

## CHINA: BOOK LAUNCH AND LECTURE

At the end of May, Joint Publishing (JP) of Hong Kong published "**Frederick: the Life of My Missionary Grandfather in Manchuria**", about the life of Frederick O'Neill, an Irish Presbyterian missionary in northeast China from 1897-1942.

**On Thursday, 28 June 2012 at 7.30 pm the book will be launched in Belfast and the author, Mark O'Neill, will give a lecture on the book, with power point slides, in the Chapel of the Presbyterian Union Theological College, Botanic Avenue, Belfast.**

Frederick O'Neill lived for 45 years in Faku, a small town in Manchuria. From his arrival in 1897 until his expulsion by the Japanese army, he witnessed and reported the extraordinary events that convulsed China – the Boxer Rebellion, the Great Manchurian Plague, the overthrow of the dynasty and the Japanese invasion of Manchuria. He also served with the China Labour Corps in France in World War One.

The story is told through Frederick's own words – vivid, analytical and self-critical – and those of the other missionaries who built schools, hospitals and communities as well as churches. It includes the moving diary of a lady doctor who built a hospital in the small town and died aged 37, from a disease contracted from a patient. A missionary interned in Nagasaki describes the day the atomic bomb fell on the city.

After the missionaries left in 1949, they feared the church would not survive. Instead, it has recovered, miraculously, from closure and persecution to become the fastest-growing Christian community in the world.

Most of this material in the book has never been published before. It includes rare photographs that capture the life and hardship of one of the most remote corners of China. Much of the material comes from the archives of the Presbyterian Church, whose monthly *Missionary Herald* provides a clear and detailed record of the mission in Manchuria. It has more than 100 photos.

The author is Frederick's grandson, **Mark O'Neill**, a journalist who lived in Northern Ireland from 1975 to 1978 before he moved to Hong Kong. He has lived there and in countries in Asia ever since.

Copies of the book will be available. Your questions will be welcome. Mark considers it an honour to give the presentation in the place where his Grandfather studied to become a minister.

The book is selling in all Joint Publishing's bookshops in Hong Kong. A friend in Beijing has completed a version in Chinese, which has been given to Joint Publishing. We hope that this version will be published soon.

We look forward to seeing you on Thursday, 28 June at 7.30 pm.

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**This event is sponsored by the Presbyterian Historical Society of Ireland.**