

THE BORDER SERVICE DEPARTMENT

Diana Xiong
Assistant Professor of History
Regent University

Introduction

In November 1937, Chongqing in Sichuan province was chosen to be the provisional capital city of the wartime Nationalist state, and the Southwest border areas thus suddenly became China's "national revival base." This situation gave new urgency to a growing government determination to stabilize its control over the people and resources of the southwestern border regions. Since impoverished ethnic minorities made up a considerable proportion of the population of these regions, programs to improve the lives of these people were seen to be a way both to encourage economic development and strengthen loyalty to the central state. Lacking sufficient personnel to implement this mission on its own, the GMD government decided to turn to the Church of Christ in China for help, counting on both the religious and patriotic motivations of church leaders and members to provide committed workers necessary for the programs' success. The Church of Christ in China was established in 1927. At its formation, it already represented 3/5 Chinese Protestants, and was the representative of Chinese Christian churches' union and indigenization movement. In addition, in the 1930s, it cooperated the nationalist government in many social services, and in 1937, it became the only registered Christian church with the Nationalist central government.

On June 24, 1939, the GMD central government issued a decree granting funds to the CCC to establish the Border Service Department, with a mission to provide primarily educational and medical services for the peoples in western Sichuan (will be referred as Chuanxi thereafter) and Xikang (a new province created between Sichuan and Tibet in 1939). The CCC responded to

this call with alacrity. Starting in December 1939, the BSD, initially funded almost solely by the GMD government but under the direct control of the CCC's General Assembly, began its services. The establishment of the BSD reflected the Nationalist state's new emphasis on the border construction during the war with Japan, and this new political environment led in turn to this high point in the cooperative relations between the GMD government and the CCC, perhaps even with the Chinese Christian community in general.

THE GMD GOVERNMENT'S INTEREST IN "BORDER SERVICES"

The roots of the BSD can be traced back, even before the Japanese invasion of the Northeast, to a desire by the Nanjing government for what was called "border construction" (边疆建设 *bianjiang jianshe*). As one Nationalist Party theorist explained, the idea of "border construction" arose from Sun Yat-sen's ideal of "the five peoples of China" – the Han, the Manchu, the Mongolians, the Tibetans and the Hui – living in harmony without ethnic, religious or cultural discrimination against each other.¹ As the Nanjing government claimed itself to be the legitimate successor to Sun Yat-sen's revolutionary movement, the grandiloquent "five-nationality republic" became the goal for the new regime in terms of dealing with frontier and minority affairs.² This goal was clearly reflected in some important policies that the Nationalist government designed.

In March 1929, the GMD Third National Congress held in Nanjing passed a resolution regarding the guidelines for "construction" in Mongolia, Tibet and Xinjiang. The resolution reasoned that, although the peoples in those areas were very different from those in other

¹ Zhu Zishuang, *Zhongguo Guomindang bianjiangzhengce* [The Nationalist Party's border policies], (Chongqing: Guomin tushu chubanshe, 1943), pp. 10-11.

² Hsiao-Ting Lin, *Tibet and Nationalist China's Frontier: Intrigues and Ethnopolitics, 1928-49*, (Vancouver, BC: The University of British Columbia Press, 2006), p. 12.

Chinese provinces linguistically and culturally, they were parts of the nation of China given their histories and geographies. Several important meetings after the Third National Congress continued to put forth various policies for exploring and constructing the border areas. For instance, the Second Plenary Session of the Central Executive Committee in June 1929 proposed the following measures in a resolution on border construction: sending special commissioners to Mongolia and Tibet to publicize the central government's goodwill; sending orders to the local officials in Mongolia, Tibet and Xikang to open schools of different levels in a timely manner and to compile and translate books and brochures to propagate GMD's general policies; popularizing national education and promoting literacy campaigns among the border peoples, and helping them to change their customs; appropriating educational funds for the Mongolians and Tibetans; organizing migration; and so forth. The resolution emphasized that all the propaganda and education efforts were to help the border peoples become aware that the imperialist powers were plotting aggression in China's border areas, and that all economic, educational and infrastructure enterprises should therefore be undertaken jointly by the central and local governments.³

On the one hand, these policies proposed at the various GMD congresses and meetings revealed the new regime's nationalistic and revolutionary stance on China's borders. "Border construction" was a political statement of the Nationalist ideal to create an ethnopolitical order and "a Han-centred nation-state of China."⁴ In its Provisional Constitution promulgated in June 1931, Nanjing asserted its claim of the "de facto independent regions of Outer Mongolia and Tibet as part of the territory of the Republic of China."⁵ On the other hand, "border construction" also sought to make use of the lands and resources of the border areas to benefit the Nationalist

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 41-44.

⁴ Hsiao-Ting Lin, *Tibet and Nationalist China's Frontier*, p. 13.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

state.⁶ For example, a resolution passed at the GMD's Third Plenary Session in March 1930 stated that the central government should encourage and financially support people who were willing to migrate to the border areas according to the government regulations.

In short, the border construction was a movement by the Nanjing regime to project a nationalistic and revolutionary political image that would be devoted to realizing the ideal of a "five-nationality republic." In addition, border construction could possibly help mitigate a series of thorny problems that the central government was facing. But the big question was if the still-weak Nationalist government could execute these policies so as to be able to reap their proposed political and economic benefits.

After the Mukden Incident on September 18, 1931, these issues became more pressing as the Nanjing regime faced various actual or threatened secessions of China's border areas. Frontier crises triggered by Manchukuo were publicly discussed in the international community and certainly within the Nationalist regime. An article published in April 1934 by the Foreign Policy Association of the United States argued that the establishment of Manchukuo was "a new era of China's territorial dismemberment," and that "Manchuria, Outer Mongolia and Tibet were respectively subject to Japanese, Soviet Russian, and British influences."⁷ It specifically pointed out that "large parts of Inner Tibet (the border areas between Tibet and China proper) had been occupied by Tibetan troops who were well-equipped with British munitions, and it was in great danger of complete alienation."⁸ As the Vice-President of the Executive Yuan, H. H. Kung recalled the government's anxiety the border crises in the 1930s in his 1943 address to the

⁶ More resolutions were passed on how to carry out border construction at the GMD Fourth National Congress in November 1931, the Fourth Central Executive Committee's Second Plenary Session in March 1932, the Fourth Central Executive Committee's Third Plenary Session in December 1932, and the GMD Fifth National Congress in November 1935. See, Zhu Zishuang, *Zhongguo Guomindang bianjiangzhengce*, pp. 45-55.

⁷ Hsiao-Ting Lin, *Tibet and Nationalist China's Frontier*, p. 31.

⁸ *Ibid.*

Border Missions Committee, which was formed to supervise the work of the BSD.⁹

One of the most dangerous tactics of modern imperialism is the process of alienation of minority groups within a nation. Our enemy Japan has created 'The Puppet State of Manchukuo' out of our eastern provinces...For the same purpose the enemy has also brought into existence 'The Puppet state of Mongolia' in the provinces of Suiyuan and Chahar. More recently the enemy has also forced Siam to change its name to Thailand, with a design to alienate certain inhabitants in Yunnan who have been known as 'Thais'. It is imperative, therefore, that we should bring the minority groups of our country to a clearer understanding and a closer relationship. Otherwise they will continue to be the prey of foreign exploitation.¹⁰

The competition between the British and the Nationalist for the influence and control over Tibet was revealed in Kung's speech.

There were also other events that illustrated the British involvement with the southwestern border areas crises, which upset the Nationalist government. From late 1930s to the end of 1932, a few clashes broke out in Kham areas (later in 1939 to become the core of Xikang province). One of the major players in these clashes, Liu Wenhui, a Sichuan warlord, spread propaganda throughout China about the worsening southwestern border situation, "claiming that the Tibetan troops, under strong British imperial support, were launching a large-scale offensive."¹¹ As Hsiao-Ting Lin points out, these military conflicts involved complicated political struggles among the Nationalists, the British, the Tibetans and local Chinese warlords. But firm British support for the Tibetans was clearly as to preserve their interest in these areas.

⁹ In original Chinese name of this entity, *Bianjiang fuwubu*, is appropriately translated as Border Service Department. But in the English records preserved at the Yale Divinity School Library, it is translated as Border Missions Department. In my view, the reason for this use of "Missions" instead of "Service" is that the purpose of the English materials was for soliciting foreign financial help, particularly targeting foreign mission boards and churches. "Missions" would stress the BSD's religious nature, and make it seem more attractive to potential donors. While "Border Missions Department" will be used in any direct citation of these documents, in all other cases the correct translation, "Border Service Department," is used. This same distinction occurred in other related entities, such as the "Border Service Committee" and "Border Missions Committee."

¹⁰ H. H. Kung, "An Address of Dr. H. H. Xung[sic] to the Border Mission Committee at its Fifth Annual Meeting," pp. 1-2, box 1, folder 2, Papers of the Border Service Department of the Church of Christ in China, (RG 17), Special Collections, Yale Divinity School Library (hereafter cited as Papers of the Border Service Department, Yale Divinity School Library).

¹¹ Hsiao-Ting Lin, *Tibet and Nationalist China's Frontier*, p. 62. For more on these Sino-Tibetan border crises in the early 1930s, please read *Tibet and Nationalist China's Frontier*, pp. 58-65.

For example, when the Tibetan forces lost their advantage and were forced to pull back to the upper Yangtze River in mid-1932, the British government pressured Nanjing regarding the Sino-Tibetan border crisis. Fearing “possible foreign intervention,” the Nationalist government informed the British that “the conflict was China’s domestic affair with the government would deal appropriately.”¹² The statement expressed the Nationalist dissatisfaction over the British government’s involvement in the southwestern border areas.

These events revealed the Nationalist government’s concerns about Tibet, the Southwest-Tibetan border areas, and the British interference. As the War of Resistance against Japan started, Nanjing naturally feared that the Tibetan government would take advantage of the war crisis to make more trouble in the border areas with the backing of the British. Such a fear was more intense after the wartime Nationalist capital moved to Chongqing in November 1937.

The main challenge though, was how to draw the minority peoples in these areas to the Nationalist state when most of them barely knew there was a GMD government that was fighting with Japan and who viewed the Chinese government through the lens of their constant struggles with the Han immigrants.¹³ Nonetheless, the Nationalists were concerned that without a sense of belonging to the Chinese state, these border peoples could easily be instigated to rebel against the GMD central government, and pose potential threat to national unity. Thus, as Hsiao-Ting Lin points out, “in order to stabilize its political power, the wartime Nationalist government adopted very resilient, enlightened and pragmatic methods when dealing with the Tibetan and other

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 64.

¹³ In his 1943 address, Kung made of point of noting that Yi, one of the minority groups in the southwestern areas, was “the wildest group of people in China.” H. H. Kung, “An Address of Dr. H. H. Xung[sic],” p. 5. Also see, Liu Weitan, “Zhili chuankangdian sansheng bianwu shishi fangan” [Plans for managing border issues of the three provinces of Chuan, Kang and Dian], Min (Civil Affairs Department) 113-1043/30-40, Sichuan Provincial Health Bureau, Sichuan Provincial Archives.

Southwestern minority groups' ethnic and political problems.”¹⁴ In practical terms, the GMD government at this particular time sought to stabilize the southwestern areas through education and other social services to these minority peoples.

However, the central government faced the very irritating problem of being unable to find good officials and sufficient personnel willing to serve in those areas. The Executive Yuan was in charge of “border construction.” But, as the vice-president of the Executive Yuan H. H. Kung noted, “The intense love of one’s native land, which is a common trait of our people, has produced an innate dislike of adventures. It is, therefore, extremely difficult to find well qualified officials who would go to the border regions.”¹⁵ Huang Yanpei, a member of the People’s Political Council who served on the BSD’s Directing Committee from the very beginning, also explained the government’s dilemma in its border construction efforts, and the need of the third parties, like the BSD. He commented at the Border Service Committee’s Fifth Annual Meeting:

...in the past many bad officials in the border region have exploited the people, instead of helping them, so that they have lost their confidence...It is necessary, therefore, for the government to depend upon voluntary service organizations, as a third party, to promote border work...

Much of the work which we do in the Border Mission would fall normally into the scope of government work, if, as we believe, the government exists for the promotion of the welfare of the people. We have to do it, as a Border Mission, because the government is handicapped by the age-long prejudices as mentioned above...¹⁶

Thus Kung was looking for “voluntary service organizations” to realize the central government’s plans for the border regions. These concerns and needs set the stage for the collaboration that would lead to the founding of the BSD.

¹⁴ Hsiao-Ting Lin, “Xizang yu jidaizhongguode minzuzhengzhi” [Tibet and Modern China’s ethnic politics], unpublished lecture manuscript, excerpted from Yang Tianhong, *Salvation and Self-salvation*, p. 47.

¹⁵ H. H. Kung, “An Address of Dr. H. H. Xung[sic],” p. 4. Zhu Zishuang also frequently noted this problem of lacking well-qualified officials. Zhu Zishuang, *Zhongguo Guomindang bianjiangzhengce*.

¹⁶ Huang Yanpei, “Remarks of Mr. Huang Yan/Pei on the Border Mission Fifth Annual Meeting. Chungking,” box 1, folder 2, Papers of the Border Service Department, Divinity School Library Yale.

TWO COMPETING NARRATIVES ON THE ORIGINS OF THE BSD

Due to the Nationalist government's concerns with the southwestern border areas during the War and its urgent need to tie the border peoples to the central state with some practically helpful social programs, one might expect that the BSD came about through the initiative of the central government's initiative, with the CCC responding to the call. However, the dominant narrative of the founding of the BSD, promoted by scholars such as Yang Tianhong, accepts a version from the CCC, seen for example in a retrospective CCC report published in 1948, that the actual idea for establishing the BSD grew out of many long discussions for a new mission strategy between Cheng Jingyi and another CCC leader Zhang Bohuai (张伯怀) in Chongqing in the summer of 1939.¹⁷ While it will be shown here that this version may not be the most reliable, it is important to understand how the CCC itself sought to portray its involvement in this great venture.

The CCC version is linked to changing conditions after the start of the War of Resistance against Japan, when many schools, factories and institutions in the Japanese occupied areas were moved to the Southwest accompanied by a great multitude of war refugees. Sensing new evangelical opportunities in the Southwest, the attendees of the CCC's Fourth General Assembly in Qingdao in 1937 urged the General Assembly to explore and establish mission fields in the Southwest since evangelization was still the CCC's fundamental goal. Accordingly, the General Assembly organized a Guizhou and Guilin Survey Group (黔桂考察团 *Qiangui kaochatuan*) comprised of four CCC leaders including Cheng Jingyi. From September 29 to November 13, 1938, the Survey Group went to several southwestern cities, with Guiyang, the capital city of

¹⁷ *Zhonghua jidujiaohui quanguozonghui bianjiang fuwubu gongzuo jianbao* [Brief Work Report of the BSD of the CCC], (The General Assembly of the Church of Christ in China, October 1948), p. 2, folder U102-0-27, Shanghai Municipal Archives.

Guizhou province, as the main focus of this trip.¹⁸

Before the War, the population of Guiyang numbered only from 80,000 to 90,000 people. But in just one year after the outbreak of the War, its population had doubled to about 160,000. Prior to this time, the growth of Christianity in Guiyang had been very slow, and only the Catholics, the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and China Inland Mission had some limited mission work in the city.¹⁹ Then, a great number of people from the Japanese occupied areas fled to Guiyang after 1937, with many Christians among them. The Survey Group discovered that more than three hundred Christian doctors, nurses, professors and students had moved to Guiyang with their hospitals and schools. The existing churches in Guiyang could hardly house the newcomers.²⁰ In April 1939, Cheng Jingyi and several other CCC leaders came to Guiyang. They rented a compound including three houses and a yard, which would be used as a fellowship hall, a sanctuary, and living quarters for the coming missionaries. On May 15, they held the first worship service in this compound, and began the Guiyang Mission. Later, church and missionary activities were extended to other cities and regions in Guizhou province.²¹

Shortly afterwards, Cheng Jingyi made a trip from Guiyang to Chongqing. The CCC's narrative asserts that the purpose of Cheng's trip was to explore opening more new mission fields in Sichuan province. On this journey, he not only heard a lot about the border peoples' hardships, but also saw their sufferings with his own eyes. In Chongqing, Cheng Jingyi met with Zhang Bohuai who had been working hard to solicit support for wounded soldiers in the War. On Zhang's travel from the Northwest to Chongqing, he also observed the poor living situations of

¹⁸ "Qiangui kaochatuan baogaoshu" [The Report of the Guizhou and Guiling survey group], *Gongbao* 10, issue 10, (December 1, 1938), p. 3, folder U102-0-16, Shanghai Municipal Archives.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Cai Zhicheng, "Dao Guiyang qu" [Go to Guiyang], *Gongbao* 11, issue 7, (July 1, 1939), pp. 6-7, in folder U102-0-16, Shanghai Municipal Archives.

the border peoples, their “outdated” living styles, the tension between the Han immigrants and the indigenous Yi people, and the border peoples’ indifference to national affairs. Zhang shared what he saw with Cheng, and these situations stirred both Cheng’s and Zhang’s hearts. After many conversations during their stay in Chongqing for almost a month, the vision of sending Chinese Christians to serve in the border areas was therefore fashioned, and the two men came up with a written plan for a border service program. According to the CCC’s documentation, this plan masterminded by Cheng and Zhang was then presented to H. H. Kung at the Executive Yuan.²²

Despite the widespread acceptance of this conventional explanation of the origins of the BSD, H. H. Kung himself offered an alternate version. In an address to the Border Mission Committee’s Fifth Annual Meeting in 1943, Kung, then the Honorary Chair of the Committee, emphasized that he received Cheng Jingyi who came to Chongqing at that time to “solicit help for the missionary work of the Church of Christ in China among the refugees in Kweichow (Guizhou).” Kung claimed that he had then challenged Cheng to “start something for the benefit of the border people,” and that Cheng had accepted Kung’s challenge.²³ In other words, it was Kung, representing the GMD government that came up with the idea for the BSD, with the CCC simply responding to his call.

There are a number of reasons for arguing that Kung’s account is more reliable. First, Kung’s account accurately reflects how the CCC’s main focus of attention at the time was on the war refugees in Guizhou after the establishment of its first southwestern mission station in May 1939 in Guiyang. Second, Kung undeniably had direct knowledge of the program’s origin since it was under his orchestration that the funds for establishing the BSD were granted. It was

²² *Zhonghua jidujiaohui quanguozonghui bianjiang fuwubu gongzuo jianbao*, p. 2.

²³ H. H. Kung, “An Address of Dr. H. H. Xung[sic],” pp. 4-5.

moreover unlikely that Kung would have presented an inaccurate story of the founding of the BSD in a public address to the Border Mission Committee. Besides Kung's account, however, another important piece of evidence supports Kung's account. This is an article titled "An Oasis in a Vast Human Desert" written by the BSD's founding General Director, Zhang Bohuai. Although the date on which the article was written is unknown, it was probably produced sometime after the close of the War, since the purpose of this article was to solicit continuous support for the BSD after the GMD government started to reemphasize the importance of Chinese coastal and urban areas that happened after the Japanese retreated from those regions. The article states:

Dr. H. H. Kung was then premier of China, and was keenly interested in all Christian efforts to serve the country in this period of great struggle. Dr. Cheng called on him, as they were old college mates and intimate friends, in the interest of the Kweiyang Mission. "Why not do something for the Border People on a larger scale? As a nation we owe it to them! As Christians we owe it to them!"

That was the much needed 'touch off' to start the ball rolling. Conferences with interested people and consultations with specialists followed. By the middle of June, a tentative plan was formulated. A copy of it was sent to Dr. Kung and another brought back to Shanghai for formal action of the General Council of the Church of Christ in China. Dr. Cheng went to Peiping to move his family to West China in order to direct the work in person. The writer was charged with all preliminary preparations – securing of personnel and exploring possible fields.²⁴

Thus, Zhang's recollection of the establishment of the BSD was in accord with what Kung related in his address. As Zhang and Kung were the authorities on the origins of the BSD, their similar versions must bear more weight. Cheng actually came to Chongqing asking funds for the CCC's mission work in Guizhou, but he was challenged by Kung to "do something for the Border People on a larger scale." Only after Cheng accepted this challenge, did the CCC start to

²⁴ Zhang Bohuai, "An Oasis in a Vast Human Desert: The Story of the Border Mission of the Church of Christ in China," n.d., p. 3, box 2, folder 48, Papers of the Border Service Department of the Church of Christ in China, Yale Divinity School Library.

make plans for the founding of the BSD.

The BSD was the central government's initiative, not the CCC's, but this does not mean that CCC leaders, especially Cheng Jingyi, did not play an important role in establishing the BSD. Kung and Cheng were school mates, and Kung attended numerous Chinese Christian conferences chaired by Cheng in the 1920s. This personal relationship also helped make the BSD happen. Furthermore, Cheng was one of the greatest Christian leaders in China at that time. His reputation, capability, and influence in the Chinese Christian community persuaded many to answer the call of the government to do the border services. Without Cheng, the launch of the BSD could have been very hard. It is also true that the detailed plan of the BSD was drafted by CCC leaders. But this does not mean that the CCC led the way.

The compilers of the 1948 CCC report and other CCC/BSD documents might be forgiven, however, for highlighting the role of church leadership in the establishment of this significant program, particularly given the context in which these documents were written. The 1948 report and other documents giving brief introductions of the establishment of the BSD were primarily written for the CCC's churches in China and mission boards of the western countries, which had been financially supporting the CCC General Assembly's work, including the BSD and other border missions. The compilers thus had an incentive to emphasize the church's own initiative and autonomy, and to avoid appearing that they were manipulated or utilized by the government.²⁵

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF EXAMINING THE BSD'S ORIGINS

To some degree, the role of the central government, in the person of H. H. Kung, in the origins of

²⁵ Professor Qin Heping of China's Southwest University For Nationalities supports this interpretation pointing out that the organization of the BSD came about the request of the GMD government to explore the border areas. Qin Heping, *Jiduzongjiao zai Sichuan chuanbo shigao*, pp. 121-122.

the BSD reinforces the conventional picture of state-dominance in Chinese state-religion relations. At the same time, though, the establishment of the BSD also demonstrated some significant characteristics that complicate the conventional paradigm. Most importantly, the GMD central government absolutely gave autonomy to the CCC to run the border program from the very beginning. The GMD central government gave the BSD financial, administrative and political support, and even when the central government was financially drained in 1945, it still provided 60% of the BSD's operational funds. But then, the GMD government completely left the BSD alone to plan its border work. It did not even interfere with its religious work as long as the BSD would not use the government funding for evangelization.²⁶ In other words, we see a greater willingness to accept not only a degree of religious participation in a government-initiated program but considerable autonomy in the management of that program.

The origins of the BSD thus reveal a different wartime Chinese Christian church that deserves detailed study. Most importantly it shows that the CCC at this time was not only quite Chinese but highly nationalistic.²⁷ In the early and mid 1930s there were already numerous cooperative ventures between the Chinese Christian organizations and the GMD government, the launch of the BSD was however a brand new thing. It was a project on a national scale intended to reach out to the border peoples with a political goal of wooing them to the Chinese state. In other words, a program that should have been carried out by the government itself had to be undertaken by a Christian organization that did not even have financial and professional capabilities necessary for the task. It was, however, confidence in the patriotism of the CCC that

²⁶ The Executive Yuan's decree issued on June 24, 1939, for the establishment of the BSD stipulated that the funds given to the CCC should be used for educational, medical, and relief purposes only, and made clear that the CCC could not use any part of the funds for its evangelical work. More details on this decree will be given in a later section in this chapter. "Minzhengting Zou Huang de baogao" [The report of Zou Huang of the Civil Affairs Bureau], Min (Civil Affairs Department) 54-1-2/24, Sichuan Provincial Archives.

²⁷ Commonly known, the meaning of "nationalism" is different from that of "patriotism." "Nationalism" means not only "someone loves his/her country" but also "his/her country is superior to others." However, during this time of war, "nationalism" and "patriotism" are almost interchangeable in describing the Chinese Christians' emotions.

inspired the government to trust the CCC with this project. At the same time, the CCC also faced attack from fundamentalists within the Chinese Christian community who were troubled by the CCC's attachment to the government. Despite this, the CCC still decided to cooperate with the central government to establish the BSD because of its patriotism.

At the time when the War broke out in 1937, the CCC's Fourth General Assembly was in session in Qingdao of Shandong province. As soon as the CCC's leaders and delegates learned of the War, what they repeatedly talked about in their conversations was that "what should the church do to help the nation, if this 'incident' should become a prolonged struggle for national existence?"²⁸ As Zhang Bohuai revealed in the article "An Oasis in a Vast Human Desert," the CCC's genuine concern for the wartime nation was an important reason for the CCC's willingness to accept the challenge of organizing the BSD. The CCC's nationalistic zeal can also be felt in the BSD's Border Service Corps Song. The lyric read:

How the sky is boundless, how the plains are vast, [we] are free to roam about the tremendous universe. The vault of the Heaven can be the house, milk can be the drink, and anywhere can be hometown. Don't distinguish the central China or the border areas, all are in the family of China. Medical service is to restore people's health, and education is to produce virtuous persons. It is [our] responsibility to serve the border peoples. "Every one under the Heaven is one family, and there is only one nationality – Chinese." This teaching of Confucius and the Mohist are truthful. Mountains cannot separate, peoples far away are in the same clan, unified we are becoming stronger and stronger.²⁹

Nationalism echoed in this song was strong, and it enthusiastically expressed the BSD workers' belief that the border areas were part of China, and that they were willing to dedicate their lives to the construction of the border areas in order to make a stronger China.

²⁸ Zhang Bohuai (W. B. Djang), "An Oasis in a Vast Human Desert," p. 2.

²⁹ "Bianjiangfuwutuan tuange" [Border Service Corps Song], in "Bianjiangfuwubu guanyurenpuanpin Yue jingfeijiesuai mianfeizhibing yuexiedengcaichantongji de tongzhi gonghan" [BSD's notice and documents regarding personnel appointments, budget balances, free medical treatments, medical equipment and properties statistics], file 4-37, Aba Prefecture Archives.

A careful study of the origins of the BSD is worthwhile not only because they reveal the shared values of the CCC and the government at work in the founding of the organization, but also how other goals specific to each party could be reconciled within these shared values. In 1939, the GMD was in the urgent need to consolidate the southwestern border areas, and an important part of this construction was to provide social services for the border peoples. But the GMD lacked human and financial resources. Then, when the CCC was making contact with H. H. Kung, as the Vice-President of the Executive Yuan, he decided to seek assistance from this church organization as it did before in the rural reconstruction and the New Life Movement. Kung had a good knowledge of the CCC. First of all, as Kung perceived it, “the Church Of Christ In China is a Chinese Church.”³⁰ Since the CCC was a legally registered Chinese church with the central government, Kung had certain confidence that it was patriotic. Furthermore, since the outbreak of the War, the CCC had already been actively involved in relief work, often cooperating with the GMD central and local governments. Significantly, Kung himself served as the president of the National Christian Service Council for Wounded Soldiers, one of the most notable wartime relief programs organized by the CCC. The CCC’s genuine concern for China’s welfare and its sincerity in doing good for Chinese society had won acceptance of the public and the government. This was why Kung immediately considered the CCC as a possible partner in solving the grave problem of the government in southwestern border construction. So the BSD was valuable to the Nationalist central government.

For the CCC, the BSD was an unprecedented opportunity to fulfill many of this Chinese church’s ideals of making greater impacts on Chinese society. One of the BSD official documents stated:

...The work of the Border Service Department is providing the Church of

³⁰ H. H. Kung, “An Address of Dr. H. H. Xung[sic],” p. 4.

Christ in China with a deep sense of Mission, calling its membership to think in terms of Christian responsibilities outside their own immediate circles and challenging to youth to become pioneers for Christ... Since true brotherhood between nationalities cannot be attained until such matters as self direction, in proper relationship to the whole, are practically dealt with; the present organization of the Border Service Department is perhaps the strongest influence in the Chinese Church toward a deeper and more perfect understanding between Chinese Christians and their Western colleagues...

There is a further effect of this program upon the life of the Church of Christ in China in that it makes the Church a working partner in the Mission of the World Church. It brings the Chinese Church into a great and powerful working fellowship with a heritage of heroism and sacrifice for righteousness reaching back through the centuries to all the prophets of the only True God...

In addition to the contributions to its own Church the Border Service Department has an important part to play in the larger Christian Community in China for the following reasons: (1) It provides a way through which scattered and independent Christian groups can become cooperative units with the Church of Christ in China without compromise to either their creeds or their methods of worship. (2) It provides a way of united approach to undeveloped and untouched geographical areas and ethnical groups... which is probably the only effective approach for the present stage of Chinese national development: largely because it is a Chinese approach under the Chinese direction to help solve some of the Chinese problems...³¹

These passages illustrated the value of the BSD to the CCC. It could help the CCC gain a platform through which the CCC could create influence and make contribution in a society in which Christianity was fiercely attacked even just a decade ago. Above all, through the BSD, the CCC could extend its missionary work among the minority people since evangelization was still the church's essential task. With the outbreak of the War, the CCC had begun to expand its activities through relief work, but it still could not do missionary work on a large-scale. Thus, the BSD offered a great opportunity.

In summary, the BSD was born out of the mutual needs of the central government and the CCC. The GMD government found a helper in providing social services for the border peoples in

³¹ "New Age for Christian Missions in China," pp. 5-8, box 2, folder 47, Papers of the Border Service Department of the Church of Christ in China, Yale Divinity School Library.

the Sichuan-Tibetan areas as one of the ways to stabilize these politically sensitive areas. At the same time, the CCC had a chance to pursue its evangelization goals. The BSD was both valuable to the state and the CCC, and it highlighted wartime cooperative ventures between the Nationalist government and the Chinese Christian community.

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE BORDER SERVICE DEPARTMENT

Quickly following H. H. Kung's meeting with Cheng Jingyi and Cui Xianxiang, and little doubt through Kung's efforts, the Executive Yuan issued a decree on June 24, 1939, that the central government would grant funds to the CCC from 1939 to 1941 to carry out educational and medical services for the peoples in the western border area of Sichuan. The grant would be 40,000 yuan (Chinese currency) for educational expenses and 40,000 yuan for medical expenses each year. In addition, for the year of 1939, there would be another 40,000 yuan provided as relief funds. The government gave the CCC three years, starting in December 1939, as a trial period. If the services were successful, the government would extend the CCC's social work in the border areas. The decree specifically stipulated that the funds given to the CCC should be used for educational, medical, and relief purposes only, and could not be used for the church's evangelical work.³²

After receiving the decree, Cheng Jingyi immediately organized a special meeting among the CCC leaders. A few important ones gathered in Hong Kong in July 1939 to work out a detailed plan for the CCC's future border services. According to this plan, Cheng would move to Sichuan to lead this unprecedented project directly.³³ Unexpectedly and sadly, however, he died in November that year. Thereafter, Zhang Bohuai, who had been preparing for the launch of the

³² "Minzhengting Zou Huang de baogao" [The report of Zou Huang of the Civil Affairs Bureau], Min (Civil Affairs Department) 54-1-2/24, Sichuan Provincial Archives.

³³ *Zhonghua jidujiaohui quanguozonghui bianjiang fuwubu gongzuo jianbao*, pp. 2-3.

BSD as a volunteer in Chengdu, shouldered all the responsibility of the actual work. Zhang was at that time the Dean of the Arts College in Cheeloo University. Because of the significance of this program, Zhang resigned from the position in Cheeloo University in order to give full attention to the BSD.

In October 1939, Zhang Bohuai arrived in Chengdu from Chongqing with the first batch of border service staff, numbering just half a dozen. A Border Service Preparation Office was set up at Cheeloo University in Huaxiba (outside of Chengdu).³⁴ Under Zhang's leadership, the six staff members started to locate the specific regions suitable for the future BSD to do its services. At the same time, they were recruiting border service workers. The immediate focus of these efforts was on the western border region of Sichuan province (Chuanxi) and its intersection with the newly established province of Xikang.³⁵ On November 6, at the request of Zhang Bohuai, H. H. Kung, as Vice-President of the Executive Yuan, and Zhou Zhongyue, as Minister of the Interior, jointly issued Decree #14052, which commanded the provincial governments of Sichuan and Xikang and related organizations to assist the work of the CCC as Zhang Bohuai, the director of the Border Service Preparation Office, went to investigate the border areas in Sichuan and Xikang provinces. After receiving this decree, the Sichuan provincial government also issued a decree of its own on November 22 ordering the administrative commissioners in the Districts 15 and 16, where Zhang and his staff intended to establish their initial work base, to support Zhang's investigation there.³⁶ The decrees revealed that the official support for the CCC's operation of the border service program was strong from the central to the local

³⁴ The Cheeloo University was originally located in Jinan, Shandong province. It was moved to Chengdu's Huaxi Ba due to the War of Resistance against Japan. After the War was over in 1945, it moved back to Jinan.

³⁵ Xikang province, based on the Kham region of eastern Tibet, was officially established on January 1, 1939. In the early Republic this region was called the "Chuanxi Special District." After the Nanjing government took power, it announced a plan to make this district a province. Li Zhimin, et al., eds., *Huashuo minguo*, Vol. 4, pp. 1230-1231.

³⁶ "Sichuansheng minzhengting 28nian 11yue 22ri faxunling(zidi 895 hao)" [Decree by the Sichuan Provincial Government's Civil Affairs Department on November 22, 1939 (No. 895)] and "Xingzhengyuan xunling" [Decree by the Executive Yuan], Min (Civil Affairs Department) 54-1-2/1-3, Sichuan Provincial Archives.

governments from the very beginning.

Since the areas where the CCC chose to implement the BSD services were in Sichuan, the Border Services Preparation Office also submitted a letter with the outline of the work plan to the Sichuan provincial government's Civil Affairs Department. The letter not only sought the Department's assistance, but also humbly asked the Department to offer its guidance and direction for the work of the Preparation Office.³⁷ This letter reveals that the CCC, while relying on the central government's support, was also making great efforts to establish good relationships with local governments, recognizing that the ultimate success of its border service would be dependent on the cooperation with them as well.

Largely due to the backing of the central and local governments, work on establishing the border service program developed quickly. In December 1939, the Border Service Department was formally established. Organized directly under the CCC's General Assembly, the BSD would serve as the general office for the CCC's border services, planning the fieldwork and coordinating funds. The BSD itself operated under the control of a General Director. Under the BSD, there were a number of service field offices, each being a complete unit. Each field office implemented various types of services (educational, medical, relief, evangelical, etc.). Each of these field offices also had a Field Director appointed by the General Director. The Field Director was expected to execute and promote all types of service within the region to which he was assigned.³⁸ Zhang Bohuai was naturally appointed the General Director of the BSD when it was initially established. When Zhang resigned in July 1948, he was succeeded by Liu Lingjiu (刘龄九) who was the Acting General Director from July 1948 to June 1949. Then when Cui Derun (崔德润) returned from studying in the U.S. for a year, he took the office of the General

³⁷ Letter sent to the Civil Affairs Department by the Border Services Preparation Office, Min (Civil Affairs Department) 54-1-2/4, Sichuan Provincial Archives.

³⁸ "Border Missions Department of the Church of Christ in China, Tentative Plan of Work," pp. 1-2.

Director of the BSD from July 1949 to October 1955 (the end of the BSD).³⁹

In February 1940, a special committee called the Border Service (Mission) Committee was established to promote and supervise the work of the BSD. The committee members included H. H. Kung, who chaired this Committee since its founding, Dr. Wu Yifang, the President of Jinling Women's University and China's first female university president, Dr. Hang Liwu, Vice Minister of Education, Dr. Jin Baoshan, Minister of National Health Administration, Zhou Yichun, Minister of Agriculture and Forestry, Huang Yanpei, General Secretary of the Vocational Education Institute, Chen Zhiqian, Director of the Health and Experiment Bureau of the Sichuan provincial government, and other GMD officials, social celebrities and Christian leaders. At the Border Service Committee's fifth annual meeting in 1943, the first lady Madame Chiang Kia-shek was also invited to be one of its members.⁴⁰ The participation of such high profile GMD officials and social leaders in the promotion and supervision of the BSD, a Christian church managed program, was unprecedented in the history of Chinese Christianity. This type of cooperative venture, in which the Christian church was willing to be under the guidance and direction of a special committee comprised primarily of government officials, at

³⁹ The information here derives from various BSD documents. Zhang Bohuai was another CCC leader behind Cheng Jingyi who should receive much credit for the establishment of the BSD. He came from Shandong, and graduated from Cheeloo University with a B.A. degree. After being a teacher at an intermediate school for a few years, he went to study at Chicago University and earned his Master's degree. Upon returning from his study in the U.S., he became a professor at Cheeloo University, and later the dean of the College of the Liberal Arts. When the CCC was preparing for the launch of the BSD, Zhang was still fulfilling his duty at Cheeloo University. After Cheng Jingyi died in November 1939, Zhang had to resign from Cheeloo in order to be fully devoted to the work of the BSD. With Zhang's capable and hard work, the foundation of the BSD was laid as the BSD's "Tentative Plan of Work," "Service Regulations," and other important principles were produced under Zhang's directorship. Liu Lingjiu, a Shandong native, was the Acting General Director of the BSD during his almost one year responsibility for that office because he was at the same time an editor for *The Christian Farmer*. Cui Derun was also a Shandong native. He graduated from the Cheeloo University with a B.A. degree, and had been the principal of an intermediate school in Shandong and associate professor of Cheeloo University before he came to work for the BSD, first as a field director, and then the General Director of the BSD.

⁴⁰ "Border Missions Department of the Church of Christ in China, Tentative Plan of Work," p. 1; "A Memorandum on the Work of the Border Service Department," p. 1, box 1, folder 5, Papers of the Border Service Department, Yale Divinity School Library; and "Benbu weiyuanhui mingdan"[Name list of the Committee members], Min (Civil Affairs Department) 54-1-2/38, Sichuan Provincial Archives.

the same time revealed an ameliorated and closer relationship between the Nationalist state and Christianity.

The Border Service Committee's power was manifested in its participation in the appointment of some important BSD positions. For example, the hiring of the General Director required the concerted approval of the Committee and the General Assembly of the CCC; moreover, the Committee had a hand in the hiring of the BSD accountant who would be responsible for designing the annual budget of the BSD and for managing its annual incomes and expenses. Consultation with the Committee was also involved in the hiring of the General Director of the BSD's secretary. Beyond this, the Border Service Committee had the power to determine who would be the director for each of the BSD's three service fields, and the persons who would be in charge of the BSD's educational, medical and social relief work. The power of the Border Service Committee in structuring the BSD again revealed the nature of the BSD again. It was a government-sponsored program, with government control indirectly inserted through the Committee.

After its basic organization was completed, the BSD drew up its goals, working principles, and so forth, in a speedy manner. The "Goals of The Border Service Department" stipulated that:

The Border Service Department holds the serving spirit of Christ, and the good will of the central government's compassion for the border peoples. Through our service for the border peoples, we hope the border peoples will be enlightened. Our goal is to relieve the border peoples from disease and pain, to improve their lives, to promote the unity of the different peoples in Nationalist China, and to enrich our nation's capacity.⁴¹

The BSD's patriotism and idealism were clearly seen here. This passage revealed the important goal of the BSD in promoting the interests of the Nationalist state. Although it mentioned "the

⁴¹ "Bianjiangfuwubu de gongzuomubiao" [The goal of the BSD], Min (Civil Affairs Department) 54-1-2/6, Sichuan Provincial Archives.

serving spirit of Christ,” it is still clearly positioned as part of the state’s border construction project. No doubt, the BSD had to show its deference to the central government this way, since it was completely dependent at the beginning on the state for financial and administrative support. But there is no reason to think that CCC participants in the BSD enterprise were not sincere in their support for these goals.

With the writing up of the guiding documents on its goals, creeds and working principles, the BSD unfolded the field work quickly. However, even with the central and local governments’ firm support, the difficulties ahead of the BSD workers were overwhelming. Besides religious, cultural and customary differences between the BSD workers and the border peoples, the BSD’s financial situation also made its undertaking of the border service challenging. Although the central government solely funded the BSD for the first two years, the funds were too limited for an ambitious border service program, and the BSD essentially had no endowment or any other underwriter for any of its expenses. One episode can show how low the BSD budgets were. Some GMD officials were invited by H. H. Kung to attend the Border Service Committee’s second annual meeting of the Border of Directors held in Chongqing in order to gain their support for the BSD. After hearing the BSD’s budget reports, some of the officials said, “the total annual budget of the Border Mission was scarcely enough for the travel expenses of one official to go and make inspection.”⁴² In addition to this already very low annual budget, the wartime inflation was another great problem that the BSD had to deal with. As a result, the salary scale of the BSD workers was very low. Zhang Bohuai claimed that it was the lowest salary scale among Christian groups in China. Because of the extremely low salary scale, it was often difficult for the BSD to hire sufficient qualified workers. Nevertheless, the BSD overcame all the cultural, financial, and geographical obstacles, and consequently established a couple of

⁴² Zhang Bohuai (W. B. Djang), “An Oasis in a Vast Human Desert,” p. 18.

significant bases for its social service and religious work in the southwestern border areas.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CHUANXI AND XIKANG SERVICE FIELDS

In its sixteen years of existence, the BSD focused primarily on two major service fields. One was the Chuanxi (western Sichuan) Service Field and the other Xikang Service Field. In addition, it tried to extend service to the minority peoples in Guizhou and Yunnan provinces, and was able to establish a service field in Yunnan border areas in 1944. But the work in these places remained very limited.

The Chuanxi Service Field was the first one that the BSD established in the southwestern border areas. According to the BSD's design, the Chuanxi Service Field covered the areas on the border of Sichuan, Xikang, Gansu and Qinghai provinces including the counties of Lifan (理番),⁴³ Songfan (松番), Wenchuan (汶川), Mao (茂县), and so on. It was a high and cold mountainous area with a population of around 155,000. There were various ethnic peoples living in this region, with Tibetans being the majority, followed by Han immigrants. There were also small numbers of Qiang, Jiarong, Yi and Waxi peoples. Tibetan Buddhism was the dominant religion.⁴⁴ The specific purpose of constructing this service field was evidently to reach out the Tibetan people.

The Lifan County was the core area of the Chuanxi Field geographically. In the early 1930s, before the outbreak of the war between China and Japan, the Sichuan Synod of the CCC has sent a seasoned pastor Mao Shusen to do evangelical work in Lifan. In just a few years, three churches and one school were built. However, Pastor Mao later passed away, and most of his

⁴³ 1946, the Lifan County was changed to the Li County (理县). So in some BSD's documents written after 1946, the Lifan and Li counties were used back and forth.

⁴⁴ "Bianjiangfuwubu Chuanxiqu gongzuobaogao"[Work report of the Chuanxi service field of the Border Service Department], Min (Civil Affairs Department) 54-1-2/43-59, Sichuan Provincial Archives.

work was destroyed in the fights in this area between the Red Army and the Nationalists in 1935.⁴⁵ After learning this history, the BSD workers were all inspired to “rebuild the destroyed temple” in the Chuanxi area.⁴⁶ This was also why Chuanxi was chosen to be the first service field, which reflected the BSD workers’ religious zeal.⁴⁷

The construction of the Chuanxi Service Field began on December 14, 1939, when fourteen workers under the leadership of Zhang Pinsan (张品三), the deputy director of the Chuanxi Service Field, left Chengdu for Zagunao (杂谷脑), a small border town in the Lifan county that served as a trading center for the Tibetan and Han peoples. Arriving at Zagunao after an eight-day trip, they borrowed an extremely shabby room in a discarded temple in the town’s suburb as a temporary base for the fieldwork.⁴⁸ Before long, the headquarters of the Chuanxi Service Field was relocated to Weizhou (威州, today’s Wenchuan汶川), which was the main transportation hub for the Chuanxi region. This location would help the BSD to connect and coordinate the work better in an area where transportation was highly inconvenient. A branch office was also set up in Zagunao.⁴⁹ After the offices were built, the BSD workers immediately paid visits to the GMD representatives, such as the commissioners of District 16, the local officials and gentry, and the local religious leaders, such as the shamans among the Qiang people. The workers knew that the smooth operation of their work would depend on local support and collaboration. Then, in January 1940, they did an investigation on the exact situation

⁴⁵ In the summer of 1935, during the Chinese Communists’ Long March (1934-1936), the Red Army tried to reach a Communist base built in Northern Shanxi via this remote area in western Sichuan. The Nationalists chased the Red Army here, and the two enemies had numerous fights.

⁴⁶ This alludes the biblical story of Ezra who led the Israelites to rebuild the new temple in Jerusalem.

⁴⁷ *Zhonghua jidujiaohui quanguo zonghui bianjiang fuwubu gongzuo jianbao*, p. 7.

⁴⁸ Zhang Zongnan, “Bianjiang fuwubu gongzuo gaikuang” [Work profile of the Border Service Department], *Bianjiang fuwu* 1, issue 1 (April 1, 1943), p. 4; *Zhonghua jidujiaohui quanguo zonghui bianjiang fuwubu gongzuo jianbao*, p. 9.

⁴⁹ “Bianjiang fuwubu Chuanxi qu gongzuo baogao,” Min (Civil Affairs Department) 54-1-2/43-59, Sichuan Provincial Archives.

of the Chuanxi areas, especially the living conditions of the border peoples.⁵⁰ After this investigation, three Tibetan-dominate villages were made the Chuanxi service points, which were the Zida Zhai (子达寨), the Rierjue Zhai (日尔觉寨), and the Longxigou Zhai (龙溪沟寨). In these three villages, the first BSD service facilities were set up so that the workers were able to carry out the BSD's initial educational and medical work.

In March, Zhang Bohuai and Cui Xianxiang⁵¹ went to Chuanxi to investigate the BSD's pioneer work, and they were very pleased with the first BSD workers. Zhang commended that they "have won the trust of the local people in just a few months. And, the progress of their work is rapid. Now the training of the Tibetan people has begun. In addition, four primary schools and eight adult study points were also established for the Yi people."⁵² After Zhang and Cui returned to Chengdu in April, they enthusiastically organized the second batch of the BSD workers who were able to leave for Chuanxi in mid-April. Among them, there were not only educational and medical workers, but also two religious workers. Their arrival strengthened the work force of the Chuanxi Service Field, and thereafter, all the planned work developed steadily in Chuanxi.

In the preparation and the early stage of the Chuanxi work, the BSD presented itself with a humble attitude and a spirit of cooperation, which helped to create a good image of the BSD Christian workers. This enabled the BSD to continue its service for a comparatively long period of time in Chuanxi. Carrying the same attitude and spirit, the other major service field of the BSD, based in the Xichang city of Xikang province,⁵³ was established in May 1940.

The service range of the Xikang Service Field included primarily nine counties in Xikang

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, Min (Civil Affairs Department) 54-1-2/49, Sichuan Provincial Archives.

⁵¹ After Cheng Jingyi passed away in November 1939, Dr. Cui Xiangxiang assumed the position of the General Secretary of the CCC from being the Associate General Secretary.

⁵² "Zhang Bohuai yuanzhang jiangfu Xichang kaocha" [Dean Zhang Bohuai will go to Xichang to investigate], *The Christian Farmers*, vol. 7, issue 9, p. 6.

⁵³ Xikang officially became a province of the Nationalist state on January 1, 1939.

province, referred as the Ning district.⁵⁴ These areas constituted one special geographical unit known as Liangshan (凉山), or “Cool Mountain”, because it was surrounded by high mountains and often had snow as late as June in some parts. The majority of the people in the Liangshan region were the indigenous Yi who numbered about two to three million. The Yi people were divided into two groups called the Black Yi and the White Yi. The former were the ruling class, consisting ten or twenty percent of the whole Yi people. The Black Yi did not work, and made a living from exploiting the White Yi, who were in actuality slaves often obtained as captives in tribal wars. The second largest group in the Liangshan region was the Han people, who were immigrants from other provinces and numbered from one million to one million and half. There were also some Tibetans and Miao people, but they were very small groups here.⁵⁵

The preparation work for the Xikang Field was done by three BSD workers. In May 1940, doctors Yu Daorong (于道荣) and Zhang Guangwen (张广文) and the medical secretary of the Xikang Service Field, Cui Derun,⁵⁶ arrived in Xichang after walking on the narrow bumpy roads for more than twenty days. They borrowed a house belonging to a Baptist church to be used as their temporary lodging, and initiated the Xikang work.⁵⁷ Unlike the Chuanxi Field where educational work was started first, the work in Xikang took off with medical service. From a small clinic in a rented house, the BSD workers organized mobile medical teams travelling to remote Yi villages. Then educational work, livelihood work, religious work were all developed gradually. As the Xikang Field Directors, Yu Daorong, Ma Honggang (马鸿刚), Li

⁵⁴ “Zhonghuajidujiaohui quanguozonghui bianjiangfuwubu dengjibiao, zhangcheng, fuwuguicheng” [The CCC’s BSD registration form, bylaws, and service procedures], Jianchuan (Sichuan Building建川) 50-435, Sichuan Provincial Archives.

⁵⁵ *Zhonghua jidujiaohui quanguo zonghui bianjiang fuwubu gongzuo jianbao*, pp. 33-34.

⁵⁶ Cui Derun later was transferred to Chuanxi to assume the position of the Field Director of the Chuanxi Service Field.

⁵⁷ “Zhang Bohuai yuanzhang jiangfu Xichang kaocha” [Dean Zhang Bohuai will go to Xichang to investigate], *The Christian Farmers*, vol. 7, issue 9, p. 6.

Yingsan (李应三), and Wang Hezhang (王禾章) were in charge of the field work in succession. In August 1949, Wang Hezhang resigned. Then the BSD set up a seven-man executive committee to keep the work in Xikang going. Later, the office of president was created, and Liu Huangzhang (刘焕章) assumed presidency of the executive committee until the end of the BSD.⁵⁸

The BSD's Xikang services were provided mainly for the Yi people.⁵⁹ The establishment of the Xikang Field and its focus on serving the Yi people were in correspondence of the central government's political objectives. Furthermore, the CCC's religious zeal was at work in organizing services in the Xikang Liangshan region. No foreign Christian missionary work had ever succeeded in the Liangshan areas before. The Baptists had tried to evangelize the Han people in this region, but stopped the work after only a short period time. The Roman Catholics had done some evangelization among the Yi for a while, but it was proven to be a total failure. No other missionary outreach was made among the Yi people, who were labeled by previous Western missionaries as people of ingratitude and hostility. The CCC thus felt that "among all the border peoples, the Yi people's need for the Gospel is the most pressing and urgent."⁶⁰ So when the Xikang staff came to the Liangshan region in the summer of 1940, they carried with them an ambition of being able to evangelize the Yi successfully through large-scale and far-reaching medical, educational, and other social relief works.

The Chuanxi and Xikang Service Fields were the core of the BSD's border service. After

⁵⁸ Yang Tianhong, *Salvation and Selvesalvation*, pp. 85-86. Yu Daorong, a medical doctor, was the field director from May 1940 to 1943. Ma Honggang took this position after Yu left Xikang, and he resigned in 1944. During his term of office, however, he was asked to work in the BSD headquarters in Chengdu compiling the BSD work report since September 1943. So from 1943 to 1944, Li Yingsan was the provisional field director. Li earned his Ph.D. in Sociology in the United States. He was a professor in a Chinese university before came to work for the BSD's Xikang Service Field. Wang Hezhang once worked for the Nationalist government's Relief Committee, and was the Xikang field director from 1944 to 1949.

⁵⁹ "Zhonghuajidujiaohui quanguozonghui bianjiangfuwubu dengjibiao, zhangcheng, fuwuguicheng," Jianchuan (Sichuan Building建川) 50-435, Sichuan Provincial Archives.

⁶⁰ *Zhonghua jidujiaohui quanguo zonghui bianjiang fuwubu gongzuo jianbao*, p. 37.

they were established, the BSD tried to use various means to propagate the BSD's work and to solicit support. On October 20, 1942, Zhang Bohuai was given an opportunity by the NCC to talk about the BSD's service in the border areas and its achievements in a radio broadcasting in Chengdu.⁶¹ In his radio talk titled "The work report of the Church of Christ in China's Border Service Department," in addition to introducing the BSD's achievements and current work. He specifically pleaded that people who were interested in and concerned with border enterprise should give the BSD encouragement, guidance and support.⁶² This radio talk helped the BSD reap much encouraging feedback. As it continued to expand its work, the BSD's societal influence went beyond Chengdu to other areas in China.

The FINANCIAL SITUATIONS OF THE BSD IN CHUANXI AND XIKANG

Funds are critical for any campaigns and movements. As a brand new work in the history of Chinese Church, the BSD needed even more finances since there were no foundation and precedence for what the BSD was going to do, and the BSD services for the border peoples were mostly non-profitable. There were four major sources from which the BSD obtained financial support for its operation of sixteen years. The first and the most important source, especially at the beginning of the BSD, was the Nationalist government funding. For the first two years, from December 1939 to December 1941, the BSD's educational and medical programs were fully funded by the Nationalist central government. Then, starting in 1942, the Sichuan and Xikang provincial governments and the Lifan county government also began to give some financial

⁶¹ The NCC since its founding in 1922 had served as a national institution for all the Protestant churches and mission organizations in China to facilitate the exchange of information. During this time of war, the NCC secured some radio broadcasting slots to periodically introduce the work of each Christian church and organization. On October 20, 1942, the NCC gave the BSD the broadcasting chance to introduce its border service.

⁶² Zhang Bohuai, "Zhonghuajidujiaohui quanguozonghui biangjiangfuwubu gongzuobaogao" [The work report of the Church of Christ in China's Border Service Department], *Xiejing yuekan* [The N.C.C Bulletin], published in April 1943, p. 21.

support to the BSD.

The second category of funds for the BSD's operation came from the General Assembly of the CCC and the BSD itself. Even in the first two years, the CCC had to solicit donations for the BSD's religious work. It was more costly to do evangelization in the border areas than other areas in China. The BSD had to spend more money in hiring Chinese Christians who were willing to work in the remote Chuanxi and Xikang fields. At the very beginning of the establishment of the BSD, the General Assembly had already started to publicize BSD missionary positions and the positions' benefits and requirements in numerous Chinese church publications. Eventually, the first batch of the BSD religious workers were chosen from the CCC churches. Each of the six Chinese missionaries' tenure was seven years. To mitigate the missionaries' concerns with their families and to encourage their dedication, the missionaries' parents and children were also given some subsidies to support their living and education so the missionaries would not be too worried about their lives at home.⁶³ The funds for hiring the BSD missionaries and subsidizing their families were raised by the General Assembly, and the missionaries were chosen by the General Assembly as well. But once they were in the border areas, the missionaries were under the BSD's direct leadership.

As the BSD demonstrated its achievements with the early constructions of schools, hospitals and churches, the General Assembly and the BSD were able to raise more money. For example, in 1941, 36,000 dollars (Chinese) were raised from the CCC churches and other Chinese Christian organizations, and in 1942, the donations almost doubled to 70,000 dollars.⁶⁴

⁶³ "Jiaohuixiaoxi: zonghuipairen xuanjiaobianjiang" [Church news: the General Assembly of the CCC sent missionaries to evangelize the border areas], *The Christian Farmer*, Vol. 7, Issue 6, published on March 16, 1940, p. 6.

⁶⁴ "Zhonghuajidujiaohui bianjiangfuwubuweiuyuanhui disijienianhui jiyao" [The summary of the Border Service Commission's Fourth Annual Meeting of the CCC's BSD], *Xiejun* [The N.C.C Bulletin], Issue 1 of the reopened publication by National Christian Council of China in March 1943, pp. 26-27.

After the first two years of the establishment of the BSD, the central government continued to fund the BSD educational, medical, and social relief work, but the General Assembly and the BSD had to do more fundraising, not just for its religious work, but for educational and medical work as well. In 1942, the General Assembly and the BSD had to shoulder one-fifth of that year's BSD expenditure. After that, the percentages kept increasing each year due to the reduction of the government financial support.

The third major source for the BSD's finances came from some national and international relief organizations. From 1942, the United China Relief Committee, the International Relief Committee, and International Red Cross, all started to give grants to the BSD from time to time based on its applications.⁶⁵ Finally, the BSD created some revenues through its medical and livelihood programs. For example, at the BSD hospitals, symbolic registration fees were required for those who came to seek medical treatments. After the educational and medical programs were established, the BSD got permission from the central government to open livelihood programs including the building of a couple of agricultural stations where some agricultural and dairy products could be sold. These incomes helped defray some of the BSD's expenses. But they were just a very small portion of the funds that the BSD received for operation. For instance, in 1942, the BSD had an income of 481,501.70 dollars (Chinese) for its medical work including grants from the central and provincial governments; donations from the National Relief Committee, the International Red Cross, and the American Advisory Committee; sales of medicines; and medical registration fees. But the income from the registration fees was only about 6,026.70 dollars, 1.5% of the total.⁶⁶ This again showed the BSD's nature as a mainly charity entity.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ "Medical Work – Border Mission of the Church of Christ in China, Financial Statement for Year Ending Dec. 31st 1942," box 1, folder 11, Papers of the Border Service Department, Divinity School Library Yale.

The BSD was a border service enterprise responding to the challenges in the Southwestern Sichuan-Xikang-Tibetan border areas after the War of Resistance against Japan broke out. From 1939 to the end of the War in 1945, the BSD experienced rapid growth. One important reason for this was the central government’s unusual financial support. These subsidies again indicate the extent to which the BSD was an initiative of the GMD central government. The following table is the financial statement of the BSD from 1939 to 1945.

Year	Total Expenditure (Chinese dollar)	G.A. Grant (Chinese dollar)	Other Sources (Chinese dollar)
1939	99,000.00		99,000.00
1940	111,000.00	2,000.00	109,000.00
1941	330,000.00	18,000.00	312,000.00
1942	738,000.00	45,000.00	693,000.00
1943	1,859,000.00	160,000.00	1,699,000.00
1944	9,053,000.00	2,000,000.00	7,053,000.00
1945	29,063,000.00	3,650,000.00	25,413,000.00

(“Financial Statement of Border Mission”⁶⁷ Note: G.A.: General Assembly of the CCC.)

The strong financial support provided by the central government to the BSD throughout the War of Resistance against Japan made the BSD an unusual product of cooperation between the state and a Christian organization. The BSD received a lot of government funds, and accordingly served the government’s agenda. But it also was able to do a fair amount of evangelical work. This mutual need was most urgent after the Nationalist provisional government moved to Chongqing and turned the Southwest into the national revival base, and

⁶⁷ “Financial Statement of Border Mission” in “A Memorandum on the Work of the Border Service Department, May 7, 1946,” box 1, folder 6, Papers of the Border Service Department, Divinity School Library Yale.

the CCC was not able to do much church work in the urban cities. After the War ended, as the central government moved back to Nanjing, its financial support to the BSD also reduced. The BSD and the General Assembly of the CCC had to look for support from many other channels besides the central government, including the donations from foreign churches. The wider financial support sources enabled the BSD to continue the border services for another a few more years.

In 1949, before the Nationalist regime was forced to Taiwan by the Chinese communists, the Nationalist central government had totally lost the ability to support the BSD. Thus, the CCC tried to secure the needed funds for BSD operations from overseas sources and the domestic churches even as the CCC churches themselves were facing extremely difficult financial situations. But trying to secure the BSD needed revenue and continuing to operate the border service was difficult for the CCC. After the People's Republic of China was founded, the new communist government did not immediately abolish the BSD, but gave it no any financial subsidy even though the BSD's services benefitted the border areas. In the beginning of 1950, the CCC stated that the BSD's expenditures would be covered by the General Assembly and the BSD itself. Thus, the BSD tried to collect two thirds of the money needed for operation by selling its agricultural produce and expanding its charged medical services. The General Assembly was responsible for one third of the operating funds, and it also solicited donations from foreign (mainly American) churches, which were the mainstay of contributions to the General Assembly, and the CCC's affiliate churches, which were financially weak.

Then, in December of 1950, new policies were adopted by the communist government regarding the cultural, educational, relief and religious organizations that accepted foreign funds or were run by foreigners. As a result, the General Assembly made a public statement in the

spring of 1951 that it “had already refused to accept foreign donations,” and it would have to stop appropriating funds to the BSD from 1952. The General Assembly also gave the BSD the following directions: first, the BSD would request that the new government take over the BSD’s service facilities (schools, hospitals, and agricultural stations); second, the BSD churches should find a way to support themselves; and third, for the work that the new government refused to take over, the BSD should stop operating immediately if it could not be sustained by the BSD alone.⁶⁸ Due to this financial pressure, as well as political pressure, the BSD eventually shut down in 1956.

CONCLUSION

The BSD was the Chinese Christian community’s biggest outreach among the minority peoples in Nationalist China’s Southwestern border areas. Under the direct leadership of the CCC’s General Assembly, Zhang Bohuai defined it as “one movement without reference to any similar types of work carried on by other Christian or non-Christian groups.”⁶⁹ The BSD was launched during China’s war with Japan, and did not end until six years after the Chinese Communist Party took power in 1949. With the establishment of its field offices, the BSD’s service work touched the provinces of Sichuan, Xikang, and Yunnan. Although no field office was set up in Guizhou, the BSD was also able to serve the Miao minority people, in some areas of that province by helping the CCC’s local churches initiate border service programs.

Through the BSD’s medical, educational, livelihood, and other programs, the Southwestern border areas developed to some degree, and the minority peoples’ lives were also

⁶⁸ Zhonghua jidujiaohui bianjiang fuwubu Chuanxiqufuwubu dengjibiao baogao [Registration forms and reports of the Chuanxi Service Field of the Border Service Department of the Church of Christ in China], Zongjiao shiwuchu [Religious affairs bureau], Jianchuan (Sichuan Building 建川) 50-437, Sichuan Provincial Archives.

⁶⁹ Zhang Bohuai (W. B. Djang), “An Oasis in a Vast Human Desert,” p. 1.

improved. While doing its services, the BSD played a significant role in nurturing patriotism among the minority peoples, and in spreading modern medicine, technology and culture in the backward border areas. The BSD's evangelical work did not produce mass conversions among the minority peoples, but it built numerous churches, and the BSD religious workers also did a lot of practical service for the local people. The BSD undoubtedly functioned as a mediator and helped reduce the tensions between the Nationalist state, the Han Chinese in the border areas, and the minority peoples. As a result of its achievements, Chinese and foreign Christian communities praised the BSD as one of the Church's most creative enterprises, and the Nationalist government gave the BSD credit as a committed modernist movement in Republican China's border areas. Indeed, the BSD was the pinnacle of cooperative relations between the GMD government and the Chinese Christian community, and it was a strong proof of the CCC's nationalism and patriotism.