

**Hudson Taylor (1832–1905)**

If you went as a missionary to a country where most people had never heard the gospel and considered you a "foreign devil," what would you do? In the mid-1800s, European missionaries in China dressed like Europeans, lived like Europeans, and acted like Europeans, all the while trying to teach Christianity to the Chinese. It didn't work very well! The Chinese thought that the Europeans looked incredibly strange in their weird clothes and ugly hairstyles. In fact, when the Europeans tried to talk to a group of Chinese people, their words were seldom heard because their appearance was so odd.

One man changed all of that. His name was Hudson Taylor. Hudson Taylor had been dedicated to the service of the Lord in China before he was even born! His parents had a heart for missions to China and passed that on to their son. Hudson had a strong conversion experience when he was seventeen and felt a call of God to China shortly after that. In order to prepare for service, he studied medicine in London. In order to train himself for hardship, he lived mainly on oatmeal and rice. In order to learn dependence on God, he gave away most of his money to needy people, then trusted God to supply his own needs. This rigid training was rewarded when he got to China. Hudson Taylor was able to live very simply and humbly while

he got on with the business of learning the language and sharing the gospel.

One day he noticed that the people were staring at his clothing and not listening to his words. So, he decided to dress in Chinese clothing and to prepare his hair as the Chinese men did—with a long braid down his back! At first he had to use a fake braid, but eventually it was replaced with his own hair. The other European missionaries were horrified, but the Chinese were listening. They began receiving the wondrous message of Jesus that Hudson Taylor shared.

At this point, all the missionaries were living and working on the coastline of China because the interior of China was considered too dangerous and difficult. Hudson Taylor, however, saw that the gospel needed to go wherever the people were, so he prayed earnestly to see missionaries released into the interior. Eventually, he started the China Inland Mission, which was a non-denominational mission dependent upon God alone for financial provisions. That was very unusual in those days—to ask a missionary to leave home and family without offering them any salary! But God blessed the China Inland Mission tremendously, and people from many countries and many churches joined Hudson Taylor in the evangelization of the interior of China—all wearing Chinese clothes!