I Saw China’s Need

By LOUIS T. TALBOT, D.D.

flew from Shanghai to Wuchang, where we were met by Mr. Russell Davis, Business Manager of the Hunan Bible Institute. It was a good thing that Mr. Davis took us in charge, for no one could understand us, and we would have been stranded indeed! We crossed the yellow Yangtze by ferry to reach Hankow, where we were entertained at the Lutheran Missionary Home, and in the evening of the same day returned to Wuchang, where we boarded a primitive and rickety train which required eighteen hours to transport us the two hundred miles to Changsha. It was quite a contrast to the luxurious airliner on which we had travelled! We wish we could go into the details of that trip. At least, there was one advantage: the slow transportation enabled us to see the countryside. The villages were intriguing, and the people who gathered at the stations to sell their wares most appealing. Everywhere was such filth as we had never imagined. Every Chinese home is not only blessed with large numbers of children, but there are pigs, ducks, and chickens, and quantities of livestock of much smaller size, often referred to as “China’s millions,” though more correctly, it should be “trillions.”

At last on September 17th we reached Changsha! Our hearts were deeply moved as we for the first time beheld that great citadel for God, the Hunan Bible Institute. There were tears in our eyes and great gratitude to God in our hearts. The buildings stand on a fifteen-acre compound, right in the heart of Changsha, a city of 500,000 population, which is the capital of Hunan, the last province of China to admit the Gospel. The story of the establishment of our school is a thrilling one. But in order to understand it, one must go back into missionary history in China. In 1807, Robert Morrison, the first Protestant missionary, arrived, followed fifty years later by J. Hudson Taylor, and a great army of heroic souls who sacrificed themselves to the gigantic task of reaching China for Christ. The work of various missions followed and progressed, until the first great blow came with the Boxer Uprising in 1900, when anti-foreign feeling rose to fever pitch, and many of God’s servants were martyred. Out of this persecution, God hammered a church for Himself in that land. With the loss of so many foreign missionaries, the responsibility fell upon the native church, which grew in courage and strength. But the political picture was ever shifting. The rise of the young republic brought to China a national consciousness she had never known before. Russian aid was sought, and a new anti-foreign, anti-God element was introduced. At the hands of the Communists, many of the Lord’s children climbed to heaven by the
In addition to the spiritual blessings we received, and the Christian fellowship which we enjoyed, we transacted some very important business. Many conferences were conducted at which vital plans for the future of the school were discussed. We mean to utilize our buildings to the fullest extent. The school will open, God willing, with forty-five students and we will retain space for at least two hundred. A new project will be an orphanage for girls and boys which is greatly needed. The attitude of the Chinese toward their children is tragic, but it grows out of the economic situation. The boys are looked upon as old age security for their parents, when a son marries, he brings his bride into the ancestral home, and continues to work and provide for his parents. The reverse is true of the daughter, who goes to the home of her husband and thus becomes a total loss to her parents. For this reason, daughters are not desired, and the unfortunate little creatures are often sold into houses of prostitution at an early age. We want to train numbers of girls as Bible Women and boys as evangelists. The China Inland Mission may take over one of our buildings for a hospital. We believe that through these new avenues of service the work will increase and expand and many more souls will be properly allotted to all.

After the war, the government agencies wished to make use of some of our property, so it seemed best to allow them to do this for the cost of putting them in repair. Altogether, they spent about $100,000 in American money for this purpose, and, of course, many more thousands of dollars are needed to complete the reconstruction. We believe that God has given us a plan for the work which we will make known in due time, in which all friends of the school may share.

To proceed with our trip: It was a great joy to renew fellowship with those in charge of the school: Dr. and Mrs. Charles Roberts, Mr. and Mrs. Russell Davis, Mr. and Mrs. Edwin Corey, and, in addition, to become acquainted with many Chinese sisters and brethren whom we learned to know. The Bible Conference which we had gone to attend was in progress when we arrived, and a great sight it was to behold the great crowds of Chinese Christian workers, many of them alumni of the school, listening intently to the expositions of the Word of God, praying and counselling together over their problems, and having a good time in the Lord. All were registered at the Hunan Bible Institute. The meetings were held during the day and evening. Dr. Roberts conducts a regular English service for those who understand English, mostly employees from banks, postoffices, and schools, and this was continued in the conference. There were Bible classes led by different delegates each day, lectures by the Dean, and many special speakers. It was my privilege to bring a Bible message each day, which of course had to be interpreted, and I showed the Bible Institute of Los Angeles film, which made all of the workers homesick. The spirit of the conference was wonderful; blessed harmony prevailed. The singing was magnificent. Although the words were in Chinese, it was good to hear the familiar melodies of "Nearer, my God, to Thee," "Safe Am I," "Rolled Away," "Jesus, Lover of My Soul," and other American hymns and Gospel choruses, which the Chinese love. The closing communion service was a never-to-be-forgotten experience.

Chinese children whom we desire to rescue and train for Christ in our own orphanage.

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village, leaving it completely undis turbed, without their testimony of the Messiah. I thought, too, of the eagerness of the Samaritan woman, who, after believing the Gospel for herself, rushed to the village in the hottest part of the day, shouting to all: "Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did; is not this the Christ?" I also recalled the ready response of the men, who, in their great haste, took the shortcut to the well. Gathering their white robes about them, they left the path that led around the field, and made their way directly with great haste to the Saviour.

What I was beholding below our plane was strangely similar: Outside a small Chinese village, standing on a mound a little distance from the highway, were a native preacher and his co-workers. As they sounded forth the Gospel, white-gowned Chinese, in their eagerness to reach them, forgot the narrow path around the dried-up rice paddies, and poured into the fields themselves to hear the message. The sight of these hungry Chinese listeners impressed deeply upon my heart the words of Jesus to His disciples on that day in Samaria: "Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest."

Yes, I saw China's need. With my own eyes, I beheld the whitened harvest fields. I wish with all of my heart that all of you who read this article could have stood with me, could have seen what I saw, and could have felt what I felt. But God can put into your hearts as He did in mine the sense of urgency to get the Gospel out before the night comes when no man can work. China is calling to us for messengers; how shall they hear without preachers? We must recruit thousands of China's young men to travel and send forth with the Gospel. It is the only thing that will combat Communism, which recently announced its return to its original objective of international conquest (which it never did actually abandon).

The young Chinese are enamored of everything American. They want, above all things, to learn our language, and to come to our country. They are convinced that there is to be another world war, in which they are determined to be on the side of the United States. This makes China particularly our mission field, and furnishes us the opportunity of a lifetime to evangelize the youth, of which we must take advantage.

The doors are open to the Gospel now; only God knows whether in a year from now they will be. Let us dedicate ourselves anew to the unfinished task of evangelizing that great land. Let us pray, and work, and give with all of our hearts until the day dawns and the shadows flee away, and we shall see the King in His beauty. May China's need become our need, and our Saviour China's Saviour.

Pause! Be still! Selah! Not a word, emphatically; not even a look that will mar the sweet serenity of soul. Get still. Know not what to say. Keep silence before Him. Stillness is better than noise.

Not a word of murmuring or complaining in supplication; not a word of nagging or persuading. Let language be simple, gentle, quiet; you utter not a word, but give Him opportunity to speak. Hearken to hear His voice. This is the way to honor and to know Him. Not a word—not the last word! Listen to obey. Words make trouble. Be still. This is the voice of the Spirit. Take no thought for tomorrow; worry not about home, church, or business cares. Cast all on Him, and not a word. We think so hard, pray so hard, and trust so hard, that we become unrestful and disquieted and noisy, and thus drive Him away.

Restlessness, fret, and worry, make the place of His abiding unpleasant, and He leaves. Not a word to anyone of your worries, or of desire to know what to do. Take it not out of His hands. He is to keep in perfect peace; do not go to another for wisdom or direction.

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