

This is a complete transcript of the oral history interview with **Arthur Frederik Glasser (CN 421, T4)** for the Billy Graham Center Archives. No spoken words that were recorded are omitted. In a very few cases, the transcribers could not understand what was said, in which case “[unclear]” was inserted. Also, grunts and verbal hesitations such as "ah" or "um" are usually omitted. Readers of this transcript should remember that this is a transcript of spoken English, which follows a different rhythm and even rule than written English.

... Three dots indicate an interruption or break in the train of thought within the sentence on the part of the speaker.

.... Four dots indicate what the transcriber believes to be the end of an incomplete sentence.

( ) Words in parentheses are asides made by the speaker.

[ ] Words in brackets are comments by the transcriber.

This transcript was made by Bob Shuster and Kevin Emmert and was completed in April 2011.

**Please note:** This oral history interview expresses the personal memories and opinions of the interviewee and does not necessarily represent the views or policies of the Billy Graham Center Archives or Wheaton College.



**Collection 421, Tape 4. Oral history interview with Arthur Frederick Glasser by Bob Shuster on April 17, 1995.**

**SHUSTER:** This is an interview with Dr. Arthur Glasser by Robert Shuster for the Archives of Billy Graham Center. This interview took place on April 17th, 1995 at 1:15 PM in Dr. Glasser's office at Fuller Seminary in Pasadena, California. Dr. Glasser, last time we were talking about your service in the military and afterward briefly assisting Dawson Trotman and his work [the Navigators] and then, of course, you went on to serve from '46 until I think '51 in China. Is that...is that correct?

**GLASSER:** Yeah, uh-huh.

**SHUSTER:** Before we go into the experience in China, I wanted to ask you a question...two questions relating to missions in the war. Do you think that World War II had an effect on the direction of missions, at least American missions?

**GLASSER:** Well, several things should be said by way of response. In the first place, a lot of GIs came to faith in Jesus Christ and they became a rather serious type of person in contrast to those who did not go overseas. So you go to Wheaton and places like this and say, "What was the quality of the students that came to Wheaton just after the war?" [Shuster makes adjustments to tape recorder]

**SHUSTER:** Go ahead. Go ahead.

**GLASSER:** And they would say, "The guys who had been GIs were much more serious." Now this is significant because during the time we were actively serving as chaplains and seeing a lot of fellas come to Christ, we knew that the GI Bill would be made available [enacted by the United States Congress in 1944 as the Servicemen's Readjustment Act to fund college or vocational education for returning military personnel]. That was rather early publicized and.... [tape recorder turned off and on]

**SHUSTER:** You were saying the GI Bill?

**GLASSER:** Yeah, the GI Bill. And so, for instance, working with Dawson Trotman and with GIs here in this country. The big thing is, "Let's get praying about the war's coming to an end; let's get praying about you and where you're going to go to school. You're going to cash in on the GI Bill." Now, that meant that point one, you had a serious type of young person, and you had a person who went to the Christian schools. They were very recruitable for missionary service. That's why for those first couple of decades, right after the war, there was an upsurge of missionaries to Japan, and upsurge of missionaries all over the place. And that's why it did, in a sense, contribute to the upsurge of missionary interest among young people.

**SHUSTER:** It had made people more serious?

**GLASSER:** More aware of the world.

**SHUSTER:** Uh-huh.

**GLASSER:** For instance, in the South Pacific, we were in one place and here were ruins of a mission station. And the Japanese had occupied...we drove the Japanese out. They saw things like that. In...in New Guinea we would run into things of this sort, in Cape Gloucester and New Britain. And...and there were books that were being...not books, maybe, but just articles saying, you know, "We formed a church there where GIs were sent." Some of the people became of aware in their wan...wandering around of a worldwide church, especially in the South Pacific. So that's why...that's the only part that I really knew and my brother was a...was a doctor in the, you know...in Europe. And so he saw the world quite differently, but all I knew was that great recruiting opportunity [chuckles] as we saw the war drawing to an end. 1945 I spoke to many guys about, "Hey, what are you going to do? You haven't completed your college education. You haven't even started. Why don't you go here or go there." And the fellows that you'd meet later on...met at Columbia Bible College, people like myself, would have been people in the service. So, I should say that was one of the factors, and I know here at Fuller there are recruiting the guys from the School of Theology for missionary service during those first years of Fuller's big experience. Fuller sent forth a lot of new missionaries then. More so then perhaps day...today.

**SHUSTER:** That was about '49 or '50 when...

**GLASSER:** Well, yeah, yeah. Just ri...yeah, that's right. You're...you're fa...to come here and speak on missions as I did during those, you know, the...the early '50s you almost found a...a good positive response among School of Theology students, you see. Of course, today I'm in the School of World Mission [at Fuller Theological Seminary], so I don't have much access to them in the same way.

**SHUSTER:** The...the other thing I wanted to ask you about was if.... You mentioned individuals and how they were affected by the war and how that effected who serves in the [unclear] of missionaries...missionaries. Well, what organizations, either existing ones or new ones for mission outreach, did the war have an effect on them?

**GLASSER:** Well, I don't know if you ever heard of Phil Armstrong?

**SHUSTER:** Certainly, we have...we have some of his papers in the Archives. [Collection 572]

**GLASSER:** Well, Phil Armstrong is the founder of the Far East Gospel Crusade.

**SHUSTER:** Uh-huh.

**GLASSER:** Okay. Now, that was GIs who started out...GIs gathering together in the Philippines and holding meetings

**SHUSTER:** *The GI Gospel Hour.*



**GLASSER:** *The GI Gospel Hour*. That a remarkable...and from that a mission came. Now, I don't know how many others of that sort developed, but I know there's something...things like that developed in Japan too.

**SHUSTER:** Yeah.

**GLASSER:** You see.

**SHUSTER:** Yeah.

**GLASSER:** Now, with us in China, I don't know any new of China missionaries...missions came in existence because the China mission was still rather extensive, all over the place, and maybe people thought, "Well, they didn't need any new missions societies." But there were some places where they felt that missions were kind of shattered. A lot of missionary societies, you know, had a hard time recouping after the war, as CIM [China Inland Mission] did too. A lot of people were emotionally tired, drained, and you know, and there were places in China where the missionaries of the China Inland Mission were supported by the Chinese. There was no possibility of getting funds through from the U.S. in those war years. And as a result, things were pretty run down all around, and people needed to be rehabilitated and that sort of thing.

**SHUSTER:** So, were many of the missionaries going out then [unclear] people?

**GLASSER:** [tape becomes inaudible for a few seconds] I was on a ship taking missionaries to China. Ralph Covell. I remember Baptists and the Presbyterians had all sorts of medical doctors going. There was quite an upsurge of interest. "We ought to go to these countries now that they're trying to recover from the war. Damage, war weariness, let's go send missions...there's come an upsurge." I felt I was in, you know, I was in...not that that was...well, you felt that was not something that was a bitter end of an old era. You felt that there was something new. There was something new about it. But the...I guess the war. ...you know, World War II was kind of a crusade in a sense. The issues of dark, light...huh?

**SHUSTER:** Eisenhower called his book *Crusade in Europe*.

**GLASSER:** Yeah. Well, there's a black/white nature. The Nazis were bad, the Japanese were bad, but we were the nice guys and so.... [chuckles] And that thought sort of stimulated that kind of philanthropic service of one's self to...to route out the enemy and make sure that people here the gospel, so forth.

**SHUSTER:** You briefly mentioned at the end of your last interview about Mission Aviation Fellowship and Dawson Trotman's influence on them.

**GLASSER:** That would be one, ye...yes.

**SHUSTER:** Did MAF come out of the War?

**GLASSER:** Oh yes. At first, all the guys were pilots, fighter pilots, you know. And...well, Charlie...Charlie Mellis, the first president after Jim Truxton, who's a Navy flier, but Charlie Mellis was a bomber. Bomb pilot and he would describe...I'd ask him, "You know, you...you're...you went on these constant raids over Germany, bombing my relatives. Did you ever think about my relatives [laughs]?" And he would say, "Yes (typical GI). Listen, we knew where we had to go, where we had to drop the bombs and the next thing was to get out of there and go home. I never thought about one person down below." And I said, [Glasser continues to laugh] "Well, I thought about it because quite apart...quite a...my family was in Germany, etcetera, etcetera."

**SHUSTER:** You were thinking about surviving?

**GLASSER:** Surviving and the enemy fighter craft coming after you, you know, and not sure you had...your gun was ready to take them on, so forth. So, that was the war. And I know the same thing...dow...when he had to go down to Australia, round up to guys in the Royal Austr...Royal Australian Air Force. And they had been with us up in New Guinea, and other places providing a measure of air cover, and know some of the guys who after the war went into missionary service.

**SHUSTER:** We have materials in the Archives about Australians in Bolivia. Bolivian Indian Missions.

**GLASSER:** Bolivian missions, yeah, yeah.

**SHUSTER:** Aviators who joined the mission in order to help them find missionary and supplies at various points.

**GLASSER:** There was one family, Lumsden, a Baptist family in Victoria [Australia]. Their headquarters were in Melbourne. Two sons and one daughter. And the daughter (well they had several daughters) but one of the daughters joined us in China with the CIM [A. J. Lumsden]. The other two were bomber...bomber pilots in Europe. One were....

**SHUSTER:** Daughters?

**GLASSER:** Well, the two guys...two guys. One guy, he was...he was shot down and I remember the apprehension, the uncertainty. And then we got word he was...he was alive as a prisoner, and his brother carried on, and that became part of the missionary contingent from Australia that I became aware of after the war. The family...the kids scattered all over the place, but the parents originally had been missionaries in the Solomon Islands before they went Baptist Evangelistic work in southern...southeastern Australia. So, that was a lot of that.

**SHUSTER:** Well, talking about this movement, upsurge after the war. Let's make it personal. How did you come to apply to CIM to be a missionary?

**GLASSER:** Well, as you know, the...the...the...several things happened during the war. . I was in correspondence with Alice. No, no, we were married then. We were married and...and she was

reading, thinking about Wycliffe Bible Translators. Getting quite interested in meeting Pike and Nida and some of the early members of that group.

**SHUSTER:** That's...

**GLASSER:** Kenneth Pike. Eugene Nida, yes, and...and Uncle C...Cam we called him. Cameron Townsend. And she was in touch with them, and quite interested and some of her friends were there. And, of course, I told her...I think I had mentioned this to you. I wasn't sure that she was the one that I should marry, and the thing that impressed me, I didn't think that she had what I thought was adequate enough Bible training. So, I said to the Lord, "If she decides to go to Columbia Bible College (having graduated from college), that would be a sign. But I'm not going to talk to her about it." [Laughs] And then she...when she sent...came up to that...that...that was...that was good news indeed. So...

**SHUSTER:** That was your fleece?

**GLASSER:** That was the fleece, yes. I'm not too much on sen...handing out a fleeces, but that was the one. And I thought it was a sig...significant one because it brought us to...closer to Columbia Bible College, which was one of the things during the war, Dr. [Robert] McQuilkin, you know, he knew about us, and...and Alice actually worked with Child Evangelism in New York City throughout the war. That was her work when I was overseas. But when we came back there was this desire to think about Jewish mission work, but that had somehow...the doors all closed, and while I was in Australia in Melbourne...our unit was sent down there was so badly shot at and so much malaria that...that I started wandering around and going into town and checking on various groups, and I met some of the officers of the China Inland Mission structure in Australia.

**SHUSTER:** Who did you meet?

**GLASSER:** Now you're asking me questions and name. Well, I met...I met this J.O. Sanders in Auckland, New Zealand, actually. He was the head of the...of the Auca...of the New Zealand Bible...Bible School...Bible College. I've forgot what the name was. And he later became the general director of the OMF [Overseas Missionary Fellowship, the later version of China Inland Mission]. And through him I went to...when I got to Australia I checked up on the CIM again. You see, I was brought up in the church (well, after I became converted) the churches that sent John Stam to China. You may have heard John and Betty Stam?

**SHUSTER:** Yeah, John and Betty.

**GLASSER:** Both drove by...I went to the farewell meeting of John Stam [before he sailed to China in 1932] and that was the first missionary commissioning service I ever attended. And that sort of made an...an...well naturally hearing later of his being slaughtered by the communists in Anhui Province [on December 7, 1934]. Later I was in Anhui Province. So that was...there was some connections there. But it was....

**SHUSTER:** We...we have some of his papers...his and Betty's papers in the Archives [Collection 449]...

**GLASSER:** Oh yeah.

**SHUSTER:** ...including Cordell Hull's memos to the various consular agents telling them to investigate the death...

**GLASSER:** Ah-ha.

**SHUSTER:** ...to report back to him and we also have a home movie of their wedding....

**GLASSER:** Oh, yeah. Isn't that something. Yeah. Well, anyhow, that was...that was an experience. Of course, my roommate at seminary was Peter Stam, from Wheaton [both laugh], and so therefore I knew...my mother's close friend was Clozina Stam, which was John's older sister, and they've...they've...they were very good friends and so that's...that's... these things are all inter...intertwined. But you ask me who were the CIM missionaries in...in Australia. My, well...anyhow. I met them. [Laughs] We had times together when I was...when I could be free, I'd go on and see 'em. Yeah.

**SHUSTER:** You mentioned John Sanders. We've had a number of people refer to them in interviews...refer to him in interviews that we've done.

**GLASSER:** Yeah.

**SHUSTER:** A very rememberable person and influential. What kind of an impression did he make on you?

**GLASSER:** Well, he was trained as a lawyer and he had a very lucid, clear head. He could express himself very well. I think he was a little...when I knew him I was just here as a brand new chaplain and we were just in Auckland a couple of days before going up to New Caledonia. And I was not attached to the Marines at that time, but we had a nice...nice friendship. You know, just...just got acquainted with him. Ah, I cultivated more some of the pastors in Auckland rather than J.O. Sanders. J.O. Sanders I got to know more in Bournemouth. That's where he really appeared on...on my radar screen.

**SHUSTER:** '51.

**GLASSER:** Yeah, '51. [The China Inland Mission held a meeting in Bournemouth, England, in 1951 to decide whether to continue as a mission after they were expelled from China.] Later on, yeah. Yeah, so that in...in China of course, I knew about him. Knew that he was always in the home staff, but he wasn't a leader...a field leader. And so that's why I had little to...almost no touch with him.

**SHUSTER:** So, anyway, you...you met some CIM workers in New Zealand and Australia. And how did this lead you to...?

**GLASSER:** And then...then, you know, I was talking with Alice [his fiancé] and corresponding. It seemed that both of us were drawn to the CIM, so that when we first...when the war was over and went back home...well, actually we before even left the service, I was stationed in Long Beach for a while. San Ped...Pedro. There was small-craft training center there, and then I was released from the service there and I had already been in contact with the CIM through Harry and Marguerite Owen, [Collection 584], here in Los Angeles. So, it was natural to...well, we applied almost soon as the war was over. It was....

**SHUSTER:** Now that was the second time you applied, right?

**GLASSER:** Well, the first time I was turned down. I was at Moody.

**SHUSTER:** How did that...what was the story behind that?

**GLASSER:** [laughs] Well, then they had some very, of course...the China Inland Mission leaders were always very impressive guys. When I was at Moody, I heard that these people from the China Inland Mission were coming to town...Chicago, at Moody. And so I...I went and made myself know to them. And I said, "I've been thinking about China." And...and I said, "Maybe I ought to apply." And you know, talking that way. But their conclusion [chuckles] was they discouraged me from applying. They said, "You know, the...it doesn't seem that Lord is dealing with you about China yet." They...there wasn't that intensity of commitment, and I had to agree, you know [chuckles]. But it was very...that...that...that society was naturally, you know, a high-quality society in my book. And so it was natural to explore them. But I remember that feeling that there was something lacking insofar as intensity of conviction was concerned. You know....

**SHUSTER:** On your part?

**GLASSER:** On my part. Yeah. And so they...they sniffed that out of me. It came out.

**SHUSTER:** Was that Mr. [Dixon Edward] Hoste? Or who....

**GLASSER:** No, no. It was the one who was in Toronto. My, this is awful, but I'm not good on these names. But this man was close to retirement then and one of the ones who knew...who knew the...that first generation, you know [of the mission's founders]. So they...they...they were really quality people. The...the one thing about the C...the CIM that impressed me was the quality of their...their homeside leadership. They were cultured people, educated; they're people who seemed to really be...well, all that I wanted in those who would have rule over me in the Lord, you know. You're always looking for people to serve under.

**SHUSTER:** That's right.

**GLASSER:** Yeah.

**SHUSTER:** Did they stand out in that respect more than other missions?

**GLASSER:** Well, I didn't interview other missions. I was in touch with Phil Armstrong and...but that's another story. But, you know, 'cause Phil and I became quite close. And there was a time when, after we got kicked out of China, the po...I was going to go to the Philippines under Phil Armstrong just as a loan from the new OMF to...to the...to the [Far East Gospel] Crusade until we could get established as a separate mission in the Philippines. A certain amount of time to m...do the negotiating so there were loans to other missions that were already active in the...Crusade was very active and they had a Bible school called FEBIAS, Far Eastern Bible Institute and Seminary. And they wanted me to become what I had been doing at Columbia Bible College. This happened during those years, those five years when I was at C...CBC.

**SHUSTER:** So when were you actually accepted...you and Alice actually accepted?

**GLASSER:** We were...we were accepted in four [pauses]...'46, and then the...we went out...there was a lot of delay. We were sent...what they did was they sent us all to...to Wycliffe in Canada. Briarcrest. It was a sort of basic training that the...all Wycliffe translators get. Kind of basic orientation. Phonetics, phonemics, syntax, morphology, etcetera, etcetera. And you know it was only later I realized I should...the thing that I look back on our China experience and wish I had done...when I was riding, going out to China in the shipload of gu...people, I found that there were people who had been GIs who had cashed in on the GI Bill and had gone to Yale University and they studied Chinese.

**SHUSTER:** This is in 1946?

**GLASSER:** Yeah. Oh, that was...there was...during the war, even before that they were preparing people for China and there were a lot of people going planning on being missionaries who weren't in the G...who weren't military. But the...I could have cashed in the GI Bill and really learned how to speak Chinese. But I didn't do it [laughs].

**SHUSTER:** Do you think that was a mistake?

**GLASSER:** No. Well, looking back, if I had thought things through enough I realize...because I always look back and my...and my interest in Chinese is my attempts to learn how to speak it, I wish...I wish I had gotten a better grounding in it. Yeah. The...using the Wycliffe approach is okay. Well, Wycliffe was not about how to learn a language. It was how to break down the language. And being an engineer, in training, the idea of analyzing things—that was fascinating. But you know the [unclear] didn't get your mouth working, your ears working, any of those other things that have to be stimulated and functioning before you're really effective in a language.

**SHUSTER:** Or the method for breaking down a language you can translate it...

**GLASSER:** Yeah, yes. The sounds, know the sounds, how to produce the sounds. Yes, and how the sounds were actively analyzed. You can spend a lot of time analyzing but not...not imitating. No. Language is looking at that person and imitating what that person says [chuckles].

**SHUSTER:** So when did you actually go to China...when did you sail?

**GLASSER:** We sailed in '46.

**SHUSTER:** '46.

**GLASSER:** Yeah.

**SHUSTER:** So lang...so the language school...the Wycliffe school was only a few....

**GLASSER:** That was summer...summer...a summer session. We were there and we were pulled there to get ready to go. Mission wanted us to go and get ready. But that was my first...we were quite a group of candidates going, and one guy had been in the landings at Anzio beachhead [in Italy], the battle for Italy, and you know, we had some interesting people in that first group.

**SHUSTER:** Did...did they ask you where you wanted to go or did you put in a...?

**GLASSER:** Well, yeah. When you get to...when you got to Shanghai, of course, the thing I immediately heard about was that there was some thirty thousand Jewish people in Shanghai who were re...refugees from Hitler's Germany who came out before the war, got out in time to know where to go, settled in China. And...and people in the CIM started to witness to them and that was rather interesting to hear about. Speak...if you could speak a little German and get involved there. I've used that as an illustration because here were the Chinese and they landed in Shanghai with nothing. You know, just the clothes on their backs. But by the time, the communist revolution took place [1949] and they had to leave China, they were prosperous. Some of them owned whole city blocks. But they made no impact on the Ch...Ch...Chinese people. There were great temples in Shanghai and here are these people knowing about the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but no mission...no mission confession. And when we left China in the train going from Changsha to Hong Kong, lo and behold there was a European in the car crowded with soldiers, this and that. And I went down to see who he is and talked to him in English. He didn't know any English. So we spoke in Chinese and he was a Jew from Shanghai. That was my only contact with the.... But, you know, [laughs] and you know, "What are you doing in China?" "What you guys should have been doing before us."

**SHUSTER:** So when you say no impact, you mean the Jewish people in China made no attempt to proselytize?

**GLASSER:** No proselytize. No witness. No...nothing...no sense of obligation, but they could become prosperous. And, of course, the Chinese met their match. The Jews are able people, and they work hard. There's an industry about them that's comparable to even the best in Chinese industry. The way the kids study. So that was...but that was just beside the board. When we got to Shanghai, we were naturally interviewed, and I spoke about Alice's interest in Wycliffe and our having been exposed to Wycliffe and that would mean a travel situation. I spoke about the fact that when I was an engineering student at Cornell met Muslims and those are my first, first non-Christian people of another religious system that I ever had contact with. I had always been rather concerned about the Muslim world. And so there was that. And then of course you know I liked working along students, liked GIs, liked students. And so there were the three and we went to and said, "Well, you fellas know more about what we should do and than...than we do." But the



thing is what we did was they...they ascertained our interest, but then they sent us all to one language school. In Anhui, Anching. And there we were all introduced to Mandarin as Mandarin is spoken, see. Now have they given us our...our...our sense of appointment right in Shanghai, we wouldn't have gotten to...gone to that language school. Of course, everybody had to go to that language school. Because we were being sent to a China that had a different tonal system from Mandarin. So that after we had been in that language school for months learning Mandarin tones and Mandarin...the sp...sentence rhythm and this and that, then just toward the end we found we were being sent to Yunnan. And that meant that when I got to Yunnan I had to start all over again. And that was a setback in language. I thought that they could have thought that thing through more. I thought they...I think now they...if they had said, "Hey, you're a GI, you're thinking about going to China, why don't you cash in your GI Bill and go to Yale. Get that excellent training [in the Chinese language]." You know, that was a wonderful training school. You could tell a missionary had been in...in...in Yale, and he could really speak Chinese. That's...that's...that's....

**SHUSTER:** Was there something institutionally in CIM that prevented them from making those...?

**GLASSER:** Well, I think that they were just, you know...you get to be that big an organization and you kind of get encapsulated. You're not in touch with the world outside. You're not thinking through these things, and that was the case. Well anyhow, so they said, "We're sending you to Yunnan. Yunnan. You'll be in a city called Kunming and there's student work there. You're going to be in a part of Yunnan that has tribal work. You may end up there. And the villages in Yunnan are very often filled with Muslim Chinese." Obviously that was the...everything fit together [chuckles]. That was very nice.

**SHUSTER:** Now when you arrived in Shanghai, there was your first arri...time you had been in China?

**GLASSER:** Yeah, my first time. I was met by [pauses].... Do you know...did you ever meet...meet Hans Martin Wilhelm? A rather prominent mission leader today. He came to Fuller. I knew him as a teenager in Shanghai. He was just a...just a...still somewhat an active member of youth [laughs]. His parents were German and they were German missionaries in the CIM, and they met us at the boat. And so I spent the first, you know, going into the CIM home there. And I can't tell you much about other people in Shanghai but I can tell you about the...the Wilhelm family [Shuster laughs] because meeting him, Hans Martin, and later on becoming active in the little young people's group, and later on got him to...into the Navigators Bible memory system. And that's a friendship that has continued to the present day as a result of being met on a boat by a German.

**SHUSTER:** Do you recall your first impressions of China?

**GLASSER:** Oh, the impressions of crowds. The streets...just crowds. I know...the...the...you drive through a street slowly and the crowds just part and you look back and [both laugh]...oh, the crowds, and you felt, "Lord, this is an absolute impossibility." A country so densely populated, you know, how can you possibly do anything [laughs]...it was just...? Of course the poverty. It was right after the war. You'd go into the buildings, the CIM buildings and all the...the plumbing had

been ripped out and turned into metal. The Japanese using it in their war effort. You know, Japan...Japan doesn't have any raw materials, and they just cleaned the metal out of Shanghai. So the place was in quite a mess. And then after being there very shortly took a ship and went up the Yangtze River to...to this language school in Anching.

**SHUSTER:** And from Anching after being there where did...?

**GLASSER:** After being there, well, we got there until the heat of the summer. And the heat of the summer in the Yangtze River is...is something. So they sent us to Jang Si [?], which is further up the river, sort of a mountain resort. We were there for a while and then...and then we were scattered. But it was then, you see, up in that mountain resort I at long last realized where we were going. And then learned we were going to Yunnan.

**SHUSTER:** Now, who else was in Yunnan, as far as CIM workers?

**GLASSER:** Oh, well, CIM had been there. Mostly Australian no...Australian Methodists of the China Inland Mission. It would have been a...here everyone sent... They said, "Is there any theological group with which you'd rather not be associated?" [Laughs] I said, "I'm kind of Reformed. I...I...you must be born again, and again, and again, that doesn't quite fit my theology." [Laughs] But they sent us to a Methodist area and it was, you know, and the Methodist churches were established by the China Inland Mission. It was a...the Methodist part of the CIM. In other place you would speak more of a...Anhui was more of a Presbyterian part, but they...they divided the people according to their church backgrounds to cause the minimum of fuss.

**SHUSTER:** But often times somebody like yourself was not a Methodist...

**GLASSER:** Well, yeah, what you had to do was you had to accept the church structure, the church polity there. You were not to go in and straighten these people out according to your line of things, which I had no desire to do anyhow [chuckles].

**SHUSTER:** What...what tasks were you and Alice given when you arrived?

**GLASSER:** Well, of course you had to continue the language. The...the Chin...the China Inland Mission have a...had a highly developed of language study, which was largely reading books and working through six separate...took you a half a year to complete each one, and then you'd stand examinations. But very little in the way of getting out and talking, and...and we had a hard time finding a person who would serve as my teacher. So for months there in Sh...in Kunming I would s...eat breakfast, go in to work to lunch, and then go to work until maybe four or five in the afternoon. We slowly trying to figure out...you know, *Pilgrim's Progress* [by John Bunyan], I read *Pilgrim's Progress* in Chinese. You know, reading through...reading through school books trying to see how the kids would learn language and the characters and all that sort of stuff. Working hours. I worked hard, but looking back now, I...I should have been on the street talking to people all the time. I should have been...they should have worked on me. But we just didn't have adequate people that could help me so I was sort of alone. Alice was the s...same way. She had our son. We had a little daughter there in Kunming, and so it was experience... As soon as I...I felt I sh...I just had to get out. I had been, you know, when you're a person who spends the weekend preaching and



teaching as you do in the service, I just had to get out. And so I got some Chinese posters of all these incidents and life of our Lord, and I said, "Are there any chapels out here in the countryside that we can go to?" And Albert Grant (one of our young Canadian, a little older Canadian missionary, now with the Lord), he and I started going to these villages and preaching. And you take a poster and you memorize what that poster said and you'd just try to explain it. And so that was what I did weekends. And then s...then every Thursday going into the prison because the students were causing riots. You know, the government was disintegrating, trying to.... And so they would go to class and bolt the door open and then take all the furniture and toss it out the window. They just causing chaos. And these kids they rounded up and dumped in prison and we'd go Thursdays into their prison and s...try to talk to them about Jesus Christ. There was a lot of that sort of thing. So that the..the...I...I look at...at Kunming and I don't think I made much progress language-wise. Worked down at the YMCA, tried to be useful but after a while we were shipped out to a place called Wu Ding [?], which was a...down the Burma Road a ways and up north. It was a center in just sort of a business center, and here was the Nasu tribe and Lisu tribe and the Miao, and it was kind of a staging center where their c...the CIM kept a couple there but the missionaries in these tribes would need supplies. And they send notes down to you and you would arrange and purchase these things and then send up by carriers or by horseback, or by this and that. It was a matter of you know, serving these ch...tribal churches, but always working down there in the city trying to get a church started and it was...it was built around.... Oh, looking back now we violated every church growth principle. Some...yeah....

**SHUSTER:** Such as? What were some of the principles that you violated?

**GLASSER:** Well, the thing is, you don't want to build your church around a people that may not be the.... There was some, I thought, rather limited people who had believed years before, and we should have...and we...and we naturally stayed with them, but sometimes you can.... When you think of...of a community you want...you think in terms of the church is gonna need leadership, so you go to the segment of the town where the educated people are...start there. That was one of the things. But the thing that disappointed me most about the China Inland Mission I, think, was that for several years I did not receive what I felt was leadership. For instance, when you go out to a Chinese culture, you know, Chinese culture is different from Western culture. All right. How do you communicate the gospel to these people? What are the things you should avoid? What are the things you should stress? Now, the China Inland Mission had been in China for quite a while [Glasser raises his voice]. Okay, now I wanted to tap into the experience.

**SHUSTER:** Uh-huh.

**GLASSER:** What...how do you present the gospel to these people? See. And I tho...I thought I was always reinventing the wheel...I mean, I...and read a little bit. I read a little bit about Chinese religion. Oh, that's interesting. There was a prison there in the town. I went to the prison, got a hold of people and started talkin' there. Oh, did a lot of the things, you know, to try and make yourself useful. But we didn't get what I would feel was a...a supply of tracts and gospels and things of that sort. Tools with which to go out and do mission work. I was supposed to go out and sort of think of somebody who might be able to sell me these things and then buy them. I thought that in terms of strategic planning we weren't...we weren't really up to snuff.

**SHUSTER:** Why do you think that was?

**GLASSER:** Well, they...well, the leader would say to me, you know.... You see, after a while they sent John Kuhn to be my ch...my...my...he was the superintendent of that field and he came up and visited us and this sort of, "How do you feel?" and I thought okay, you know, etcetera, etcetera. And almost, I didn't know what questions to ask. And he didn't know...he didn't...I don't think I learned anything about what I should do from my leader after that little visit. Now, you know John...John Kuhn...he...his wife [Isobel Miller Kuhn] has written so many wonderful books on China and you doubtless have a lot of their materials. [Collection 435 in the Archives] But I felt that, you know, maybe...in the military, where you know what your job is and you're...you know, you're told how to do it, and then you're checked up on whether or not you're doin' it, and things of that sort. I felt.... Today when I think of the way in which...which we teach s...today, you know. Guys that graduate from this school know what they're going to do and what they're going to try and do, and how to do it. They're gonna know how to check up on themselves, etcetera, etcetera. That wasn't in it. Then [?] John Kuhn said to me...he said, "If you just pray, the Lord will show you what to do." You know, that's good piety but it's [laughs]...I don't know. In fact, it was during these...that period there in China...and we saw, we were in the middle of fl...flourishing church work, except in that town Hu Ding [?]. 'Cause later on we were sent to the Nasu tribe, and my, we had a congregation in that center of the...oh, about two thousand people. It was a training school for evangelists from nine of the separate tribes, and I was the first...supposed to teach a course there, which I did. I stumbled around. But you know, the...it just was...it just was I felt.... Have you heard of the Victorious Life movement?

**SHUSTER:** Uh-huh.

**GLASSER:** Keswick and all, that sort of thing?

**SHUSTER:** Sure.

**GLASSER:** Yeah. Well, in every...in every mission station in the China Inland Mission all over inland China there would be the books of Amy M...Amy Carmichael and all of that sort of thing. And you would pr...you know, "Were walking with the Lord," this and that. But it seems to me that when I got to Columbia Bible College after the war and there was the Victorious Life, Doctor McQuilkin, but it seems that Victorious Life emphasis in the Evangelical movement was beginning to wane and to be replaced by something else, where the charismatic movement started to come in its place, and started to remove...remove some vitality such as, what do you think of today in Keswick? Keswick is not a significant place in English spiritual life today the way it was say back in the '30s and '40s and '50s. It was starting...it started to fade. John Stott said...I...I once asked him, I said, "Is Keswick today the vital force that it used to be?" He said, "Oh no. Other things have taken over. Harvest Festivals and some charismatic touches and other things of this sort." And it was that sort of thing that made me aware of the fact that we were in kind of a transition period, so far as Evangelical life was concerned. The fundamentalist movement that was a separate system...mentality that was sort of fading, but except in certain groups like the GARB and the...you know, General Association of Regular Baptists. Things like that. But there also were something about...about...about the whole Keswick Victorious Life movement that was waning.

**SHUSTER:** You mentioned that the various tribal leaders, tribal pastors would come to you for materials.

**GLASSER:** Well, the thing is I found...well, you see, the missionaries in these tribal churches would ask for.... They needed supplies to keep themselves living...take care of their own food. So the things we were sending up were supplies for them of one sort.

**SHUSTER:** Relief.

**GLASSER:** Yeah.

**SHUSTER:** Did you have much contact with the tribal pastors or others?

**GLASSER:** Oh yeah, they would occasionally come down. In fact, they c...came to one place where the...the chap who was in...in charge of the Nasu.... You see this...this evangelist tribe...tribal evangelist school would be rotated from one tribe to another every three years. And it was going...it was in the Nasu tribe and getting to the end where there would be a graduation, and then it would go to another tribe for three years. And so that...so that it was used to stimulate the...the development of leadership in all of these tribal groups, you see. And that's and...but and...and one of the...as I say, the Nasu missionary, his health started to break down and there came a day when one...some of the tribal leaders from that particular tribe came to me with a petition and would I go and help them. They wanted to complete the third year of their evangelist training program, and here the missionary was leaving and it didn't look as though it was going to work out. When I had come I said, "I don't have enough language...I don't know enough about these things, but...." So I [unclear] informal basis, but there was a lot of, you know, apostolic authority pres...pre...preserved by the missionaries in those days. And so there wasn't much of the free interaction that nowadays is much more common in mission thinking.

**SHUSTER:** Were the tribal pastors, deacons, elders, were they the real leaders of the church or were the missionaries the leaders of the church?

**GLASSER:** Well, missionaries, you see, were doing the Bible translations. We...our tribe had a...had a Bible in the New...no the New Testament completed. And, well, the missionaries had a lot of authority, and moreso than perhaps they might have had, but it was waning. There was a change taking place. But indigenous principles, you know.... Everybody was talking about the...the...not only the Nevius method from the Presbyterians in Korea, but also Roland Allan [of the Sudan Interior Mission] and the, you know, the whole church growth methods that were before [Donald] McGavran came on the scene. But, actually the churches were all fully controlled by the national leaders, and fully supported by them. For instance, during the time when the grain is up so high, and then you wait until it gets to the type...time when you cut it, there would be several weeks which you could do no more cultivating of the soil around the roots because the fields are too high. Well, everybody in our tribe would break up in groups of two and three and they'd go evangelizing throughout that whole district. It was well organized in that sense. And you...you...everywhere the gospel was being preached, the whole tribal area maybe forty by sixty miles. Throughout that area the gospel was being preached and preached widely. And...and then here was this evangelist school, so I was tied up there with the evangelist school and with about forty some young people

from all of these various tribes and stumbling around with Chinese trying to teach them. It was...it was great. We lived about five thousand feet up in the middle of nowhere. You know, Alice said, "Let's stay here forever." You know, we... [laughs] it was...it was very lovely. Really lovely.

**SHUSTER:** Was that your main assignment during the years that you were in China?

**GLASSER:** That would have been the...yes. And then, of course, the communist movement came, the...the change, the governments, and...and we carried on. We heard about all the things happening among the communists down below, but nah, we were carrying on busy. Had I not had those last two years, I would have looked back on my China experiences, really, in sharp disappointment [pauses] because it was...as I say, I didn't get the language down. I started off with a new tonal system and that was very frustrating. Why couldn't they get me...have told me where I was to be sent at the outset. Then I would have learned that language. You know, [laughs] to learn how to read a character like for instance, to buy something, you see, "*Mai*" [a Chinese word for "buy"]. But when I went to the new area it was "*Mai*" [the word seems to have a slightly different tone]...you know, *mai, mai* [Glasser emphasizes the tonal differences between the two words].

**SHUSTER:** That...the tonal system changed?

**GLASSER:** Well, western Mandarin is not like Beijing, like the Peking dialect, so you usually had to start all over again. Anyhow....

**SHUSTER:** You mentioned the difficulties you had with the language [sic]. Did you do better with the written language?

**GLASSER:** Yeah, well, being an engineer and drawing, I thought... [laughs] I found it easy to remember the characters, like those characters right behind you [referring to characters hanging on the wall where the interview was being conducted]. Well...

**SHUSTER:** It was like industrial drawing.

**GLASSER:** [laughs] Oh yeah. I didn't mind leaning characters. That...that was simple. You see, characters are...are combinations of things. They're not...not each character a separate...for instance, you can see, like here [Glasser is referring to a character hanging on the wall].

**SHUSTER:** Now you're pointing to a set of.... For those people who are listening to this tape, you're pointing to a set of Chinese ideograms.

**GLASSER:** You see, now this has three...that's a...that's a...that's the character for "eye" [or "I"]; you see, now that could be the character for "sun" [or "son"?], and this is the character of man. And you see, you learn things of this sort. See, here's the character of man...here. And so it goes. It's fascinating language...fascinating language.

**SHUSTER:** You mentioned several times about working with tribal leaders and tribal pastors. So you weren't actually working with Chinese?

**GLASSER:** Oh no, these were all tribal people.

**SHUSTER:** Tribal people.

**GLASSER:** No Chinese around. There was one Chinese who was on the faculty. He was sort of the head of the school and he was...but he was...he was....

**SHUSTER:** What was his name? Do you recall?

**GLASSER:** Oh boy. [Sighs; Shuster chuckles]

**SHUSTER:** Sorry to pull this on you.

**GLASSER:** Yeah [laughs], yes, yes. D'Loo [?]. His name was D'Loo [?].

**SHUSTER:** D'Loo [?].

**GLASSER:** Yeah, yeah. D'Loo Mushu [?].

**SHUSTER:** From your observation, how did the practice of the faith...the practice of Christianity differ among the tribal people than it did among the Chinese?

**GLASSER:** Well, among the tribal people it was a people movement. The...that whole area was being saturated with the gospel. Therefore, although there was an opium-growing part of China, you tell the home of a Christian because it was neat, it was clean, and that person was not raising opium. The agriculture patterns of the Christians had been changed. It...Christianity really penetrated the tribal areas in significant ways. You had evidence all over...all around you of the power of the gospel.

**SHUSTER:** What was some of those evidences?

**GLASSER:** Well, the evidence of children being educated, you know. Of...of no opium, addiction, none of that sort of thing. A lot of church activity. It was a.... And that very fact that when you entered a tribal home, it was always neat. Yeah, I was quite impressed with that. And the organization of the tribe. Our tribe was organized very much like the feudal system of the Middle Ages. The...the...the Miao, their organization was very democratic, very, you know, individualistic. And you have these two tribes side by side. Different structures and the church structures were different reflecting the fact that there was a difference. There were a lot of ind...indigenous principles, but the missionaries had a...had a real authoritarian stance. There was some of that. After all, you go to, well, the house that we lived in. Alongside was the grave of the missionary who had been the first one to bring those people the knowledge of Christ. You know [laughs], natural respect for missionaries, and we sent young people up to be with Ralph Covell in the province north of us, and for those young people from our school to go up there that far away from home and among the people of another dialect of their own tribe, that was so difficult for them. Some got so homesick; some came back. They just couldn't stand it, and they looked at us with new appreciation. They realized, "You people left your country and came here." You know

[chuckles]. They, after all...they just lived in that part of China for a long, long time before you arrived. That was that. Yeah.

**SHUSTER:** The...now the missionaries you were working with...you mentioned they were Methodist.

**GLASSER:** Well, they were...yeah, yeah.

**SHUSTER:** You say British Methodist?

**GLASSER:** No, Australian.

**SHUSTER:** Australian. How did the missionaries get along among themselves?

**GLASSER:** Well, you know how missionaries are. They're...you don't choose automatically. You know, normally you choose your own friends, but missionaries they aren't. They're chosen for you by the Lord and we...we had some missionaries that we were closer to than others. But actually, as soon as I left Kunming we were isolated. We were by ourselves, and working [unclear], we knew a couple up there. There was an English doctor up at that place, he and his wife. Max [M.P.W.] Gray, English guy, Anglican. And then there was Theo [T.W.] Simpkin. He was an Australian and he was there, you know. [Both the Grays and the Simpkins were stationed in Sapushan.] And you knew about these people and occasionally you would visit and have good times with them. Actually they were...they were such...well, they were just good missionaries. I've...I found missionaries by and large, a very interesting, stimulating people. One of the things my wife used to say was, the great thing about being a missionary was you were brought in touch with all sorts of Christians from all over the world. We had a lot of Swiss missionaries. We had German missionaries. In Yunnan there were a lot of missionaries of the Marberg [Lahn] Mission associated with the China Inland Mission. And that was great to be with Lutherans, you know. And so, Lutherans and Methodists side by side in that province. So, and when there was a wedding going on, you know, that was quite exciting thing, weddings. We sent...to our province they sent, oh, about four or five single girls and lo and behold, all of those single girls married [laughs]. It was quite amazing that we had such success. Oh, one didn't marry. She remained single, but oh, a lot of things happened. One said, "Oh, this kind of marriage couldn't take place on the mission field, but it's taking place and we're going to make a go of it," and so forth.

**SHUSTER:** The...you had mentioned before about going to towns and evangelizing and speaking to the crowds there.

**GLASSER:** Yeah.

**SHUSTER:** How did you...how did you start out? When you came into a town for the first time how did you beginning preaching?

**GLASSER:** Well, generally we had a home of someone who lived there as a point of contact. Somebody had gone to these towns before, see. And s....



**SHUSTER:** These people were Christians or...?

**GLASSER:** They were Christians or interested in having us come, see. And so we'd go there and we go around and gather a meeting in Kakwai [?], Kaiho [?] and open...open a...open a meeting. That's the phrase you use.

**SHUSTER:** You'd just go on the streets?

**GLASSER:** Oh, walk down the street...yeah, go down the street [unclear]. Just, you know, and give out some tracts and things and talk and.... But generally go to that house and the group would have already gathered. They knew we were coming, and a certain amount of palaver, talk, this and that. And bit by bit we'd get around to a meeting. I remember on one occasion I worked up a...I had a poster of.... Remember our Lord spoke about a hou...a house built on the rock and a house built on the sand and the floods came [Matthew 7:24-27], and I had that as a drawing [laughs]. And I went and gave this, "Two here, two houses, like two people very much alike. One of them is on the rock, one on the sand. And [unclear] two Chi...two," (these are Chinese), "two Chinese and they look identical. They were twins, yes. And one was a believer and the other was not." So we had the poster. Have one guy stands [laughs] here and the other [Glasser continues to laugh], you know. Those were most irregular times, but [laughs], but...and the thing that always impressed that when you went into the homes of young people in those towns and looked at the books. All the books of Mao Tse-Tung [leader of the Communists].

**SHUSTER:** The people had Mao Tse-Tung books.

**GLASSER:** Well, people had been reading and knew about a lot of those things before we came. So that the...the young people naturally stayed at a distance, aloof. You know.

**SHUSTER:** From the missions or from you?

**GLASSER:** Well, sure. We represented the old, the old days, you know. See ch...the kind that...the Christian movement had been in that province for some time. After all, they don't have these w...well-organized tribal churches happening overnight. So that there was a lot of...a older generation who believed and the younger now just eating up this whole business of...of...of China.... You go...you go, for instance, I remember in the city of Wuting, you want to buy stamps you go down to the old post office and you'd look and there the doors would be shut. And you'd think, "What are they doing?" And they...and then you'd see them sitting...the people who manned that post office sitting in a circle, and they're all reading a book. And their passing it, discussing among themselves. You know, "What is it? What are they doing?" "Oh," they said, "that's part of every day." And, using Christian terminology, they were having a quiet time. The book is a book of Mao Tse-tung and the next chapter. And each one would have to judge himself in the light of this and what this chapter meant to him now that he's been studying it, and how he's gonna reform his life. Going to be better because of what this says. "We're gonna make a new China," etcetera, etcetera. And then the guy in charge was in...each one write out what you just stated. And each one would write out their confessions and write out their determination, live in the light of this new truth and sign it and everything else. Then they turned it over to the man in charge. If you do that week after week, month after month, the person who was in charge of you has in his possession in

your handwriting your confessions of your past and your resolves to make yourself a better person, to make a new China. He's got enough information there (people could be very, very specific about the things they used to do) to really destroy you. And that's why at first there was such enthusiasm. And the sad thing is that in the churches, people weren't talking about making a new China. People talking about getting saved, see. And it was the...made me aware of the fact that a Christian gospel that doesn't deal with a whole situation is hardly the Christian gospel of the kingdom of God. It's...it's...it's a...it's a theology of salvation, but it's not the good news of the kingdom, see. And God is concerned with China because he also concerned with the people of China. God's concerned with good government, and unfortunately the teachings wasn't along those lines. It was in China I became aware of the fact that I must become a student of the kingdom of God.

**SHUSTER:** Now were you aware of this at the time or something you were realizing...

**GLASSER:** Well, ah, no, no. You see, you would live under the communists for two years and you'd see what the communists would start to do, see. Then you'd see how the questions that the communists asked...you know, the China Inland Mission will set the...the...the whole student movement (which was under David Adeney) [the BGC Archives has his papers, Collection 393], which was so strong and then it started to collapse. Why? Because the communists came in with questions, and "What does this mean to you, a Christian? Aren't you interested in China? You know, that sort of thing. For instance, they would say to me (a communist official), he said, "You see those fields over there?" I said, "Well, what are they?" I said, "You know what they are." He said, "You tell me." I said, "Well that op...that's poppy fields. They're growing opium." He says, "Would the Chiang Kai-she government allow you to grow opium?" I said, "No. It's illegal, but they do it anyhow." I said, "For all you know the government is involved in the business." You know, everything was co...so corrupt. Okay. "Now what are you Christians doing about this?" I said, "Well, listen. You look around. The homes of the people that believe in Jesus Christ, they are not growing opium. No, they changed their agriculture." Yeah, we could boast of these things, you see." He said, "Yes, that's okay for them. What about China? Are you concerned about China?" He said, "You don't care if this nation just slips into utter, total corruption if you can have your nice Christians in it." You know, and that was to me a rebuke.

**SHUSTER:** Now who was this who had said that to you?

**GLASSER:** Oh, just a local communist official I met along the road, talking.

**SHUSTER:** This is after they had taken over?

**GLASSER:** Oh yeah, yeah. See, I was only there those two years [1949-1950]. But those two years were the challenging years because naturally the language was starting to improve and becoming more aware of what was going on. But furthermore, here I was right in the middle of a social revolution, to see that, that's an experience few people have, you see, in the West. And...and how...how when the communists came then the young people just left the churches. And they (communists) had their meetings streaming all over the place. At night.... I remember a meek...he was a milktoast sort of a little Chinese guy. He worked as the secretary of our center in Chungking (this was Chungking, I was on my way out), but here he was, he was a little secretary, worked hard.



And we were out wandering the streets in Chungking that night, and lo and behold there was a group and you'd draw near, and here was our little meek...there he was, preaching away. You know, that was something and the...another...these people were being captured by a new idea. A new... "Let's make a new China." A guy stopped my wife on the street once and he said, "Give us [Glasser says a phrase in Mandarin]...give us seven or eight years and we're gonna surpass America." Now that province had as many people in it as all Canada. And it had one surface road for about thirty miles, and the rest are just dirt roads. The Burma Road, the dirt road. You know, all of that. And seven eight years they're gonna surpass us. Their expectations were so great they were bound to be disillusioned. That was inevitable you see, and...and that was a sad thing as that...they didn't, later they become terribly disillusioned.

**SHUSTER:** Going back to the...you were talking about those two years, one of the things that made it exciting was that you were evangelizing and that you were....

**GLASSER:** Well, I was working with the...I was still working in the school. That was every day, you know, teachings every day and all.

**SHUSTER:** When you were talking to groups of people or talking about the gospel, how did you start? What...how did you go about presenting it? What...?

**GLASSER:** Well, you see, but when I went out then in the tribal situations, the p...the meetings were always well planned. I would go with a group of three or four to a place and we'd have a regular succession of various speakers. It wasn't like preaching the gospel to new people. And we'd talk about various things and you know, it wasn't evangelism per se. The evangelism I did was earlier when I was in Kunming, you know, reaching out into the villages in Kunming. But...but here it was working as a member of the church talking about church matters. But the thing that we didn't get around to was talking about making a new China. We should have captured the ideology of the day and spoken.... Although on one occasion I remember at a marketplace a guy said to me, [pauses] "Is there religious liberty [Glasser says phrase in Mandarin] in the Soviet Union? Is there...is there religious liberty?" And I said, "Well, of course, what do you mean by religious liberty?" And you know you always ask questions [laughs] while you're...while you're trying to think. And I said, "You know, there are two kinds of religious liberty. Down deep in your mind you believe whatever you want to. You have that liberty, see, and no one can take that freedom from you. If you hear of God and his love, and Jesus Christ and his death for you, etcetera, etcetera, etcetera, you can believe it, see. Okay. Now, so that in...in the Soviet Union, sure there are Christian people. They've been there for a long time. The church went there first in the year 900. You know, talk about a little bit the history there. But I said, "There's another kind of liberty where I can go down the street and give out tracts and I can stand on a street corner and preach." I said, "Kind of thing they don't think they have." And later on when we were trying to get permission to leave China (now I was back in Kunming)...hundred miles from that situation, and they said to me, "Did you ever meet a man who asked you about religious liberty?" In other words, I was being interviewed and the words were being passed back, and they recalled tha...and I never realized...I said, "Well, you know, religiously there are two kinds" and so forth [chuckles]. And that was a fun...funny....

**SHUSTER:** So they were preparing a dossier on you?



**GLASSER:** Oh, they knew. They knew. Oh yes, they knew about us, and I realized we were kind of...they...they looked on us as sort of helpless nincompoops, not concerned making a Ch...we didn't talk politics. People would ask us about...we saw America has terrible flaws. You know, we're not what we ought to be. We need to conc...be more concerned for the poor and this and that. You know, you generally talk like that.

**SHUSTER:** You talked several times about, of course, living under communism. Did the war between the Kuomintang and...

**GLASSER:** The Kuomintang

**SHUSTER:** ...the Kuomintang and the communists affect your region at all?

**GLASSER:** No, no.

**SHUSTER:** There was no fighting in your area?

**GLASSER:** Well, occasionally, you know, at night the Wuting, for instance, the great gates...you see, it was a walled city. The gates would be shut and they would...well, before they would be shut and anyone going into the city they would always frisk to see if they were bringing weapons in. And they...the big bars along behind the gates, you know, and then the soldiers up on the...on along the walls, and so forth. And occasionally you would hear of some commotion out...you'd see burning out in the distance. Maybe a village being burnt. There was some of that, but not as much because, you see, the war came down to northeast China and slowly came down...down... down in...by the time it got to southwest China a year had passed. China was already under control of, whereas...so a lot of the rascals had already been...been removed by the local citizenry, and there had been a lot of informal revolutionary activities, but all waiting with apprehension for the coming of the communists.

**SHUSTER:** And when did that turnover actually take place?

**GLASSER:** Well, there was turning over all over the pl...you know, wh....

**SHUSTER:** I mean actually in...where you were?

**GLASSER:** Well, I was in a tribal sit...everything was great up there. And then when we went down to Wuting on the way home and suddenly became aware of the communist movement in a new way. I hadn't seen it up in the hills. They...you see, we were in a sense on a frontier, the frontier of China and Thailand, China and Burma, you know. And in...and when...when you're...and you always want to be very careful that you have peace along the frontiers, and so forth. Now, they wanted to make sure no one was running out, but there were large numbers of Chinese soldiers who had been with the Kuomintang who had just gone over to north Thailand. Years later I went and visited those soldiers. We had meetings. You see, that was the kind of Chinese that I could speak. Well, the army just left the country...went to the next. And there in the...in the...in the mountains of Northern Thailand carved out villages right out of the forest and

started their own little homes. But those were soldiers, ex-soldiers. And, I don't know, maybe families were started. Women were gained from somewhere, but, oh there was a lot of that.

**SHUSTER:** So, while you were there in the tribal area, the communists didn't really try and take over control of the areas?

**GLASSER:** No, but they realized that the church structure was a rather strong structure. And so they were starting to, you know, work on us. But I didn't see any of their work directly. You knew that some of the...the...the soldier...the Chri...the Christians church leaders became very closed mouthed and wouldn't tell me much of what was going on.

**SHUSTER:** Because they were afraid of being...

**GLASSER:** They didn't want to be too friendly....

**SHUSTER:** ...talking with a foreigner?

**GLASSER:** Yeah, but then I used to say to them...now, I said, "You know, when we as a group go out to a church on a weekend, we go as a group, we march through maybe a couple of villages before we get to where we're going, and so forth. Now, if it's ever an embarrassment for you to be seen with me be sure to let me know because we don't...we...we wanted to know when we should leave. You see, c...no one...they w...we hadn't been told by anyone what to do about leaving. We were trying to...CIM who was only China...therefore tr...stay in China as long as you can. But, and they would say, "Yes we'll tell you." But there came a day when they say, "You'll, you'll come back, won't you?" [Shuster laughs] You know, nice, polite way....

**SHUSTER:** Of saying you're leaving then....

**GLASSER:** That says, "You better leave." Yeah, the didn't say, "You better leave," but, yeah. But we knew that the leaders would be disappearing for a while. They had to go to meetings. Th....

**SHUSTER:** What kind of meetings?

**GLASSER:** I imagine government meetings.

**SHUSTER:** Re-education meetings?

**GLASSER:** Being instructed to...re-education type meetings. And, you know, we wouldn't see them. Things would carry on. There's a lot of apprehension and fear, and people were worried because they were recruiting...you see, the Korean War broke out. They were coming through for soldiers, and I knew some nice Chinese guys who stuck in the...and you'd see them out in the field, drilling, getting ready. All to march to North Korea...then go down. The guys...I...I imagine that some of the guys that we knew were slaughtered in that terrible, meat grinder of the Korean War. Later on, we got further into...going back home it took us quite a while to go across China...you ran into large bands of soldiers marching, going on to...big flags everywhere. We're gonna go "[Chinese phrase]" [?] (oppose America, assist Korea). You know, those were the...



**SHUSTER:** That was the group that was supposedly volunteers?

**GLASSER:** All volunteers. Big signs: "volunteers." Oh yeah. And you know, wars tend to drag on volunteers because people are bored with life, the routines of life. You know, war, there's something exciting about the idea of a war, a national effort. Young people marched to the colors.

**SHUSTER:** You talked about how people are apprehensive, and some of the changes that came with the communist rule, how was the missionary community reacting to that? What were you saying among yourselves about what was happening?

**GLASSER:** Well, some of the missionaries were...see some of the missions of other societies were leaving. We got to Kunming we heard about the...that missionaries were clearing out early.

**SHUSTER:** What were some of the societies that were leaving?

**GLASSER:** Presbyterians were leaving early. I remember them. The Methodists were leaving early. You know, and...and the...and the American consul would say, "Hey, you guys better leave. You know, we're leaving too," so forth. The British would say, "There...the..." it seems like the CIM was in touch with the British consul in Shanghai. And the British consul I felt wouldn't let this thing last too long.

**SHUSTER:** This thing being communism?

**GLASSER:** The communist rule. They somehow felt that and so our...we felt that general...the...their general director, Frank Houghton, was getting his guidance from British .... [chuckles] we were sure this thing was gonna st...at leas...mean...the Americans were kind of impatient there, you know.

**SHUSTER:** Houghton was British?

**GLASSER:** Huh?

**SHUSTER:** But Houghton was British?

**GLASSER:** Oh, British, yeah, yeah, yeah. Listening too much to what those British.... They said, "We ought to get out of this country and go elsewhere." Well, getting out while the getting is good, but just hanging on, there was a lot of restlessness about that. Yeah.

**SHUSTER:** How was this expressed among the CIM missionaries?

**GLASSER:** Well, there was a great deal of solidarity. You know, you could be on occasion, you could express that, "Don't you think that we ought to get over to Japan?" (That's a tough language.) And start learning that one or th...this and that. But by in large there was no revolt. There was a revolt, however. You know Dick Hillis? Dick Hillis who made Overseas Crusades, you know, OC. He was one who said, "Dr. Houghton or...Frank...or Director, Reverend... Bishop...Bishop...Bishop Houghton, you're wrong. We should get out of this country now." And

so he without much fanfare, he just left. But everyone knew that a key American...a key American, Dick Hillis, Christian, was leaving China before....

**SHUSTER:** He resigned on his own?

**GLASSER:** He resigned on his own. And the idea of resigning from the China Inland Mission, that was tough. I remember when later I resigned, that was a difficult decision to make because you virtually took a commitment for life. This was, you know, to be your life. Come what may, we're sticking with the mission. And that's...but Dick Hillis and Overseas Crusades.... And I'm sure there are other groups that...that thought the same way and admired Dick. And of course, some went to be with Dick...left entirely. I was tremendously impressed with Dick Hillis.

**SHUSTER:** How did the mission finally decide to leave China? Or did they have the decision made for them?

**GLASSER:** I...the decision was made. We suddenly received a telegram. Oh, yeah. "All evacuate."

**SHUSTER:** Telegram from?

**GLASSER:** From Shanghai.

**SHUSTER:** From the...?

**GLASSER:** The general...

**SHUSTER:** From the mission headquarters?

**GLASSER:** Yeah, from the headquarters, yeah that was the headquarters area.

**SHUSTER:** So, what fi...what finally brought that decision...?

**GLASSER:** Don't know. I don't know.

**SHUSTER:** I mean, I know you weren't in Shanghai, but...the scuttlebutt around the mission.

**GLASSER:** Oh yeah, didn't...didn't...see in those days when I...I was just in Shanghai just when entered China and never went back to Shanghai. So...so just told we were getting out. And then we asked the tribal people, the leaders, and of course they said, "Well, that's...that's the end." But they had been telling us in those weeks, "You will come back. You will come back." You see, so we knew were getting.... And we started giving away a lot of our stuff because when you left China you could only take about twenty pounds of things. No...you had to have blankets, something to sleep in at night. And so you...you just left virtually everything.

**SHUSTER:** Now, you left China in '51. Is that correct?

**GLASSER:** '51. Yeah, in the spring of '51.

**SHUSTER:** And by that time America and Chinese were in combat in Korea.

**GLASSER:** Oh yeah, the Korean War.

**SHUSTER:** How did that affect you as an American national in China?

**GLASSER:** And the thing was, you know, they knew I had been a...when the Japanese mil...with the American military during World War II...my own division, the First Marine Division was the division in nor...in Korea. Yeah, a strange thing they somehow didn't bother me about that. Of course, I didn't let it...I didn't even.... When I went before the police and they reviewed this, they had a map and, and...

**SHUSTER:** A map of?

**GLASSER:** Map of the Pacific area and of China. They asked me where I'd been in China, and I...and I said, "Well, you know, during the war I was here, and I was here, and I was here...."

**SHUSTER:** Pointing to spots in the Pacific?

**GLASSER:** In the Pacific, but what I was doing was describing those first few weeks of getting out there and they thought that I had stayed at each place for months on end. I said to them, "You know the American troops were the only ones here in China helping you against the Japanese. I was in the islands helping you against the Japanese." You know, and I worked that angle.

**SHUSTER:** What were the responses at that...?

**GLASSER:** Oh, that...that...they're...they're...they're willing to recognize this, you see. But I said to them...I said [laughs]...so I worked that map. But the...in the next room they had Alice, asking her the same questions.

**SHUSTER:** Now why were you being interrogated?

**GLASSER:** Because we just...we s...we said we wanted to leave China. "Well, who's telling you to leave China?"

**SHUSTER:** Uh-huh.

**GLASSER:** Yeah. "My leaders tell me." "Why?" They'd say. So we'd say, "Well, the school for our children is closing down. So therefore, I can't...our children can't get an education." "Why don't you use our education?"

**SHUSTER:** The Chefoo School?



**GLASSER:** The Chefoo school. Where the Chefoo school had been moved to...to...to central China, a place called Juong Si [?], Kuling, and...and that school was closed down. So as that school was closed down, well, then missionaries with families knew that there was no future unless they developed home schooling or got their kids in the local Chinese school, and this and that. And so they said, "The local schools are closing down. We...we can't leave...we can't...we don't want to leave China. We'd love to stay but circumstances as such we have to leave." The Chinese didn't want to make it appear that they forced us to leave, but they knew as well as we did that they were closing down things. They just tapped our closed-down facility. We couldn't function without some f...some semblance of foreign structure there in the country.

**SHUSTER:** So they interrogated you about your decision, but there was no attempt to keep you from leaving?

**GLASSER:** No, but just delay you...delay you...delay you. You go to a place like Chungking, you stay there a week. And you go to Kunming and stay there a month or so, and you go and appear b...appear before the officials and say, you know, "I...I'd like to have permission to the next stop." And they worked out the route, and we'll...we'll...we'll...we'll "[Chinese phrase]." "We will notify you." Well, "[Chinese phrase]" is like "[Chinese phrase]" which means "comrade." And so he said we'd get the old comrade treatment, but just kept delaying, delaying. They wanted us to know that they were in charge, you know, and how when you're in charge you can...you can toy around with these people. And meanwhile they wanted us to tell them where all of our properties were in China. Would we take our hospitals and give them over to them, you see. And till you were willing to work out transfers of title yo...you...y...you wouldn't be granted permission [to leave]. We never knew this, but they...I remember I had to appear before them in one place and tell about our properties in the province of Yunnan. I said, "We have very little property here." And they didn't believe this. And I said, "Sure, just this list." 'Cause the Catholics had tremendous acreage of profitable land. China Inland Mission wasn't interested in property, you know, and so.... "And here was a hospital in Tali. We want to give this to the People's Republic as possible. It was run and brought into being by American, western money for the people of China. Now, you people should have the right to continue its service on behalf of the people of China. Now, we'll give you the hospital." You know?

**SHUSTER:** You said that?

**GLASSER:** Well, that's the line that we said. "We" are the mission. I didn't negotiate the hospital, but that's the way it was. And now, just recently, some friends of ours have gone to these hospitals and visited them, you know. People there remember the Christians who ran the hospitals back there. See trouble is, in J...in...in...in Asia people go past the national hospitals to go to the Christian hospitals because the care was always much better. The sanitation was always much more highly developed, and much more friendly. That sort of thing.

**SHUSTER:** Paul Stough [Collection 89] said the same thing about hospitals in Belgian Congo and...

**GLASSER:** Oh yeah.

**SHUSTER:** Kenya.

**GLASSER:** Yeah, yeah.

**SHUSTER:** The [pauses]...let's see.... I can't remember what I was going to ask at that point.  
[Pauses] Did you have much contact or had you hear much about the Three Self movement...

**END OF TAPE**



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