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### 1927-01-24, Letter from Frank Keller to Chester and Helen Rutledge

Frank A. Keller

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[Written on Hunan Bible Institute Letterhead]

Changsha,

January 24, 1927

Dear Friends:

Mr. and Mrs. Foucar are leaving today for Shanghai and I want to take this opportunity to give you a further account of conditions here at Changsha. I will ask Mr. Foucar to take the letters with him and post them at Shanghai as we hear that many letters going from here by post are intercepted and either greatly delayed or wholly destroyed. The only way by which I can accomplish my purpose is to dictate this letter and have several carbon duplicates made, will you therefore kindly accept the carbon duplicate instead of a strictly personal letter. On December 20<sup>th</sup> I wrote you regarding the closing of the school at a somewhat earlier date than usual. Conditions became a little more quiet in Changsha and we decided to have our usual Christmas celebration. The students who had remained with us worked very enthusiastically and decorated our social hall beautifully, we had a quiet and happy day, one of the best Christmas days we have ever had. We have not learned of any other school that had any Christmas gathering, the same was true of the majority of the mission churches. After much prayer and consultation we decided to resume our classes early in January. The union meetings of the Week of Prayer were held in our auditorium, leaders from the different missions taking charge in turn, these meetings were held in the afternoons and we began holding classes in the mornings. After the Week of Prayer we had classes both morning and afternoon running a full schedule up to Friday, January 21<sup>st</sup>, when it seemed best to definitely close the school. On January 12<sup>th</sup>, by order of the British Consul, all British women and children were taken on a British gunboat to Hankow and from there sent on down river. The British Consul has now issued orders for most British men to leave also, they expect to leave this week. On January 13<sup>th</sup> there was a general walk out of servants employed by British men, not because the servants wanted to strike, but they were ordered to walk out by the Servants' Union and failure to do so would have involved them in serious consequences. The Rev. G.G. Warren was lying in his bed in dying condition, he had some servants who had been with him for many years and they wanted to stay by him and help him, but though the matter was presented to the

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Servants' Union and the heads of the Union admitted that it was a special and appealing case they said, "This matter is national not personal and ~~that~~ it is not possible to permit the servants to remain." Our own Mr. and Mrs. Roberts were also without servants for several days. Later a most urgent letter came from the American Consul advising all American women and children to leave at the earliest possible moment and all American men not definitely detained here by mission duties to leave also. Last week saw a large exodus by Chinese Launch, among those leaving being our Mrs. Roberts with her mother, sister and children. Today a party of twenty American missionaries are leaving by train, they have secured a freight car and are fixing it up as comfortably as possible. The reason for this is that the ordinary coaches are almost wholly occupied by military and it is utterly impossible to secure accommodations sufficient for so large a party. Among those leaving today are our Mr. and Mrs. Foucar who will be going direct to Shanghai, also Mr. Elden Whipple who is escorting his mother, sister and younger brother to Nanking. We expect that our Mr. Charles Roberts will be leaving with a party of British men later in the week. This will leave Mr. Otis Whipple, Mrs. Keller and myself here. Mr. Elden Whipple expects to return in the course of a couple of weeks if possible. I have ordered the Central China Post to be sent to you for one month beginning with the number of January 10<sup>th</sup>. This paper gives details regarding conditions in this part of China which will be of interest to you and of help in our future correspondence, by this plan I can keep you more fully informed than I could hope to do by personal correspondence.

Missionaries are pouring into Changsha from different parts of the province with tales of very serious conditions. Another large party expects to leave by launch on Thursday. Last week I received a letter from the Rev. William Taylor, Superintendent of the China Inland Mission in Kiangsi, telling me that about one half of their mission stations in Kiangsi had been occupied by soldiers. I trust that this letter will not unduly alarm you, good order is being maintained here in Changsha and we have strong assurances from the Foreign Office of protection both for our property and for ourselves. But while these promises are apparently sincere it is sometimes utterly impossible for officials to control an excited mob until after much damage has been done. With kindest regards, Very truly yours,

Frank A. Keller  
FAK/PCT

*[Handwritten on bottom of page 2]*

Ask Mr. Welles to give you a poster that I enclosed with my letter to him. Our united warm love to you both. No checks to hand yet! Frank.

*[Handwritten on page 1 in the greeting]*  
Chester & Helen Rutledge