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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

OMF International Mourns the Loss of James Hudson Taylor III

Littleton, Colorado – March 20, 2009 – James Hudson Taylor III, great-grandson of the founder of the China Inland Mission, died early this morning of March 20, 2009, in Hong Kong.



Having been born and raised in China, he imbibed its language, thought forms and literature like the Chinese themselves, and won the respect of senior Chinese government officials and of church leaders alike.

James Hudson Taylor III was born on August 12, 1929 in China's ancient city of Kaifeng, situated in Henan province on the south bank of the Yellow River.

His parents served here as missionaries of the Free Methodist Church.

As a 12-year-old boy, he was interned in Weih sien Concentration Camp for three years, when the whole of Chefoo School was moved there during the Sino-Japanese War. Eric Liddell, the Olympian who won gold in the 1924 Paris Olympics, was also in this camp and taught the boys games.

Camp life was a tough and cramped existence. Summers were often blisteringly hot, and the children had to contend with swarms of flies and rats. Jim Taylor, interned with his brother and two sisters, also had the company of his grandfather in the camp. He was always to remember his grandfather's sure faith during this testing time. He wrote "I saw in Grandpa how the patterns of life had been set. Every day began with praise" (*God's Grace to Nine Generations*: OMF Singapore, 1999 p. 18). The camp was liberated on August 17, 1945, and the Taylor family reunited the following month.

James Taylor returned to the U.S. for college education at Spring Arbor College, Michigan; Greenville College, Illinois; and Asbury Theological Seminary. He would later pursue further study at Yale University and Yale University Divinity School. In 1951 he married Leone Tjepkema, a fellow student at Spring Arbor and Greenville Colleges. Their marriage was to prove a strong partnership for service in each sphere ahead of them.

In June 1955 James and Leone arrived in Taiwan to begin missionary service in Kaohsiung. They joined James' parents just as Holy Light Bible School, founded by his father, began its first year of classes. James and Leone's three children (Amelia [1955], Signe [1957], and Jamie [1959]) were born during their first term. When James's parents returned to America for home assignment in 1960, James was invited to serve as the principal, an office he held for ten years.

In 1970 we was appointed founding president of China Evangelical Seminary (CES) in Taipei. CES was an expression of the Chinese church's desire to provide theological education for university graduates. In this role he traveled extensively among Chinese churches worldwide to impart the vision.

In 1979 James Taylor received an unexpected invitation to become the seventh General Director of what was by then the Overseas Missionary Fellowship, succeeding Michael Griffiths. He took up this position on July 1, 1980, the first descendant of the mission's founder to serve in this role. The 1980s brought consolidation and growth across all OMF International fields, and strikingly so in Japan, The Philippines and Hong Kong's new towns; in literature ministry; and among factory workers in Taiwan. China was welcoming professionals to contribute to its policy of "Four Modernizations." Under James Taylor's leadership, OMF International was encouraged to continue in their concerns for China and the Chinese people. China Awareness seminars became established across the UK and North America, and new energy went into the creation and distribution of apologetic literature in Chinese.

When James Taylor handed the leadership to David Pickard in 1991, he and Leone relocated to Hong Kong to seek opportunities to serve the Chinese people. In 1993, with a Chinese American Professor of Pediatrics and a businessman from Hong Kong, James Taylor formed Medical Services International (MSI), to serve in Sichuan province where Jim Broomhall, a descendant of Benjamin and Amelia (Hudson Taylor's younger sister) Broomhall had served as a medical doctor among the Yi people in the early 1950s.

MSI was soon to diversify into Accounting, English teaching, community development, livestock rearing, and Business/ Management. Invitations, extended in full partnership with the provincial government, were extended to skilled teams bringing long-term commitment to serve in needed spheres.

In 1993 the marriage of James and Leone Taylor's son, Jamie, to Ke Yeh Min from Taiwan, brought Chinese blood into the family line. James Taylor took especial delight in teaching Bible stories and New Testament Greek to James Hudson Taylor V (known as JT) and his sisters Selina and Joy, when the whole family lived in Hong Kong. He had a strong sense of legacy; the legacy he had received in the seventh generation of his family's Christian history, and the legacy he himself would pass on.

Dr. James Taylor received honorary doctorates from Greenville College (1978) and Asbury Theological Seminary (1987); more recently he was also awarded two honorary doctorates, in recognition of his distinguished service in Christian mission, by Tyndale College and Seminary, Toronto (2001) and Spring Arbor University (2008).

His 10 years of service as founding president of MSI gave him opportunity to work with officials from the central government as well as with provincial and grassroots leaders. The depth of their acceptance and respect is reflected in their referring to him as "Overseas Chinese." On April 4, 2007, in a ceremony attended by 300 people, a county of the Sichuan province conferred on him honorary citizenship.

Dr. Taylor's book on the life of Hudson Taylor's father-in-law *Even to Death: The Life and Legacy of Samuel Dyer*, co-authored with Irene Chang, will be published this year (published by OMF HK, ISBN: 978-962-8402-13-7).

Two Festschrifts, each planned to celebrate James Taylor's 80th birthday, will be released shortly. (For details see www.omf.org.) They honor a man who pressed into service an unusual combination of ten talents and high energy, all infused with a love of Christ and a humble spirit.

For a more complete version of this article, please visit www.omf.org/us.

About OMF International:

OMF International (formerly the China Inland Mission and Overseas Missionary Fellowship), was founded by James Hudson Taylor in 1865. Together with 1,200 members and affiliates from 30 countries OMF serves the church and takes the gospel to many countries in East Asia, and pioneers in ministries in the rest. OMF places Christians with professional skills in China and other Asian countries, by sharing the love of Christ with East Asians worldwide.

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