

Chapter 5

The Anglican Years

1885-1928

After leaving the Presbyterian Theological Hall (Chapter 3), Cheok Hong Cheong worked in the family business in Brunswick Street, Fitzroy. In 1879 he was a co-author of *The Chinese Question* (Chapter 4), the project that started his long career as a Chinese community spokesman. In 1882 he was invited to address the Annual Meeting of the Anglican Church Missionary Society of Victoria (CMSV).¹ His speech showed his Chinese cultural pride and reflected something of the framework of ideas and values included in *The Chinese Question*. He spoke of 'the existence of China as a nation for nearly four thousand years' and attributed this to 'filial piety' and 'bonds of mutual subordination and respect'. He again addressed the CMSV Annual Meeting on 3rd December 1884.² This time *The Church of England Messenger* praised the 'unexpected' quality of his presentation:

The speech of the evening, partly from its intrinsic merits, but chiefly from the fact that, good as it was in itself, it seemed so much better, because so unexpected, in the mouth of a true Chinaman, Mr. Chok [sic] Hong Cheong, a Chinese trader in Fitzroy, but a thorough master of English, and matriculated student at the University of Melbourne.

In praising Cheong's 'gentle, persuasive and amiable character', the paper reported his 'pardonable confidence in the invincibility of the Chinese nation, despite . . . all assaults' and his equal confidence that only Christianity could provide the 'grand motive-power' China needed to be restored to the ranks of the world's great powers.³

The Church Missionary Society of Victoria (CMSV) began in January 1851 as the Melbourne Diocesan Board of Missions (DBM) formed to undertake the evangelisation of

1 *The Missionary, At Home and Abroad*, November-December 1882, p 184.

2 The CMSV had no connection with the CMS of England (CMSE), although most of its supporters in Victoria saw the CMSV as carrying on the traditions of the British society. When the CMSE established itself in Australia in 1892, it was named the Church Missionary Association and it was not until the early 20th century that the name Church Missionary Society of Australia was adopted. By then the term Church Missionary Society of Victoria, Re-formed had no legal status and had fallen into disuse.

3 *The Church of England Messenger*, January 1885.

non-Europeans in Victoria and the South Pacific.⁴ It was the Victorian element of an Australian Board of Missions created at a conference of the five Australian Anglican Bishops and the Bishop of New Zealand, held in Sydney in 1850.⁵ In 1857 the Victorian DBM was reconstituted as the Church Missionary Society of the Diocese of Melbourne.⁶ In September 1859 it was replaced by a 'voluntary' or non-official CMSV formed to start an Anglican Chinese Mission after the 1858 collapse of the Victoria Chinese Mission (VCM).⁷

The CMSV adopted the original 1851 objects of the DBM that were retained unaltered in 1857:

- (i) To establish and maintain missions, and generally to assist in any efforts for the conversion and civilisation of the aboriginal inhabitants of this diocese.
- (ii) To co-operate, as far as possible, with the Provincial Board of Missions at Sydney in the conversion and civilisation of the heathen races in all the islands of the Western Pacific.
- (iii) To receive and forward any subscriptions to particular missionary societies, or special missionary objects, approved by the committee.

The first systematic attempt (see Chapter 1) to evangelise the Chinese in Victoria took place between 1855 and 1858 at the Mount Alexander diggings (Castlemaine). A financial recession forced closure of the interdenominational Victoria Chinese Mission (VCM) at the end of 1857. There were other ecumenical missions at Ballarat and Smythesdale, near Ballarat, but by the end of 1859 both had closed. After the collapse of the VCM denominational missions were established with Methodists taking Castlemaine and the Presbyterians absorbing the Ballarat mission.

The first Anglican Bishop of Melbourne, the Right Reverend Charles Perry, as a private individual, had been, with the Australasian Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, a major financial supporter of the VCM, although his first choice was for an Anglican mission.⁸ Perry's views were stated in a letter to Bishop George Smith (Anglican Bishop of Hong Kong) by the Dean and Vicar General of the Diocese of Melbourne, the Very Rev. H B Macartney, who wrote:

4 *The Church of England Record*, October 1859:110. See also *The Church of England Messenger for the Diocese of Melbourne*, Vol II No 2:53. For convenience referred to throughout as the Church of England Messenger.

5 The Dioceses of Sydney, Melbourne, Tasmania, Adelaide and Newcastle, with New Zealand. *The Church of England Record*, Vol 1, No III, September 1855, pp 1-2.

6 Later the Church Missionary Society of Victoria (CMSV) after the creation of the Diocese of Ballarat in 1872. As a matter of convenience, the abbreviation CMSV is used throughout.

7 *The Church of England Record*, November 1859.

8 Very Rev. H B Macartney to the Lord Bishop of Victoria, 14 July 1855, *Perry Letterbooks*. Anglican Diocesan Archives, Melbourne.

The Bishop of Melbourne hoped before he left Victoria that your Lordship might have been able to send him a Chinese Catechist who might labor among his countrymen here. Two young men have lately arrived connected with the London Missionary Society, and we bid them welcome, but of course we would be much better pleased if we could send out churchmen.⁹

In 1856 the Bishop of Hong Kong sent Lo Sam-yuen, his most trusted Chinese catechist, to Victoria. When Perry 'loaned' Lo to the Victoria Chinese Mission he wrote to the 'Rev' William Young, the Superintending Missionary of the VCM, insisting that Lo Sam-yuen act in accordance with Anglican principles:¹⁰

Bishops court, June 25 1856

Rev. Mr. Young, Missionary to the Chinese
Reverend and Dear Sir

The bearer of this note is Lo Sam-Yuen the Chinese teacher sent to me by the Bishop of Victoria with the purpose of employing him on the Gold-Fields. I propose to place him at the disposal of the Committee of the Chinese Mission, and in the meanwhile I would wish you to have the goodness to take charge of him and employ him either at Castlemaine or Sandhurst (Bendigo) at your discretion. You will arrange with him respecting his stipend for which I will hold myself responsible. I would wish him, in any public service which he may undertake, to use a portion of our liturgy, to which he is accustomed, and of which he has brought a supply in the Chinese language.¹¹ I



9 Very Rev. H B Macartney to the Lord Bishop of Victoria, 14 July 1855, *Perry Letterbooks*.

10 Despite Perry's courteous use of the honorific 'Reverend' Young was not an ordained minister and had no theological education. The use of the honorific by lay ministers was accepted practice in 19th century Victoria. Cheok Hong Cheong also used the term. Young's status as a locally recruited missionary of the London Missionary Society was that of a non-ordained lay evangelist or Bible teacher. His work as an LMS missionary was significantly affected by the continuing ill-health of his wife, Olive Amelia Vardon, the daughter of a British merchant in Batavia, whom he married in 1842. Mrs Young was born in Bow, London, in 1816. Continuously subject to ill-health during their missionary service at Amoy (Xiamen) Mrs Young suffered a serious illness during childbirth in Castlemaine in 1856, and died in 1857 at just forty years old, leaving Young with a young daughter, Catherine Stewart. There is only one reference to Catherine Stewart Young apart from a note of Young's death in Bow, perhaps with his daughter at his side. In December 1864, aged about seven or eight years old, he took her with him on a visit to Creswick. At some stage during his residence in Victoria he apparently sent Catherine to live with his wife's parents in London and although he resided in Jersey (Channel Islands) he was apparently visiting Catherine when he died at Bow. Young was of mixed racial origin (mother was Malay) and this might have added to his problems. A letter from the Secretary of the Victoria Chinese Mission, the Rev. Richard Fletcher, stating that Young was not employable as a minister to Europeans while a later Presbyterian minister said, when the Presbyterians were seeking to replace Young, that the mission needed a European superintendent. Fletcher to Tidman, 26 October 1855, *London Missionary Society, Australian Correspondence*, MSS. *The Christian Review*, December 1866, p 7.

11 The importance of the two points should not be missed. In paying Lo's salary, and insisting on his use of Anglican forms in worship services, Perry was making it clear that he saw Lo as primarily an Anglican

have at my disposal a large quantity of Chinese testaments, prayer-books and tracts. Would you wish me to send any up to you? If so please write to me and tell me how they should be sent and to what address. PS, Lo Sam-Yuen cannot speak English.¹²

With two other Chinese catechists already at work in Castlemaine (Chu A Luk and Leong A Toe), Lo Sam-yuen was moved to Ballarat in 1857 where he made striking progress, holding three services every Sunday averaging about 150 worshippers. Lo raised £160 from the Chinese to build a Chinese Christian chapel at Red Hill. The opening on 24 January 1858 was a gala event.

The scene presented . . . was one of peculiar interest. . . . Outside, in front of the newly erected chapel, was assembled a mixed congregation of Christian and heathen; most of them were seated but a great many were standing. In front were seated the Europeans, both ladies and gentlemen, with here and there a Chinese among them. . . . The background was composed almost entirely of Chinese who kept looking on with interest and eagerly listening. This number must have amounted to 300, that of the Europeans to 150.¹³

The Ballarat Mission Annual Meeting of 1859 was told that during 1858 Lo Sam-yuen made 436 separate contacts with the Chinese, distributed 669 books and spent 1263 hours on mission affairs.¹⁴ The driving force of the Ballarat mission was James Oddie, a prominent Wesleyan Methodist businessman and philanthropist, who was secretary and treasurer.¹⁵ Lo Sam-yuen formed a very close friendship with Oddie and the two men spent most Sunday mornings visiting the Chinese townships around Ballarat. Young reported:

I have frequently received most gratifying testimonials from Mr. Oddie and Mr. Booth regarding his zeal and fidelity though left entirely alone. To the gentlemen whose names I have mentioned the Mission is greatly indebted for the help and encouragement they have afforded Lo Sam-yuen by accompanying him regularly every Sabbath afternoon to the scene of his labours, and assisting to collect the Chinese to come and listen to the preaching of the Gospel. The first mentioned gentleman has often advanced the funds to pay the agent's salary when the treasury of the Mission was entirely exhausted. Had he not done so the interests of the Mission would have been materially injured.¹⁶

worker and not as a free agent able to follow the wishes of others.

12 Perry, Rt. Rev. Charles, Letter Book 5, 25 June 1856. *Perry Letterbooks*, Anglican Diocesan Archives, Melbourne.

13 Young to Tidman, 14 April 1858, London Missionary Society, Australian Correspondence, MSS. *The Argus*, 23 December 1858.

14 Some of Lo Sam-yuen's Ballarat weekly journal reports have survived. See Lo Sam-yuen, *Journal* (Ballarat) Mss. Photocopy held by Ian Welch.

15 *The Star*, Ballarat, 30 January 1860. See Withers, W B, (1870), *The History of Ballarat*, Ballarat, Ballarat Star Office.

16 Young to Tidman, March 1858 with 1857 Annual Report of the Victoria Chinese Mission, London Missionary Society, Australian Correspondence, MSS.

After their Sunday visits Lo and Oddie shared an evening meal at Oddie's home after which they attended the evening service at Oddie's church in Lydiard St. One evening the two men received Holy Communion side by side.¹⁷ In Perry's judgment Lo's participation in a Wesleyan Methodist service was a breach of the principles in his letter of 26 June 1856 to William Young (see preceding page).¹⁸ He immediately transferred Lo to establish a new Anglican mission among the large Chinese population in northeast Victoria. His action caused a major row between the Wesleyan and Anglican Church leaderships.¹⁹

There were Chinese Christians in the Yackandandah/Beechworth district before Lo's arrival, including Leong Pong Seen from Castlemaine who had been baptised by the Methodists in 1858 just after the VCM collapse. The Chinese Interpreter in Wodonga, and part-time evangelist, was Fan A Wye, a Christian and former student with Chu A Luk and Ho A Low at the London Missionary Society's Anglo-Chinese College in Hong Kong.²⁰ Lo shared a house with another Christian, Lui Fun-sing, who was baptised in the Anglican parish church in Beechworth, on 12 July 1860.²¹ Another man baptised at the same service was Cheong Peng-nam who shortly afterwards moved to Ballarat to join the 'Rev' William Young who had been appointed Superintendent of the new Presbyterian Mission (see Chapter 3).

In 1861, Lo Sam-yuen, Fan A Wye and Leong Pong Seen returned to China. Lui Fun-sing was appointed as CMSV catechist but less than a year later, citing poor results, i.e., few baptisms, the CMSV closed the mission.²² Over the next few years the CMSV opened

Table 5.1
Anglican Chinese Mission Statistics 1855-1885

Place	Baptisms	Communicants	Adherents	Chinese Popln 1884
St Arnaud	38	5	30	80
Bendigo	91	34	130	1000
Daylesford	19	6	20	290
Maryborough	34	13	25	500
<u>Blackwood</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>130</u>
TOTAL	202	60	225	2000

17 *The Star*, Ballarat, 30 January 1860.

18 *The Wesleyan Chronicle*, April 1869, p 77.

19 See *the Wesleyan Chronicle* and also some satirical comments in Melbourne *Punch* in which Bishop Perry is pictured as a legalistic split personality.

20 *The Wesleyan Chronicle*, April 1860, p 147; February 1869, pp 45-46.

21 The relationship between the Christian colleges in China and the work of Chinese interpreters in Australia and North America is a story that is yet to be told.

22 *The Church of England Gazette*, 2 June 1862; 16 October 1862; 16 July 1863; 2 November 1863.

missions at St Arnaud, Percydale, and Bendigo and later at Maryborough and Blackwood.²³ The catechists were untrained men recruited locally but despite many inadequacies the CMSV mission succeeded in making converts, as shown in Table 5.1. The importance of these statistics in terms of events in the CMSV in 1897-1898 involving Cheong's performance as Superintending Missionary after his appointment in 1885 should be kept in mind.

The Rev. John Stair of St Arnaud, a former missionary printer with the London



Church Missionary Intelligence, September 1863
National Library of Australia

Missionary Society in Samoa, took up the CMSV cause with enthusiasm and St Arnaud went on to provide the majority of the men who subsequently worked as Anglican catechists.²⁴ The weekly round of the Chinese catechists is shown in the surviving copies of their journals.²⁵

The CMSV was overseen by a committee that met for just one evening meeting each month.²⁶ The Secretary, Rev. R B Dickinson, of South Melbourne, one of the busiest clergymen in the Diocese of Melbourne, did most of the day to day work, a pattern continued by his successor, a

layman, Mr. J W Veal, who served as Secretary for the next thirty-six years. CMSV funds were distributed through the local parish clergy but often no money arrived and the men

23 See list of missions and missionaries of all denominations at Appendix 9. Extracts from missionary journals are at Appendix 11.

24 John Bettridge Stair had been an LMS printer-missionary in the Pacific. Gunson mentions him as one of the men recruited to the South Seas through a powerful missionary sermon delivered in his congregation in England. Gunson, Neil, (1976), *Messengers of Grace: Evangelical Missionaries in the South Seas, 1797-1860*, Melbourne, Melbourne University Press.

25 See extracts at Appendix 11.

26 See Welch, Ian (1995), *The Anglican Chinese Mission in Victoria, Australia, 1860-1898*, *St Mark's Review*, No 161, Autumn 1995, pp 26-30.

had to find other work.²⁷ Cheong referred to the work before 1885 as being essentially part-time.²⁸ He claimed in 1897 that several catechists were alcoholics or opium-addicts.²⁹

The most impressive convert and evangelist to emerge from this period was Matthew Fong (Kwong) Yat-sau, who was converted at Percydale.³⁰ He was said to have brought about a significant reduction in Chinese petty crime in the district.³¹ After service with the CMSV at Maryborough, Fong joined Lo Sam-yuen at St Stephen's Church, Kowloon. Both Lo and Fong were ordained in Hong Kong and Fong succeeded Lo as priest in charge at St Stephens. The Rev. E J Barnett of the Victorian Church Missionary Association (CMAV) went to Hong Kong to study Chinese. He remained and became an Archdeacon in the Diocese of Hong Kong. Barnett said of Fong:

Our senior pastor was converted in Australia. He has preached the Gospel faithfully for more than forty years. Others who first heard the Gospel from him are now preaching it. He himself is still active in the Lord's work, receiving no salary, though he has charge of a congregation. When the record of the life's work of this one man comes to be known, it will be seen that he is worth all the energy which has been put into the Chinese work in Australia.³²

All the missions to the Chinese in Victoria tried for years, unsuccessfully, to recruit ordained European missionaries from China to supervise the evangelism of the Chinese in Victoria.³³ The CMSV negotiated with two very experienced British missionaries in China, including the Rev. (later Bishop) A E Moule and Archdeacon J R Wolfe of Foochow. Both declined as neither spoke Cantonese.³⁴ At the 1882 Annual Meeting of the CMSV, at which Cheong spoke, a motion put to the meeting by the Rev. S L Chase stated:

That this meeting, while recognising the large measure of success which has attended the labours of our Chinese catechists, desires to commend to the prayers of all God's people the necessity for obtaining the services of a European agent qualified to superintend the missions.³⁵

27 Finance was a major issue for all the missions to the Chinese as a result of inadequate income (from voluntary gifts) received by the organisations at any given time.

28 Cheok Hong Cheong to Very Rev. G O Vance, Dean of Melbourne, 8 November 1897.

29 *The Church of England Record*, October 1859, pp 110-111.

30 Fong is the Mandarin form of his surname, Kwong the Cantonese. The fact that his name is always given, in the archival sources, as Fong suggests that he had a good Chinese education.

31 His great-nephew, the Most Rev. Peter Kwong, is Anglican Archbishop of Hong Kong.

32 *The Church of England Messenger*, 29 October 1909. The Rev E 'Joss' Barnett became the Honorary Secretary of the Church Missionary Association of Victoria in 1892 and the paid Secretary after the amalgamation of the CMSV with the CMAV in 1897.

33 The Presbyterians succeeded in recruiting an experienced American Presbyterian Cantonese – speaking minister, the Rev. Daniel Vrooman. His unhappy experience is told in Chapter 3.

34 *The Missionary, At Home and Abroad*, January 1886.

35 *The Missionary, At Home and Abroad*, December 1883.

William Ching Wah was appointed acting superintendent in 1883, pending the outcome of negotiations with folk in China. Ching Wah had been a successful market gardener at Kangaroo Flat (Bendigo). After his conversion he became a part-time voluntary evangelist until appointed catechist at Daylesford.³⁶ The CMSV Board asked a former catechist and his wife to return, at a salary of £100, to work with the mission for three years but the catechist's wife flatly refused to leave China and the man refused to come without her.³⁷

In his 1884 charge to the Anglican Church Assembly, the Bishop of Melbourne had identified language and leadership as the most important challenges facing the CMSV:

Why is it, then, that this great opportunity is being allowed to slip by unimproved, or at least, very inadequately improved? Mainly, I believe, because we cannot afford to employ a European superintendent of our Chinese missions, who can speak fluently to both Chinese and Europeans. At present no one can thoroughly understand the reports of the Chinese missionaries, and, worse still, no one can test the real character of their labours by direct communication with those who profess to be converts.³⁸

The distrust of the Chinese that is implicit in the Board's preference for a European superintendent was to have a lingering influence on Cheong's relationship with the CMSV Board in the years after his appointment in 1885.

A month or so later the Rev. H B Macartney (jr.), Vicar of St Mary's Church, Caulfield and a leading Anglican missionary enthusiast, put a series of questions before the Christian community through his journal, *The Missionary, At Home and Abroad*.³⁹ He said that the Chinese should be accepted as part of the community and treated with proper respect:⁴⁰

Why do we trouble ourselves about the Chinese? They are looked upon by many as a nuisance, a plague spot of which the Colony would be well rid. We will state why we do so trouble ourselves, and why we wish to interest others in our work.

1. We are not likely to get rid of the Chinese, but may reckon upon their continuing to form an ingredient in our population, there is the more reason for endeavouring to better their condition spiritually and morally.
2. The results of Missionary effort among this people, have here, as in China itself, been such as to prove that they are susceptible to Divine Truth, and can become earnest followers of Christ.
3. Besides the Chinese catechists now employed at Sandhurst, Maryborough, St. Arnaud, Daylesford and Blackwood, no less than six of our men have returned to

36 See Appendix 9.

37 *The Daily Telegraph*, 17 January 1885. A likely candidate was the Rev. Fong Yat-sau.

38 *The Church of England Messenger*, October 1884.

39 Son of the first Dean of Melbourne, the Very Rev. H B Macartney.

40 *The Missionary, At Home and Abroad*, December 1884.

their own country, and are then engaged in Evangelising work.⁴¹ Five out of the six came to this country heathen, and then having received the Gospel, are now sowing the good seed among the millions of China.

We venture to ask why does this Mission not find more favour with the Clergy and Laity of our Church? Can any good reason be given why so little is done for it? The Mission Board now has under consideration the employment of an English Missionary from China to superintend our Catechists.

The search for a Cantonese-speaking European superintendent dominated the 1884 Annual Meeting, at which Cheong was again a guest speaker. Cheong later identified himself with the CMSV from the early 1880s. He told Isabel Willis in 1914:

Having been permitted by the grace of God to share in the work of the C.M.S. of Victoria for the last 35 years of its history, your humble servant is very thankful to join with you in erecting his Ebenezer and say - "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us," though my share in the work for the first few years was simply in being used as a medium of communication between the Society and its missionary agents, as examiner of its candidates for office, and as a speaker at its annual and other meetings, in the interests of the Mission, until early in 1885, after finding that Archdeacon Wolfe, of Foochow, whom the Board of Management had agreed to appoint as Superintendent, had not acquired, and consequently could not speak, the Cantonese dialect the dialect of the Chinese in Victoria and Australasia generally overtures were made to me through the late Dean Macartney, who did me the honour of calling upon me three successive times concerning the Society's need, and asking if I would accept appointment if offered the position of Superintendent I need scarcely say I was very much impressed by the appeals of my late venerated friend, and the generous confidence the appeal bespoke; and after giving the subject careful and prayerful consideration, accepted the responsibility of the Society's trust in June, 1885.⁴²

It was not surprising, after Cheong had twice spoken at CMSV Annual Meetings, that the *Church of England Messenger* mentioned Cheong's name as a possible superintendent:

Mr. Cheong may be enabled in due time to be one of the evangelisers of his fellow-countrymen. Gentle, persuasive and amiable as we are sure he is, if he is equally zealous, as we believe him to be, and can finish his university course (as he would have done before this, but for straitened means and family cares), there would seem to be in this land no fitter messenger of the Gospel of truth and peace.⁴³

The CMSV Board appointed Cheong for twelve months from 1 July 1885 at a salary of £250 a year plus travelling expenses, i.e., a rate in the mid-range of European clerical payments. It was a salary that was unprecedented for an ethnic Chinese Christian missionary in

41 Lo Sam-yuen, Fan A Wye, Lui Fun Sing, Matthew Fong Yat-sau may be four of the six considered. Stephen Cheong may have been a fifth.

42 Cheok Hong Cheong to Miss Isabel Willis, 11 May 1912.

43 *The Church of England Messenger*, 9 January 1885, pp 2-3. The reference to Cheong's university course should be noted. He was not a university student at any time.

Australia with £100 being the usual allowance and most work done on foot with no travelling expenses. Dean Macartney said that:

Mr. Cheong's duties consist in making periodical visits to the mission districts for the purpose of examining into the work of the catechists, and encouraging them in their labours in opening up fresh fields of labour; in itinerating in Melbourne and suburbs among his fellow-countrymen, with a view of establishing a mission amongst them; in addressing meetings and Sunday Schools; and generally in aiding organisations on behalf of the mission where he can find an opportunity.⁴⁴

Having made a temporary appointment, the CMSV continued to seek an ordained European missionary.⁴⁵ Cheong later described the appointment as a 'loan', an exaggeration of his status in the Presbyterian Church where, although a lay or 'ruling' elder, he held no paid office in the Presbyterian Church of Victoria:

Before my formal appointment as Supt. took place Dean Macartney had made personal enquiries of the Rev. John Clark the then Moderator of the Presbyterian General Assembly & the Rev. Andrew Hardie the then Convener of their Foreign Missions Committee as to whether they as representing the Presbyterian Church had any objection to their appointing me as Supt. of the Chinese Mission under the C.M.S. of Victoria & they had replied that they not only had no objection but were pleased with the catholicity of spirit which animated the proposed appointment which I may say was then looked upon in the light of a loan from one sister church to another⁴⁶

Despite Cheong's description of his appointment as a 'loan', it is unlikely the Presbyterians took any such view. As a layman Cheong could take whatever employment he chose without the approval of the Presbyterian authorities. The Anglican request was no more than a formal courtesy.

The initial attraction of Cheong, to Chinese merchants (see Chapter 4) and European church leaders alike, was his English language aptitude. Because Cheong appeared 'assimilated' in language, dress, education and residence the Anglican Board believed that he was more like 'one of us' than 'one of them'. What they did not appreciate was Cheong's strong Chinese cultural identity despite two decades of integration into the Victorian Christian community. The Rev. Julius Lewis, a leading member of the CMSV Board, commented:

I am confident Mr. Cheong's work will prove of the utmost value to the Mission, not merely in the way of organisation, for which he seems to have the faculty, but also in

44 The Church of England Messenger, October 1885.

45 The Daily Telegraph, 22 September 1885. See also 16 December 1885.

46 Cheok Hong Cheong to Miss Isabel M Willis, 11 May 1912.

his influence on Europeans. Intercourse with a Chinese of education, such as Mr. Cheong, cannot fail to break down prejudices, and to correct false ideas in respect to the national character. This I believe has been the effect at Maryborough, for our church-people are disposed to show more interest in the evangelization of the Chinese, and I may add that our boys are inclined to treat the Chinamen with more respect since Mr. Cheong's visit to the school.⁴⁷

In July 1885 Cheong travelled over 700 miles across Victoria, gave twenty-four public addresses and visited Chinese in their homes and workplaces. European churchgoers were impressed by an educated Chinese speaking perfect English and when he wore his elegant Chinese gentleman's costume audiences were entranced.⁴⁸ There is no record of what the Chinese thought. After paying all the costs of the tour, there was an encouraging surplus of £65.⁴⁹ The CMSV Board had reason to believe that it had found the right man.⁵⁰ In hindsight, the Board might have noted that Cheong undertook no evangelistic work and his report, that took up an entire meeting, made no mention of conversions.

At about the same time that he joined the Anglican Mission Cheong became the leader of the Victorian anti-opium movement, a cause to which the Board initially took no exception until some members began to think that Cheong's Chinese community involvements were distracting him from evangelistic work.⁵¹ The focus of the CMSV Board was always upon conversions and not the social and economic circumstances of the Chinese.

In early 1886, Cheong was instructed to spend two full afternoons a week visiting the Chinese in and around Melbourne. He accepted the direction but sent the following homily to the secretary, Mr. J Veal. It is revealing in displaying his wish to provide training for others to undertake the work of evangelism. It also contained, upon close examination and after just six months as superintending missionary, a criticism of the CMSV Board that the members would not have missed:

I am quite agreeable to the proposal to devote two afternoons a week to visitation in Melbourne and suburbs. Still I think the Board could make even a better use of my time and supply an undoubted want by forming a training class from amongst the

47 *The Missionary, At Home and Abroad*, November 1885, p 23.

48 See discussion in Chapter 3 about the Presbyterian requirement for Cheong to undertake English elocution lessons.

49 Cheok Hong Cheong to Archdeacon Samuel Williams, 29 January 1894.

50 *The Daily Telegraph*, 22 September 1885.

51 One of the most influential of the 'independent' Chinese leaders in China was Watchman Nee. Another influential Chinese Christian leader was the late Bishop K K Ting. Both were prolific writers. The most famous, if controversial, example of 'Chinese' Christianity was the ideology behind the Taiping Movement of the 19th century. Taiping theology was unorthodox, to say the least.

best of the converts. Now it seems to me that any Christian man who reflects a little will perceive that even if a Paul and an Apollos, men who were such accomplished Scholars in the O. T. Scriptures, required Christian training before being appointed to their Christian work, how much more then would a Chinese convert who had been brought up in idolatry and superstition and been accustomed to them all his lifetime, be he ever so intelligent and earnest, require to have the great fundamentals of evangelical religion instilled into his mind before he should be appointed to set forth its momentous truths. I know of course the additional expense that that would involve is a difficulty in the way of the Board but if they feel as I do the importance of such an undertaking not only for effective work here but also for the extension of that work to the millions of China the difficulty which they may now see would prove no difficulty for I know what a Board so numerous and influentially representative of the greatest section of the Christian church is able to do if they only feel called upon in duty to do it. I might say that I feel a special urgency about the matter for it will be only for a few years now at the most that I shall stay in this colony and there is no telling when you may be able to secure a qualified clergyman.⁵²

As instructed, he started visiting Chinese market garden areas at Little Brighton (East Brighton-Ormond), Essendon, Collingwood, Tooronga, and Richmond but without any baptisms being reported.⁵³ Cheong claimed in 1897 that the suburban program was his idea:

In the way of organising for the Mission I began with L. [Little (*East*)] Brighton where I held several missionary meetings in St Mark's & several conferences in the Parson-age with the result that the support of a Missionary student was guaranteed, but no representative of the Board was ever sent to any of its preliminary meetings . . .⁵⁴

At the 1886 Annual Meeting he stated that:⁵⁵

It was a sad confession to make that after more than a quarter of a century's labour of the Church Missionary Society the Board was frequently obliged to overdraw their account, that the vacancies occurring in their staffs could not be properly filled, and that even in Melbourne no one besides himself had been appointed to do the work, and Melbourne had fully 4500 Chinese inhabitants living in widely dispersed suburbs covering more than one hundred square miles.

In July 1887 he 'reminded' the Board that there were four full-time catechists in the country parishes with fewer clients collectively than he was expected to care for, by himself, in Melbourne. He did not mention that they often walked twenty or more miles a day while he was able to take advantage of the excellent public transport of Melbourne at

52 Cheok Hong Cheong to J W Veal, 17 February 1886.

53 *CMSV Minutes*, 21 January 1886. Cheok Hong Cheong to the Very Rev. G O Vance, 8 November 1897.

54 Cheok Hong Cheong to Very Rev. G O Vance, 8 November 1897.

55 Cheok Hong Cheong to J W Veal, Hon Sec, CMSV, 17 February 1886, *Church of England Messenger*, April 1888. Cheok Hong Cheong to the Very Rev. G O Vance, 8 November 1897. *Church of England Messenger*, June 1887.

the time. He had briefly visited the rural missions at Blackwood, Daylesford, Maryborough and St Arnaud.

Following his visits the Board approved his recommendation that Daylesford and Blackwood should become a single district with one catechist. Cheong suggested that Paul Ah Fat of St Arnaud, 'might be sent for to work among the market gardeners in Melbourne'. Bringing Ah Fat, the most effective of the Chinese catechists, to Melbourne was a logical step but others saw it as a gambit that would free Cheong for his Chinese community interests.⁵⁶ Ah Fat's death, attributed to exhaustion from the hundreds of miles he walked every month, ended the proposal. His public criticisms of the Board, the Ah Fat proposal, the lack of conversions and other issues discussed below gave rise a sense of unease within the CMSV Board.

After another tour in 1888 Cheong recommended changes in the staffing of the country missions. Daylesford was vacant following the death of William Ching Wah and Mark Ah Bon was moved from Blackwood to fill the vacancy. Ah Bon was still working at Daylesford in the late 1890s. Henry Ang Gook was appointed to Blackwood.⁵⁷ Philip Lea Tong moved to Maryborough to replace the opium addicted Moses Ah Gon, who was dismissed.⁵⁸ Another vacancy was created at Blackwood when Ang Gook decided to return to China.

1887 and 1888 were more than usually difficult years for relationships between the Chinese and Europeans in Australia. In 1887, hopes for an improvement in their acceptance in Australia were raised, and dashed, by the arrival of Chinese Imperial Commissioners charged to inspect the circumstances of Chinese life in Australia (See Chapter 7 and Appendices 2-5).

In 1887-1888 the New South Wales Government decided to further restrict Chinese immigration in the wake of the *Afghan/Burrumbeet* dispute (see Chapter 8). The populist reaction to the two ships, first in Victoria and then in New South Wales, led to an Intercolonial Conference on the Chinese Question that ended whatever small hopes the

56 Cheok Hong Cheong to J W Veal, 19 July 1887.

57 Extracts from catechists journals will be included in Ian Welch's contribution to the Chinese History at Australian Federation (CHAF) site at Latrobe University, together with other journals including those of William Young, Cheong Peng-nam, Lo Sam-yuen, Leong a Toe and Leong On Tong.

58 *The Church of England Messenger*, 10 April 1888. See Cheok Hong Cheong to the Dean of Melbourne, 26 October 1897.

Chinese may have had of an easing of restrictions on immigration and free movement for businessmen between the colonies (see Chapter 10). Cheong played a leading role in all these episodes as the spokesman for the Victorian Chinese Residents Association (see Chapter 8). The extent of his public role furthered concerns within the CMSV Board that he was giving too much attention to issues outside his primary task of seeking Chinese conversions.

To add to the Mission's problems 1887-1888 saw the beginning of another financial slump in the Victorian economy and contributions to the Mission fell dramatically.⁵⁹ Cheong stunned the Board when he suggested that savings could be made if the St Arnaud mission was transferred to the Wesleyans. What Cheong needed to do was to provide the Board with a more productive way of evangelizing the Chinese. His only plan was to improve the training and fieldwork skills of the catechists by opening a training centre in Little Bourke Street. He had been advocating the concept since his appointment in 1885 – but the Board believed it could not be resourced from the inadequate income of the mission.⁶⁰ In June 1889 he made a forty-three day tour of Victoria and conducted forty-six meetings. He raised more than one eyebrow when he said he visited his countrymen only 'as time and circumstances permitted and very briefly and yet as fully as I could delivered to them the message of the Gospel.'⁶¹ In the same report he chose to describe his employers as children playing at a game of missions, adding to anti-Cheong feelings in the Board.⁶² While some members now wanted to get rid of him, a report from the respected Rev. Canon Stuart Lloyd Chase of St John's Church, Latrobe Street, praising Cheong's evangelistic efforts averted his dismissal. Cheong outlined his proposal for a mission hall to the 1889 Annual Meeting: ⁶³

A great drawback to the proper development of the Mission is the want of a central hall in which to hold our services. I have long felt that want, and I am glad to think that the board now feel as strongly as I do regarding it. I know that the Centennial Services we held in the Chinese Assembly Hall⁶⁴ make it plain to them and to the

59 Detailed analyses of the colonial economies of nineteenth century Australia do not appear to exist.
60 See Cheong's comments on the attitudes of J W Veal in Cheok Hong Cheong to Very Rev. G O Vance, 8 November 1897.
61 *The Daily Telegraph*, 20 July 1889.
62 Cheong Cheok Hong, Report, (1889), ,CMSV Annual Meeting, 1889. *Church of England Messenger*, December 1889, p 214.
63 CMSV Minutes, 21 April 1887. *The Australasian Missionary News*, 3 January 1890.
64 See discussion of Chinese associations in Chapter 2. The 'Assembly Hall' was owned by the Kong Chew Association, the district association of men from the Xinhui District of Guangdong Province. Its use for a Christian religious purpose shows the change in attitudes on the part of the Christians but

other friends of the Mission that to secure large attendances at our services we must have a hall right in the midst of the people. I trust, therefore, that this matter will engage the earnest consideration of the Society . . .⁶⁵

Cheong pressed on with money-raising and in a letter to Mark Ah Bon's European wife listed Chinese contributions for the project.⁶⁶ No Board members were mentioned as contributors.⁶⁷

Table 5.2
Chinese Contributions to the Building Fund

Non Christians		Christians	
W Shi Geen (Merchant)	£10 -0- 0	James Lamsey (Doctor)	£33 -0- 0
Toy Kei	10 -0- 0	Cheok Hong Cheong	25 -0- 0
L Tye Shing (Furn Manfr)	5 -5- 0	Mrs Cheong	25 -0- 0
Chin Chack	5 -5- 0	Cornelius Poon Why	6 -0- 0
W Shi Ho	5 -5- 0	Lew Ngem	5 -0- 0
Quong Kee	5 -5- 0	Daniel Wong Keat	5 -0- 0
Cheong Shing Chow	5 -5- 0	James Lee Wah (Catechist)	5 -0- 0
Hoy Ling (Harry?)	3 -3- 0	Philip Lew Tong (Catechist)	5 -0- 0
Hang Hie	3 -3- 0	Mark Ah Bon (Catechist)	5 -0- 0
Quong Mow Shang	3 -3- 0	Tsam Foon	5 -0- 0
Leong Lee	3 -3- 0		etc etc
Lee New	3 -3- 0		
Sun Wing Lee	3 -3- 0	Cheong noted: Total Chinese contributions up to the present about £240— Total contributions from European Christians in mycollecting book— nearly £200.	
Leong Mow	3 -3- 0		
Kwan Shoung	2 -2- 0		
Kwang Chong On	2 -2- 0		
Quan Hang Shing	2 -2- 0		
Choon Woh Hong	2 -2- 0		
Ah Chow	2 -2- 0		

Despite Cheong's enthusiasm the Board was reluctant to pursue a major new and costly initiative.⁶⁸ In early 1890, and with considerable reservations on the part of most members, the Board finally yielded to Cheong's repeated urging and authorised 'a great effort' to raise the £5000 needed:

The question of erecting a Chinese Mission Church in Little Bourke-street was again considered; and a circular drawn up by a sub-committee, and signed by the Bishop of Melbourne and the hon. Secretary; to be made use of as an appeal for funds, was submitted and adopted.⁶⁹

A vacant block at 110 Little Bourke Street was sold to the Mission at a price below market value by Thomas Bent, a leading Victorian politician and an extraordinarily odd mix of entrepreneur and idealist.⁷⁰ Cheong's persistence had won the day but it won him few friends within the Board.⁷¹

more especially on the part of the district associations, now in decline.

65 *The Missionary, At Home and Abroad*, January 1889.

66 Cheok Hong Cheong to Mrs Bon, 13 November 1890 (From Museum of Chinese Australian History, 22 Cohen Place, Melbourne).

67 *The Missionary, At Home and Abroad*, January 1890.

68 *The Church of England Messenger*, April 1888.

69 *The Missionary, At Home and Abroad*, January 1890.

70 Archdeacon Samuel Williams to Cheok Hong Cheong 9 April 1891. See Glass, Margaret E, (1993), *Tommy Bent: bent by name, bent by nature*, Carlton, Vic, Melbourne University Press. A brief summary

A personal invitation to Cheong from the Anglican bishops of New Zealand to advise them on establishing Chinese missions boosted Cheong's self-image but the outcomes of the visit added to the Board's disquiet⁷² During the visit Cheong met Archdeacon Samuel Williams, a wealthy member of a distinguished missionary family who were pillars of the Church Missionary Society's extraordinarily successful missionary outreach to the Maori people of New Zealand.⁷³ Cheong presented Williams with a grand plan for a Chinese training centre in Melbourne that could serve the entire South Pacific, a concept that the Board had never heard about. Williams offered £500 to finalise the purchase of the land and another £500 towards the cost of a mission hall and training center on condition that his offer was matched by Victorians.⁷⁴

In his non-mission work Cheong was meeting people of wider public influence than the members of the Board of the CMAV. He was a leader of a Victorian anti-opium alliance with prominent European supporters including William Anderson, MLA; W J S Gordon, MLA; W H Calder (later first chairman of the Victorian Country Roads Board); and Chinese leaders including William Shi Gean of the See Yup Society, and others (See Chapter 6). *Chambers Weekly*, a British journal widely read in Victoria, gave Cheong the same community leadership status as Lowe Kong Meng:

The cultured Chinaman is a *rara avis* on the great southern continent. Those of them to whom that complimentary phrase could be truthfully applied might be counted on the fingers. In the whole of Victoria there are only two Chinese residents whose figures stand out . . . One is Kong Meng, a wealthy Melbourne merchant, and a master of several languages, the other is Cheok Hong Cheong, the only Chinese graduate of the University of Melbourne, an excellent English speaker and a representative elder of a suburban Presbyterian Church.⁷⁵

of his life appears at <http://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/speaker/former/bent.htm>

71 *CMSV Minutes*, 19 May 1887.

72 The Presbyterian Church was the leader in Chinese evangelisation in New Zealand. Don, Alex, (1906), *Nineteenth Inland Otago Tour, 1905-1906*, Dunedin. McNeur, G H, (1951), *The Church and Chinese in New Zealand*, Christchurch and Dunedin, Presbyterian Bookroom. Butler, Peter, (1977), *Opium and Gold*, Waiura, Martinborough, New Zealand.

73 See *New Zealand Dictionary of Biography* at <http://www.dnzb.govt.nz/dnzb/> See critical observations about the sources of the wealth of the Williams family in Marshall, T W M, (n.d), *Christian Missions: Their Agents and Their Results*, London, Longman Green *et al.*

74 Cheok Hong Cheong to Mrs (Ah) Bon, 13 November 1890.

75 *Chambers Journal*, 21 July 1888, p 451. The reference to Cheong being 'the only Chinese graduate of the University of Melbourne' seems to reflect the image that Cheong liked to present. It was, as noted elsewhere, incorrect. Cheong's only formal connection with the university was that he had signed the Matriculation Roll, the prerequisite to enrolment.

Cheong's growing prominence brought up the question of his ordination as an Anglican clergyman.⁷⁶ The Rev. H B Macartney (Jr.) suggested that he should receive a full diocesan ministerial stipend to support the mission. The idea was opposed by the Very Rev. G O Vance, a leading member of the CMSV Board, who had succeeded Macartney's father as Dean of Melbourne. Vance's view, widely shared among evangelicals of the time, was that missionary work only flourished when it was maintained by voluntary means.⁷⁷

The idea of ordaining Cheong was not new. It had been mentioned from the time of his appointment to the Mission Superintendency in 1885 but always ran into the obstacle, as it did later for James Cheong, of what to do with a Chinese clergyman in Victoria if, for any reason the Anglican Chinese Mission should fail. Cheong reviewed the issue in 1912:

As to the question of my ordination I have subsequently been informed has been a troublous one with the late Board which under the guidance of the late Canon Chase (senior examining chaplain of three successive Bishops) approached Bishop Goe upon the subject (without my knowledge) & for 3 successive times that he (Bp Goe) finally decided he would not take the responsibility of providing me with a "living" should the Chinese population so decrease by legislation or otherwise that I would have no Chinese congregation to minister to though as a matter of fact I made a pecuniary sacrifice in accepting my position under the Board.⁷⁸

In a 1915 letter he linked the question of his own ordination with discussions he held with the Anglican Diocese in 1904 when his son, James (the Rev. James Cheong, MA), was returning to Melbourne from theological studies in England. James had been designated by his father and the bishop as the Missioner in the Anglican Chinese Mission, to provide clergy services under his father's direction. James' stipend was to be paid by the diocese in recognition of his clerical status and, it must be added, because the mission could not have employed him otherwise. If the mission were to close it might prove impossible to find a stipendiary appointment for James although his personality, of equally strong character as his father was thought, by some Chinese, to be less confrontational.⁷⁹ Cheong summarized the situation in a letter to the bishop:

Your Lordship . . . desired the Representatives of the Committee to undertake James sole support as we understood you as Bishop to feel a difficulty in appointing a Chinese clergyman to an English Living should the Chinese population here be so largely reduced by legislative enactments to cause such a contingency.⁸⁰

76 *The Missionary, At Home and Abroad*, November 1890.

77 *The Missionary, At Home and Abroad*, 16 October 1890.

78 Cheok Hong Cheong to Miss Isabel Willis, 1 June 1912.

79 *Tung Wah Times*, Melbourne, 29 March 1899, p 3.

80 Cheong Hong Cheong to the Rt. Rev. Field Flowers Goe, 22 September 1904.

From the time of his appointment in 1885, as discussed above, Cheong had fuelled the anxieties of key members of the CMSV Board whose focus, it will be recalled, was not on the general issues affecting the Chinese but upon their conversion.⁸¹ Mention was made earlier of a pattern among 19th century evangelicals of focusing on individual conversion and leaving the remediation of wider social injustices to ameliorative efforts by voluntary associations. Cheong had told the Board on his return from New Zealand that the mission's lack of success came from using unskilled men, a claim that must have been a surprise to those who had been around long enough to compare his performance with untrained men such as William Ching Wah, Fong Yat-sau or Paul Ah Fat (See Table 5.1). He credited the conversion of the Maori people to a properly trained Maori ministry, pointing out there was no provision for the training of Chinese catechists in Victoria.⁸² He roundly condemned the Board for its neglect:

Now let us ponder the subject from another & more important viewpoint - the equipment of the men. They are drawn from the market gardens, the factory, the laundry, & the pawnshops. I mention this not to the disparagement of the men for the grace of God is not restricted by a man's previous occupation since the first apostles were fishermen & operatives of Galilee & among them even a publican. But the question the all-important question is what has the Church or Missionary Society done for them in the way of equipment for their work? The cabinet manufacturers e.g. would not engage a hand who has not served his term of apprenticeship & so with the other industries but the Church or Missionary Society here has been notorious for its neglect in this respect.⁸³

During a visit to Melbourne Archdeacon Williams confirmed his offer of financial support. With his encouragement a public appeal was published in the Melbourne daily, *The Argus*:

We trust that the following letter by Canon Chase, which we republish from *The Argus* of the 12th ult., will elicit a liberal response from the Churchmen of Melbourne.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE ARGUS

SIR, – The Venerable Dean of Melbourne held a drawing room meeting at his residence on the 6th inst. for the purpose of raising funds to build a Chinese Church. The sum of £5,000 is needed for this object. The Church must be erected in the great business quarter of the Chinese, and at least £2000 will be required for the purchase of a suitable site. If the Church of England desires to carry on evangelistic work amongst the Chinese population with advantage, it must provide a building which will be easily accessible to them. The Chinese are soon discouraged by distance, and they have too much cause to fear molestation and insult when they venture forth

81 Cheong Cheok Hong, Report, (1889), CMSV Annual Meeting, 1889. *Church of England Messenger*, December 1889, p 214.

79 Cheok Hong Cheong, Address on the subject of Missions to the Chinese in Australasia. Delivered at Bishopscourt, July 21st 1896 .

80 Cheong Cheok Hong, (1915), Response to a Paper submitted by Rev. A.R. Ebbs at Conference between Representatives of C.M.A. & Epiphany Mission, 24 April 1915.

from their usual haunts. A stranger was present at the meeting above referred to, the Archdeacon of Waiapu, New Zealand, and being convinced of the utility of the scheme propounded and the necessity existing for its execution, he has, since the meeting, generously offered £100 if nineteen other persons will each become subscribers of an equal amount, or the Archdeacon will contribute £50 if 39 persons will join with him making a total of £2,000. A stranger, seeing the tokens of our great wealth, may possibly be more sanguine than many a resident amongst us of a cordial response to an appeal on behalf of the Chinese. He has thought well kindly to challenge our love to our heathen neighbours, and it would be gratifying to find the love of the Christian Church warmly responsive to the call of a friendly visitor. Any kind offer to co-operate in Archdeacon Williams' generous scheme for raising funds will be gladly acknowledged.⁸⁴

Despite concerns about Cheong's performance and his pursuit of his own priorities the mission was moving, if at a snail's pace, towards the training arrangements proposed by Cheong. A major contribution of £150 was made by Mrs. Maria Moriarty, a wealthy widow and supporter of missionary causes who lived at Inverleigh in Western Victoria with her companion, Miss Isabel Willis, and more was promised by Archdeacon Samuel Williams.⁸⁵

What seemed to be a promising new wave in the progress of the Mission was about to be crossed in the form of a new awareness of foreign missions that dramatically changed the missionary attitudes of Victorian Anglicans.

The Australian Missionary Awakening of the 1890s brought about a major shift in support for overseas missions in Australia. There had always been a belief, in all the Chinese mission committees, that missions to the Chinese were part of a wider concern for the conversion of China itself. In August 1890 the Rev. Dr James Hudson Taylor, founder of the interdenominational China Inland Mission (CIM), arrived in Victoria. The CMSV Mission Board invited Hudson Taylor to be the leading speaker at the November 1890 Annual General Meeting but he was unable to accept as he intended an early return to China. During his Australian visit Hudson Taylor wrote to friends in Shanghai saying that, 'We are having remarkable meetings here, not so specially large attendances as spiritual power and blessing and increase of missionary feeling.' It was soon to become apparent that Taylor had introduced Victorians, and Australians, to a different approach to Chinese evangelisation.⁸⁶ The idealism of many for the evangelisation of China was not

84 *The Church of England Messenger*, 3 April 1890.

85 Archdeacon Samuel Williams to Cheok Hong Cheong, 9 April 1891.

86 James Hudson Taylor to J W Stephenson, 22 August 1890 cited in Dixon, Lesley, (1978), *The Australian Missionary Endeavour in China, 1888-1953*, PhD thesis, (unpublished), University of

matched by a new enthusiasm for the conversion of the Chinese living in Australia.

Taylor's visit resulted from a small but growing Australian interest in missionary work in China. An Australian Anglican clergyman, the Rev. C H Parsons, formerly a curate under Macartney at Caulfield, had sailed for China in March 1890 as a result of direct contact with the CIM in London. A Tasmanian woman, Mary Reed, had served with the CIM before Taylor's Australian visit and had written an influential book. She commented on the deep anti-Chinese prejudice in Australian society that weakened interest in the evangelisation of the Chinese. She cited Cheong as a very different example of a Chinese role model:

Towards China there had been sadly little but prejudice, arising from the presence in the Colonies of so many Chinese coolies, who had introduced opium-smoking, and by their thrifty habits were competing successfully with Europeans in many lines of trade. The general impression seemed to be that the opium-smoking coolie was a fair sample of his race, while the presence of such men as Mr. Cheok Hong Cheong, Mr. Quong Tart, and other able Chinamen in our midst was quite forgotten.⁸⁷

The Rev. H B Macartney (Jr.) became a member of the China Inland Mission's Australian Council. His parish, St Mary's, Caulfield, was closely associated with Caulfield Grammar School whose headmaster, the Rev. E J Barnett, later became first the honorary secretary and later the full-time Secretary of the CMAV and later still a CMS missionary in Hong Kong. Another member of the Australian Council of the China Inland Mission was W H Calder who was closely associated with Cheong in the Victorian anti-opium movement.

There were three factors at work that together encouraged a shift in feeling about the Anglican Chinese Mission within Anglican Church in Victoria. The first was the overall distrust of Cheong who, although theologically an evangelical, had never become identified with the evangelical movement within the diocese. The distrust reflected, in part, the lack of conversions and baptisms. The second was whether, in the growing financial difficulties of the mission at a time of severe economic recession in Victoria, the CMSV (and Cheong) were making effective use of scarce resources for missionary work.⁸⁸

Melbourne, p 78. See also Brothie, Phillip Edgar, (2000), *The Importance of the Contribution of Australians to the Penetration of China by the China Inland Mission in the Period 1888-1953, with Particular Reference to the Work of Australian Women Missionaries*, PhD, Deakin University, Geelong.

87 Reed Mary, ed, (1892), *Short Sketch of the China Inland Mission, Location of Australian Missionaries, The Truth About Opium*, Melbourne, China Inland Mission, p 36.

88 Critics of Cheong's work had no idea of the conversion rate in China. Their assumption seems to have been that a mission to Chinese in China would result in more conversions that were being achieved in the Anglican, (and other denominational) missions in Australia. This assumption was never tested.

The third, less clear, was the impact of the Federation Movement in Australia and with it a growing sense of national identity in which race, symbolized by the emergence of the White Australia Policy, was undoubtedly an element. A letter from the Saunders sisters of Melbourne reflected an emergent sense of a distinctive Australian outlook:

Mr. Eyton Jones, one of the Fuh Ning missionaries, told us that he got a letter . . . saying that there were two ladies coming from Australia who would not work at all unless they could do it on their own lines.⁸⁹

When Taylor left for China in November 1890, eight women and four men missionary recruits went with him. Between 1890 and 1895, 58 percent of all Australasian CIM missionaries were women, the majority being Anglicans.⁹⁰ 70 percent of all New Zealand missionaries have been women.⁹¹

Table 5.3
Australian Missionaries to c 1900

Society	Men	Women	Total
China Inland Mission	41	49	90
Church Missionary Assocn	1	21	22
London Missionary Socy	4	4	8

By the end of 1891 there were thirty-five Australians working with CIM, with five more joining in 1892, three in 1893, and seven in 1894 – a total of fifty. Australia and New Zealand, after Britain and North America, became a significant major contributor to Protestant missionary work in China providing ten per cent of CIM missionaries and perhaps a similar number to Anglican and other Protestant missions.⁹²

Table 5.4
China: Origins of Australian Missionaries to c 1900

Victoria	46.7%
New South Wales	12.0%
Queensland	7.7%
Tasmania	5.1%
Western Australia	2.3%

In just four years after Taylor's visit in 1890, the China Inland Mission in Australia received more money than all the missions to the Chinese in Australia had received in the

89 Berry, D M (c 1901), *The Sister Martyrs of Kucheng, Memoirs and Letters of Eleanor and Elizabeth Saunders*, London, James Nisbet, p 27. See also Turner, H F, *His Witnesses, Ku-cheng, August 1, 1895*, London, Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent & Co Ltd. Church of England Zenana Missionary Society.

There is a Chinese language manuscript of this event, written by the girls' mother, in the Chinese manuscripts collection in the National Library of Australia.

90 Dixon, Lesley, (1978), *The Australian Missionary Endeavour in China, 1888-1953*, PhD thesis, University of Melbourne (unpublished), p 93. Tables 5.2 to 5.4 are from Dixon. See also Brotchie, Phillip Edgar, (2000), *The Importance of the Contribution of Australians to the Penetration of China by the China Inland Mission in the Period 1888-1953, with Particular Reference to the Work of Australian Women Missionaries*, PhD, Deakin University, Geelong.

91 Personal communication from Hugh Morrison, New Zealand.

92 The location of late 19th century Australian CIM missionaries in China is listed in *The Weekly Times*, 10 August 1895.

previous forty years. Evangelical interest in the Chinese was moving away from the domestic scene towards the adventure of China itself.⁹³

Victoria was the heartland of the China Inland Mission in Australia (See Tables 5.4 and 5.5).

Table 5.5
China: Origins of Australian Missionaries by Societies 1890-1950

	Vic	NSW	Tas	SA	WA	Qld
China Inland Mission	139	63	15	41	10	31
Church Missionary Society	28	28	5	1	-	1
TOTAL	167	91	20	42	10	32

The new Australian passion for missionary outreach included the belief among 19th century evangelicals in the imminent return of Jesus Christ to earth preceded by the ‘Rapture of the Saints’ when all Christians would be caught up to meet Christ in the sky (premillennialism) to be followed by the ‘millennium’ – a thousand year reign of Christ on earth.⁹⁴ An example of this kind of thinking among Anglican evangelicals in Melbourne is found in Berry’s memoir of the Saunders Sisters. He recalled teaching them:

Christian evidences and Church history, the latter subject being treated mainly by the light of the Book of Revelation [and] the meaning of those symbolic visions . . . They had learnt to believe fervently in the near Second Coming of Christ, and that they must . . . ‘hurry up’ in order to witness . . . in the world before His Coming.⁹⁵

The next foreign missionary advocate to visit Victoria was Eugene Stock, Editorial Secretary of the Church Missionary Society of England (CMSE) and the Rev. Robert Stewart, a CMSE missionary from China. Their visit resulted in the formation of the Church Missionary Association of Victoria (CMAV) on the 9th September 1892, as the local auxiliary of the CMSE. Cheong initially hoped that there would be a boost in interest in the CMSV and domestic missions to the Chinese but later referred sadly to people

93 The Australian contribution to missionary work in China (and elsewhere) has remained outside Australian historiographical interest. It is regrettable that archival material is not readily available as it is in the UK, USA or Canada. Few archives are in public or academic ownership. No provision appears to have been made for conservation or copying. Despite the 10,000 or so Australians who served as missionaries in Australia or in many overseas places, including China, there are few collections of letters and similar records.

94 An Australian example of premillennarian thinking, issued at the time of the Australian Missionary Awakening, is Abbott, Albert J, (1892), *The Return of Christ*, Melbourne, H W Miles and Co. Premillennarianism is still very influential in the United States conservative evangelical movement. Part of the belief is that God will restore Israel as a preliminary to the Coming of Christ and the Millennium, hence the support for Israel in the Palestinian issue.

95 Berry, D M (c1901), *The Sister Martyrs of Kucheng, Memoirs and Letters of Eleanor and Elizabeth Saunders*, London, James Nisbet, pp 4-5.

'responding to the: distance which lends enchantment to the view and the glamour of the . . . Regions Beyond'.⁹⁶

As knowledge of China grew the 'expert' status of 'old' Chinese-Australians, such as Cheok Hong Cheong, declined. Cheong had left China as a youth and only one certain visit, in 1906, is known. His knowledge came from sources available to most church members, such as the publications of missionary societies.⁹⁷ Knowledge and authority on matters Chinese was passing into other hands.

By the turn of the twentieth century few of the more traditionally focussed Chinese were connected with the churches. In Melbourne, for example, less than one hundred Chinese remained associated with the Anglican, Presbyterian and Methodist Chinese Missions. While total baptisms from 1854-1900 for Victoria have not been extracted for this study, a rough calculation suggests that between 2000 and 3000 Chinese were either baptised or became associated with the Christian churches through marriage and the baptism of their children (Appendix 12).

There were also quiet but significant changes in the way Australians of Chinese ethnic descent were seeing themselves. Chinese who had married Europeans tended to link, at least nominally, with a local church and saw themselves as Australians rather than Chinese. Their children identified with the general population.⁹⁸ No single episode reflected the changing tide of Chinese-Australian identity more than the comments of Samuel John Tong Way, son of the Chinese Presbyterian Minister at Bendigo, the Rev. John Tong Way. When Sam Tong Way enlisted in the Army in 1916, he was initially accepted and then rejected after his father asked a member of parliament to use his influence to have his enlistment cancelled. Sam explained:

My parents weren't happy that I'd enlisted. They didn't have my feelings for Australia. I was brought up among the young people of the time but they [his parents] didn't think of Australia as their country. . . . Father, from the point of view of his religion, was a sort of pacifist.⁹⁹ When Sam reenlisted, he warned his parents

96 Cheok Hong Cheong, (1915), Response to Paper submitted by Rev. A R Ebbs at Conference between Representatives of the CMA and Epiphany Mission, 1915. See discussion of missionary backgrounds in Dixon, Lesley, (1978), *The Australian Missionary Endeavour in China, 1888-1953*, PhD thesis, University of Melbourne (unpublished), pp 228-237.

97 Loose clippings tucked into the pages of his letterbooks indicate that he received the *North China Herald* and *The Chinese Recorder*.

98 While documentation of a traditional academic kind is yet to be prepared on this trend, it is very obvious in the growing collections of images in the various State Library pictorial archives.

99 From notes prepared by Mary Boland, of Canberra, from material in the Australian War Memorial.

that he wouldn't come home if they interfered again. Sam and his brother Hedley served in the 5th Division of the First Australian Imperial Force (1st AIF).

Well over 100 men of Chinese ethnic descent voluntarily enlisted in the First World War and some, including members of the Hoyling family, and others, served in both world wars.¹⁰⁰ Private Alfred Lee, grandson of the Anglican catechist James Lee Wah, served with the 58th Battalion of the 1st AIF. All four sons of a Chinese immigrant from Port Albert, Victoria, the Langtip brothers, served with the Australian Light Horse in Palestine and took part in the capture of Damascus. Sergeant Herbert Kong Meng (son of Lowe Kong Meng), a member of the Victorian Mounted Rifles, failed in his attempt to join in the Boer War in 1900 but subsequently served with the 7th Battalion, 1st AIF, in France. These were not isolated enlistments. Even earlier William John Shying, descendant of John Pong Shying who arrived in Sydney in 1818, served with the New South Wales contingent to the Sudan War in 1885. And of course, Mei Quong Tart served in the NSW militia. While the Cheong boys were rejected for overseas service in WWI, two of the boys served in the Australian 'home' army, the Local Defence Volunteers, during the Second World War.¹⁰¹

Mention was made earlier of the predominance of women among the Australasian missionaries to China. Only a quarter of the women had any kind of higher education, and of the China Inland Mission missionaries, less than a quarter had any professional training.¹⁰² Their shortcomings would, it was believed, be made up by the Holy Spirit. Australian missionaries, including the women, tended to fall into a limited range of occupations. Men, at the time, were often ordained ministers. Women and men, in the main, were doctors, nurses, teachers and clerical workers. Some women specialized in the care of children for which no formal training was considered necessary. Nurturing children was considered to be a genetic normality for females.

Their spiritual convictions resulted in tragedy for the Saunders family of St Hilary's Anglican Church, Kew, in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne. Elizabeth Maud (Topsy) Saunders and her sister, Harriet Eleanor (Nellie) Saunders, had what friends saw as a streak of mysticism in their devotion to Christ.¹⁰³ Their story demonstrates the life-impact on two young people of an evangelical religious experience, (conversion. Dixon observes,

100 Boland, Mary and Ian Welch (2003), *Australians of Chinese ethnic descent who served in the Australian Armed Forces from 1900 onwards*. <http://www.chaf.lib.latrobe.edu.au/ian.welch/>

101 Their names will be found in the World War II Nominal Roll online at the Australian War Memorial.

102 Dixon, Lesley, (1978), *The Australian Missionary Endeavour in China, 1888-1953*, PhD thesis, University of Melbourne (unpublished), pp 228-237.

'The documentary and oral testimony of both suggest that a conversion experience underwrote the decision to become a missionary.'¹⁰⁴

The Saunders sisters volunteered for China after hearing the Rev. R W Stewart of the CMSE Foochow mission in Melbourne in 1892. They were accepted subject to further study that included a short period of practical nursing at Melbourne Hospital and theology lessons from the retired but evangelically energetic Canon Stuart Chase, as well as the Bible lessons with the Rev. Canon D M Berry already mentioned.

In August 1895, 'Vegetarian' bandits attacked Ku Cheng killing Stewart, his wife, the two Australian women and five others including another Australian, Annie Gordon, from Ipswich, Queensland. The Melbourne press reported the tragedy at length. *The Weekly Times* described the deaths of the two young Australian women and their colleagues in graphic language:

Miss Elizabeth (or Topsy) Saunders was stabbed through the face with a spear, her brain being penetrated. A far more dreadful death befell her sister, Miss Harriet (or Nelly) Saunders, who was tortured for some time, hacked and lacerated with knives and finally burned alive. Miss Bessie Newcombe was transfixed with spears, and her bleeding body was then thrown over a precipice. Miss Elsie Marshall was butchered with knives, her throat being cut. Mr. Herbert Stewart, son of the Rev. R W Stewart, who was burned alive, had his skull split open and his brain exposed. The children who fell victims to the ruthless cruelty of the murderers were impaled alive upon spears and borne aloft in brutal derision as a spectacle for the onlookers. Miss Gordon, an Australian lady missionary, was speared in the head.¹⁰⁵

Mrs. Saunders never publicly showed any distress or anger about the deaths of her daughters, always stating publicly that they had been 'privileged to die for the Lord.' Not long afterwards she went to China, where she worked for the rest of her life. She died in Foochow and was buried in the same cemetery as her daughters.¹⁰⁶

103 *The Open Door*, Melbourne, Church Missionary Society, October 1838, p 7.

104 Dixon, Lesley, (1978), *The Australian Missionary Endeavour in China, 1888-1953*, PhD thesis, University of Melbourne (unpublished), p 269. See also Brotchie, Phillip Edgar, (2000), *The Importance of the Contribution of Australians to the Penetration of China by the China Inland Mission in the Period 1888-1953, with Particular Reference to the Work of Australian Women Missionaries*, PhD, Deakin University, Geelong.

105 *The Weekly Times*, 10 August 1895.

106 The former 'British' or 'Protestant' cemetery in Foochow has been lost. The area is now part of the Chinese Naval base. It is not known if any of the graves have been preserved.

Six of the Kucheng Martyrs



The Weekly Times

15 August 1896,



During Hudson Taylor's 1896 visit to Melbourne, Cheong hoped for an growth in enthusiasm for China missions:

It would be a glorious day for the church if her members could be roused to such enthusiasm that she could gladly send forth a "thousand strong" to the regions beyond to battle with the forces of darkness. In such a case there would be no lack of men and means to engage the enemy at home.¹⁰⁷

Cheong was later to express disappointment at the willingness of so many Australians to venture overseas while ignoring the Chinese at home.

The press sought his views on the deaths of the Saunders Sisters. A report of an interview with him appeared in the *Weekly Times*:

INTERVIEW WITH THE CHINESE MISSIONARY IN MELBOURNE
The Rev. Cheok Hong Cheong
THE SECRET SOCIETIES OF CHINA

The Rev. Cheok Hong Cheong, Chinese missionary in Melbourne, was seen on the subject of the massacres on Wednesday, with a view of ascertaining his opinion of their probable cause. He . . . has no personal knowledge of affairs in Fuh-Kien, where the outrages have taken place, but he is closely in touch with the Chinese mission work generally. Mr. Cheong is strongly of opinion that the Chinese people generally are inclined to be friendly to the missionaries, but that disturbances are caused by the acts of members of the secret societies with which China is honeycombed.¹⁰⁸

In Brisbane fifty Chinese residents met to protest against the deaths of the missionaries and in particular, Annie Gordon, a Queenslander. Leong Sung Hing spoke about the common humanity of all people and the desire of the Chinese in Brisbane to express their sympathy for the families and friends of the martyrs. His remarks reflected the sense of embarrassment that Chinese felt about the weakness of their homeland:

I truly believe that the Government of China, if it were strong enough, would search out the defaulters . . . I cannot speak anything but in praise of the way in which we are treated in this land, and I would that the same liberty were dealt out to you Europeans when visiting our land.¹⁰⁹

Another man, Kum Ching, said:

I have been a resident in this country for sixteen years, and though there is a special tax upon people of my race who come here, I must say that when here we have the protection of the Government and all the rights of free citizenship. . .¹¹⁰

107 *The Australasian Missionary News*, 3 January 1890

108 *The Weekly Times*, 10 August 1897.

109 *The Church Chronicle*, (Brisbane), 1 October 1895, p 14.

110 *Ibid*

The two comments provide an additional insight into the range of opinions within the Chinese community on their situation in Australia. Their similarities to the views of Cheong and others mentioned in Chapter 4 and also in Chapters 8-10 suggest that great care is needed before making assumptions about the treatment of the Chinese in 19th century Australia.

The story of the Saunders Sisters (and other Australian, European and Chinese Christian martyrs) is part of a neglected aspect of European-Chinese relationships in 19th century Australia. It is relevant in the context of Cheong's references to discrimination and injustice and his claims that China observed its obligations (see Chapter 4 and Appendices). Cheong argued a one-sided case, stressing the rights China had acquired or as mentioned in Chapter 4 assumed, under the provisions of the treaties but ignoring the responsibilities China accepted.

There has been even less attention to the impact of events such as the Kucheng massacre, the Tientsin massacre of Catholics a decade earlier, the Boxer Rebellion at the turn of the century and many other attacks on European missionaries because of the focus on the wrongs done to China.¹¹¹ Anti-Christian attacks were reported in the Australian press and they influenced colonial opinion especially in the lead-up to Federation. In the case of the Kucheng episode, some remarks attributed to Cheong should not be overlooked. When he mentioned the influence of secret societies, such as the 'Vegetarians', he acknowledged that secret societies were often involved in anti-Christian activities in defiance of treaty obligations and were often aided by Chinese officials.

These societies, he says, are semi-political, semi-freebooting, and are a frequent source of trouble. . . Rioting, stimulated by these people, is frequent, and is often directed against the houses and churches of the missionaries. But why should they be angry against the missionaries, who are a peaceful people, one would think, is a natural question. Because they are foreigners, is the best explanation Mr. Cheong can give. It is race hatred that is at the bottom of it, perhaps.¹¹²

111 Cohen, Paul A, (1963), *China and Christianity: The Missionary Movement and the Growth of Chinese Anti-Foreignism, 1860-1870*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press.

112 *The Weekly Times*, 10 August 1897.

The Bulletin, republican, radical, racist and anti-religious, commented on the 'religious hysteria' sweeping the churches. The cartoon shows a young Christian woman walking into the mouth of a sharp-toothed Chinese whose mouth is full of symbols of death.

The terrible events at Ku Cheng occurred while a sub-committee of the CMSV Board was undertaking a review initiated in late 1894. The sub-committee's report was issued at the 1896 Annual Meeting and stated that that only slightly more than half of the fifty-nine baptised men claimed on Cheong's membership list could be located.¹¹³ No doubt members of the Board connected the sacrifices of missionaries in China and contrasted the outcomes of Cheong's work among the Chinese in Victoria. Cheong was aware of the concerns over conversions and in an attempt to outflank his critics he wrote to Bishop Goe:

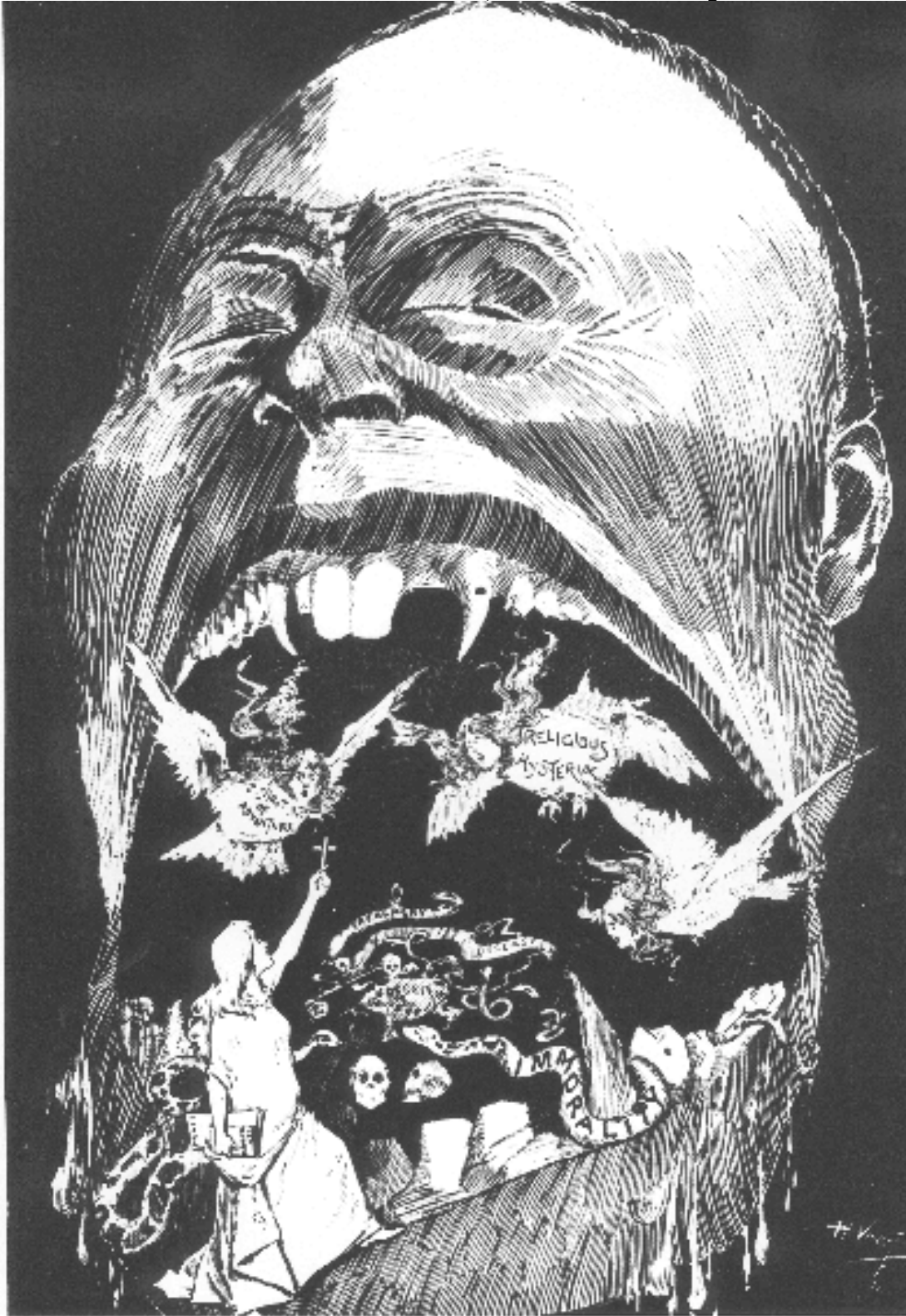
My Lord Bishop — Another of the catechumens Lew On whom I have been preparing for the Sacrament of Baptism for the past eighteen months came to me on Saturday and asked that he also might receive it on Friday next — making a total of four applications. There are six others whom I have also reported to the Board from time to time as having practically cast in their lot with us & been so regarded for a long while by their Heathen brethren but who have not yet come to talk over matters with me privately as the others have done. They are likely however to come forward ere long. They have each of them a clear knowledge of the great verities of the faith & are walking in conformity therewith. Beside these I am thankful that there are nine who might be designated enquirers. The fourth applicant is a well-known & highly respected member of the Chinese community — having occupied the Presidential chair of the See-Yup people.¹¹⁴

It was an example of too little, too late. The sub-committee's report was critical of Cheong's management. Firstly, there were very few baptisms, reflecting the low rate of conversions. Secondly, Cheong seemed to spend more time on his Chinese community activities than in gaining

¹¹³ *The Victorian Church Missionary Gleaner*, March-April 1896, p 106.

¹¹⁴ Cheok Hong Cheong to the Rt. Rev. Field Flowers Goe, 2 November 1897. The former See Yup President was almost certainly William Shi Gean, who worked closely with Cheong on the Anti-Opium Committee. Shi Gean was an immigration entrepreneur and was probably Cheong's chief source of information on the various immigration scams within the Chinese community.

The Modern Mercia and the Sirens, The Maid and the Mongols



The Bulletin, 12 September 1895

National Library of Australia

conversions. Thirdly, he displayed an inappropriate sense of self-importance. Fourthly, Cheong did not visit or encourage the catechists in rural areas. Fifthly, his financial management was unsatisfactory with not all income being reported to the Board as it was received. Sixthly, Cheong did not seem very interested in projecting an 'Anglican' style in mission work. The latter was not so much about looking back to his Presbyterian years but referred to the use of Confucian literature within the mission XX

Cheong's leading critics within the sub-committee were the Rev. Julius Lewis, and the Rev. G O Vance, Dean of Melbourne. Lewis had been Organiser of the Mission until 1885 and had been a supporter of Cheong. The immediate point of issue was the proposed appointment of a man named Lau, a Chinese literary graduate with experience as language advisor to the CMS in Hong Kong. Although he denied it Cheong appears to have unilaterally appointed Lau to the position of Chinese language tutor in the Mission's catechist training centre without the Board's approval

The CMSV sub-committee's report coincided with a review, by the Australian bishops, of Australian Anglican missionary activity. The agencies directly concerned were the Australian Board of Missions (ABM), established in 1850, a body under the bishop's oversight; the Australian voluntary auxiliaries (CMAV, CMANSW) of the English Church Missionary Society (CMSE) formed 1892; and the Church Missionary Society of Victoria Chinese Mission (CMSV) formed 1859, and the Sydney missions to the Chinese and Aborigines.¹¹⁵ The bishops decided to place Chinese and Aboriginal missions under the (CMANSW and CMAV) with the ABM focusing on the Melanesian Mission in New Guinea and the Solomon Islands.¹¹⁶ The bishops recommended a merger of the CMSV and the CMAV.

The CMSV sub-committee's report, and the recommendations of episcopal conference, contributed to a third and critical step in relation to the Chinese Mission and Cheong's role as Superintendent Missionary. The Bishop of Melbourne, the Rt. Rev. Field Flowers Goe, under strong influence from the Church Missionary Association of Victoria (CMAV), appointed a Diocesan Commission of Enquiry into the CMSV. Goe wrote to the Board of the CMSV reflecting the widespread anxiety about Cheong's expansionary views and the

115 Holmes, W R, (1913), *The Story of the C.M.A.*, Melbourne, Hearne and Co, p 22.

116 Rev. E J Barnett to General Secretary of CMS, London, 19 October 1898, Church Missionary Society, London, Correspondence, Folder C/Y8, Doc 111.

resources available to the diocese for all its missionary commitments:

Dear Canon Carlisle – I have given much consideration to the two questions which were discussed at the last meeting of the Council of the Mission to the Chinese in Victoria.

(1) The purchase of the land and tenement adjoining the present Mission Hall for the purpose of erecting a training college for the Colonies, and

(2) The appointment of the Chinese Christian from outside the Colony to take charge of the Mission under Mr. Cheong, and have come to the decision that these proposals are too large and important affecting as they do the whole scope and character of our diocesan mission and greatly (and it seems to me having reference to the monetary resources of the Mission dangerously) extending its objects and field, for me as Bishop and president of the Mission to sanction or allow them, until I have first fully satisfied myself as to their prudence and desirableness. It is my intention therefore to appoint a Commission into the financial position and general working of the Mission and to report to me as to the nature and cost of the steps proposed, the liability pecuniary or moral which the diocese will incur through them, the arrangements for defraying the cost, and generally as to the soundness of the reason for making a change. I request therefore that you will notify the Council that no action must be taken as to either of the above proposals until I have received and weighed the report of such Commission and have signified to you in writing my sanction to such proposals.

I am Yours Sincerely, F.F. Melbourne [Bishop Field Flowers Goe].¹¹⁷

Dean Vance was appointed Chairman of the Bishop's Commission. In retrospect it was an inappropriate appointment as Vance was already a critic of Cheong. The church paper later acknowledged that the Commission had attacked Cheong while ignoring the role of the Board, of which Vance had been a member, in the leadership of the mission.¹¹⁸

On 23 November 1897 a special meeting of subscribers of the CMSV voted without dissent to merge the CMSV with the CMAV. The Secretary of the CMAV issued a statement that was published in the church paper on New Year's Day 1898:¹¹⁹

(To the Editor of the Church of England Messenger.)

SIR – Will you kindly allow me to bring before the notice of Churchmen through your valuable paper the following resolution, passed at a special general meeting of subscribers to the funds of the Mission to the Chinese in Victoria, held in the Chinese Mission Hall, Little Bourke-street, on November 23rd, at eight p.m., the Bishop of Melbourne presiding: –

“Since it is the mind of the Lord Bishop of the Diocese of Melbourne and the Lord Bishop-Coadjutor of Ballarat, acting as Ordinary, to place the management and control of the Mission to the Chinese of the Church Missionary Society of Victoria in the hands of the Church Missionary Association of Victoria, and the said Church Missionary Association of Victoria has expressed in writing its willingness to take

117 Rt. Rev. F F Goe to Rev. Canon J Carlisle, 5 October 1897. Cheong's Letterbooks 1897.

118 *The Church of England Messenger*, 1 December 1898.

119 Rev. E J Barnett to Editor, *Church of England Messenger*, 27 November 1897 cited in *Church of England Messenger*, 1 January 1898.

over the Mission with all its properties and responsibilities, this special meeting of the Church Missionary Society of Victoria, regularly convened, gives its consent to the transfer, and requests its trustees and board of management to put the aforesaid Church Missionary Association of Victoria in possession of its properties of all kinds, to be held and used under the same trusts and conditions as the board now holds and uses them, and assigns to the aforesaid Church Missionary Association of Victoria all its liabilities and responsibilities of every kind on the 1st day of December, 1897, or as near thereto as practicable, so that when the transfer is complete no pecuniary liability shall be against any member of the Church Missionary Society of Victoria or its trustees or members of its board of management in respect of any matter whatsoever.”

Among the liabilities which are being bequeathed to the Church Missionary Association by the Chinese Mission . . . is a debit balance of £450 to date. The C.M.A. hopes nearly next year to extend this work among the heathen at home, for which there is great need. But before any advance is made this debt must be liquidated, and to that end Christmas gifts will be thankfully received from those who desire to fulfill their obligations to evangelise the heathen who have been brought to our shores. It may be well to state that this union has been effected at the instance of the Chinese Mission Board. – I am etc.

Cheong was originally in favour of the amalgamation that took effect on 1 December 1897 but did not appear to grasp the personal damage to his leadership and reputation implicit in the Commission’s finding that the Mission was inefficient and ineffective.¹²⁰ The *Church of England Messenger* stated that the report made, ‘painful reading – gloom unrelieved’. The *Messenger* concluded that:

The position is very simple. The whole work was in a confessedly deplorable condition . . . income fell hopelessly short of liabilities; the stipends of the catechists were often in arrears; the work was stagnating.¹²¹

The Honorary Secretary of the CMAV, the Rev. E J Barnett, summarised the Commission’s findings in a letter to the CMSE in London:

- The site [Little Bourke Street] then proposed for a Training House was unsuitable.
- The offers of assistance by Archdeacon Williams were not fairly conveyed by Cheong.
- The methods adopted in connection with the work of the Mission were disapproved.
- The results of both town and country missions were deemed unsatisfactory.
- The training given to catechists was insufficient.¹²²

120 Rev. E J Barnett to Teachers of the Church Missionary Society of Victoria, 2 December 1897 (with Chinese translation by Cheong). *The Church of England Messenger*, 1 December 1897. Johnstone, 1925, pp 289-290. A summary appears in *The Church of England Messenger*, 1 January 1898. Cheok Hong Cheong to Archdeacon Samuel Williams, 26 January 1898. See also *The Church of England Messenger*, 1 December 1898.

121 *The Church of England Messenger*, 1 December 1898.

122 Rev. E J Barnett to General Secretary of CMS 19 October 1898, Church Missionary Society, London, Correspondence, Folder C/Y8, Doc 111.

Cheong's reaction to the Commission's findings was set out in a long letter to Archdeacon Williams that focussed on personalities rather than on the specific criticisms of his performance:

My dear Archdeacon, Your favours of the 19th and 26th ult are duly to hand. It is true the recommendations of the Commission is open to the CMA to follow or not but I fear it was a foregone conclusion. For I find that the sympathy and cordiality Mr. Barnett showed for my plans before the appointment of the Commission have now taken to themselves wings and closed conferences have been held between him and the Dignitaries with the result that the project which you hailed with so much gladness of heart and for which you so nobly entered into guarantees, viz. the appointment of a Christian Literary Graduate to assist me in Training and Missionary work is now practically abandoned. At least as far as I am informed nothing has been done to remove the cable to Hong Kong two months ago. And Mr. Barnett is coming to interview you. With what object he has not condescended to reveal either to Mr. Davies or myself though we are the only members of the old Board who are familiar with all the places and workings of the Chinese Mission nor have we been favoured with any invitation to join the CMA Committee. The plans of the latter therefore if they have any cannot possibly be based upon personal knowledge. Should they however be guided by the Commission then I think you know their personnel.

1st Dean Vance was chairman concerning whom I need say nothing, as you already know him.

2nd Archdn Henry A. Langley a very different man to his brother of Sydney.¹²³ The amount of interest he has shown in our Mission is represented by not a single subscription known to Mr. Davies the Hon. Treasurer or myself except what the Ladies Committee got from him on one occasion, although his salary is still £575 per annum besides £100 per annum for travelling expenses. And his missionary interest generally is represented by the Collect, Prevent us etc . . . he is President of the Evangelical Association.

3rd Rev. W.G. Hindley successor to Dean Vance's parish at Kew. He is described by Canon Carlisle as the most dangerous man in the Diocese. His one object is his own interest and he is a most accomplished Courtier.¹²⁴

4th Mr. W.E. Morris, the Diocesan Registrar, is a regular subscriber to the Mission. One of his daughters is a teacher in the Central Mission School.

5th Mr. R.R Godfrey is a lay Canon and Chairman of Committees of the Church Assembly. He is not a subscriber and has never shown an interest in the Mission in any shape or form. And yet Mr. Davies after his examination made this remark to Canon Carlisle in my presence, I am ashamed of the cloth the only decent men upon the Commission are the two laymen! To which the Canon replied, it is not a Commission of investigation but of accusation.

The Rev. Julius Lewis and Mr. J W Veal were very busy with it and they knew the composition long before it was announced . . . And they were moreover members of the sub-committee of investigation appointed nearly two years ago although they were responsible for the mistakes and blunders into which the Board had previously been led. Should the object of Mr. Barnett's visit be to secure your consent to the appointment of a European Missionary instead of the Chinese assistant I shall be

123 Langley's brother was a clergyman in the Diocese of Sydney.

124 St Hilary's Church, Kew, was the home parish of the Saunders Sisters, the Martyrs of Kucheng.

thankful if you could effect a compromise . . . so that they might have their European Missionary without disturbing our previous arrangement for a Christian Literary Graduate.¹²⁵

In a follow-up letter to Williams less than a week later Cheong still seems to have had no appreciation of the misgivings about him within the Diocese of Melbourne. His comments about Barnett show his inability to grasp his lack of credibility:

My Dear Archdeacon I must confess that the position taken up by the CMA Committee at present in regard to the Chinese Mission is quite a mystery to me and does not seem to indicate any independence of view & judgement. I have said in my postscript of the 7th that Mr. Barnett in his conference with me before the appointment of the Commission always spoke of an amalgamation between us with the greatest pleasure. After the Commission was appointed however the word was never once used but the words handing over of the Chinese Mission to the CMA were substituted. I then made enquiry about his promise to move for the inclusion of the lay members of our Board in the CMA Committee and his reply was a change of tone altogether. He said that they would not touch it if amalgamation were insisted on. . . . The influence of the Dignitaries, I have now found to my sorrow is greater over the CMA Committee than over the Board, and I am to learn what is the nature of the offence I have committed which has stirred up so much opposition to me & to my devisings in the interests of the Mission beyond an occasional unguarded admission of regret at the appointment of the Dignitaries. This opposition was first manifested by the Bishop which my letter to him of 16/6/98 will to some extent show.¹²⁶ Also my letter to Archdn Langley to which he never condescended a reply and my reports which the Archdn disapproved of copies of which I send under separate cover.¹²⁷

By November 1897, while the amalgamation was proceeding, Cheong wrote to the bishop in response to the accusation that he had 'packed' functions attended by the Commissioners to make it appear that the mission was more successful than it actually was:

I That the children belonging to the Mission School of the Presbyterian Women's Missionary Union have been exhibited as the fruits of our Mission. The fact is these children have been frequently accompanying the parents to our Services & Missionary & School Meetings long before their own school was established, as well as since, and as many & perhaps the majority of its Honorary Teachers are of the Church of England, I could not say nay to members of our Ladies Council who wish them present at their functions.

II That Christian hymns and addresses are put into the mouths of Heathens which are neither understood by them nor expression of their views & feelings.

So far as I know all the addresses are in the first instance written by the scholars themselves and brought to me or to one or other of the teachers to be put into correct English. If they express sentiments which are distinctly Christian who will assume

125 Cheok Hong Cheong to Archdeacon Samuel Williams, 13 December 1897.

126 This letter has not been located.

127 Cheok Hong Cheong to Archdeacon Samuel Williams, 18 December 1897.

the functions of a judge that these sentiments are not felt.

The Commissioners unhappily have no personal knowledge of the fact that nearly all of the Senior Scholars of our Mission School are either baptized converts and catechumens or inquirers & those who are more or less favourably impressed with the truth.

As to the statement that they do not understand what they sing, I have to say that one Hymn is translated to them every school night by myself word for word, sentence for sentence with the lesson it teaches emphasized & in the concluding prayer in Chinese it forms one of the petitions at the Throne of Grace.¹²⁸

In a letter written to Dean Vance Cheong did not accept responsibility for any of the shortcomings of the mission.¹²⁹ He told Vance that 'my duty was done when I pointed out where the responsibility lay for the condition of things I had revealed to members of the Board who recently joined it.' He went on to criticise the Rev. Julius Lewis, the Secretary, Mr J W Veal, and the Rev. J B Stair of St Arnaud.¹³⁰ As far as Lewis was concerned, Cheong asserted that Lewis had baptised four Chinese without reference to Cheong and that all four were 'opium debauchees'. He told Vance that Veal had appointed Lew Tong as catechist at Maryborough without reference to Cheong.¹³¹ Cheong claimed that he had been overruled when he disapproved of three nominations to vacant catechetical positions: those of Tim Foon, a 'known opium smoker'; James Ah Ha, 'a man who had been notorious for all the vices of the Camp including drunkenness'; and Kwok Wai Thong whom Cheong claimed was a thief.¹³² It is apparent from this and later citations involving relationships between the two men that Veal had chosen to take Stair's advice.

Cheong's implied suggestion that Veal, Lewis and Stair, three highly respected men, were wrong and only he was right did not help his case. Stair had been responsible for the conversion and selection of the majority of men who worked as catechists with the CMAV yet, despite this, Cheong had earlier recommended handing over St Arnaud, the most successful of all the Anglican country missions, to the Wesleyans. Nothing sums up Cheong's negative attitudes towards J W Veal more than the following comments:

When I found upon my return from England that nothing was done to awaken interest in the Building Fund of the Mission Church and Training Home I set myself to the task, got Canon Chase to go with me to solicit Mrs. Goe's powerful assistance which was very kindly given; a Ladies Committee was organised & the members

128 Cheok Hong Cheong to Rt. Rev. Field Flowers Goe, Bishop of Melbourne, 12 November 1897.

129 Cheok Hong Cheong to the Very Rev. G O Vance, 8 November 1897.

130 Cheok Hong Cheong to Archdeacon Samuel Williams, 13 December 1897. It is clear whom Cheong blamed for the negative appraisal of his work. He singled out Vance, Veal and Lewis: 'they had been members of the CMSV sub-committee of investigation appointed nearly two years ago although they shared responsible for the mistakes and blunders of the CMSV Board.'

131 Cheok Hong Cheong to the Very Rev. G O Vance, 8 November 1897.

132 Ibid.

thereof worked zealously under her direction; but somehow or another there was a feeling that the dislike for the Chinese in certain quarters might militate against the Sale of Gifts the Ladies were getting up; so in order to assure our friends that the Chinese were not so unpopular as some supposed I took the Town Hall for a lecture on 'China's Early Ages' the proceeds of which I announced would be devoted to the Building Fund. The Hon. Secy Mr. Veal thought that I was off my head. He ran thither and hither to tell members of the Board how absurd it was for me to think that people nowadays would attend a lecture on "Ancient China". 'He might have some 300 people', he said to Canon Chase on the morning of the lecture, 'who would be lost in that big Hall'. The result more than justified my expectations for the Hall was densely packed with 4000 inside while some 2000 outside could find no entrance.

The stimulating influence of such a sight induced Mrs. Goe to forego the £5 deposit on the Athenaeum & take the Town Hall instead for her 'Sale' or Bazaar with proceeds of which we were able to claim Archdeacon Williams further offer of £400.

When plans were being prepared for the Building as originally intended, viz. a Mission Church and Training Home combined, the Hon. Sec Mr. Veal objected to the second and got it altered to a Mission Church alone. Canon Chase & I felt it was breaking faith . . . as the action involved the doing away with an essential part of the Mission — a part without which no Mission could be properly conducted.

Archdn Williams also wrote most strongly upon the subject urging that without the provision for the raising up of a native ministry the Mission could not be efficiently carried on. Mr. Veal however did not see the necessity and would not have it; and though prostrated by sickness, as soon as he heard of Archdeacon Williams letter he said to a member of the Board in a strong voice, 'it will never be', which was repeated but in more courteous tones when Canon Chase & I called to see how he was. The Canon however was equal to the occasion & very promptly said, "We did not call to discuss any business with you but simply to see how you are getting on".¹³³

As far as the Board of the CMSV was concerned, Cheong's protestations came too late and showed too little understanding of the situation in which he now found himself. Although the processes by which Cheong had been judged were far from fair and open, it must be added in passing that Veal and the CMSV Board were not the only people with whom Cheong collided during his missionary career.

He had, as discussed in Chapter 3, had a falling out with the Board of the Presbyterian Mission Board. Later in this chapter it will be seen that he fell out with the Honorary Secretary of the Church Missionary Society of Victoria, Re-formed, Marston Bridger and the Treasurer of the Board, the Rev. Ernest Hughes, the parish priest of St Peter's Church Eastern Hill. Mention will also be made of the strong words between Cheong and his close friend and associate in the Victorian Anti-Opium Movement, William Howat (see Chapter 7). As will also be shown later, businessmen and tradesmen alike experienced the

133 Cheok Hong Cheong to Very Rev. G O Vance, 8 November 1897

downside of Cheong's strong character (Chapter 6).

Behind a long history of personal conflicts was, as has been shown already, a complex identity. Cheong was well aware that attitudes to him as an individual were caught up with and inseparable from a wider negativity towards the Chinese and their homeland. It was difficult for him, as indeed for anyone, to separate criticism of his behaviour from his broader emotional feeling that he, and his countrymen, did not enjoy full equality and acceptance.

Unfortunately for Cheong some of the most damaging criticisms of his leadership of the Anglican mission were made by a man whom Cheong himself recommended as an expert on matters Chinese; the Rev. Dr. Ernest Eitel of Adelaide.¹³⁴ When Cheong heard of a forthcoming CMAV invitation to Eitel to review the work of the Mission, he moved promptly to ask him to visit the Mission at his, Cheong's, expense. His letter of invitation mentioned his family's connection with some of the most famous names in British missionary involvement in China, exemplified by his reference to James Legge as an 'old friend of his family':

Dear Dr Eitel — Although we have never yet met your name has been a familiar one to me ever since you succeeded the old friend of our family — Dr Legge [Dr James Legge - LMS Missionary to S China] at the London Mission Compound in Hong Kong.

I have recently heard from my son James [Rev. James Cheong MA] that you are now in Adelaide settled over a German congregation and it has occurred to me in view of our approaching Missionary Conference on New Year's Day whether we could induce you to spend a little holiday here & at the same time give our Mission workers the benefit of your long wide and varied experience in Chinese work.

I need not say how delighted Mrs Cheong and I will be to have the honour of entertaining a veteran missionary from our Native Province should you find it possible to favour us with a visit.

I enclose a brief statement about our Mission written more than two years ago together with a view of the Buildings in which the Conference will be held. Of course we will gladly pay your travelling expenses if you can so favour us.¹³⁵

134 Ernest J Eitel. Born January 1837, Esslingen, Germany. Attended Pedgogium Esslingen for 6 years. Theological Seminary, Schoenthal, for 4 years Tubingen University, Phil D 1860, (aged 22). Assistant Pastor, Wurtemberg Lutheran Church, 1861. Missionary in China with Basel Mission. Superintendent of Mission Schools for 16 years. Published Chinese-Sanskrit book on Buddhism, 1870. Head of Hong Kong Education Department 1878 and introduced program of religious education. Private Secretary to Governor of Hong Kong (Sir John Pope Hennessy) 1895-7. Editor of the "China Review" for 18 years. Pastor of St Stephen's Lutheran Church, Wakefield Street, Adelaide 1897-1906. Lecturer in German Language and Literature, University of Adelaide. Died 1908. Information provided by: Rev. J Stolz, Archivist, Board of Archives and Research, Lutheran Church of Australia, 17 Wellington St, N Adelaide. It should be noted that Cheong's willingness to pay Eitel's costs was not referred to or approved by the Board of Management.

135 Cheok Hong Cheong to Rev. Dr. Ernst Eitel, 20 December 1897.

It appears an innocuous letter but not against his knowledge of an impending CMAV invitation to Eitel. Eitel did not accept Cheong's invitation and in March or April 1898 he carried out the formal investigation requested by the CMAV Board. Barnett described Eitel's observations in an article published after Cheong's dismissal in late 1898:

The C.M.A. committee asked for advice as to certain of their future plans from Dr. Eitel, who was the best expert in the Chinese available. As a Lutheran himself, the criticisms he passes are the more remarkable. He comments strongly on the need of more definite organisation of the Mission on our Church's own lines, calling to the fact that no good work can be done on a vague 'interdenominational' system. He is amazed that the books provided in our Melbourne Church of England Mission seemed to be 'a heterogeneous growth of Presbyterian, Methodist, Lutheran and especially Confucian literature.' None of the converts he met 'appeared to possess any of the several existing Chinese versions of the Book of Common Prayer.' He came across no *Cantonese* colloquial version of the N.T., but only an 'elegant classical version quite above the understanding of the ordinary Chinese here.' The only student he found in the Training Home, 'though under training as a Churchman, spoke as a Dissenter,' and his favourite text-book of theology was a Lutheran Catechism! 'Broadly undenominational' was the impression Dr. Eitel received from all he could see in converts, books, or institutions.¹³⁶

Rather than interpreting Eitel's comments as reflecting an evangelical flexibility on Cheong's part, the CMAV saw his leadership as thoroughly un-Anglican.

Cheong continued to ignore the CMSV sub-committee's report, the Diocesan Commission's findings and the post-amalgamation experience of the CMAV in dealing with him.¹³⁷ Instead he claimed to be the equal of the some of the greatest names in 19th century Chinese evangelisation.¹³⁸ He declared that the language skills of missionaries never equalled those of a learned Chinese – a view also expressed in private letter from Ernst Eitel to James Cheong.¹³⁹ He neglected to add that his own Chinese literary skills were far behind those of the men he mentions.

One point where Cheong showed greater vision than his critics was his belief that the

136 *The Church of England Messenger*, 1 December 1898.

137 Cheok Hong Cheong to the Very Rev. G O Vance, 25 November 1897.

138 Allowing for the quite different circumstances it is still worth noting that the Missions to the Chinese in Australia, for all their conspicuous problems, achieved a Chinese conversion rate of perhaps 10 percent overall. The Protestant conversion rate in China of less than 70,000 converts in an overall population of some 400 million does not stand comparison.

139 Rev. Dr Ernst Eitel to James Cheong, 1 March 1898. Eitel, widely regarded as a Chinese language expert, told James: 'As to selecting typical Chinese passages for your classical studies I cannot help you. I never had more than a smattering knowledge of Chinese and I gave away all my Chinese books before leaving Hong Kong. European Sinologues are all quacks with the exception perhaps of Dr Chalmers; I would not even except Dr Legge — blessed be his memory — from the above category. What is a European Sinologue without his teacher? What is Dr Legge in the way of Sinology after parting with his old teachers, wretch as he was in everything outside Chinese classical lore.'

successful evangelisation of the Chinese, in Australia and China, would only succeed when Chinese, not Europeans, became the missionaries – although it is not clear where that placed him. In the context of late 19th century Victoria it seemed that he was putting a self-serving argument that had no chance of acceptance.

Dear Mr. Dean – I append herewith a few extracts from the Reports of the Chinese Mission showing the efforts that have been made for the last quarter of a century to secure that which your last letter so much desiderates.

From the Reports of the CMS first issued the present total of European clergy belonging to Kwan – Tung Province are: 'Rev. Charles Bennetts MA Dur 1891, Rev. E.B. Beauchamp Lond Coll Div 1889.' The former stationed at Hong Kong & acts as Secretary – Treasurer for the CMS in South China, is stated to be at home in England to consult on the successor to the Bishopric of Hong Kong & the latter is at Pakhoi some hundreds of miles to the extreme South West of the province where the dialect is materially different to that spoken by the Chinese in Australasia. 'The Rev. John Grundy,' the same reports say, 'has retired from the Mission.'

The only other clergyman – Rev. Fong Yat Sau – was formerly our own Catechist at Maryborough and he succeeded the Rev. Lo Sam Yuen the first catechist that was employed by the CMS of Victoria in 1859¹⁴⁰, so that we are about as near the consummation of our desires as we have been for the last twenty-five years.

My only fear is that in returning to the pursuit of the shadow we are losing the very substantial progress that has been made in the raising up of a trained native ministry from the point where the most earnest efforts of the Board only realised £13 for that purpose (vide extract of Report for 1875). No other sum having ever been received until the felt need was pressed home upon the Superintending Missionary & his consequent appeals met with a ready & liberal response from seven different sources together with liberal promises of support from five different Dioceses in N.Z, & N.S.W, but which following long hesitation & delay has not reached fulfillment.

Besides valuable and desirable as they undoubtedly are in other respects no European missionary can perform the duties which we proposed should fall to the share of the Assistant or Colleague. Not even in the days of the Jesuit Missions when some of the most distinguished young Professors of the Universities were enlisted in the Chinese work, was there any literary, scientific or theological product of the missionaries which had not to be submitted to the native scholars to be thoroughly overhauled & done into Chinese. Certainly nothing has appeared from the pens of the present staff of Protestant missions which has not been similarly treated.

Such also is the oft-repeated confession of leading missionaries. The Rev. E.T. Williams MA in a paper read before the Nanking Missionary Association and published in the 'Chinese Recorder' of Sept. 1895 says: 'We labour at best under a serious disadvantage in preaching in the Chinese tongue. Even the most ready speakers have a foreign accent. All are more or less limited in their vocabulary. Many employ foreign idioms.' The Rev. Wm H. Lacy MA BD Principal of the Methodist Episcopal Training College Foochow in a paper before a similar conference & published by request in the 'Chinese Recorder' of Nov. 1895 says: 'Successful preachers to heathen audiences are very rare in the ranks of missionaries.'

140 Cheong was apparently unaware that Lo Sam-yuen had been an Anglican convert in China and a catechist from the time of his arrival in Victoria in 1856.

This not due to any neglect or fault on their part but to the insurmountable difficulties of the language & the very contrarities of human nature as we find them in the Chinese and foreigners. Few, very few foreigners understanding the Chinese nature & and in an average crowd of heathen listeners very few understand much of what the foreigner says to them. Did I speak from my own experience you would not doubt my words, but this is the testimony of men who give years to this kind of work. The late Dr Nevins after over thirty years of labor said: 'We soon find that the natives throng around us not so much to hear as to stare at us. We soon learn that the crowd we have been addressing have in reality understood but a small part of what we have said.' The Rev. Arthur Smith out of a varied and extensive experience gives his testimony to the same fact. Both of these workers also bear testimony to the disadvantage the foreigner meets with because of the language. The former says, 'The difficulty which the Chinese have in understanding our preaching is further increased by their entire ignorance of Christian ideas and terminology.' The latter says he finds in the language a 'lack of capacity for conveying Christian truth owing to it being full to the saturation point of heathen associations'.

I myself have had the pleasure of being associated with men who have laboured long & devotedly in Canton Province, such as the Rev. Dr Legge DD LLD, G Piercy, F Storrs Turner BA, Silvester Whitehead, T G Selby, Wm Young and Daniel Vrooman MA and I can corroborate the testimony of the authorities above quoted. I have had occasion moreover to act the part of an Interpreter to the Rev. Wm Young and Daniel Vrooman MA while they respectively attempting to impart instruction to my Father's and my own Bible Class although they have an average of over twenty years China experience. Need I add in conclusion that my only wish in writing thus long and fully is that the progress of the training work might not be thrown back any further by any change or delay in carrying out the resolution regarding the Assistant. As the work develops and a suitable European Missionary is available I can assure you no one will give him a heartier welcome than myself.

Apart from a possible passing encounter with Legge in Hong Kong when Cheong was sixteen years old, he could only have met the others briefly during his visit to Britain and Ireland in 1891-2 as a visiting deputationist for the Anti-Opium Society. He knew William Young well as a child and young adult but Young was never regarded as a successful missionary in Victoria.¹⁴¹ His only meaningful contact with Vrooman was to assist an anti-Vrooman thrust by the Presbyterian catechists that resulted in Vrooman's abrupt resignation and return to the United States (Chapter Three). The training Cheong provided for the catechists was almost identical to the Presbyterian course he had criticized two decades earlier, (Chapter 3) and was a long way from 'the raising up of a trained native ministry'.

In a conciliatory step the CMAV appointed Cheong on 3 December 1897 to the post of Organiser and Deputationist. The appointment recognised his commitment to the mission

141 Welch, Ian (1980), *Pariahs and Outcasts, Christian Missions to the Chinese in Australia*, MA, Monash University

over more than a decade, his public relations skills and his successful record of raising money. Unfortunately, the appointment involved his removal from the role that was the source of his self-image – that of Superintending Missionary and Principal of the ‘Training College’. When his cousin, William Ah Ket, referred to him some years later as an ‘ex-missionary’ Cheong took umbrage.¹⁴² For more than forty years Cheong’s first sense of himself was that he was a ‘superintending’ missionary – a man of substance.

The appointment of Daniel Wong, a relative of Mrs. Cheong, as the evangelist cum missionary leader of the CMAV thoroughly angered Cheong.¹⁴³ Wong was a young man with a limited knowledge of English, subordinate in every Chinese sense to Cheong and inexperienced. Wong’s nomination was culturally insensitive and weakened Chinese confidence in the CMAV’s understanding of Chinese culture. On the other hand, Cheong nominated Wong for the post of Anglican catechist in Wellington, New Zealand but that may have had a strong element of family support in it.

The Rev. E J Barnett had resigned from the Headmastership of Caulfield Grammar School in 1897 to become the full-time Secretary of the CMAV. In an attempt at peacemaking Barnett suggested that, irrespective of specific issues, Cheong should view the new arrangements as a long overdue reduction in his workload, an issue related to Cheong’s own comments that the problems of the mission were due in part to the unrealistic expectations of Cheong by the Board. Cheong replied that he was prepared to do the deputational work but could not accept his replacement as an evangelist by a young man of limited abilities. Barnett’s conciliatory letter failed to plumb the depth of the frustration and humiliation that was revealed in Cheong’s response:

Dear Mr. Barnett – I have to thank you for your consideration to myself personally in seeking to give me some relief from the strain of the work which has of later years grown heavily upon me though I regret to say the direction in which you proposed to do it has caused me more pain and sorrow than the severest trials I have yet endured for the Gospel’s sake.

I am not at all averse to doing the Deputation work whenever the necessity arises as I have already assured you that to withdraw if not altogether at least for the most part from the position of a Missionary to which by the Grace of God I have devoted my life & from the Training work to which I have set both my hand & heart is what I cannot reconcile my conscience to.

Notwithstanding the many & sometimes distracting cares connected with the

142 Cheok Hong Cheong to William Ah Ket, 25 September 1907

143 Cheok Hong Cheong to Archdeacon Samuel Williams, 4 December 1897.

Mission under the Divine Blessing I have succeeded on the one hand in building up the nucleus of a Chinese Congregation which promises to become in the course of a few years largely self-supporting, while on the other by continuously & persistently urging the importance of the work of raising up a trained Native Ministry & bearing the subject before the Throne of Grace many of the Lord's people have rallied around the cause & contributed more funds than the management have been prepared to utilize with promises of far larger amounts for maintenance & building purposes.¹⁴⁴

It is a time moreover when the arrows of conviction has struck deeply in many of my congregation & prayerful attention is needed to bring them to the new birth that I feel it very inopportune at this juncture to take on Deputation work and I have no one with the requisite experience to stand by the work of the Mission.

Mr. Daniel Wong, one of the first fruits of my Melbourne labours is too young in the faith and has not himself prepared catechumens for baptism. Even the Bible Class I had established for that purpose in North Rd [*Murton Hall, Ormond*] during the latter half of 1892 he would not continue nor could be prevailed upon to open one since. Close application of mind is just what he lacks. He seems destined for an itinerant evangelist rather than a Pastor. The best use we can make of him therefore is to let him be ever on the move – like that which he has been doing recently in the North East.

In regards to Essendon if you have already arranged with Mr. Good for Sunday Evening next would you please ask him kindly to send a trap for me at the Mission Church any time after the afternoon Service? If however a Thursday evening will suit equally well I would much prefer it and perhaps a larger number might be got together then . . .

I will come down and talk over matters with you tomorrow afternoon. I enclose under separate cover the list required.¹⁴⁵

The public image was that Cheong had accepted the changes but behind the outward conformity he offered passive resistance to the requests of the CMAV. On occasion, he offered outright obstruction such as his letter to the CMAV Treasurer refusing to hand over money sent by Archdeacon Williams to purchase a new site for the Training College.

In regard to Archdn Samuel Williams' cheque for £500 which he was good enough to entrust to me as a Deposit for a Training College I am now awaiting his instructions for its disposal. This may come any day & I shall be glad to do as he directs me.¹⁴⁶

Cheong's behaviour forced the CMAV to request Williams to direct Cheong to release the funds to the Committee. Cheong wrote to Williams:

144 Cheong knew that there was no possibility of the Anglican Chinese Mission ever becoming fully self-supporting when the number of members was so few. All the Anglican Missions relied on the support of sympathetic European Christians for financial support. Cheong also knew that there was little likelihood of the Anglican Chinese Christian community ever producing its own candidates for the ministry or, more importantly, of providing them with an income. The proof of that was his own son whose income as Missioner from 1904 until 1910 was provided by the diocese on Cheong's own advice that the mission could not afford a salary, even after Cheong himself has ceased, from 1898, to accept any payment for his work as superintending missionary.

145 Cheok Hong Cheong to Rev. E J Barnett, 12 February 1898.

146 Cheok Hong Cheong to H Maddock, Hon Treasurer, CMAV, 22 March 1898.

My Dear Archdn – The CMA Committee have at last fixed upon a site. The first information I had regarding it was conveyed to me in Mr. Maddock's letter enclosed. I feel a difficulty however in meeting the demand so abruptly made in view of your instructions to me & in as much as I have received no reply from you to my enquiry dated 25th Feby as to what I was to do with the amounts you so kindly entrusted me with so I asked him in Mr. Barnett's presence 'Would you mind waiting till I received Archdn William's letter promised in a cable of the 15th inst?' Mr. Barnett appeared very indignant & said he would cable to you that I had declined to hand over the cheque. I said, 'Don't say 'declined' but that I desired the Archdeacon directions or will you let me cable to him for instructions?' I asked 'No', said Mr. Barnett, 'I'll cable myself.' Your cable directions having been forwarded to me I lost no time in carrying it out and now enclose you Mr. Barnett's receipt. Our mutual friend Mr. Wm Davies . . . called this evening & informed me that the site chosen is down the Avenue not very far from Balaclava Railway Station. The name of the house is 'Hiawatha' . . . & stands upon an acre of land. The distance of Balaclava from the Mission Church & centre of the Chinese population is close upon five miles. Some four miles further land can be brought for about £25 per acre with the advantage besides of a Chinese population of about 150 amongst whom we have been labouring for several years past . . . I cannot help concluding with an observation which our Wellington student was overheard to make. 'As a Chinese Training College it is quite a white elephant. It won't be long before it will be appropriated for an English college.'¹⁴⁷

When Cheong was asked if he would carry out Barnett's instructions he answered in terms that were offensive to Barnett and politically impossible for the CMAV to accept:

Personally no; since he is my younger in years, with no qualification for his commanding position, and with absolutely no experience in Chinese work; but officially, when conveying to me the deliberate judgement of the Committee, Yes.¹⁴⁸

If Cheong was not always tactful the Board of the CMAV showed little awareness of the cultural impact of their decisions. In May 1898 the CMAV appointed a Principal to the Training College with nothing more to recommend him, if James Cheong's comments and those added by Cheong are to be believed, than his evangelical party credentials.¹⁴⁹ Once Williams advised the CMAV of the contents of the following letter the CMAV realized that Cheong had to be dismissed. Cheong wrote:

My Dear Archdeacon – Fidelity to the cause requires me to write fully to you whose large-hearted sympathy has devised & supported so enlightened a project as the

147 Cheok Hong Cheong to Archdeacon Samuel Williams, 25 March 1898. The closing comment was prophetic. In due course, the capital reserves from the sale of the Balaclava property and the mission church at 110 Little Bourke Street provided resources for the purchase of the CMS national training centre, St Andrew's House, Parkville.

148 Cheong, Cheok Hong, (1898), *Chinese Mission Crisis, Superintending Missionary's Address to the Converts, In Reply to the CMA Committee's Printed Statement*, Melbourne, Provisional Committee, 7 November 1898, p 4.

149 The error of the Balaclava decision was acknowledged in a review of the merger and the outcomes published in *The Church of England Messenger*, 1 December 1898, that refers to: 'the somewhat hastily-made arrangements in connection with the Balaclava Training Home.'

Training of a Native Ministry for the Chinese. My son James writing from Geelong to one of his brothers said, "Tell Papa this piece of news. I am writing this in the shop of a Mr. Pearson — a cousin of Rev. W H Brett who tells me that Mr. Brett has been appointed Head of the Training House at Balaclava and will proceed to Hong Kong for a year's study of the language. Precious little he will learn in that time. He is 32 years of age & married.

He subsequently wrote to me to say that from what he knew of Mr. Brett, "he is not a scholar, not a theologian, not even well-read in English."

Seeing that James formally excluded himself from the work of a Training Institution because he felt it required the finest scholarship and experience I went over by steamer to see him at Geelong & asked if Archdn Williams who was so particularly interested in him & his future would ask him to head the Training & superintendence work would he accept it? He replied readily that if he is thought worthy he would. I then went & saw Canon Goodman the Senior Examining Chaplain to the Bishop . . . In regard to Mr. Brett he said he knew him well and had examined him for ordination. "He is a man", he continued," with no mental equipment. He doesn't know a word of Greek & is a poor scholar in English. Besides he is a sickly man and will break down if he attempts Chinese."

Having ascertained from James his willingness to help me in my work I had a long private talk with Mrs Adams his hostess.¹⁵⁰ She is a widow of the Late Captain Adams of the Royal Navy & was matron of Trinity College during James five years residence there. . . . I enclose therefore her letter & the letters of two other intimate friends Canon Carlisle & Mr. Wm Howat.¹⁵¹ The former was chaplain to Trinity College as well as Hon. Sec to the Chinese Mission. I might add he has a special partiality for the Chinese people & has spent some time in learning their language & held for many years constant social intercourse with them. The latter is the solicitor of the Hon. Sir Rupert Clarke Bart, MLC, one of Melbourne's millionaires. He is warmly interested in Christian education & in missionary work & has given largely to both objects¹⁵²

Cheong's anxiety can be seen in the thought that James, still in his early twenties, a Taishanese/Cantonese speaker with no more knowledge of scholarly written Chinese and spoken Mandarin than Brett, might be appointed Principal.¹⁵³

In a belated gesture of solidarity with Cheong the students, including Daniel Wong, withdrew from their training program, the college closed and the property was sold. The CMAV management had reduced the Chinese staff of five catechists and five missionary students to one catechist and no students in less than a year following the amalgamation.

150 In 1888 James had just finished his MA in classics, i.e. Greek and Roman civilisations, at Melbourne University. James had, at that stage, no theological training at all and no knowledge whatever of written Chinese. He was no better suited for the Training College than Brett but just as Brett was a loyal evangelical, so Cheong assumed that James was loyal to his father.

151 Canon Carlisle was a strong supporter of Cheong. See Cheong's comments in Cheok Hong Cheong to Archdeacon Williams, 13 December 1897. Howat was associated with Cheong in the Victorian Anti-opium Movement, yet, despite being an 'intimate' friend, as Cheong describes him in this letter, he and Cheong had a serious falling out that is discussed in Chapter 7.

152 Cheok Hong Cheong to Archdeacon Samuel Williams, 10 May 1898.

153 James Cheong's personal papers held by St Peter's Anglican Church, East Melbourne contain his notes of his studies in classical Chinese.

The Chinese Mission income of the CMAV fell from £1000 a year to £62 in 1897.¹⁵⁴ Cheong may have been ineffective but the policies and management of the CMAV seemed, to him, incoherent and incompetent.

The CMAV dismissed Cheong with effect from 1 November 1898. Cheong's treatment reinforced Chinese community views that Europeans would never understand the Chinese world. Christian and non-Christian Chinese, together with a small group of Europeans united around Cheong. Anglican converts, led by Andrew Chung, wrote to the CMAV asking for an explanation of Cheong's dismissal. As Cheong remarked they were, 'not school children that might be influenced or even coerced but men of business ability & capacity who want to know all the reasons for such a change.'¹⁵⁵ They were told, dismissively but accurately, that Cheong would not do what he was told.¹⁵⁶ It was not just the Chinese Anglicans who expressed concern. Many long-time European supporters were also disturbed by Cheong's dismissal. He was Victoria's most prominent Chinese citizen and inseparably identified with the Anglican Chinese Mission, and it must be added, the mission with him. In August 1898 the majority of Chinese Anglicans, a large number of Chinese sympathisers and Cheong met in the Temperance Hall, Russell Street marking a formal break with the CMAV.¹⁵⁷ The church paper defended the CMAV:

THE CHINESE MISSION

The Church Missionary Association have not deserved the trouble they have had with the mission to the Chinese residents in Victoria, or the obloquy which has been cast upon them in connection with it. When about a year ago the proposal was made to them by the committee managing that mission, that they should take it into their hands with all its assets and obligations, they consented to the transfer, chiefly out of the praiseworthy desire that instead of spending all their energies and funds on foreign missions they might have the privilege of carrying on missionary work nearer home. The request to take over the Chinese mission came to them by a nearly unanimous recommendation — Archdeacon Williams, the mission's greatest benefactor, supported by the report of the commission appointed by the Bishop to inquire into the condition of the mission, and with the full consent and approval of the then superintendent of the mission, Mr. Cheong. They knew that they were undertaking no light responsibility for they had before them in that report sufficient

154 Cheok Hong Cheong to the Archbishop of Melbourne, 29 May 1916.

155 Cheok Hong Cheong to M C Bridger, 5 June 1912.

156 *The Church Missionary Gleaner*, September 1898, p 66.

157 Apsey, Rev. Gordon, (unpublished nd) 'The Relationship of the Church of England (Anglican) to the Church of England Chinese Mission of the Epiphany' from unpublished Mss Early Missions to the Victorian Chinese and the Church of England Chinese Mission of the Epiphany, 123-125 Little Bourke Street, Melbourne, p 4.

proof of the unsatisfactory state into which the mission had fallen, and a financial statement showing that in spite of extraordinary efforts that been made, the revenue of the mission had for some years fallen below the expenditure by something like £200. Every step that they have taken since they assumed the charge of the mission has had the approval of persons experienced in the conduct of such institutions. Had their efforts been seconded as they ought to have been by the superintendent whom they employed, instead of being thwarted and defied by him, very different results would have been obtained from what, unhappily, are now to be seen. We would advise our readers to obtain copies of the printed statement of their case put forward by the C.M.A Committee, and signed by Archdeacon Langley, that they may understand something of the difficulties with which they have to contend, and may judge with what propriety and loyalty Mr. Cheong can come forward to a public meeting and take part with his friends in attempting to organise another so-called "Church of England" Chinese Mission, in opposition to that to which the Church of England in this colony twelve months ago, in the most formal and public manner, with consent of the Bishops of both dioceses, transferred without reserve all its interests and rights.¹⁵⁸

The CMAV informed the CMS in London:

You are aware that the Mission to the Chinese in Victoria was entrusted to the CMA last year by the Bishops and the Board of Missions. We have had considerable difficulty and opposition in the endeavour to reorganize the same which had drifted into a very bad state. The chief salaried officer [i.e. Cheong] has continually neglected and refused to carry out the directions of the Committee, until, finally, he was asked to resign. As he took no notice of this request, the Committee was obliged to dismiss him . . . The old Board made Cheong Superintendent . . . and were completely at his mercy. We felt that . . . we must have a Chinese-speaking European to superintend this work . . . [we are] desirous of putting the whole Mission on a more satisfactory basis and working it by means of one whom we can trust and from whom we can find out what is transpiring.¹⁵⁹

On the 7th November 1898 Cheong issued a formal statement acknowledging that the 'old' mission had not been producing converts in any significant numbers but his explanation was that he had been overworked.¹⁶⁰ His most telling remark reflected the marginalisation of the Chinese Christians and his reference to a lack of social intercourse between Chinese and Europeans would seem to be an indirect accusation of racial prejudice that needs to be weighed against the wider context of his own behaviour. He stated:

It is not the number [of] men you employ which counts in Christian work but whether they have the essentials of character gifts & graces & the equipment of special training & above all the endowment of the Holy Spirit. And you are unable to administer the tests because of the language difficulty. And when that difficulty did not exist you do not mix with them in private & social life to secure an insight

158 *The Church of England Messenger*, 1 November 1898.

159 E J Barnett to General Secretary of CMS 19 October 1898, Church Missionary Society, London, Correspondence, Folder C/Y8, Doc 111.

160 *Ibid*, pp 2-3.

into all these things. Hence the deplorable results.¹⁶¹

On 12 December 1898, Cheong's supporters formally adopted the title 'Church Missionary Society of Victoria Re-formed' (CMSVR). The CMSV's 1859 constitution, unchanged, was adopted as the constitution of the CMSVR, the meeting affirming the intention of the 'Cheong' Mission to retain its identity as an Anglican enterprise:

The principle enunciated by Mr Cheong in 1898 when in his appeal to the Chinese converts he said it behooves us more than ever to seek light and guidance from above so that nothing may be done for strife or vainglory; nor leave room for the conjecture that you are separating yourself from the Church of England that Branch of the Catholic Apostolic Church which has been used by God for your ingathering into the fold of the Great Shepherd. And also demonstrated at that great meeting held in the Temperance Hall just after the breach with the C.M.A. in 1898 when (to quote the circular letter issued in March 1899) it was decided in order to preserve the Mission and to keep it in the Church of England that it be reorganised under its former title (Ch Missionary Society of Victoria).¹⁶²

For the next twenty years there were two competing Anglican missions to the Chinese until the CMAV closed its Chinese Mission at 110 Little Bourke Street in 1918. The building was leased to the Presbyterian Chinese Mission and sold in 1953.¹⁶³ In 1900 or 1901 Cheong went to Sydney to lecture on China on behalf of the Chinese Empire Reform Association (see Chapter 7). He was taken aback when the New South Wales Church Missionary Association (CMANSW) sought to have the City Council deny the CERA and Cheong the use of the Sydney Town Hall to deliver his lectures.¹⁶⁴

In 1902 the CMSVR purchased land at 121-123 Little Bourke Street for a new mission building almost directly opposite the 'lost' premises at 110 Little Bourke St. Isabel Willis, the companion of Mrs. Maria Moriarty of Inverleigh who was the largest single contributor to the new enterprise, William Davies and Cheong were appointed Trustees.¹⁶⁵ A significant change was made to the old CMSV Trust Document giving the CMSVR Trustees the power to appoint new Trustees (i.e., a self-perpetuating trust). The practical effect was to give Cheong, as Chairman of the Trustees, control of the mission's physical

161 Cheong Cheok Hong, (1915), Response to a Paper submitted by Rev. A.R. Ebbs at Conference between Representatives of C.M.A. & Epiphany Mission. 24 April 1915.
Ebbs, Rev. A R, (1915), Paper submitted by Rev. A.R. Ebbs at Conference between Representatives of C.M.A. & Epiphany Mission, 24 April 1915.

162 Bridger, Marston, (1913), *Hon. Secretary's Report to the Annual Meeting*, 28th August 1913.

163 Johnstone, S M, (1925), *A History of the Church Missionary Society in Australia and New Zealand*, Sydney, Church Missionary Society, p 291.

164 Cheok Hong Cheng to Miss Isabel Willis, 28 May 1912.

165 Cheok Hong Cheong to Marston C Bridger, 6 January 1911. Supreme Court of Victoria, 90/8180, Chin and Doery vs Goon and anor, Judgement 92/279, pp 3-4. Miss Willis, on behalf of her sister, Mrs Moriarty, and Mr Davies, former supporters of the CMSV were the largest European contributors to the

assets. The foundation stone of the building was laid by Miss Willis on 17 July 1902 and the building was opened in 1904.¹⁶⁶ Cheong's plan included facilities on the second level for training and meeting purposes with accommodation for student catechists on the third level. The third floor became a Cheong family apartment or as Cheong referred to it from time to time, his 'city office'. A shop was included on the ground level to provide the Trustees with revenue to maintain the property.

Cheong wasted no time in promoting the continuity of the CMSVR with the earlier CMSV. A major report about the CMSVR appeared in the widely circulating *Weekly Times* newspaper accompanied by the illustration on the following page. Cheong maintained that the CMSVR was a continuation of the original mission, i.e., the CMSV unmerged. It was true of a majority of the congregation, the superintending missionary, and some key European supporters including Maria Moriarty, Isabel Willis, Matthew Davies and Marston Bridger but in a legal or diocesan sense, or in the minds of evangelical Anglicans, it was quite untrue.¹⁶⁷

The CMSVR needed a formal association with the Anglican Church to maintain financial support and to sustain Cheong's status as a 'mainstream' Christian leader. That support had traditionally come from the evangelicals in the diocese but their focus was now on the CMAV. The CMSVR was outside the evangelical mainstream in Victoria.

The Rev. James Cheong had long been 'ear-marked' by his father to succeed him as the leader of the Anglican Chinese Mission. After his return in 1904 from his theological studies in England, James Cheong was ordained priest and licensed to St Peter's Church, Eastern Hill, reflecting his adoption of 'high church' or 'Anglo-Catholic' beliefs and practices. Cheong's alliance with the ABM and Hughes was always one of convenience rather than a meeting of minds and values. Cheong's view of his son's future had never been a matter of negotiation and an initial test of wills occurred when James' decided to live at St Peter's. Cheong wanted him to live in the apartment on the top floor of 121-123 Little Bourke Street. James preferred the company of like-minded priests at St Peter's

CMSVR .

166 Apsey, Rev. Gordon, (unpublished nd) 'The Relationship of the Church of England (Anglican) to the Church of England Chinese Mission of the Epiphany' from unpublished Mss Early Missions to the Victorian Chinese and the Church of England Chinese Mission of the Epiphany, 123-125 Little Bourke Street, Melbourne, p 154.

167 *The Church of England Messenger*, 1 November 1898.

The Church Missionary Society of Victoria, Reformed



Clergy House.¹⁶⁸ Residence was not, however, the issue that finally destroyed Cheong's dream of placing James under his life-long supervision as Missioner (see Chapter 6).

A serious and long-lasting break between father and son centred on the introduction, by Hughes and James, without consultation with Cheong, of altar candles and private confession in the mission church. Cheong sent a strong letter of protest to the Archbishop who replied:

Dear Mr Cheong – I have seen both Mr Hughes and your son on the subject of your letter. With regard to the candlesticks placed by your son on the Communion Table at the Mission, I heard of it for the first time from you. I do not think your son will remove them but the chapel is not one of the churches of my diocese and I can only leave you to urge further your wishes. Your son is licensed as Curate of St Peter's and I cannot withdraw this license so long as your son gives no occasion to do so. I deeply regret the difference of opinion between you and him but it ought to be capable of adjustment between you.¹⁶⁹

Cheong removed the candlesticks and hid them in the mission building. His public reason was that candles on the altar paralleled elements of traditional family worship that Chinese Christians had given up. He rejected confession on theological grounds but it is not unreasonable to suppose that he also saw his own role as the principal confidant and guide of the Chinese Christians being superseded by the clergymen. In July (1911) Hughes withdrew all clergy services from the mission, i.e., James Cheong no longer carried out the duties of Missioner including the administration of the sacraments. This was an intolerable affront to Cheong whose view on the importance of filial piety – the duty of obedience of son to father – was an indelible part of his character (see Chapter 6 and the opening pages of this chapter). He did not or would not see, or perhaps did not care, that a layman intervening in the priestly functions of the two clergymen was, to them, an affront to their self-image and sense of authority.

The CMSVR, or Anglican Chinese Mission of the Epiphany, as it was now known, was in legal terms, an independent voluntary body operating in association with, but not formally part of, the Anglican Church.¹⁷⁰ The CMSVR was located within the boundaries of the Anglican parish of Eastern Hill. In Anglican practice, Hughes, as the incumbent, had

168 See discussion of James Cheong's religious outlook in Holden, Colin, (1995), *From Tories at Prayer to Socialists at Mass, St Peter's Eastern Hill, Melbourne, 1846-1990*, Melbourne, Melbourne University Press.

169 Most Rev. H R L Clark, Archbishop of Melbourne to Cheok Hong Cheong, 14 June 1911.

170 During the 1980s and 1980s the mission moved into more formal connection with the Anglican Diocese and is now, in effect, an ethnic parish with rights to attend the Diocesan Synod.

responsibility for all Anglican matters within his parish. At that time no Anglican clergyman, evangelical or otherwise, irrespective of any differences of theological views would administer the sacraments anywhere within the Eastern Hill parish without Hughes' permission.

Cheong's strong Anglican commitment was shown that he did not, faced with this situation, decide to invite a clergyman of another denomination to provide ministerial services. Although his denominational identity, and that of the Mission, with the Anglican Church was questioned, notably during the dispute with the CMAV and later by Ernest Hughes, and although, as Eitel had observed, he did not always conformed to conventional Anglican ideas, he was always aware of his Anglican connections.¹⁷¹ One example of his unconventional outlook was that he did not take Holy Communion on a weekly or even monthly basis as was the convention with most Anglicans. Hughes' ban did not affect Sunday worship services as these were normally conducted by lay readers nominated by the Board of the CMSVR and licensed, through Hughes, by the Bishop. Hughes did not seek to have their licences revoked. Cheong told Miss Willis:

You are aware that our Mission Church has been under a sort of interdict by which no administration of the Sacraments could take place by any clergyman of the Church of England since the Rev. E.S. Hughes has chosen to forsake us.¹⁷²

James took no further part in the Mission and concentrated on his role at St Peter's and in the wider Anglican Church for the rest of his life (see Chapter 6). With Hughes' agreement, the Archbishop eventually resolved the contretemps by appointing the Rev. A W a de facto extra-parochial situation on the principle that the mission constituted a private chapel outside the jurisdiction of the Parish of Eastern Hill. The Archbishop had made the appointment conditional on a diocesan representative being appointed to the Trust but when the Board demurred, the diocese did not pursue the issue.¹⁷³ Cheong had explained the Archbishop's decision in a letter to Isabel Willis.

Croydon 29/8/11

Dear Miss Willis – I am duly in receipt of your favor with enclosures a few days ago & would have acknowledged the same ere this if not for the influenza epidemic which thoroughly prostrated me.

Mr. E.S.H. [Rev. Ernest Hughes] will not any longer trouble the internal management of the Mission. He has opposed us very strongly before the

171 Cheok Hong Cheong to Miss Isabel Willis, 11 May 1912.

172 Cheok Hong Cheong to Miss Isabel Willis, 13 February 1912.

173 Registrar, Diocese of Melbourne to M C Bridger, 6 May 1912.

Archbishop & would have wiped us out of existence if he had the power but the Archbishop is not with him and though the Mission for the most part is situated within the boundary of St Peter's parish & for that reason E.S.H. has asserted his claims of jurisdiction. The Archbishop in reply to our representatives the Rev. A. Cresswell MA & Mr. Bridger said, "You can dismiss from your minds the idea that your Chinese Mission is an appendage of St Peter's. I look upon it as a Diocesan Mission."¹⁷⁴

With minor exceptions the CMSVR (the Anglican Chinese Mission of the Epiphany) from 1904, like the CMSV from 1859 to 1897, operated under the pastoral supervision of an Anglican clergyman licensed by the Anglican Archbishop of Melbourne.¹⁷⁵ There has been some individual and temporary non-Anglican clergy assistance but no clergyman of another denomination has ever been officially appointed to the Mission of the Epiphany.

The Archbishop had, as noted above, asked the mission to strengthen its link to the diocese by the appointment of a diocesan nominee to the Trust and the Board, with Cheong's agreement, agreed that R J Alcock, the diocesan nominee, should be appointed.¹⁷⁶ The Board, and especially Marston Bridger, felt betrayed when shortly afterwards Cheong repudiated the agreement as an improper interference with the autonomy of the Trustees who, under the Trust Deed, had the sole role and authority to nominate and appoint Trustees. The Board then suggested that Bridger, having been a Trustee of the CMSV at the time of the amalgamation in 1897, could be appointed to the CMSVR Trustees but Cheong refused.¹⁷⁷ Cheong's refusal was well-grounded. Bridger had written to the Registrar of the Diocese during discussions over the status of the mission and expressed the view that:

I may say that the Mission has from first to last been thorough in its adherence to the Church of England. I also venture to express the opinion that the property of the mission is Church property; that is it can belong to no other Church or denomination; and that as a place of worship in connection with the Mission's work the property may be regarded as coming within the scope of the Acts of Synod with respect to Trusts.¹⁷⁸

Cheong was Chairman of Trustees and as Honorary Superintendent, an ex-officio member of the Board of Management. While both roles were important, his status among the Chinese gave him unmatched authority in what Hughes had angrily, but correctly, once

174 Cheok Hong Cheong to Miss Isabel Willis, 28 August 1911.

175 Registrar of the Diocese of Melbourne to M C Bridger, Hon Sec, Chinese Mission, 6 May 1912, 26 May 1912.

176 M C Bridger to the Registrar of the Diocese of Melbourne, 29 February 1912.

177 *CMSVR Minutes*, 3 February 1913.

178 M C Bridger to the Registrar, Diocese of Melbourne, 29 February 1912.

described as 'Cheong's Mission'. Bridger's letter, apart from being incorrect in law, was a direct, if long-term, challenge to the autonomy of the Trustees and hence to Cheong's status. In the background of Bridger's mind was the fear, and it probably seemed real at the time, that Cheong and the Chinese might, as they had done in August 1898, simply walk away from the diocese as they had then walked away from the CMAV and this time Cheong had the numbers on the CMSVR Property Trust to keep control of the buildings.¹⁷⁹

Cheong needed the full cooperation of the other Trustee, Miss Willis to appoint a new Trustee. Her letter to him might, had Cheong been less committed to the Anglican Church, have resulted in the Mission becoming either non-denominational or linked to another denomination. Although Willis was a practising Anglican she saw little benefit in the mission's link to the Anglican Church:

Dear Mr. Cheong, Yours of the 10th reached me safely. I am sorry to say that I cannot agree to the election of any nominee of the Bishop in Council as our co-Trustee. I think our experiences have shown that it is time we declared ourselves as a simple effort to win the Chinese for Christ & to have nothing to do with denominationalism at all. Our Committee may be adherents of the Church of England as we ourselves are & naturally would like to work with the Diocesan authorities provided they are sympathetic. But you have wooed them too long & what have you gained by your effort to be recognised as a Church of England Mission? Nothing. What have the Chinese gained? Nothing & worse confusion. What has our Saviour gained? Nothing but sorrow. As to H.C. do not let that trouble you, invite a Godly minister to lead the feast of love, someone who will preserve the deepest spiritual aspect of the Lord's Table & you will bring joy to the Master by recognising Him as the Head. Your long connection with the Church of England will doubtless make such a course hard for you but you must be content to suffer if need be, in thus declaring Christ Jesus to be your Master & Lord. The Diocesan folk know well your longing to keep in touch with them. And their only hold on you is refusal to administer Holy Communion but take no notice. And let the remaining years of your life be spent for Christ alone to bring your brethren to Him.¹⁸⁰

Although attempts to bridge the gap went on, Hughes imposed unacceptable conditions by insisting on the use of candles and observance of the arrangements that existed prior to July 1911 that were unacceptable to the Board.¹⁸¹ The Precentor of St Paul's Cathedral, the closest Anglican church to the mission chapel, tried to intercede by agreeing that if Cheong could find a Chinese-speaking clergyman to conduct the services, the Cathedral

179 Cheong mentioned Bridger's concern over the non-denominational possibility in Cheok Hong Cheong to Miss Isabel Willis, 28 May 1912.

180 Isabel Willis to Cheong, 19 February 1912.

181 M C Bridger to Registrar, Diocese of Melbourne, 20 April 1912.

would appoint him as a part-time member of the Cathedral clergy. No such priest was available but in any case the appointment of Cresswell ended the difficulty.¹⁸²

The appointment of a diocesan trustee involved adding a fourth trustee to Cheong, Willis and William Davies, the mission's treasurer. Irrespective of any additional trustee the Chinese congregation wanted a Chinese majority on the Property Trust and were pressing for the appointment of David Ching Hin to the existing three member Trust. Their demand became more pressing following the death of William Davies. Cheong's vacillation over the trusteeship is a complicated issue in which personality and cultural issues were involved. Cheong had long maintained his own authority and status by keeping other Chinese at a distance from the decision making processes of the mission. Another Chinese appointment meant sharing his authority. Another European appointment, especially a diocesan representative, to the Trust risked alienating some, if not all, the Chinese members of the congregation.

Bridger's irritation with Cheong resulted in an extraordinary step of moving the Board's meetings to his office without informing Cheong of the time of meetings or the new location. It was improper behaviour, and to add to the situation Board meetings were often cancelled because, Bridger said, there was no business to discuss. Even Annual Meetings were ignored.¹⁸³ In his report to the Annual Meeting in August 1913 Bridger accused Cheong of ignoring the Board and using the powers of the Trusteeship to run the mission on his own terms.¹⁸⁴ Bridger's report was received but not adopted by the Board in a desire to avoid a public split. At one point, in sheer frustration, the European members decided to resign en masse with Bridger declaring that the mission was not Cheong's private preserve. Bridger conveyed the Board's concerns to the archbishop who urged patience and the crisis was briefly averted.

In 1916, Cheong told the Archbishop that he had been prepared to have Alcock as a fourth member of the Trust but not if it meant losing the financial support of Mrs Moriarty on whose behalf Miss Willis acted, or if it involved alienating the Chinese members of the

182 Cheok Hong Cheong to Miss Isabel Willis, 29 April 1912

183 *CMSVR Minutes*, February, March, April 1913.

184 *CMSVR Minutes*, 28 August 1913.

congregation. Cheong drew attention to Chinese concerns over property issues in a note to the Archbishop:

As I told your Grace when the Rev. A. W. Cresswell introduced the proposal I voted for it, being assured of Mr Alcock's breadth of view and liberality of sentiment, and wrote to that effect to my co-trustee (Miss Willis) telling her that the proposal was carried by vote of the Board, including one of the Trustees, but that her consent was necessary to make the vote effective. She did not, however, and would not give her consent. Meanwhile, the Chinese members of the Board, who had voted as I did, realizing the full meaning of the proposal, reproached me with having misled them by my vote. You have lost one church already. Would you lose another? That in face of the facts and experiences of the Mission how was it possible for you to vote as you did? I told them, in reply, that we were under a new regime, that the present Archbishop is not likely to hand us over to a private Society. But, they asked, what about his successor? And these Chinese members are levelheaded businessmen, several of them with large business undertakings of their own and cling to the view as laid down by Lord Bacon that 'history is prophecy'.¹⁸⁵

The loss of the original CMSV property to the CMAV remained a sensitive issue to the end of Cheong's life. It was the Chinese, Christian and non-Christian who, encouraged by Cheong, had been the major contributors to both mission buildings. Retaining Chinese confidence in the CMSVR Trust was vital to Cheong's leadership. The trustee issue might have been easier had not events in Sydney increased the alienation of the Chinese Christians. Cheong described the circumstances:

The case of the Sydney converts is that when the C.M.A. received compensation for their Chinese Mission Church on a/c of Sydney's Street widening policy they simply kept the money while the Presbyterians with the money paid them have secured another site & erected their new Mission Church. The Church of England converts have no place of worship & no say in the matter . . .¹⁸⁶

The awkward relationship that was developing between the Trustees and the Board of Management was a signal of more battles in the years ahead. At the heart of the difficulty was the ultimate ownership and use of the mission property. In the later part of the twentieth century, this long-standing problem resulted in a legal tussle between the Trustees, the Board of Management, the majority of the small congregation and subscribers to the mission, and the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne. It centred on the extent to which the Trust could intervene in the day-to-day management, including the appointment of clergy, the use of buildings, and other issues that the Board had

185 Cheok Hong Cheong to the Archbishop of Melbourne, 29 May 1916.

186 Cheok Hong Cheong to Isabel Willis, 6 June 1912; CHC to the Archbishop of Melbourne, 29 May also refers to the Wexford Street Church.

controlled. It arose from the creation of the successory trust of 1902 coupled with a lack of clear constitutional procedures defining the relative roles and responsibilities of the two bodies. Although the old CMSV constitution was adopted by the CMSVR it was honoured as much in the breach as the observance. A redrafted constitution was prepared in the early 1930s and although it was followed for the next sixty years, the Supreme Court of Victoria ruled in 1991 that it had not been properly adopted and therefore the '1898' constitution remained nominally in place.

The dispute between Cheong and Bridger and the ongoing impact of differing cultural perceptions were not dissimilar to those that had occurred in the CMAV in 1897-1898:

Dear Mr Bridger Re the Vacancy on the Trusteeship.

I have had a long conference with Miss Willis on the subject & she tells me that her Aunt (Mrs Moriarty) during her remaining days charged her to accord the Chinese brethren their proper representation. Originally you may be aware the proposal was that I should be the sole Trustee as all the contributions for the Building Fund came through my hands, but I declined the honor of being sole Trustee & so the largest subscriber thereto [Miss Willis/Mrs Moriarty] with the next largest who was also a most devoted worker in the Mission [William Davies] were associated with me. And though I had expressed the wish for a wider representation & actually proposed that there should be five the resolution was carried limiting the number to three about whose qualifications there had been no question.¹⁸⁷

The next step in Cheong's conflict with Bridger was over the management of a Chinese mission hall in Ormond. The 'Murton Hall' (non-denominational) was an independent Trust funded by a Miss Murton of Hawksburn (also a supporter of the China Inland Mission) and the Millar family of East Brighton. Miss Murton and the Millars were Anglicans and had arranged with Cheong for the hall, as property, to be managed by an independent Trust comprising Cheong, Mr Millar and his daughter but to be otherwise at the disposal of the CMSVR under the direction of the Board of Management. The CMSVR Board of Management had no right to intervene in any matters concerning the property but Bridger had not fully grasped the details of the trusteeship.¹⁸⁸ Following the deaths of the Millars Cheong was the sole Trustee. Cheong wrote to Bridger:

Mr M.C. Bridger, Dear Sir, Your letter enclosing copy letter to the Secretary to the Education Department duly reached me. And in reply thereto will you allow me to point out that the Board of Management has apparently overlooked the fact that while it may have certain authorities regarding the conduct of the Mission the control of the Building; The Murton Hall; is absolutely in the hands of the Trustees and I have therefore to request that you will be good enough to withdraw your letter

187 Cheok Hong Cheong to M C Bridger, 6 January 1913.

188 With decline in Chinese Christian activity in Ormond, the building had been leased to the Victorian Education Department to supplement the classroom facilities of the Ormond Primary School.

of the 11th inst sent to the Education Department.

[There is a pencil footnote, apparently by Mr Bridger: – Secty to view Trust Deed at Union Bank].¹⁸⁹

Bridger received legal advice that confirmed Cheong's position on the separation of authority between the Board and the Murton Hall Trust.¹⁹⁰ Cheong retaliated by demanding a personal apology from Bridger and declared that Bridger had acted improperly by moving the location of Board meetings without informing all members and, most serious of all, had not called Annual Meetings for two years.

Cheong sent Bridger another letter intended to secure an unequivocal acknowledgement of Bridger's error over the Murton Hall matter. It is important, in the light of the events, to see Cheong's understanding of the relative roles of the Board and the Trustees and, most important of all in the light of the Supreme Court's ruling in 1991 about the need for the Board to be elected annually by a properly constituted general meeting of subscribers. That implied the existence of a list of subscribers to the Mission as distinct from the congregation which had no voting powers at all:

Mr. M.C. Bridger, Dear Sir, Re the Murton Hall. Surely your good sense if not the luminous exposition of the law by Mr. Rigby (re the Little Bourke St property) should have informed you that Trustees have been invested with certain powers for the due exercise of which they alone are responsible & that no others share or can share the responsibilities unless & until . . . they appoint them their fellow-trustees. And the same principle applies to the Murton Hall Trust. I had thought you were sufficiently informed to know the separate powers & functions of the Trustees & the Committee that while the former are permanent office-bearers entrusted with all the properties of the Mission the latter have their limitations & are subject to annual election to make their position legal. Notwithstanding these facts of law however the Trustees have always been & always are ready to talk over matters & consult with the Committee & other friends & supporters of the Mission on all-important questions affecting its interests. But on the present occasion when the question of the extension of the lease of the Murton Hall was raised no opportunity was afforded the Trustees to discuss matters with the Committee by the action of the Secretary who without any consultation with the Committee had dropped out three consecutive monthly meetings thereof in precisely the same way as he had previously dropped out two Annual Meetings of the Society (1911 & 1912) at which the Committee according to both the rules & customs was wont to be elected. . . the Secretary had shifted the meetings of Committee from the Headquarters of the Mission where they have always been held since their erection to his own private office. And yet want of consultation is the grievance against the Trustees who are by no means under the Committee as the Secretary certainly is.¹⁹¹

189 Cheok Hong Cheong to M C Bridger, 14 February 1913.

190 Cheok Hong Cheong to M C Bridger, 5 April 1913 and 18 April 1913.

191 Cheok Hong Cheong to M C Bridger, 18 April 1913.

After the break with Cheong and the formation of the CMSVR in 1898, the CMAV Mission had achieved some early success by opening English language night classes at St Hilary's, Kew; St Columb's, Hawthorn; St Thomas', Essendon; St Clement's, Elsternwick; and at Bendigo and Echuca. The schools closed one after another as enrolments fell and European supporters became preoccupied with the domestic effects of World War I. Few Chinese attended CMAV services in Little Bourke Street. In 1915 the CMAV, with the complete failure of its Chinese mission work looming, appointed a sub-committee to try to end the pointless and wasteful two mission division of Anglican work among the Chinese.¹⁹² The CMAV offered to leave Chinese evangelisation in Victoria entirely in the hands of the CMSVR. It might have seemed a victory for Cheong had it not been for the refusal of the CMAV to make any financial contribution or to return the property in Little Bourke Street.

Cheong demanded, as a starting point, the transfer of 110-112 Lt Bourke St to the CMSVR Property Trust in return for which he was prepared to have CMAV representation on the CMSVR Board of Management, but not on the Trust. Cheong's response to the 1915 proposals of the CMAV was direct and appropriate:

This joint or equal control suggested with those who have the longest acquaintance with & consequently the widest knowledge of & largest experience in the work of the local Chinese Mission will I fear prove in the end a divided control. We are not like two Societies which had developed their work separately and independently in the same field & when comparing notes find that their views & sympathies are in thorough accord. They can thus easily amalgamate as one. But the circumstances in connection with this Mission are such as to make a variation both desirable and necessary.

^{1st} The Chinese Mission with all its properties (some £5000 worth) the C.M.A. [CMAV] received 17years ago from the C.M.S. of Victoria [CMSV].

^{2nd} All the Metropolitan and one of the country properties I know personally were subscribed for a specific purpose as the contributions came through my hands – no diversion therefore could well be made while the needs of the Mission here are as stated above so dominant.

^{3rd} The C.M.A. has been unable apparently by reason of the absorbing vastness of the Regions Beyond to give the local Chinese Mission adequate attention. As a matter of fact although it had the run of the Churches & Sunday Schools in all the Dioceses of the State its income therefrom has fallen to less than one-tenth & its staff to a like proportion!

While welcoming always a representation of the C.M.A. on our Board of Management & any suggestions from its Committee will carry due weight with our Management I am prepared subject to the approval of His Grace the Archbp if the C.M.A. in the heartiest good will offer to hand back its trust in its entirety to the old

192 Ebbs, Rev. A R (1915), Paper Submitted by Rev. A R Ebbs at Conference between Representatives of CMA and Epiphany Mission, 24 April 1915.

Society, to recommend its acceptance of the same.¹⁹³

The discussions failed and in 1918 the CMAV mission closed and the premises were leased to the Presbyterian Chinese Mission. In 1953 the premises were sold for £10,320 and the proceeds invested for the benefit of the CMS but not, as the original Trust Deed had required, used either for Chinese evangelisation in Victoria or for Christian work in China. Cheong's rejection of the CMAV approach resulted in Bridger's resignation. A year later Cheong gave this picture of the state of Anglican missions to the Chinese in Victoria that had followed the 1898 creation of two Anglican Missions:

First [the original Chinese Mission] has been treated as a shuttlecock. . . and brought to its present deplorable condition spiritually and temporarily . . . And, though after the failure of their negotiations for a re-amalgamation by reason of their unfair and one-sided proposals, nevertheless I offered to help them to revive the work at Bendigo by guaranteeing one-third of the expenses of the Mission for a term of 3 years if they would guarantee a like proportion and local churchmen the remainder. The Bishop of Bendigo I learnt was willing to bear his share of the responsibility but the Association, which accepted the trust when they took over the Mission's income and the Mission's properties, was unable to see their way to do so, thus practically repudiating the trust reposed in them by Bishop Goe and yet retaining the Mission's properties.¹⁹⁴

Whatever remained of the 1850s Anglican dream of the evangelisation of Chinese in Victoria and the subsequent conversion of China was submerged in the new reality that confronted the Anglican Chinese Mission of the Epiphany – that of being a fringe body serving a shrinking group of bilingual Cantonese/English-speaking Australians. In Melbourne, as in other parts of the Chinese diaspora, a cultural gap was to open between Australians of Cantonese ethnic descent and postwar non-Cantonese arrivals from China and elsewhere.

By 1918 Cheong's health was beginning to fail and family strains were accumulating. Economic conditions had deteriorated. Mrs. Cheong was increasingly concerned the family would lose everything if Cheong's judgement stumbled. Cheong wrote to Miss Willis:

Dear Miss Willis, At the last meeting of our Mission Committee on the 26th ult Archdn Hayman our Chaplain desired me to bring up for discussion 'Our plans for the Future' at the next meeting on Thursday week the 31st inst. It will be an important meeting & I trust that you can make it convenient to be present. The question arose from the fact that with my advancing years the need of a younger

193 Cheong Hong Cheong, Response to a Paper Submitted by Rev. A R Ebbs at Conference between Representatives of CMA and Epiphany Mission, 24 April 1915.

194 Cheok Hong Cheong to the Archbishop of Melbourne, 29 May 1916.

man to share in the work has been felt & our inability so far of securing one though I have been continually in harness for 32 years without the break of even a months holiday except when ill-health has enforced it & I am feeling the effects of the drain [of physical energy].¹⁹⁵

In late 1914, following the death of Cresswell, the Rev. R J E Hayman was appointed Acting Chaplain. By putting his emphasis on providing pastoral care Hayman avoided any confrontations with Cheong. Over the next two years, members of the congregation including Samuel Goon, David Chung Hin (Trustee) and Timothy Ng Yat Yee (Cheong's nephew) assisted in the conduct of services in the Mission chapel. The day-to-day management of the Mission was firmly in the hands of Cheong but evangelism, once the cornerstone of his self-image, had faded into a distant background.¹⁹⁶ The Chinese living in Victoria had made up their minds about Christianity one way or another many years before.

Li Shui Kwai, a missionary from Samoa, was appointed as lay Missioner, under Cheong's supervision. Li had attended a Bible College in China and was highly recommended by the Bishop of Hong Kong and other clergymen.¹⁹⁷ They described him as, 'energetic and vigorous and has in him the right spirit. He has had fair educational advantages and preached here with efficiency and general acceptance.' Cheong said of him, 'Having laboured in Melbourne for nearly 18 months the Hon. Supt. testifies that he is a workman that needeth not to be ashamed rightly dividing the Word of Truth.'¹⁹⁸ Li struggled to find a footing in an environment in striking contrast to Cheong's claim twenty years earlier that he had established a financially viable and outward looking congregation.

The majority of people associated with the congregation were born in Australia. Their worldview was different to those of people born during the 19th century in a China that no longer existed. Cheong had to ask the Archbishop for diocesan financial assistance stating that without it the mission would have to close.¹⁹⁹ The Archbishop agreed to appoint Li as a Stipendiary Lay Reader with a diocesan allowance of £75, commencing an arrangement that continued for many years. In mid 1923, shortly after the mission paid for his family to

195 Cheong Hong Cheong to Isabel Willis, 22 May 1917.

196 *CMSVR Minutes*, 28 January 1915.

197 In addition to missions in Australia, there were Chinese missions in New Zealand and in the Pacific Islands. While NZ Presbyterian Missions have been documented there is no general account of Chinese missions in the Pacific.

198 Cheok Hong Cheong, (1919), Annual Report of the Chinese Mission of the Epiphany, 28 July 1918.

come to Australia, Li asked to be released from his contract.²⁰⁰

In a remarkable gesture, given their past difficulties, Hughes invited Cheong to join the inaugural Victorian Council of the Australian Board of Missions.²⁰¹ With characteristic energy Hughes had guided a restructure of the ABM in 1917 that resulted in a marked expansion in its work in Melanesia. The invitation to Cheong probably had little other purpose than to prevent any rapprochement with the CMS. Cheong took a seat on the ABM Victorian Council in 1921.

Cheong's business partner, Peter Ng Hong Nam, made a business visit to China and at Cheong's request made enquiries about a Chinese Missioner to fill the vacancy left by Li.²⁰² Hong Nam recommended the Rev. Paul Tso See-fong. Tso met with a grilling by immigration officials upon his arrival in Australia despite assurances that the provisions of the 1901 Act covering clergymen would be observed.²⁰³ Tso bought with him a letter of introduction from Archdeacon E J Barnett. Barnett's letter was a form of apology for past events:

Canton, China, 2nd June 1923

Dear Mr Cheong,

I have every confidence in commending my brother beloved, Rev. Paul S.F. Tao to your paternal sympathy and guidance. Personally I shall miss him greatly for he has been profitable to me in many ways. I trust that in his new sphere of service he will not only receive benefit himself, but that he will become a channel of blessing to many others.

Much water has flowed under the bridge of time since we last saw one another, and it may be we shall yet have opportunity of another talk in this life. If this is not to be, we can look forward with confidence to a meeting in the mansions prepared for those who love the Lord Jesus Christ, by whose grace we have been allowed to serve him for these many years past—a service marred by mistakes here and there, but mistakes which have all been forgiven and forgotten by you, I am sure, for His name's sake. With fraternal greetings, (sgd) E. Joss Barnett.²⁰⁴

Cheong sent a copy to Hughes with a dismissive comment. He had not forgotten the events of 1897 and 1898 and was unable to forgive or forget the indignities that he had experienced from the Secretary of the CMAV even though Barnett had been the messenger rather than the source of the message itself.

199 Cheok Hong Cheong to Rev. E S Hughes, 16 October 1920.

200 *CMSVR Minutes*, 2 June 1922.

201 Cheok Hong Cheong to Rev. E S Hughes, 15 October 1919.

202 *CMSVR Minutes*, 26 April 1923. Tso's name is also given as T'ao and Tsao.

203 Cheok Hong Cheong to Collector of Customs, 28 July 1923.

204 E J Barnett to Cheok Hong Cheong, 2 June 1923.

The Rev. Paul Tso's 1925 Missioner's Report gave the communicant membership as less than twenty and he admitted he had no idea what to do to make the mission more effective: 'It is nearly two years since I first took up the work of the Mission, and I find that apart from the usual routine work, there is nothing else that I can include in my report.' He resigned in early 1927.

Cheong's last surviving letter book records negotiations with the Diocese of Hong Kong for two men to come to Australia, one to go to Bendigo in a joint CMSVR-diocesan venture and the other to replace Paul Tso in Melbourne. A cabled invitation was sent to the Rev. Lee Kau Yan to become Missioner. Lee declined and suggested Wong Tye Joy, a graduate of St Paul's College, Hong Kong, the institution that had trained Lo Sam-yuen in the early 1850s. The Archbishop of Melbourne was not prepared to ordain Wong, probably for the old reasons of not knowing what to do with him if the mission finally closed, as seemed more and more likely.²⁰⁵ Lee then suggested the Rev. Kong Chi Wing for Melbourne. Kong Chi Wing arrived and conducted his first service in June 1928. He resigned in 1933 and returned to Hong Kong. For the next four years the services were conducted by lay members with occasional visits from Melbourne clergymen to provide the sacraments.

The Rev. E C Thompson, a hospital chaplain, assisted the mission from 1937 to 1939. Mission services were conducted by laypeople until the appointment of the Rev. W George Thomas in 1946.²⁰⁶ He retired in 1963.

The Rev. Stephen Wong from the Diocese of Hong Kong became part-time Missioner in 1964, combining his appointment with the Mission to Seamen. He returned to Hong Kong in 1968 and was succeeded by the Rev. Geoff Glassock who combined Mission duties with his primary task of Anglican Chaplain to the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology.

In 1971, the Rev. Luther Ling Leung Lo was appointed as the first full-time Chinese Missioner in fifty years. Tragically, he died in September 1972. He was succeeded by the Rev. Michael Chin in 1972. Chin made the first steps from an inward looking Cantonese-

205 Cheok Hong Cheong to Rev. Lee Kau Yan, Secretary of the Standing Committee of the Diocesan Synod of Hong Kong.

206 The author received Cheong's Letterbooks from the deathbed of Father George Thomas who had a deep affection for the Mission and its people. His father, an active Methodist layman, had been a supporter of Chinese evangelism and a friend of Chinese in the goldfields.

speaking congregation towards a commitment to the evangelisation of newly arrived Chinese. The overall result was a deepening of the gap between the old Cantonese families and the newcomers, who had a different sense of Chinese identity.

The Rev. S V Dodson succeeded Chin in 1978 as Honorary Missioner and was in turn succeeded by the Rev. Gordon Apsey in 1979. There was a vacancy for the next two years when the Rev. Eddie Millar briefly acted as Missioner. In 1986 the Rev. Michael Chin returned and served until 1990 when he took a post in England following conflict with the Trust. The Trustees, troubled by diocesan pressure for the Mission and its property to be absorbed by a multicultural ministry, began to intervene directly in the management of the mission. Their tactics were misplaced, especially a decision to remove the Mission from its traditional Anglican links. This resulted in the 1991 Supreme Court action mentioned earlier.

The Rev. Rick C M Cheung became Missioner in 1992 and for some years combined his responsibilities with the Mission with ministry to a separate Chinese suburban congregation at Glen Waverley. More recently, the Rev. Michael Chin was reappointed Missioner. Other Chinese Anglican congregations, unconnected with the old Mission, have emerged and the Anglican Chinese Mission is no longer central to Anglican ministry to the Chinese. Despite various limited efforts to establish a niche market among newly arrived Chinese, particularly students from the People's Republic of China and refugees from Vietnam, the Anglican Chinese Mission of the Epiphany has not found, in the seventy odd years since Cheong's death, a vision to restore it to a leading position in the Chinese Christian community.

Members of Cheong's family served as Trustees for many years after his death. Christine Cheong served until the 1940s when Benjamin Cheong became a Trustee. Benjamin died in December 1970, at 82 years, ending the direct connection of the mission to Cheok Hong Cheong.

Cheok Hong Cheong's main role in the Anglican Mission after the formation of the CMSVR in 1898 was as the public officer, principal money raiser and as it emerged, determined guardian of Chinese ownership. His status outside the Anglican Chinese Mission rested on his leadership in community affairs, including the anti-opium

movement, endless representations to the immigration bureaucracy on behalf of Chinese-Australians and his determined struggles to protect the employment rights of Chinese.

Cheong's concept of mission management was focused on processes and buildings, and with that, on money raising. He was not particularly creative and took many of his most earnestly pursued objectives from others, such as the Presbyterian idea of a training institution for Chinese catechists and from the Methodists the importance of a Mission Church in Little Bourke Street. His education and language skills set him apart from all his Chinese contemporaries. His ethnic pride was double-barrelled in its effect on his relationships with others. It is undeniable that a downside of his personality was the constant conflicts with European clergy and lay leaders in the Presbyterian and Anglican churches. His tactics, and his playing of an ethnic card were, even when fully justified, tainted by personal attacks, an unforgiving bitterness and avoidance of his own shortcomings. But the other side of his personality, shared with many of his countrymen in Australia who were well aware of the White Australia Policy, was a constant unease about the genuineness of his acceptance as a social, intellectual and spiritual equal. He experienced difficulties with interpersonal relationships throughout his life. His love for his children was adversely affected by his determination to direct their lives generated at least in part, it may be suggested, by his wish to smooth their path. Unfortunately this behaviour generated deep conflicts within the family, first with James and later with Caleb (Chapter 12). A strand of self-righteousness, seen most clearly in a series of letters with William Howat over the opium issue in Victoria, and his dispute with Anderson over paper-hanging work at *Pine Lodge*, reflected an almost obsessive anxiety to control anything in which he became involved. The deeper roots lay, as mentioned above, in the issues of status and insecurity implicit in his perception of his ethnic identity (See Chapter 11).

Cheong's passing in 1928 was a symbol of the fading away of the old 19th century Cantonese-See Yup-Chinese community of Victoria. At the time of his death there were under six hundred overseas-born Chinese in the State of Victoria. Although the Anglican mission retained nominal evangelistic goals and conducted its regular Sunday activities, albeit with smaller and smaller attendances, the fire had gone out of Cheong as age, serious ill-health and finally the death of his wife, saw him in a terminal decline.

Whatever Cheong's personality defects may have been they should not be seen as fatal flaws or used to justify any downplaying of the value of the man and his work. He was little different to most people in having multiple identities and qualities, some positive and others not so. His life showed the qualities of hard work, ethnic pride, pride in education and struggle for status that were inseparable from his sense of a well-formed Chinese identity.

Without Cheong, the life of the Chinese in Victoria might have been as unpleasant as it was, from time to time, in New South Wales or Queensland. There is not a single event in Melbourne or provincial Victoria to compare with the mass anti-Chinese meetings held in Sydney and Brisbane in the 1880s and the anti-Chinese events that followed. That was, in some part, due to Cheong's influence within the wider colonial community. It was almost entirely through Cheong's efforts, and the support he engendered from Chinese generally, that the two major Anglican Chinese building projects in Little Bourke Street were initiated and completed, providing Chinese Anglicans with a permanent home and creating a Chinese ethnic congregation that has endured for more than a hundred years. His wider efforts on behalf of Chinese-Victorians surpassed those of any other individual and he was rightly honoured by his contemporaries. He did more for the Chinese-Australian community, in his life-time, than any other single member of that community but remains an almost unknown figure in Australia's Chinese and multicultural history.

