

Sherman A. and Mary C. Nagel

謝爾曼。那基理

瑪莉。那基理

*May Tuan Tucker, Ph. D. 段崇儀, 2014

Sherman Albertus:

Born: June 9th, 1887 in Forman, Sargent County, North Dakota, USA

Died: July 8th, 1968 in Angwin, Napa County, California, USA

Father: Albertus Nagel, Sr.

Mother: Emma E. Nagel

Siblings: Charlie I. Nagel, Lee O. Nagel,

Alwin G. Nagel, Ira M. Nagel

Spouse: Mary Christine Hansen

Children: Sherman A. Nagel, Florence Ione Nagel (Flossie)

Mary Christine Hansen:

Born: October 10th, 1886 in Storm Lake, Buena Vista County, Iowa, USA

Died: December 15th, 1979 in Angwin, Napa County, California, USA

Father: Charles "Carl" William Hansen

Mother: Hannah Melchert

Siblings: Margaret

Spouse: Sherman Albertus Nagel

Children: Sherman A. Nagel, Florence Ione Nagel (Flossie)

Ministry Highlights:

Sherman and Mary Nagel spent 14 years in Wai Chow, Hakka as Adventist missionaries with their children. Established 15 congregations and 10 Gospel teachers in the Greater Wai Chow Hakka Area, totaling over 730 church members by 1920. Remained in China until 1929. Extensive writing and record keeping via Asiatic Division Outlook. The Nagels experienced the most unfavorable time in China during warlords' upheaval and Japan Invasion with the people in



Figure 1: Sherman and Mary Nagel with daughter Florence 1915

Wai Chow in the 1920s. Living under extraordinary hardships with Chinese believers, demonstrating courage through fire and remaining a beacon for Christ and a faithful and loyal friend with the people in Wai Chow, Hakka.

Family life history prior to China Ministry:

Sherman Albertus Nagel was born on June 9th, 1887 in Forman, North Dakota, USA. At the time of his parents' wedding, his father, Albertus Nagel, Sr. was not yet a Christian but his mother, Emma, was Christian since birth.

Emma's sister Margaret studied in Ann Arbor, Michigan and received her bachelor degree. Following graduation she went to work at Battle Creek Sanitarium and brought her sister Emma along to study at the college there. Margaret was able to earn the fees necessary to help Emma finish college.

Emma met Albertus Nagel Sr. while she was a schoolteacher and they were married in October of 1883. This young couple moved to a small town called Forman, population 400, located in the state of North Dakota, USA. In the ensuing years, they became the loving parents of five sons and one daughter. Sherman's mother prayed earnestly for God to guide her husband and her to move to the northwest of USA. They settled in a place where their children could attend a Christian school in Milton, Oregon. As the children grew, older brother Lee, older sister Iva, and Sherman all attended Walla Walla University in Washington state.

In 1904 there was an Evangelistic Camp Meeting in Milton. Mrs. Ellen G. White also attended. Sherman's father was baptized as a result. The family rejoiced greatly.

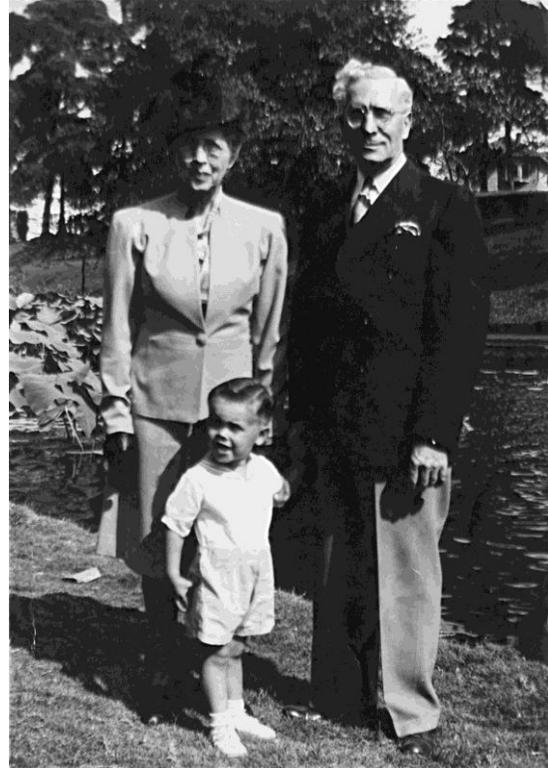


Figure 2: Sherman and Mary Nagel with grandchild



Figure 3: Picture of Sherman Nagel on tombstone

The following year son Sherman decided to study at Union College and there he met Mary Christine Hansen, the cook. Meanwhile, Elder Luke Aaron was recruiting youth for missionary work while Mrs. Ellen G. White was instrumentally encouraging Elder John A. Burden in the purchase of then Loma Linda Hotel, a land package between Redlands and Riverside. It was later reconstructed as Loma Linda Hospital, as today's Loma Linda Medical Center.

Ministry in China:

On October 4th, 1906 Sherman joined thirty-four other students as the first group in Medical Missionary Training course. In that same year Dr. Seligman returned from China and pleaded with students to serve there. Sherman answered the call. Mary Hansen came forth from Iowa likewise. Sherman and Mary were married on June 22nd, 1908. As Sherman finished his course he was about to move back to Freewater, Oregon, to look for work, he got a very big surprise, in a roundabout way!

The story came from Nagel Sr.'s perspective. One Sabbath afternoon as Father Nagel was reading the recent edition of Review and Herald, he shouted to his wife, "Hey, Mother, Sherman and Mary are going to China to become missionaries!" Sherman was equally surprised! And unprepared! A few days later they received the official assignment papers from Adventist General Conference Mission Board about their mission trip to China. They were to set sail for China in a month. Yet they were stunned! How could they go? Mary was with child and the due date was in two months. Sadly Mary gave birth prematurely on October 16th, 1908 and the baby only lived a few hours. The departure



Figure 4: Picture on Mary Nagel on tombstone

was postponed.

Twelve months later, Sherman, Mary joined seventeen other missionaries set sail on the SS Monteagle on October 16th, 1909 to Shanghai. The Ship anchored at Shanghai while Pastor Harry W. Miller came to welcome them on November 14th. They went directly to language school. Sherman was quick with this training. Pastor J. N. Anderson came from Hong Kong to invite some of the missionaries to work in Southern China. Sherman and Mary were chosen. The young Nagel Family went to serve in Hong Kong initially. Mary was feeling exhausted by the heat in Hong Kong and the family decided take some very needed time off. Their daughter Florence was born (2 months early) exactly a year later on October 16th, 1910 in Macau while the family was on Holiday.

Pastor Anderson was their schoolmate at Union College and he had just started work in the Hakka, Wai Chow area. He asked Sherman and Mary to join him. Sherman and Mary subsequently spent fourteen years in Wai Chow. They commissioned the first two Missionary Families there with funds of US\$100,000 donated by the United States Sabbath School Association. One of the families was Bruce Lo's and my maternal grandparents' 鍾子鈞 and 曾定 (Zhong Zi Jun, grandfather, and Zeng Ding, grandmother) farm. They had a cattle and poultry farm in Wai Chow and were devout Adventists. They provided room and board as well as many other services to many Adventist missionaries including Pastor Ezra Longway. These early missionaries lived as the locals. They spoke the dialect and never asked for any American comfort.

In 1920 Pastor Anderson was transferred to



Figure 5: Daughter Florence Ione Nagel Longway

Shantou Area. Subsequently the following six years Sherman became the Hakka Area president. During a furlough in the United States, their son Sherman was born on May 16th, 1915 in Burbank, California. The Nagels were joined by Pastor and Mrs. Irwin Henry Evans as they returned to Wai Chow. According to Asiatic division Outlook dated December of 1920, Sherman shared that Elder Anderson and the Nagels had established over fifteen congregations and ten Bible teachers. There were almost forty foreign missionaries and seven hundred thirty Adventist church members in that area at the time.

In the Greater Wai Chow Hakka Area people traveled by sampans, horse, or walking. Home visitations were long and arduous. It would take months. When Sherman home-visited, Mary and the children were often left alone by themselves, especially when they moved north. So one day, Mary said, "May the children and I join you in your next home visits?" They decided to record the happenings of these visits.

Mrs. Irwin Henry Evans (Pastor Evans was the second ordained Adventist missionary to China) wrote that life for the Nagels between 1922-1926 was extremely grueling and difficult. War and unrest was ubiquitous and constant. Warlords and other invaders would attack at any given moment. Wai Chow was outside the protective areas. The Nagels were in a foreign land without protection. At times they would be surrounded by the military for months on end. Hundreds of the natives there had hidden in their basement during the thundering of bullets and bombs. Sherman and Florence would read their Bibles in the basement with coal-lit lamps.

When Dr. Yat-Sen Sun (孫中山) and his army seized Wai Chow back, Sherman was invited to their headquarters to join in the

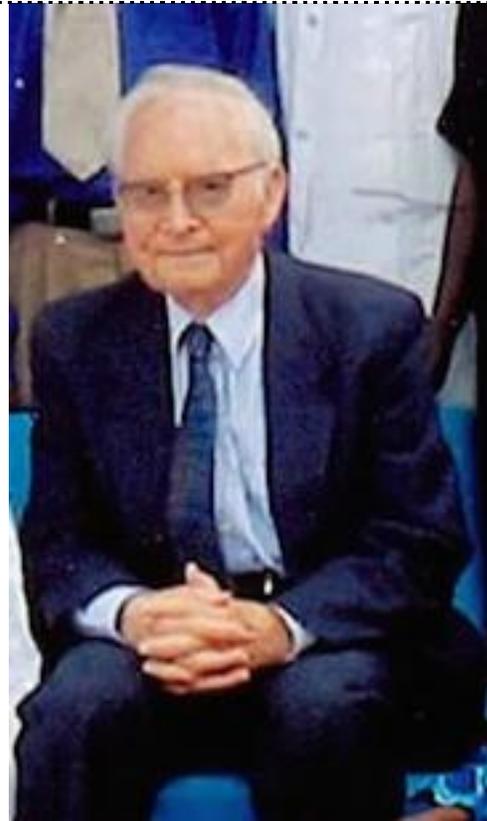


Figure 6: Son Sherman A. Nagel in Nigeria

celebration of Chiang Kai-Shek's (蔣介石) victory. Photographs were taken of this occasion and placed in their passports. This enabled the Nagels much convenience in traveling throughout China without difficulties. They were able to go to Hong Kong (British Colony at the time) to acquire supplies, food, and equipment for the school and the hospital.

One day in the thick of the war during the 1920s, there was only one sack of wheat left. Their area was under curfew. The only other source was the milk from two buffalos. While they were surrounded by gunfire one moving buffalo was shot in the head, sparing the Nagel Family and others.

In 1926 Sherman and Mary were transferred to Shantou District. They served there until 1929.

Significant Contributions:

Sherman was instrumental in many books written in that period. His personal writings included "My Days in Hakka, Southern China", "No Excuses", "Answers to 25 Excuses", "Silas the Polish", and numerous articles in Spirit of Prophecy publications. Most of his publications were in leaflet form.

Book: God's love for the remnant church: a book with a message for every Adventist: in two parts by S.A. Nagel. 1975-1985

Years after China:

Upon their return to USA in 1929 they attended General Conference at Silver Springs, Maryland, USA. Sherman was called to serve an Adventist congregation in San Francisco. This location made it convenient for their children Sherman and Florence to attend Pacific Union College. Subsequently, both Sherman and Florence followed in their parents' footsteps in the mission field. Sherman became a medical doctor serving Africa while Florence, a



Mary and Sherman Nagel, Florence's parents, a few months before Sherman's death July 6, 1968.

Figure 7

nurse, returned to China, specifically to Wai Chow, Hakka and she became life-long friends with Bruce Lo's and my mothers. After her retirement from her mission in China she returned to Angwin, CA. Auntie Florence remained a close friend of mine until her death in 2008.

***Author's notes:**

The essence and efficacy of a missionary is about building relationships. Relationships that would yield trust, love, and lifelong friendship. The Good News Sherman and Mary shared in Wai Chow was more than Christianity. They were answering Christ's Commission—"love thy neighbor, feed the hungry and heal the sick". They developed deep-rooted friendships with the people there. They and their children learned the local dialect, mingled and played with the locals. A touching tribute was the fact the Florence Nagel returned to China after college. She carried with her the legacy of her parents. She loved the Hakka people.

She also stayed at my grandparents' farm after she returned to Wai Chow as an adult. She named my mother (English name) Orient—phonetically means "Lovely Lotus", 愛蓮, shortly after my mother was born.

Auntie Florence and her husband Pastor Longway came to my wedding in 1981 in Eureka, CA, a good 250-mile drive from Angwin. I felt so honored.

This paper is more than a simple bio on and contributions from Sherman and Mary but a tender rendering of a missionary couple who touched lives in the inmost way, especially my family. This is my personal tribute to Sherman and Mary for they were and still are very much part my family's endearing and collective memories. They exemplified the timelessness of a mission well done.

Chinese Contemporaries:

鍾子鈞，曾定：Zhong Zi Jun, maternal



Mary Nagel and Florence Longway at their final parting on February 11, 1974. Both knew they would probably never see the other again on this earth.

Figure 8

grandfather, and Zeng Ding, maternal grandmother of author May Tuan Tucker. They ran a boarding house for Adventist missionaries in Wai Chow, Hakka. Sherman and Mary, among others, stayed with them.

曾純 Zeng Zhun: Grandmother's brother who lived and worked at the farm and the boarding house.

Noted Guangzhou Sam Yuk Alumni from Wai Chow:

鍾啟南， 聶寶珍 : Zhong Qi Nan—eldest son of my grandparents—Bruce's and my uncle. He was one of the closer playmates with Sherman and Florence in 1910s. Nieh Bao Zhen was his wife.

聶妙新: Nieh Miao Xin—sister of Nieh Bao Zhen.

羅慶蘇: Luo Qing Su or H. S. Lo as known in Hong Kong. Possibly the most illustrious Chinese Adventist teacher, principal, pastor and leader from that era. He was my uncle and father to Bruce Lo. His contributions were vast. He first taught at the current Hong Kong Adventist College upon arriving Hong Kong in the late 1940s to 1950s. He then became the principal at Kowloon Sam Yuk Middle School from early 1960s to 1980. He was also the President of the South East Asia Adventist General Conference during the 1970s. He held numerous and important leadership positions in Hong Kong during the 30 years he resided there.

Interviews and References:

鍾麗金: Zhong Li Jin, daughter of 鍾啟南, Zhong Qi Nan (eldest son of 鍾子鈞, boarding house owner in Hakka) and author's cousin who lives in San Francisco. She provided invaluable information about author's grandparents and their involvement with the early Chinese Adventist Church in Wai Chow, Hakka.

Florence Nagel Longway Howlett: Daughter of Sherman and Mary and author's family friend for

decades. She provided firsthand information of her parents' life in Wai Chow, Hakka as well as her own missionary work.

Reference: "**Lotus Blossom Returns**", 2005, by **Sandra L Zaugg**, Pacific Press Publishing Association

"The remarkable life of Florence Nagel Longway Howlett Born two months early to missionary parents Sherman and Mary Nagel, Florence Ione Nagel seemed eager to see China. Called "Fa Lien," (Lotus Blossom) by the Chinese, Florence's love for the people and the culture of this far eastern country was indomitable. College would call her away, but this young missionary was determined to return to her beloved China someday. The long road back was paved with war, bedbugs, emergency plane landings, heartbreak, floods and seemingly "impossible" challenges. But what Lotus Blossom knew, and what you, too, will discover as you read, is that nothing is impossible with God. Lotus Blossom Returns gives a fascinating history of the Adventist work in China through the eyes of one its still-living pioneers."

Last updated September 16th, 2014 by May Tuan Tucker, Ph.D.