

LETTERS FROM GRANDPA

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Dearest Grandchild,

God willing I will be leaving early in the morning to travel to Thailand and teach some spiritual leaders of the Lisu tribe. Here is a link to a short video produced by CNN that will give you some background to these people.

<http://www.cnn.com/2014/11/12/world/asia/thailand-lisu-tribe/>

One of the pioneer missionaries to the Lisu was James O. Fraser. He was born in London in 1886. He was disciplined and athletic and on one occasion walked 44 miles in a single day. On another occasion he rode a bicycle 199 miles without dismounting. At the age of 20 he had a promising future, both as an engineer and concert pianist. However, in 1908 he dedicated his life to missionary work arriving in China at 22 years of age.

The catalyst that brought this dramatic change in his life was a small booklet given him by a fellow student. The booklet pointed out: *“A command has been given. Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. It has not been obeyed. More than half of the people in the world have never yet heard the Gospel. What are we to say to this? Surely it concerns us Christians very seriously. For we are the people who are responsible. If our Master returns today to find millions of people un-evangelized, and looked as of course He would look to us for an explanation. I cannot imagine what explanation we should have to give. Of one thing I am certain - that most of the excuses we are accustomed to make with such good conscience now, we should be wholly ashamed of then.”*

For the next 30 years Fraser lived and worked among the Lisu people in the high mountains of China, Tibet, and Burma. He reveled in climbing the mountains and readily adapted to living in huts with mud floors. He not only learned their language but developed what is now known as the “Fraser alphabet” so they could read the Scriptures in their own language.

For years Fraser prayed for a spiritual break through among the Lisus. As an engineer he wanted to see things work, but much of his effort seemed ineffective. It was of great consolation for him to read James 4:7 and claim the promise that when we resist the devil he will flee from us. He found that rebuking the devil worked and developed the habit of speaking out loud to him as Jesus did, saying “Get thee behind me, Satan!”. Then in 1915 he made another spiritual discovery. He came to realize that faith has a way of calling things that are not as though they were (Rom. 4:17). Thus, on Jan. 12, 1915 he asked in faith for hundreds of Lisu families to give their lives to Christ. Some time later 600 Lisus turned to Christ in a four month period of time, but in Fraser’s mind it had already become a reality on Jan. 12, 1915.

Unlike other missionaries of his generation, Fraser would not pay preachers or fund their construction projects. He trained them to be self supporting and to pay their own expenses. This helped prepare the Lisus for the harsh years of Japanese occupation and Communist persecution which were soon to come. His efforts in evangelism were so successful that in the 1990s the Chinese Government recognized that over 90% of all the Lisus in China were Christians.

Fraser did not take a furlough until 1924. Dr. Garland Bare, who was born on the border between Thailand and Tibet, said that after 16 years in the mountains, Fraser asked for only two things, a hot bath and a piano. After his bath he was said to have played the piano for 24 hours.

In 1929 he returned to the Lisu with his new bride, Roxie Dymond. God blessed their marriage with three children. Toward the end of his life he became increasingly dissatisfied with what he had done and longed for a powerful visitation from God and the Holy Spirit such as we read about in the book of Acts

On Sept 25, 1938, while in Baoshan Yunan, China, James O Fraser died of cerebral malaria. He was only 52 years old.

Another great pioneer to the Lisu people was the late J. Russell Morse. He, his wife Gertrude, and their 18 month old son Eugene went to Western China in 1921 and began working with the Lisu people. They were 700 miles from a doctor or dentist and worked among these people for 35 years without the benefit of any wheeled vehicle. It must have been great to introduce the concept of the wheel to this tribe, but even greater to introduce them to Christ and the reality of eternal life.

The Morse family became internationally famous in 1974 when the Reader's Digest published a book about their work titled "Exodus to a Hidden Valley".

From 1921 until now, the Morse family has worked faithfully for Christ in Asia. They not only work with the Lisu, but also with many other tribal groups. Illustrative of their outreach, the late Robert Morse spoke 18 languages and labored faithfully to reduce several tribal languages to writing. There are, for example, 500,000 Rawang Christians and today, largely because of Robert's work, they have the Bible in their own language and nearly 100% of them can read. Robert's son, David custom engineers computer codes for minority languages. One example of his work involves the Burmese Bible. Using software developed by David the complete Burmese Bible can now be printed on fewer pages. This, of course, not only makes it cheaper to print, and also to ship.

I will be specifically working with Ron and Pat Morse. He is Eugene Morse's youngest son and works with hostels, Bible schools, dormitories, and many churches throughout the whole area. His network of contacts extends to various countries and is the fruit of five generations of hard work by the Morse family. Ron tells me that our teaching will be electronically transmitted to Lisu speaking people in Burma (Myanmar), China, Tibet, Thailand, the Philippines, etc

Even though I will not send out letters for a couple of weeks, I will be remembering each of you by name in prayer every day.

I love you and God loves you too!

Grandpa

