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THE POWER OF PRAYER: A Case Study of Hudson Taylor

Jacob Z. Kibor

Lessons from the past are not always remembered. As we look into the unknown of the new century and new millennium we would do well to remember some of the spiritual lessons learned by the giants of the faith in the past. The Rev. J. Hudson Taylor (1853-1905) was one such giant. Used by God to found the China Inland Mission in 1865, Hudson Taylor became a pioneer in the development of "faith missions." The C.I.M. became the largest Christian missionary agency in China and until 1950 was the largest of a number of missionary agencies known as "faith missions." Hudson Taylor and the C.I.M. have become "one of the strongest witnesses to the faithfulness of God in supplying the needs of so great a company of His workers over many years, in answer to simple faith and prayer." This lesson from the past is surely one that is needed by our churches in Africa in this new century as missionary boards spring up all over the continent, seldom lacking in volunteers but frequently lacking in the necessary funds to support them. The life of Hudson Taylor reminds us that "The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective" (James 5:16).

INTRODUCTION

There is need in the Christian ministry these days for men and women who can give themselves unreservedly to God, those who are hungry for the Word of God and desire to be together with him.

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There is need for men and women with intense passion for those who have not heard the gospel and can say with Hudson Taylor as in a letter to his mother: "I cannot tell, I cannot describe how I long to be a missionary, to carry the Glad Tidings to poor, perishing sinners. For this I could give up everything, every idol, however dear. I feel as if I could not live if something is not done for China" (Taylor 1935:28). Thus are the men and women who can depend on God alone for everything.

In the present day when better methods are sought after by churches, it is worth noting that God is primarily looking for men and women who are filled with the Holy Spirit, those who are mighty in prayer. Quoting E. M. Bounds in the context of the China Inland Mission, Dr & Mrs. Howard Taylor express it well,

It is not great talents or great learning or great preachers that God needs, but men great in holiness, great in faith, great in love, great in fidelity, great for God – men always preaching by holy sermons in the pulpit, by holy lives out of it. These can mold a generation for God (Taylor 1935:8).

Examples of such men and women abound. In this paper, Hudson Taylor will be discussed, a man who depended upon the living God alone for protection, supplies, and help of every kind. He boldly said, "I shall have no claim on anyone for anything. My only claim will be on God. How important to learn, before leaving England, to move man, through God, by prayer alone" (Taylor 1935:23).

Hudson Taylor is a man whose story, as Ruth Tucker puts it, is "a story of love, adventure, and unswerving faith in God, though not the story of the flawless saint that his early biographers created" (Tucker 1983:173; cf. Neill 1986:282). This will be seen later.

With the rise of Third World Christians going out to minister out of their own need, there is no greater human example to learn from than Hudson Taylor's. His love for Christ, sacrifice, and perseverance is to be emulated. In spite of all the problems, difficulties, and mistakes made, God honoured the faith of his weak servant. It is my desire that such great men of faith will be multiplied in our churches in Africa today.

**PRAYER FOR
SPIRITUAL AND MATERIAL SUPPLIES**

Hudson Taylor learned to economise in order to help the poor. He wrote to his sister Amelia,

the less I spend on myself, the more I can give to others. I cannot describe how I long to be a missionary and carry the Glad Tidings. Think, Amelia, every year twelve million souls in China die without God, without hope. I must leave as soon as possible. I feel as if I cannot live if something is not done for China (Stocker 1986:36).

He immediately began putting to test the promises of God. Ruth Tucker points out that "he began a rigorous programme of self-denial as an additional preparation for missionary work. It was an effort to live entirely by faith He even refused to remind his employer of his long overdue wages." The rationale as Tucker quotes Pollock being:

... when I get out to China I shall have no claim on anyone for anything; my only claim will be on God. How important, therefore, to learn before leaving England to move man through God, by prayer alone" (Tucker 1983:174).

God and God alone became Hudson Taylor's hope, and he needed no other. From the very start, he wrote, "I must live by faith, hang on by faith, simple faith, and He will do all things well" (Taylor 1965:18).

He deliberately cut himself off from possible sources of supply. It was God, the living God he needed comfort or discomfort in London, means or the lack of means, seemed a small matter compared with deeper knowledge of the One on whom everything depends (Taylor 1932:32).

God led him step by step and eventually the door opened for him to go to China with Chinese Evangelisation Society. While in China he wrote to his sister,

I have been puzzling my brain again about a house, etc., but to no effect. So I have made it a matter of prayer, and have given it entirely to the Lord's hands, and now I feel quite at peace about it. He will provide and be my guide in this land every other perplexing step (Taylor 1935:39).

The Lord guided him to Ningpo, a place where he later found his partner. On one occasion when he learned that his salary was from borrowed money because the Chinese Evangelisation Society was in debt, he wrote,

To me it seemed that the teaching of God's Word was unmistakably clear: 'Owe no man anything.' To borrow money implied to my mind a contradiction of Scripture – a confession that God had withheld some good thing, and a determination to get for ourselves what he had not given. Could that which was wrong for one Christian be right for an association of Christians? Or could any amount of precedents make a wrong course justifiable? If the Word taught me anything, it taught me to have no connection with debt. I could not think that God was poor, that He was short of resources, or unwilling to supply any want of whatever work was really His. It seemed to me that if there were lack of funds to carry the work, then to that degree, in that special development, or at that time, it could not be the work of God (Taylor 1935:58).

Hudson Taylor had embraced George Muller's attitude to debt as a denial of God's faithfulness in keeping his promises. In one of his documents quoted by A. J. Broomhall (1982:56) he decided to owe no man anything or borrow no more of anyone under any circumstances whatever. He had believed that God would supply all his needs. As he founded the China Inland Mission later, one of the requirements of the recruits was their willingness to prove their faith by going to Inland China with only the guarantee they carried in their Bibles. They had to seek God's will, believe that He owns all the gold and silver in the world, and the cattle on a thousand hills. Hudson Taylor challenged them to 'Depend upon it, God's work, done in

God's way, will never lack God's supplies' (Broomhall 1982:85-86; 1984:417).

There was no set salary for these missionaries. They depended entirely on God for their needs. To them donors were a poor substitute for the living God. They never collected money nor took collections. In some of their meetings, Hudson Taylor read out letters from George Muller especially at a particular time when Muller was caring for three hundred orphans and planning to receive a thousand, without any visible means of support. Yet, all he needed, premises, clothing and daily food was coming in answer to prayers. And in addition he was contributing to the support of forty-five missionaries overseas (Broomhall 1982:33). These letters served as practical confirmation of God's provision for Hudson Taylor and his mission. They inspired him to put his own faith into practice from day to day.

Hudson Taylor's attitudes to money and to 'faith in God' changed considerably through different periods of his developing years. His faith and understanding were growing all the time. Broomhall states that in later years Hudson Taylor burned with zeal to awaken the church to China's spiritual need and claims upon Christendom (Broomhall 1984:10). He goes on to say,

He well knew that this publicity by word of mouth and by his pen could not but bring financial returns. And he held strongly that the church at large and local churches in particular ought with conviction to send and support their missionaries to the world. If he had indulged in deliberate oblique solicitation he would soon have reaped the bitter fruits of hypocrisy. When the Christian public forgot China and the Great Commission they also forgot Hudson Taylor and the C. I. M.; and when he inspired them again, or new hearers, both China and Missions benefited through more lives dedicated to serve in them, and more prayer and funds to make it possible (Broomhall 1984:10).

The missionaries shared their income together because they never knew from where funds might be coming or how much. They never allowed any debts to be incurred. Hudson Taylor wrote with regard to debts,

It is really just as easy for God to give beforehand ... and what does going into debt really mean? It means that God has not supplied your need. You trusted Him, but He has not supplied your need. You trusted Him, but He has not given you the money; so you supply yourself, and borrow. That would be to put the blame on God when the fault had lain in your running ahead of His will (Broomhall 1984:69).

They kept the principle of 'no personal solicitation,' 'no collections' and 'no debt' literally. They stated the anticipated costs and nothing else done in raising the sums needed. The team placed their faith for its success in the Lord alone. They saw money as one small element in the Mission's needs.

Hudson Taylor's favourite verses, "It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes Do not put your trust in princes, in mortal men who cannot save" (Ps. 118:9; 146:3). These verses encouraged them to see God alone as their hope whether in England or in China.

Through much prayer, God moved men and women to give to C.I.M. One such donor was John Houghton who wrote the following note to Hudson Taylor.

It is my intention to contribute to the China Inland Mission and shall endeavour to interest my friends in the work In the meantime I have sent £25 to the London and County Bank ... when you come to Liverpool, I shall be glad to see you and give you a prophet's chamber (Broomhall 1984:115).

At another meeting where Hudson Taylor shared concerning the extent of the population of China and its deep spiritual needs the people were moved to take a collection but Hudson Taylor objected. He begged "each one to go home burdened with the deep need of China, and ask God what He would have them to do." To him,

what God wanted was not a money contribution, but personal consecration to His service abroad, or the giving up of a son or daughter -- more precious than silver or gold -- to His service no

amount of money could convert a single soul; that what was needed was that men and women filled with the Holy Ghost should give themselves to the work for the support of such there would never be a lack of funds. As my wish was evidently very strong, the chairman kindly yielded to it, and closed the meeting (Broomhall 1984:153).

The following morning Colonel Puget, the chairman of the meeting, had told Hudson Taylor that he believed the previous evening that Taylor was mistaken. Hudson Taylor, quoted by Broomhall, writes,

after breakfast he asked me to his study and giving me the contributions handed to him the night before, said 'I thought last night, Mr. Taylor, that you were in the wrong about collection; I am now convinced you were quite right. As I thought in the night of that ocean of souls in China ever passing onward into the dark, I could only cry as you suggested, 'Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?' I think I have obtained the guidance I sought, and there it is.' He handed me a cheque for £500, adding that if there had been a collection he would have given a few pounds to it (Broomhall 1984:154).

The outcome of these meetings strengthened Hudson Taylor's conviction that it was always best to carry out exactly any undertakings once they had been given. To him a little thing is a little thing but faithfulness in little things is a great thing.

When finances were very low, for example in 1881, Hudson Taylor extended his habitual hours of prayer and fasted more than usual. Broomhall quoted him saying, "I am in great straits for funds. I am happy about it. The Lord may take away all our troublesome people through it and give us 'true-hearted ones instead' – those who would look, as most did, to God instead of to 'the mission' to supply their needs (Broomhall 1988: 296).

In answer to their prayers, he wrote,

"we had to win from Him by daily prayer and trust the funds to make remittances (to individuals). We did not ask in vain, for four-

fifths of the last month's income for general purposes was received in China (instead of from Europe), including sizable gifts from a consul and the parents of a non-C.I.M child in the Chefoo School (Broomhall 1988:296).

We see here that their trust in the Lord paid in the end. Their support did not depend on their home councils but on the Word of God. God had proved true to his promises and unerring in his faithfulness. Once again, Hudson Taylor's saying in reference to faith stands, "Depend upon it, God's work done in God's way will never lack supplies" (Anderson. 1994:32). Dr. & Mrs. Howard Taylor puts it well, "the secret of faith that is ready for emergencies is the quiet, practical dependence upon God day by day which makes Him real to the believing heart (Taylor 1935:71).

Other than prayer, there was Hudson Taylor's charisma, as well as the compelling power of his message about China's spiritual need and claims of results from those he influenced (Broomhall 1984:166).

PRAYER FOR WORKERS

The young China Inland Mission needed workers. Methodology used in recruiting them was not through elaborate appeals for help, but first earnest prayer to God to thrust forth labourers, and second the deepening of the spiritual life of the church, so that men should be unable to stay at home, when they were needed. Hudson Taylor and his mission trusted God's promise that said, "seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you" (Taylor 1935:78).

Hudson Taylor was quite specific in his requests. In June 25, 1865 at Brington, he prayed for twenty-four willing, skillful labourers (Barr 1973:4; Broomhall 1984:47). A few years later while in China, he requested prayer for a hundred new recruits for China in one year. Dr. & Mrs. Taylor write,

The three-fold prayer they were praying in China was taken up by countless hearts; that God would send the hundred workers, those of His own choice; that He would supply the fifty thousand dollars of extra income needed, no appeal or collections being made; and that the money might come in large sums, to keep down

correspondence, a practical point with a small office staff (Taylor 1935:157).

Since prayer to God presupposes that he hears and answers, the C.I.M. missionaries in China under the direction of Hudson Taylor waited upon the Lord to answer their prayer.

In 1887 the Lord answered their prayer. One hundred and two were chosen, equipped and sent out (Taylor 1935:157). Dr & Mrs. Howard Taylor note, not 'fifty' but 'fifty-five' thousand dollars extra were actually received, without solicitation, so that every need was met. And how many letters had to be written and receipts made out to acknowledge this large sum? Just eleven gifts covered it all, scarcely adding appreciably to the work of the staff, taxed to the utmost in other ways. And best of all, faith was strengthened and hearts were stirred with new and deeper longings wherever the story of "The Hundred" became known (Taylor 1935:157).

Hudson Taylor therefore expected the workers to come in answer to prayer, not persuasion; to the call of God, not recruiting. He did not discriminate between men and women. His experience in China showed him how effective women missionaries could be. Maria his wife had been so fluent and at ease in Chinese homes that she was always in demand (Broomhall 1984:47). As to qualifications of the workers Hudson Taylor wrote,

There is ample scope for the highest talent ... for men filled with love for God, whose superior education would enable them to occupy spheres of influence into which others could not enter, (yet) the proposed field is so extensive, and the need of labourers of every class so great, that 'the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee'...therefore persons of moderate ability and limited attainments were welcomed (Taylor 1935:1984:67).

The qualification that was emphasised most was spiritual. These are men and women who believed that there is God, and that He is both intelligent and faithful, and who therefore trust Him; and whose love for Christ made them love people and exert themselves to bring them to him. Women would find different ways of working among the women of China, but would have no less valuable roles than men

(Taylor 1984:68). While prayer for the workers was answered, God moved men to provide the funds. For example in the year 1883 news reached Hudson Taylor that an anonymous donor had contributed £3,000. The following year, the same family donated £1,000. This was God's seal for the requested workers (Broomhall 1988:311).

In spite of these provisions, the faith of the workers must be in God and their expectation from Him. The mission might fail them, or it might cease to exist, but if they put their trust in Him, He will never fail nor disappoint them.

In his early ministry, Hudson Taylor had written, "if I had a thousand lives, China should have them." This dream was fulfilled towards the close of his ministry. In 1904, more than 1,300 men and women had joined the C.I.M. and a number of others had gone to China with other societies through his urging (Broomhall 1989:502). God truly answered their prayers.

PRAYER IN TIME OF DIFFICULTIES

Loneliness

Prior to leaving for China, Hudson Taylor broke his engagement twice with Miss Vaugh because she had no vision for missions. China and the Lord came first to him. Tucker writes, Taylor's commitment to God proved more powerful than his love for a woman (Tucker 1983:174). When Hudson Taylor arrived in China, he was engulfed by loneliness. This is evidenced in letters written to family members. One such letter stated, "Oh I wish I could tell you how much I love you all. The love I have in my composition is nearly all pent up, and so it lets me feel its force. I never knew how much I loved you before" (Tucker 1983:174).

In another letter to his sister he poured his emotions thus,

I love you with a love so intense, that the very possibility of your love to the Saviour, or communion with God being in the slightest degree weakened causes me to pray and almost to weep ... No words can tell the intense fervency of my love to thee my sister. I love you more than life ... I long for your growth in grace and advancement in holiness more even than for my own ... (Broomhall 1982:290).

In spite of this loneliness, the Lord brought to him Maria who became a true helper and partner in ministry. They lived together in utmost simplicity, and they truly prayed, "Give us this day our daily bread" (Ellis n.d.:73). Years later the couple sent their children to England under the care of Miss Blatchley because of the sanitary dangers of China. On the point of starting, one of them died. At this time Maria's health was not at its best. A few months later Hudson Taylor wrote to his mother that,

(Maria) has been failing for the past 4 months, and each time worse than the preceding ... I fear that if spared till her confinement, we shall have a very trying time. If she gets over that, it will be well if a tendency to phthisis is not established in the meantime. She has been confined to her room or bed for three weeks, so I have had very little help from her. God has sustained me or I should have broken down... (Ellis n.d.:90).

A few days later Dr. Barnes, a London Hospital Obstetrician who came to see Maria, advised on an immediate induction of labour because the risk of delaying was too great for her. Hudson Taylor carried out the procedure himself, and at two A.M. he wrote urgently to Mr Muller, Mr. Horne (of Clevedon), Mr. Berger, Amelia and his mother to pray for them and especially for Maria who was in a very precarious state. Their little boy Noel, who was born, died thirteen days later. He was buried next to his brother Samuel who had died earlier on. Hudson Taylor took the burial service himself. Broomhall notes that after the burial he turned to the grave-digger and said, 'I trust I may not have to trouble you again soon.' Then turning to Charles Fische he said, 'I think she is needed for the Lord's work; that is a comfort to me and leads me to hope for her' (Broomhall 1984:262).

That evening was not encouraging for Maria. Hudson feared that she would die and asked the Rudlands (and others) to pray God to keep his heart quiet and guide his judgement. The following morning showed Hudson Taylor unmistakably that Maria was dying. Quoting from Hudson Taylor's notes, Broomhall writes,

As soon as I felt sufficiently composed, I said to her, 'My darling, are you conscious that you are dying?' She replied with evident surprise, 'Dying! Do you think so? What makes you think so?' I said, 'I can see it darling your strength is giving way.' ... she continued conscious till about 7.30 ... after which she slept till Jesus took her home, to be forever with the Lord (Broomhall 1982:263).

In a note to American Presbyterian friends in Hangzhou Hudson writes, Mrs. Taylor died of consumption of the bowels; baby also of diarrhea. They are truly blessed! And I too. My heart wells up with joy and gratitude for their unutterable bliss, tho' nigh breaking. "Our Jesus hath done all things well" (Broomhall 1982:263).

With the loss of his wife Maria, loss of his children and the rest of the children in England, Hudson Taylor experienced great loneliness. Dr and Mrs Howard cite him saying, "How lonesome were the weary hours when confined to my room! How I missed my dear wife and the voices of the children far away in England!" (Taylor 1935:125). But as a man of prayer Hudson Taylor learned to rest and rejoice in the Lord under all circumstances as he dealt with both inward and outward difficulties that surrounded him. This spiritual renewal, as Tucker notes, came in time to sustain him through this period of severe personal testing (Tucker 1983:183).

Writing to Jennie, Hudson Taylor says,

... my poor heart would have been overwhelmed and broken, had I not been taught more of His fullness and indwelling I am not far from her whom I have loved so long and so well; and she is not far from me. Soon we shall be together Good night (Broomhall 1985:278).

Looking back over 1870, and all the difficulties and dangers, sickness and sorrows encountered, Hudson Taylor wrote, "wave after wave of trial rolled over us; but at the end of the year some of us were constrained to confess, that we had learned more of the loving-kindness of the Lord than in any previous year of our lives" (Broomhall 1985:285).

Hudson Taylor learned the secret of not running away from difficulties but facing them squarely. He learned to find God's will in the midst of such difficulties. He encourages us, 'fear them not; look them in the face; determine to overcome them in the strength of the Lord.' Prayer changes our difficulties into joy.

Criticism

Hudson Taylor, like any other leader, faced criticisms from some of his colleagues like Lewis Nicol whose literature refers to as a thorn in the flesh and other variety of friends and critics. These encounters as Broomhall notes, "throw strong light on Hudson Taylor himself, providing what can now be recognised as indispensable training for his role as leader of such a heterogeneous international society" (Broomhall 1984:8). His control of the mission combined firmness with respect and affection. He wrote to the missionaries, and dealt with their difficulties and differences of opinion.

In spite of a multitude of problems coming to him, Hudson Taylor learned to meet them by 'living one day at a time rather than carry tomorrow's problems today.' Some of the colleagues resigned from the mission. Others lacked spiritual life and power especially in the year 1881. Hudson Taylor wrote, 1881 had been 'a year of trial' unlike any other (Broomhall 1988:299). J. J. Coulthard, quoted by Broomhall, says of Hudson Taylor,

It was his habit to rise before us, very early anytime before dawn, and by candlelight read his Bible He valued dispatch and prompt execution in correspondence, remittances, etc At some of the stations there were a great many difficulties to be met, but he never trusted to anyone's advice, he always prayed about everything. His way of living was simple. He would take such notice of (a little child) and win the mother's heart. Then (he would) read the Bible with (the missionary in difficulties or disaffected), and would give such helpful talks (about the passage), and invariably the difficulties were settled (Broomhall 1988:299).

Problems also came from without. The Yangshow controversy is a prime example. It suffices here to refer to what Ruth Tucker has written. At this difficult moment, "newspaper editors and private citizens railed against Hudson Taylor until he was bitten down." So great was his despair that he lost his will to go on, succumbing to "the awful temptation ... even to end his own life." Tucker goes on to say that, "while outside forces contributed to his dark depression, it was inner strife that afflicted him most: "I hated myself; I hated my sin; and yet I gained no strength against it." The more Hudson Taylor sought to attain spirituality, she writes, the less satisfaction he found. "Every day, almost every hour, the consciousness of failure and sin oppressed me." Where was it to end? But for the concern of a friend, Taylor may have suffered a complete mental collapse. Aware of Taylor's problem the friend, in a letter, shared his own secret to spiritual living. "To let my loving Saviour work in me His will Abiding, not striving or struggling not a striving to have faith, or to increase our faith but a looking at the faithful one. A resting in the loved one entirely..." With that letter Taylor's life was changed. "God has made me a new man" (Tucker 1983:1830).

Such spiritual renewal that came to him through the sharpening of a brother sustained him. The Lord allows difficulties to come to us for a reason. Dr. and Mrs. Howard Taylor wrote regarding Hudson Taylor,

He who was to encourage thousands in a life of childlike trust, must himself learn yet deeper lessons of a Father's loving care. So difficulties were permitted to gather about him, especially at first when impressions are deep and lasting, difficulties attended by many a deliverance which made then lifelong blessing (Taylor 1935:35).

In the area of finances, some people circulated false information that the C.I.M. missionaries were in sheer poverty. The following letter written to Hudson Taylor is a good example.

Dear sir, ... I heard from a friend who has been in China, that missionaries of your society are frequently reduced to such depths of poverty that they are induced to give up the work and take up

with secular pursuits ... and that even their children are sometimes so destitute that the heathen take pity on them ... For this cause I have not continued my support of your mission. Will you kindly let me know if what I have stated is really the case (Broomhall 1988:41).

In reply to this letter, a brief portion of Hudson Taylor's letter is quoted by Broomhall.

Dear Madam, I am much obliged for your letter of inquiry ... and shall be glad if you kindly show your informant this letter, as he has been entirely misled I do not believe that any child or member of the family of anyone connected with our mission has ever lacked food or raiment for a single hour, though in many cases the supply may not have come before it was needed (Broomhall 1985:40).

Mrs. Rich renewed her support after receiving Hudson Taylor's letter.

Though funds sometimes diminished because of the expansion of the work, Hudson and his colleagues relied on God whose supply never diminishes. As they waited upon the Lord at such difficult moments, the Lord provided for them in ways they did not understand.

PRAYER SUPPORTERS

The salvation of Hudson Taylor came as an answer to the prayers of his sister who has written in her note book to the effect that she will give herself daily to prayer until God should answer in the conversion of her only brother. His parents also prayed for him.

In exposing the deep pain of parting with his family, Hudson wrote to his mother to pray for him. He recognized that it is easy to talk of leaving all for Christ, but when it comes to the proof, it is only as one stands 'Complete in Him' (Broomhall 1982:91).

Hudson Taylor learned from his early years the importance of requesting the prayers of other brethren. Examples abound in the

literature concerning his requests for prayer. Writing to his mother when he was undergoing trials, Hudson said,

Pray for us. At times I seem almost overwhelmed with the internal and external trials connected with our work. But He has said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee," and "My strength is made perfect in weakness," so be it (Broomhall 1982:90).

Although his consolation was his deep personal faith in God, Hudson Taylor requested, as we have seen, prayers from other brethren. Special daily prayers were offered by the team and those in the home land at crucial moments. For example at Ningboon January 7, 1882, Hudson Taylor drafted an appeal to the churches in Great Britain and Ireland, writing,

1. To unite with us in fervent, effectual prayer (for) more labourers in connection with every Protestant missionary society on both sides of the Atlantic. 2. ... for forty-two additional men and twenty-eight additional women, called and sent out by God... (Broomhall 1988:302).

As for the missionaries in the field, Hudson Taylor may requested for prayer so that God might keep them from temptation and evil that surrounded them.

CONCLUSION

The life of Hudson Taylor serves as a challenge to all who live in the present day when Christianity is easy going, a time when the importance of counting the cost in Christian missions has been minimised. What does the church need other than the heroic motivation and sacrificial life style of men like Hudson Taylor to inspire them to endure hardships for Christ?

Men and women are needed who can trust God in time of difficulties, trials, and poverty. faithful men who can say we will go whether we get support or not. Men and women are needed who yield in faith to seeking first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and letting matters of food and clothing be secondary.

We need those who are compelled by passion for obedience to the will of God. Hudson understood that faith rests on God's faithfulness. This caused him to trust in God as a child trusts his parent. He trusted Him for material and spiritual needs. He often said, God's work done God's way will never lack God's supplies.

The Psalmist also says, "Delight yourself in the Lord and he shall give you the desires of your heart" (Ps 37:4). This promise is given to men and women who give God time to reveal Himself to them as they persevere in prayer.

In our present day missionary movement, very little time is spent praying for our missionaries. The brochure, *Seven Ways to Pray for Your Missionary*, written by Bill Wilson of OMF, is very helpful as it directs to specific topics ranging from the missionary's relationship to God, physical and emotional needs, family relationships, and country of service. A wise missionary centres his prayer requests around these topics.

To all who are involved in missions, Paul's words to the Philippian church are sufficient. "My God will meet all your needs according to His riches in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:19). We need to take the gospel of Jesus Christ to the unreached masses with this assurance. We need to rely on God fully for both physical and spiritual victory, depending on him for guidance and protection.

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