

The Story
of
Christchurch,

Kpg. Stunggang, Lundu, Sarawak
by
Otto Steinmayer.

Published by the Christchurch
Sesquicentennial Committee.
Lundu, Sarawak, 2004.

copyright © 2004 by Otto Steinmayer
Forewards copyright © 2004 by
Jose Jol Endru and Jackson Jarau Unggin respectively.

Printed by Lee Miing Press, Sdn. Bhd.
Kuching.

Dedicated
to all those who worked
and all those who continue to work
to tell the gospel of
JESUS CHRIST
and strengthen the Church
in Sarawak.

*“And many people shall go and say,
Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain
of the LORD, to the house of the
God of Jacob; and he will
teach us of his ways, and we will walk
in his paths.”*

Isaiah 2:3

Message from the Priest-in-Charge

GREETINGS in the name of our Lord JESUS CHRIST,

I WOULD like to thank the Committee of Christ Church, Kpg. Stunggang Dayak, for allowing me to write a few words.

Christchurch, Kpg. Stunggang Dayak, celebrates its 151st anniversary of the planting of the Anglican Church in this parish of Lundu. Founded in 1853, the Church has now entered its third century today, 15th October, 2004, with continued love for our missionaries, Bishops, priests, deacons, sub-deacons, catechists, and lay-readers.

At just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.

“Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die.” (Romans 5:7).

God demonstrates his own love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. We should honour our past missionaries, Bishops and priests, for spreading the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ in our land. Many of these faithful and courageous men and women died in the line of duty while trying to save another person's life and soul.

Let's also show love and gratitude for those who have served or are serving in the church ministry, especially those who throughout our Lundu Parish's history worked to plant the Church. Many of our priests died so you and I could live and worship God as free people. These priests and leaders deserve our honour and respect.

But one person towers above all the rest. Today as we

celebrate the Church's 151 years let's recognize the priest of priests—the one who gave his life that we might have life abundant and eternal. Let's give all our love, gratitude, honour, and respect to Jesus Christ, the son of God.

I thank God that we live in a free country, in the free state of Sarawak, in the free parish of Lundu; free because of the missionaries who were willing to give their lives. But I thank God even more that we can live in spiritual freedom because Jesus Christ was willing to shed his blood on Calvary.

Too often, when missionaries are mentioned for honor, Jesus' name does not come up. Yet his name should be at the top of the list. He died for the whole world, for those who did not deserve him, for the sins of all mankind. He was bruised so that every person could experience health and well-being. He knew suffering and agony so that we could enjoy victory and peace.

I thank God for all of our human missionaries. But I thank God more for Jesus Christ. And any time I list missionaries, I always put Jesus Christ at the top. There is no one who can compare with him.

While there will never be another missionary like Jesus Christ, the one who gave his life so mankind could live free from sin and death, we can be thankful for our everyday missionaries in our life. Today when we celebrate 151 years of Christchurch Kpg. Stunggang Dayak, take a few moments to tell Jesus Christ how much you love and appreciate him.

Jako ari Paderi, Christchurch

TERIMA kasih ka Tuhan laban Iya udah mai kitai dalam begelumu besambiang sereta berami enggau diri sama diri. Pengawa tu dikena kitai ngingat ka kerja Tuhan ti udah nanam Gereja Iya ba tempat tu, Stunggang Dayak, iya nya 151 tahun ti udah lalu.

Saritu kitai tentu temegah ati meda pemujor enggau pemansang pengawa Eklisia tu udah ngerembai bendar di Lundu bepun enggau Gereja kitai empu, Anglika. Sejarah Gereja Anglika nyata madah ka pemedis enggau pemar, ka penusah enggau jalai mutar ka penusah nya ti nuntong pengidup enggau pengarap bansa kitai di Lundu ditu. Tu meh kabuah iya berguna ka ajar ti dalam. Lalu pengawa ti ngenatai ka ajar tu tentu berguna ka masa ti nadai sekat. Setegal tu bala Paderi dulu kalia ti datai ari menoa tasik baka Father Gomes, Father Hollis, Father Zehnder enggau samua sida ti bukai tetap mutus ati diau mendam di menoa tu. Samua sida sanggup berambun ka nyawa; besatup enggau samua penguji sereta enggau penusah datai ka ngujong ka nyawa sekeda ari sida setegal ngereja pengawa Tuhan. Sejarah Gereja madah ka ari Stunggang Iya terubah ngerembai ka Kampong Sedemak (Chapel St. Mark lalu diatu di-kumbai Holy Name) enggau St. Nicholas, Serayan Hilir.

Ari Pengarap sida Kalong anak O.K.P. Jugah, Bulang, Bugai, Konday (Selakau), Saban enggau anemiak sida nya ti nyadi ka batu pemun pengarap Kristian di menoa tu. Bulang, Bugai, Konday enggau Saban udah mutus ati ninggal ka pengidup kampong sida lalu nyadi Katikist. Ari sida empat Bulang lebih tebilang nama laban iya 'Manang' lalu dikarap ka orang dulu menya ulih ngelindung sida ari kuasa Sitan lalu ngerai ka sida ti sakit. Leboh iya nemu Tuhan iya berubah terus ngeleka ka pengarap lalu nya nyadi Kristian. Iya sigi enda mungkir ari

Kristian datai ka pemat iya. Nya alai enti Bulang mutus ati ngelengka ka pengarap lama nya dulu menya nama kabuah kitai ti anembiak Tuhan saritu agi bisi bendar limpang lalu arap ka pengawa manang ti belian?

Kingat ka Father Angking, Father Hope, Father Eric Scott, Father Oscar Sindon, Father Augustine Ahim, Father Jamal Senada, Father Francis Nyegang, Father Peter Augustine lalu datai ke saritu Father Jose Jol enggau Fr. Jackson Jarau ti nampong pengawa sida ke tuai ke dulu menya ngajar awak ka seruran besemak enggau Tuhan lalu ngemeran ka ajar enggau pesan Iya. Bakanya mega pengawa sida Katikist Limin, Paul Bichin, Helly Maling, Peter Jeil (diatu udah nyadi Paderi), Liamtan Tinchang sereta enggau samua Lay Reader.

Pengawa kitai saritu mega endang betul amat ngingat ka pun enggau urat pengarap diri empu. Tentu mega Tuhan enda belebu ka penemu enggau runding kitai ti ngingat ka jasa enggau kereja; pengerindu enggau pengarap anembiak iya ti sama bebendar ngangkat ka nama Eklisia Tuhan. Dulu menya Bakih anak Negi amat besai budi sanggup nyaup Paderi niri ka rumah sambiang taja Gereja nya lama tumbang tang semangat iya ti mutus ati nya agi mengkang.

Kitai benasib bendar laban bisi siko ari anak jati Stunggang, Ybhg. Datuk Ramsay Noel Jitam, ti udah kempang mutus ati ngena peluang ke besai reti sanggup meri diri nyadi ka tuai begiga ka duit lalu niri ka Gereja tu lebih sepuluh tahun ti udah lalu. Terima kasih Ybhg. Datuk Ramsay Noel Jitam. Jasa nuan amat kami kenang beserimbai enggau kitai ti sama-sama lantang sereta gaga ati nyelamat ka 151 udah Eklisia Allah Taala bepun di Stunggang.

Saritu mega kitai ngenang ka penalok, pengelurus sereta enggau pengarap siko agi anembiak Tuhan, Samuel Hugh Ah Nen, ti udah ngena peluang ti di-beri ka iya enggau mujur sereta lurus ngimpun Account Gereja selama lebih dua puluh tahun

nyadi Tukang Wang. Ari pengelurus enggau pengarap iya nya ti mai kitai bisi meda pemasang ba Gereja tu. Tiga tahun ti udah lepas Balai Gereja (Hall) setengah rubuh kena tinggang batang rian. Setaun lepas nya atap Gereja muak ka kiba ari belakang altar tebakak di-kesai ka angin. Tambah mega sekeda ari kayu dikena ngaga Gereja udah buruk. Samua tu udah mujur magang di-ganti ulih saup samua kita. Kami nemu mega bala kitai ti udah netap ka pendiau kita di menua bukai agi ingat ka penatai kita. Terima kasih ngagai Datuk Stalin Harden, bala peturun niang Datuk Edward Beranda, peturn Jonathan Saban enggau ka samua kita bukai ti enda ulih disebut nama ditu ti selalu meri tulong enggau pemerri ngagai Gereja tu. Terima kasih enggau puji mega di-beri ka samua anemiak Tuhan ari Kampung Stunggang, Gerunggang, Klaoh, Batang Mawang, Benggang, Stunggang Ulu enggau Kampung Stunggang Dayak tu empu ti udah bekereja sama dalam samua pengawa gotong-royong enggau bejual tiap tahun kena ngiga duit ka Gereja selama tu.

Dalam masa enggau tahun ti deka datai kitai besai bendar pengarap ka kitai olih ngemujor ka Projek Gereja:—

- (1) “Projek Tangga Gereja,” ari mua Gereja nurun ka baroh ngagai jalai kampung Stunggang tau nyadi nyata.
- (2) “Projek Magar Gereja,” tu netap ka kandang Gereja enda ulih id-pasok olih sebarang orang lalu selamat ari pengawa ti enda badas. Kami besampi minta Tuhan merekat ka perambu penemu tu lalu ulih tulong kita semua tentu pengawa tu nyadi.

Sekula Minggu (Sunday School) udah mujur diring ulih Puan Nusi Baki. Kitai beasi pengarap ka Gerempong Indu (AWF) ulih mansang ari ti udah ngambi ka ngempong sida ti indu ngereja pengawa dalam Gereja. Gerempong sida ti anemiak di-sadang deka berengkah enda lama agi bepanggai ba peneka kaban kitai meri diri nyadi ka tuai sida.

Kitai minta awak ka semangat enggau pengarap sida ti udah nanam Gereja Allah Taala ba tempat tu 151 tahun ti udah

lalu ulih ngangkat ka pengarap samua kitai. Awak ka samua mansang dalam jalai pengidup enggau pengarap. Awak ka samua kitai beserakup enggau Paderi, kaban PCC ti nyadi ka tulang belakang Parish St. Francis Lundu sama-sama mutus ati ngemansang ka iya.

Jackson Jarau ak Unggin
Pengerusi.

The Story of Christchurch.

I.

THE introduction of Christianity to the peoples of Sarawak stands high among the momentous events of Sarawak's history. We are fortunate, too, that Christianity did not arrive here by conquest. Once James Brooke became rajah, he established his rule by gentle means, protecting the people, stopping war and piracy, and working to bring prosperity, peace, and growth to all the peoples of Sarawak. From the beginning Brooke wished to bring Christianity to Sarawak, and here too he insisted that this new religion be taught and spread in gentleness and love, according to the example and command of Jesus Christ. The result of this kindness was that Dayaks embraced Christianity willingly and with joy. Although the Christian community grew slowly at the beginning, those few who accepted Christ accepted him fully. Their faith showed others the spiritual benefits of this new religion, and as the years went by attracted more and more people to become Christians, until today, 156 years since the

first missionaries landed in Kuching, the Christian community in Sarawak is strong and wide.

What sort of religion did the Dayaks of Lundu practiced before the arrival of the Mission? This is a question well worth asking. James Brooke visited Rumah Stunggang in 1839, and although he paid close attention, he could not see that the Sebuyau had any religion at all. It is hard to tell what life was like then. From what James Brooke and others wrote, we can guess that the Sebuyau of the old days gave little thought to their spirituality, and whatever religion they practiced consisted of observing taboos and in conducting healing ceremonies.

But the old Dayaks did not lack a basis for true faith. Harriette McDougall, wife of Rev. McDougall, head of the first mission, wrote:

“They [the Dayaks] know that some great Spirit made them, and the country they live in; they feel sure that the rice, fruit,

fish, and animals, which form their food, are His gifts; and therefore they pray for his blessing, when they sow the seed in their padi fieldsÖ”

Mrs. McDougall goes on to say that the Dayaks also acknowledged the existence of the Devil, and were right to lay the blame for their sicknesses and misfortunes on him and his *antu*.

“But at this point,” Mrs. McDougall continues, “they depart from the truth, and become superstitious: for they do not know that God is stronger than the Devil; and so make their offerings and prayers to the *antus*, to avert their wrath, and keep them in good temper.”

Sadly, Dayaks did not understand the true greatness and mercy of the Creator. But the English missionaries that James Brooke invited were ready to bring this good news of the knowledge of God to Sarawak, and Dayaks were ready to receive the gospel, because they knew, however dimly, that God was

One and the ruler of all other spirits.

II.

The mission of the Church in Sarawak began when Rev. Francis T. McDougall, his wife Harriette, and their party landed in Kuching on 29 June, 1848. They set up a temporary church and a school. Rev. McDougall was a skilled doctor and surgeon, and cared for sick and injured people of all races. He also recruited other missionaries to come to Sarawak and spread the gospel to areas outside Kuching.

We do not know how Rev. McDougall and his colleagues developed plans for the establishment of a mission in Lundu. It is natural to think that Rajah James suggested Lundu. The Sebuyau people of Stunggang were intensely loyal to the Rajah, and very fond of him, as Rajah James was fond of the Sebuyau. Lundu was at peace and safe from the troubles that disturbed

other districts. Many races, Sebuyau, Selako, Chinese, and Malay, lived here in harmony. The country was also rich. All the early visitors to Lundu were surprised at the great amount of rice, vegetables, and fruits grown there. In February 1851, Father McDougall visited Lundu.

In June 1852 Rev. William Henry Gomes arrived in Kuching from the Bishop's College in Calcutta. He was a Eurasian of mixed Portuguese and Sri Lankan descent. He went straight to work teaching in Kuching School, and by October he was preparing to move to Lundu.

Father Gomes came to Lundu on 10 January 1853. He traveled in company with Charles Brooke, whom the Rajah had appointed District Officer. Brooke says that he and Gomes had been in Sarawak the same amount of time, and had "an equal knowledge of affairs and language." Brooke says he knew "two or three thousand" words of Iban. The people of Rumah Stunggang must have made their new *padri* welcome, either inviting him to live in the longhouse—then a very large

and comfortable one, more than 500 feet long—or building him a house and school-room nearby, like the house they had built for Charles Brooke. Brooke talks about the handsome welcome the people of Stunggang gave him, and described Lundu as “this delightful of all abodes.” We can imagine that the Sebuyau made Father Gomes feel at home, and that he too felt at home here.

Only seven days after he arrived in Stunggang, Gomes opened a school. Eighteen students immediately signed up to attend. One March in 1854 or 1855, Spenser St. John, Rajah James’s secretary, travelled to Lundu along with Rev. McDougall and left us this story about Father Gomes’s mission work and teaching:

At first, [Rev. Gomes] did not press religious instruction upon them, but opened a school. I mention this circumstance on account of the very remarkable tact he must have exercised to induce the children

to attend as they did. His system of punishment was admirable, but difficult to be followed with English boys. He merely refused to hear the offending child's lesson, and told him to go home. A friend, who often watched the progress of the school, has told me that instead of going home the little fellows would sob and cry and remain in a quiet part of the school till they thought Mr. Gomez had relented. They would rarely return to their parents, if it could be avoided, before their lessons were said.

The school in Stunggang was not for Sebuyau only. Students came from the Selakau and other communities, including Chinese and Malay. Spenser St. John sent his son to be educated there. Because of this mixture, Rev. Gomes decided to use Malay in his teaching and preaching, because everyone could understand it. He invented a way of writing Malay, after the model of Sanskrit, in roman letters, not in the difficult *jawi*, and translated and printed books for his pupils to study. From the very beginning of the mission in Lundu, both the Mission

and the people held education to be very important. Gomes taught reading and writing along with Christian doctrine, and he must also have taught arithmetic and general knowledge. Apart from the one above, we do not have any stories from that time, but it must have been exciting for a young Dayak to learn so many new and interesting things. As we saw, Fr. Gomes did not use harsh discipline, but made his lessons pleasant. He set the ABC to the tune of “Auld Lang Syne,” and this is how the children learned.

Reading and writing allowed his students to study the Bible and the catechism. Rev. Gomes had such success that he was able to baptize his first converts in less than two and a half years from his arrival in Lundu. On Pentecost Sunday, May 27, 1855, Rev. Gomes baptized eight adult Dayak men: Samuling, Bulang, Bugai, Sageng, Langi (son of O.K.P. Jugah), Samuel, Puntang and Janggot. He took them down to Kuching and the candidates were baptized in St. Thomas’s Church. Bulang, son of Metut and Lamut, had been a *manang* and after his conversion became

a strong Christian believer. Bulang, says Mrs. McDougall, “had tried to be an honest manang, and finding it impossible had turned with all his heart to Christianity.” Bulang later became a catechist, along with Bugai. After their baptism, the new converts went on a trip with Frs. Gomes and McDougall to see the new mission at Banting. There the Lundu men impressed the Balau Iban with the skill of their singing.

On the 5th of August Fr. Gomes performed his first baptism in Lundu, of another Dayak man named Intei anak Ili. Two weeks later, on August 19th, he opened a temporary church, and there began holding daily prayers in the morning, as well as two services on Sundays. People must have been enthusiastic about their new faith, because in October Rev. Gomes baptized fourteen more converts. His school now had three boarders, young former slaves who had been freed by the government, as well as local students. Rajah James gave rice to the school, and money for Rev. Gomes to use in printing books, including a catechism. It is unfortunate that no copy of these books has

come down to us. Certainly some were in Malay. But if Father Gomes printed Iban, then these were the first books ever printed in that language.

Rev. Gomes also gave weekly talks in Rh. Stunggang to those who had not yet been converted. The theme of his talks was: "The leading incidents of our LORD'S Life, His miracles, teaching, and sufferings." Through Rev. Gomes's labors, the Christian community was firmly established. We do not now know much about Rev. Gomes as a person, but his success shows that he must have been a kind and understanding person, patient, hard-working, and willing to help better the lives of the Dayaks.

In 1856, Rev. Gomes took leave in Singapore. There he arranged for books to be printed and he married a Miss Helen Maria, who was also Eurasian. Man and wife came back to live in Lundu. Soon after they had several children, born and baptized in Lundu.

Rev. McDougall was consecrated Bishop of Sarawak,

in Calcutta, on 18 October 1855. A year later, in October 1856, Bishop McDougall travelled to Lundu and on the 16th. confirmed twelve catechumens. However, even while more entered Christianity, many people still practiced superstition. The next January rats did great damage to the rice fields in Lundu, and the pagan Sebuyau performed a *ngemali umai*. Gomes could of course not take part in this pagan ceremony or respect the restrictions, but he did not wish to offend the pagan people who had treated him so kindly. He moved himself and his school temporarily to Bandang, to the *ili* on Batang Kayan, where he could live and teach and hold services normally.

Now that the Lundu congregation counted twelve members taking communion, Rev. Gomes decided it was time to build a permanent church. Indeed, Rev. Gomes must have expected he was about to make many more Christians, and his new church should hold a sizable congregation. The new church was to be made of *belian* wood, and Bakih, son of Negi and Burak, of Rh. Stunggang, took charge of the construction.

The years between the planning of the church and its completion seem to have been quiet ones, except during the time of the Chinese Rebellion in February 1857. When news of this reached Lundu, the Christian community took steps to preserve themselves and their padri in safety. Fortunately, Lundu remained quiet. Danger also arose later, in late 1859. Father Gomes wrote to Charles Brooke to warn him that a certain Nakodah had made threats against O.K.P. Jugah's life, telling him he would be killed if he became a Christian. The Tuan Muda took immediate action and banished the troublemakers.

For the next few years, life was uneventful, although progress was slow. Miss Sarah Coomes, a lady missionary who had come to Sarawak in 1856, came to Lundu on 24 April 1857 to help Fr. Gomes. She took with her Polly Nelson, a young Saribas Iban girl who had been rescued after her parents were killed during the Rajah's battles with the "pirates," and brought up by the McDougalls as a Christian. Miss Coomes settled down happily, and found plenty to do. She took care of the Rev. and

Mrs. Gomes's mission household, and, along with Mrs. Gomes visited and talked with the Dayak women. Here we see the beginning of the present AWF! Perhaps she became lonely later on, for she wrote that missionaries must have "patience & faith (and be prepared) to undergo personal privation, to abandon the comforts of social and civilized life and to be content with native fare".

Gomes reported at the beginning of 1858 that he was celebrating the Eucharist once a month, and had seven communicants. Twelve boarding students, eight boys and four girls, attended his school. Of these twelve, eight were orphans, children of rebels, who had been ransomed by the Rajah, taken out of slavery, and sent to Lundu.

A result of the growth of the mission in Lundu was that the Malays, who had not been accustomed regularly to practice their own religion, started holding Friday prayers and began building a mosque.

Kalong, the son of O.K.P. Jugah and later Orang Kaya

himself, was baptized on 1 September 1861. Jugah, according to Mrs. McDougall, always wanted to become a Christian, but there is no record of his baptism and he seems never to have gotten around to it.

Fr. Gomes, in addition to his duties as padri in conducting services and building the church, also worked for the Rajah's government. Bishop McDougall (who, unfortunately, looked down on Fr. Gomes because of his Eurasian ancestry) was not pleased. However, work on the church went ahead, and McDougall consecrated Christchurch on September 2nd 1863. Christchurch building measured 62 by 23 feet, and was made entirely out of *belian*. Photographs of this church survive from later years. As it was first built Christchurch lacked a spire. The spire was added in 1865, to house a bell that had been donated by English supporters of the Sarawak mission. These English friends also donated a set of stained-glass windows.

A giant clam shell served as the original baptismal font in Christchurch. St. Thomas's and other churches also used clam

shells for their fonts, a distinct tropical touch.

Besides the areas for the church, mission house, and graveyard, Rajah James had also given the Mission in Stunggang land on which to plant coconuts and bananas, fruit trees and other things, to make the Mission as self-supporting as possible. The practice of the kampongs' *gotong royong* began here.

In 1864, Rev. Gomes baptized fifty people. He performed twenty of these baptisms on Christmas Eve, and most of the candidates, thirteen in all, were women! Among the males was Spenser St. John's ten-year-old son, Charles. There was a now a *kubu* and a Resident in Lundu—the government offices were then sited near Nanga Stunggang—and the fortmen used to fire off a cannon on Saturday evenings, to tell the longhouse and kampong the next day was Sunday.

Bishop McDougall visited Lundu in during the season of Pentecost in 1866. Mrs. McDougall followed her husband and left us this sketch of the Christian Sebuyau.

Every evening before late dinner, the Lundus go up to Mr. Gomes's room to say their prayers, and sing, or rather chant, their hymns. There is something very affecting in this little service—the Dyak voices singing of Christ's second coming with His holy angels, and rejoicing that He came once before for their salvation; and then praying for holy, gentle hearts to receive Him. I always feel on these occasions as if I heard these precious truths afresh when they are spoken in a tongue till lately ignorant of them. Indeed, there can scarcely be a more joyful excitement than such passages in the life of a missionary; they are worth any sacrifice. After English morning service, Mr. Gomes has prayers in church, two English, two Chinese, and one Dyak. We clothed all the candidates in a new suit of cotton garments with a bright-coloured handkerchief for their heads. It would be considered very irreverent for Easterns to uncover their heads in church. I taught the school-children to sing "Veni Creator Spiritus" at this baptism, while the clergy were arranging the candidates and sponsors around the font.

The font was wreathed with flowers by my children. There was quite a full church, for the Chinese Christians all came to see the Dyaks baptized, and all the English of the place were present. Mr. Gomes baptized, and my husband signed them with the cross. They all spoke up bravely in answering their vows: may God give them grace to keep them.

Eighty-two fully confirmed Christians were among the congregation, as well as many more catechumens, and over forty students were attending classes in the day school. Bulang, the former *manang*, and Bugai had now become catechists, and the school's classes were held in the catechists' house.

Elsewhere in the Lundu area many more people were drawn to Christianity. John Richardson, a former schoolteacher, came to Sedemak in early 1863 to work among the Selakau people, and began to build St. Mark's church, also made wholly out of *belian*.

Rev. and Mrs. Gomes took leave in early 1867. He had been

almost fifteen years in Lundu, and his wife ten years. They did not return. Later, in 1872, Rev. Gomes became the director of the Church Mission in Singapore, and served there many long and fruitful years. We are sure that the people of Lundu must have greatly missed Father Gomes, “a good man and gentle,” as Mrs. McDougall described him. He died in Singapore in 1902.

His son, Edwin Gomes also came to Sarawak and served with the Church fifteen years. Edwin Gomes stayed in Sarawak after he left the priesthood. He had married the daughter of a Chinese rebel who had taken part in the Bau Rebellion of 1857, one of the many orphans who were adopted and raised by the Church. Edwin also wrote two excellent books about Sarawak, *Seventeen Years among the Sea Dayaks*, and *Children of Borneo*. Edwin’s grandson, George Gomes, now lives in Lundu and works with SESCO.

Rev. Gomes was replaced by John Louis Zehnder. Rev. Zehnder was born on 27 September 1827 in Switzerland, and was originally a Lutheran. Zehnder arrived in Kuching in March of 1862, when he was 35 years old. He entered the Anglican communion, and was ordained deacon in June, and then priest on 22 May 1864. Rev. Zehnder was a very learned man. He had studied in Munich and taken his degree at the University of Zurich, and later taught in Wales. Rev. Zehnder knew at least nine languages, including Greek, Latin, English, Welsh, and Hebrew, besides his native German, before he came to Sarawak. While he lived here he learned Malay, Chinese, Iban, and several other native languages!

Father Zehnder held his first post in Merdang. When Rev. Gomes left Lundu in early 1867, Zehnder came to Lundu to replace him. He would spend the rest of his life working in Lundu, a total of thirty-six years of dedicated service in Borneo.

Not long after Fr. Zehnder had taken up his post in Stunggang he married Jane Hugh, In Christchurch, on 21 April 1867. Jane Hugh was one of six Chinese-Dayak orphans whose parents had fled from a rebellion in Kalimantan in 1850, and who had been kept as slaves by the Sebuyau. Jane's surname was originally Hiew, but when these six children were adopted by the Rev. and Mrs. Gomes they spelled their name in the English way. Her stepbrother, Thomas Hugh, later became a catechist. Fr. Zehnder's marrying a Chinese says much about him. At that time a European man faced censure from other white people if he formally married a woman from another race.

From the records we have it appears that the years of Father Zehnder's ministry were quiet and fulfilling, and marked by steady progress of the Faith. Father Zehnder did not take care of Christchurch alone. Sedemak could now be reached by a good road, and Zehnder made regular visits to St. Mark's church to serve the Selakau congregation, because Richardson had left in 1868.

Bishop McDougall retired from the bishopric and left Sarawak in 1869. Father Walter Chambers, who had ministered in Sarawak since 1851, was named the new bishop, and Father Zehnder himself installed Chambers in St. Thomas's Cathedral. In the same year Christchurch suffered a great loss when Catechist Bugai died. Father Zehnder wrote to Bishop Chambers that Bugai was "our most advanced Dayak." Bulang anak Metut, the other catechist, continued to serve until his death on 17 August 1894. Bulang is buried in Christchurch churchyard, not far from Father Zehnder, and a *belian* plaque marks his grave.

In 1874 Bishop Chambers reported to England that daily services were being held in Lundu and in all other missions in Sarawak. Only at Lundu were services held in Malay, because Malay was the language that all the members of the congregation, Sebuyau, Selakau, and Chinese, could understand. Malay has long been a source for words to express Christian concepts. For example, "Allah Taala" comes from Arabic, through an adaptation

into Malay, and is the word that Arabian Christians have used for “God” since the beginning of the church in Arabia, well before Islam. When James Brooke talked to O.K.P.Jugah about religion when they first met in 1839, they spoke Malay, and used the word “Allah.”

The years went by. We must imagine that Father Zehnder worked hard and patiently at his duties as Priest and Schoolteacher. He was a scholar, as you would expect of such a highly educated and talented man, and spent much of his time reading and writing. He loved books, and, as an anonymous writer said of him, in a tribute published in the *Sarawak Gazette*, “his knowledge seemed to be spread over nearly all branches of literature and learning, and few topics could be touched on that he was not acquainted with.” Fr. Zehnder’s great work was a complete translation of the Old and New Testaments into Malay or Iban. This must have taken him many years, and much effort. The friend who wrote the tribute said that Fr. Zehnder often said that there were not enough hours in the

day and night to please him.

Besides being a man of letters, Father Zehnder was something of a scientist and a gardener. He became very interested in padi growing, and collected over eighty different varieties of rice, which he described thoroughly in a long letter to the *Gazette*, along with an account of his experiments.

In 1878 Fr. Zehnder travelled to Kuching to attend the diocesan synod. Here he reported to the Bishop and other clergy of Sarawak that Lundu had two catechists, Tommy Hugh in Stunggang and Bulang in Sedemak. After the synod was over, Rev. Zehnder accompanied the Bishop together with Rev. John Perham on an eight day mission visit to Banting.

On the way back from another trip to Kuching the December of the next year, Father Zehnder's boat swamped at Nanga Sampadi and he had to spend two hours in the water until he was rescued and swam to shore. He suffered the same misfortune once again in early 1882, and again had to spend several hours in the water. The editor of the *Sarawak*

Gazette wrote: “We believe Mr. Zehnder was much exhausted, and we trust that the Reverend gentleman will not try this dangerous experiment a third time, or he may not escape so easily.” Unfortunately, Fr. Zehnder was to have trouble on the sea one more time. Not only St. Paul was shipwrecked in the service of God.

In this year, 1882, Fr. Zehnder had been in Sarawak for twenty years without any leave. Bishop Hose, who succeeded Chambers, sent Zehnder to Malacca as acting chaplain, to give him a change and to help him recover from a state of ill health that had been brought on by his ordeal in the sea. It must have been hard for Zehnder to do all the work of the Lundu mission himself, with few helpers. At this time he wrote that St. Mark’s Church in Sedemak was falling into ruin. They had been attacked by an epidemic of cholera so violent that three or four people died in one day. The people abandoned their longhouse and scattered into the jungle. We learn that Rev. Zehnder’s eldest daughter was schooling in Singapore in

1885, and later that Father Gomes returned again to Lundu to help Zehnder with his duties, because Zehnder was suffering another illness.

Father Zehnder was a retired man, and rarely went to Kuching, perhaps only on Church business, or in passing through when he took his daughter to and from her school in Singapore. Few people in Sarawak outside of Lundu knew him well. One story about him shows that he knew how to relax and enjoy himself, even though his picture makes him look so serious. Zehnder bought a phonograph, the first in Lundu, and when he played it people came up to listen.

In the last ten years of his life Father Zehnder's health failed more and more. To make things worse, he was again suffered on the sea. In July 1896 Fr. Zehnder travelled to Singapore, and as he and his daughter were coming back to Kuching, in the S.S. *Rajah Brooke*, the ship wrecked on a rock in the sea and began to sink. All the passengers got off safely in the boats and landed on a small island, where they remained four days until help came.

This hardship must have further weakened his health.

That same year he turned seventy, and had been in Sarawak longer than any other European. Rajah Charles recognized Zehnder's services, and awarded him a pension for his retirement. Alas, Father Zehnder never got to enjoy it. Father Zehnder celebrated Mass for the last time on February 6th, 1898, holding Sunday service in Christchurch, Stunggang, and died in Stunggang four days later, on February 10th. Death came to him at 7:30 in the evening while he was waiting for the boat that would take him into retirement. He had planned to go to Singapore, and then to England. H. R. A. Day, the Resident, wrote to the *Gazette* that Father Zehnder died "much regretted" by the people he had lived among so long.

Father Zehnder lies buried in Christchurch churchyard. His oldest daughter and son came from Singapore as soon as they heard the news. His sons and daughters, their grieving mother and the congregation raised a marble monument, topped with a cross, to his memory. On the 18th of July *Gazette* reported that

Mrs. Zehnder and her children departed Lundu on the steam launch *Young Harry*. Crowds of people came to the *pengkalan* to see them off, because Mrs. Zehnder and her children were all “very much liked.” It is regrettable that after his death, Fr. Zehnder’s books and papers remained neglected, and at last were destroyed by time and termites. We hope that somewhere we may still find his translation of the Bible.

Father Zehnder has many descendents. Most of his children moved to Singapore, and five great-grandchildren now live there, along with their children. His son James stayed in Kuching and was employed by the Public Works Department. Many of his grandchildren and great-grandchildren in Kuching now bear the name Zehnder.

IV.

No one came immediately to replace late Father Zehnder. Later in the year he died, 1898, Rev. F.W. Leggatt was transferred

from Skrang to Lundu. Leggatt was an Englishman who went to school at St. Augustine's College in Canterbury. He was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Hose in March 1887.

Rajah Charles did not like Fr. Leggatt, and the Rajah's disapproval must have made his job difficult. Furthermore, Leggatt knew only Iban, and when he got to Lundu he found he had to learn Malay in order to preach to the Selakau. Leggatt also wished to minister to a group of Jagoi people who had recently settled at Selampit and Stuom, but they knew no Malay. Leggatt seems to have tried his best. He cleaned and repaired the church at Sedemak for the use of the few Selakau Christians left there. However, he may not have had energy enough for the large task of keeping the mission together, and he spent much time on leave. A lay missionary, Harold A.J. Larzen, came in 1902 to help Leggatt, but Larzen published an article in the *Straits Times* which greatly offended Rajah Charles and he was ordered to leave the country. The school closed in 1904, and according to our records, many Christians had fallen away into

paganism. Someone writing to the *Sarawak Gazette* on 4 June 1904 said that: “The school as well as the Church at Lundu has been abandoned by the Dyaks, its once flourishing state in this lovely spot, the most peaceable in the whole country, is much to be deplored.” Leggatt, says another writer, “seems to have lost hope.” He left Lundu in May 1907 and returned to England the next year.

The Church did not abandon Lundu, though. For this we are to thank Rev. Arthur Frederick Sharp. Sharp had come from Singapore in 1897 and became Archdeacon of the Diocese. Rev. Sharp, along with his sisters, Mary and Caroline, was very active in mission work and education. Sharp viewed the Church in Sarawak as an *Asian* Church. He believed that men and women could become perfect within the communion of the Church, and he considered the encouragement of Sarawakian Christians and building the Native Church to be his most important duty, although he did not neglect his European congregation. Sharp promoted education for girls as well

as boys, and he even established a Dayak Rest House at the Kuching Mission, where Christian natives could stay when they came to town. Two of the most famous early Sarawakian priests, Thomas Buda and Kong Kuin En, began their careers as catechists under Archdeacon Sharp.

Sharp, along with Kong, Buda, Thomas Dayak, and others, visited Lundu in July 1908. They cleaned up the church and mission house, held services, and gave help and encouragement

Komiti Gereja Christchurch, Stunggang Dayak, Lundu Sesi 2003-2004

PENASIHAT: Rev'd Jackson Jarau
PENGERUSI: Rev'd Jackson Jarau
TIMBALAN PENGERUSI: KK Helly Maling Jelani
SETIAUSAHA: Binin anak Anggut
TIMBALAN SETIAUSAHA: Apun Bugil
BENDAHARI: Philip Spencer
PENOLONG BENDAHARI: Samuel Ah Nen

PENGERUSI AWF: Puan Madu Bunjai
PENGERUSI SUNDAY SCHOOL: Puan Nusi Baki

AJK KECIL:

1. KAMPUNG STUNGGANG DAYAK

- a. En. Janin Lazi
- b. En. Glassan Lianghe
- c. En. Jimmy Juda

2. KAMPUNG STUNGGANG ULU

- a. En. Stephen Will Kinjie
- b. En. Muda Sigat

3. KAMPUNG KLAOH

- a. En. Bungkie Kihon
- b. En. Bong Ah Kiong
- c. En. August Sinong

4. KAMPUNG GERUNGGANG

- a. Puan Sikoi Busoi

5. KAMPUNG BENGGANG

- a. En. Gangga Janin

6. WARDEN GEREJA

- a. En. Dunstan Spencer
- b. Puan Lucia Baki



Rev Francis T.
McDougall,
Bishop, 1856-
1869

Harriette McDou-
gall





The Mission landing, with the Mission boat *Fanny*, and Gunung Gading from the Mission House. Paintings by Mrs. McDougall, around 18



Rev. John Louis
Zehnder, Priest
in Stungang
1867-1898.



The old Christchurch.



Old Christchurch front.



Going home from church, 1941.



Christchurch, around 1910, from Eda Green,
Borneo: The Land of River and Palm.



Rev. Hope Hugh



The Mission House.



Old Christchurch interior. Photo by
Rev. Eric Scott



Students of Christchurch School, 1925.



Christchurch School students, 1934. Margaret Hugh in centre. 119341934193419341925.

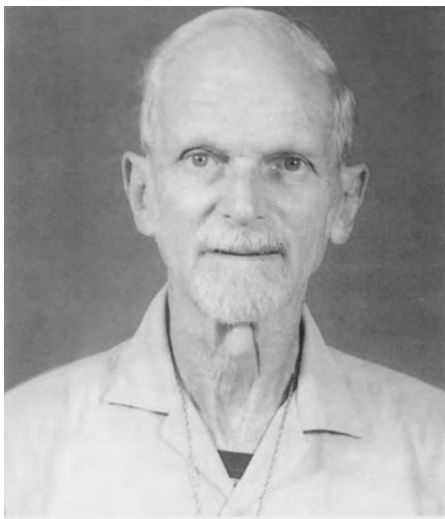


Lay-Reader
Konday

Catechist Saban
anak Landau



Rev. Eric Scott,
1958-1968.



Stunggang Boy Scout Troop, ca. 1960.



Rev. Lawrence Angking and family.



Rev. Jose Jol Endru,
Priest-in-Charge



Rev. Jackson Jarau anak Ung-
gin, Priest, Christchurch.