegetable gardens. Nevertheless, its reputation remained and was subsequently encouraged by the evolution of Dunedin's own "Chinatown".\textsuperscript{5}\textsuperscript{5}

\textsuperscript{2} N. Pawakapan, "The Chinese in Dunedin Between the 1920s and the 1940s", MA, Otago, 1987, p.53

\textsuperscript{3} N. Ritchie, "Archaeology and History of the Chinese in Southern New Zealand During the Nineteenth Century", p.12

\textsuperscript{4} P. Butler. Opium and Gold, p.104

\textsuperscript{5} "Life in the Devil's Half-Acre" Dunedin Star Midweek, February 13, 1991, p.11
However, the population of the Devil's Half-Acre was not exclusively Chinese: the area also accommodated Lebanese and European families, both the very poor and the very wealthy.

Walker Street, in particular, housed Dunedin's Chinese population and was described by the Otago Witness in 1894 as 'a steep ugly street... On either side are dingy dirty shops and warehouses - many of them Chinese shops and eating houses... What dirty, wretched, squalid little houses, what rotten old tumbledown shanties bulging onto the street...’ Parents warned children of the dangers of the area, thereby passing prejudices on to the next generation, for as one contemporary remarked, 'a lot of people thought that if you walked up Walker Street it was very dangerous. You'd never come out alive'. A plague scare in 1900 only encouraged such preposterous rumours, as Health Inspectors focused media and public attention on this section of town by identifying it as Dunedin's slum area and a likely cause of death. An Otago Witness reporter visited a Chinese boarding house in order to report on the exact nature of the problem.

Leprous-looking paper, stained and mildewy with damp, peeled from the walls, grime and grease blackened the ceilings, while the warm sickening smell from the cook house poured through the dingy passages. A dozen cook houses were passed through, and in many cases the Chinamen were sitting down to tea. In every kitchen there was a bed, and down in the cellar, where daylight never penetrates, more cook houses and bedrooms were found to be inhabited.

While the report could not verify these living conditions as the cause of plague, it does indicate the extent of overcrowding and the squalid living conditions under which the Chinese suffered.

In 1916 Walker Street became Carroll Street, undoubtedly an attempt to change its image by changing its name. However, only time could provide such an alteration and indeed decades of development have seen the area become a

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6 Ibid
7 Ibid
8 Pawakapan, p.24
9 Otago Witness, June 14, 1900, p.25
10 Midweek, p.11
typical inner-city suburb, although a surprising number of original buildings remain. However, the long-standing reputation of the Devil’s Half-Acre was quite contrary to the reality, as many former residents testify. For example, the memories of one contemporary who spent her childhood in the area defy the widely-held image.

Oh it was so colourful, it was lovely ... Growing up in the community amongst the Chinese and the Lebanese was something - something I don’t think I’ll ever experience so lovely in my life and I’m 84 years old. The Chinese were lovely, they were very, very nice.\(^\text{11}\)

However, another one-time resident noted how the Chinese’ lack of English helped to exacerbate urban transitional difficulties.

The Chinese would be talking in their language, we’d be talking in our language. They just couldn’t understand people with different languages, and it sort of got at them I think.\(^\text{12}\)

Thus, while a certain amount of neighbourhood closeness developed, the Chinese still remained isolated behind cultural obstacles that could not easily be overcome.

(ii) The Urban Social Reaction

The turn of the century saw an alarming development in society’s reaction towards its Chinese guests, in that a cult of white supremacy began to emerge. Intrinsic to this belief in white superiority was a presumption of the inferiority of alien races. These overtly racist attitudes were prompted to a large extent by a rapid decline in the white birth rate. In the 1860s, average New Zealand families saw eight births, but fertility rates fell so markedly that by the 1920s couples were only producing 2.5 children.\(^\text{13}\) This decline alarmed many and

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\(^{11}\) Jamee Joseph, *Midweek*, p.11

\(^{12}\) Jessie George Milne, *Midweek*, p.11

encouraged fears of "white race suicide" which would inevitably destroy the
nation. These fears encouraged the promotion of whites at the expense of
alien races, the Chinese included. As a result, they were denounced, although
not for the first time, as immoral, unclean, degenerate and, most tellingly, as a
threat to white racial purity. Comments from various Members of Parliament were
indicative of the prevalent attitude at this time. For example, Canterbury's
Member of Parliament, the Honourable Mr W. C. Walker, stated

I must say that modern opinion, more highly trained
in the doctrines of heredity, shudders at staining any
innocent stock with pollutions of that kind ... We
prefer to keep our sources of population pure ...

Moreover, Seddon was reported as saying that he 'would as soon see his
offspring in her grave as see her united to a Chinaman.' Thus, the Chinese
presence was seen to pose the threat of interbreeding and a loss of the nation's
racial purity.

In order to counter these alleged dangers, various organisations were
formed with the specific purpose of drawing attention to the "Yellow peril" and
"cleansing" the colony of its heathen elements. Organisations such as the White
Race League, the White New Zealand League and the Anti-Asiatic Society were
established throughout the country, and engaged in various activities ranging
from circulating petitions to boycotting Chinese businesses.

The Anti-Chinese League was founded in 1895, with the support of many
prominent Members of Parliament, including the Premier, Richard Seddon, and
the Minister of Education, William Pember Reeves. The manifesto contained
this central objective -

This League considers the time has now arrived that
action should be taken to remove from our Colony
what is known as the "Yellow Peril" believing that if
left alone it will become a menace to our Country, and
for the purity of our Race those rules have been
framed.

14 Ibid, p.219
15 NZPD, 1898, vol.104, p.177
16 NZPD, 1880, vol.36, p.99
17 Otago Daily Times, August 16, 1895, p.2, c.5
Palmerston North, Buick & Young, c.1905
The rules encouraged public agitation to not only raise the poll tax but to prevent unfair competition in business. They also aimed to bring about a decline in the Chinese population by deporting Asians who were deemed 'undesirable'.¹⁹ However, these objectives seemed to have little effect and as one observer noted, 'if in the Anti-Chinese League there was less talk and more "do" it would be more satisfactory to all.'²⁰

A similar example was the White Race League, established in Wellington in the last years of the 1890s. Its founder, Mr W.A. Lloyd, visited Otago soon after, where he found many willing listeners. His argument that the purity of the white race was under threat found favour with the audience which passed a resolution to the effect that 'this meeting, representative of the fruit industry and laundry businesses of Dunedin, emphatically declares itself in favour of a white New Zealand.'²¹ The nature of the proposal reveals that while arguments concerning racial purity were very strong at this time, the old fear of economic competition still underlay much agitation.

Therefore, during the early years of the twentieth century, the alleged inherent superiority of white Europeans and the manifest inferiority of the Chinese was supported not only in public meetings but also in the media and in Parliament. This obsession with the idea of a "Yellow Peril" was taken to its extreme in 1905 by Lionel Terry, a well-educated European, who shot dead an elderly Chinaman - Joe Kum-yung - in Haining Street, Wellington. He apparently took a keen interest in the issue of alien immigration and decided to actively protect not only his own rights, but those of his fellow countrymen by helping to keep New Zealand white. While few could agree with the action, most could at least understand the motivation behind it.²²

(iii) The State and White New Zealand Policy

By 1893 the colony had a new Premier, Richard John Seddon, otherwise known as "King Dick". Seddon was parliament's leading proponent of restrictive

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¹⁹ Ibid

²⁰ Lady Anna Paterson Stout, Collection of newspaper clippings c.1896-1913, vol. B

²¹ Butler, p.18

²² D. & P. Beatson, Chinese New Zealanders, Hong Kong, Heinemann, 1990, p.14
legislation against the Chinese; indeed one of his first actions as Premier was to initiate the Asiatic Restriction Bill. As a result, he has been described as a 'quite savage racist' and many of his attitudes seem to verify this view. For example, he declared that 'the Chinaman is inferior in every way, shape and form; and I hope that such an inferiority will never be tolerated here.' Yet paradoxically, even as late as the 1880s Seddon was arguing that Chinese in New Zealand ought to have the same personal freedom as immigrants of other nations. This apparent balance has encouraged the argument that Seddon, in terms of the political arena, was neither more nor less racist than any other Member of Parliament. Perhaps this was the case earlier in his career but by the 1890s, and certainly by the time he became Premier, Seddon had become thoroughly discriminatory. In fact his prejudices were gaining an irrational edge - for example he countered the argument that the Chinese population was steadily decreasing with the unlikely scenario that the Chinese were 'too cunning' to declare themselves at census time and thus the population was in fact rapidly increasing. While undoubtedly a product of the prejudices of his time, Seddon was in turn helping to generate those very prejudices.

The year 1895 saw Chinese residents petition parliament asking that no further discriminatory legislation be ratified. This was an unusual step, indicative of the intense racist pressure the Chinese were suffering under. As a rule, they did not become involved in colonial politics, despite their need for protection against restrictive immigration laws - such discrimination was usually accepted philosophically. The effect of this initiation into New Zealand's political system could well be said to be negligible, since in 1896 there was a further Amendment Act. It increased the poll tax from £10 to a staggering £100, an almost impossibly high rate, while also raising passenger limits to one for


24 NZPD, 1880, vol.36, p.98

25 NZPD, 1888, vol.63, p.358

26 Pawakapan, p.8

27 NZPD, 1888, vol.60, p.35


29 Butler, p.90
every 100 tons. Debate over this issue was kept to a minimum, as there was general agreement within parliament on the need for further immigration restrictions. However, it is widely acknowledged that the legislation was little more than a "paper tiger" to the extent that many aspects were difficult to enforce. The poll tax was a prime example of this for, as a landmark Court case in 1899 held, 'there was reason to believe that a systematic evasion of the Chinese poll tax was going on'.\textsuperscript{30} It appears that many new arrivals simply slipped through the fingers of enforcement authorities, although such culprits were heavily fined if detected.\textsuperscript{31}

Originally designed as a mere stop-gap measure, the 1896 Amendment Act was to be superseded by the eventual passing into law of Seddon's Asiatic Restriction Bill. This proposed piece of legislation was based on the argument of white racial purity and was thus aimed not only at the Chinese, but at Japanese and Indians as well. However, while the House of Representatives had become more convinced of the desirability of immigration restrictions, the Legislative Council represented the last remnants of opposition to such measures. During this period, the average number of departures superseded the number of arrivals, yet the colony and its government representatives had fallen into the grip of a White New Zealand policy, thus the demand for further restrictive legislation strengthened. In the face of such determination, the Legislative Council's best means of defeating this severe Bill was to lay a protest before the Governor General for submission to the Queen.\textsuperscript{32} As a result, the Act failed to receive the Royal Assent.\textsuperscript{33}

In 1898 the course of discriminatory legislation took a new direction with the introduction of the Immigration Restriction Bill. It was concerned primarily with the quality of immigrants, rather than their race. The Act not only provided for immigration limits to be raised to one Chinese passenger per 200 tons, but more importantly, it also implemented an education test. While not specifically aimed at any particular race, English-speaking migrants were much more likely to meet the prescribed standards than Asian migrants. Moreover, an amendment was quickly added to the original Act, which prohibited any further naturalisation

\textsuperscript{30} Otago Daily Times, September 20, 1899, p.5, c.5

\textsuperscript{31} Ibid

\textsuperscript{32} Otago Daily Times, November 27, 1897, p.6, c.6

\textsuperscript{33} Scholefield, pp.69-70
of Chinese immigrants – this stipulation was not lifted until 1952.\textsuperscript{34} Thus, the policy of a White New Zealand was increasingly finding legislative support.

Anti-chinese sentiment continued to make itself felt in various pieces of legislation throughout the early years of the twentieth century. In 1898 the Old Age Pensions Act specifically excluded New Zealand’s Chinese population from its scope. Moreover, the Opium Act of 1901 gave police the right to search without a warrant any Chinese dwelling in which they suspected opium might be found. It is interesting to note that this Act was introduced as a result of Chinese petitions to parliament. With the decline of the gold mining era, many Chinese found solace in opium addiction. Thus, the Act was an attempt by the Chinese to protect their own.\textsuperscript{35}

In 1906 Seddon’s distinguished career came to an end, but his legacy helped to ensure that parliamentary anti-chinese agitation continued well after his death. For example, an amendment to the Factories Act Amendment Bill was proposed in 1907 with regard to restricting the number of hours worked by Chinese in laundries. Support for such restrictions was widespread, as legal favouritism towards European businesses would further reinforce the policy of a White New Zealand. As work for Chinese laundries was intermittent, the nature of the proposal signified disaster for their livelihood. However, the amendment was rejected narrowly by parliament, for as one Member testified, 'he had no brief for the Chinese, and wished they were out of the country, but he wished to see them treated as human beings.'\textsuperscript{36}

Nevertheless, parliamentary anti-chinese sentiment was as forceful as ever.

To begin with the Asiatic is a fatalist; he knows nothing, and cares less, about our canons of conduct, and he seeks out a deeper deep than has yet been plundered by even the lowest and most degraded and abandoned of the European people. Wherever he goes he blights and ruins everything he touches ...\textsuperscript{37}

The prevalence of such opinion encouraged the Premier, Sir Joseph Ward, to introduce the Chinese Immigrants Amendment Bill with a view to virtually ridding New Zealand of further Asian influence. The Act strengthened the

\textsuperscript{34} Ritchie, p.26

\textsuperscript{35} J. Ng, "Who are the New Zealand Chinese?" Otago Daily Times, 1972

\textsuperscript{36} Otago Daily Times, November 15, 1907, p.6, c.6

\textsuperscript{37} Mr Hornsby, NZPD, 1907, vol.142, pp.923-4
education standard, providing that no citizen of China (with the exception of Christian teachers) could enter into the colony until they had passed an English reading test to a Standard 4 level as determined by a Customs official.\footnote{38}

Finally in 1908, the entire body of law relating to immigration was united under the Immigration Restriction Act; Part III of which was devoted to restrictive measures pertaining to the Chinese. A White New Zealand policy was firmly in place, and producing the desired effect on Chinese immigration statistics.

### TABLE 5: The Number of Chinese Entering New Zealand 1890 - 1913\footnote{39}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>NUMBER OF IMMIGRANTS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>18</td>
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<td>1891</td>
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<td>1892</td>
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<td>1893</td>
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<td>1901</td>
<td>75</td>
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<td>69</td>
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<td>1903</td>
<td>132</td>
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<td>1904</td>
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<td>1911</td>
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<td>1912</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>1913</td>
<td>325</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

State intervention had successfully restricted Chinese immigration, yet it is interesting to note that no attempt was made to reduce the size of New Zealand's Chinese population by limiting the duration of stay. This step was generally considered unnecessary, as it was widely acknowledged that the Chinese were

\footnote{38 Scholefield, pp.273-4}

\footnote{39 Statistics of New Zealand}
only transitory migrants\textsuperscript{40} - although this very knowledge should have logically negated the need for any restrictive legislation. Thus, the government did not restrict the existing Chinese population in any way. The United States, for example, passed a series of laws to exclude Chinese from employment as labourers. Stringent regulations regarding what class of Chinese might enter the country were also put into place.\textsuperscript{41} New Zealand's legislation was a less harsh reflection of overseas restrictive measures, as the government did not lose sight of the basic rights of humanity.

Nevertheless, the State succeeded in virtually closing the door on Chinese immigration. As a result, the Chinese population was less than half the number reached during the gold rush days and immigration levels were sufficiently low so as not to add to the population. New Zealand was well on the path to ridding itself, or at least controlling, the unwanted alien presence, thus maintaining its high standards of racial purity.

\textsuperscript{40} A. Forgie, "Anti-Chinese Agitation in New Zealand 1887-89. Its Results and Causes", p.35

\textsuperscript{41} M. Moore, "The Chinese in New Zealand", pp.94-5
II THE CHURCH AND THE URBAN CHINESE CHALLENGE

(i) The Church’s Attitude to the Chinese

The Church could not entirely isolate itself from the pervading social attitudes of the day, for indeed the body is only as strong as its individual members, and sometimes weaker. Thus sermons were preached warning congregations of the formidable Chinese presence and its effects on the moral standing of the colony. For example, the Right Reverend Dr K. Stephen expressed support for anti-Chinese legislation on the grounds of racial purity, 'the highest function of a nation was to make its gift towards the elevation of the race ... [to] maintain the traditions it had received, and to preserve its race.' This type of scaremongering was further encouraged by events in China. The Church had always been supportive of foreign missions, including those established by various denominations on the Chinese mainland. However, the 1890s saw a decade of civil unrest within China and in 1896, during the Ku-cheng massacre, several missionaries and their families were slaughtered. Yet again, in 1900, supporters of the Boxer Rebellion murdered Christians, both Chinese and European, and razed missionary institutions to the ground. These events predictably caused something of a backlash within New Zealand, whereupon many began to express hostile opinions and criticism of Chinese Missions. An example of contemporary opinion was expressed in an Otago Daily Times editorial, which came out strongly against missionaries being sent to the Chinese mainland. 'Do they imagine that Christian doctrine justifies the most wanton offering of sacrifice to the Moloch of Chinese barbarity and impurity.'

Such attitudes not only affected the public's view of foreign missions but home outreach as well. Over time hostility mellowed, yet a somewhat whimsical attitude to the Chinese remained, as one selection from the Christian Outlook reveals.

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42 For example Otago Daily Times, November 14, 1907, p.7, c.1

43 White New Zealand League, "Citizens of the Future are the Children of Today", c.1926, Hocken Library

44 J.K. Fairbank & E.O. Reischauer, China: Tradition and Transformation, p.377

45 Outlook, April 25, 1896, vol.13, no.3, p.148

46 Otago Daily Times, August 8, 1896, p.2, c.4
"Chinese Perversity"

The Chinaman shakes his own hand instead of yours
He keeps out of step when walking with you
He puts his hat on in salutation
He whitens his boots, instead of blackening them
He rides with his heels in the stirrups, instead of his toes
His compass points South
His womenfolk are often seen in trousers, accompanied by men in gowns
Often he throws away the fruit of the melon and eats the seeds
He laughs at receiving bad news (This is to deceive evil spirits)
His left hand is the place of honour
He says west—north, instead of north—west, and 6–4ths instead of 4–6ths
His favourite present to a parent is a coffin
He faces the bow when rowing a boat
His mourning colour is white
He stands with his back to the teacher when reciting a lesson
He studies at the top of his voice.47

Thus, while the prevailing attitude was one of distrust, there was also an element of curiosity, in that the Chinese seemed to symbolise the exact antithesis of all that was European. As a result, many Church members were motivated to support the Mission less from an evangelistic spirit, than by a desire to assimilate these curious aliens and, in the process, remove any threat they might pose to the colony’s well-being.

(ii) Denominational Response to the Urban Chinese Presence

The demographic trend towards an increasingly urban Chinese population presented a direct challenge to city churches. Up until the 1890s, the Chinese had largely congregated in the Central Otago area and were thus beyond the immediate reach of urban churches. Any pangs of conscience were soothed by the thought that the Christian message was at least reaching the Chinese, largely through the efforts of Reverend Alexander Don. In any case, most churches were too financially incapacitated to support their own missionary. However, such arguments held less weight once the Chinese became established within the city. The "heathen Chinee" were no longer in their back paddock –

47 Outlook, October 31, 1903, vol.X, no.40, p.34
they were at the very front door! Thus, the opportunity for an urban evangelistic mission had surfaced, but would the challenge be accepted?

The Salvation Army with its long history of social work among the less fortunate members of society, seemed to be a likely candidate for work amongst the Chinese. The Dunedin branch of the Army was opened on April 1, 1883 and soon after the first of many Social and Rescue operations were put into motion. They not only performed a very necessary role among the urban needy, but also became active supporters in causes such as temperance. The Salvation Army did not limit itself solely to a mission among Europeans and in the early years of the twentieth century an official mission to the Maori was initiated. However, no comparable evangelistic mission was directed towards the Chinese population. There seemed to be little impetus to move the Corps in this direction, indeed the upper ranks encouraged the liberal view that 'the Chinaman will Christianize himself.' Nevertheless, although no official mission was implemented, the Army's rescue operations brought them into contact with many urban Chinese. Community-based schemes such as Old Age Homes, Men's Shelters and Rescue Homes provided the means of practical outreach through which the Chinese could be influenced. It was this form of mission which best suited the talents of the Salvation Army.

The Congregational Church also exercised an influential role in the city. Established in Dunedin by 1862, a missionary was appointed in 1866 to visit nearby districts, hold meetings and help organise regular Congregational gatherings. Within a short space of time, churches were established in Moray Place, Great King Street, Ravensbourne, St Clair, Port Chalmers, as well as places further afield such as Oamaru and Lawrence. Congregationalism was based on strict Puritanical ideals and thus the Church kept a close eye on members, both in the private and public realms. This righteous fervour

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48 Salvation Army in New Zealand, Ebenezer: 1883-1930 Souvenir, 47th Anniversary, Dunedin, 1930
49 Ibid
51 Ibid, p.78
52 K. Furniss, Moray Place Congregational Church, Dunedin: A Social History, BA(Hons), Otago, 1975, pp.8 & 12
53 New Zealand Congregational Union Year Book (NZCU), 1887, pp.38-40
encouraged involvement in moral causes such as temperance, which resulted in
the launch of a strong Prohibitionist campaign. They were also represented on
various social committees and charitable boards such as the Patient and
Prisoner's Aid Society. Moreover, Congregationalist Churches were responsible
for the formation of the Dorcas Society: a group of women who met together to
make clothes for the needy. However, the efforts of this denomination focused
more on moral and social issues, rather than evangelistic endeavour. As a result,
the urban Chinese population remained outside the bounds of Congregationalism.

The Salvation Army and Congregational Churches were not alone in their
lack of evangelistic impact on the urban Chinese. Many other denominations
continued to focus solely on European mission, to the detriment of evangelistic
outreach to Chinese. Thus, for example, an urban Catholic mission was never
established; similarly the Brethren, who had made such a strong start in
Dunedin in the 1860s, failed to implement any kind of work among the Chinese,
although a mission to the Maori flourished in the early years of the twentieth
century.

In contrast there were those churches who, while not launching full-scale
missions to the Chinese, did participate to a limited extent. For example, local
groups of Methodists and Christian Endeavours distributed Christian tracts
among the remaining Central Otago Chinese. Reverend Don felt this outreach
encouraged a growing awareness and attentiveness to the Gospel, while the
friendliness shown by such distributors also had an important effect. The
Anglican Church was also active among New Zealand Chinese, although more so
in centres north of Otago. Within the province, outreach was left largely to
individual rather than collective efforts, with the exception of St Matthew's.
This evangelical Anglican church was located in the Devil's Half-Acre and thus
could not ignore the large alien population contained within its parish.
Evangelistic outreach, including visitation and the distribution of tracts, was
quickly implemented. However, the mission met with little success, perhaps
because while the Chinese faced mounting social problems in this area, little
social work was undertaken on their behalf. No doubt spiritual guidance

54 Furniss, pp.12,14 & 44
55 P. Lineham, There We Found Brethren, Palmerston North, G.P.H. Society
  Ltd, 1977, pp.17,106 & 146
56 A. Don, Memories of the Golden Road, p.16
57 J. Tuck, "The Devil's Half-Acre: 1900 - 1910", BA(Hons), Otago, 1983,
  pp.8 & 27
would have been more readily accepted if accompanied by practical help.

Despite a lack of official impetus by many urban churches, the enthusiasm of a number of willing helpers could not be dampened. Amongst the individual efforts worthy of note were those of Mr Walter Paterson, a somewhat aged evangelist belonging to the Open Brethren. In spite of his advancing years he entered into the discipline of learning the Cantonese dialect. This task was largely accomplished by means of a volume containing both an English and Cantonese version of the Gospels of Mark and Luke. A note at the end of this book indicated that the first reading was accomplished in August of 1899 and by September 1901 the completion of the seventy-fourth was recorded. Walter Paterson invested much time talking with the Chinese and providing practical support, thereby earning their friendship and trust. He also played an integral role in the inception of an urban Baptist mission, proving himself to be a thoroughly tireless and devoted worker amongst Dunedin’s Chinese population from the early 1880s until his death in the 1920s.

Another worker of note was Mr Henry White, a member of the Mornington Anglican Church. He was involved with the urban Presbyterian Mission from its inception, and provided invaluable aid. Don later described him as a ‘broad-minded Anglican, who has been the right hand of the Mission ...’ When the Dunedin Mission reached crisis point in 1913, it was Henry White who ensured the Mission continued by personally undertaking to conduct the Chinese services - although his inability to speak the language somewhat hampered his efforts.

Also worthy of attention was a young Baptist by the name of Joseph Ings. He was a conscientious student of the Chinese language in his spare time, as he intended to work among the Chinese abroad. Over a seven month period, during 1896 to 1897, he opened the family home every Sunday evening and conducted

58 G. McNeur, The Church and the Chinese in New Zealand, p.41
59 Ibid
60 A brief account by Jessie Buchanan of the Hanover Street Baptist Church Chinese Mission to be placed under the Missionary foundation stone of the new church building to be laid on Saturday October 8, 1910
61 Moore, p.88
62 McNeur, p.24
63 A. Don, Under Six Flags, p.7
64 Moore, p.88
a service for a small number of interested Chinese. Ings later became involved with the Presbyterian Mission, even accompanying Don on his trip to China in 1898.65

Many such helpers, both men and women, volunteered their time and services to Chinese Missions. The only necessary qualification was an interest in the immigrants - any questions as to Church affiliation was largely irrelevant.66 Thus, individual efforts were often the most effective contribution to arise from many denominations. For the most part city churches did not accept the challenge presented by an urban Chinese presence, that is with the exception of three denominations: - the Methodists, the Baptists and, of course, the Presbyterians.

(iii) The Methodist Central Mission

It was to be the Dunedin Methodist Central Mission who undertook to carry the Message to the Chinese on behalf of their denomination. The founder of the Dunedin branch of the Methodist Central Mission, Reverend William Ready, instigated a Mission to the Chinese in the early 1890s.67 Meetings were held in an old tin shec in Stafford Street and what the surroundings lacked in comfort was more than made up for by location, which saw the Mission established right in the centre of the area most densely populated by Chinese. A commitment to this work was made by a number of Methodists, among the most dedicated of whom were Mr T. Patterson, Miss Bessie Saunders and of course Reverend Ready, who fulfilled the role of Superintendent. Their aim was to instruct Chinese pupils in the basics of the English language and, by means of a developing trust and friendship, also instruct them in the basics of the Christian gospel. Special celebrations were also held from time to time with great success. On one occasion, for example, a performance by a Chinese orchestra and choir brought about an impressive attendance of around seventy-five people.68 Activities such as this guaranteed the continuation of the Class and by 1895 it

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65 A. Don, *Under Six Flags*, pp.7-8

66 McNeur, p.49

67 *Methodist Central Mission, Dunedin, Jubilee, 1890-1950*, Dunedin, Whitcomb & Tombs, 1950

68 Ibid
had grown to a respectable size, with around twenty pupils and fourteen teachers, the majority of whom were women.\textsuperscript{69}

(iv) The Baptist Mission

A Baptist Mission to the Chinese was established under the auspices of the Hanover Street Baptist Church. It had grown from a small gathering in the early 1860s, to a substantial urban church with a membership of around four hundred.\textsuperscript{70} Initially, outreach focused on establishing Baptist churches in Opoho, Kaikorai, Maori Hill and North East Valley, although interest in foreign missions was also high, thus organisations such as the London Missionary Society and the Baptist Missionary Society received much financial support.\textsuperscript{71} The Church also sent out several missionaries from among its ranks, including Miss Beckingsale, Mr Charles North and Rosalie Macgregor, the first New Zealand Baptist missionary to India. This interest in mission work was to pave the way for an outreach much closer to home.

In 1897, the Baptist work among the Chinese was begun in an unofficial capacity by two interested parties - Mr Walter Paterson, already noted as a veteran worker among the Chinese, and Miss Jessie Buchanan, a member of the Hanover Street Baptist Church. Initially, the Mission consisted of a meeting held in the Church's vestry every Wednesday evening for about five or six Chinese. This arrangement remained in place for two years, whereupon it was decided to present to the Church a proposal to place the Mission on a firmer footing. The general feeling among Church members was 'that something more should be done for the Chinese of our city',\textsuperscript{72} thus the decision was taken to establish an official Baptist Mission to the Chinese. Their primary aim was for the Gospel message to take a prominent place in lessons and it was hoped that in this way converts would be made. Thus, the Mission would endeavour to teach the Chinese to read and write English, win them for Christ in the process, then merge them into the teaching ranks, thereby allowing the Class to carry on with

\textsuperscript{69} Ibid

\textsuperscript{70} Hanover Street Baptist Church Minutes, 41st Annual Report, June 8, 1905

\textsuperscript{71} Ibid, 28th Annual Report, June 2, 1892

\textsuperscript{72} A letter for Jessie Buchanan to Mr Gibson regarding details of the Chinese Mission
fewer European workers. It was also decided, firstly, to move the Class to Sunday afternoons and, secondly, to visit Chinese gardens and laundries in order to personally invite the men to attend. Walter Paterson agreed to bring to bear the benefit of his experience in establishing the Mission but, as a member of the local Brethren Church, was unable to regularly attend the Sunday afternoon class. Nevertheless, he was able to provide a meeting place - his own lodgings above a shop in George Street, opposite Knox Church. On June 18, 1899 the work officially began in earnest.

The Mission received further encouragement in December of 1899 when it was officially adopted as a "daughter" organisation of the Church and full support for the work was promised. A Committee of Management was established and a proposed "Constitution of the Chinese Mission" was also approved. It provided:

1. That it be called the Hanover Street Baptist Chinese Mission.
2. That it be under the control of a Committee of three nominated by the teacher and elected by the Church; the Pastor to be President ex officio.
3. That all teachers be elected by the Committee and the teacher.
4. That the officers to be elected by the Church annually.

Their current location proving too small, it was also decided that an area be set aside for the use of the Chinese Mission in the soon to be completed Sunday School building. In August of 1900, after some timely reminders from the Mission leaders, the Chinese were given the use of a lower school room for their Sunday afternoon meeting.

The Mission work continued to progress well; indeed attendance increased to the extent that the Chinese Class Committee deemed a second meeting was necessary. Thus, an application for permission to extend the Mission to Monday evenings was made to the Deacons Committee. After due consideration, the proposal was accepted with the proviso that the lessons continue to be carefully

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73 Hanover Street Baptist Church Minutes, 44th Annual Report, May 21, 1908
74 Ibid
75 A Brief Account of the Chinese Mission
76 Hanover Street Baptist Church Minutes, 35th Annual Report, December 21, 1899
77 Church Minutes, 35th Annual Report, December 21, 1899
78 Ibid, 36th Annual Report, August 21, 1900
supervised by the Committee.\textsuperscript{79}

The Mission also saw growing support from Church members, many of whom became actively involved as teachers. For example, the Mission benefited significantly when Mrs Alfred North decided to close the Young Woman's Bible Class so that she and her pupils could join the teaching staff of the Chinese Class.\textsuperscript{80} Thus, whereas the Mission began with three teachers - Mr Butler, who was elected leader; Miss Buchanan, the Secretary; and Miss Inglesby, the acting treasurer - within the first few years a further twenty five teachers were added to the Mission team.\textsuperscript{81} Enthusiasm for the Mission was high: indeed as one missionary to China later testified 'none could question the consecrated zeal of the workers.'\textsuperscript{82}

\textbf{TABLE 6: Teacher Numbers}\textsuperscript{83}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>AVERAGE ATTENDANCE</th>
<th>MALE</th>
<th>FEMALE</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1899-1900</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1902</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1903</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>1904</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>1905</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>27</td>
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<tr>
<td>1906</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1907</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1908</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1909</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>22</td>
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<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1913</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Involvement in the Chinese Class provided a valuable training ground for many of these teachers who later departed for foreign mission work. By 1910 nine ex-teachers had become involved in overseas service, including Miss Wiseman, who

\textsuperscript{79} Deacons Committee Minutes, December 17, 1900

\textsuperscript{80} Letter from Jessie Buchanan

\textsuperscript{81} Brief account of the Chinese Mission

\textsuperscript{82} McNeur, p.41

\textsuperscript{83} Hanover Street Baptist Church Chinese Class Register
became Mrs North of India; Miss Blick, later Mrs Strong of China; Miss Inglesby and Miss Gamistord who both became missionaries in India; Miss Freeman who later served in China and Miss Gordon, who was to become the wife of Reverend William Mawson, an active worker among Chinese both in New Zealand and overseas.  

Nevertheless, the majority of workers continued to support the home mission by filling essential roles on the Management Committee or as Treasurer, Organist, Librarian or Secretary. Most proved to be enthusiastic, long-term participants as in the case of Miss Jessie Buchanan, who served a total of twelve years as Secretary and many more as teacher. The leadership rested with Mr J. Butler until 1903 whereupon another teacher, Mr R.C. O’Connor, was chosen to fill his place. He held this position until his removal to Wellington in 1907, whereupon Mr A.C. Stewart took over the leadership which he retained until the Mission work was brought to a close.

After the Mission was officially established in 1899, Chinese membership grew while regular attendance rates maintained a satisfactory level. Classes were held every week without fail, except at the Chinese New Year and Easter. These meetings provided a valuable source of social contact, especially as there were usually visitors from the Chinese boats. In this way, news was exchanged and first-hand information from home was obtained.

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84 A Brief account of the Chinese Mission & A Letter from Miss Jessie Buchanan
85 Letter from Jessie Buchanan
86 A Brief Account of the Chinese Mission & A Letter from Jessie Buchanan
87 Chinese Class Register
TABLE 7: Chinese Attendance Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>STUDENTS ENROLLED</th>
<th>AVERAGE ATTENDANCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1899</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1902</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1903</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1904</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1905</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>1906</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1907</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1908</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1909</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
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<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1913</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The major problem confronting the Mission was essentially one of language differences. Most of the Chinese had only a limited understanding of English, thus the motivation to attend the Class, while the teachers' understanding of Cantonese was, on the whole, even more limited. This problem was largely overcome through the efforts of one man - Mr Benjamin Wong Tape. His father was one of the first Chinese migrants to New Zealand and, unlike most of his contemporaries, decided to settle in the Colony. Educated in Dunedin, Benjamin Wong Tape was well acquainted with European language and customs, although the family still retained strong ties to traditional Chinese culture. Thus, Wong Tape was an avowed Buddhist - that is until the time he began to attend the Chinese classes held by the Hanover Street Baptist Church. His familiarity with European Christian ideas paved the way for his rapid conversion and within a few months he proved himself indispensable to the Mission. He became very involved with the Class, acting as a much-needed interpreter and teacher, while also fulfilling the position of Secretary for three years. Wong Tape won the respect and friendship not only of the Chinese Class, but also that of the Minister and congregation. This goodwill was testified to in 1905 when Wong Tape left Dunedin for Hong Kong. The Minister at the time, Reverend William Hay,

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\(^{88}\) Ibid

\(^{89}\) Letter from Jessie Buchanan
wrote that the announcement of his departure had been met with real regret by the congregation. He was also of the opinion that now it would be much more difficult for the Church to carry on its work among the Chinese, which Wong Tape had done so much to build up and sustain. Indeed, the Mission Class testified that 'his enthusiastic secretarial and teaching ability has been among the main causes of the Mission's present prosperity ... it will be impossible to fill his place.' On his return to China, Benjamin Wong Tape continued to exercise his faith, becoming involved in outreach organisations such as the Young Men's Christian Association and the Chinese Inland Mission.

The Chinese Class continued to flourish during the early years of the twentieth century. Members made regular financial contributions to the extent that they were able to assist with the support of a newly established church near Canton. In 1907, they also contributed aid to missionaries dealing with the widespread famine in China, while finance was also put towards the debt incurred in the construction of the Church's Sunday School building. Moreover, many of the pupils became teachers thus fulfilling initial hopes for the progress of the Mission. Regular social events were also held and a genuine sense of warmth and companionship developed. For example, on the death of Mr W.H. Buchanan, a much-loved friend and teacher, six of the scholars presented the Class with an enlarged photograph of their friend in honour of his memory. Moreover, such mutual regard began to include the Church as a whole. Emphasis was placed on the need to reach out to the "aliens" within their midst and thus the Chinese Class was viewed as 'one of the most important agencies of the church.' The Chinese noted this interest with pleasure and were reported to be 'exceedingly grateful for all the interest taken in their...

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90 Benjamin Wong Tape, Miscellaneous Papers 1875-1926, Letter from Rev. William Hay

91 Ibid, Letter from the Secretary of the Chinese Mission Class

92 Moore, p.91

93 Benjamin Wong Tape, Miscellaneous Papers, Funeral Service for the late Mr Benjamin Wong Tape, O.B.E., J.P.

94 Church Minutes, 41st Annual Report, June 8, 1905

95 Ibid, 43rd Annual Report, February 23, 1907

96 Ibid, 42nd Annual Report, May 24, 1906

97 Ibid, 46th Annual Report, May, 1910
welfare .... As a result, a relationship of trust and mutual respect seemed to develop between the Chinese Class and European church goers. For example, in 1899 the Class held the first of many teas to which members of the Church were invited. This invitation was heartily accepted and the meeting of the two cultures proved to be a remarkable success. Moreover in 1900, on the occasion of one of these social teas, the Chinese presented the Church with a splendid silk banner as a means of expressing their gratitude for the interest and sympathy shown towards them. This banner was cherished down through the years and was in fact recently restored to its former glory. The Church also included the Chinese on important occasions such as the laying of the foundation stone of the new Church in 1912, where David Chin Goon, one of the first scholars of the Class and an active Church member, led a prayer for the Church in Chinese. Indeed, a report detailing the history and activities of the Church's Chinese Mission was sealed behind the foundation stone.

Thus, in terms of integration the Mission appeared to be meeting with some success. This was also true from a numerical standpoint. By 1910 fourteen Chinese scholars had been baptized and the list of members was higher still.

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98 Ibid, 45th Annual Report, June 4, 1909
99 Ibid, 35th Annual Report, August 24, 1899
100 Letter from Jessie Buchanan
101 A Brief Account of the Chinese Mission
102 Ibid
### TABLE 8: Chinese Membership 1897–1907

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>DATE OF ADMISSION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Harry Chin Pong</td>
<td>23 December, 1897</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel Yat Lee</td>
<td>1 February, 1900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Chin Goon</td>
<td>1 February, 1900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Chin Lingh</td>
<td>1 February, 1900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sam Loo</td>
<td>23 August, 1900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lim Foon</td>
<td>23 August, 1900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matthew Ching Hoy</td>
<td>25 February, 1904</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benjamin Wong Tape</td>
<td>2 March, 1904</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Yip Cheng</td>
<td>26 August, 1905</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fallo Ng</td>
<td>21 December, 1905</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joe Gow Hong</td>
<td>22 August, 1907</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benjamin Sing</td>
<td>22 August, 1907</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph Wong Tape</td>
<td>22 August, 1907</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philip Yip Fung</td>
<td>22 August, 1907</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ernest Yip</td>
<td>22 August, 1907</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Nevertheless, the Mission was not completely free of controversy. In 1902, an argument erupted between the Baptist Class and the Presbyterian Mission. Reverend Don first aired the dissension between the two denominations by claiming that the Baptist teachers were making weekly visits to Chinese in the Walker Street area, as well as posting invitation notices in South Dunedin, with the intent of luring away many of his congregation. He charged the Baptist Class with having ignored invitations to Presbyterian social gatherings for the Chinese and that, as a result, they had introduced the 'devil of division.' Don also wrote that 'his heartstrings [had been] wrung by plans thwarted through the misdirected zeal of others ...' The Baptists responded that visits were indeed made to the Chinese but only to their own scholars and that no attempt was made to 'lure' away the members of another Class. They argued that Hanover Street had no desire to monopolise the mission, indeed they would offer encouragement and help to any Church that felt called to establish an outreach amongst the Dunedin Chinese. Attacks and charges of denominationalism were exchanged for a short time but eventually abandoned - not because a

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103 [Church Minutes, 1897–1908](#)
104 [Outlook, June 28, 1902, vol.IX, no.22, p.35](#)
105 [Ibid, July 19, 1902, vol.IX, no.25, p.12](#)
106 [Ibid, July 12, 1902, vol.IX, no.24, p.4](#)
resolution was reached but to prevent an alienation of potential Chinese adherents.\textsuperscript{107} It is difficult to ascertain the truth of the matter: perhaps the Presbyterians were coming to terms with the first Mission to threaten their monopoly, although in their initial enthusiasm, Baptist teachers may have overstepped the mark.

Unfortunately, by 1913 the situation had changed dramatically and a once flourishing Mission turned into an uphill battle. Attendance fell to only two or three scholars and the commitment level of teachers saw a corresponding decline. With the onset of World War I, many Chinese involved with the Mission returned home, while others simply joined the drift \textsuperscript{108} North.\textsuperscript{109} Faced with this depletion in numbers, the Management Committee decided to close the Mission over the summer period – those still attending the Class could easily attend meetings run by the Presbyterians.\textsuperscript{109} The Mission would resume after Easter, when it was hoped the work would proceed with renewed vigour. The matter was taken to the Church membership who sympathised with the situation the ministry now found itself in. As a result, the following resolution was passed.

That in view of the trying circumstances in which, largely through the removal of many of our Chinese friends from the dominion, the Chinese class is now placed the Church desires to record its highest appreciation of the constancy and fidelity to Christian work among the Chinese shown by the leader and teachers of this class – to assure them of its hearty sympathy and to express the hope that the special effort to be made on the opening of the class after next Easter may meet with marked success.\textsuperscript{110}

Unfortunately, by 1914 there was little change in the situation, in fact the exodus of Chinese from the city had increased. Thus the leader of the Chinese Class, Mr A.C. Stewart, reported to the Church that resuming the Mission to the Chinese was not a viable option at this time.\textsuperscript{111} Indeed, the option never did become viable.

\textsuperscript{107} Ibid

\textsuperscript{108} Chinese Class Register & Church Minutes, 49th Annual Report, April 3, 1913

\textsuperscript{109} Deacons Committee Minutes, November 25, 1913

\textsuperscript{110} Church Minutes, 49th Annual Report, November 27, 1913

\textsuperscript{111} Ibid, 50th Annual Report, March 30, 1914
While an official Baptist Mission lapsed, a Mr Matthew approached the Minister, Reverend Gray, in 1914 with the idea of embarking on a Baptist Inland Tour of mining districts, not unlike Don’s Annual Tours. He then approached the Church for financial aid in meeting travel expenses but the decision was deferred and eventually the idea was abandoned. Nevertheless, old friends continued to keep in touch, interest in the overseas Chinese Mission remained high and financial contributions to Famine Relief Funds, in particular, were significant.

Thus for almost fifteen years, the Baptists succeeded in running a flourishing Mission to the Chinese. It was by no means more successful than the Presbyterian Mission; it had no prominent personalities; it was not even enduring; but it was significant if for no other reason than the fact that it was established, it was long term, and it was effective.

(v) The Presbyterian Urban Mission

Until the late 1880s, active participation in the Presbyterian Mission to the Chinese was largely limited to the Otago Synod and their emissary Reverend Don. This situation was not to change radically in the coming years, but the implications of a growing Chinese urban presence were not altogether lost on local Presbyterian congregations. While many churches, such as Knox Church, displayed an interest in the ‘heathen Chinee’ within their bounds, most practical work was entrusted to a church better suited to this outreach by virtue of its geographical position. In 1871, St Andrew’s Presbyterian Church was established in the heart of the Devil’s Half-Acre, but it was not until 1879 and the appointment of Dr Rutherford Waddell that the Church was prompted to concern itself with social issues such as sweatshop conditions. The problem of urban poverty was addressed by the formation of both a Friendly Aid Society in 1886 and a Mission Hall in Walker Street, which provided assistance for the poverty-stricken. However, these programs were relatively small in scale and, because of the predicament caused by language differences, the Chinese proved

112 Deacons Committee Minutes, October 27, 1914

113 Knox Church Dunedin, Jubilee Souvenir, 1860-1910, Dunedin, J. Wilkie & Co., 1910

114 Tuck, pp.27-8
to be largely beyond their scope. Eventually, progress was made in this area when, in 1892, an organisation named the Sisterhood of St Andrew's was established with the sole purpose of distributing religious tracts and encouraging foreign immigrants to attend a Sunday School class held in the Hall. Due to a lack of records, little is known of this work, although it does appear that success was relatively limited. The mission was revived in 1906 but failed to prove its effectiveness and within a year the work was brought to a final close.

Thus, during this period of increasing urbanisation, the character of the Presbyterian Mission to the Chinese was not altered in any significant way by the efforts of local churches, which was perhaps just as well, for the Mission was hard enough to sustain without a diffusion of energies. As a result, the onus for the continuation of outreach to the Chinese remained firmly on Reverend Don's shoulders.

By 1888, Otago's Chinese population was around 2,500, a significant number of whom had chosen to settle in Dunedin and its surrounding suburbs. This increased urban presence, and a corresponding drop in the goldfields population, prompted a change in Synod policy and early in 1889 the Missions Committee decided to move the Mission headquarters to Dunedin. Responsibility for continuing the outreach among Central Otago Chinese was left in the capable hands of Kwok Wai Shang, who transferred to Lawrence in 1889 and was thereby able to extend his ministry to Adam's Flat, Waitahuna, Bungtown, Beaumont and Waipori. Unfortunately, the ministry of this enthusiastic worker was not without controversy. Opponents of Kwok Wai Shang began a rumour to the effect that the catechist had been quoted by newspapers as saying that all New Zealand Chinese were criminals who did not dare to return to China. The rumour spread like wildfire and the reaction was both immediate and passionate. He was threatened with violence and an almost unanimous

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115 Ibid, p.30
116 Ibid, pp.37,41
117 New Zealand Census
118 New Zealand Presbyterian, April 1, 1889, vol.III, no.10, p.186
119 A. Fraser, "The Social Work of the Presbyterian Church in New Zealand up till 1930", p.102
decision was made not to attend his meetings.\textsuperscript{120} Such trials were hardly conducive to a successful ministry and in 1890 the Mission Committee came to the decision to dispense with the services of the catechist, on the basis that it was inappropriate for Kwok Wai Shang to be responsible for such a large parish without the immediate supervision of Reverend Don.\textsuperscript{121}

The first priority for the Dunedin Mission was the selection of suitable premises. The search occupied the space of some months, for while many places were in most respects suitable they were situated in areas where 'the community could not tolerate the presence of the Chinese.'\textsuperscript{122} Thus, care for the public’s sensibilities hampered initial efforts to establish an urban Chinese Mission. Finally, a combined Hall and private residence were found on the corner of Lees and James Streets. Although further from the nucleus of the Chinese population than Don had hoped, it was still only five minutes walk from the Chinese stores. Thus, the lease was signed and on March 18 the new Mission headquarters were officially opened.\textsuperscript{123}

The Mission proper soon got under way with the introduction of a regular Sunday service. The first few meetings were well attended with between nineteen to thirty-six hearers present. However, as the novelty began to wear off, attendance went into decline, so Don decided to resurrect interest by establishing classes to teach English. Beginning in May 1889, these classes were held in the Hall three evenings a week – Sunday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. Teachers were recruited from the Young Men’s Society of St Andrew’s Church and their enthusiastic cooperation soon won the respect of Don.\textsuperscript{124} Attendance at the classes slowly grew to an average of around fifteen pupils and, as Don had anticipated, this interest caused a corresponding increase in attendance at the Sunday service.\textsuperscript{125} The Mission also expanded in other areas supporting, for example, that tireless individual Walter Paterson, who held a Sunday School

\textsuperscript{120} New Zealand Presbyterian, February 1, 1888, vol.II, no.8, p.147

\textsuperscript{121} Fraser, p.102

\textsuperscript{122} New Zealand Presbyterian, June 1, 1889, vol.III, no.12, p.222

\textsuperscript{123} Ibid

\textsuperscript{124} New Zealand Presbyterian, July 1, 1889, vol.IV, no.1, p.3

\textsuperscript{125} Ibid
service for seven Chinese in the Dunedin Gaol.\textsuperscript{126} Moreover, Don made regular visits to the homes of his Chinese flock as well as transforming the Hall during the week into a library and reading room, which provided the Chinese with access to journals, maps and magazines in their own language,\textsuperscript{127} although it is doubtful how many Chinese had the time or the ability to make use of this facility.\textsuperscript{128} Indeed, Don realistically assessed that the majority of Chinese were attending services merely out of regard for his efforts and to socialise with fellow Chinese.\textsuperscript{129}

Nevertheless, this apparent lack of tangible success did not lessen the missionary's enthusiasm. Indeed, the Synod reported that the new Mission Hall had been a real encouragement to Don and there was perceived to be 'a note of cheer about [Don's address] that had not always been heard in previous years ... He has the true apostolic zeal and unconquerable faith. No difficulties down him.'\textsuperscript{130} Thus, for the next eight years Don continued to run the Lees Street Mission, as well as ensuring the continuation of the Annual Inland Tours. He encouraged the Chinese by any means possible means even to the extent of creating his own mission resources by translating English hymns into the intricate Chinese language, producing hymn books in 1897, 1899 and 1902.\textsuperscript{131} Moreover his energies, if not always directed towards the Chinese, were usually focused on mission. Thus, with a view towards foreign mission, Don enrolled at University with the aim of completing a medical degree. Unfortunately, the added workload proved overwhelming and Don contracted double pneumonia, thereafter forbidden to undertake intensive study for some time.\textsuperscript{132}

By 1896, the Chinese Mission was once again in need of a change in direction. Don realised that the Mission's present location contained inherent problems —
firstly, the Hall was too far from Walker Street, Dunedin’s Chinatown; secondly, it was too small, providing seating for only thirty to thirty-five people; and thirdly, it was too expensive to run as the rent alone was a hefty £47 per annum.\textsuperscript{133} Thus Don proposed that the Mission move from an inadequate and costly site to a more permanent facility better equipped to handle the Mission’s needs. He recommended that this facility take the form of a specially constructed Chinese Mission Station which, providing the necessary funds were raised, would be debt free. Ideally a site should be found in Walker Street as this would overcome the excuse of distance among his Chinese pupils and would also be close to St Andrew’s Presbyterian Church, which provided Don with much practical support and encouragement. The auditorium itself should be capable of seating a maximum of one hundred people, although for most occasions a dividing curtain could be used to reduce the seating space to seventy. A Library would also be included in order to provide a resource centre for Chinese literature and English translations for the whole of New Zealand.\textsuperscript{134} Don’s proposal met with no few objections, in particular that the Mission would soon be ‘a priest without a people’, as the Chinese population was rapidly decreasing.\textsuperscript{135} However Don argued, rather optimistically, that the Chinese urban population was likely to grow as it had in Australia, and in any case, even if only a remnant should remain the Mission was still worthwhile.\textsuperscript{136} After due discussion, the Presbyterian Synod eventually agreed to this proposal, allowing Don to launch into an active fund-raising campaign. Hundreds of Chinese from all over Otago contributed to the project although European church-goers, contrary to Don’s hopes, were not quite as financially enthusiastic. Nevertheless, a site was duly found in Walker Street and bought for a modest £250. A well-known architect, Mr J.L. Salmond, was appointed to design the Church and Manse, while the partnership of Crawford and Watson, who were hired to build the small and simple church, managed to complete the project under budget early in 1897.\textsuperscript{137}

\textsuperscript{133} *Outlook*. February 15, 1896, vol. III, no.3, p.28

\textsuperscript{134} Ibid

\textsuperscript{135} Ibid

\textsuperscript{136} Ibid

\textsuperscript{137} J. Ng, “Reverend Alexander Don: his ‘good harvest’ being reaped at last”, *Otago Daily Times*, September 24, 1983, p.23
The plain brick Church faced the street while the Manse stood some little way behind it. The Manse was a comfortable house consisting of nine rooms, and what it lacked in spaciousness was more than made up for by convenience. The Church itself was 44 feet by 23 feet and seated a maximum of 160 people, although a dividing curtain could be drawn if necessary to halve the auditorium. At the rear of the Church, a moveable screen was used to section off a space of eight feet, which served as a combined library, reading room and class room. Five windows were built into the eastern wall, two into the front, a stained glass window was placed on the northern side, while the western wall was simply divided by buttresses into four bays. The colours used in the Church were a little different from the traditional, in that light green walls and a flesh coloured ceiling contrasted with a vivid dark red dado. Other creative decorations included flower baskets, Oriental vases and four pairs of Chinese lanterns - all gifts from Don's flock. An ornamental tapestry of the Cross, handmade in China, had also been ordered by the congregation.

The official opening of the Church was delayed until Easter Sunday, 1897. Many Chinese in Central Otago were eager to attend the ceremony and Easter

138 Outlook, February 15, 1896, vol III, no.3, p.28 & May 1, 1897, vol.IV, no.4, p.167

139 Outlook, May 1, 1897, vol.IV, no.14, p.167
ensured both time off work and cheap trains. Therefore, in the hope of assembling a sizeable gathering, around 300 invitations in red and gold were posted to Chinese up-country, and indeed it was reported that Dunedin had never before seen so many Chinese gathered together in one place. The service began at 2:30 on Easter Sunday afternoon and opened with the singing of Psalm 100 in Chinese. This was followed by several more songs and a sermon by Mr Thomas Chang Luke from Australia. The congregation listened with interest and the meeting eventually came to a successful end. The second stage of the official opening was held on Tuesday night. After a fine supper, attended by 194 Chinese and 40 Europeans, a meeting was held to address the issue of European prejudices and the positive light in which "true Christians" looked upon Chinese. Finally, on Wednesday and Thursday evenings Don held lantern exhibitions for a total of almost 160 Chinese. Many of the slides were of Canton city and the sight of these familiar views, after such a long period of separation, proved to be deeply moving for many in the audience. As Don later testified, 'certainly I never saw, in China or out, such emotion among Chinese before.'

Thus, in this way the Dunedin Chinese Mission Church was officially opened.

Regular Church services and activities were quickly established. Two services were held every Sunday – one at 2:30 p.m. and the other at 6:30 p.m., although later both these services were put forward by half an hour. While the first service was conducted completely in Chinese, the second service was a "mixed" meeting, to the extent that two or three short lessons were given in simple English while the rest of the service was conducted in Chinese. Regular meetings during the week were also established. A class to teach English was quickly organised despite a lack of willing and able teaching staff. The younger members of the congregation were catered for by Sunday School and a Friday night class for half-caste Chinese children who came together for an hour's singing. Prayer meetings were also held on a weekly basis and in 1900 a Bible Class was established with the aim of giving Chinese 'a saving, sanctifying and serviceable knowledge' of Scripture in their own language. Don also displayed admirable cultural sensitivity by encouraging the celebration of many Chinese traditions thus, for example, a "watchnight service" was usually held.

\[140\] Outlook, May 1, 1897, vol.IV, no.14, pp.157 & 167

\[141\] Outlook, May 22, 1897, vol.IV, no.17, p.203

\[142\] Ibid

\[143\] Outlook, May 18, 1901, vol.VIII, no.16, p.6
at the Church to welcome in the Chinese New Years Day. A valuable Mission Library was also established, while the Church's Book and Tract collection was said to contain the best supply of Christian Chinese literature in Australasia. Moreover, every year the Church held a service for "outsiders", in order to give the community an idea of how the Mission functioned. This annual event became so popular that at one stage there were complaints about overcrowding caused by too many Europeans! In order to remedy the situation, it was decided to sell tickets although the capacity of the Church was still exceeded.

The establishment of a Church specifically targeted at the Chinese population encouraged higher attendance rates than the Mission had hitherto experienced. However, there was still a considerable number refusing to attend, which Don attributed to European racist attacks upon the Chinese community, coupled with the enactment of restrictive legislation. Nevertheless, Don also felt that the Message was getting through to those who did attend. Moreover, by 1905 the Mission estimated that more than two-thirds of the Chinese in Dunedin attended services reasonably regularly.

The work of the Chinese Mission was indeed expanding and developing favourably, not only in the sense of buildings and numbers, but also in terms of Mission workers. The responsibility for outreach no longer rested solely on Reverend Don's shoulders. In 1897 Mr Timothy Faie Loie was engaged to carry on the work of the Chinese Church for one year while Don went on sabbatical. Born in China, Loie was cut off from his family after his conversion to Christianity. Thus, at age seventeen, he left for Australia and entered into theological training there. By the time the Otago Synod employed Loie he had eight years experience as a pastor and was currently employed by a Methodist Church Mission. During his time with the Chinese Church he made a favourable impression on Europeans and Chinese alike, although it was said that

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144 Outlook, February 15, 1902, vol.IX, no.3, p.4

145 Missions to Chinese 1904: views and notes, p.23

146 Outlook, June 24, 1905, vol.XII, no.24, p.14

147 Ibid, November 28, 1896, vol.II, no.45,

148 Ibid, June 24, 1905, vol.XII, no.25, p.14

he had no tolerance for either the superstitious or wrongdoers.\textsuperscript{150} Loie continued to be an effective assistant missionary on Don's return, proving especially useful during the Annual Inland Tours. Moreover, in 1900 he was ordained into the eldership of the Chinese Church by Reverend Dr William Bannerman. This entitled him to a seat in the Synod and made him the first Chinese to be thus honoured by the New Zealand European Church.\textsuperscript{151}

In 1903, Loie transferred to Auckland to work among the northern Chinese population. The ensuing vacancy was quickly filled by William Chan who returned from China to take up the position. Chan was no stranger to Dunedin, having worked for many years as a gardener and fruiterer in Walker Street. He was baptised by Don, who then recommended that he return to Canton to study to become a catechist. His training complete, Chan was now qualified for the position as Don's assistant pastor. His return caused much celebration and his former position in the Chinese community made him an invaluable member of the Mission team.\textsuperscript{152}

In addition to these official assistants, Don also had several willing and committed Christian Chinese who performed important work within the Church. One couple especially worthy of note was Matilda and Joseph Lo Keong. With an eye to business opportunities, Lo Keong arrived in 1865, a year before the first rush of Chinese miners and his wife Matilda was reportedly the first full-blooded Chinese woman to settle in New Zealand.\textsuperscript{153} Although faithful members of St Paul's Anglican Church, they gave equally loyal service to the Chinese Mission Church once it was established. Joseph Lo Keong died in 1905 but Matilda continued to be of service, often interpreting sermons given by visiting English-speaking preachers. She died in 1915 and was farewelled with much love and respect by the Church she had done so much to support.\textsuperscript{154} Another faithful and willing servant, with something of an amazing testimony, was Paul Chan. He had made his way to Otago during the height of the gold boom in order to make his fortune. He did indeed "strike it rich" but before he could convert the gold to hard cash he was robbed by his mining partner. His resulting depression caused him to squander what little means he had left on alcohol.

\textsuperscript{150} McNeur, p.27
\textsuperscript{151} Outlook, July 7, 1900, vol.VII, no.25, p.5
\textsuperscript{152} Ibid, May 30, 1903, vol.X, no.18, p.15
\textsuperscript{153} McNeur, p.28
\textsuperscript{154} Ibid & Outlook, December 28, 1915, vol.XXII, no.52, p.7
opium and gambling. Eventually his mental state reached such a low ebb that he attempted to kill himself. The attempt was unsuccessful however and, as a result, he was placed in a lunatic asylum. There Paul Chan heard the Gospel being preached, accepted the Message, and eventually got his life back on track. He was baptised by Don in 1899 and thereafter became a willing worker in the Church. It was said of him after his death in 1908, that he was a true example of a 'fine character, consistent life and zealous service ... By Europeans he was esteemed as a man of simple and sincere faith and fine Christian spirit.'

Thus, the Mission was no longer dependent on Don. The Chinese Church had evolved from being the focus of the Mission to itself fulfilling a role in Mission outreach. As a sign of this progression, the Church sought to generate a more active evangelistic role in the Chinese community. In general terms, it may be said that the Chinese Church helped to maintain a feeling of unity and an awareness of their own culture and identity in an alien society. For example, they held a regular fortnightly service for elderly Chinese residents of the Old Man's Home, who were now largely isolated from their own society. The Church also worked with those at the opposite end of the age scale by incorporating half-caste Chinese children into their programme. This was indeed a positive step as, in most societies, half-castes were in fact outcasts. Thus, the Church organised activities and provided a central meeting place where Chinese could gather together, socialise and maintain some sense of cultural identity.

The Mission Church also provided shelter and practical support to those Chinese harassed by European society and its various institutions. For example, in 1900 Dunedin experienced a plague scare which focused public attention on an area of slum housing, the nucleus of which was Walker Street. Public opinion vented its fury against the Chinese community. In the wake of this outburst, the City Council declared a great number of Chinese homes to be unfit for habitation and therefore had them condemned. Walker Street Chinese turned to the Church for support and Don was more than willing to take up the fight. He headed a delegation to Mayor Chisholm, demanding that due attention be paid to the Chinese situation. Three homes had already been torn down in compliance with the Council's order, thus forcing the tenants into other, already overcrowded, accommodation. The Mayor suggested that the Chinese should disperse into

155 McNeur, p.28
156 Outlook, December 6, 1902, vol.IX, no.45, p.6
157 Pawakapan, p.77
other areas of the city, but Don cited the example of two Chinese who had arranged accommodation in the north end of Dunedin only to be refused tenancy when the landlord discovered they were Chinese. The Council then argued that the Chinese were responsible for this situation in that their habitations were dark, damp and breeding grounds for disease. The delegation replied that their homes were necessarily dark and airless as all windows had to be boarded up to stop young larrikins peering in or breaking the glass.\(^{158}\) They asked the Council to either cease the demolition or provide alternative housing for those made homeless by the project. The Council were persuaded to look more closely at the issue and, in time, decided that providing suitable accommodation for the Chinese was too expensive a procedure. Thus they agreed to rescind the order and allow Chinese to remain in their boarding houses providing they were kept to certain hygienic standards.\(^{159}\) Don, the Church and the Chinese community had combined their efforts to win an important battle and conquer the short-sightedness of the Dunedin City Council. The Church's practical worth had been proven.

Some Chinese still maintained their hostility to Christianity and refused to associate with all such influences. Many remained outside the scope of the Church's mission because of geographical distance (market gardeners for example), while others were simply too busy with their own small businesses to concern themselves with matters of the soul – especially when those matters were of alien origin. Nevertheless, a significant percentage of the Chinese community attended services at least intermittently, although their system of beliefs did not necessarily undergo radical change. Certainly the establishment of a permanent and central meeting place had seen the rate of attendance increase – although how many were there to hear the Message and how many were there to socialise is as indefinable as in European Churches. Between 1897 and 1900, the afternoon service saw an average attendance rate in the middle to high forties. In 1902 there was an unusual drop to an average of just 24, but throughout the next few years this figure once again rose into the mid-forties.\(^{160}\) This increase was even more encouraging when coupled with the fact that services were not attended every week by the same small group. Certainly there was a nucleus of loyal members, but a significant percentage of the

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\(^{158}\) Tuck, p.23

\(^{159}\) Otago Daily Times, June 5, 1900, p.5, c.4

\(^{160}\) Annual Reports of the Chinese Mission, Outlook
congregation were visitors who came only on an intermittent basis. Indeed, it was estimated that at least half of the Chinese community in Dunedin would at some stage during the year attend a service.\footnote{For example \textit{Outlook}, December 6, 1902, vol.IX, no.45, p.7} Thus in 1905, despite a decreasing Chinese population, the attendance at services was in fact increasing and the Mission could claim that ‘the outlook was never more hopeful. This church has a strong influence for good on the Chinese here, and, through the Canton Villages Mission, on the Chinese at home.’\footnote{Ibid, June 24, 1905, vol.XII, no.24, p.14} Financial contributions were more than sufficient to meet the Church’s needs, every year saw an increased number of baptisms and thus the Mission appeared to be on a firm footing.

Although the Chinese Church was no longer as reliant on Reverend Don, the missionary was busier than ever. On the homefront, his family had extended substantially since his marriage in 1883, to include three daughters and four sons.\footnote{Ibid, November 3, 1906, vol.XIII, no.44, p.11} Nevertheless, increased family responsibilities did not slow him down. While on sabbatical from his regular duties to the Chinese Church in 1897-98, Don undertook an extensive inspection of Chinese Missions in California, British Columbia, Japan, Shanghai, Hong Kong, Canton, Sydney and Tasmania.\footnote{see A. Don, \textit{Under Six Flags}} During his time in China, Don visited former friends and acquaintances who had returned to their homeland. He also personally carried messages and letters to the families of his flock who remained in New Zealand. His reception was so positive and the welcome so warm, that Don was encouraged to look into the possibility of establishing a New Zealand Presbyterian Mission within China. On his return, plans quickly took shape and in 1898 the Canton Villages Mission (CVM) was officially established.\footnote{J. Ng, \textit{The Presbyterian Church of New Zealand and the Chinese}, pp.10-11} Missionaries sent to work in the area found that much of the initial groundwork had already been laid.
... he [Don] has won the friendship of many, and the name of Teacher Don has become an "Open Sesame" to many homes in their villages. Thus missionaries trained in New Zealand have found doors of opportunity to them past whose closed and trebly-barred portals missionaries of older societies have been travelling for several decades.166

From this basis of trust and friendship, the CVM was able to build hospitals, schools and Churches within China, all of which initially depended, to a large extent, on Don’s awesome fund-raising efforts. His exceptional public relations skills were put to full use in the creation of what was to become a very effective fund-raising campaign. This not only encouraged promising results within China, but the flow of missionary information back to New Zealand Churches also had an impact more far-reaching than expected. Letters, reports and slide shows given by missionaries on sabbatical, as well as frequent articles in publications such as The Outlook and Break of Day,167 helped the CVM to become a central focus of the Presbyterian Church. Moreover, missionaries' encouraging reports of their work among the Chinese inevitably generated an increased sympathy and understanding for those members of the race within New Zealand. Thus, Don established an organisation that, given time, was to have a profound effect on the attitude of the Presbyterian Church towards the Chinese.

In 1901 Don was offered a position in British Columbia. The Presbyterian Church there was involved with an extensive Mission to the Chinese and sought the missionary’s services to help organise the work more effectively. He was tempted by this offer but the ensuing negotiations were bought to a close when Don made the decision to remain in New Zealand.168

In 1907, China found itself in the grip of yet another devastating famine. Characteristically, Don was quick to leap into action launching an appeal for the relief of suffering caused by the famine. Between March and June money poured in from all over the country. Part of the funds were regularly cabled to China to be used for immediate relief, while the rest was used to buy food, which was transported to China free of charge thanks to Don’s arrangement with a

166 H. Davies, The Canton Villages Mission of the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand, Dunedin, Foreign Missions Committee, 1916, p.29
167 J. Ng The Presbyterian Church of New Zealand and the Chinese, p.15
168 Outlook, October 26, 1901, vol.VIII, no.39, p.5
shipping company. An impressive total of £2,600 was raised in just four months.\(^{169}\) Many years later, in recognition not only of the missionary's help during this crisis but his consistent endeavour on behalf of New Zealand Chinese, the Chinese government conferred on Don the "Seventh Council Insignia of the Excellent Crop", a prestigious honour indeed.\(^{170}\)

These efforts had not gone unnoticed by Don's contemporaries. The Presbyterian Church noted his faithful work and eloquence on behalf of the Chinese both in New Zealand and abroad, as well as his help in connection with The Outlook, and the many other activities undertaken for the Church. As a result, in 1907 Don was unanimously elected Moderator - the highest honour the Presbyterian Church could bestow.\(^{171}\) Not surprisingly, his inaugural address emphasised the need to expand the Church's mission to 'witness for Christ among the heathen abroad and at home ...'\(^{172}\) During the next few years, until the outbreak of World War I, this very expansion took place as new missions were established, while existing missions were supported more strongly than ever. Thus, Don successfully provided a unity and purpose to missions to an extent the Presbyterian Church had never before experienced.\(^{173}\)

In the midst of such activity, Don was still committed to ensuring that the Annual Inland Tours continued. From the inception of the Tours through until 1897, Don was solely responsible for maintaining contact with the remaining inland Chinese. However, between 1898-1900 the reigns were passed to Timothy Fae Loie, the assistant pastor of the Chinese Church, while Don travelled abroad and became involved with establishing the Canton Villages Mission. The tour of 1900-1901 was once again undertaken by Don, this time accompanied by a young minister and apprentice Chinese missionary, Reverend George McNeur. McNeur was to become one of the most influential missionaries involved with the CVM and he also came to provide significant support for Dunedin's Chinese Church. The 1901-1902 Tour was once again undertaken by Mr Loie, while the following year's tour was performed by Don and William Mawson - later Reverend Mawson, missionary to China. The 1903-1904 tour saw Don and Mawson joined by William

\(^{169}\) Lineham, p.20

\(^{170}\)DNZB, vol.1, p.217

\(^{171}\)Outlook, November 9, 1907, vol.XIV, no.45, pp.11,12 & 21

\(^{172}\)A. Don, Memories of the Golden Road, p.18

\(^{173}\)J. Ng, "Fev. Alexander Don: his 'good harvest' being reaped at last", Otago Daily Times, September 24, 1983, p.23
Chan, who was by this time Don's assistant at the Chinese Church. The year 1904 also saw Don undertake a special tour among Chinese further north. For almost two months, he toured the Taranaki and Auckland areas preaching the Gospel, distributing Christian literature as well as giving lantern shows three or four days a week displaying scenes from China. Don also took the opportunity to spread among northern churches encouraging news of Dunedin's Chinese Mission as well as the Canton Villages Mission.\textsuperscript{174} By the end of 1904, Mawson was in China and thus during the next Tour Don and Chan were accompanied by Loie. The 1905-06 Inland Tour was performed solely by Don, although in the following year he rested and the duty was undertaken once again by Chan. From 1907 to 1911, Don was involved with every Tour including a special journey in 1911 to the Chinese in Westland.\textsuperscript{175}

**TABLE 10: A Summary of Don's Tours 1890 – 1911\textsuperscript{176}**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Places Visited</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>People Seen</th>
<th>Hearers</th>
<th>Total Travelled</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1890-1</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>1203</td>
<td>1140</td>
<td>496</td>
<td>1654</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891-2</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>1255</td>
<td>1125</td>
<td>511</td>
<td>1744</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1892-3</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>1142</td>
<td>1063</td>
<td>557</td>
<td>1904</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1893-4</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>836</td>
<td>779</td>
<td>373</td>
<td>1904</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1894-5</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>1197</td>
<td>1121</td>
<td>657</td>
<td>2282</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895-6</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>1130</td>
<td>1010</td>
<td>458</td>
<td>1846</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896-7</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>1281</td>
<td>1053</td>
<td>594</td>
<td>2259</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1898-1900 Tours Undertaken by Loie - No Statistics</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1900-1</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>820</td>
<td>692</td>
<td>549</td>
<td>2069</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901-2</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>780</td>
<td>679</td>
<td>665</td>
<td>1793</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1902-3</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>623</td>
<td>550</td>
<td>438</td>
<td>1899</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1903-4</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>348</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1904-5</td>
<td>Statistics Not Recorded</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1907-8</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>436</td>
<td>399</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>2147</td>
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<td>1908-9</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>710</td>
<td>607</td>
<td>472</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>1910-11</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>592</td>
<td>525</td>
<td>438</td>
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\textsuperscript{174} *Outlook*, January 30, 1904, vol.XI, no.1, p.1

\textsuperscript{175} A. Don, *Westland Tour 1911*, p.56

\textsuperscript{176} A. Don, *Annual Inland Tours, 1890-1911*
While throughout the 1890s Don had continued to find apathy and indifference among the inland Chinese, by 1902 Loie was commenting that 'the reception given me was better than on my last tour two years ago, and though there are no visible fruits, these inland tours must be of much benefit.'\(^{177}\) Moreover, in 1909-10 Don remarked that not only was there an absence of the usual excuses, but attendance had increased and most listeners were proving more attentive.\(^{176}\) This was probably due less to a new interest in the Gospel than to the fact that as the population had decreased, the remaining Chinese were increasingly elderly and isolated, and therefore eagerly sought any form of social contact available. Moreover, long residence in the colony had broken down much of the miners' hostility. As a result, almost the entire remnant of Chinese miners left in Central Otago attended Don's mission services. Unfortunately, by 1911 the sharp decline in Otago's inland Chinese population caused the viability of the Tours to come into question. The Synod eventually decided that, while the Inland Tours had suited the purpose of the early Mission, a change in circumstances had rendered them unnecessary. It was the end of an era.

The Presbyterian Mission was experiencing a difficult phase. Not only was the need for an Inland Mission diminishing but there was also a corresponding ebb in the work of the urban Mission; indeed, as early as 1906 there were signs that all was not well. The assistant pastor, Reverend William Chan, noted that 'the general spiritual life of the congregation is rather feeble',\(^{179}\) while in 1907 the Annual Report merely commented that the 'Church work continues to go on very quietly'.\(^{180}\) It seemed that enthusiasm, both among the congregation and the Mission team, was at a low point.

By 1907, Don was actively involved in his work as Moderator and encouraging foreign mission as a whole. As he was unable to maintain such a direct, ministerial relationship with the Chinese Church, the assistant pastor, William Chan, took over most duties with assistance from Mr Loie.\(^{181}\) Unfortunately, Chan was forced to resign in 1908 due to family responsibilities. Nevertheless, the vacant position was soon filled by a Mr F.L. Law, a catechist.

\(^{177}\) *Outlook*, December 6, 1902, vol.IX, vol.45, p.67

\(^{178}\) A. Don, *Annual Inland Tours, 1901–1911*, p.12

\(^{179}\) *Outlook*, November 3, 1906, vol.XIII, no.44, p.11

\(^{180}\) *Ibid*, September 21, 1907, vol.XIV, no.38, p.11

\(^{181}\) McNeur, p.29
from Canton. Belonging to a village of idol worshippers, he had been persecuted for his beliefs but remained loyal to the faith. Law was described as ‘an honest young man from the country, one who you feel is good from the very look of his face. He is always on hand, doing faithful and creditable work and promises to be a valuable helper.’182 His time with the Church marked a temporary resurgence in the outreach of the Mission. Indeed, the average rate of attendance grew to fifty-two – the largest attendances in the history of the Chinese Church. Even the Annual Report for 1909 was more optimistic, stating that ‘the church prospects are somewhat brighter this year and the dark cloud that has hung over the work for several years appears to be lifting.’183 Unfortunately, these encouraging signs were not given time to reach fruition under Law’s tutelage, as a misunderstanding of an undisclosed nature led to his resignation in August, 1910.184 Don was preparing to leave for six months in Australia, thus the need for a replacement was immediate. The missionary’s search led him to a Mr Henry Jackson, who had been educated at a Christian school in Hong Kong, and was now living in Wellington. After due consideration, the Otago Synod hired Mr Jackson to carry on the work of the Mission for a seven month period, while Don embarked on a trip to Australia and later a tour of the West Coast. Unfortunately, this arrangement was met with little enthusiasm by the Chinese, and by 1912 the Annual Report described the work of the Church as ‘practically at a standstill’ with attendances at their lowest point since the Church first opened.185

This sorry state of affairs was by no means lost on Don. He reasoned that the downturn was in part due to temporary factors, including a terrible season for market gardeners; political upheaval within China, which in turn had an unsettling effect on Chinese in New Zealand; and most specifically, the current prevalence of gambling on Sundays.186 Nevertheless, it could not be denied that the major factor was a significant decrease in Dunedin’s Chinese population which saw many move to the North Island or return to China. The Mission was facing a crisis.

Although the majority of Chinese initially settled in the South Island (indeed

182 Ibid, p.30
183 Outlook, September 25, 1909, vol.XVI, no.39, p.11
184 McNeur, p.30
185 Outlook, November 5, 1912, vol.XIX, no.45, p.6
186 Ibid
in 1867 there were only thirty-four Chinese outside of Otago\textsuperscript{187}, it was not long before the North Island began to witness a growth in its Chinese population. Local churches responded in a variety of ways and to varying degrees. For example, the Chinese population in Westland grew rapidly after the discovery of gold in the area, but it was not until 1896 that any action was taken. A Hokitika minister, Reverend William Douglas, approached the Presbyterian General Assembly with the idea of establishing a Chinese Mission along the West Coast. Widespread support for the proposal saw a Chinese Mission Committee established and, in time, the services of a Chinese catechist, Mr Daniel Lew, were secured. The Mission headquarters, initially established in Greymouth, moved to Nelson in 1899 when responsibility for the work was assumed by Mr David Wong.\textsuperscript{188} However, it was not until 1905 when Timothy Fae Loie, a stalwart of the Dunedin Chinese Church, transferred from Auckland that the Mission began to move ahead. Unfortunately, the catechist was soon recalled to Auckland, thus the Mission lost momentum and progress was significantly impeded.\textsuperscript{189}

Due to the urban northward drift, Wellington also experienced a considerable increase in its Chinese population. The challenge presented by the Chinese presence was accepted primarily by local Anglican and Baptist churches. Outreach officially began in 1903 when the Anglican Church installed West Coast catechist, David Wong, as head of the Mission. He established Sunday services, a Bible Class, an English class and by 1907 was pastor of a newly completed Chinese Mission Hall. Wong was ably assisted by Reverend C. McKenzie, a former missionary to China, who undertook many of the preaching duties. Meanwhile, the Baptist church engaged a succession of Chinese catechists, including Mr F.L. Law, a former member of Don’s mission team.\textsuperscript{190} Unfortunately, a lack of cooperation saw the Wellington Mission to the Chinese community somewhat hampered by a division of strength.

Auckland’s Chinese community increased slowly, thus the challenge to the church was not immediately evident. As a result, only piecemeal efforts were initially made among the Chinese and these were, for the most part, a failure. It

\textsuperscript{187} McNeur, p.41
\textsuperscript{188} Ibid, pp.41-3
\textsuperscript{189} Moore, p.85. Also see \textit{Outlook}, August 17, 1907, \textit{vol.XIV}, no.33, p.14 & November 20, 1907, \textit{vol.XIV}, no.48, p.18
\textsuperscript{190} Moore, pp.89-91
was not until 1910 and the return of Timothy Fae Loie that the Mission gained momentum. After securing the Y.M.C.A. as a central meeting place, Loie quickly established Sunday services, an English class and a prayer meeting. However, before long Timothy Fae Loie was once again on the move, this time for a Methodist Mission in Melbourne. After his departure, reports of ill-feeling and disunity began to circulate and catechists employed to continue the work only lasted a short time. Thus, from 1912 the Mission lacked any real leadership and ceased to be effective.

While Don accepted the Chinese drift northward as inevitable, he was concerned by the lack of effectively organised missions in northern centres. Don often visited existing Chinese missions, providing encouragement and support indeed he undertook two extensive northern tours, seeking to inspire Chinese classes, not only in the main centres but also in smaller towns such as Palmerston North, Masterton, Lower Hutt, Timaru and Oamaru. These tours only served to confirm his belief that an extensive Chinese population remained beyond the reach of existing Christian missions.

By 1913 certain undeniable truths were weighing heavily on Don. Firstly, the work of the Dunedin Mission was at a standstill, largely due to a substantial decrease in the population. Whereas in 1896 Otago's Chinese population stood at 1500, by 1901 it had fallen to 1200, and by 1911 the population had dwindled significantly to a mere 400. Secondly, the assistant pastors were more than capable of continuing the Mission of the Chinese Church - indeed Don's role, by necessity, had been drastically reduced. Thirdly, if the North Island Chinese were to be reached by an effective mission, then experienced leadership was necessary. The equation seemed compelling and so, for the good of the wider work, Don decided to move the Mission headquarters to Palmerston North.

This city was chosen for its convenient geographical position, situated as it was in the middle of the North Island with most Chinese communities in easy reach. Moreover, the Chinese Mission already established in Palmerston North exhibited...
encouraging signs of making a considerable impact.\textsuperscript{197}

In May 1913, Don was farewelld by his Chinese flock. Those present at the
large gathering testified to the enormous impact Don had made on their
community.

... his name has become a household word among his
flock ... [the Chinese] have had a true friend, and one
ever keenly alive to their best interests, and
carefully vigilant in their defence as occasion has
required.\textsuperscript{198}

Soon after, Don left for Palmerston North cutting direct ties with a Mission he
had nurtured from infancy. The missionary had supported it through teething
troubles and established it on a strong footing – now the Mission was going to
have to learn to walk by itself.

\textsuperscript{197} Outlook, September 16, 1915, vol.XII, no.37, p.11

\textsuperscript{198} Ibid, May 6, 1913, vol.XX, no.18, p.27
CHAPTER 4
NEW DIRECTIONS

The Mission's entry into a new phase of development occurred at the outbreak of World War I, during which time anti-Chinese sentiment was put on hold but, unfortunately, so was the Mission. While social antagonism was vigorously revived after the War, the Mission was not. Thus progress remained slow until the late 1930s, when the onset of World War II heralded a change in social attitudes. At the same time, the Chinese Church proved its worth by fulfilling valuable social functions within the community, thereby enlarging evangelistic opportunities. By 1950, the Mission was ready to enter into a new phase, quite different to those that had gone before. For the first time, the responsibility for outreach to the Chinese community would rest solely on Chinese shoulders.

1 THE LULL IN RACISM

By the outbreak of World War I, the Chinese population was at its lowest point since the early 1860s. Although a significant number of Chinese were still gold mining, the majority had moved into occupations such as market gardening, laundering, fruit and vegetable shops. Moreover, while this urban Chinese presence initially attracted much antagonism, World War I engaged the colony's attention so completely that the Chinese enjoyed a lull in the expression of public and legislative racism. Thus, for almost five years New Zealand directed its attention to more important issues. However, while the outbreak of War caused the suspension of aggression against Chinese, the conclusion of the War also generated a renewed offensive.

The end of World War I saw the influx of a large number of returning soldiers. After the initial period of celebration and rejoicing ran its course,

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1 The Chinese population had declined to 2,516. New Zealand Census, 1913
2 Ibid
attention was turned to the reassimilation of ex-soldiers into New Zealand society. The employment market proved itself incapable of absorbing such large numbers and, despite government efforts, a significant number of servicemen were unable to find work. One result of the ensuing discontent was the renewal of agitation against Chinese. As the issue of competition in the economic and labour markets revived, so did agitation against the Chinese who were allegedly monopolizing European jobs.\(^3\)

In order to further their many causes, ex-soldiers used the Returned Serviceman's Association (RSA) as an effective pressure-group, and one which soon directed its attention towards the Chinese. In 1920 a national conference held in Wellington unanimously agreed that the 'ever-increasing influx of Orientals must be stopped immediately if the dominion is to maintain the high standards of race and morality which now distinguish it.'\(^4\) Thus, the Association not only appealed to moral fears but also to those of racial purity, arguing that Chinese immigration could only lead to the 'spread of such undesirable inter-marriage and the creation of a race of a lower type.'\(^5\) Local associations were also urged to hold public meetings and, as a result, many resolutions were passed entreatying the government to put a stop to Chinese immigration.

This action was strongly supported by organisations such as the White New Zealand League, who advocated strict exclusion measures. The League objected to Chinese on economic, racial and moral grounds.

The peril is from those dark-skinned races which have long ago put on a thin veneer of semi-civilisation, but have remained for centuries without rising any higher [and] are really constitutionally incapable of rising any higher.\(^6\)

The League not only advocated exclusionist legislation, but also encouraged society to actively reject the Chinese presence.

\(^3\) M. Moore, The Chinese in New Zealand, pp.112-3

\(^4\) Otago Daily Times, July 2, 1920, p.3, c.2

\(^5\) Ibid, July 2, 1920, p.3, c.2

REFUSE TO DEAL, TRADE OR DISCOURSE WITH ORIENTALS. Show them the way to go HOME.7

Before long the government began to respond actively to this renewed agitation. Thus, in 1920 the Immigration Restriction Bill was introduced as 'a result of a deep-seated sentiment of a huge majority of the people of New Zealand that this dominion should be what was often called a "white country", and that the people who came here should ... be of the same way of thinking from the British Empire point of view."8 While the Bill repealed the education test as a requirement of entry to the colony, it instead placed Asian immigration on an application basis. Thus, every person not of European descent was required to obtain a permit of entry. Each application was to be investigated by the Minister of Customs, who would judge individual cases on their own merit. Only the wives and children of Chinese already in New Zealand and in possession of permanent visas, were exempted from the legislation. Mr Downie Stewart, then Minister of Customs, made full use of his powers under the new Act, restricting the number of Asian immigrants to a pre-determined figure, apparently regardless of the merits of individual cases.9

However, unlike previous legislation, this Act did not pass without comment from the Chinese community in New Zealand. A new political consciousness developed in conjunction with their increasing assimilation into European society. Thus, the New Zealand Chinese sent petitions to Parliament calling for the removal of racist restrictions, in particular the poll-tax which was not only described as unjust but barbarous and inhumane.10 Unfortunately, this campaign had little impact and no modification of restrictive legislation was undertaken.

The 1920 Immigration Act soon had its desired effect and Mr Downie Stewart was able to report with satisfaction that in the eighteen months following the implementation of the Act only 166 Chinese had obtained the necessary permits.11 This legislation proved to be less of a "paper tiger" than many

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7 White New Zealand League, "Don't Fail to Read this Appeal", Wellington, 1927, Hocken Library
8 Otago Daily Times, September 15, 1920, p.5, c.7
9 Ibid, July 24, 1926, p.17, c.6
10 N. Ritchie, "Archaeology and History of the Chinese in Southern New Zealand during the Nineteenth Century", p.27
11 New Zealand Parliamentary Debates, vol.201, 1923, p.152
previous restrictions and implementation proved especially effective as subsequent immigration figures reveal.

**TABLE 11: Immigration and Emigration Figures 1919 - 1925**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>IMMIGRATION</th>
<th>EMIGRATION</th>
<th>GAIN</th>
<th>LOSS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1919</td>
<td>418</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>1,477</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>1,097</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act in force=</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>368</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1922</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>362</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1923</td>
<td>365</td>
<td>378</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1924</td>
<td>548</td>
<td>451</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>517</td>
<td>524</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Not only were immigration levels restricted but emigration figures also increased and, as a result, there was a net outflow. Thus, the Act had its desired effect and the much feared alien hordes were prevented from overwhelming the colony. Further protection was ensured by successive governments' refusal to grant permanent resident visas to Chinese immigrants.

It was not until the 1930s that the first signs of a thaw in New Zealand's attitude towards its Chinese inhabitants became apparent. The first indication of this came in 1932 when the government, after forty long years of discrimination, abolished the poll-tax. Moreover, the 1935 election saw the first Labour government come to power and, soon after, a comprehensive welfare state was established, available on an equal basis to both European and Chinese. Nevertheless, while New Zealand society was beginning to show increasing acceptance of the Chinese community, the Chinese community was by no means willing to embrace New Zealand society - assimilation was a lengthy process. Chinese integration was still restricted, not only by the remnants of social prejudice but also by self-imposed bounds. Homeland ties were not easily forgotten. While contact had been established with the European population, especially in the form of business ties, the Chinese continued to be largely isolated. China's traditional emphasis on the family unit encouraged New Zealand Chinese, who had left wives and children behind, to imitate the extended family network within their local community. Thus, rather than mixing in a European social framework, they looked to their own people not only to maintain traditions but also to provide support, communication and entertainment.

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12 New Zealand Yearbook 1920-1926
This problem was compounded by an almost complete lack of a female Chinese presence in the colony. Historically, New Zealand's Chinese community had been almost exclusively male. By 1874, in an Asian population of 4,816, only two of that number were women; by 1900 the ratio was only slightly better with thirty four women in a total of just over 3,000. Even by the outbreak of World War I, there were only 112 women in a male population of around 2,400. Thus, low female ratios continued to encourage the "sojourner" outlook among New Zealand Chinese. While a small percentage of Chinese men married European women, the majority maintained homeland family ties, and therefore refused to think in terms of permanent settlement. This obviously had a detrimental effect on the impulse to assimilate, although the end of the 1930s signalled a change that would radically alter the attitudes of both the European and Chinese communities.

Throughout the 1930s Japan had become increasingly militaristic, focusing much of its aggression on neighbouring China. On September 18, 1931 the "Mukden Incident" was staged by the Japanese army who then proceeded to take over Manchuria, establishing the puppet state of Manchukuo in 1932. This was followed by Japan's formal withdrawal from the League of Nations, thereby shattering its alliance with the West and stimulating a move towards closer ties with Nazi Germany. By 1937 Japan had launched a full-scale war in China - the curtain raiser to World War II.

From the beginning, New Zealand's sympathies were allied with China - not only as the underdog but also as a symbol of the democratic West's struggle against fascist forces. Such sympathies were only encouraged by the many missionary reports vividly describing cruelties and suffering, bombings and homeless refugees. As a result, there was a growing feeling of comradeship with the gallant Chinese who were attempting to stand firm against what was quickly becoming a common enemy.

Meanwhile, the Chinese community had found a united voice through the newly established "New Zealand Chinese Association", which was also working closely with the Chinese consulate. Spurred on by New Zealand's increasingly positive attitude towards China, they lobbied the government to admit the families of New Zealand Chinese, in order that they might escape the ravages of war. Their pleas were eventually heard and between 1939 and 1941 hundreds of

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13 Statistics of New Zealand 1915

14 J. Fairbank & E.O. Reischauer, China: Tradition and Transformation, pp.462-3
women and children were reunited with their husbands and fathers in New Zealand.\textsuperscript{15}

This influx had a dramatic effect on the nature of the Chinese community, as these newly-reunited families began the process of assimilating into New Zealand society. However, the end of World War II caused much anxiety, for it was well known that the government had only permitted the refugees entry into New Zealand on the understanding that they would be deported to their homeland as soon as possible after the cessation of hostilities. Nevertheless, the Chinese were no longer without a political voice and the New Zealand Chinese Association, in partnership with the Chinese consulate, pressured the government to allow these families to settle permanently. Moreover, Dunedin’s Chinese Church appealed to the Presbyterian Synod that something might be done on their behalf. As a result, Reverend George McNeur lead a deputation from the Chinese community in Dunedin to see the Prime Minister, Peter Fraser. They argued that the refugees had established a peaceful and prosperous way of life in New Zealand and that to repatriate them to a country suffering the ravages of war would not only be disastrous but inhumane. In the face of such pressure, the government agreed to investigate the matter and after due discussion it was decided to grant permanent residency to all refugees.\textsuperscript{16}

Although the government expected an initial outcry from the European population, none resulted. To a large extent, this was due to society’s increased recognition and acceptance of the Chinese as a result of their war effort. As food had been in short supply, Chinese market gardens in the cultivation of fruit and vegetables had helped the national cause, thereby generating a sense of comradeship.\textsuperscript{17} Moreover, the campaign for permanent residence placed emphasis on the value of having united Chinese families, rather than individual males - historically, an important source of agitation.\textsuperscript{18} Thus, the decision to grant permanent residency to the refugees was greeted with calm acceptance.

This apparent thaw in society’s attitudes encouraged the government to allow more families to be reunited.\textsuperscript{19} A pattern of chain migration was

\textsuperscript{15} J. Ng, \textit{The Presbyterian Church of New Zealand and the Chinese}, pp.3, 15 & 16

\textsuperscript{16} G.H. McNeur, \textit{The Church and the Chinese in New Zealand}, p.37

\textsuperscript{17} D. & P. Beatson, \textit{Chinese New Zealanders}, p.38

\textsuperscript{18} McNeur, p.37

\textsuperscript{19} Ng, p.16
established as both close relatives and eventually members of the extended family were able to settle in New Zealand. As a result, the Chinese community grew substantially over successive years – the female ratio especially saw tremendous growth.

**TABLE 12: New Zealand's Chinese Population 1921–1951**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>MALE</th>
<th>FEMALE</th>
<th>MALE/FEMALE RATIO</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>2,993</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>11:1</td>
<td>3,266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1926</td>
<td>2,927</td>
<td>447</td>
<td>7:1</td>
<td>3,374</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1936</td>
<td>2,432</td>
<td>511</td>
<td>5:1</td>
<td>2,943</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>3,414</td>
<td>1,526</td>
<td>3:1</td>
<td>4,940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>3,633</td>
<td>2,090</td>
<td>2:1</td>
<td>5,723</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the following years, discriminatory legislation was gradually revoked, placing the Chinese community on a more normal footing. Although remaining a close-knit group, a major hindrance to assimilation had been removed. A new generation of Chinese were growing up in New Zealand, thus facilitating the community’s integration into society. Moreover, China’s Communist regime destroyed any remaining ties with their native homeland, thereby forcing Chinese to view New Zealand as "home". Thus, by the 1950s, the Chinese were no longer "sojourners" in an alien land but settlers beginning the process of becoming, in a true sense, Chinese New Zealanders.

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20 Beatson, p.9

21 *New Zealand Census 1921–1951*

22 J. Ng, "Who are the New Zealand Chinese", *Otago Daily Times*, July 22 & 29, 1972, Hocken Library
II THE MISSION

1914 signalled a crisis for the Chinese Church. Not only was interest at an all-time low, but the founder and prime motivator of the Mission, Reverend Don, had transferred his headquarters to the North Island. The Church had no official pastor, although the Synod had appointed Mr Henry White as superintendent. While a member of the Mornington Church, he had been active in the Chinese Mission for over twenty five years. Unfortunately, White was not fluent in the Cantonese dialect, but he and his assistants, Mr Walter Paterson and Mr A.L. Miller, were provided with able translators in the form of Mrs Lo Keong and Mr Joseph Say. Members of the congregation itself were also quick to support the troubled Mission, often conducting services as well as undertaking much of the visitation duties.

Mission prospects brightened temporarily with the news that Don was returning to Dunedin. However, it was quickly ascertained that his purpose was not to take over the reins of the Dunedin Mission once more, but to fulfil the role of a newly created position, Foreign Missions’ Secretary. The Presbyterian Church’s involvement in foreign missions had grown to such an extent that the services of a fulltime organising secretary were required. Who better to fill the position than the Church’s foremost promoter of mission work, Reverend Don? Thus, by 1915 he had excused himself from active duties connected with the Chinese Mission and was once again installed in Dunedin.

Throughout the war years and beyond, the work among Chinese in Dunedin was maintained despite various ups and downs. At the end of 1915, the Chinese Church was further weakened by the departure of two key members – Reverend Miller, who left to take up mission work in China, and Mrs Matilda Lo Keong whose death brought to a close a long and distinguished period of service in the Church. In the following years the Church struggled to even continue Sunday services and the occasional help from missionaries on sabbatical provided welcome respite. Indeed, there was so little activity that the Church Session found it necessary to meet only once in a period of six years.

It was not until the mid-1920s that prospects seemed to brighten once again.

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23 Otago Daily Times, November 2, 1915, p.6
24 McNeur, p.31
25 Ibid, p.31
26 Ibid, p.33
In 1926, Mr F.L. Law returned to New Zealand from mission service in China. Employed as assistant pastor in 1909, Law initially met with much success although, within a short space of time, a misunderstanding had led to his resignation from the Church. Nevertheless, the opportunity afforded by his presence could not be overlooked. An invitation was advanced and, by July, Law had accepted the position of Pastor to the Chinese Church. The attendance rate quickly showed improvement and the Mission began to exhibit encouraging signs.\(^{27}\) Indeed for the next few years, the Church once again served as a central meeting place for many Dunedin Chinese.\(^{28}\) Law served both the Church and the Chinese community well, thus his resignation from the Mission in 1931 proved to be a severe hardship.

The early 1930s saw the Mission faced with another disheartening blow. The reason for this tribulation was Reverend Don who, while employed as Foreign Missions' Secretary, had continued to maintain his interest in the progress of the Chinese Mission. Indeed in 1922, as he approached retirement, the Foreign Missions Committee sent Don to represent New Zealand at a Missionary Conference in China. His stay proved to be a somewhat extended one, no doubt conscious of the fact that this would be the last time he would undertake such a journey.\(^{29}\) Retirement followed his return to New Zealand in 1923 and by May, he and his wife had settled in Ophir, Central Otago. Don's love for the area, as well as his long-standing relationship with the people, made it the obvious place in which they should, as Don put it, 'begin their new life.'\(^{30}\) Thus, retirement by no means implied stagnation and Don soon involved himself in new projects. His interest in work among the young was renewed, while contributions to the Outlook were also forthcoming.\(^{31}\) Commissioned in 1931 to write a history of the Presbyterian Church in Otago for the Presbytery's approaching jubilee, Don spent three years employed in the business of collecting information, classifying it and putting the material into book form.\(^{32}\) In 1934, while staying in Green Island with his daughter in order to be nearer the printer and publisher, a

\(^{27}\) Otago Daily Times, July 27, 1926, p.2, c.4
\(^{28}\) Moore, p.88
\(^{29}\) A. Don, Memories of the Golden Road, p.36
\(^{30}\) McNeur, p.33
\(^{31}\) Don, pp.26 & 35
\(^{32}\) Ibid, p.36
Presbytery meeting in Alexandra called him away for a few days. On November 2 he boarded the train to return home. Just outside Ranfurly, Don had a sudden heart attack and died. His mission accomplished, Don at last reached Home.

The death of this pioneer missionary was a severe blow to the morale of a Mission already in decline. Indeed, Reverend William Mawson, who at this time occupied the post of Foreign Missions' Secretary, questioned whether the small number of Chinese remaining in the area justified a full-time worker. The Foreign Missions Committee agreed with this assessment and, as a result, decided to temporarily suspend the search for a full-time pastor. Thus, the work of continuing the Mission was left solely to the members of the Chinese Church and the intermittent support of visiting missionaries, although arrangements were also made for Reverend Y.S. Chau, the mission worker in Auckland, to periodically visit the Church. In charge of the Auckland Mission since 1930, Reverend Chau's work had seen positive results in terms of increased interest and support. Indeed, he not only established regular meetings but also a successful Young Men's Club, Sunday School, and language class.

While the outreach to Chinese continued to strengthen in Auckland, most other missions were experiencing a lull equivalent to that in Dunedin. For example, although the work in Wellington initially saw a division of strength between the Anglican and Baptist Missions, these denominations combined their efforts in the late 1930s. Unfortunately, this collaboration met with little success and in 1949 the two denominations separated, causing the Mission to stall. Comparable to this situation was that of the Westland Mission, although for different reasons, in that by 1945 the region's Chinese population had almost disappeared. In contrast, Christchurch accommodated a considerable Chinese population, but unfortunately no mission worker. Only occasional visits were made by pastors from Wellington or Dunedin. Thus, the Mission to the Chinese New Zealand-wide was in decline.

Throughout the 1930s it had become evident that the lack of continuity in the leadership of the Chinese Church was proving completely unsatisfactory. Thus, the Foreign Missions Committee reversed its earlier decision and in

33 McNeur, p.33
34 Ibid, p.33
35 Ibid, p.35
36 Ibid, pp.46-7
37 Ibid, pp.43,49, & 52
February 1940 Reverend A.L. Miller was inducted as the Church's new minister. The missionary soon discovered that interest among Dunedin's Chinese population was virtually non-existent. Indeed the task seemed almost hopeless. However, it was at this point that external circumstances saved the Mission.

As already noted, the outbreak of hostilities in China prompted the government to provide temporary refuge for the wives and children of New Zealand's Chinese residents. Thus from 1939, an increasing number of families were reunited, many of whom chose to settle in Dunedin. This significant increase in population gave rise to opportunities which were by no means lost on Reverend Miller and the Chinese Christian community. The new migrants were facing severe assimilation problems which the Church was ideally suited to alleviating. A new emphasis for mission work began to evolve – one that placed importance on evangelism through social service. Thus, for example, Reverend Miller and his willing workers provided necessary assistance in overcoming language difficulties, while also educating the women and children. Meanwhile, Mrs Miller gave practical help in mastering domestic problems and was especially active in the care of babies, children and the sick. The entire Chinese community endeavoured to help by any means possible and, as a result, attendance rates soon began to show improvement, especially those of the Bible Class which attracted an enthusiastic group of young new migrants.

Nevertheless, the apathy generated by years of an impotent Mission and the initial alienation often expressed by the newly-arrived immigrants, made the task a difficult one. Despite these obstacles, Reverend Miller continued to provide practical help and friendship, even extending his mission to include contact with other South Island Chinese. Unfortunately, these untiring efforts took too heavy a toll on the missionary and on July 20, 1944 he died suddenly. The strong relationship established between the missionary and his Chinese flock was testified to by the fact that they 'mourned as for one of their own kith and kin.'

While Mrs Miller ensured the immediate work of the Mission continued, the Foreign Missions Committee asked Reverend George McNeur to supervise an

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38 Ibid, p.35
39 Ibid, p.36
40 Ibid
entire South Island Mission with headquarters in Dunedin.\textsuperscript{11} With over 40 years experience as a missionary in China, McNeur was the obvious choice for such an appointment. He was not only well-versed in Chinese language and customs but, as an old friend of Don's, also had links to the Dunedin Mission.\textsuperscript{42} McNeur was described as kind, considerate, a true gentleman and while 'not naturally endowed with talents of brilliance ... he made himself a front rank man by the absolute consecration of every talent he possessed.'\textsuperscript{43} The Chinese community held McNeur in high regard, largely due to the invaluable service rendered as leader of the delegation which helped persuade the Prime Minister to allow refugee families to remain in New Zealand. Indeed, the Chinese Association of Otago and Southland issued a letter to all Chinese in the area encouraging them to support Reverend McNeur and attend the Chinese Church as often as possible.\textsuperscript{44} Thus, the Mission began to establish for itself an increasingly important role in the community. Once the Church proved to be of significant social value in terms of practical support, its religious influence increased.

Nevertheless, McNeur was of the opinion that the successful continuity of the Mission depended on the appointment of a Chinese pastor who would relate well to the community by virtue of his race.\textsuperscript{45} He took the matter to the Missions' Committee who agreed 'that the interest of the local Chinese in the church will be increased through the presence of one of their own nationality as their minister.'\textsuperscript{46} Thus McNeur wrote to offer the position to Reverend Y.T. Fong, a former student who had trained at the Union Theological College in Canton and was now working in the Dutch East Indies (Indonesia).\textsuperscript{47} Fong readily accepted the challenge - somewhat surprising considering that he was leaving a Church with a membership of almost a thousand for one with a single

\textsuperscript{41} Ibid
\textsuperscript{42} G.H. McNeur, The Chinese in our Midst, p.2
\textsuperscript{43} J. McKenzie, "A Man of Christ"; a tribute to the late Dr G.H. McNeur on the occasion of the unveiling of two memorial plaques in the Chinese Church, Dunedin, on Sunday 21 July 1957, Hocken Library, p.30
\textsuperscript{44} G.H. McNeur, The Church and the Chinese in New Zealand, p.37
\textsuperscript{45} Ibid, p.35
\textsuperscript{46} Otago Daily Times, June 22, 1950, p.8, c.3
\textsuperscript{47} Ibid
communicant member.\textsuperscript{46} On June 21, 1950 Reverend Fong, his wife, and four children arrived to a welcoming committee at Dunedin station. One newspaper reporter described the scene, especially the excitement and enthusiasm of the new minister.

Small, alert, courteous Mr Fong was almost too excited to talk when he arrived with his wife and family by the express and he found rapid conversation in Chinese with Dr McNeur and prominent members of the local Chinese community easier than conventional greetings in English.\textsuperscript{47}

Reverend McNeur helped ease the new minister into his duties, which included regular Sunday afternoon services, a Bible class and Sunday School, as well as visiting members of the Chinese community and distributing Christian literature. Once Fong was established in his new role, Reverend McNeur was able to retire from a lengthy career in mission work.

The Mission was now placed under the supervision of Reverend Fong and thus an era was brought to a close. The sun had set on a Mission that had been generated and nurtured largely by European supervision and guidance. From 1950 onwards, the responsibility for evangelising the Chinese was placed squarely on Chinese shoulders. A new era had dawned.

\textsuperscript{46} McNeur, p.39

\textsuperscript{47} Otago Daily Times, June 22, 1950, p.8, c.3
CHAPTER 5
CONCLUSIONS: VICTORY OR DEFEAT?

Almost a century of missionary endeavour had been employed by the Church in an attempt to render the Chinese community more amenable to Christianity. As the measurement of progress in matters of the soul is always difficult, the degree of success enjoyed by the Mission is not easily ascertained. Nevertheless it may be determined that the Mission was not an immense success, at least in numerical terms, as the number of obstacles confronting the outreach considerably hindered its progress.

1 NUMERICAL RESULTS

Comprehensive statistics on Chinese religious affiliation are scarce, but census results clearly reveal that the vast majority were avowed Buddhists or Confucians. Unfortunately, the number of Chinese Christians was not indicated after 1881, thus it cannot be determined what proportion of the residual population were Christian and what proportion simply refused to declare their affiliation.

TABLE 13: Religious Affiliation of the Chinese in New Zealand 1867-1911

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>BUDDHISTS/CONFUCIANS</th>
<th>CHRISTIANS</th>
<th>TOTAL POPULATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1867</td>
<td>1 111</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>2 612</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1874</td>
<td>4 764</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>4 816</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1878</td>
<td>4 379</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>4 433</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>4 936</td>
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1 Statistics of New Zealand 1869-1912 & New Zealand Census 1871-1911
Although an increasing number of Chinese were unaccounted for, the proportion of Buddhists and Confucians remained high, at least until the early years of the twentieth century. Despite the lack of official statistics regarding Chinese Christians, contemporaries verified that numerically the Mission was making little impact. As Timothy Fae Loie affirmed, 'our Chinese work does not show speedy and easily seen results; the Chinese are not easily converted'. Reverend William Mawson formed a similar opinion on the basis of first hand experience provided by the Annual Inland Tours — 'Year after year they have listened to the message which tells them of the hope of the Gospel, but they have never gained possession of that hope'. Reverend George McNeur further verified this situation after experiencing comparable problems within China itself.

Mr Don's parish is a most difficult one; the men he has to deal with, most of them from the upper Poon Yue district, are about the hardest flint I know, as far as susceptibility to spiritual influences is concerned.

Although the Chinese attended services or special classes and listened with respect and attention, it seemed that little permanent impact was made on the majority. Thus even Reverend Don, the most zealous of missionaries, only baptised around twenty converts. Nevertheless, to ensure that the change of heart was both genuine and permanent, Don required a high standard from those converts who wished to be baptised or become members of the Church. Indeed, Reverend A.L. Miller noted that 'perhaps many whom he [Don] refrained from receiving into full communion were at heart Christian, or had least had the root of the matter in them'. However, the missionary was wise to be on his guard as there was much evidence to show that many Chinese, on their return to the homeland, renounced all previous ties with Christianity. It was estimated that over half who professed to be Christians while in Western society, simply returned to old habits and traditions, thereby revealing a complete lack of

2 A. Don, Memories of the Golden Road, p.12
3 Outlook, February 13, 1904, vol.XI, no.3, p.15
4 Don, p.12
5 J. Ng, "Who are the New Zealand Chinese?", Otago Daily Times, July 22 & 29, 1972
6 Don, p.42
understanding as to what it meant to adhere to the faith. Don had personally noted that the majority 'on return to China, revert to their home idolatries as readily as they revert to their old Chinese dress.' Thus, not only were Mission conversion rates low, but the authenticity of some of that number may be in question, although Don's careful probing of his converts helped ensure that their understanding was certain and the change genuine.

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7 Outlook, November 7, 1903, vol. X, no. 41, p. 12
8 A. Don, Annual Inland Tour 1900-1901, p. 34
II OBSTACLES TO CONVERSION

(i) The Persistence of Chinese Religious Traditions

As low conversion rates exemplify, the Mission was not perceptibly influential in terms of its own optimistic aims. Thus, the question arises as to how and why the Chinese were so apparently immune to the Church’s efforts. The answer is complex and multidimensional. Obviously, the primary factor was Chinese antipathy to the alien religion. The strength of Chinese religious and social traditions created a mindset that was firmly closed against Christianity. The very antiquity of Chinese society and its glorious past encouraged devotion to tradition, while Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism helped to create an incredibly stable society. As a result, the comparatively modern teachings of Christ carried little weight – it was not only an alien faith but also more than likely a passing fancy unable to stand the rigours of time. Thus, time and again Don was confronted with the argument that ‘Confucius lived ten thousand years ago, while Jesus lived only eighteen hundred years ago.’ If this was the test used to appraise religions then Christianity could only come a poor second.

At the outset, no doubt the Church did not realise that the Mission would face such strong resolve: indeed, the task appeared relatively easy. There was, for example, no state religion in China equal to the influence that the Western Church had exerted in political and social spheres. Indeed, the populace could adhere to any of three separate religions and often adhered to all three at the same time. Thus, it appeared that such a tolerant and syncretistic approach to religion would facilitate a rapid adoption to the newly-introduced Christian faith. Unfortunately, centuries upon centuries of religious traditions prevented the Chinese from relating to the alien notions embodied in Christianity. Indeed, a major obstacle between the Church and the Chinese was the incomprehensibility of Christianity. For example, the idea of salvation from sin by divine grace was completely foreign, considering that none of their existing philosophies even mentioned a deity who forgave and overcame sin. The concept of salvation was remote. Confucianism concentrated on this life, largely ignoring the supernatural realm. Buddhism encouraged the lost to be good, to suppress...

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9 M.J. Moore, "The Chinese in New Zealand", p.73

10 Annual Inland Tour 1888–89, New Zealand Presbyterian, May 1, 1889, vol.III, no.11, p.204
all desires and hope for a better reincarnation. Taoism believed in the notion of sin and a heaven that kept an account, but the balance sheet was always in the red and no means of clearing the debt was ever offered. Thus the idea of freedom from past sins was not only alien but also largely irrelevant.

Acceptance of Christian principles was further hampered by the Chinese attitude to death and the afterlife. Although superstitious about the effect of supernatural forces, such as demons, in their daily lives, paradoxically, they gave little thought to the nature of life after death. The Chinese were essentially a pragmatic people, chiefly concerned with matters of this world and, as a result, the emphasis Christianity placed on the afterlife was of little relevance to them. As one Chinese miner argued, 'this life is so hard, yet you speak of the next!'

The inability of the two faiths to relate to each other was further exemplified by ancestor worship. This was in effect the prevailing religion for millions of Chinese, requiring the observance of certain rituals in order to pacify evil spirits and dead ancestors. As one contemporary missionary noted 'they are kept all their lifetime in rear, not of death, but of the dead.' Each home had a small shrine, or ancestral hall, which housed a tablet of wood containing the names of the deceased. The family would kneel before the shrines, bow, light tapers and burn incense. Homage was also paid to wooden or stone representations of gods, such as Kwantai (god of war) and Hung Shing (god of the south seas). To the missionary this practice was pure and simple idolatry, contravening a basic Biblical commandment which stated 'you shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God ...' Missionary resolve on this issue was met with even stronger determination on the part of the Chinese, who could not risk the vengeance that the neglect of obedience would surely bring upon them. Similar adherence to tradition was exhibited among the New Zealand Chinese who

11 Outlook, August 12, 1899, vol.VI, no.28, p.28
12 Annual Inland Tour 1896-7, p.48
13 J.S. Dennis, Christian Missions and Social Progress, vol.1-3, p.302
14 Outlook, August 26, 1899, vol.VI, no.30, p.22. Also see N. Ritchie, "Archaeology and History of the Chinese in Southern New Zealand During the Nineteenth Century", p.66
15 Deuteronomy Chapter 5, verse 6
not only had small shrines in their huts, but built larger temples, or joss-houses, in settlements such as Round Hill and Lawrence. Indeed, Don commented that at Round Hill 'the temple of Kwantai (the god of war) has quite diverted the little attention formerly given to the Mission House next door.' The fear of evil spirits was not lessened by geographical separation and thus continued to pervade the lives of Chinese miners. Mission workers were confronted with a mindset that was 'such a hard tangle of ancestor-worship, demonolatry, extreme clannishness, conservatism, love of gain, and delight in the marvellous, that the Gospel falls upon a very uncompromising seed-bed.'

The tradition of ancestor worship also reinforced a range of superstitious fears, including lucky and unlucky omens. One example of such superstition was the Chinese Almanac which carried an essential list of lucky and unlucky days. Headings included Auspicious Days for Piercing Girls' Ears, Auspicious Days for Binding Girls' Feet, Auspicious Days for Shaving Boys' Heads, Auspicious Days for Buying Pigs, and Auspicious Days for Feeding Silkworms. Superstition often hindered the progress of the Mission, as demonstrated by the miners linking Don's presence to unfavourable changes in the weather, especially drought or floods. For example, one Chinese settlement near Wailaia refused to attend Don's meeting on the grounds that his presence had caused heavy rains and flooding. However, during his next visit the weather was hot and dry and so all the miners attended his service. Don's presence also evoked superstitious fears in connection with the effectiveness of their claims. While two fatalities in the Manuherikia Gorge were blamed on his presence, the missionary was welcomed by the miners at Thomson's Gorge as most had done well in their claims since his last visit. Moreover, the death of Chinese who were friends with Don and other Europeans only served to verify 'the evil of free intercourse with the foreigner.' As a result, the missionary's relationship with the miners was seldom consistent and Don had to admit that 'such ups and downs [in his reception] are quite characteristic of our work, and to me are

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16 Annual Inland Tour 1890-91, p.35
17 Ibid, 1905-06, p.10
18 Ibid, 1893-94, p.10
19 Ibid, 1896-7, p.39
21 Ibid, 1892-3, p.5
often inexplicable.\textsuperscript{22}

As James Shun, Chinese miner and later a convert to Christianity, claimed 'our people do not wish to serve demons, but know not how to avoid doing so, for they think if they refuse they will suffer.'\textsuperscript{23} However, after years of living in a Western society, the hold of ancestor worship and superstitious fear gradually dissipated, although the Church did not necessarily benefit from this. Preoccupation with dead relatives was gradually replaced by preoccupation with living relatives and the family bond, which was considerably strengthened in the late 1930s by the immigration of wives and children. Reunited families tended to focus on their own relationships, maintaining the traditional importance placed on the family unit. Thus, the ever-pragmatic Chinese drew emotional strength and sustenance from human relationships rather than resorting to the Church for hope and encouragement.\textsuperscript{24}

Years of increasing acculturation also encouraged Chinese religious toleration to come to the fore. As outright hostility diminished, the missionaries found that the miners began to accept basic Christian teachings. However, these teachings were usually integrated into their existing religious philosophies and therefore did not alter the miners' beliefs or their way of life. As Don explained, 'what Chinese suffer mostly from is not incredulity but hypercredulity - not belief in too little, but belief in too much.'\textsuperscript{25} Many Chinese came to accept the principles of Christianity, the Crucifixion and Resurrection, the accounts of miracles, just as easily as they accepted the many Buddhist and Taoist stories. To a people who were practised in the art of placing equal weight in three different philosophical systems, the addition of another, at a superficial level, was no great trial.

Thus, the persistence of Chinese traditions proved to be a considerable obstacle to the progress of the Mission. Don concluded that 'Chinese ears have the faculty of hearing only what their owner wishes to hear' - any statements that could not be assimilated or harmonised with their own beliefs were immediately excluded.\textsuperscript{26}

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{22} Ibid, 1896-7, p.32
\bibitem{23} P. Butler, Opium and Gold, p.79
\bibitem{24} B.C.B. Thornton, "The Lebanese, Chinese and Dutch Communities in Dunedin City", pp.108-9
\bibitem{25} Annual Inland Tour 1893-4, p.32
\bibitem{26} Ibid, 1909-11, pp.42-3
\end{thebibliography}
(ii) Recrimination

Paradoxically, whatever progress the Mission made only served to create further barriers to conversion. Chinese Christians were viewed by their countrymen in one of two ways - either as shrewd businessmen, who were Christian only in name so as to attract Western business; or as weak, despicable traitors who had fallen under the spell of the foreigners. Once it was determined that the conversion was indeed genuine and traditional rites were being rejected, Chinese Christians became objects of scorn, recrimination and persecution. Such animosity was exemplified by events during the Boxer Rebellion; essentially an anti-Western outbreak but, by the law of guilt by association, hundreds of Chinese Christians were persecuted and killed. Rumours circulating among the miners testified, albeit in a distorted fashion, 'that in China it is the custom for both men and women to be branded on joining the Christian church. Home letters state... that all Christians there have been caught and beheaded, having been identified by the cross stamped on the crown of their head.

Thus the fear of recrimination caused many a heart to harden, and was by no means an idle threat even in New Zealand where Chinese Christians were often persecuted by their companions. Don came across many such examples of molestation, including verbal abuse - terms such as "Jesus dog" and "Shaat" (which translates as "Kill") were common refrains. Persecution was not only verbal in nature but also economic. Peter Ah Bing told the missionary that his clansmen had ostracised him and not only refused to pay him due wages but also repudiated all debts owing to him. Another Chinaman who owned a local Chinese store complained that he had not a 'pennyworth of custom' from his fellow countrymen since joining the Salvation Army Church in Waikaia. Ah Ming was forced by general animosity to sell his substantial claim at Weatherstones and take up another more isolated claim from which he could

27 Ibid, 1900-01, p.39
28 Outlook, October 20, 1900, vol.VII, no.90, p.26
29 Annual Island Tour 1900-01, p.1
31 Ibid, 1890-91, p.6
32 Ibid, 1894-95, p.68
baredly earn a living.\textsuperscript{33}

Thus, Chinese Christians became objects of scorn and anger, stigmatised as non-Chinese. This rejection was based less on religious differences, for the Chinese as a race could be remarkably tolerant of other faiths, than on the perception that their compatriots had been duped by foreigners into betraying their very "Chineseness". To become a Christian was to betray one's heritage.

(iii) Anti-foreign Sentiment

Although religious differences presented a major hindrance to the Mission, a deep-seated xenophobia among Chinese proved to have equally debilitating repercussions. Reverend Don often encountered this anti-foreign attitude, commenting that 'it is mainly their profound contempt for things foreign that prevent our Chinese applying for baptism in hundreds.'\textsuperscript{34}

Hostility towards the West was generated to a large extent by foreign activity within China. Western interference and aggression in China was deeply resented, as were the many terms and agreements forced upon the nation. Conditions such as treaty ports and extraterritoriality enabled Western countries to establish within certain ports their own small settlements, over which the Chinese government had absolutely no jurisdiction. This exploitation of China's vulnerabilities left many an embittered patriot.

This resentment was by no means assuaged by settlement in Western society. New Zealand Chinese remained intensely patriotic. Thus, during the Sino-Japanese War when the foreign media reported, quite accurately, that China was fast losing the battle, New Zealand Chinese refused to accept this news. They argued that 'the idea of the great Chinese Empire yielding to the Dwarfs is ridiculous.'\textsuperscript{35} These 'false reports' were held to be typical of the 'foreign dogs', thus further anti-foreign sentiment was generated.\textsuperscript{36} Once this attitude took root, even the most trivial matters were used to excite additional contempt. Thus, for example, the fact that England and her colonies were ruled by a woman

\textsuperscript{33} Annual Inland Tour 1887-88, New Zealand Presbyterian, February 1, 1888, vol.II, no.8, p.147

\textsuperscript{34} Annual Inland Tour 1900-01, p.39

\textsuperscript{35} Ibid, 1894-5, p.17

\textsuperscript{36} Ibid, 1894-5, pp.47-51
was a source of great derision, despite the fact that China, for all intents and purposes, had been under the control of the Empress Dowager since 1862.37

While anti-foreign sentiment was certainly heightened by Western incursion, the primary source of this attitude was China’s traditional belief in its inherent superiority to all other races. The Chinese had long held an ethnocentric view of the world which encouraged the perception of China as the centre of civilisation. This was not an altogether unreasonable assessment considering that "the world", in China’s limited geographical sense, had not reached a comparable standard of advancement. Thus, China’s sense of superiority was fostered by a long history of dominance in terms of both geographical position and cultural achievements. Completely self-sufficient, they held to the belief that ‘outside of China [there was] nothing to see and nothing to know.’38 As a result, while the Western presence was tolerantly endured, it generated little admiration, envy or even curiosity. The same could be said for Western religion, the comparative youth of which made it necessarily inferior in Chinese eyes.39 It was generally held that if Jesus Christ was indeed the Saviour and Creator of the world, as the West claimed, then he would have been born in China – although some overcame this problem by locating Judea within the realms of ancient China.40 Moreover, the undermining of Chinese superiority by various displays of Western strength, encouraged the view that China should seek to remain wholly untainted by Western influences, especially religious influences. As one Chinese miner argued, ‘even if you skin yourself you will still be a Chinese. China and the West have their separate religions, and each should follow its own.’41

A belief in their own inherent superiority was perhaps the one quality that China and the West shared; unfortunately it only served to make their relationship all the more difficult. The British Empire particularly exemplified this attitude of superiority in their perception of China as an uncivilised land full of vice, torture, poverty, corruption and oppression.42 Every self-

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37 Ibid, 1900-01, p.52
38 Ibid, 1893-4, p.29
39 Ibid, 1890-91, p.16
40 Ibid, 1892-93, p.20
41 Ibid, 1909-11, p.54
42 Dennis, pp.10-13
respecting Victorian presumed that the Chinese were in need of the civilising influence of Western society by means of Christianity. This view was exemplified by Rudyard Kipling in the poem "White Man's Burden"

Take up the White Man's Burden -
Send forth the best ye breed -
Go bind your sons to exile
To serve your captives' need;
To want in heavy harness
On flattered folk and wild -
Your new-caught sullen people,
Half-devil and half-child.

New Zealand's European settlers also perceived themselves to be superior to their Chinese guests, thus contact between the two races was, at least initially, hardly conducive to warm relations. Indeed, this perception of the Chinese as inferior, and its external consequences, had a serious impact on the Mission. Often, Chinese miners excused themselves from attending Don's meetings on the grounds that they feared larrkin attacks when returning at night from the meeting. Moreover, it was relatively common for a group of European youths to interrupt the services and harass those attending. Unfortunately, missionaries were often made the scape-goats for such offenses against the Chinese and thus a warm welcome one year could turn into suspicion and disdain the next. Therefore, Western effrontery, experienced both at home in China and abroad in New Zealand, generated much anti-foreign resentment to the detriment of the Christian Mission.

(iv) Hypocrisy

A further hindrance to the acceptance of Christianity was the failure of European society to provide an example which the Chinese might in any way wish to emulate. What they saw of colonial society did not encourage them to call the superiority of their own civilisation and religions into question. Indeed, "Christian" Europeans often exerted a thoroughly unchristian influence,

43 Annual Inland Tour 1890-91, p.6
44 Annual Inland Tour 1889-90, New Zealand Presbyterian, March 1, 1890, vol.IV, no.9, p.164
45 Annual Inland Tour 1893-94, pp.10-11 & Annual Inland Tour 1900-01, p.31
denying in their very words and actions the values their society was supposedly based on. As Don remarked, the Chinese 'have too many dealings with Europeans for them to become Christians.'\(^\text{46}\) Benjamin Wong Tape, on his return from China and before his conversion to Christianity, intimated that the hypocrisy evident in Western "Christian" society merely served to reinforce the superiority of Chinese religions.

[Westerners] are a great factor for evil in the relations between our people and foreigners. Those of our people who travel see quite clearly that the western nations require Christianity quite as much as our people. I am well acquainted with the lives of our lower classes and I am quite certain they live on a higher moral plane than European people of the same class, and we want to know why you don't cure yourselves before going in for "healing" others. There is more vice and immorality in a large European city than in a Chinese city of an equal population. Our faith has sufficed us for thousands of years. We have held it while you have changed yours several times. Besides, you Westerns have not yet decided among yourselves what it is you really believe.\(^\text{47}\)

Such manifest hypocrisy significantly undermined the Mission's effectiveness: Christianity appeared to many as little more than a superficial philosophy, splintered into a variety of different and opposing groups who merely paid lip-service to its principles. Its only real importance was to provide a set of values by which the Chinese were deemed, by European society, to fall profoundly short.

(v) Assimilation Problems

The vast majority of Chinese immigrants had virtually no understanding of Western culture or language, particularly those who arrived directly from China on the recommendation of relatives. Here were two different races, moulded by two very different cultures, having to find common ground on which to peacefully coexist. As New Zealand's rugged history of race relations reveal, this proved difficult for many years, exacerbated as it was by the general conviction

\(^{46}\) Ibid, 1894-95, p.63

\(^{47}\) Quoted from the Cromwell Argus in the Otago Daily Times, February 24, 1889, p.2, c.4
among contemporary Europeans that 'the Chinese are our opposites in almost every action and thought.'\textsuperscript{48} Even Don commented that 'it is never safe to assume the actions of a Chinaman and a European in similar cases will correspond, but often safe to set such actions diametrically opposed.'\textsuperscript{49} This lack of understanding and common cultural ground was further exacerbated by the fact that, just as few Chinese had any knowledge of the English language, significantly fewer Europeans had any comprehension of the Cantonese dialect. Even the Mission was hampered by communication problems and misunderstandings often occurred. For example, one Chinaman having just heard Don speak was overheard to say 'Whatever Teacher Don was driving at today, I don't know.'\textsuperscript{50} Language difficulties were further aggravated by Chinese illiteracy. The vast majority of migrants came from poor farming stock among whom education standards were very low. Thus, the booklets produced to aid the missionary by explaining the christian message in simple and understandable terms, were of little use to the majority of illiterate migrants.\textsuperscript{51}

As already noted, Chinese assimilation into New Zealand society was considerably hindered by their sojourner outlook. The miners came to the country with one aim in view: to make their fortune and return home as quickly as possible. Thus, adaptation to and adoption of Western culture and religion was simply not on the agenda. Some Chinese were of the view that conversion to Christianity was acceptable as long as the converts intended to remain in Western society.\textsuperscript{52} However, as the majority intended to return to China they were, on the whole, not interested in understanding an alien religion that would only serve to assimilate them into Western society at the expense of their own cultural ties.

As a result of this sojourner outlook, the Chinese population was exceptionally mobile. The mining community as a whole was very restless, continually chasing after rumours of bigger gold strikes, but the Chinese especially typified this trend as they had no permanent ties to the land and were not seeking any. Thus, Don often found that where a mining camp was

\textsuperscript{48} Annual Inland Tour 1892-93, p.8
\textsuperscript{49} Ibid
\textsuperscript{50} Ibid, 1894-5, p.7
\textsuperscript{51} Ibid, 1890-91, pp.17-18
\textsuperscript{52} Ibid, 1896-97, p.16
receptive one year, by the next Inland Tour attitudes had considerably altered due to a charge in the inhabitants.\textsuperscript{53} Often the missionary would be close to making a real impact on a member of his flock only to find on his next visit that the miner had moved to another district, where there was no guarantee that this progress would be capitalised on.\textsuperscript{54} An obstacle of this nature could only be overcome through the passage of time. Once the Chinese moved to urban centres, the population became more fixed, largely due to the influence of newly-established business ventures. Nevertheless it was not until the late 1930s, when Chinese families were once again reunited, that assimilation began in earnest and the sojourner outlook was well and truly laid to rest. Thus, from this point on, Christianity benefited from an increased receptiveness among the Chinese community to the Western society that was now their home.

Paradoxically, a further impediment to the success of the Mission during the nineteenth century was the loss of this sojourner outlook. For many Chinese the "New Gold Hill" proved to be an empty promise. As much of the easily-won gold had been exhausted by the end of the 1880s, a significant number could only scrape together enough gold to provide for daily living expenses. Thus, the dream of returning to China with untold riches eventually turned to tatters. Elderly miners were especially prone to a sense of hopelessness as their quest for gold failed to yield results - indeed many began to give up hope of ever seeing their homeland again.\textsuperscript{55} This feeling of despair caused many to lose interest in everything except keeping themselves alive. Don, for example, was severely reprimanded by one Chinaman for trying to feed the soul when it was the body that was hungry. 'You see I can scarcely get enough to eat - how then can I give my mind to hearing the doctrine.'\textsuperscript{56} Thus the hopelessness and bitterness generated by the long deferred, and perhaps unattainable, hope of seeing both riches and home only served to intensify the anti-Christian attitude of many Chinese.\textsuperscript{57}

This sense of desperation often exhibited itself in addictions; sometimes to alcohol, but usually to gambling and opium. Opium smoking and the traditional gaming lotteries, such as fantan and pakapoo, were not only among the few

\textsuperscript{53} Ibid, 1890-90, p.2
\textsuperscript{54} Outlook, February 23, 1901, vol.VIII, no.4, p.22
\textsuperscript{55} Annual Inland Tour 1894-95, p.3
\textsuperscript{56} Ibid, 1896-97, p.6
\textsuperscript{57} Ibid, 1909-11, p.19
leisure activities open to the Chinese community, but they also helped to reinforce links to their traditional culture in the face of a hostile alien environment. Nevertheless, these activities often became sources of refuge for those who were becoming increasingly desperate to escape from the realities of their dreary mining life. Gambling afforded the opportunity of instant wealth, while opium simply provided an escape from depressing realities. Unfortunately, these addictions served to further impede the acceptance of Christianity. Opium addicts, while sometimes attending the services, were seldom in a fit state to take in the Message.\textsuperscript{58} Don also found that gamblers were not only closed to new ideas, but kept others away by ridiculing and abusing the missionary.\textsuperscript{59} Even after the Chinese Church was built and regular services established, attendance rates dropped when gambling was established regularly on a Sunday night.\textsuperscript{60}

This lack of enthusiasm among gambling and opium addicts was hardly surprising considering that Christianity judged their chief passions to be deplorable. Indeed, it taught that many of the miners' foremost pleasures were wrong and should be rejected. This not only applied to gambling and opium but also to the very motivation behind their immigration to New Zealand - the desire for untold wealth. As one Chinese miner explained, 'no one goes to hear teacher Don preach, for he says it is wrong to lay up earthly riches.'\textsuperscript{61} In a mining district, where the population's sole motivation was to lay up 'earthly riches', this sort of message proved to be unpopular. The Chinese were not prepared to pay the cost required by Christianity in return for promised spiritual rewards, especially when material remuneration was much closer at hand.

\textsuperscript{58} \textit{Ibid}, 1890-91, p.3

\textsuperscript{59} \textit{Ibid}, 1892-93, p.19

\textsuperscript{60} \textit{Outlook}, November 5, 1912, vol.XIX, no.45, p.6

\textsuperscript{61} \textit{Annual Inland Tour} 1896-97, p.16
III REVEREND DON - HELP OR HINDRANCE?

If their was one man upon whom much of the responsibility for the Mission fell, and if there was one man whom the Chinese associated with the missionary effort, it was Reverend Don. While he was by no means solely responsible for the Church's response to the Chinese, he was nevertheless perceived to be at the forefront of the missionary effort in the minds of most of his contemporaries - Asian and European alike.

Although the situation was difficult and the problems were generated by factors largely beyond Don's control, finally the question of the Mission's responsibility for its own failure must be assessed. Certainly the Mission's sphere of outreach was too widespread to be effective. While Don was directly responsible for the Chinese scattered throughout Otago, he also felt a responsibility to reach those beyond. As it was, many Chinese only saw the missionary for a few brief hours every year and, to minds that knew nothing about the Christian message, this time naturally proved to be ineffective. Don himself bemoaned the length of time between visits, citing the number of Chinese who became 'considerably despiritualised during the year.'62 Yet he was at a loss to know how to improve the situation. There were very few local Europeans who had an adequate knowledge of Chinese customs and manners as well as an understanding of the Chinese language. Moreover, various catechists had met with little long term success, especially during the early years. Essentially, the Mission lacked manpower and, as a result, its impact was necessarily restricted.

Of primary importance, however, to the success of any Mission, were the personal attitudes and attributes of its representatives. Mission progress could be significantly hindered by a lack of understanding and as one contemporary critic noted of missionary endeavour in general,

... their [the missionaries] tendency to regard the [native] minds as so many jugs, which had only to be emptied of the stuff which is in them and refilled with the particular form of doctrine they, the missionaries, are engaged in teaching, is certainly one among several causes of the mission failures.63

Thus it was Don's character and capabilities that were crucial to the

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62 Ibid, 1890-91, p.11

63 M. Warren, Social History and Christian Mission, Britain, SCM Press, 1967, p.75
effectiveness of the Mission to the Chinese.

(i) Eye-witness Accounts

Certainly, Don's contemporaries left no doubt as to his worth. For example, a former pupil, Dr John Kirk from University College in London, testified to the missionary's strength of character and singleness of purpose.

I have never known any other man, who, like him, combined in so remarkable a way a strong and forceful character with such gentleness and gracious courtesy. With the courage of a Lion, he could stand fast when others wilted and sought the line of least resistance ... the Chinese trusted him and understood his patient sincerity of purpose as he went in and out amongst them, able and ready to talk to them in their own language about anything or everything, but always, too, about Jesus Christ.64

On his death, the Presbyterian General Assembly had only words of praise for Don's untiring efforts among the Chinese during his lifetime.

He was a man of faith and vision devoted to the Chinese ... and no toil was too great in order that he might reach the scattered Chinese miners ... with the message of the Gospel.65

Dr Rutherford Waddell, who had often been Don's ally and friend, also praised the missionary's endeavours.

Mr Don's devoted obedience ... made him a man of vision. He saw the possibilities of a Chinese Mission where others saw nothing but Chinese men. But he did more. He obeyed the vision. This is where most of us fail ... It is too costly.66

Moreover, eye-witness accounts testify to the fact that the Chinese also held Don in high regard and give the impression of an on-going relationship based on warmth and trust. Once they became familiar with the missionary, ceasing to

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64 Don, pp.27-8
65 Ibid, p.40
66 G.H. McNeur, The Church and the Chinese in New Zealand, p.viii
view him with hostility and suspicion, a real rapport was established. Time and again, Don’s colleagues witnessed the warm relationship that sprang up between the missionary and his flock.

One thing which my predecessors remarked, and which did not fail to impress me, was the way in which the faces of the men would light up when they recognised "Teacher Don". Their confidence in him seems to be unbounded.67

Pragmatic to the end, the Chinese were just as practical in judging character. As the long-serving missionary Reverend Dr George McNeur noted, they judged people on the basis of their actions rather than mere words.68 Thus, Don’s consistent approach of providing practical service wherever possible, gradually won the confidence of these people. Doors were opened, understanding increased and a valuable relationship developed.69 Nevertheless, this friendship did not often spill over into discipleship.

(ii) A Racist Missionary?

It has been argued by Dr James Ng that, contrary to general contemporary perception, Don was racially biased against the Chinese at least until the latter years of the nineteenth century, when he began to develop a deeper understanding of his flock.70

Modern myth has it that Don loved the Chinese and vice versa. This was not so. Don was quite racist towards the New Zealand-Chinese ... [and it is] doubtful whether he regarded more than a few of them as equals.71

Don is presented as an uncompromising, inflexible and obstinate man whose open

67 Outlook, February 13, 1904, vol.XI, no.3, p.15
68 McNeur, p.55
69 Annual Island Tour 1896-97, p.30
70 J. Ng, The Presbyterian Church of New Zealand and the Chinese, p.6
71 Ibid, p.6
hostility towards the Chinese was responsible for the ineffectiveness of the Mission well into the twentieth century. The missionary's first posting to Riverton is seen to provide much evidence of this prejudice. Unquestionably, this phase of the Mission made little impact on the Chinese community, while Don's comments sometimes displayed a certain degree of antagonism.

One quite unacquainted with the Chinese would not believe that ignorance and self-esteem could go so far ... one who knows them well would probably show no surprise.\(^\text{72}\)

This comment provides the essential key to apparently racist sentiments expressed by Don during his first few years of involvement in Mission work.\(^\text{73}\) Initially, the missionary did not understand Chinese religious and cultural traditions; he did not understand the Chinese mind; he was, in effect, 'quite unacquainted with the Chinese'.\(^\text{74}\) While he had spent time in China, toured various missions and begun to master the difficult Cantonese dialect, these accomplishments amounted to little more than clots on a page that still needed to be joined together in order to form a complete picture. Time and again, the Chinese proved to be inexplicable. As he commented after an unsuccessful attempt to garner support from the Chinese community for one of its own who had contracted leprosy, it was 'just another example of the incomprehensibleness of the Chinese character ... So I left ... feeling my head as if swimming. Who can understand the Chinaman?'\(^\text{75}\) However, Don was approaching the situation from a Western cultural mindset, therefore applying Western expectations which proved equally incomprehensible to the Chinese. As a result, the missionary's prevailing attitude during his time in Riverton seemed to be one of annoyance and intense frustration at his lack of progress and inability to understand the Chinese immigrants.

In 1886 Don transferred to Lawrence and, according to Dr Ng, continued to

\(^{72}\) New Zealand Presbyterian, September 1, 1883, vol.V, no.3, p.47

\(^{73}\) For further examples see New Zealand Presbyterian, August 1, 1884, vol.VI, no.2, p.25
September 1, 1884, vol.VI, no.3, pp.43-44
December 1, 1884, vol.VI, no.6, p.105

\(^{74}\) New Zealand Presbyterian, September 1, 1883, vol.V, no.3, p.47

\(^{75}\) Ibid, April 1, 1884, vol.V, no.10, p.83
make damaging statements which contained more cynicism and sarcasm than actual truth, while the Chinese offered friendship and hospitality in return.

Don was an exponent of the damaging, sweeping statement ... He combined sneers with an element of truth, but not the whole truth ... 76

However, it is unlikely that the Chinese community, who distanced themselves from European society because of racial hostility, would welcome with open arms a proponent of those same prejudices, as they in fact did. More importantly, the tone of his diaries reveal that during this period Don became increasingly enlightened in his attitude towards his flock, realising that 'the Chinese require different treatment.' 77 He established himself as their defender in the face of European prejudice – 'if we could only see it, the Chinese are a direct benefit to the colonies' 78 – and began to develop an understanding of why the Chinese were resisting his Message.

The high lamp [Western perspective] hides our defects, what of the Chinese lamp? By it he sees that opium and missionaries are "the twin plagues of China". 79

Thus, Don began to exhibit greater tolerance, displaying less surprise and antipathy to Chinese reproaches. He was learning to deal with the practical problems rarely envisaged during his theological training.

However, by 1888 the lack of tangible progress caused Don to question his suitability for the position. Failing in his attempt to establish the kind of close relationship with the Chinese that evangelism required, the way ahead seemed bleak. Don later recalled the hopelessness of those times.

A critical period, I confess, occurred after the eighth year, when the catechist, Kwok Waishang's failure, combined with a rather unsympathetic study of Chinese character, brought the demon Despair rather near. 80

76 Ng, p.8
77 New Zealand Presbyterian, August 2, 1886, vol.I, no.2, p.21
78 Ibid, p.23
79 Ibid, p.22
80 A. Don, Under Six Flags, p.7
On the basis of this passage, Ng has argued that during 1888, and again in 1893-1895, Don suffered a mental breakdown which deteriorated into manic depression. As difficult as it is to make medical judgements from this point in time, the general tone of his reports suggest that the cause of the problem was less medical than spiritual. Loss of faith in his abilities and aptitude for Mission work seemed to be at the core of Don’s despair. Indeed, in finding an answer to these questions, the crisis passed.

But ... the darkest hour is nearest the dawn. The Annual Inland Tours then began in earnest, on which so much kindness from Chinese and Europeans was met, and so much better ground offered for studying Chinese character uncritically, that the crisis passed. 

Here was the means of establishing a closer relationship with the Chinese miners. If the mountain would not go to Mohammed than Mohammed would go to the mountain.

The Annual Inland Tours proved to be a break-through for Don and his Mission. While not dramatically increasing the number of converts, they did provide an important opportunity for understanding and friendship to develop between Don and his miners. The missionary was by no means the "saint" contemporaries often portrayed him as, but he was becoming increasingly enthusiastic.

He had his weaknesses, and his occasional over-dogmatic and brusque attitude to white folk was in marked contrast to his patient tolerance toward his Chinese brethren.

Thus, Don’s increasing sympathy for the Chinese community was paralleled by an increasing intolerance of European prejudice, especially within the Church.

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81 Ng, p.7
82 A. Don, Under Six Flags, p.7
83 G.H. McNeur, The Chinese in our Midst, p.10
84 For example, Don expressed dismay at the difficulty he encountered in securing the Chinese catechist, Kwok Wai Shang, private board with a Christian family. Annual Inland Tour 1887–88, New Zealand Presbyterian, February 1, 1888, vol.II, no.8, p.147
In 1894, ill-health saw Don take a break from Mission work. Although Ng has suggested that the reason for this was a reoccurrence of manic depression, contemporary medical diagnosis explained it as 'an attack of influenza ... [which] asserted itself most unmistakeably, and did damage to my nervous system, such that it took nearly four months of resting and nursing to repair.' Prior to this bout of ill-health, Don had pushed his enthusiasm for mission to extremes. While involved with the Inland Tours and the establishment of a strong mission base in Dunedin, he also undertook medical studies in order to better fit himself for mission work as a whole. Thus, stress of overwork took its toll on the missionary's health and an enforced period of rest and recuperation was required. Afterwards, there seemed to be no end to his energy, and all his efforts were directed towards encouraging growth not only in the home mission but also in the work of foreign missions. Following a trip to China to advance the work of foreign outreach, Don explained the basis of his new-found enthusiasm.

Eighteen years' work among the Chinese has given me new eyes and ears. The strange world wherein I walked on my former visit dazed and bewildered; this time it lay like an open book, the one I wanted to read twenty-four hours a day.

So, was Don racist? Were his prejudices responsible for the inhibition of a promising Mission? While Dr Ng recognises aspects of the missionary's progress, including winning the confidence of the Chinese, in the final assessment he argues that Don’s efforts were not only a failure but exceedingly harmful.

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85 Ng, p.7
86 Outlook, November 3, 1894, vol.1, no.38, p.452
87 A.K. Davidson & P.J. Lineham, Transplanted Christianity: Documents Illustrating Aspects of New Zealand Church History, p.44
88 A. Don, Under Six Flags, p.99
89 Ng, p.17
90 J. Ng, "Reverend Alexander Don: his "good harvest" being reaped at last", Otago Daily Times, September 24, 1983, p.23
Don was very unfortunate for the collective image of New Zealand Chinese ... I would class him and the Premier R.J. Seddon as the two worst detractors of the Chinese last century.\textsuperscript{91}

Can Don's efforts be accurately compared to the Premier at the forefront of anti-Chinese agitation and legislation? Certainly some of the missionary's comments seen thoroughly racist by today's standards - indeed, he described the Chinese attitude to Christianity as 'a surging sea of hate and antagonism with its dark billows like to overwhelm the lone sailor; or what is even worse, a dead sea of unsympathy, when the calm slimy surface of superstition makes me sick at heart.'\textsuperscript{92} Don was very much a man of his time, and even more so a zealous Christian of the period, utterly convinced of the truth of his own religion. It is in this context that many of his remarks must be considered; from the position of religious conviction rather than racial bigotry.

Religion, not race, was always of primary importance to Don. His first years of Mission involvement taught him that attacking Chinese culture and national pride merely created another needless barrier to conversion. Indeed, Don increasingly came to value China's cultural heritage and the traditions of its glorious past. As the missionary became more supportive of Chinese culture, he also became less supportive of their assimilation into Western society. As a result, he proved to be something of an exception within the Otago Church.

Essentially, the Church was concerned with the perceived threat to society's well-being posed by the Chinese presence. The best means of combatting this danger appeared to be assimilation through evangelical outreach. Thus, one of the Church's primary motives was self-preservation by means of conversion and assimilation.\textsuperscript{93} Initially, Don followed this approach but as his relationship with the Chinese deepened, he became increasingly anti-assimilationist. As a result, some traditional cultural features not in conflict with Christian principles were supported by Don. For example, he advocated the retention of the queue on the basis that 'a Chinese man's queue has no more to do with his religion than his sleeves have.'\textsuperscript{94} The missionary also encouraged the Chinese Church to celebrate certain traditional festivals, such as the Chinese New Year. Indeed,

\textsuperscript{91} J. Ng, The Presbyterian Church of New Zealand and the Chinese, p.9

\textsuperscript{92} Ibid, p.8

\textsuperscript{93} Ibid, p.94

\textsuperscript{94} A. Don, Under Six Flags, p.57
Don displayed an increasingly high regard for his flock - 'I have yet to learn what the Chinese cannot do if they have a mind to.'\textsuperscript{95} He was even covetous of the advantage held by Chinese missionaries who, by virtue of their birth, 'can say things that a foreigner dare not say without giving offence; he can say the same things as a foreigner, but more effectively.'\textsuperscript{96}

Essentially, Don was developing a considerable degree of ethnosensitivity. In other words, with a growing regard for the Chinese came an increasing sympathy and understanding of their cultural traditions. As a result, the missionary began to take steps towards making a distinction between culture and Christianity. This was very much a gradual and often unconscious process, but Don's developing ethnosensitivity and anti-assimilationist approach revealed a growing ability to distinguish between conversion to Christianity and conversion to Western culture. Nevertheless, it must be said that, as a messenger of the Gospel, Don continued to reject aspects of Chinese culture, such as demonology, gambling and opium smoking, which he perceived to be immoral and mere pagan superstition. Indeed, he saw that conversion to Christianity invariably included the adoption of many Western moral standards. However, an increasing degree of ethnosensitivity meant that while the missionary condemned some Chinese practices, he was often able to express compassion for the motives behind such behaviour. For example, although Don opposed the widespread addiction to opium, he recognised that many Chinese 'resort to the drug to soothe the pangs of despair.'\textsuperscript{97}

Thus like the early Jesuit missionaries to China, Don displayed commendable cultural sensitivity, but unlike those same missionaries, this was not a conscious adoption of Chinese manners for the specific purpose of gaining converts. In contrast, the missionary's attitudes changed only gradually and expressions of cultural sensitivity were genuine rather than for the express purpose of evangelism. In a sense, Don had become "sinicized". His initial intolerance and incomprehension was eventually transformed into a more positive and compassionate perception of the Chinese and their traditions. Indeed, perhaps the Mission's most unexpected result was Don's "conversion" by those he sought to convert.

Don's attitudes, especially in comparison to those of New Zealand society,

\textsuperscript{95} Annual Inland Tour 1896–97, p.46

\textsuperscript{96} Outlook, July 5, 1910, vol.17, no.28, p.14

\textsuperscript{97} Annual Inland Tour 1893–94, p.21
were remarkably enlightened. He increasingly developed an understanding of some of the distinctions between Asian and European mindset and the complications this produced.

We call the Chinese illogical merely because he breaks our logical laws; but what if the constitution of the Chinese mind is such that our laws are inapplicable?  

His "sinicized" perception enabled Don to view European society through Chinese eyes to a certain extent, and prompted him to become their most vocal supporter. For example, the missionary supported the introduction of legislation against intermarriage between the two races. Many a European agreed with him, although they 'would have this for the sake of the woman. I might have it for the sake of the men."

I cannot count on my fingers the number of Chinese that have been dragged down by European women during my few years' experience... And they are just the men that show most promise - generally young, intelligent, and friendly.

Don also condemned his own society's racism, particularly organised labour movements which inflamed anti-chinese sentiment for their own ends, usually economic.

But the agitating gentry do not play upon facts: it suits their purpose better to play upon race hatred.

He also attacked parliament for succumbing to anti-chinese agitation and criticized the ensuing restrictive legislation.

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98 Ibid, 1892-93, pp.8-9
99 Ibid, 1894-95, p.20
100 Ibid
101 Ibid, 1907-08, p.1
Popular clamour, then, is in a sense excusable, being the outcome of unavoidable ignorance; but for the truckling thereto of intelligent legislators there is no excuse.\textsuperscript{[102]}

Even the Church did not escape Don's censure, and he often felt ashamed at the 'rarity of Christian charity',\textsuperscript{[103]} and lamented the lack of eagerness 'to show practical interest in the heathen Chinese'.\textsuperscript{[104]}

Thus, in the final analysis, Reverend Don was not a thinly-disguised racist who proved exceedingly harmful to the Chinese cause. Yet neither would it be true to say that Don was the saint that contemporaries often portrayed him to be. The truth lies somewhere between these two extremes, in that the missionary's changing perception of the Chinese enabled him to take steps, often unconsciously, towards making some kind of distinction between culture and Christianity. In so doing, he occupied a unique position. Both Europeans and the Chinese saw conversion as a suppression and ultimately a rejection of traditional Chinese culture in favour of Western social conventions. Don proved to be something of an exception, beginning to perceive conversion more as a spiritual transformation than a social one. Certainly it required the individual, Asian and European alike, to reject many past practices but it did not necessarily entail a betrayal of Chinese culture nor wholesale assimilation into Western society.

(iii) A Positive Contribution

From Don's evangelical perspective, the Mission proved largely unsuccessful. The numerical results of his efforts were low, although considering the innumerable obstacles facing the Mission it is almost a miracle that any Chinese were converted. However, from a wider perspective, the Mission produced positive, and unexpected, results.

Beyond the introduction of significant innovations such as the Annual Inland Tours and the Chinese Church, Don successfully established a warm relationship with the Chinese community. Indeed, the creation of this confidence and

\textsuperscript{102} New Zealand Presbyterian, December 1, 1888, vol.III, no.6, p.107

\textsuperscript{103} Ibid, December 1, 1882, vol.IV, no.6, p.106

\textsuperscript{104} Annual Inland Tour 1887-88, New Zealand Presbyterian, February 1, 1888, vol.II, no.8, p.147
rapport, in the face of mutual hostility between Europeans and Chinese, was an important achievement in itself. As Reverend George McNeur observed, 'Mr Don had a genius for friendship, for he took trouble to make friends, and cultivated carefully the associations formed.' This rapport enabled Don to fulfil an extremely valuable social role by facilitating the relationship between Europeans and the Chinese. Don was very much a public relations expert, and his constant stream of articles about the Mission in Christian magazines, his slide shows, his role as guest speaker and fundraiser helped propel the Church to a higher level of awareness concerning the Chinese. The more they knew of these Asian immigrants, the less they feared them and the more sympathy was generated. The missionary's "sinicized" perception and increasingly vocal support for the Chinese also saw him condemn society's racism and lobby parliament on their behalf. Thus, Don made a valuable contribution towards a gradual transformation in society's attitudes, encouraging New Zealanders to see Chinese in a more positive light and thereby facilitating their acceptance in society.

On another level, the Presbyterian outreach, in contrast to other Missions, exhibited long-term stability and stimulus, largely due to the efforts of Don. While the Baptist Mission, in the short term, was perhaps equally as effective as the Presbyterian effort, their inability to sustain the outreach undermined the overall impact. Essentially, other denominations lacked a central figure who could provide ongoing motivation and impetus. Bursts of enthusiasm quickly proved unsustainable. Nevertheless, this lack of long-term input from other denominations ultimately benefited Christian outreach, in that the Chinese were not further confused by competing Missions.

Paradoxically, one of Don's most important contributions was in the area of foreign outreach, through the creation of the Canton Villages Mission. Initially established as a means of encouraging the progress made among New Zealand Chinese who had since returned home, these expectations were soon exceeded as the Mission began to flourish in an area where hitherto little evangelistic work had been done. There proved to be a strong relationship between home and foreign mission - indeed much of the success of the CVM was directly attributable to Don's work in Otago. The friendships established with New Zealand Chinese and the many letters he wrote to families and friends in China on their behalf, even personally delivering these messages on occasion, opened a door into China and provided a firm foundation upon which the CVM could

105 A. Don, Memories of the Golden Road, p.29
106 Outlook, February 25, 1899, vol.VI, no.4, p.11
flourish.

It began then to dawn upon me [Don] that here was some result for the years of toil in Otago: but I was not assured till an old missionary said: 'The freedom with which you go about among those people is wonderful. If you had done nothing more in New Zealand than make it possible for you to do so, your work is not in vain'.

Reverend McNeur, pioneer missionary to the CVM, verified that Don's work in New Zealand had a tremendous, yet unlooked for effect within China itself.

The weary tramps over Otago's tussocks and snow-clad ranges, the stinging rebuffs, the chilly disappointments, the lonely vigil, the sowing in tears, are bearing fruit today and promise a never-ending harvest.

Despite all the obstacles and failures, the Mission exerted a profound effect. At least its primary aim was accomplished - the Christian gospel had reached Chinese ears. The converts may have been few but they were genuine. Timothy Fae Loie compared the work to that of the miners they were trying to convert: they would sift through hundreds and hundreds of tons of mud, sand and stones and when the work was over all they had to show for it was a handful of yellow dust - but that dust was gold.

107 A. Don, Under Six Flags, p.94
108 Moore, p.83
109 Ibid, pp.92-3
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