

Rev. Harry Parsons (younger brother of Edward Parsons)

Rev. Harry Parsons was born on 26 November 1878 in Barnstaple but spent his early years living with his family in Plymouth.

He entered the Ministry of the Bible Christian Church in 1899 and subsequently spent a short time at Cheriton Fitzpaine, Devon as a minister.

He went on to serve in China from 1902 to 1928. Returning to England he served the remainder of his active ministry in home circuits and died at Torquay, Devon on 8 July 1952.

Harry's wife, Edith Annie Kate (nee Bryant) was born on 13 December 1876 near Tiverton, Devon. They were engaged in 1899 and the Bible Christian Church subsequently accepted her as a lay missionary. She sailed for China in 1904. They married on 24 April 1906 in Yunnanfu, China and had three children, Elsie, born in Zhaotong in 1910 and twins, Richard Keith and Philip Kenneth, born in Zhaotong on 17 September 1916.

Both sons became ordained ministers of the Methodist Church, who served at home and overseas. Philip Kenneth served in the Hupeh Central China District, 1940-1946, South West China District, 1946-1950, and later in Kenya, 1953-1965. Richard Keith served in Hupea District, China, 1942-1950, and later as Educational Secretary, United Christian Council, Sierra Leone District, 1953-1958.

From 1904, Rev. and Mrs Parsons and Rev. Samuel Pollard (also a missionary in Yunnan with the United Methodist Church) went to live among the Hua Miao tribe at Shimenkan, 25 miles east of Zhaotong. They learnt the Hua Miao language and used a simple phonetic script to reduce it to writing. Philip Kenneth and Richard Keith Parsons continued this work with the Hua Miao language.

In 1949, they were approached by Mr Wang Ming-ji regarding the possibility of their compiling a Hua Miao-English Dictionary. Wang Ming-ji had already done a considerable amount of work in grouping Miao words written in the Pollard script, and the Parsons translated and annotated these words and phrases.

Courtesy of Steve Coombes

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