The impact of the ministry of Rev John Young Wai among early Chinese residents in Sydney (with his ministry with Ma Ying Piu and Gock brothers as a case study)

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Rev. John Young Wai (1847-1930) came to Australia looking for gold in the Gold Rush, but ‘instead of gold, he found Christ’ and through his ministry, many looking for gold also found Christ. His contribution to the multi-cultural shape of the Sydney Evangelical scene is significant because he was among the first to effectively reach the Chinese in Sydney with the gospel. The aim of this article is to demonstrate the extent of the impact of his ministry. The first part of the paper will establish what he did. Then the second part will demonstrate the impact of those ministries. It will show that he was both effective as a missionary in his time and also instrumental as a pioneer of Chinese ministry for today. The lives of three prominent converts—Ma Ying Piu and the two older Gock brothers—will be examined to show how God used the ministry of John Young Wai to shape these men. This will explain how the ministry of John Young Wai made an enduring impact in Sydney and beyond.

Research has been conducted on this topic on two fronts. First, evidence about the impact of Rev. John Young Wai’s ministry has been found through documented sources from the NSW Presbyterian Archives such as the ‘Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian

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2 George Ah Len was before him (1872). However, Presbyterian Historian Rev James Cameron acknowledges that ‘no great progress’ was made under Ah Len, and it is only under Young Wai that ‘now the cause began to prosper’ (James Cameron, Centenary History of the Presbyterian Church in New South Wales (Reprint edition.; Repressed Publishing, 2015), 108) George Soo Hoo Ten also worked in Anglican Ministry at the same time starting in 1879.
3 Even though there were four Gock brothers in total. We will refer to the older two (James Gocklock and Philip Gockchin) as the ‘Gock brothers’ in this essay.
4 Thanks to the staff at the NSW Presbyterian Archives, Ferguson Memorial Library.
Church’ (NSWBB),

‘Minutes of the Chinese Presbyterian Church’ (CPC Minutes), firsthand accounts from his children and Presbyterian magazine clippings. Very excitingly, this paper has been able to draw upon some previously untranslated relevant material from the ‘Minutes of the Chinese Presbyterian Church’ thanks to the translation work of Ian Su and Andy Yip. The NSWBB has been heavily relied upon in this paper as a source that was written at the time of the events. It appears to be an accurate and honest representation of the events at the time. Other documents from the period have also been used to understand John Young Wai’s ministry context with Chinese in Australia at the turn the century. The second front for research is about the specific impact of John Young Wai’s ministry on the lives of Ma Ying Piu, Philip Gockchin (also known as Guo Quan) and James Gocklock (also known as Guo Le). The reason they were chosen for this essay was that, as businessmen, the impact of the gospel on their lives was demonstrated publically. Available documents give us insight into the influence of the gospel on their business practices. Some documentary evidence was found in Hong Kong with the help of Aster Cheung. The memoirs of Gocklock and reflections by Gockchin could not be retrieved but relevant sections are summarised in secondary sources. These documents reveal the influence of Rev John Young Wai’s ministry on their lives in their own words.

**REV. JOHN YOUNG WAI’S MINISTRY AND MINISTRY STRATEGY**

The context of Rev. John Young Wai’s ministry was just after the initial Gold Rush in Australia. The Gold Rush of the late 1850s and 1860s brought a large wave of Chinese migrants to Australian shores. As the ABS records show, before the Gold Rush, there were

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5 These Minutes are known as the NSWBB (NSW Blue Books) because of their Blue Cover
6 The NSWBB mostly reports the facts of what happened. The opinions of the reporters are mostly positive, but there are negative comments as well which makes it appear to be honest opinions
7 Only available in USA according to worldcat: (http://www.worldcat.org/title/guo-le-zi-shu-hui-yi-lu/oclc/50546009)
only 4,147 Chinese in NSW and Victoria in the mid-1850s. However, during the Gold Rush, this number swelled to 37,720 in these two colonies in 1861, nine times the amount in the 1850s. When the gold ‘dried up’, many Chinese returned to their families in China. However, the combination of the lifting of immigration ‘poll tax’ restrictions from 1867–1881 and some miners staying and moving into business, meant that by 1881 there were still 22,155 Chinese in NSW and Victoria. Demographer CY Choi notes that a trend after the gold rush was a gradual movement of Chinese towards the capital cities of the colonies, with 13% of Chinese population in Sydney, NSW in 1881 but 33% by 1901. This population movement shows why mission to the Chinese came to be significant in Sydney.

The story of Rev John Young Wai’s ministry begins with when he was converted through mission activity on the goldfields. The exact date is unknown, but he came to Australia in 1867 and began seminary in 1875, so his conversion occurred within that period. His ministry began in Victoria under the Presbyterian Foreign Missions Committee. He served for six years there before being asked to move up to Sydney in 1883. It was not that the Foreign Missions Committee had not tried to reach the Chinese in Sydney previously but, as Cameron explains, ‘no progress was made’ under George Ah Len for the 8 years immediately prior. At the same time, Young Wai was ‘well recommended by several of the

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8 NSW (1,806 Chinese in 1856) and Victoria (2,341 Chinese in 1854) are the only two states to have records before 1961. Queensland is the only other state with Chinese numbers in 1961 (538 Chinese). These Chinese were mostly labourers. Australian Bureau of Statistics, ‘Feature Article - The Chinese in Australia’ (November 22, 2012), Cited 10 Jun. 2015, Online: http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/featurearticlesbytitle/4A6A63F3D85F7770CA2569DE00200137?OpenDocument.
9 ‘Feature Article - The Chinese in Australia’.
10 C. Y. Choi, Chinese Migration and Settlement in Australia ([Sydney]: Sydney University Press; Portland, Or., 1975), 27.
11 ‘Feature Article - The Chinese in Australia’ and Choi, Chinese Migration and Settlement in Australia, 23-26. – NSW began overtaking Victoria as having more Chinese persons after this time due to immigration patterns
12 Choi, Chinese Migration and Settlement in Australia, 28.
14 Cameron, Centenary History of the Presbyterian Church in New South Wales, 108.
ministers of that Church [of Victoria]¹⁵ and so they invited Young Wai up to Sydney to reach the ever increasing Chinese population in Sydney.

Young Wai tried a number of strategies to reach the Chinese. As the 1895 NSWBB recognised, he was ‘leaving no means untried to reach his fellow countrymen, and to bring them under the influence of the gospel’.¹⁶ His desire to find every opportunity is firstly seen in his church services. He purposely chose times and locations for his church services to seek out where Chinese were gathered. For example, in his first year, 1883, Young Wai held two Sunday church services (one at Scots church in the afternoon and one at Goulburn Street in the evenings), weekday meetings at Goulburn Street and occasional weekday meetings in North Sydney.¹⁷ The strategy of this can be seen using the map in Fitzgerald’s Red Tape and Gold Scissors which shows a clustering of Chinese businesses and residencies on upper Goulburn Street in 1891.¹⁸ Fitzgerald notes that other than the Rocks, ‘the southern end of the city […] became increasingly important as a Chinese location’¹⁹ with fruit markets and cheap accommodation established. Furthermore, she notes that the presence of Chinese ‘outside the inner city was partly explained by the distribution of Chinese market gardens’.²⁰ This again explains Young Wai’s strategy as he started weekday meetings in North Sydney to reach ‘the Chinamen in that neighbourhood’²¹ and expanded this to Botany and Canterbury in the next year.²² By 1890 his reach was expanded again, as was reported: ‘Mr. Young Wai also spends the greater part of everyday among the Chinamen in their workshops and places of business in the city and in the suburbs of Botany, Waterloo, Alexandria, St Peters and

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¹⁵ Minutes of Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of N.S.W. (Archives of Presbyterian Church, Ferguson Memorial Library, 1883).
¹⁶ Minutes of Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of N.S.W (1895).
¹⁷ Minutes of Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of N.S.W (1883).
¹⁸ Shirley Fitzgerald, Red Tape Gold Scissors: The Story of Sydney’s Chinese (Halstead, 2008), 77. An even greater clustering is seen in the map of Goulburn Street in 1901-1902 on page 78.
¹⁹ Fitzgerald, Red Tape Gold Scissors, 68.
²⁰ Fitzgerald, Red Tape Gold Scissors, 68.
²¹ Minutes of Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of N.S.W (1883).
²² Minutes of Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of N.S.W (1894).
others. Occasionally he has services at North Willoughby and at other places some distance from town, where there are Chinamen at work in gardens etc."  

Furthermore, he demonstrated his availability for the Chinese by being flexible with meeting Chinese labourers at times suitable for them. The Woollahra Messenger emphasised his commitment to the gardeners at Woollahra by saying that the late summer working hours of Chinese gardeners forced him to cancel the Woollahra meeting ‘however, [he] continues to visit the men’. Later he even held church services from 9.30 to 11.00pm for the sake of labourers who worked late. To show how unique this effort was, Fitzgerald contrasts this with Rev. George Soo Hoo Ten, who also had a great ministry among the Chinese at the time but struggled with market gardeners because he did not alter his service time from 1.00pm to accommodate the schedule of Chinese labourers as Young Wai did. This weeknight ministry at Woollahra bore great fruit with weekly gospel services held during the winter months and a ‘great awakening of interest and enquiry about the Christian religion’. Young Wai also tried running an open-air service in Chinese populated areas just before the evening service, showing creativity in the way he broadened his reach to the Chinese. These instances show that Rev. John Young Wai was clearly mission minded. He was purposeful in choosing the particular times and locations of his meetings to reach more Chinese. As the

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23 Minutes of Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of N.S.W (1890).
24 John Walker, ‘What Mr. Young Wai Is About’, The Woollahra Messenger (Sydney, January 1892). In NSW Presbyterian Archives, Ferguson Memorial Library - italics used by newspaper to emphasise that he did not give up meeting them.
26 Fitzgerald, Red Tape Gold Scissors, 102.
27 Minutes of Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of N.S.W (1893).
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1891 NSWBB summarises, his strategy was ‘to visit the Chinamen [[…]] where they are most to be found’.²⁹

The services themselves were also tailored for the Chinese audience. While they were run ‘in the ordinary Presbyterian fashion’,³⁰ they were conducted in Chinese. Young Wai translated hymns from the Presbyterian Hymn Book into Chinese so that they could be sung in their heart language. This clearly made a difference because James Anderson notes in his report for the 1883 NSWBB that ‘the heartiness with which they join in praise is very noticeable’.³¹ On top of his other ministry workload, Young Wai translated 302 hymns in his lifetime.³² Little has been recorded about the content of his sermons (perhaps because the reporters could not understand them). We only get a brief summary at the end of his life that he had ‘a strong influence for righteousness’.³³ Whatever the content, it was recorded that ‘the attention of the audience being maintained to the close’³⁴ which indicates that they were relevant to his Chinese audience. One way we can gain a clearer insight into his teaching is to see the impact of what he taught on the lives of Ma Ying Piu and the Gock brothers, which we will do later in this paper. The themes of morality and generosity feature prominently in their writings.

The Night School was another major strategy Rev. John Young Wai used to share the gospel with the Chinese used throughout his years of ministry.³⁵ The teaching material itself was not

²⁹ Minutes of Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of N.S.W (1891).
³⁰ Minutes of Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of N.S.W (1883).
³¹ Minutes of Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of N.S.W (1883).
³³ Minutes of Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of N.S.W (1931).
³⁴ Minutes of Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of N.S.W (1888).
³⁵ Night Schools and Sunday Schools used for education were prevalent among other churches at the time also.
explicitly evangelistic – containing only ‘ordinary branches of education’\(^{36}\) such as English\(^{37}\) and business skills (added later on).\(^{38}\) Kuo states that ‘almost all the Chinese who came to Sydney were from rural villages and without education’,\(^{39}\) which means that there would have been a great need and attraction to this service. It also created a unique space for networking ‘among Chinese from different clans, counties and socio-economic strata’\(^{40}\) (unlike other networks like the Lin Yik Tong which were restricted to the leading members of the business class).\(^{41}\) However, the end goal was not just education or networking but to create opportunities to share the gospel. This end goal can be seen in this quote: ‘this work though of a secular kind, is always begun and ended with prayer and sacred song. The teachers carry it on for the Master’s sake and many a good word is spoken for Him.’\(^{42}\) Thus opportunities to speak about the Lord naturally came about as it was clear that the service was provided in the name of the Lord. At one stage, it was ‘the largest regularly teaching organization for Chinese education in the late 19\(^{th}\) century’\(^{43}\) with classes held every week, across three weeknights, each with 30-40 students. However, it was also very labour intensive involving Young Wais family as teachers\(^{44}\) and constantly needing outside support.\(^{45}\) The fact that Young Wai persevered with this ministry throughout his years of ministry shows how important he considered it. This ministry was strategic because English and business skills resonated with the felt needs of Chinese migrants and provided a pathway to connect non-Christians to church.\(^{46}\)

\(^{36}\) Minutes of Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of N.S.W (1899). – Perhaps a modern label for this is ‘pre-evangelistic’ (that is, opening opportunities to share the gospel later rather than sharing the gospel there).

\(^{37}\) Minutes of Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of N.S.W (1884).


\(^{39}\) Kuo, Making Chinese Australia, 83.

\(^{40}\) Kuo, Making Chinese Australia, 85.

\(^{41}\) Kuo, Making Chinese Australia, 90.

\(^{42}\) Minutes of Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of N.S.W (1899).

\(^{43}\) Kuo, Making Chinese Australia, 84. Quoting from Woollahra Presbyterian Church Messenger, Nov 1893

\(^{44}\) Chau, ‘Extracts from My Father’s Ministry’.

\(^{45}\) ‘Chinese Mission, Sydney - A Forward Movement’.

\(^{46}\) Kuo, Making Chinese Australia, 81. Quoting Memoir of James Gocklock.
Loving people was evidently part of the ministry philosophy of the Young Wai family. This is seen on a number of levels. Firstly, they were well known for their personalised care. At one point, Rev. John Young Wai made 2000 visitations in the one year.\(^{47}\) Even when he was getting old and nearing retirement, he still made 1000 visits per annum.\(^{48}\) Other than workplaces and homes, another group he visited regularly were people in hospital, gaol and asylums. One example of their care was how they ‘were able to provide references and letters to enable Chinese immigrants to gain access to the Sydney hospitals’.\(^{49}\) Mrs Young Wai’s care was seen in the fact that ‘there would be very few Chinese homes that when a new baby arrived there would not be a welcome gift awaiting made by this grand old lady’.\(^{50}\) Their visits also maintained an evangelistic edge as they ultimately cared for the souls of the people they visited by ‘distributing New Testaments and tracts’.\(^{51}\) They also expressed their care for the Chinese publically by advocating on behalf of the Chinese. Rev. John Young Wai took ‘an active and influential part in the Anti-Opium Crusade\(^{52}\) and was part of the organised group resisting the Immigration Restriction Act (1901).\(^{53}\) Whether it was their plan or not, their care meant that ‘his whole family became well known and influential in the community \[\ldots\] especially those struggling with the unaccustomed burdens of the immigrant’.\(^{54}\)

From this overview of his ministry, we have seen that Rev John Young Wai was mission-minded and went about this task of reaching the Chinese purposefully. He demonstrated

\(^{47}\) Minutes of Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of N.S.W (1905).

\(^{48}\) Minutes of Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of N.S.W (1917).

\(^{49}\) Kuo, Making Chinese Australia, 74. Quoting from CAH 6 June 1903 (unsure what publication CAH stands for)

\(^{50}\) ‘Mrs. Sarah Young Wai’, The NSW Presbyterian (NSW Presbyterian Archive, Ferguson Memorial Library, April 9, 1947).

\(^{51}\) Minutes of Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of N.S.W (1914).

\(^{52}\) Minutes of Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of N.S.W (1906).


\(^{54}\) Kuo, Making Chinese Australia, 78.
commitment and availability for the Chinese in moving the service times and locations around, even to 9.30-11.00pm and his translation of 302 hymns into their heart language. He demonstrated an understanding of their felt needs by opening up and persevering with a Night School for English and Business. Finally, he demonstrated a genuine love for the Chinese in the way he went above and beyond in the large number of visitations, even when frail himself, and in his public advocacy on issues on their behalf.

THE IMPACT OF HIS MINISTRY

Rev. John Young Wai ministered for close to forty years in Sydney (1882-1919).\(^{55}\) Primarily, he was brought to Sydney and later ordained to be ‘a Missionary among the Chinese of this Colony’.\(^{56}\) Therefore, to assess his impact, we will firstly consider what he achieved in his missionary work at that time. But he was more than just a missionary, he was in a unique time and place as one of the early pioneers of Chinese ministry in Sydney. Therefore, we will consider the challenges that he overcame as the ministry began and how it set things in place for ministry today. Finally, we will consider more deeply the impact he had on individual lives in the case studies of Ma Ying Piu and the Gock brothers.

Reaching the Chinese in Sydney was not an easy task, as his predecessor George Ah Len had found out in the eight years before Young Wai came to Sydney. We get some insight into the spiritual state of the Chinese at the time in the following *The Presbyterian* article: ‘those who came to the colonies […] were free from the old restraints and from the ancestral influences. The Christian churches had, therefore, greater encouragement in bringing the truth

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55 He was granted his request to retire in 1918 (after starting in 1882) but continued to help until 1922.
56 *Minutes of Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of N.S.W* (1894).
into contact with their minds’. However, ‘[at] the same time, they must not forget that they were a most superstitious people, [...] these influences were a stumbling block in the way of Christian Churches in bringing proper influences to bear upon them’. We get further insight into the clash of cultures when Rev. John Young Wai allegedly told his congregation to avoid a particular Chinese school because they ‘pay obedience to the picture of Confucius’ idolatrously. This caused a big controversy among leaders of the Chinese community in Sydney including death threats to Young Wai.

However, despite the cultural baggage that needed to be overcome, we have some indicators that his work in reaching the Chinese in Sydney was very effective. There were seventy-seven baptisms recorded in the NSWBB and there were likely to have been many more conversions unrecorded because John Young Wai ‘intimated that over 100 Chinese conversions had taken place during his ministry’. There is evidence that Rev. John Young Wai’s efforts to reach out to Chinese in the suburbs where they worked and lived was effective. For example, his effort to reach late working labourers in Woollahra bore fruit with 7 baptisms in one year. There is anecdotal evidence that strategy of the Night School was effective as a pathway for non-Christians to come to church. This was certainly the case for James Gocklock who shared about how he was drawn to the church through this pathway.

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57 *The Presbyterian* (NSW Presbyterian Archive, Ferguson Memorial Library, June 3, 1893).
58 *June 1893 The Presbyterian*
60 ‘BOWING DOWN TO CONFUCIUS CHINESE CHILDREN AND CHRISTIANITY. EXTRAORDINARY ALLEGATIONS, SYDNEY, May 11.’, *The Mercury* (Hobart, Tas., May 12, 1910). And ‘BOWING TO CONFUCIUS. VIGOROUS REPLY BY CHINESE. ‘A STRING OF GROUNDLESS STATEMENTS.’’.
61 Some converts were not publically baptised and others NSWBB entries simply recorded ‘several’ baptisms. These baptisms are also unlikely to have included infant baptisms which were recorded separately.
63 Minutes of Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of N.S.W (1893).
The church grew but attendance numbers had ups and downs. In the early years, the church had two services with 20 - 30 people in each.\(^{65}\) At its peak, the church had four services with 40 - 50 people in the morning, 70 - 150 in the evening, 20 - 40 on Wednesday night and 10 - 15 at Waterloo.\(^{66}\) However, near the end of his ministry, there were three services with only 20 in the morning, 40 - 70 in the evening and 10 at a plant in Waterloo.\(^{67}\) These final numbers were undoubtedly affected by the war and Young Wai’s poor health. The translated minutes of one Chinese Presbyterian Church meeting in 1919 notes that ‘the church was not going well recently’.\(^{68}\)

An important contextual consideration is the return of converted members to China. This would have caused Young Wai’s impact to be understated in these numbers. In the general population, the number of Chinese in Australia in 1881 near the start of his ministry (38,700) nearly halved by the end of his ministry in 1921 (20,800).\(^{69}\) This was caused by the gold rush ending in Australia, better opportunities overseas for the Chinese and restrictive immigration policies.\(^{70}\) This halving of the Chinese population in Sydney certainly was felt by the church. As the NSWBB observes: ‘owing to the migratory habits of the Chinese, neither the attendance at Church nor the attendance at the Sabbath School seems to increase much’\(^{71}\) and, unlike European ministry, ‘the Chinese are, however, so migratory in their habits of life that the same definite results cannot be expected as among Europeans’.\(^{72}\) Especially difficult was the loss of key members. They seemed to always be in need of helpers, especially

\(^{65}\) It started with 30-40 in each service in the NSWBB 1883 (Minutes of Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of N.S.W (1883)), but for the three years after there were 20-30 in each service 1884, 1885 and 1886

\(^{66}\) Minutes of Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of N.S.W (1905). – 140-255 overall

\(^{67}\) Minutes of Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of N.S.W (1917).

\(^{68}\) Andy Yip and Ian Su, trans., ‘Chinese Presbyterian Church Minutes’ (Chinese Presbyterian Church Scrapbook, July 13, 1919), NSW Presbyterian Archive, Ferguson Memorial Library.

\(^{69}\) ‘Feature Article - The Chinese in Australia’.

\(^{70}\) Choi, Chinese Migration and Settlement in Australia, 24-27.

\(^{71}\) Minutes of Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of N.S.W (1904).

\(^{72}\) Minutes of Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of N.S.W (1906).
assistant ministers and helpers for their Night School. However, the return of key members to China also had the positive effect of spreading the kingdom work across to China and into the mission field there. For example, ‘three of the converts connected with Foster street Church – sterling young men – at the call of conscience returned to their own land to tell of Jesus and His love to their relatives and friends. From a letter recently received, they have already commenced open-air preaching in their native land’. From another account in 1919, other ex-members of Rev. John Young Wai’s church have ‘built a mission church at Shanghai, […] another church in the city of Hong Sang, […] [and] they have now decided to build a church in Hong Kong’. The newspaper summarises: ‘his Church members in China had done great service to the mission work’ and they serve as ‘an illustration of the far-reaching influence of [Rev. John Young Wai’s] work’. Through these migration patterns, Rev. John Young Wai’s ministry not only impacted the community of believers in Sydney, but overseas as well.

Another way to understand the impact of John Young Wai’s ministry is to see that he operated in a unique time and place as one of the early pioneers of ministry to the Chinese in Sydney. Thus, part of his contribution to the multi-cultural Evangelical scene today is how he faced and overcame these initial obstacles back then. A major challenge that he continually faced was a lack of resources, initially this included a lack of Chinese materials. Young Wai and his family met this challenge by translating 302 English hymns into Chinese themselves. Having material in Chinese was clearly very important. After he returned from China with some hymn books, it was said that the ‘parcel of hymn books […] have proved of great

73 Minutes of Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of N.S.W (1905).
74 Minutes of Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of N.S.W (1895).
76 ‘Australian Christian World’.
77 ‘Australian Christian World’.
service’. 78 This along with the providence of a mission-minded wife brought ‘a new impulse’ 79 to the church after a few years of stagnation. Church numbers grew from 20-30 in each service 80 to 60-70 in the evening. 81 The growth in church numbers then brought about a second lack of resource problem: ‘a large room is urgently required’. 82 A short term lease on a larger property was acquired in 1888 83 leading to ‘renewed vigour and both in the numbers attending his services and in the interest taken in them a distinct advance has been made’. 84 However this meant that they soon outgrew their new property again. Eventually, a new property was built and opened at Foster Street 27 May 1893 and a mission to Waterloo was started in December 1894. 85 Owning this Foster Street building was significant because it allowed them to upgrade later to Campbell Street (in 1910) and later Crown Street (1957), which is still home to ‘the oldest surviving Chinese church in Australia’. 86

This original church has also planted many evangelical Chinese churches since. 87 Many of the Chinese churches planted since have remained mono-ethically Chinese (despite language not being an issue for the second generation), which possibly shows the ongoing mindset of it being originally set up as a ‘mission to the Chinese’ separated from the local church setting. Setting up Chinese materials and buildings were part of the challenges that Rev. John Young Wai had to face in the early formative stages as a pioneer of ministry to the Chinese.

78 Minutes of Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of N.S.W (1887). – This provision of hymn books was parallel to his ongoing work of translating hymns himself.
79 Minutes of Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of N.S.W (1887).
80 NSWBB 1884-1886 record little growth from 20-30 people per service
81 Minutes of Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of N.S.W (1887).
82 Minutes of Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of N.S.W (1887).
83 Minutes of Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of N.S.W (1889).
84 Minutes of Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of N.S.W (1889).
85 Minutes of Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of N.S.W (1896).
86 Mar, So Great a Cloud of Witnesses, 1. – It remains strongly evangelical today.
87 Including Chinese Christian Church (which has planted churches), Burwood Chinese Presbyterian Church (which has planted churches) and Cornerstone Presbyterian church (which has planted churches).
Another major problem that Rev. John Young Wai had to overcome as a pioneer was to justify the place of Chinese ministry against the backdrop of racism. This was witnessed most prominently in the Immigration Restriction Act 1901 where dictation tests were applied to restrict immigration (and the ‘poll taxes’ prior). When passing the Act, Prime Minister Edmund Barton even expressed that ‘The doctrine of the equality of man was never intended to apply to the equality of the Englishman and the Chinaman’.88 On the ground, racism was seen in violence against the Chinese with reports of ‘instances of several assaults by larrikins on Chinese becoming frequent’89 and an open-air protest against Chinese immigration that resulted in a Chinese shop being torched.90 The concern with the Chinese was their cheap labour and ‘supposed’ immorality.91

Even among Presbyterian churches, there were hints of racism and suspicion that Young Wai needed to overcome. Reading ‘between-the-lines’ of the 1896 NSWBB these reservations can be seen: ‘let any who doubt the power of Christ upon the heathen go and see our Chinese Christians at Foster Street’92 and it goes on to answer some that have ‘asked what the Chinese are doing for themselves’.93 However, these quotes also show that the Young Wai had done a good job in easing these fears and proving to the Foreign Missions Committee that they were a viable ministry worth supporting. While the Chinese still needed some support, one of the ways the Chinese proved they were taking ownership of their ministry was that they

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88 E Barton, ‘Debates: Immigration Restriction Bill’ (House of Representatives, September 26, 1901), 5233. - http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22hansard80%2Fhansard80%2F 1901-09-26%2Ff0023%22
90 Fitzgerald, Red Tape Gold Scissors, 75-76.
92 Minutes of Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of N.S.W (1896).
93 Minutes of Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of N.S.W (1896).
contributed the majority of the fundraising of the Foster Street Building\textsuperscript{94} and part of the salary of another Catechist.\textsuperscript{95} This made other churches more at ease in providing funds and helpers to assist at Night School. Rev. John Young Wai did the important work of building the reputation of ministry to the Chinese and showed that it deserved its place alongside European ministry.

The examples of Ma Ying Piu and the Gock brothers will now be considered so that we can better appreciate the impact of Rev. John Young Wai’s ministry on individuals under his care. Ma Ying Piu came out to Australia as a young man looking for gold.\textsuperscript{96} After limited success, he moved to Sydney in 1883 to be a market gardener.\textsuperscript{97} It is unclear exactly when he met Young Wai or became a Christian\textsuperscript{98} but there is evidence of their interaction very early in Young Wai’s ministry. For example, in 1887,\textsuperscript{99} Young Wai introduced Ma Ying Piu to Huo Qingtang (the daughter of a missionary) who would become his wife. Kuo neatly highlights that this was ‘typical of Rev. Young Wai’s benign attention to the whole person’\textsuperscript{100} as it is consistent with the care he is known for. In 1890, Ma set up a fruit store called Wing Sang (which is Chinese for ‘Eternal Life’) with some other prominent members of the church (including Choy Hing with George Biew).\textsuperscript{101} However, soon after, Ma sold his shares in Wing Sang and used that money to leave for Hong Kong and Guangzhou as a missionary with his wife. It is very likely that Ma was one of the three ‘sterling young men’ from Young Wai’s church that returned to China for open-air preaching mentioned in the NSWBB 1895

\textsuperscript{94} E.g. in NSWBB 1893, 231 pounds of the 357 were contributed by the Chinese (Minutes of Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of N.S.W (1893).
\textsuperscript{95} Minutes of Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of N.S.W (1905).
\textsuperscript{96} Kuo, Making Chinese Australia, 79.
\textsuperscript{97} Kuo, Making Chinese Australia, 79.
\textsuperscript{98} Definitely converted in Australia (Denise Austin, ‘Kingdom-Minded’ People: Christian Identity and the Contributions of Chinese Business Christians (BRILL, 2011),) and through Young Wai’s ministry (Kuo, Making Chinese Australia, 79,) but unsure when exactly
\textsuperscript{99} Within 5 years of Young Wai starting in Sydney.
\textsuperscript{100} Kuo, Making Chinese Australia, 79.
\textsuperscript{101} Kuo, Making Chinese Australia, 80.– George Biew was baptised in 1894 and was a prominent member, opening his house for church services. Choy Hing was also baptised in 1894 and later became a catechist.
or at least he had a mind like them.\textsuperscript{102} Even from this early interaction we see hints consistent with Young Wai’s ministry. We see his care for market gardeners, his care for the whole person, the networking among church members and key members leaving to spread the gospel in China.

In 1900, Ma entered into business again, starting ‘Sincere’ in Hong Kong. This later expanded into Guangzhou and Shanghai (1917) and became ‘one of the largest Chinese-owned companies in the world’.\textsuperscript{103} However, his missional mindset continued with him into business. This can be especially seen through the Moral Education Department. Other Chinese companies also had Moral Education Departments but his had a clear Christian emphasis. For example, the Moral Education Department ran weekly gospel services in the company’s assembly halls reaching out to several hundred each week.\textsuperscript{104} Initially, Ma ran the services himself but as the business got busier he employed ordained Christian ministers to help out.\textsuperscript{105} Through these services, employees were won for Christ and ethical behavior was promoted. Fitzgerald quotes the official company historian who says that the firm's Christian-instruction units 'were set up in succession in every branch of the department store and every factory with the result that the number of converts among our employees grew daily'.\textsuperscript{106} Thus even in business, his evangelistic zeal, which he first caught under John Young Wai in Sydney, remained with him.

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\textsuperscript{102} He left sometime between establishing Wing Sang in 1890 and establishing Sincere in 1900. Taking into account that he worked for a few years after 1890 and was on mission for a few years before 1900, it puts his departure date exactly in this time frame.
\textsuperscript{103} Austin, ‘Kingdom-Minded’ People, 83. - worth $7 million in 1924.
\textsuperscript{104} John Fitzgerald, Big White Lie: Chinese Australians in White Australia (UNSW Press, 2007), 202.
\textsuperscript{105} Fitzgerald, Big White Lie, 202.
\textsuperscript{106} Fitzgerald, Big White Lie, 202.
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Other than evangelistic zeal, the ‘Christian values […] of philanthropy and egalitarianism’ that were taught to him by Young Wai in his time in Sydney were evident in the way he ran the store – even when it was costly. For example, he was the first in China to hire women as salespersons (beginning with his wife and sister-in law). This resulted in a protest outside the store that caused the store to be temporarily shut down. Similarly, he was the first in China to set apart Sunday as a Sabbath for all staff resulting in heavy ridicule from competitors and criticism from shareholders. He introduced other innovations such as ‘fixed-price policy, issued receipts, offered an exchange policy, sourced quality merchandise worldwide, […] [and] English lessons for his staff, so that they could serve Western customers’. While these practices were learnt from the Sydney department store Anthony Hordern’s, they also reflected his care for his customers and staff that stood out against less caring traditional Chinese business practices. His underlying Christian identity is clearly seen in how the company report finishes: ‘with the Grace of God’. Finally, Ma was heavily involved in setting up charities and churches. Using company funds, they provided aid in natural disasters in China and set up a Christian college in Canton. Ma was the president of the YMCA and his wife set up the YWCA in Hong Kong. A translated Chinese newspaper article shows Sincere and Wing On (run by Gock brothers) coming together to fundraise HK$50,000 for a Presbyterian church in Hong Kong. Before they were business competitors, they were first and foremost united as brothers in Christ.

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107 Kuo, Making Chinese Australia, 79.
108 Austin, ‘Kingdom-Minded’ People, 82.
109 Austin, ‘Kingdom-Minded’ People, 82.
110 Austin, ‘Kingdom-Minded’ People, 82-83.
112 Fitzgerald, Big White Lie, 203. Quoting from Sincere 25th Anniversary Chinese language section p9 (Xianggang yong’an you xian gong si, Xianggang Yong’an you xian gong si nian wu zhou nian ji nian lu, 1938.)
113 Fitzgerald, Big White Lie, 203-204.
114 Austin, ‘Kingdom-Minded’ People, 82 and Fitzgerald 204
Ma and Young Wai remained close friends, as his granddaughter reflected. When Young Wai announced his desire to retire in 1919, Ma was present in Australia supporting him and giving a rousing speech to the congregation about a way forward. Even after Young Wai died, Sarah Young Wai was ‘feted on all sides by some of these families’ of Hong Kong Christians on a holiday there. These insights give us an example of Young Wai’s teaching on an individual’s life. A plaque at a Kindergarten that Ma established sums up the impact of the gospel on him exactly: ‘I have done business overseas since a young age. I received and believed the gospel which has been the thing upholding and blessing me.’ Thus Ma’s generosity and care for staff and customers clearly flowed from his Christian identity, which Young Wai helped nurture in the early days and in an ongoing way.

The Gock brothers trace a similar path to Ma Ying Piu but their story illustrates some different aspects of his ministry. In particular, we get a close insight into the Night School where James Gocklock first came to church. James Gocklock came to Australia in 1890, which is later than Ma, and he also began as a market gardener. George Bew (his cousin) and Ma Ying Piu helped him out with a job at Wing Sang in the early days. He recalls in his memoir that his English was very limited back then and so they introduced him to Young Wai’s church. He was attracted to the Night School because it could improve his English. Soon after, James’ younger brother Philip Gockchin arrived and they set up Wing On together in Sydney in 1898. He recalls that through the combination of being ‘exposed to their [Christian colleague’s] faith on a daily basis, as well as through Rev. John Young Wai’s

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117 Yip and Su, ‘Chinese Presbyterian Church Minutes’.
118 Lee, ‘John Young Wai’.
120 Ma came to Sydney in 1883. Gocklock came via Melbourne, so we don’t know exactly when he moved up to Sydney. Ma was also 12 years older: In 1890, Ma was 30. Gocklock was 18.
121 Austin, ‘Kingdom-Minded’ People, 86.
122 Kuo, Making Chinese Australia, 81. Quoting from Gocklock’s Memoirs p. 5-6.
evening English classes’, Gocklock eventually became a Christian.\(^\text{123}\) Around that time, his wife also tragically passed away leaving him with an infant son. He was greatly touched by the care and charity of the Young Wai family who looked after his son so that he could build his business.\(^\text{124}\) These precious memories reveal how a new migrant saw the Night School as a felt need. They also give insight into the close-knit community created through common faith and confirm once again the care that the Young Wai family showed.

In 1907, the two older Gock brothers left the Australian Wing On business to their two younger brothers and set up Wing On in Hong Kong.\(^\text{125}\) There are many similarities between their business priorities to Ma Ying Piu’s. Therefore, these will not be covered as extensively. Like Ma, the Gock brothers started in Hong Kong before moving into Shanghai one year after Ma on the same street with much of same customer policies.\(^\text{126}\) Like Ma, Gockchin ‘believed the major keys to the success of their company were generous wages, and well-presented, courteous employees who were kind and helpful to customers, qualities that he believed were lacking in traditional Chinese practices’.\(^\text{127}\) Like Ma, the Gock brothers also instituted a Department of Moral Education with weekly lectures and stopped work on Sunday.\(^\text{128}\) In particular, on Sundays, they opened their store for employees to have a prayer meeting and encouraged them to join the Cantonese Union Church in Shanghai.\(^\text{129}\) Within their store, they founded and led a Christian Union\(^\text{130}\) where ‘Protestant business ethics’ were taught\(^\text{131}\) and

\(^{123}\) Austin, ’Kingdom-Minded’ People, 87. Summarising Gocklock’s Memoirs p. 5.
\(^{124}\) Kuo, Making Chinese Australia, 82. Quoting from Gocklock’s Memoirs p. 5-6.
\(^{125}\) Due to unfavourable business conditions in Australia with the backdrop of discrimination, and favourable conditions overseas
\(^{126}\) Ma set up Sincere in Shanghai in 1917. The Gock brothers set up Wing On in 1918.
\(^{127}\) Austin, ’Kingdom-Minded’ People, 92. (Summarised from Yongan jingshen zhi fazhan jo changcheng by Philip Gockchin p25)
\(^{128}\) Austin, ’Kingdom-Minded’ People, 91. Summarising from p6 of 25th Anniversary Wing On.
\(^{129}\) Austin, ’Kingdom-Minded’ People, 91.
\(^{130}\) Xianggang yong’an you xian gong si, Xianggang Yong’an you xian gong si nian wu zhou nian ji nian lu, 18.
\(^{131}\) Austin, ’Kingdom-Minded’ People, 91.
‘some were evangelising the Christian religion to build up the business talent’. \[132\] There were some clear indicators that their early experience of Christianity in Sydney was influential, as they ‘set up a night school specialising in English and health classes’. \[133\] Similar themes of Christian generosity and care for staff, especially within the business Sincere, are striking and may be testament to Young Wai’s teaching and ministry. The early years of nurturing under Young Wai in Sydney bore fruit in the salvation of many employees and many good works in Hong Kong and China as well.

**CONCLUSION**

The first NSWBB report on Rev. John Young Wai mentions that he was ‘well-fitted’ \[134\] to his task of reaching the Chinese. Over his near 40 years of ministry to the Chinese we have seen that this is clearly true. He was mission-minded and purposeful, often making the extra effort to reach the Chinese where they were at. By God’s grace, his ministry strategies bore much fruit in his time both in the salvation of over 100 people and in the ripple effects of the lives of his converts both in Sydney and overseas. His ministry has an enduring impact on the multi-cultural evangelical scene in Sydney as an early pioneer that fought many early battles to prove the place of Chinese ministry alongside European ministry. He set up the oldest surviving Chinese churches which remain evangelical and missional today. On a personal level, there was the impact of his ministry in converting and nurturing Ma Ying Piu, James Gocklock and Philip Gockchin to be generous and caring Christian Entrepreneurs who in turn have had a big impact on the evangelical Christian scene in Hong Kong and China.

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\[132\] Xianggang yong’an you xian gong si, Xianggang Yong’an you xian gong si nian wu zhou nian ji nian lu, 16.
\[133\] Xianggang yong’an you xian gong si, Xianggang Yong’an you xian gong si nian wu zhou nian ji nian lu, 16.
\[134\] Minutes of Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of N.S.W (1883).
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