

Preface

This book is about how remarkable people of the mid-1900s came to Christ, were disciplined by Navigators and, obedient to the call of God, left their language and culture to bring the gospel and the Navigator vision of spiritual reproduction to Asia, where they lived for many years.

The contributions of these pioneers are largely over, but their legacy lives on, the works and vision now in the care of their spiritual offspring. This collection of inspiring stories, which we have called *The Asia Legacy*, provides insight into the lives of these men and women and will challenge you to a deeper commitment to Christ's Great Commission to make disciples in every nation. It is a modern missions book. About half the stories are in this volume; we hope that the remainder can be published soon.

It has been my honour to meet and befriend almost all the people I have written about, in most cases meeting the names I had heard about by reputation for decades. When I was asked as a Navigator writer if I could commit myself to the task of documenting the past, I sensed immediately the hand of God, and the strategic nature of the opportunity. One pioneer had already died. Another was seriously ill and died only a few months after my interviews.

Over two months I criss-crossed Asia and North America, staying with the pioneers, observing and interviewing them thoroughly. The histories that resulted, written with the full and willing cooperation of these men and women of deep faith and conviction, are *their* stories. Though not a comprehensive history of The Navigators in Asia, taken together, the accounts give some understanding of the periods of foundation laying, consolidation and expansion. The chapters chronicle individual journeys, with their joys and pains. With the benefit of hindsight, the pioneers were in many instances able to talk about the lessons they learned, and were happy to pass them on to future generations. Sadly, not every story has a happy ending—but more lessons can be learned.

Though written for Asians by a European about mostly Europeans, the stories nevertheless have had Asian input. First, the pioneers themselves, having lived in Asia, knew what to say to the Asian reader. Second, the stories benefited from the wisdom of my Asian editor, David Bok, and mentor and supporter Jim Chew, both of whom, happily, saved me from cultural blunders. I thank them all.

I thank God for the opportunity to serve Asia in this way. The experience, which is ongoing, has given me many new Asian friends, deepened my walk with God, and strengthened my commitment to the Great Commission and the Navigator vision of spiritual multiplication. It is my prayer that the nineteen stories in all will have the same effect on every reader. You too can be a pioneer.

That being so, the words of the late Lorne Sanny, Dawson Trotman's successor as President of The Navigators, to me in his office in Colorado Springs on October 17, 2002, will come true: "I believe the Asia Legacy project will be of considerable significance not only in Asia but throughout the Navigator world."

Sandy Fairservice, Christchurch, New Zealand, October 14, 2006