

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

PayPal

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

“... Thankful for your partnership in the gospel, from the first day until now ...” — Paul, Philippians 1:5 (RSV)

Partnership in the Gospel

FROM THE JUNKINS' FIRST DAYS IN CHINA
TO THE SUQIAN THREE-SELF CHURCH

Robert G. Patterson
1746 Autumn Avenue, Memphis, Tennessee, USA
2005

Table of Contents

<i>Chapter</i>		<i>Page</i>
PART I. PLANTING THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH		
1	The First Day Was Sunday	1
2	Early Years	16
3	Into the Work	27
4	Social Service	46
5	The Quality of Conversion	64
6	Crisis, Mediation, Peacemaking	77
7	Japanese Aggression	99
8	Messages Across the Sea	115
PART II. ALIVE AND GROWING		
9	An Independent Church	125
10	The Three Self Patriotic Movement	136
11	The Suqian Church – I (1894-1942)	145
12	The Suqian Church – II (1945-2000)	153
13	From the First Day Until Now	164

A Word of Appreciation

I was fortunate in the selection of the two central personages for this study: Will and Nettie Junkin. They were great people whom I remember well from the overlap of their later years with my earlier ones. They bequeathed to us, moreover, a substantial body of written sources, consistently excellent, some not previously published.

My thanks are extended to many who contributed to the study. Foremost among them are members of the Junkin family, especially Jessie McCall and Agnes Junkin Peery†. I deeply appreciate their help and their generous permission to use family papers. I also was assisted in a variety of ways by Margaret P. Mack of Harrisonburg, Nancy Patterson of Bristol, Don McCall† of Montreat, Jameson M. Jones of Memphis, and G. Thompson Brown of Decatur. My daughter, Mary Moore Patterson, has patiently answered a long stream of questions about *pinyin* transliterations and other Chinese puzzles. My wife, Jane, has given unfailing help and encouragement. To have been associated with all these people in the project has been a source of great personal satisfaction.

I appreciate the cheerful help given by staff members at libraries and research institutions, especially The Presbyterian Division of History, Montreat, North Carolina; the library and archives, Union Theological Seminary, Richmond, Virginia; the National Archives, Maryland; the Jesuit Library, St. Louis; Burrow Library, Rhodes College; and the Bureau of Religious Affairs, Suqian County, Jiangsu Province, China.

I hope that others will let me know of errors they find here, whether in accounts of the Junkins' lives and work or in descriptions of the Church in later China. While many have helped in the accomplishment of this project, clearly I alone bear responsibility for the final product.

R. G. P.
Memphis, Tennessee

Note from the Author

Some parts of *Partnership in the Gospel* are not yet finished. I intend eventually to include maps of places and photographs of people and to provide an index, or perhaps several indices. In a subsequent version I will also include information about important developments in the life of the Suqian church that have taken place since 2000. Pending these later additions, I hope that the present version of the book will prove useful to readers.

Robert G. Patterson
Memphis, Tennessee, U. S. A.
October 14, 2005

PART ONE. PLANTING THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

1

The First Day Was Sunday

WHEN ANYONE ASKED WILL why he chose to go to China, he always replied that it was in response to the “call of the Lord.” But his awareness of that call seems to have developed only gradually. Accounts of the first twenty-six years of his life do not mention any Damascus Road experience to bolster his decision. Rather, his life seems to have proceeded in a straight path, from baptism by Leighton Wilson, to attendance at a church-related college, to seminary, to commitment as a young adult to go to the mission field. Many years afterward, Nettie Junkin — Nettie Lambuth Dubose, that is, until Will persuaded her to become Mrs. Junkin — considered what influence his earlier life might have had on his decision to go to the mission field.

On the day after Christmas of the year 1870 (she wrote), a little boy was born to the Rev. and Mrs. E. D. Junkin in the manse at New Providence, Rockbridge County, Virginia, and named William Francis. Before the day was out six older brothers and sisters had filed into the room to stand and look at the new little brother, for he was the seventh in the family which was later increased to ten children.

The family was a lively one, and the big house rocked with laughter and pranks. No school was near by, so for the first few grades, “Willie” and the younger children went to school to their eldest sister, Julia. In summers they ran barefoot over the countryside or swam in the creek down behind the house.

But there were other influences which came into the boy’s life. Many missionaries spoke in the old church of New Providence and stayed at the manse, and each day the father gathered his family together for family prayers and prayed for “the nations that know not Christ.” The young boy’s thoughts would go wandering off to far lands when he heard

these words. He would think of what his mother told him of when he was baptized, of how the honored Leighton Wilson, who had been a missionary to Africa, had laid his hands on his baby head and prayed that this child might grow up to be a missionary. And he would think to himself: "I want to go to Africa as a missionary some day." But of this he told no one for fear that they would laugh.

And then, when Willie was ten years old, the father accepted the call to the First Church in Houston, Texas, and they went to that city to live. The fields gave way to city streets and schools were near by. The Virginia days were over and "Willie" became "Will."

Austin College saw a tall, slender Will Junkin in the year 1889. It had not been easy to get to college. Funds were scarce and there were many in the family to send to school on a preacher's salary. Will had worked for a year as a drugstore clerk and "soda jerk" before he had enough to start, and he found jobs of various sorts in summer vacations.

After college came Louisville Seminary. During this time the desire to be a missionary had grown, and he offered himself as a missionary for Africa. All during college and seminary days he preached in the summers in the lumber belt of Texas, and many came to know and love the young man and to follow the Saviour about whom he preached.¹

Will's deep desire to go to Africa was perhaps in part because Leighton Wilson had once served there. But when he volunteered as a missionary, the Foreign Mission Committee mentioned that there was a special need in China just then and asked him if he would be willing to serve in that land. He replied, "I am willing to go anywhere that the Lord calls."

When his appointment came, it was for China. On December 10, 1896, he and several other missionary candidates departed through San Francisco's Golden Gate, bound for Shanghai. They sailed aboard the *S. S. Doric*, a hybrid ship powered by both steam and sail. While the liner was out on the open seas, Will's little coterie celebrated with him the arrival of his twenty-sixth birthday on December 26. The winter voyage of the *Doric* was a stormy one, but eventually she managed to reach her

destination safely, as most ocean liners usually do. (Usually, but not always. That same *Doric*, fourteen years later, ended her career in a wreck.²)

BY CANAL TO THE SUQIAN MATOU

WILL REACHED SHANGHAI about the second week of January, 1897. Graduated from seminary only a few months earlier, still young and unmarried, he learned that he was to be assigned to the town of Suqian [Sutsien]* in northern Jiangsu [Kiangsu] Province.

He took a few days to pay courtesy visits at Shanghai. He then boarded one of the British-owned river steamers that made regular trips on the Chang Jiang [Yangtze River] and after an easy overnight cruise reached Zhenjiang [Chinkiang] the very next day. He had looked forward to this particular stop as it would give him a chance to meet Dr. Absalom Sydenstricker, a man with previous experience in Suqian. In the course of his career, Dr. Sydenstricker made some valuable contributions to the work of missions, and his name will come up again in our story. But his one accomplishment most likely to be known to modern Americans is that he was the father of Pearl S. Buck (the “S” is for Sydenstricker), author of *The Good Earth*. At the time of Will’s first visit, Pearl was five years old.

Will’s journey from Texas had been long, but it was now nearly over. After Zhenjiang, a gentle northward sail on the Imperial Grand Canal aboard a wind-driven Chinese junk was all that remained. As the wooden boat moved slowly along the canal, Will could hear the soft ripple of wavelets breaking against the hull and the complaints of the timbers as they stretched with the boat’s dignified and rhythmic sway, and he shared with crew and passengers the stir of excitement caused by the passing of vessels going in the opposite direction. In later years his children fondly recalled gathering on the deck during canal trips to watch the setting of

*Chinese place names are transliterated in *pinyin*. When a place name first occurs, the former International Postal Union spelling will be appended in brackets.

the afternoon sun in the western sky and to sing together “Sun of My Soul, Thou Savior Dear,” filled with a sense of God’s presence.

Craig Patterson was to be Will’s main co-worker for the next twenty-five years. He was already living in Suqian by 1897, and when he learned that Will was on the way, he travelled down the canal to Huai’an to *sung* Will to his new home, that is, give him honorary accompaniment for the last stage of his trip. Huai’an (known to missionaries as Qingjiangpu [Tsingkiangpu, or “TKP”]) was an important Jiangsu canal city, about one hundred miles north of Zhenjiang. Making the canal trip from Huai’an to Suqian with Craig gave Will his first chance to see the flat and fertile alluvial fields and the dense population of the area where he would be working. People avoided building their small adobe houses in scattered fields, choosing to cluster them close together, in villages, to increase their security from bandits. As a result, a cross-country hiker would always be within sight of two or three villages. Farmers in the area raised wheat, soybeans, *gaoliang* (“*kaoliang*” in the older spelling, a sorghum grain), green beans, and sweet potatoes. But not rice. That is grown south of Huai’an, where more generous water supplies are available. As Will and Craig drifted quietly northward, small boys in the fields would often point and wave, shouting an alert to one another about the foreigners they had spotted; and Craig and Will, from their perch on the deck, waved back.

The appearance of a low hill, the first one visible along the canal for two hundred miles, signaled that Suqian’s waterfront, known locally as the *matou*, was near. As the two men drew closer, they could see crowds of people actively milling about. Many of them were boat dwellers, their junks tied together at the *matou* or roped to stakes driven into nearby banks. The mothers on board maintained a brisk chatter from boat to boat, calmly bathing their children or cooking supper. Swarms of stevedores crisscrossed the stone-paved quay, lifting up from deep within their

chests a hoarse chant that kept time with the flex of their bamboo shoulder poles — *bai ... yo! ... bai ... yo!* — warning those ahead to open up a pathway and at the same time giving a certain grace to their handling of the heavy loads. A stream of tray-bearing women and children trudged over from a nearby village to hawk meat-stuffed dumplings or aromatic leaf-wrapped packets of rice, snacks whose steaming fragrance tempted those who were standing around in the cold January air to buy and eat.

Such an energetic, live gathering of people was to be seen over and over in Suqian. Navigating through crowds like this was soon second nature to Will. But in the midst of all that bustle, could anyone even hear the message that he was “called” to bring? Jesus once spoke of “the cares of the world” as a potential impediment to the spread of the Gospel (Mark 4:19). The people whom Will saw at work on the *matou* knew all there was to be known about the “cares of the world.” They worked long and hard, every day, every member of the family, just to have food to eat. Missionaries learned to have deep respect for the tenacity and energy of Chinese working people. They also learned, in due time, that such people had great potential to become committed and loyal Christians.

SUQIAN

SUQIAN’S BATTLEMENTED city wall, twenty feet high, was visible about a mile back from the *matou*. The wall’s East Gate, dominated by the guard tower that loomed above it, could also be easily seen. A cobblestone street marked the route from the canal to the gate, flanked on both sides by rows of busy, open-fronted stores.

The East Gate, along with a South Gate and a West Gate, provided communication in and out of Suqian. Each of the three gates was massive, wooden, and guarded by a tower. But — unexpectedly — there was no north gate. In the cities of China, gates for the city walls were universally located at the four cardinal points of the compass. (The com-

pass, after all, was one of China's own inventions.) So Suqian's lack of a north gate may have been unique. At some point in the past *feng shui* practitioners must have predicted that building a north gate would bring misfortune, and the gate was never built.

The three actual gates that Suqian had were heavily used. The East Gate communicated with traffic from the canal. The South Gate led to southern suburbs and to the road for Nanjing [Nanking]. The West Gate had at one time given the town access to commerce on the Yellow River, back when Suqian was a port on the banks of that river. That ended, of course, in 1855, when the river found a new channel to the sea and permanently left Suqian behind. Now the West Gate opened to nothing more remarkable than a dirt road leading across the former river bed and a broad agricultural plain extending to Suining. (A more extended note about the Yellow River's change of course will be found below.)

Inside the walls, a main commercial street ran across the town from the East to the West Gates. Shops also spilled over onto a street that went towards the South Gate. The *yamen*, or police headquarters, was at the gateless north end. Otherwise, the town consisted mainly of winding and narrow residential streets. A town of Suqian's size would normally have had two or three temples. For some reason, however, not a single temple of any consequence was located inside this town. On street corners there were "spirit houses." More ambitiously, there were a number of memorial halls belonging to specific clans, places where all branches of a family with a common surname, both local households and also those who lived in surrounding districts, could preserve their ancestral tablets. As a matter of fact, when the mission was able to purchase land inside the walls for a compound, about a year after Will arrived, the property they bought included the former Cai Family Ancestral Hall, a substantial edifice which Protestants used first as a church and later as a school. Suqian's lack of temples inside the walls was somewhat remedied

by a large temple just to the outside. Thus, if people wished to do their yarrow stick divination in the presence of a large gilded image, or if they needed to secure help from a priest for an exorcism or a funeral, they had a place to go.

When Will first arrived in China, the ninth Manchu emperor, Guang Xu, was living in the Forbidden City at Beijing [Peking]. But the dynasty had recently experienced some important defeats at the hands of foreign rulers, and its strength was ebbing. Dissatisfaction had appeared among the common people, especially in the coastal cities, and modern change, partly the result of Western influence, was on the way. Suqian was comparatively slow to experience these developments. Its sixty thousand inhabitants meant that it rated in China as only a small city. In addition, it was inland, and it was thoroughly provincial. Yet even in Suqian modest evidence of change was present by the time Will arrived. With telegraph poles now moving in lonely Indian file along the levee of the canal towards Qingjiangpu, local citizens could go to the government telegraph office at the *yamen* and dispatch wires. The more prosperous citizens could buy spring-wound clocks at local shops to replace their sundials. And five-gallon cans of kerosene, each bearing the name "Standard Oil" embossed in raised Western letters, had appeared in local shops as recently as 1895, making it possible to have kerosene lanterns.

Local people adapted to these changes at their own pace. When the uneducated among Suqian's people heard the hum of the telegraph wires, they interpreted it as the faint reverberation made by the hurried flights of disembodied spirits streaking through space in pursuit of their final destinies. (Actually, that's a pretty apt description for telegraph messages!) As for the five-gallon cans of kerosene, they reached the city on hand-pushed wheelbarrows, each barrow balanced on a large central wheel whose wooden axle emitted a low whine as it ground against the wooden frame, a sound something like the creaking of a farm gate, the

commingled wails from all over town giving a comfortable signal that things were “all clear,” that life was normal and the town’s business could proceed.

A few foreigners had already found their way to the town. Dr. Sydenstricker moved in 1887 to Qingjiangpu, about sixty miles south of Suqian. He soon included Suqian in his country journeys and thus became the town’s pioneering itinerant missionary. The town was “opened” as a mission station when missionaries took up residence in 1894. They rented rooms in a large mud-floored, but tile-roofed, hostel, to use for living quarters and a clinic. The inn was located outside the city wall, near the South Gate, and was known as the old Zhang. Will spent his first night in Suqian there, and also his first year. Many of Suqian’s girls of the evening maintained quarters at the same inn, so it was hardly a reputable place for missionaries. The Zhang, however, willingly rented its rooms to foreigners, and that consideration outweighed its racy reputation.

The Zhang was a converted family residence. Its three buildings followed a plan which is still common for multigenerational families in the heavily populated coastal provinces of China — one large central building for the main family and for meetings of the extended family, along with two smaller auxiliary side buildings for sons’ families or for other relatives. The three buildings are grouped into a “U,” with the main doors opening centrally towards a paved square courtyard and with the front side of the courtyard left open to permit public access. The Pattersons had rooms in the central building, and Mrs. Patterson had an additional room at the back for her clinic. The mission also leased one of the smaller side buildings in its entirety to be used as a missionary residence when needed. The Sydenstrickers lived in the smaller building in the winter of 1895–96, the Griers in the winter of 1896–97. When Will came, he had a room in the central building.

The five earliest Protestant missionaries to take up residence in Suqian

included four male ministers — the Revs. Sydenstricker and Patterson, whom we have previously mentioned, and the Revs. Hugh White and Mark Grier; and a woman physician, Annie Patterson, M.D. Dr. Sydenstricker's wife, Carrie, came to Suqian for the winter of 1895–96, bringing along Pearl and the two younger children, after which the whole family moved permanently to Zhenjiang. Mr. White soon moved to Xuzhou [Hsuchou]. Mr. Grier married Nettie Donaldson, M.D., and that couple also moved to Xuzhou, in early 1897. So Suqian had only three Protestant missionaries for most of 1897: the Pattersons and Will.

Catholics reached Suqian about ten years before Protestants and were rewarded with earlier success in the quest to buy land inside the walls. A Catholic compound opened at Suqian in 1895. Father Henri Boucher of the French Jesuit Mission, the second foreign father to come to Suqian, began his residency just a few days after Will came. In March, still another foreigner arrived — the Pattersons' first child, a little boy. Chinese love children, and the birth of a foreign baby, especially a boy, was an event of considerable local interest. So by March, 1897, foreigners residing in Suqian totaled five: Craig, Annie, little Houston, Will, and Father Boucher.

Additional note: The Yellow River's Changing Course. *Suqian originally grew up at the juncture of the Yellow River and the Grand Canal. The town was built immediately adjacent to the east bank of the river, with the incidental result that it was located about a mile from the canal. After the floods of 1854–55, the river established a channel to the sea several hundred miles to the north. In Will's day, the former river bed near Suqian was still easily visible just outside the West Gate, dried up and barren, a few weathered and broken pilings sticking up here or there. For a few months of each year, rainwater turned the old bed into a small lake, giving women in that part of town a convenient place to beat out their laundry. Modern visitors to Suqian will find that the abandoned river bed has been filled in and developed into an attractive stone-paved park with marble benches, a reflecting pool, and trees. The once imposing city wall has been razed, as has the old West Gate, along with its tower, so the park directly adjoins the tall downtown buildings of the modern city.*

SUNDAY

WILL AND CRAIG REACHED the Suqian *matou* on the afternoon of January 30, a Saturday. By the time the crew had lowered the sail and poled the boat over to the wharf, secured it, and maneuvered a narrow gangplank into place for the passengers to pick their way down to the shore, the day was getting on. Will and Craig arranged to have their luggage delivered to the Zhang Inn, went to it themselves, had supper, and turned in for the night. The following day, a Sunday, was Will's first full day in the new town. It was a perfect "first day" for a man who would later write that the theme of his life was to be "a preacher of the gospel of the grace of God."³ Craig had already asked him to preach at the men's service.

Suqian missionaries acknowledged Chinese scruples against the public mingling of men and women by segregating the women's Sunday service from the men's. The men met at a small thatched-roof, dirt-floored rented house designated as the "chapel." They were led in worship by one of the male missionaries who was in town or by Mr. Shu Yanji, the lay evangelistic assistant. The women met in the room at the Zhang Inn used for Mrs. Patterson's clinic, a place with its own separate outside entrance. They were led in worship by a woman missionary or by one of the Chinese female evangelistic assistants known as "Bible women."

A few names have come down to us of those who in all likelihood were present at the men's service on Will's first Sunday. Any male missionary in town would have been in attendance. That included Mark Grier, though he and his wife would shortly be moving to the newly opened station of Xuzhoufu [Hsuchoufu]. Mr. Shu Yanji, a Christian who had come to Suqian from an outlying town to work with the church, would have been at the service — unless he was himself out doing itineration in some rural area on that particular Sunday.⁴ Zhang Yuzhang, a youth who had recently entered business, was probably present. He had been baptized in 1896 at the age of nineteen,⁵ so in early 1897 he was

about twenty years old. Zhang's father was likely also there, probably as one of the early members of the church.⁶

A young man named Samuel Shen, though not actually a member of the Suqian church, may have come that day as a visitor. When missionaries first opened work at Suqian, Samuel was the only person in the entire district who was already Christian. His father was a minister in Fujian [Fukien] Province, and his father's mother was also Christian, so Samuel was actually a third-generation Christian. He worked in a neighboring town as an operator for the Imperial Telegraph, and liked visiting Suqian to have Christian fellowship. He also enjoyed the chance to practice English. He surely knew that a new missionary was expected on January 31, so he may very well have travelled down the canal to extend greetings. Samuel, at twenty-seven, was close to Will in age. Just three years later, he would be of important help to Will during the Boxer Uprising.

The names of a few of the women who attended service at the inn that day may also be of interest. Mrs. Grier's knowledge of Chinese was still rudimentary, so probably Mrs. Patterson led. Another woman who was present would have been Mrs. Dong ("Mrs. East"), an older widow who had been a household assistant to the Pattersons for four years. Even though she was certainly a serious Christian inquirer by 1897, we don't know whether she was yet a professed and baptized Christian, that is, one of the four original members who made up the church when Will first arrived.⁷ There was also a Mrs. Qian, a thirty-year-old young mother with two small sons, recruited by Mrs. Patterson in 1895 to be trained as a drug dispenser and all-around assistant in the clinic. Mrs. Qian was to become a devoted Christian, but whether this had happened by early 1897 is not clear. Her two sons, later to become a minister and a doctor, were important church leaders during the difficult years of the Sino-Japanese War.⁸ We may assume that total attendance at the women's service would have been fewer than at the men's service. To make an appearance

in public was far more difficult for a woman than for a man, especially for women who had any social standing, and mere curiosity would not have brought many out. We do know, however, that at least two other women besides those named above were serious inquirers by 1897.

Men could go out freely, and they crowded the little chapel on Sundays. Some of them may have been serious Christian inquirers, though undoubtedly most of them attended out of curiosity. Will knew only a word or two of Chinese that first day, so presumably Craig translated.

Remarkably, the notes for Will's first Suqian sermon have survived.⁹ He seems to have been thinking especially about his own new situation. The text — Joshua 1:5, "I will not fail thee nor forsake thee" — was one he had already used in America several times. The similarities between Joshua's and Will's situations emerge as the sermon develops. Joshua, on the verge of the Jordan, was still young and untried, and he was disturbed by reports of giants among the Canaanites and of great walled cities that were to be conquered. Will, too, was young and untried, and he, too, had heard of giants in this land to which he had now come. As for walls, even as he preached he was standing in the shadow of a city wall as imposing as any that Joshua would ever find among the cities of Canaan. When Will's sermon notes say of Joshua, "How his human nature must have shrunk," we can sense the uncertainty that Will himself must have felt as he placed his foot for the first time in the path of his calling.

He preached, however, not about his own uncertainties but about the sure promises of God. Will affirmed over and over during his years on the field that the gospel would someday prevail in the hearts of Chinese people. He did not defend this proposition by citing evidence that the Manchu Dynasty was in decline. Still less did he argue that missionaries possessed some personal talent or cultural advantage that would assure the victory of their cause. He believed that the gospel would finally prevail in China only because God purposed it. The abbreviated notes of

his first sermon make this clear: “We have many battles before us. But in trials, God is with us. In doubt and perplexity, God is with us. Even in death, God is with us. If we depend on *ourselves* we will fail. We go forward in *God’s* strength. So we have the assurance of *victory*.”¹⁰

AND THEN CAME TUESDAY

THAT WAS SUNDAY. The next day was Monday, February first. Did Will busy himself that day by opening crates and sorting books? Well, maybe. But without having to guess, we know of something else that was happening on that particular Monday. Beginning about sundown and continuing until dawn the next morning, loud bursts produced by long strings of fire-crackers were assaulting the ears of everyone in town. The eve of the Chinese Lunar New Year had arrived.

When Monday’s long and wakeful night finally gave way to the quiet peace of Tuesday morning, Will and Craig decided that the time had come to explore. But their decision may have been ill-considered. Twenty-six years later, Will described what followed:

I well remember how, on my first walk out on the Suqian streets with Mr. Patterson, a couple of days after my arrival, twenty-six years ago, I dressed in my American clothes, he dressed in Chinese clothes, we raised a great commotion and we were chased back home by a howling and cursing mob. It was a Chinese holiday. We had to retire as quickly as we could and as gracefully as we could back into the Mission compound!¹¹

This New Year’s Day incident might have been very serious. But Will typically described events in his own life in a way that invited others to chuckle with him, and his telling of the incident brings out its slapstick elements. That the Chinese holiday was New Year’s probably helps to explain what happened. Family visits and reciprocal social calls were an important part of the traditional observance of a Chinese New Year then, as they still are. The visits were supposed to be done auspiciously and to

bode well for the months ahead. Probably the presence that day on the streets of Suqian of *yang guize*, foreign spirits, struck some as blatantly inauspicious. As for clothes, Will very soon followed Craig's example and chose to wear the Chinese variety — partly, to be sure, to make his foreignness less conspicuous, but also partly because he quickly recognized that Chinese knew better than Westerners how to make suitable clothes for Chinese winters.

In the early years, hostility directed at foreigners posed a problem for the Pattersons and the Sydenstrickers and the Griers. There had been muttering in the streets, spitting behind their backs, stones thrown by hoodlums from the top of the city wall down into the Zhang Inn courtyard, aimed at the foreigners or at their visitors or at Mrs. Patterson's patients. The missionaries tried to make themselves as familiar and commonplace to the people of Suqian as they could. They employed Chinese helpers in their homes, they opened their living quarters at the Zhang Inn each day and invited all to enter, they mingled in the evenings with people strolling along the former bed of the Yellow River. Two or three hundred people visited their living quarters every day for more than a year, deeply intrigued simply to stand and stare, but cautious about accepting the tea that the foreigners offered lest it contain some substance which might addle their minds or even persuade them unwittingly to become followers of the new religion.

Apart from the open house, Mrs. Patterson's clinic was also open. People came to it with both their own afflictions and those of their children — purple-scabbed abscesses of the scalp, trachoma-infected eyelids, deep-chest tuberculosis, worm-distended stomachs, infant colic. Some, suffering from malaria, were carried in on litters. The foreigners dispensed a white powder known as quinine which reputedly was able, when taken orally, to restore the patient's balance of *yang* and *yin* and with remarkable speed and potency cause the recurrent fever to abate.

The misadventure on that New Year's Day shows clearly enough that when Will first arrived in Suqian foreigners were still treated as hostile aliens from outer space. But a measure of acceptance had already begun to grow, and within only a few years a much more positive view would emerge of the role that missionary foreigners might play in the life of the town. As a matter of fact, the example of Will himself was one significant factor that helped to bring about this change. □

NOTES

1. Nettie D. Junkin, "Dr. William F. Junkin — Missionary to China," published in 1939. A clipping of it is found in *William Francis Junkin: 75th Birthday Book* (bound ms., privately held), but without bibliographical information.

2. The *Doric* was wrecked on April 23, 1911.

3. P. Frank Price, *Our China Investment* (ECFM, n.d.g. [1927]), p. 58.

4. For Mr. Shu, see B. C. Patterson, *The Gospel Comes to Suqian*, pp. 45-46.

5. Patterson, *op. cit.*, pp. 46-47 and p. 53, n. 2.

6. B. C. Patterson, personal letter to Rev. G. W. Finley, from Suqian, Oct. 24, 1896 (archives, UTSV): "We baptized a young man last Sunday ... He, his father, and one other are the three baptized (in Suqian)." Craig does not name the young man, but he almost certainly was Zhang Yuzhang.

7. Wm. F. Junkin, "It Grew and Waxed a Great Tree" (*Chr. Obs.*, Jan. 3, 1940, p. 6).

8. Patterson, *op. cit.*, pp. 49-51.

9. Preserved in a collection of Will's sermon notes (Junkin papers). In order to survive, the 1897 notes had to escape destruction during the Boxer Uprising of 1901, the Chinese Revolution of 1911, marauding soldiers in 1925 (when the Junkin house was damaged), the civil war of 1927 (when the Junkin house was looted), the burning of the town during the Japanese invasion of 1938, and the outbreak of war between the United States and Japan in 1941 (when Will was interned in another city and the Junkin house in Suqian was again looted).

10. Will's italics.

11. W. F. Junkin, "Some Facts About the Progress of Mission Work at Sutsien, North Kiangsu, China," Suqian, Sep. 5, 1923, 2 pp., typed (Junkin papers).

2

Early Years

ONCE, AFTER WILL HAD BEEN ITINERATING for nearly thirty years, he articulated his “aim and prayer” as:

... self-supporting churches over all the field, each with its own pastor, with Sabbath keeping, Christians able to read, pure in doctrine and life, earnest in soul saving, family altars everywhere, churches loyal to God’s Word and ever witnessing for His gospel.¹

Will’s thirty years of experience are clearly discernible in this confident listing of objectives. Our purpose in the present chapter, however, is not to consider Will’s longer-term understanding of his work but only to look at his first two years on the field, his period of apprenticeship.

THE YOUNG MISSIONARY

AT THE BEGINNING, the young missionary’s main need was to learn the Chinese language and to learn the work of an itinerant evangelist.

The days were full of ... hard work (Nettie later wrote). For hours each day the new missionary sat down across a small table from an old Chinese scholar, Mr. Ch’en, who had consented to teach the young man. Then, in the afternoons, Mrs. Patterson’s clinic would be open, for she was a doctor, and the sick and the curious would come in. Mr. Patterson would talk to the patients and the new missionary would try out the words that he had learned.

Soon the work branched out and the two men would go out on the streets with tracts in their hands, the gospel message on their lips, and a prayer in their hearts. They were followed everywhere by curious crowds, for the foreigners were even more exciting than a monkey or a

performing bear come to town ... Later, the missionaries carried the work out into the country, travelling the roads by wheelbarrow...²

That first year he regularly crossed the canal by sampan and walked the three miles over to Matou Village to teach singing to a class of about ten children. The village took its name from the Suqian *matou* where Will originally landed. He enjoyed teaching the children songs, and of course he also had a good chance to practice his own spoken Chinese. After a few months, he began to join Craig for evangelistic outings. The earliest of these were in Suqian itself. As the year progressed, they probably began to make trips to villages where they could go and come in a single day. When they entered new places in those early days, they had no local friends who might introduce them to people already interested in the Christian faith, so the main purpose was to let the process of acquaintance get started. Market days were ideal because people were present in droves. But as Nettie pointed out, whether or not it was a market day, “they were followed everywhere by curious crowds.”

Later the two missionaries graduated to overnight trips involving itineraries of several days or several weeks, the two of them accompanied by a wheelbarrow pusher bringing food provisions and supplies of Christian literature. Shu Yanji, the Chinese evangelist, probably often went with them. Places they might well have visited in this way include Zaoho [Tsao Ho], a canal town several hours away to the north; Buzi [Putse or Putsi], about the same distance to the south, situated on the main road to Nanjing; and, a little further off to the west, Suining, the seat of government for the adjoining Suining County and an important market town. After Will and Craig divided the field in 1902, the portion allocated to Will for his particular responsibility measured about thirty-five by sixty miles. It included Pizhou [Pichow], a county seat to the north of Suqian; also thirty or forty market towns, places such as Guanhu [Kwanhu] or Yaowan, some walled and some not, all of importance within their own

spheres; and finally, about two thousand villages.

At the beginning, Will's itineration almost always led to places where there were no Christians. He would gather hearers in whatever way he could and begin speaking to them about God's love for the people of the world and about his own motive for being in China: his desire to preach the Gospel. Admittedly, many of his hearers found this explanation for his long trip across the Pacific totally unconvincing — they were sure he had a clandestine purpose that in due time would come to the surface.

After years of work, his path more often than not brought him for return visits to places where groups of Christians now met regularly for worship and instruction, the kind of place that missionaries spoke of as "active outposts." Coming to such a place, Will would meet with Christians and "mingle, exhort, reprove, encourage, stimulate, preach, administer the sacraments, and then commit the work to the care of the local preacher or elder until the next visit."³

A TRIP ACROSS THE PLAINS

COUNTRY TRAVEL in North Jiangsu was a challenge, whether by wheelbarrow or by foot; and finding a suitable inn after reaching the destination was another challenge. The trip described below was made when Will had been in China about six months. It was not an evangelistic outing, but it does reveal some of the "hardships of itineration," as Dr. Painter, who is about to be introduced, phrased it.

Will was in Xuzhoufu [Hsuchoufu] at the time, about eighty miles northwest of Suqian. While he was there, the Rev. Dr. George W. Painter, a senior missionary and a recognized itinerator, arrived for a visit, and the two of them decided to make the trip back to Suqian together. Dr. Painter's regular station in China was Hangzhou [Hangchow], a part of the country penetrated by many navigable canals. His practice was to rent a small junk and itinerate on the canals for months at a time, his status as a bachelor facilitating his long absences from home. The contrast

between such relatively comfortable canal trips, where he could sleep in his own bed and eat his own food, and the physically demanding travel that he experienced in North Jiangsu, where by day he hiked or rode wheelbarrows and by night lived in country inns whose services barely reached subsistence level, apparently struck him forcibly. The description of the trip, found below, was given in one of Dr. Painter's personal letters. We will include only the part that involves Will.

...One and a half days' trip [*on the Grand Canal*] brought me to Sutsien, where the Pattersons were alone, as Mr. Junkin was over at Hsuchoufu [Xuzhoufu]. I merely stayed overnight at Sutsien, and next morning set out for Hsuchoufu on a small wheelbarrow. A little experience in arranging my bedding enabled me to ride quite comfortably, though the large barrow is better, in fact I regard it as far better than either cart or mule litter. Mr. Junkin and I engaged one of these for our return trip, but, in view of the danger of rain, wisely yielded to Mr. Grier's advice, and exchanged for a cart. Had we not done so, we would likely still be on the road from Hsuchoufu back to Sutsien.

As it was, we were five days making eighty miles. Before we got out of the suburbs of Hsuchoufu the cart had bruised and beaten me almost to a jelly, and I mentally abused Mr. Grier for his advice. This feeling diminished, however, as night and rain came on, and when, during the night, I lay listening to one of the most terrible downpours I ever heard, accompanied by fearful crashings of thunder, I was glad enough we made the change.

Next morning we started, but found the water so deep we returned to our inn and stayed till next day. Then after thirteen miles, during which we were in water half or more of the time, after getting our bedding soaked, we hauled up again, and stayed over Sunday [*that is, observed the Sabbath*] in a horrible inn. On Monday we made thirty-five miles — many of them in water varying from six inches up to three feet—so that our cart bed was flooded and bedding again soaked. One stream we dared not cross in the cart, but took our things into a boat. This was four days after the rain, so you may know what a rain it was.⁴

Obviously a flood of this severity ruined crops. We may assume that a large section of the flat and semi-arid plains between Xuzhou and Suqian suffered famine that fall and winter, at least until new crops could be grown. Dr. Painter continued:

Apropos of carts, let me say I think they must have originated during the days of the inquisition. The very best among them are instruments of torture. This ... one was particularly bad. The tires are not continuous but put on in sections of about nine inches in length. Two of these were missing on one wheel, and the wheel very much flattened by wearing, with the result that even over good roads the jolting continued in full force.

Then, our mules added much to the disreputable appearance of the turnout. Neither had much meat on his bones — the little black, in front, none...He had a better nature than the one at the wheel.⁵ [The latter] pulled faithfully as long as his strength allowed, and then with great deliberation slacked his traces when strength was wanting; and when pressed by hunger he would step off into the field, fill his mouth with wheat, or whatever green thing was at hand, utterly regardless of [the remonstrances] of the driver. The animal's conduct showed he had deliberately weighed the pangs of hunger in one scale against lash and abuse in the other, and had decided the latter were more endurable, and hence he never even winced while supplying his wants, nor even made any haste getting back in line — they are hitched tandem style. I rather admired the wee beast ...⁶

The wheel mule always tried to give as good as was sent, and so his efforts to reach the driver with his heel kept poor Junkin, who sat outside by the driver, in a constant state of apprehension of other than a martyr's end. The mule did reach him once, but did not hurt him. This good brother (I say good advisedly, for he certainly was good and polite and kind to me during this trip — as unselfish as anyone I ever met) had on this trip a rough initiation into the hardships of itineration in his part of the field, and they are very much greater than we have in my section.

On Saturday we stopped at 3 P.M. and at once spread out our bedding to get dry. After our dinner, as we sat breathing the filthy air of the

barnyard (for such, in truth, are the courts of the inns, where mules, oxen, hogs, horses, and dogs wade in filth) he said: “I believe there is something crawling on me.” “On me, too,” I responded. Search warrant was at once issued, with the result that creepers of three out of the four possible kinds were found.⁷ My past experience on that line has not been great, though I still felt low down on the scale [*mortified*]; but my chagrin was turned to amusement on witnessing the shame and humiliation written on Junkin’s face ... I fear the “Romance of Missions” has received a fatal stab.⁸ He was meditating a patent sterilizer for his garments when I bade him goodbye.⁹

In his own itineration, Will usually steered clear of floods — unless the intention was flood relief. Otherwise, what Dr. Painter says about inns, vehicles, and crawling things corresponds pretty closely to occasional descriptions of travel that Will himself later wrote.

Additional note: Missionaries and Marriage. *Most Protestant missionaries in the nineteenth-century came to the field neither married nor engaged. to be married. True, when Absalom Sydenstricker, the original missionary itinerator to Suqian, first arrived in China, he was accompanied by his wife. But of the town’s next thirteen missionaries, six men and seven women who reached China between 1891 and 1911, all arrived on the field unmarried. That’s thirteen out of fourteen, or ninety-three percent.*¹⁰

Protestant missionaries, unlike their Catholic counterparts, were far from committed to celibacy. Although a few may have thought that such a life style would minimize distractions from their work (note the story of Miss Johnston, in the next chapter), most were prepared to accept it only if there were no alternative. They spoke of marriage in Biblical terms, the “covenant” of marriage. A husband expected to sustain his wife in marriage, and to be sustained by her. He knew, too, that the wife of a missionary couple could contribute to the work in ways that the husband could not. In home visits, for example, a woman missionary had access to the private area of the home where wives and daughters lived, a privilege not extended to the male missionary.

Even though most missionary candidates arrived on the field single, the great majority of them, in China at least, were able after getting there to find the right person for a lifelong relationship, and often after no long wait. Novice missionaries embarking on a first voyage to China often traveled together in a congenial group, and the right

two people sometimes found one another during their very first ocean crossing. By the time their liner reached that visible line of demarcation where the blue waters of the Pacific succumb to the silt-laden currents of the Chang Jiang, a hundred miles out into the China Sea, many new personal relationships were already well under way.

We have to add, of course, that Will and Nettie traveled to China separately, so theirs was not a shipboard romance. But as Dr. Frank Price once wrote, there were “many charming romances of the mission field.”¹¹

A ROMANCE OF THE MISSION FIELD

WILL’S MOTHER gave him one last piece of advice, just as he was ready to leave Texas and start for China. “Will,” she said, “if you marry anyone over there, make it be one of the DuBose girls.”¹²

When Will reached Suqian, Annie Patterson had a chance to have her say, too. She turned to him one evening during the very first week he was at the Zhang Inn and asked directly, “Mr. Junkin, do you have plans to bring a second woman to join us at this station?”

“No, Mrs. Patterson,” he responded, “I have no such plans.”

“Are there any prospects, then?”

“No, there are no prospects, either.”

Annie was disappointed, but she replied in good humor: “Then do something about it quickly or we will have to make it a mission matter!”¹³

Eight months later, Will’s chance came. At the October mission meeting in Shanghai, he was introduced to “one of the DuBose girls” and he recognized immediately that she was the one he would like to “bring to the station” if he could!

By the late 1800’s, Shanghai had outstripped both Hong Kong and Beijing to become China’s leading center for international trade and communication. Even though no Southern Presbyterians regularly worked in that city, the mission’s annual meetings were often held there. To get to Shanghai from upcountry stations such as Suqian took about three weeks. So in mid-September, Craig, Annie, and Will loaded themselves onto a canal junk and headed south towards Qingjiang, Zhenjiang,

Shanghai, and the meeting. Apart from its regular mission business, the annual meeting gave established missionaries a chance to meet the “new” people.

When Will and Nettie DuBose first met, he was twenty-six, she nineteen. Older missionaries remembered Nettie perfectly well from her childhood on the mission field, but at the 1897 meeting she was “new.” Will had been on the field for eight months, but he had come since the previous year’s meeting, so he, too, counted as new. Two other new people were Mercer Blain and Claudia Grier, two of Will’s fellow passengers on the *Doric*. Miss Grier had originally intended to go to Japan, but theirs was a shipboard romance, and she agreed to marry Mr. Blain and join him in China. All of the younger missionaries soon became warm friends.

On the first night of the meeting, Nettie put a piece of Claudia Blain’s wedding cake under her pillow. Claudia said that it was a way to bring a beau calling. We have Nettie’s own words about what happened:

Rev. William F. Junkin fell in love! It was at first sight, too! She was Miss Nettie DuBose ... daughter of the pioneer missionaries in Soochow, China.¹⁴

The “pioneer missionaries” that Nettie mentions were her parents, Dr. and Mrs. Hampden DuBose. They arrived in China in 1872, just five years after Southern Presbyterians began work in that land. Dr. DuBose went first to Shanghai, where he was given much help by Dr. and Mrs. J. W. Lambuth, Methodist missionaries. The Duboses were then assigned by the Southern Presbyterians Mission to open work at Suzhou [Soochow], and that city became their permanent station.

The DuBoses’ first child, Julius, was born in 1874, but he died the same year and was buried in the foreign cemetery at Shanghai. Nettie’s older sister, Pauline, was born in 1876. Nettie came along two years later. Her name, “Nettie Lambuth,” was in honor of the Mrs. Lambuth whom the DuBoses had known in Shanghai. Then there were three younger

brothers: Palmer in 1880, Warner in 1883, and Pierre in 1892. Nettie had already gone to America for her later education when Pierre was born, so he was five years old when she saw him for the first time. Her later recollection of those China years was that “my early life was one filled with childhood’s pleasures, undisturbed by fears, but never failing to realize that at any time there might be a sudden riot. We children enjoyed our friends and grew up happy and light-hearted.”¹⁵

Nettie returned to the United States at age twelve and went to the Augusta Female Seminary (now Mary Baldwin College) for seven years of secondary and college education. Her older sister, Pauline, returned to China in 1895. In the summer of 1897, while on a visit to Japan, Pauline unexpectedly fell ill and died. Her death did not deter Nettie’s return to China. On the contrary, it probably increased her incentive to join her parents. She reached Shanghai in time for the October meeting.

In later days, Nettie laughingly reported that the courtship between herself and Will was a well chaperoned affair. Will and Nettie found occasion during the mission meeting for walks taken together in the Shanghai parks. The Blains, now duly married and thus qualified to be chaperones, would regularly walk along behind them at a discreet distance. Surveillance continued even after the annual meeting was over. Will was in Suqian, in the far northern part of the mission field, and Nettie was in Suzhou, in the far south. If the courtship were to progress, it had to be by long-distance correspondence. But there was no established mail service, so letters were passed along from station to station by missionaries who happened to be travelling. Thus, all of the missionaries in all of the stations knew just how many letters had passed back and forth between Will and Nettie and could gauge how well the courtship was faring.

It must have fared well, because Nettie, in due time, agreed to marry Will — but with one reservation. She would marry him only after reaching the age of twenty-one. When Will’s letter crossed the Pacific to let his

mother know that he planned to marry Nettie Dubose, family tradition reports that her answering letter said, “I’m glad it is one of the Dubose girls ... but you didn’t really *have* to follow my instructions on that!” □

NOTES

1. P. Frank Price, *Our China Investment*, p. 58.
2. Nettie DuBose Junkin, “Dr. William F. Junkin — Missionary to China” (1939). For the source, see Chap. 1, n.3.
3. P. Frank Price, *Our China Investment*, p. 16. For Will’s later account of an extensive country itinerary, see below, pp. 95ff.
4. George W. Painter, letter to his family, Qingjiangpu, Jun. 11, 1897 (*Miss.*, Nov., 1897). This was a private letter, so editors of *The Missionary* identified neither the author nor the recipients. However, the author may be readily identified from internal evidence.
5. The mules, “front” and “wheel,” were hitched in-line rather than two abreast. A little later, Dr. Painter speaks of this mode of hitching as “tandem style.”
6. Dr. Painter referred to one mule as “little,” the other as “wee,” unusual words to describe mules. Probably they were hinnies.
7. Presumably fleas, lice, ticks, bedbugs. Leeches were not in the area.
8. In later years, Will himself used the term “romance of missions” several times, usually in a context intended to show that much actual missionary life was anything but romantic. See, e.g., his m.c.l. on the difficulties and dangers of itineration in the nineteen-thirties, Jan. 7, 1930 (carbon copy, Junkin papers).
9. Painter, *loc. cit.*
10. The thirteen, with their dates of arrival in China, are B. C. Patterson (1891); Annie Houston, M.D., later Mrs. Patterson (1891); Mark B. Grier (1892); Hugh White (1894); Wm. F. Junkin (1897); Nettie DuBose, later Mrs. Junkin (1897); the “Scottish ladies,” Mary M. Johnston and Bella McRobert (1898); John Bradley, M.D. (1899); Mamie McCollum, the first Mrs. Bradley (1901); Agnes Junkin, the second Mrs. Bradley (1904); Hugh W. McCutchan (1908); and Mada I. McCutchan, Hugh’s sister (1911).
11. *Our China Investment*, p. 4, emphasis added.
12. This little story, and the other stories about the courtship of Will and Nettie, were graciously provided by Agnes Junkin Peery in an oral interview of July, 1996.
13. Annie Patterson, letter to her father, Suqian, Feb. 7, 1897 (Patterson papers).
14. Nettie DuBose Junkin, “Dr. William F. Junkin — Missionary to China” (1939).

For the source, see Chap. 1, n. 1.

15. *Our China Investment*, p. 60.

3

Into the Work

AT THE END OF THE SECOND YEAR

WILL'S SECOND ANNIVERSARY in China arrived in January, 1899. He was in Xuzhoufu for the winter, temporarily helping to replace several missionaries who were on leave for medical or other reasons. A letter that he wrote while there to his main supporting church, Second Presbyterian of Little Rock, significantly reveals his thinking at the time.

Missionaries, by the end of their second year, were considered by mission policy to have learned the Chinese language well enough to enter fully into the work. The first thing we note in Will's letter, then, is the recognition that a significant moment of transition had come:

... Though I am far from having mastered Chinese, and still, as the Chinese say, have not "enough words to use," I have come up here [*Xuzhou*] to do what I can ... Pray for me as I continue to study this language, and now try to do some real missionary work.¹

Second, Will tells us that he and Dr. Absalom Sydenstricker, also temporarily transferred to Xuzhou, had teamed up to make an extensive tour of various towns in North Jiangsu, exploring their potential for future work. Though Will did not know it at the time, the area that he was reconnoitering would be assigned to him, about three years later, as his own special missionary terrain. The places that he and Dr. Sydenstricker visited included the only two Suqian outposts that were already active — Guanhu [*Kwanhu*], in the northern part of the Suqian field, and a smaller village three or four miles out from Guanhu. Will did not name the

village in his letter, but it was Chenjialou [Ch'en Chia Lou].

At Kwanhu (Will wrote) there are seven or eight professing Christians, and as many more at a hamlet three or four miles distant. At both places there are a number of inquirers whom [*sic*] we hope will prove sincere. We examined about a dozen minutely and carefully, and yet, although they stood excellent examinations, we did not baptize any at this time. This was Mr. White's field, and we felt that we personally did not know enough about the candidates.²

Christian work had begun at Guanhu earlier than at Suqian. Once Suqian was "opened," missionaries there assumed responsibility for outpost work clear up to the border of Shandong [Shantung] Province, taking in both Guanhu and Chenjialou. Mr. Hugh W. White, an early missionary in Suqian, was assigned to visit the two towns. He later moved to Xuzhoufu and responsibility for the towns passed on, at first jointly to Will and Craig, eventually to Will alone. Guanhu, located in the northern section of the field, would later grow into an important hub for Will's work of itineration. In the latter half of the 1930's, he and Nettie even moved their permanent residence there.

Third, the letter includes the only reference that Will ever made in writing to an alarming incident that occurred on one of his earliest solo country trips. Bandits ambushed him, stripped him at gunpoint, and robbed him. The event could almost be seen as an initiation ushering Will into the new stage of missionary life for which he was now ready.

I might mention (he wrote) that on a trip I took by myself before I came up here at Chuchowfu this autumn, I was met by robbers, and relieved of all the belongings I had with me, even to the outer garments on my back! It is not funny to be robbed; but I had to laugh afterward at the thought of the sight I presented as I sat in the "high seat" of the Yamen [*police station*] of the town just outside of which I was robbed [*Zaoho*], rather scant of dress, telling my trouble to the official across the table in his silk robes. My watch and two or three other things I have re-

covered; but the things I have not yet recovered, and now have very little hope of seeing again, are not a few.³

Here, as before, Will describes his own adventures with a light touch. The incident, however, was quite serious and could easily have led to kidnapping, ransom demands, perhaps even death.

From other sources we learn more about what happened. It was October, 1898. Will had started from Suqian travelling northward, though probably not as far as Guanhu since that was still considered Mr. White's territory. His trip, which may have included initial visits to several previously unvisited places, was now complete, and Will and his barrow man were walking southward on the canal levee with about twelve or thirteen miles remaining before reaching Suqian. Although they had the towpath largely to themselves, their isolated serenity was about to be shattered. For just a brief moment Will and the barrow man could hear the drumbeat of running footsteps catching up with them from behind. Quickly a circle of men formed around the two travellers. The men's gruff commands, their callous looks, and their well-aimed rifles left no dispute that this was a group of practiced bandits carrying out a serious ambush.

They demanded Will's money. They also ransacked everything on the barrow — bedding, books, food provisions, kerosene lantern — taking what they wanted and throwing discards into the canal. They took Will's pocket watch. Among the books that they seized was a Bible that Will had inherited when his father died, marked with his father's handwritten notes. Will knew that an English Bible would be of no value to his assailants and he asked if he might have that particular book back. The head robber, his attention now directed to the Bible, riffled through its pages to see if he could find anything of value. Failing to do so, he hurled it into the canal. Fancying Will's outer clothes, the bandits stripped those from his person and left him thirteen miles from home in his shoes, hat,

and BVDs. Their work finished, the bandits quickly vanished into the countryside and the confrontation ended.

Will searched out the magistrate in the nearby town of Zaoho, reported the incident, and walked the last twelve miles back to Suqian in his underclothes. As it happened, Will's imminent transfer to Xuzhou meant that he was due to depart from Suqian in just a day or two. But if justice were to be pursued against the criminals, it had to be done from the Suqian end. Will put the matter into Craig's hands. Craig later recalled subsequent events:

I got the home guard on the trail. Two of the men were caught, one wearing Mr. Junkin's shirt and crouched inside an oven or stove. I consented to their condemnation to death as the robbery had been done in daylight by men with guns, who had followed him for twenty-four hours seeking a lonely spot. The men were sent to the superior court at Xuzhoufu for confirmation of the sentence. Two heads came back and the carrier brought them to me, asking money to buy food while he carried them to the place of the robbery.⁴

The idea was to give a dramatic warning to other thieves by impaling the heads on stakes near the site of the robbery. The carrier assumed that the injured party in the affair would perceive the display of the heads as a favor, perhaps helping to restore any "face" that had been lost in the original ambush, so he came to Craig for a gratuity. Craig continued:

I refused to pay, saying, "You may only have clods in that bag." He promptly emptied out the two heads. To his great confusion, only one was fresh; the other had been taken from a cadaver long buried. He did not press for money and I never reported it and let the case rest there.⁵

This story about Will's ambush and his scantily clad appearance before the magistrate was widely repeated in missionary circles — sometimes as a cautionary tale, more often, especially as the incident receded into the past, as a pleasant anecdote about the undignified state of Will's garb. A

hundred years later, when the present book was in preparation, a search was made for informants who had once been in Suqian and shared time there with Will. As none of these prospective informants were yet a hundred years old, none were alive at the time of Will's adventure. Yet they mentioned the story more than once as something they had heard about. Curiously, Pearl S. Buck even appropriated some details from the story to include in her fictionalized accounts of her own father's life.⁶

We might observe that the bandits' action had nothing to do with hatred of foreigners. Bandits mostly attacked fellow Chinese. Their only interest in Will's race or nationality would have been how it affected their calculation of the value of his possessions or what ransom value his own person might have. Like the American bank thief, Willie Sutton, the bandits went where they thought the money was.

When Will's adventure entered the missionary oral tradition, the versions repeated there usually said nothing about the drawn-out process of bringing the thieves to justice — except for the single striking detail that one of the criminals, when captured, was wearing Will's shirt. Most people today, hearing that two of the bandits were beheaded, are not surprised that criminal justice under the Manchus was harsh. But they often *are* surprised that Craig, a missionary, "consented" to the executions. Christians in all centuries have struggled to know when to consent to the government and when to resist. After all, Paul taught that the authority of even the Chinese emperor was "ordained of God."⁷ Whether to consent to or to resist the beheadings posed a real dilemma for Craig. Both he and Will, however, included within their outlook a hope that the power of redemption would eventually transform not just the souls of saved individuals, but even the civil life of an entire nation.⁸

BOXER TROUBLES

ON APRIL 28, 1899, Nettie reached the age of twenty-one that she had stipulated as a prerequisite for marriage. On April 3, 1900, at Suzhou,

Nettie Lambuth DuBose and William Francis Junkin were united in marriage to the accompaniment of firecrackers set off by enthusiastic Chinese friends. Their union was to provide a close, sustaining, and lasting relationship for both partners.

In the interval after Will's arrival at Suqian in 1897 and before he and Nettie were married, the roster of Suqian missionaries expanded. Two Scottish ladies, Miss Mary Melrose Johnston and Miss Bella McRobert, arrived in late 1898. They were self-supporting, meaning that no sponsoring organization in Scotland underwrote them with financial aid or directed their missionary activities. Other missionaries spoke of them as "independents." And actually they were independent in more than one way. As vegetarians, they followed their own preferences in diet. As herbalists, they formulated their own remedies for sickness. And as maiden ladies who had committed themselves to Christian work in China, they kept themselves apart from the responsibilities of marriage. Miss Johnston was one of six sisters who came independently to China to be missionaries, all six of whom stayed unmarried during their entire time on the field. People in Suqian learned to value Miss Johnston and Miss McRobert greatly as co-workers and as friends. The two of them stayed in Suqian without furlough for the remainder of their lives, more than forty years in all, never returning to Scotland.

Another couple came in January, 1900, just two months before the date of Will and Nettie's marriage. For some years the station had recognized the need for a male medical doctor to complement the work of Mrs. Patterson, and the arrival of Dr. Charles S. Terrill, M.D., and Mrs. Terrill made it possible. Will went to Shanghai to meet them. The canal froze over completely during their return journey, making the trip quite an ordeal.⁹ Eventually they reached Suqian just in time for Will to turn around and travel to Suzhou for his wedding. The Terrills' stay in Suqian turned out to be brief. In June, Boxer developments forced missionaries

to move nearer the coast, sending the Terrills probably to Shanghai. Late in the summer, Dr. Terrill was overtaken by a serious sickness and after just seven months in China he had to return to the United States. In October, two weeks after reaching his father's home, he died.¹⁰

The Mission appointed Dr. John Bradley, M.D., and Mrs. Mamie Bradley, to replace the Terrills. Less than a year later, Mrs. Bradley contracted cholera while on a trip and within hours was dead. Will's younger sister, Agnes Junkin, came to the station as a single missionary in 1904, and two years later she became the second Mrs. Bradley.

And now back to Will and Nettie. As newlyweds, in the spring of 1900, they went to Kobe, Japan, for their honeymoon. A photograph taken there shows Nettie's much younger brother, eight-year-old Pierre, as a member of the party. Why was he along? Perhaps the couple were willing to share their honeymoon with the youngster in order to bring a little excitement into his life. But a more likely explanation, and also a more ominous one, is that by the spring of 1900 the seriousness of the Boxer Uprising was becoming clear. The DuBoses may have asked the newlyweds to take Pierre along to Japan as a precaution against events that were then unfolding in China.

Threats stemming from the Boxer Uprising reached a peak during the summer of 1900. Peasants in Shandong Province who called themselves the "Patriotic Peace Fists" initiated the movement. It started out as a violent protest against the Manchu government, a regime that the peasants perceived as oppressive. But shrewd government manipulation managed to turn the movement into a protest against foreigners. During June and July of 1900, Boxers in North China mounted widespread attacks. Newspapers in the West mainly publicized the violent treatment of foreigners, but attacks against Chinese people whom the Boxers deemed to be under the influence of foreigners were actually much fiercer. Christians, many of them located in rural sections of Shandong and Anhui [Anhui] Prov-

inces, where Boxer strongholds were numerous, were especially vulnerable. The number of Christians killed in all of China during the uprising amounted to an estimated thirty thousand Chinese Roman Catholics, nearly two thousand Chinese Protestants, and some two hundred and thirty-seven foreign civilians, chiefly missionaries.¹¹

By June at the latest, Will and Nettie reached Suqian after their honeymoon. Suqian Protestants had secured property inside the walls in 1898, and by 1900 they had developed it into a multi-purpose compound. It was located at the north end of the city, near the *yamen*, and missionaries generally referred to it as the “north-end compound.” The former Cai Family Ancestral Hall, located on the property, was renamed the “Gospel Hall” by missionaries and used for a church. The area also had buildings that could be used for a clinic and dispensary, a room for women’s services on Sundays, several residences, and later on a children’s school. Will and Nettie moved into one of the residences.

Will preached on the third of June. But Boxer attacks were becoming increasingly threatening, and just three weeks later United States consuls ordered all Americans living in the interior of China to move nearer the coast and prepare for possible evacuation. Incidentally, the consuls probably sent those orders over the same humming telegraph wires that we spoke of earlier, stretched along the banks of the canal. Will and Nettie headed for Nettie’s original home at Suzhou, a place reasonably close to Shanghai. Nettie had begun to study the Suqian dialect, and the tutor who was coaching her accompanied them to Suzhou.

Just as they were leaving Suqian, Will asked a local Chinese Christian to take care of the property during their absence, provided he could do it without undue risk to his own life. Will’s papers do not name the person to whom he turned, but by a happy coincidence Mrs. Patterson, writing in another connection, made the name explicit:

Mr. [S. V.] Shen staid [*sic*] at Suchien taking care of the mission prop-

erty during the Boxer trouble.¹²

This was the Samuel Shen of whom we spoke earlier, the young telegraph operator from Fujian Province, a third-generation Christian.

So how did he happen to be in Suqian just when Will needed him? By the summer of 1900, Samuel, still a telegraph operator, had been assigned to Xuzhoufu for several years. The only missionaries present in Xuzhoufu that summer were the Griers. A report of what happened to them tells about a telegraph operator, “already a Christian,” who gave them daring assistance as events unfolded. The report, as given below, does not name Samuel; but from another source¹³ we know that he was the operator in question.

When the edict came from the capital to slay the foreigners [*an order conveyed by telegram*], the telegraph operator was already a Christian ... He, at the risk of his position, if not his life, gave Mr. and Mrs. Grier the warning that, by a margin of a few hours, saved their lives. They fled in great haste, with their little baby ... to the Grand Canal, sixty miles away, and ... escaped southward.¹⁴

Samuel knew the Griers well. Several times he had asked Mrs. Grier for medical help for his own infant children. Actually, two of them had died. While he was warning the Griers of what might be in store, he must have known that the danger was even greater for himself. We know that the Griers fled Xuzhou immediately. The Shens must have fled at about the same time. But while the Griers went on to Japan, the Shens seem to have gone only as far as Suqian.

Will said in one of his letters that when he asked Samuel to take care of the Suqian property, he was already a mission employee.¹⁵ Perhaps Craig had offered Samuel a temporary job with the mission before he and Annie left in May to go on furlough. After all, Samuel was a telegraph operator and thus an experienced government employee, he was a college graduate, and he was already a familiar figure to Suqian Christians. In the

Boxer crisis, the Mission would have been a valuable assistant.

Within about six months, intervention by various international expeditionary forces had largely quelled the Boxers, and in December Will received permission from the consul to return to Suqian for a visit. He was thankful to discover that local Christians had experienced no severe persecution, and he was encouraged to find that mission properties at the north-end compound had not been sacked. He also saw Samuel Shen. In a letter of January 10, 1901, he reported:

We are pleased and devoutly thankful to God for the condition of affairs as we found them at Suchien ... The Christians had not been harmed. Our property had not been molested ... A Christian [whom we had] left in charge of our property, even though told by us to run to the country and hide among his kinsmen in case of imminent danger to his life, and leave our property in charge of the local magistrate, had remained firm at his post. He said he was not frightened, and he said that he did not understand why he was not, except that God had kept him in peace ... It was a real pleasure to be back with these friends again.¹⁶

In view of the threats surging all around, the sense of God's peace that sustained Samuel was remarkable. Incidentally, Will's reference to Samuel's kinsmen sounds as if some of them lived nearby. This perhaps explains why Samuel had previously worked near Suqian and now chose it as a place for refuge. Within a few months, and certainly by November, 1901, Samuel was again at Xuzhou working for the Imperial Telegraph.¹⁷

In late January or early February, 1901, Will moved back to Suqian. He preached in the Gospel Hall on February 3. None of the Christians who gathered that day had been believers for very long, and now, in the provinces just to the north, tens of thousands of their neighboring Christians had been massacred. What message could Will possibly bring at such a time? He preached on "Jesus's Words on the Cross." His sermon notes contain only the seven sayings of Jesus, without further

elaboration. One would like to have heard Will's meditation on the "word" of Jesus that is traditionally put first: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34).

THE DEEPEST GRIEF

WILL AND NETTIE'S first child, a son, was born on April 28, 1902, in Suqian. They named him for his distinguished missionary grandfather, Hampden Dubose.

In the second week of June, 1903, when little Hampden was just over a year old, he became ill with what seemed to be stomach trouble. Nettie consulted the station's two missionary doctors, John Bradley and Annie Patterson, but their recommendations did not help. On Saturday a runner was sent to find Will, who was itinerating in the area around Guanhu. By traveling all night Will was able to cover the forty-two miles back to Suqian and reach home at 7:00 A.M. on Monday morning, his garments muddy from the trip. As Hampden grew gradually worse, symptoms of meningitis began to appear. On Wednesday afternoon, he quietly died.

Hampden's death was the first time Suqian people could observe how missionaries would respond to the death of one of their own. Missionaries felt that their demeanor, under whatever circumstances, was an integral part of their Christian witness. What Suqian people could see in Will and Nettie was quiet grief and yet sustaining hope. Hampden died on Wednesday. We have no definite knowledge of what Craig said the next day, when he led the funeral in Chinese. But he wrote a notice of Hampden's death for an American missionary paper in which he said that Hampden, even at such an early age, had been allowed in God's grace to become a missionary, one through whose death the people of Suqian had been given an opportunity to observe living Christian hope.¹⁸

Hampden's little body, a cluster of white heliotrope pinned to the gown, was placed in a sealed metal coffin. Several weeks later, when

travel was possible, it was carried to Shanghai and buried in the place that was used for foreigners, a small but beautiful cemetery on a hill. Hampden's grave was put next to the grave of Nettie's older brother, Julius Augustine Dubose, who had been buried there almost thirty years earlier.¹⁹

The Junkins had six children in all. Their second child, Nettie D, was born in America in 1906, and as an adult became a missionary to China and later to Taiwan. Their third, Eben Dixon, was born in Suqian on January 5, 1908. He died the same day and, like Hampden, was buried in the cemetery at Shanghai. The fourth, Agnes, was born in Suqian on February 1, 1909. She became a Christian educator in Tazewell, Virginia, and a lifelong supporter of missions. Their fifth, William, Jr., was born on July 1, 1913, at Suqian. He was later ordained as a minister and he, too, became a missionary to China and to Taiwan. Finally, during the Junkins' second furlough, their sixth child, Tinsley Penick, was born on November 10, 1914, in Austin, Texas. He died the same day.

In all of Nettie's missionary letters written and published over the years, she never made any direct reference to personal grief stemming from the deaths of three of her six children. But an indirect reference appears in a 1933 letter. Nettie was telling about a Chinese family in one of the outlying chapels, afflicted by the deaths of three children.

A man and wife (Nettie wrote), who are Christians, but who were terribly saddened by the death of their baby boy, having already lost two little sons (they still have one son and three daughters) felt that God did not love them. They stopped reading their Bible and praying. They said God did not answer their prayers. When we told them again of God's love for them and for the precious children in heaven, they agreed to study their Bibles again and have family prayers as well as private devotions. This is a case of "that we may comfort others by the comfort wherewith we have been comforted of God" [II Cor. 1:4, KJV].²⁰

That three of her children had died was always a deep sadness for Nettie. Like the Chinese family about whom she wrote, she, too, searched for comfort. She found it through prayer and devotion, and in faith she was able to place the lives of her children into the hands of God.

EARLY OUTPOSTS

THE BOXER UPRISING occupied the period from mid-1900 through mid-1901, which meant that Will could not get down to his serious work as one of Suqian's itinerators until after the gradual return of normalcy. When the Pattersons came back from furlough in October, 1901, Craig and Will agreed to divide their large country field roughly into halves. Each man was to maintain some familiarity with the entire field, able to pick up all the work when the other was on leave. Otherwise, each was to have responsibility for only his own section. The Grand Canal provided a natural boundary. Craig took responsibility for the area to the west and south, Will for that to the north and east. The arrangement was successful, and this became the permanent focus for Will's work.

If Will had been asked for a list of Suqian's active outposts in 1899, the year that he and Absalom Sydenstricker made their long survey trip around North Jiangsu, he would have named Guanhu and Chenjialou. If he had been asked the same question again five years later, as he and Nettie left to go on furlough, he would have named the same two places. Does this mean that country work had stagnated in the interim? Actually, not. But to get a clearer picture of developments, we need a much more detailed scan than just the names of the two active outposts. Happily, such a scan exists. A map sketched in 1905 by Mr. Patterson shows the state of missionary activity throughout the entire Suqian field [*see map*].²¹

The text accompanying the sketch-map identifies Guanhu, Chenjialou, and Suqian itself, as places where a growing number of Christians were

holding regular Sunday services. In addition, the map uses circles with dots to identify seven other places that by 1905 held from one to three baptized Christians. With one exception, all these seven places are identified by name. (The exception was a place just across the canal from Suqian, presumably Matou Village.) At least three of these places — Tushan, Suining, and Buze — would later become sites for strong self-governing, self-sustaining churches.

The map also has a group of twelve circles from which the dots are omitted, signifying places where there were inquirers but no baptized members. Only four of these places are given names, and the sketchy quality of the map makes identification of the others difficult. Still, we can make some guesses. Will's account of his 1899 trip with Dr. Sydenstricker mentioned that they visited the county seat town of Pizhou [Pichow], just south of Guanhu, and also the canal town of Yaowan. Will undoubtedly began at an early date to make regular visits to both of those places. Both of them later became sites for strong, independent churches.²²

Small X-marks on the map indicate places where no Christians or inquirers were known to be present but where missionaries nevertheless were making “more or less frequent” visits. Eighteen such marks appear in Will's territory.

We can get a better feel for Will's country work if we take a closer look at some of the actual Christian communities he regularly visited. At Guanhu, one of the strong members was a certain Mrs. Jiang, a woman who had lost by death not only her husband but also all eight of her children. Her conversion to Christian faith had given her new hope and new strength for life. She was baptized in December, 1891, by two missionaries who came the whole way up from Qingjiangpu for the purpose. (Suqian was considerably closer, but in 1891 missionaries had not yet taken up residence there.) Mrs. Jiang's home was a well built two-

story house, and by her invitation the church met in her home during its early years. Guanhu was nearer to the Shandong border than Suqian, so the Boxer Uprising was a more urgent threat there than at Suqian. No lives were lost to the uprising, however, and most of the Christians remained loyal. The “seven or eight” church members at Guanhu in 1899 had become sixteen baptized members in good standing by 1905.

Chenjialou, a few miles away, was a farming village of about two thousand people. The church group there, like the one at Guanhu, had one member who was particularly influential, a certain Mr. Meng. Suqian missionaries all spoke highly of this dignified peasant man, describing him as a Spirit-filled man who demonstrated genuine concern for the welfare of members of the church, a Barnabas-like person.

Will spent an important period of almost two weeks at Chenjialou in late 1902. One of his missionary letters tells about the visit.

I took up my abode at Chen-chia-lou for thirteen days (he wrote)... There were a number there about ready to be received into the church, and I wanted to give them special instruction as well as systematically teach those who were already church members, and try to reach some of the non-interested. We held daily classes for Christians and inquirers and an evangelistic service every night. On the Sunday before I left I baptized and received into the church eight ... All of these had been inquirers for some time. One was the older brother of our most influential member at Chen-chia-lou [*Mr. Meng*]. One was a man who had been an inquirer several years ago, but had grown cold during the persecutions of 1900, this last year coming back and declaring that he would never desert again. Three were wives of Christians, thus completing Christian homes ...²³

By 1905, the number of baptized Christians in good standing at Chenjialou was twenty-seven, a slightly larger group than was to be found at either Guanhu (sixteen) or Suqian (twenty-four) — despite the fact that the village of Chenjialou was much smaller than either of the two towns.

Finally, an account of the very beginning of Will's work at one of his pioneering "new" places may be of interest. Qipan [Ch'i-p'an] was a walled but poor town located in open farm country. On the 1905 map, it is probably the circle without a dot and also without a name, about midway between Suqian and Guanhu. In a late 1904 letter, Will told how unexpected his first significant contact there had been. He dates the encounter to "a little more than a year ago," that is, 1903.

Some eight or nine years ago [*in 1895 or 1896, before Will arrived in China*] a young man — a hunchback — came to the dispensary at Suchien, hoping that the foreign doctor [*Annie Patterson*] could make his body straight. He did not get that for which he came, but he got something better. He took home a Gospel catechism.

A little more than a year ago, while out on an itinerating trip, I stopped for a night in an inn at Chi-pan,* about thirty miles north of Suchien. That night, among those who came to talk, I noticed a hunchback, who seemed to understand something of the gospel. I questioned him more closely and found that he had been in our chapel²⁴ at Suchien, had heard the gospel there, had brought home a catechism, and had studied it. And this was six or seven years after he had received it, and in the meantime he had seen no one with whom he could talk on this subject. I have been there a number of times since. He seems wholly in earnest. Last winter he tried to come to Suchien to study a few weeks with a class, but his parents opposed it so bitterly that he could not. We hope that he will prove the nucleus of a future community of Christians.²⁵

Will's hope that the town would someday hold a "community of Christians" was abundantly fulfilled. Members of the Christian group in Qipan, all of them poor when judged by the material standards of this world, somehow by acting together found the means to buy a small plot

**The Missionary* mistakenly read this name as "Chi-pau." Will may have to take some responsibility for this: his handwritten *n* sometimes looked like a *u*. Apparently he did not have a typewriter until twenty years later, after his 1923 furlough.

of land, build a chapel, and support a teacher for the education of their children. Not only did many Qipan children learn the basics of reading and writing during Will's time in China, but also five or six of them entered the service of the larger church as ministers, two having completed their education all the way through college and theological seminary. But Chen, the hunchbacked young man who initiated it all, was a great disappointment. He never repudiated Christian faith; but he also never became more than a peripheral member of the Qipan church. Its leadership passed into other hands.

As Will and Nettie returned to the United States for their first furlough, what were their thoughts about the state of their work? Did they judge the initiatives they had begun during their first eight years to be really useful? Was God continuing to call them to this field of work?

A letter Will wrote to the *Christian Observer* while on furlough provides partial answers for some of these questions. The letter does not focus on Will's personal role but rather on the work itself. One of his main points was the radical disproportion between the number of seminary graduates accepting work in America and those choosing to go to the mission field. Will strongly believed that God values *all* people in the world equally, without favoritism of color or place. He noted that about twenty million people lived in North Jiangsu, and that their nurture in Christian faith, at least as far as Protestants were concerned, was *entirely* the responsibility of the Presbyterian Church. And yet North Jiangsu had at that time only about twenty Presbyterian missionaries in all, even when medical and educational personnel were included: one missionary per million people.

Will ended his letter with a decisive affirmation of the opportunity that North Jiangsu offered and a call for new volunteers to go there:

I can think of no more attractive field for our Church now to work. I can think of no more inviting field calling more loudly for young men honestly looking for a place where they can best serve the blessed Master

... It is a glorious privilege to have a share in this work.²⁶



NOTES

1. Wm. F. Junkin, letter to a supporting church, Xuzhou, Jan. 10, 1899 (*Miss.*, May, 1899, p. 216), published as “Itinerating in North Kiangsu.”
2. *Ibid*
3. *Ibid*.
4. B. C. Patterson, *The Gospel Comes to Suqian*, p. 22.
5. *Ibid*.
6. In 1898, Pearl Sydenstricker, later Pearl S. Buck, was six years old, living with her parents at Zhenjiang. She almost certainly heard about Will’s adventure, probably many times. She later published *Fighting Angel* and *The Exile* — creative novels, not biographies, but recognizably based on the lives of her father and mother. In both books thieves waylay the figure based on her father, whose name has been changed from “Absalom” to “Andrew.” A number of details in the accounts strikingly parallel what happened to Will, enough to suggest that Pearl drew on Will’s story to construct her own new narratives. See *Fighting Angel* (NY, 1936), p. 88; and *The Exile* (NY, 1936), pp. 196-97.
7. Romans 13:1: “The powers that be are ordained of God.”
8. Consider, e.g., Will’s advice to local-level government officials who became Christian. Many of them felt that their government jobs were so morally compromising that they should resign. Will urged them to hold on to their government jobs, but to embody Christian ethics in the *way* they fulfilled their duties.
9. A Nov. 19, 1945, letter by Mrs. Charlotte (Nevin) Shey, formerly Mrs. Terrill, tells of the canal trip. It is bound into *William F. Junkin: 75th Birthday Book*.
10. For the Terrills in China, see Price, *Our China Investment*, pp. 169, 163.
11. Figures for the number of Christians killed in the several different categories come from Nat Brandt, *Massacre in Shanxi* (1994), cited in an Oberlin College publication, “Around the Square,” September, 1997.
12. Mrs. Patterson’s statement comes from a note, in her handwriting, on the back of a transcript of an 1896 letter by Mr. Shen. The note is undated, but it may come from November, 1901, when the Pattersons had just returned to China after a furlough, or

perhaps from a few months later. (Patterson papers.)

13. E. H. Hamilton, "Nettie Donaldson Grier, M.D.: A Mender of Broken China," in Hallie Paxson Winsborough, compiler, *Glorious Living* (PCUS Comm. on Woman's Work, 1937). The relevant part of the essay is on pp. 46-50.

14. P. Frank Price, *Our China Investment*, p. 54.

15. Wm. F. Junkin, m.c.l., Qingjiang, Jan. 10, 1901 (*Miss.*, Apr., 1901, p. 176).

16. *Ibid.*

17. A letter from Samuel to Craig, dated Nov. 24, 1901, originated in Xuzhou. Mrs. Patterson, in the handwritten note cited above in n. 12, refers to Samuel as "a Chinese Telegraph operator," apparently describing his status as of Nov., 1901. On the back of a letter from Samuel dated Oct. 11, 1906, Craig noted that he was still a "telegraph operator at Hsuchowfu" (Patterson papers).

18. B. C. Patterson, "Sad News from Suchien, China," Suqian, June 11, 1903 (*Cbr. Obs.*, Jul. 22, 1903, p. 11).

19. B. C. Patterson tells of Hampden's death in two personal letters to his mother; one of June 15, 1903, from Suqian, another of June 25, 1903, from aboard a canal boat while on the way to Shanghai (archives, UTSV).

20. Nettie D. Junkin, m.c.l., Suqian, Jan. 6 [1933]. Nettie's original typing of the year as 1932 was a typo. (Microfilm, PCUSA Dept. of Hist., Montreat, NC.)

21. The map and accompanying text are found in a booklet, "Our Missionary, Mrs. B. C. Patterson, Suchien, China," 26 pp. and map, privately published, 1905, Ladie's (*sic*) Missionary Department, First Presbyterian Church, Jackson, Miss.

22. Pizhou (Pichow) either is absent from Mr. Patterson's map or appears there as an "x." The Pichow on the map, west of Suqian, is a different town, sometimes referred to by missionaries as "old Pizhou." Yaowan is probably the circle on the west bank of the Canal and without a dot, well north of Suqian and not very far from Guanhu.

23. Wm. F. Junkin, m.c.l., Suqian, Dec. 29, 1902 (*Miss.*, Feb., 1903).

24. Young Chen went to the Zhang Inn to visit Mrs. Patterson's clinic. The chapel, at the time, was a smaller, dirt-floored building, presumably nearby.

25. Wm. F. Junkin, m.c.l., Suqian, Dec., 1904 (*Miss.*, Feb., 1905, pp. 77-79), published as "Discouragements and Difficulties."

26. "Our North Kiangsu China Mission," *Cbr. Obs.*, Sep. 20, 1905, p. 6.

4

Social Service

FOR SIX TO NINE MONTHS IN 1906–07, and again in 1910–11, Will took leave from his work as “a preacher of the gospel of the grace of God” and became a full-time famine relief administrator, or — perhaps even more surprisingly — a supervisor of work crews engaged in rebuilding washed out roads or in repairing damaged levees on the canal. He discovered in the process that doing this other work did not really interrupt his missionary work but rather became a new and important part of it.

FOOD FOR THE STARVING

WILL AND NETTIE’S first furlough ended in August, 1906. As they returned to China on the *Empress of India*, they brought along Nettie D, their new little baby daughter born in America. At Suqian they learned that torrential rains that year, beginning on May eighteenth, had destroyed the wheat crop for large sections of Jiangsu and Anhui provinces. Subsequent floods wiped out the early growth of other food crops and destroyed thousands of villages, including the food supplies stored in them. Any observer could easily see that disastrous famine lay ahead. That winter and spring, tens of thousands of people around Suqian died of starvation, hundreds of thousands suffered severe hunger, and in the larger affected area more than ten million were threatened.

Efforts to organize relief began immediately and had moved well along by the time the Junkins got back. As early as June, missionaries in Suqian (and no doubt missionaries in other affected areas, too) began to urge international business people in Shanghai to prepare to help. The result was the formation of a relief group known as the Central China Famine Relief Committee.

Shanghai businessmen who initiated the new committee were mostly British and American. This meant they had a link of sorts with many missionaries, sharing both their language and their home countries. (Whether the businessmen really sympathized with the missionary enterprise is a different question.) English-speaking missionaries were, as a rule, Protestant. So the Shanghai committee took steps to ensure that distribution of

FIFTY YEARS OF FAMINE IN NORTH JIANGSU

- 1898 Mainly around Suqian. Drought.
- 1906–07 Several provinces, notably North Jiangsu and Anhui. Major disaster, caused by rains and later flooding.
- 1910–11 North Jiangsu. Crop failures caused by both rains and drought. During the winter, 100,000 refugees moved south to Zhenjiang to find food.
- 1914–15 North Jiangsu. No relief measures were able to be organized.
- 1920–21 National disaster, affecting most of North China. 20 million affected, half a million died. Better transportation and more organized aid limited deaths to far fewer than those in the “Great Famine” of 1876–78.
- 1935 Jiangsu Province. The Yellow River burst its banks, floods covered 600 sq. miles. National and international intervention.
- 1939–40 North China. Drought at the same time as severe floods. The Yellow River again burst its banks. War conditions hampered intervention.

foodstuffs would be non-sectarian and inclusive. It required participating organizations to agree in advance that they would not use relief supplies to seek sectarian advantage. It also required that distribution committees, located at various provincial towns, be *fully representative*. That is, committee membership was to include both foreigners and Chinese, both Christians and non-Christians, both Protestants and Catholics.

Suqian was one of the locations chosen for a distribution committee.

Will, a minister, and John Bradley, a doctor, were appointed as foreign members and as Protestants. Father Joseph Thomas, S. J., of Yaowan, presiding priest for the eastern district of the Diocese of Xuzhou, was a Catholic member. Chinese participants were chosen from among leading

government officials and members of the “gentry.” The whole number of Protestants in the larger Suqian field added up to no more than about a hundred in 1906, and almost certainly not a single one of them was a ranking government official or a member of the “gentry.” So among the Chinese members of the Suqian committee, probably none were Christians, or anyway Protestant Christians. However, a young Christian businessman who had already achieved some local prominence, Mr. Zhang Daosheng, was appointed to serve as treasurer for the local work. (This Mr. Zhang is the same person as Zhang Yuzhang, one of the young men named above as having been present at the men’s service on Will’s first Sunday. When he entered business, he adopted the name of Daosheng, “Born of the Way” or “Gospel Born.”)

Before coming to the famine of 1906–07, let us look back for a moment to 1898. That year’s famine affected a relatively small area, a district about the size of Suqian county, but within those limits it was severe [*see box*]. Will, new to China at the time, wrote: “This is a hard year in this part of China. People in the country — many of them — cannot get enough to eat.” Craig publicized the situation through the *North China Daily News*, a widely circulated English language newspaper, and received contributions of about \$4,000. Friends in America must also have sent contributions, for in May, 1898, Annie wrote her father that “Mr. Patterson and Mr. Junkin went to the country and helped 1296 families with the money from the southern friends.” Craig and Will used the money to buy wheat and they developed makeshift procedures for its distribution. Those first groping attempts to organize famine relief yielded important lessons that would be useful during the far more widespread and serious famine of 1906-1907. Craig later recalled that one thing he learned was that food is of greater value than money during a famine: “I was told that had I provided and imported grain earlier, many more lives would have been saved.”¹

Eight years later, in the spring of 1906, agricultural prospects, ironically, had seemed unusually promising. But disaster developed quickly after severe rains and floods in late spring. Suqian missionaries, partly because of their own farm upbringing, partly because of their 1898 experience with famine, quickly recognized the need for action. Besides prodding the people in Shanghai to form the Famine Relief Committee, they also alerted missionary boards in America about the need for help. The contrast between the US\$4,000 given in 1898 and the US\$40,000 in cash, besides foodstuffs and clothes, given in 1906–07 for just the Suqian area alone (as described by Will, below) is striking. When one considers how few the people were who could help with the work of distribution, the number of 74,640 families served around Suqian in 1906–1907 is staggering. Will wrote the letter below in July, 1907, shortly after the crisis was over:

The terrible famine that desolated North Jiangsu is over. A fine wheat crop has been harvested. The prospects for the later crops—corn, millet, beans, etc.—are very good. Oh, how different the whole country looks, and how different the faces of the people look from three months ago!

An International Committee at Shanghai, and a Protestant Missionary Committee at Chinkiang [Zhenjiang], collected contributions from all the world, but the Christian people of America gave the greater part, and came nobly to the relief of these suffering multitudes. In all, about three quarters of a million U.S. dollars, in money and in foodstuffs, were collected. The missionaries at the different stations, with the local Chinese gentry, formed distributing committees. The stricken district was North Jiangsu [*Anhui province was also affected, but the larger part of the affected area was in North Jiangsu*], so all the missionaries of our North Jiangsu Mission were for several months engaged in this work, and most of us gave up all of our time to it.

...Where we enrolled families for help, we estimated how much it would take to keep alive till harvest — not how much grain alone, but how much grain mixed with herbs and roots that they could gather. What comfort was brought to many a poor soul to know that he did not have to

die; but ... (that) he could really live till wheat harvest! What joy unspeakable was brought to father and mother hearts to know that their precious little ones could live — yes, really live — and that they would not have to sell them or give them away either!

No, the reports you heard were incorrect. I have not heard of a single case where a person ate his own child — or anybody else's child. I have seen many mothers, and fathers too, starving when their little ones seemed to have almost enough to eat. "One can endure hunger himself," they often say, "but he cannot endure to hear the children cry." Ah! that cry that rang in our ears all day: "I am hungry to death! It wants my life!"

... From this one station alone [*Suqian*] there have been distributed \$87,492 Mexican (about \$40,000 gold),² in money, over eight thousand "piculs"³ of millet, fifty-three thousand bags of flour, besides some wheat, meat, condensed milk, and clothes. Much of the flour was sold at half price, only to enrolled families, except at the last when some flour that came too late was distributed without enrollment.

Aid was given to 74,640 different homes. Counting an average of five to one family, the total number of persons helped from this one center alone comes to about three hundred and seventy-five thousand. All of these homes were inspected personally by a missionary or Chinese assistant before they were enrolled. Inspecting homes, giving out the relief, overseeing public works, etc., taxed the time, strength, energies of all of us. We could not have done the work alone...

On all sides there is praise and expression of gratitude for what has been done. Thinking Chinese say that the help rendered by foreigners, and the agitation by foreigners through the press, stirred up the Chinese to do much more than they would have done, and that the government distribution was a great deal more, and was given out in a better way this year than during any previous famine. The Government did well. Altogether an immense amount of help was rendered which saved the situation and really blocked the famine. The death rate was nothing like what was anticipated by both Chinese and foreigners. In mid-winter many thought that half the population would die before harvest.

One cannot but admire the economy of the Chinese as exhibited during this famine... When a peck of grain would come to a home, the inmates

would not eat it all up in a few meals. No, indeed! they would mix it with roots, leaves, bark, and greens and make it last many days, and thus keep alive those that could not exist that long on roots and greens alone.⁴

Famine struck again in 1910–11, primarily in the areas centered on the North Jiangsu cities of Suqian and Qingjiang. The February 10, 1911, issue of the Jesuit magazine, *l'Écho de Chine*, estimated the number of people without food and dying of hunger at a minimum of a million, and observed that the total number was growing daily.⁵ The Famine Relief Committee was reactivated, new appeals for contributions were made to overseas benefactors, and regional distribution committees were reconvened. Will was asked to superintend the work in Suqian, helped by Messrs. Bradley and McCutchan of Suqian, Frank A. Brown of Xuzhou, J. W. Vinson of Haizhou (Will's brother-in-law), and others. Will applied himself without stint to the new round of work.

At the annual meeting of the North Jiangsu Mission, August, 1911, he reported, "From the middle of the winter the famine relief work occupied most of my time and consumed my strength until the wheat harvest in June..."⁶ What he meant by "consumed my strength" becomes clearer when we learn that in the midst of the work he contracted a debilitating case of famine fever. The disease is characterized by two or more week-long cycles of high fever reaching 105° to 107°. Recovering patients regain their strength only slowly. Famine fever, carried by lice and ticks, has no explicit connection to famine, and it is now more commonly referred to as "relapsing fever." However, floods and famine disrupt sanitary conditions and therefore increase the prevalence of the disease. Typhus also increases at such times. During the famine of 1911, three missionary workers caught typhus, including Mr. George Stevens of Xuzhou. Another volunteer, the Rev. A. Hockin of the Canadian Methodist Mission, died of it.

Further great famines hit North China in 1914–15, 1920–21, 1935, and 1939–40. But the crest of missionary involvement had passed. Government agencies, the International Red Cross, and, after World War II, United Nations relief agencies, took over the bulk of famine relief work. Church people in America and elsewhere could send help through their mission boards or through ecumenical church agencies, of course, and missionaries on the field, drawing on their local contacts and their knowledge of local dialects, could often provide important help to outside agencies. But the clear tendency was for the work of famine relief to move into the hands of national and international agencies and for missionaries and church volunteers to concentrate their efforts on programs sponsored by, and often ministering to, their own faith communities.

The picture changed once again in 1949. The new People's Republic signaled that the people of China were ready to handle their own needs and that international assistance would generally not be welcome.

INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

WILL'S LETTER reporting the end of the 1907 famine mentioned that his work routines had involved "inspecting homes, giving out the relief, overseeing public works..."⁷ "Giving out the relief" was primary, of course. But Will's reference to "overseeing public works" alerts us to the multiple aims of the Famine Relief Committee. It wanted to link programs of food distribution with reconstruction of the community and prevention of future floods. The Rev. Mr. E. C. Lobenstine, a missionary who served the committee as secretary, described its policy as follows:

This Committee has sought to utilize funds by supplying work to those in need of relief and by using these funds in repairing breaks in the dykes of the Grand Canal and of other waterways, and in deepening existing channels or digging new ones.⁸

Food in the committee's hands was to be sold to starving families at a reduced price rather than to be given to them outright. Since reduced prices would be meaningless for families which had absolutely *no* money, it was proposed that men in those families should be offered wages for working on community reconstruction projects, with the committee picking up the tab for the wages. What kinds of projects? The repair of community infrastructure that had been damaged by floods, such as washed out roads; or the prevention of future floods by rebuilding canal levees or by "deepening existing channels or digging new ones." The committee recognized that the approval of local public authorities would have to be sought in advance for civil projects. Surprisingly, however, the committee specified that after a project had been approved, recruitment of labor and active direction of the project should be in the hands of a missionary.

The plan to sell donated food rather than give it away was controversial. So was the plan to have the supervision of public projects assigned to foreigners. Before we consider the controversies, let us briefly note some of the rehabilitation projects that were actually carried out in Suqian.

In 1906–07, the main project was to rebuild the flood-damaged roads leading to and from the city gates, first a stretch several miles in length beginning at the West Gate and going across the former bed of the Yellow River, and then a mile or so from the East Gate to the *matou* at the canal. Agnes Junkin Bradley — Will's sister and Dr. John Bradley's wife — left a description of this work in progress:

One morning Dr. Bradley went out to the west gate to give out tickets to [a company of 300] men who would be willing to work for 100 cash per day—five cents American money...[Later] the Shanghai Committee ... took on another company of 300 [*presumably new individuals, to spread out the available jobs*]. The men were carefully selected in a regular distribution of work tickets. These were all country people, and such a crowd of ragged, suffering, weak, starving men it would be hard

to find in any other country. They were set to repairing one of the main roads out of the city. This road was almost washed away by the heavy rains, and in many places men were ferrying across ... This road was built up several feet higher than the surrounding country. It is now finished, and is quite a public benefit.

The workmen, through the liberal support of the Committee, have increased to 600, and work has been begun on the road between the city and the wharf on the Canal, a distance of about one mile.⁹

In 1911, four years later, the main project was to rebuild and maintain levees on the Canal. This was a project of some magnitude, but it was important to keep high water in the canal from spilling over into farm fields. As we noted earlier, Will was the local supervisor that year. Mr. Frank Brown, a younger colleague located in Xuzhoufu, wrote a letter some years later about their work together. "I [remember]...Dzao He [Zaoho]," he recalled, "where you gave me ten miles of dykes to build while you had about a hundred miles to look after."¹⁰ (This was the same Zaoho near which thieves had ambushed Will in 1898.)

We mentioned that both the food program and the construction projects were controversial. One set of criticisms came from the Jesuit fathers of the Diocese of Xuzhou.¹¹ They objected to taking money from abjectly poor people as payment for food. They also were doubtful whether missionaries, either Protestant or Catholic, had enough training as engineers to supervise large civil building projects. They further observed that Catholic fathers could not leave their parishes for the long stretches of time needed to supervise such projects. (This was a problem for both Catholics and Protestants, but probably more so for Catholics. Protestant missionaries were typically grouped together in central stations and thus could more easily trade off duties when that would help release someone's time. Catholic missionaries, on the other hand, were stationed singly, each in a separate parish or town.) The fathers did not oppose famine relief, as such. Throngs of famished people were already streaming to

the doors of their churches. The Shanghai committee, on the other hand, envisioned a more inter-religious, more secular program, one which would in some degree include community rebuilding and flood prevention. The church-centered approach espoused by Catholics and the more secular and multidimensional approach of the committee were sometimes difficult to reconcile. In the event, however, the diocese, which included Suqian, did participate, despite reservations, in the committee's relief program.

An outside observer, himself a qualified civil engineer, made some useful observations in 1911 about the construction projects carried out under missionary supervision. He was C. D. Jameson, an American who had originally come to China on invitation from the Qing Dynasty to help plan for the building of the new Chinese railroad system. In 1911 the Red Cross asked him to make a survey of Central China and evaluate whether it might be possible to prevent future flooding.¹²

Three of his observations are of particular interest. First, he commended the quality of the construction projects that had already been done. According to Mr. Lobenstine, Mr. Jameson spoke "in the highest terms, from an engineer's standpoint, of the excellent work" that had been accomplished in such places as Suqian, under Will Junkin, and Qingjiangpu, under Will's counterpart there, Dr. J. B. Woods.¹³

Second, Mr. Jameson noted that local public officials sometimes opposed the construction projects. He commented:

...The Chinese officials were rather opposed to work being done by the famine sufferers under the direction of the missionaries. There [was a] certain work started on the Huai River, work which would have had some value if finished; but this could not be done without the permission of the authorities and they turned it down.¹⁴

One is hardly surprised, of course, to hear that public officials were reluctant to let a group of volunteer foreigners first select and then oversee

public works, even if the projects were to be done “for free.” One example of official reluctance comes from Suqian itself. We mentioned earlier that Suqian had no north gate in its main wall. Absence of a gate slowed wheelbarrow traffic coming overland from the north, an urgent concern when the city badly needed wheat from Shandong. The outer earthen wall already had a north gate, but the main wall did not. Will argued before the city council that opening up such a gate would make wheat transportation more efficient, and he offered the resources of the Famine Relief Committee for the project. But the council declined approval.

Mr. Jameson’s third comment was the most important one. He affirmed vigorously that floods in the North Jiangsu and Anhui area of China could be ended, once and for all. Here is what he said after he completed his survey for the Red Cross:

I will merely say this, in regard to the conservancy of the rivers and the preventing of floods in that region: there is no reason why they should not be done away with entirely.¹⁵

Will offered a similar judgment three years later, though he expressed the possible results somewhat less sweepingly. The Colonel Sibert of whom he speaks was William Luther Sibert, an engineer for the Panama Canal:

... Expert engineers, one of them Col. Sibert, of Panama fame, have been sent out [to China] to make survey and take observations. This commission reports that the proposed conservation scheme is entirely feasible. Canals are to be dug, the country better drained, and the land redeemed, and so the cause of these famines to be somewhat remedied.¹⁶

These proposed steps were finally carried out — but by different agents than either Mr. Jameson or Will could have foreseen, and at a much later date than Will had hoped! When the People’s Republic came to power in 1949, food production, and therefore flood control, was

given a high priority. The upper reaches of the Yellow River were reforested, the lower reaches dredged on a regular basis, some tributaries dammed and turned into reservoirs, the Grand Canal widened and deepened, and new drainage ditches dug eastward from the heartland clear over to the Pacific. Near Suqian, “improvements” were made to a reed-filled marshy lake that lay just northwest of town. Levees and a dam were added and the area turned into a flood control reservoir and fishing lake. The lake, Luoma Hu, can now be seen on large maps of China.

Did the various flood-control measures produce results? Yes. Responsible people in Suqian reported in 1996 that there had been no major local floods for thirty years or more. A flood of abnormal severity can still happen, to be sure, and no doubt one will. Nevertheless, floods in China these days, at least the ones severe enough to be reported by Western newspapers, are usually in central China rather than in the north and are more likely to be caused by the Chang Jiang [Yangtze] than by the Yellow River. If Will were with us today, he would be deeply gratified to learn of the freedom from floods that “his” North Jiangsu farmers have at last received, after all these millennia.

PREACH CHRIST OR DO SOCIAL SERVICE?

PRESBYTERIAN missionaries in North Jiangsu made a major commitment of both time and energy to famine relief and flood control. As far as we know, neither Will nor any of the other missionaries ever regretted it. Starving people were on every side, and the missionaries wanted to help if they could. But how were they to understand such “social service” as part of their calling? For months on end, such efforts monopolized their full working energy. Was it appropriate, in the missionary agenda, to give such a high priority to these activities?

Will raised this question while he was on furlough in 1915. One answer that he gave was to describe how famine relief work affected the

Chinese perception of missionaries. He was speaking in the context of an appeal for new contributions for famine relief:

Does this relief work do good for the cause of missions? Yes, yes, yes! Often during the past few years, when passing along crowded streets or country roads, have I heard people talking together after I had passed, not knowing that I could overhear, and saying, “There goes a good man!” and “If it had not been for them (i.e., the missionaries), how many multitudes in this section would have died during the last famine!” Old women have prostrated themselves before us on the roadside calling us “Chiu ming ti Pusa!” [*“Life-saving Pusa!” “Pusa” is the Chinese Buddhist term for a bodhisattva, but in popular usage it also had the derivative meaning of “a kindhearted person.”*] ... And this in a section where a few years ago everybody was suspicious of us, and many hated and cursed us and where the Gentry used every means in their power to block our way and to drive us out.¹⁷

So famine work opened doors and pioneered the way for other kinds of missionary contacts.

Will was very aware, too, that Christ himself helped people to meet their ordinary daily needs for food and health, and that Christ called on his disciples to do the same. Will stated this clearly in a 1925 article he wrote about the work of a missionary evangelist:

... Christ, though He came to give His life a ransom for many, came also, He Himself tells us, to *minister* ... As Christians, we must fill our lives with “social service” to others.¹⁸

In the same article, Will showed that he was sensitively aware that doing things *for* people was not the same thing as nurturing in them a living relationship with Christ.

Beware of the thought (he warned) that famine relief or any kind of social service will save souls and make real Christians. I have helped in much relief of this kind and have seen the great advantages to the cause

of Christianity, but some of the most difficult problems in the field are where the people have been helped the most.¹⁹

But Will managed to reorient the terms of discussion. Instead of asking, “Does a person who receives church-sponsored famine aid tend to become Christian,” he rather asked, “Does becoming Christian transform the way a person receives famine aid?” His answer was that spiritual life and growth is to be found when the person who *receives* becomes the person who *gives*.

As I look over this broad [Suqian] field (he mused) and think of and compare the various out-station points and small struggling churches, it is clearly evident that the group of Christians which is trying to do most for itself [*that is, reduce the amount of outside aid needed*] is the group that is spiritually alive and is growing in Christian graces ... *The giving church is the only live church*. No Christian is too poor to give to God’s cause. I am sure that God gives to the man or woman who gives to Him. We must ourselves give and sacrifice to lead the way.²⁰

Will was speaking here about Chinese Christians who contributed money and goods for the support of their churches. But he would not object if his principle were expanded to say that the hungry who have been fed will grow in spiritual depth when they help in the feeding of others; that the illiterate who have received teaching will discover the true meaning of learning when they extend teaching to others; that persons who have received God’s grace will grow in grace as they use God’s gifts in their relationships with others.

NETTIE’S WORK IN SCHOOLS

ANOTHER AREA in which missionaries did social work was education. Much of Nettie’s work consisted of visiting women in their homes and helping them do Bible study. But throughout her career, she was also strongly interested in general education. In her first years on the field, she

had been given responsibility for mission-related day schools in Suzhou. After she was married and moved to Suqian, and after the Boxer disturbance quieted down, Nettie began to think about opening schools in Suqian. While her children were still at home, Nettie did not do rural itineration with Will. Her school work, therefore, was primarily at the station, in the “central” schools.

One of the schools which Nettie helped to found was the school for boys. Opening in the fall of 1902 in a room at the north-end compound, it had twenty-two students and two teachers in its first year. By 1908 it had thirty-nine boys in the boarding department and eleven day students, with Nettie serving as both an administrator and a teacher. Pastor Cheng Pengyun, who became the minister of the Suqian church in 1918 and was that church’s first regularly ordained minister (see Chapter 11), attended the school during its early years. Mr. Hugh McCutchan came to the field as a professional educator in 1908 and assumed responsibility for the boys’ school. Nettie commented, “I felt so relieved to get back into woman’s work, free from the responsibilities of a big school, that I was, like Poe’s Raven, saying ‘Nevermore.’”²¹ When the hospital at the south-end compound opened in 1910, the boys’ school moved into new quarters there, still under Mr. McCutchan’s leadership. By the nineteen-thirties, it could accept approximately a hundred boarding students from surrounding outpost locations.

The girls’ school was started at the north end in 1907, under Mrs. Bradley. But when her husband, Dr. Bradley, moved to the new hospital compound at the south end, in 1910, she moved with him. So, as Nettie put it, her “‘Nevermore’ changed to ‘Oncemore,’” and she agreed to manage the girls’ school and teach in it. Mada McCutchan came to the field in 1911. Like Hugh, her brother, she was a trained educator, and she gradually took over most responsibility for the girls’ school.

“My third and final start in school work is a school for women. It is not very large yet, and another missionary is preparing to take charge of it in the future.”²¹ Literacy for girls was increasingly accepted by 1926, when Nettie wrote this, and schools for young girls were multiplying. But most adult women had never had a day of education in their lives. To learn even a few characters was liberating for them, and if they could learn the rudiments of reading it was truly liberating. Nettie taught the women singly at first, in their homes; then in groups, still in various homes; and finally in an organized school with its own buildings. Aside from increased numbers, a further advantage of establishing the school on its own campus was that it could accept resident women from out of town. In the nineteen-thirties, Frances Patterson — the “other missionary” whom Nettie spoke of — accepted responsibility for the Women’s School. Eventually the school offered a two year program.

Nettie was a pioneer in the Suqian area in the use of a phonetic script for writing Chinese. This phonetic approach to writing had the potential to be very helpful to the adult women with whom she was working, but it did not finally win a place in general Chinese usage. Since 1950, the people’s regime has moved in several ways to simplify writing. Most importantly, it has limited to about five thousand the number of characters in general use and has required that they be written in simplified form. It has also standardized a new phonetic script and a new system for the transliteration of Chinese into alphabetical writing. The widespread use of computers, with their built in limitation on the number of keys available for input, will inevitably affect how Chinese is written, though the final effect of this cannot yet be predicted. For now, anyway, simplified characters predominate.

The Junkins’ youngest child, William, left for Shanghai to enter boarding school in 1926. After that, except for times when Nettie’s involvement with the Women’s School kept her in Suqian, she began going out

with Will on his regular trips of country itineration. Her special niche, once again, was work with women. She continued to do this during their remaining years on the field.

ELDER LIANG

THIS CHAPTER'S consideration of the involvement of missionaries in social service may be concluded by recounting the story of one person who was indeed brought to Christ by seeing Will's work in flood prevention and famine relief. He was Elder Liang Jinzhen of Yaowan. Will would never have told this story about himself, of course. It was only after his death that it was told by his colleague of many years, Frank Brown:

I asked Elder Liang, perhaps the most useful elder in the whole Presbytery, to tell me the story of his conversion. He was a successful cloth merchant who gave most liberally to school and church. He said, "One incident that turned my thoughts to the Gospel, as a young man, was seeing the hardships that Dr. Junkin cheerfully bore for my people in doing famine relief and dyke building for flood control. Why should a man from far away America, I asked, be willing to live such a life for my people? In finding the answer to that question, I found Christ."²² □

NOTES

1. *Memoirs*, pp. 12-13.
2. Americans in China commonly referred to U.S. money, which was based on a gold standard, as "gold." Mexican dollars, made of silver, circulated freely throughout China and were interchangeable with Chinese silver dollars, so English speakers often spoke of Chinese money as "Mex." In 1907, either a Mexican or a Chinese silver dollar was worth about "fifty cents gold."
3. The weight of a picul varied by country. In China it was 60.5 kgs., or 133 lbs.

4. Wm. F. Junkin, m.c.l., Suqian, Jul., 1907 (published as “The Famine — And After,” *Miss.*, Oct., 1907, pp.479-80).
5. Cited in R. Renaud, S.J., *Süchow: Diocèse de Chine* (Montreal, 1955), I.373.
6. Excerpted in James E. Bear, Jr., *The China Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States*, III.411 (faculty archives, UTSV).
7. See ¶ 6 in the portion of the letter included on pp. 49-51.
8. Edwin C. Lobenstine, letter to the U.S. Presbyterian ECFM, July 20, 1912 (*Miss. Surv.*, Nov., 1912, pp. 59f.). Similar policies had also been followed in 1906–07. Mr. Lobenstine was a UPUSA missionary in Anhui Province.
9. Agnes Junkin Bradley, m.c.l., Suqian, summer, 1907 (*Miss.*, Aug., 1907).
10. Letter of Oct. 12, 1945, now in *William Francis Junkin: 75th Birthday Book*.
11. See Rosario Renaud, S.J., *Süchow: Diocèse de China*, I.361f.
12. Mr. Jameson’s findings are reported in a fairly technical article, “River Systems of the Provinces of Anhui and Kiangsu North of the Yangtzekiang,” *The Chinese Recorder*, February, 1912, pp. 69-75; and on a more popular basis, in a public address reported in the *Central-China Post*, Nov. 8, 1911. I am grateful to Dr. Jameson M. Jones of Memphis, Tennessee, a relative of Mr. C. D. Jameson at three generations remove, for providing me with a copy of the newspaper report.
13. Lobenstine, *loc. cit.*
14. Reported in the *Central-China* newspaper article.
15. *Ibid.*
16. W. F. Junkin, “Famine in N. Kiangsu, China,” *Cbr. Obs.*, Jan. 20, 1915, p. 10.
17. *Ibid.*
18. Wm. F. Junkin, “Some Lessons from Twenty-six Years of Itineration,” *The Chinese Recorder*, March, 1925, pp. 163-167. The cited passage is from p. 166.
19. *Ibid.*
20. *Ibid.*
21. *Our China Investment*, p. 60.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 61.
23. Frank A. Brown, *He Made It His Ambition: The Story of William F. Junkin* (Nashville: ECFM, n.d.g. [1947]), p. 7.

5

The Quality of Conversion

QUESTIONS ABOUT CONVERSION

PEOPLE SOMETIMES ASKED Will about “conversions” on the mission field. Questioners might be skeptical or even hostile: “Aren’t those ‘converts’ you speak of really underhanded people who know they can get a payoff by professing to be Christian? When you distribute food during famines, aren’t your converts really ‘rice Christians?’” Or they could be reflective: “How can you *know* that God is truly saving people over there?” To address such questions, Will wrote fifteen or more biosketches of Chinese Christians, each a page or two in length. He wanted to convey to his American friends a fact which seemed to him to be absolutely clear, that God’s Spirit was indeed at work in the hearts of Chinese people.

Will perceived the hand of God to be truly at work in China in several different ways. One way, basically secular, was in certain nation-wide developments. For instance, in the years just after the Revolution of 1911, Chinese “modernist” reformers had begun to look upon the large gilded images that dominated Taoist and Buddhist temples as relics of superstition. The reformers did not reach this conviction because of the teachings of Christianity or of any other religion, but rather from the influence of such twentieth century Western secular philosophers as Bertrand Russell or John Dewey. These reformers, if they had the authority to do so, often had large images destroyed and sometimes had the now empty temple buildings turned into community schools. While Will concurred that large images of God were idols, he did not encourage iconoclasm.

But he saw God's hand in the establishment of schools.

Along that same line, he saw the hand of God at work in the growing human dignity of the common people of China. He was convinced, too, that missionaries, through their educational and medical initiatives, were themselves contributing to this development in a modest way.

Coming closer to what most people at the time thought of as the "real" work of Christian missions, Will saw God's hand in the ever more respectful hearing that people were giving to the Gospel and in the encouraging growth of the independent Chinese Christian Church.

Most central of all to Will's understanding of God's present-day work was evidence that individual lives were being transformed by the power of God's Spirit, changes of life that were plain to family members, to fellow villagers, to missionaries, and, not least in importance, to the individuals themselves. Far from finding Chinese Christians to be "rice Christians," Will strongly believed that the depth of their faith compared favorably with anything that was to be found among American Christians.

We include here only three of the sketches that Will wrote. A partial list of others will be found at the end of the chapter. The first story below concerns Mr. Zhu, the "Activist of Ixu," a vigorous clan leader who at about the time of the Revolution of 1911 wanted to speed the transition of his village into modern China. The second tells of Mr. Hu, a dignified Confucian gentleman who became Christian. The third tells of Mr. Du, a one-time jailor and later tuberculosis patient who turned out to be highly effective as an extrovert evangelist, the "Billy Sunday" of Suqian.

THE ACTIVIST OF IXU

MR. ZHU YUANSHAN lived in the smallish town of Ixu [Ihsü, "Night's Rest"] up near the Shandong border, far north of Suqian. Mr. Zhu was a

scholar of ability and a wealthy distiller of whiskey, and he was recognized as the most important member of the local Zhu clan.

His first acquaintance with Christianity was prior to any missionary stopover at his town. One night Mr. Zhu confided to an early Chinese Christian who was visiting in his home that he was uneasy. He had been told by a fortuneteller that he was destined to die at fifty years of age. An outside observer might have guessed that the fortuneteller's prediction was partly based on noticing Mr. Zhu's physical frame. He was a large, hoarse-voiced, active man, with a stomach of heroic proportions that fell in folds over his belt. Going without his shirt, he would chase any ragamuffin down the street who mocked his size.

The Christian visitor reassured Mr. Zhu that the fortuneteller possessed no certain knowledge of the future, and that only God decided the span of life. He gave him a Bible and suggested appropriate passages to read. Mr. Zhu, who was literate, was pleased with the verses he read and in due course began to speak of himself as a Christian.

Mr. Zhu was not one to wait passively for the future to unfold. He sent word inviting Will to come to Ixu for a visit — perhaps one should say, *bade* him to come — probably intending to ask for baptism and reception into the Christian church. Ixu being in Will's part of the field, he agreed to go, and the visit took place in April, 1913. A year later, back in the United States on furlough, Will recalled in a sermon his visit to Mr. Zhu's home and used it to illustrate the reformist-iconoclastic movement that was then current in China:

About a year ago, I spent a couple of days in a town called Ihsü, on the northern border of Kiangsu province. With a native helper I was entertained at the home of a man named Chu [Zhu], the most influential man of the place. We had been specially requested by him to visit the town. He was a man of means and a scholar of considerable note.

There were three temples in the place, two in the town and one just outside, on a mountain. This Mr. Chu was desirous of converting these

temples into school houses. He had torn the idols out and partially cleaned up all three places. Idol limbs and idol effects were lying around as if there had been a battle of the gods. Mr. Chu had a good school in the courtyard of his own home. In this courtyard were two or three large piles of kindling wood, made of split-up wooden idols, and the teachers and scholars were using this wood to boil their tea and cook their food!

The next day was market day, and as is the custom in these market towns on market days, the streets swarmed with country people. My helper and I went out on the streets to preach and sell tracts. Mr. Chu insisted on going out with us. He stood by us most of the day, encouraging the people to stop and listen. He publicly proclaimed to them: "I tore the idols out of these temples because they are false. They are not gods at all. Listen to these men. They will tell you the truth about God, and about salvation, and about the future life."

Now this Mr. Chu was not a recognized Christian, though he declared himself a believer. His life had been such that without long waiting to see marked evidence of radical change, we were not willing to baptize him.

But what an opportunity for the gospel. The temples denuded of idols! The most influential man in the whole township telling the people that the gods they had been worshipping were false, were not gods at all, and publicly requesting us to come and teach them the truth about God and about salvation, and himself offering to provide a place — either one of the discarded temples, or other rooms in the town — for chapel and schoolhouse! At that time there was not a baptized Protestant Christian in the place. Since then, Mr. Sung, a fine scholar and the teacher in the school I mentioned, and a school boy have been baptized.¹

While Will was on furlough, Mr. Zhu asked Craig Patterson to come to Ixu, this time explicitly requesting baptism for his wife and daughter and for himself. In preparation for baptism, Mr. Zhu agreed that he would stop distilling whiskey, sell out the accumulated stocks of strong drink stored in his house, and observe the Sabbath in the conduct of his business. A few months afterwards he was duly baptized and received into the church. He subsequently made a village chapel out of a large

room that had formerly been a whiskey warehouse.

A few years later, Mr. Zhu was nearing the fateful age of fifty that the fortuneteller had foreseen. He found his own way to defy the fortuneteller's prediction, make a big splash, and concurrently stir up support for a new chapel. The account of the odd event comes from Craig Patterson:

[Mr. Zhu] sent invitations to all the Christians in the Suqian field (many hundred) to come to his funeral on his fiftieth birthday. On that day, he wished to discard his first name of "Original Good" [Yuanshan] and to be "Reborn" [Zaisheng]. The strange invitation said: "Bring no incense or paper spirit money to burn for me, but do bring all the hard cash you can afford. I wish to use it to build a church here. You are to eat my food during the three day ceremony."

For a man to act out his own death and burial was unheard of and surely must bring misfortune! So the people came in large numbers with their money in strings.² Mr. Junkin, in the meantime, had carried out the extremely awkward chore of bringing him a priest's burial jar from Shanghai. There were preaching services. On the birthday morning, he went with all the company to a hill where there were graves, got into the jar and had the top put on. In a very little while, he lifted the top, got out, and said, "I was buried 'Originally Good.' I came forth 'Born Again.'"

The church was built. The Christians talked long of his performance.³

Some prophesied that the mock funeral would bring Mr. Zhu misfortune. Really, he did not live many more years. He died in 1920, in his early fifties, leaving behind two daughters and four sons. All of his children, including the daughters, were given an education. Several of his sons became influential leaders in the Ixu Christian community.

A GENTLEMAN OF THE OLD SCHOOL

MR. HU RUXIANG was a wealthy, powerful man, the landlord of a sufficiently broad area to give him some degree of authority over about ten

thousand men. His estate, Huweize, was the family seat for the Hu clan in the northern part of North Jiangsu. He was a brother-in-law to the Mr. Zhu we have just been talking about, and it was Mr. Zhu who first urged missionaries to visit him. When Will returned from furlough in 1915, he began itinerating to Huweize regularly. We will see in the sketch which follows that Mr. Hu became one of Will's close friends.

A gentleman of the old school, well to do, living in a comfortable home, respected by the whole countryside, educated, polished, cultured, a Christian nobleman—this is my dear friend, Mr. Hu Ru Xiang, of Hujiaweize, Pizhou. He is now [1928 or early 1929] seventy-two years old, with white beard, a handsome old man. He had been an opium smoker most of his life, till he was in his fifties. He decided to break off his opium and did so before he became a Christian. He is a man of unusual will power. He was baptized nearly fourteen years ago.⁴

Mr. Hu belongs to the old gentry class. He has a large home, built around four courtyards, with two high gun towers for protection against robbers. In the old days⁵ he was quite well to do and was the lord of the countryside. For some years he was the most influential squire (in the old English sense of the word) in all the northern part of Pixian district, where he lives. He was extremely proud and was overbearing in his manners. The people in all the villages around feared him. He had easy access to the District Magistrate of the then all-powerful Imperial Government.

Influenced by a Christian kinsman⁶ to read some Christian books, he examined them thoroughly, was convinced of their truth, and he has since let his thoughts and life be shaped by the Truth of God.

Christ came very really and definitely into Mr. Hu's life. He lived Christ, he talked Christ, he thought Christ. He was dead in earnest in trying to save his family, his kinsmen, his neighbors, his friends. I have marvelled at, as I gloried in, his deep earnestness, eagerness, and persistence in talking of the Gospel and seeking to persuade hardened heathen kinsmen whom he has taken me to see — *longing* for their salvation.

One day I came away from his home with a poor man, a Mr. Han, a Christian from a neighboring village. Mr. Han said: "The Gospel certain-

ly has changed old Mr. Hu! Why, in the old days I, a poor man in these soiled clothes, would not have thought of going into his reception room and sitting down. I would have stood just inside the door and told my business and then backed out. But today, look how he treated me! He insisted on my taking a high seat, and serving me tea!" *Changed!* Ah! Yes, indeed, by God's mighty grace, and Mr. Hu glories in the change.

As I think of this dear old friend I often think how the really Christian heart beats with Christian hearts all the world around. Away out here in this hidden town in far interior China is this old Mr. Hu, saved by God's grace. I sit down beside him in his large reception room. (I have often spent days and nights in the town and in his home.) We talk far into the night about the meaning of certain Bible texts, about Christian life, about the Church of God. If I could forget I was talking Chinese, I could shut my eyes and imagine that I was back in good old America talking to an old kinsman or some dear friend whose family had been Christians for generations. Yes, this splendid old Chinese saint believes just like I do, is saved in the same way I am, talks exactly the same language of grace.⁷

A community of Christians soon formed in Huweize and Mr. Hu invited them to meet in his own well-appointed reception room. Later a chapel was built. In 1930, the churches of Huweize and Pixian City, about ten miles apart, extended a joint call to Pastor Wu Shida to become their minister. In 1936, when the two churches were ready to become independent of one another, Pastor Wu Shida chose to stay with Pixian City. The Huweize Church called Wu Dengtang, a recent seminary graduate, to become their full-time minister. Will preached at his service of ordination and installation. We will see in a later chapter that in the nineteen-fifties Wu Dengtang was destined to play an important role in the life of the early post-liberation Suqian church.

By 1936, Mr. Hu was seventy-nine and needed the help of a younger man to get about. It is quite possible, then, that he died before the next development of which we will now speak. We learn about this through a brief note that Will left among his papers: "Huweize, about November,

1941, burned completely away, including grain, provender, and fuel.” The note does not specify the cause of the fire, but other information entered on the same sheet may imply that responsibility lay with the Japanese soldiers who at the time were occupying the cities and larger towns of China and who made sporadic punitive raids out into the countryside. The burning was about a month before Pearl Harbor, after which Will himself was interned by the Japanese. Apparently Huweize was never rebuilt, or at least it does not appear on modern maps.

THE “BILLY SUNDAY” OF SUQIAN

WE MENTIONED earlier that when Will and Dr. Sydenstricker made their early reconnaissance trip through North Jiangsu, one of the towns they visited was Pizhou (sometimes called “Pixian City,” taking its name from the county of which it was the seat). The presence in Pizhou of several different levels of government strongly affected the town’s ambience. The national government permanently stationed a large garrison of troops there. The county seat was also there, which meant that many magistrates, police, tax collectors, and other functionaries were present. The fact that the county jail was there plays a role in the sketch of Mr. Du that follows.

Pizhou was a day’s journey north of Suqian and some distance east of the canal. The number of Christians in the city gradually increased, and about 1911 it became an active outpost with regular services — or in any case, 1911 is the earliest date that Will is recorded as having preached. By 1930, the church had forty members. It elected officers, paired itself with Huweize in order to call a pastor, and became a member of Jiangbei Presbytery [North Jiangsu Presbytery].

Will has left us vignettes of not just one but two members of this comparatively small church. One was a Mr. Jiao, a government employee, an older gentleman of deep character who administered public charitable

institutions for the Pixian district. The other, whose story is included here, was Mr. Du Yingfeng, the Pixian jailor. He was baptized in 1914, quite an early date for that church. By 1929, when Will wrote the life-sketch below, Mr. Du had contracted tuberculosis and had gone to the Suqian hospital for help. He must have made at least a partial recovery, for he was asked to become the hospital evangelist.

Mr. Du is our [Suqian] Hospital evangelist (Will wrote). He is of medium height and very thin. For years he has had T.B., and several years ago we thought he would not be with us long. But, like it often comes to pass, the man expected to die lives on while many strong ones have been called over the river.

He was converted about fifteen years ago in Pizhou city, the seat of the District [*county*] just north of Suqian. He was jail keeper there for a number of years, and while he had his office in the Yamen (court house), which is a center of wickedness in this land, a very gate of hell, as many call it, and was the keeper of criminals, he, like the Philippian jailer of old, was conquered by the life changing, peace giving Gospel.

Always a very intense man, he at once became a very intensely in earnest Christian. He immediately began on the material at hand and soon had a class of inquirers among the prisoners. From that time we had access to preach regularly and hold classes in the Pizhou jail, which privilege has continued for long years after Mr. Du left the city. While he was still there several prisoners were baptized.⁸

Called to Suqian to be evangelist in the Hospital, he has become, I judge, the best hospital evangelist to be found anywhere in China. He has never had seminary or Bible school training, but he is *taught of the Spirit*. He has a good education, and he reads all he can find and diligently studies his Bible. He can talk with ease to the most learned and the rich, and he fits himself to the most ignorant and wretchedly poor.

His sermons are always replete with color and illustrations. Seldom indeed does anyone go to sleep under him. When they see he is to preach, all sit up and take notice. Everybody loves to hear him. And he is not short either — sometimes he goes on for an hour or an hour and a half!

We call him our Suqian Billy Sunday. He will stop at nothing to illustrate his point. [He will] jump on a chair, or fling himself across the platform. He does not hesitate to stop in the midst of his discourse and call on some one by name and ask him some question. Once he stopped short in the midst of a most interesting part of his sermon, came down out of the pulpit, went away to the back of the church, quietly touched a man on the shoulder and told him to wake up that he had something he wanted him to hear, and then walked on back to the pulpit. He is absolutely unique; he copies no one; he has never seen a Billy Sunday or a Sam Jones. When he preaches, he preaches with his *whole body and soul*. Because of his frail body he rarely agrees to preach in regular evangelistic meetings to the crowds in a big church, because it often puts him to bed. In the Hospital chapel, he has at times begun his talk by quietly putting the question to one and another in the audience: "Mr. So-and-so, did you pray this morning? ... Mrs. So-and-so, did you pray this morning?" And he *teaches* them to pray, too, in his personal work in the waiting room and in the wards.

We are so thankful God has spared him all these years. Always true to the precious Gospel, always true in testimony, and faithful in denouncing sin. I know of no one in all this country who has seemed to lead more men to Christ, a soul seeker and soul saver. So often, even away in the outskirts of our field, on examining a man for baptism, asking where and when he was first convicted of sin and pointed to the Savior, have I been told of Mr. Du and some word or teaching of his in the Hospital. I have often marveled, and have longed that God would thus use more of us.⁹

Six years later, the hospital's official report for 1936 still listed Mr. Du as evangelist. We do not know when he died, though it seems likely that in his weakened condition this would have been before long.

RECENT QUESTIONS ABOUT CONVERSION

WHEN MISSIONARIES departed from China in 1949 and 1950, Chinese Christians had the opportunity to demonstrate to the world the depth and authenticity of their Christian faith. To speak of such Christian as

“rice Christians” is now manifestly wrong. The term, common enough in the days of Pearl S. Buck or Will Rogers, has fallen into complete disuse.

But in today’s China, questions once again have arisen about the quality of conversion, this time coming from an entirely different quarter. Some Chinese university scholars, academic students of Christianity, suspect that the large numbers of new rural converts now coming into the church are bringing along a bountiful crop of “unconverted” folk beliefs. The scholars express concern that these extra-Christian or non-Christian beliefs may be damaging the understanding of fundamental Christian truth that is found in the church itself.

For example, Zhuo Xinping, director of the Center for the Study of Christianity at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in Beijing, says:

Most Chinese Christians are ‘folk Christians’ who have a relatively low level of education and theological knowledge. Some of these have merely combined their traditional folk religions or local beliefs with the outer form of Christianity.¹⁰

The Chinese church has had a period of unprecedented growth since 1980. About 80% of new members are rural people, about 20% urban, a ratio approximately the same as that of the general population. This ratio also gives a rough indication about levels of education. One is hardly surprised, then, if an academic observer wonders what motivates the crowds of people who are coming into the church or whether some of the apparent “conversions” are superficial.

In Will’s and Nettie’s day, the church had a number of ways to deal with questions about the quality of conversions: pre-baptismal instruction, rigorous examination of life before the administration of baptism, schools to help families in the rearing of Christian children, Christian adult education, and the development of opportunities for members of the church to engage in Christian witness, practical charity, and social service. The modern-day church in China is carrying on many of these

same policies and activities, or similar ones. We will see more fully in a later chapter some of the steps that today's church in China is taking to help ensure that new adherents will grow into a meaningful and informed Christian life (see pp. 130–132). The charge of “unconverted folk beliefs” probably has some validity when raised against any national church that is going through a phase of extremely rapid growth, and no doubt it is valid in that sense when applied to the contemporary Chinese church. But just as the epithet “rice Christians” has become obsolete with the passage of time, so we may expect that the charge of “unconverted folk beliefs” will also eventually become obsolete. □

A PARTIAL LIST OF BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES IN W. F. JUNKIN'S WRITINGS

- 1914 Mr. Zhu, whiskey merchant of Ixu (Junkin papers: 1914 sermon)
 1915 Mr. Meng, farmer of Chenjialou (Junkin papers: transcript of an address, Laymen's Missionary Convention, Dallas, TX, Feb. 24, 1915)
 1922 The later Christian life of Mr. Zhu of Ixu (*Miss. Surv.*, Feb., 1923)
 1925 Chen of Qipan, young man with a hunched back (“Some Lessons from Twenty-six Years of Itineration,” *The Chinese Recorder*, March, 1925)
 1926 Mr. Jiao Yingung of Pixian (1926 pamphlet, “The Sutsien Field,” pp. 26-27; also, “A Chinese Christian Gentleman of Distinction,” Mar. 1, 1934, unpublished ms., Junkin papers)
 1930 Zhou Yucai, former opium addict of Tiefuze (*Chr. Obs.*, Jan. 22, 1930)
 1930 Blind Jiao of Yanghuaji (Junkin papers: Jan. 29, 1930, unpublished)
 1930 Shen Feng-gao, barrow pusher of Guanhu (*Chr. Obs.*, Feb. 5, 1930)
 1930 Wang San “Lao Hu” (“Third-Brother Wang ‘Old Tiger’”) of Qipan (*Chr. Obs.*, Feb. 12, 1930)
 1930 Mr. Hu Ruxiang, squire of Huweize (*Chr. Obs.*, Feb. 19, 1930)
 1930 Mr. Du Yingfeng, jailor and evangelist (*Chr. Obs.*, Feb. 26, 1930)
 1934 Elder Liang Jinzhen, merchant of Yaowan (m.c.l., Aug. 2, 1934)

NOTES

1. From “Changing China: The Land of Opportunity,” pp. 23–25 (Junkin papers: sermon ms., 37 pp., handwritten, Piedmont, SC, Apr., 1914).

2. The “cash” was a small bronze coin with a large square hole in its center. The coins

had little value, so people often carried them in strings of a thousand.

3. B. C. Patterson, *The Gospel Comes to Suqian*, pp. 80-81.
4. Craig Patterson had baptized Mr. Hu in 1915, while Will was on furlough. See *The Gospel Comes to Suqian*, p. 83.
5. Before the revolution of 1911.
6. Mr. Zhu? But Craig mentions that Mr. Hu had Christian periodicals dating back twenty years, so perhaps his interest in Christianity predated Mr. Zhu's.
7. The version of this vignette given in the text combines two sources, similar to each other but not identical. ¶¶1 and 4 and the last sentence of ¶5 come from "Little Pictures from China, Number 5, Mr. Hu Ruxiang" (Suqian, Jan. 19, 1929; *Cbr. Obs.*, Feb. 19, 1930, p. 8). ¶¶2 and 3, the remainder of ¶5, and ¶6 come from "A Chinese Christian Gentleman of the Old School" (Junkin papers: typed ms., Suqian, Mar. 1, 1934).
8. Will probably preached at the jail a number of times. The preaching records show that he definitely preached there at least once, on Nov. 12, 1919.
9. "Little Pictures From China, Number 6" (*Cbr. Obs.*, Feb. 26, 1930).
10. *CNU*, Jan., 1999, p. 7.

6

Crisis, Mediation, Peacemaking

“By peacemakers [Christ] means those who not only seek peace and avoid quarrels, as far as lies in their power, but who also labor to settle differences among others, who advise all to live in peace, and take away every occasion of hatred and strife.” — John Calvin, on Matthew 5:9¹

THE CHINESE REVOLUTION of 1911 terminated a form of government that had lasted for over two thousand years, ending the Chinese Empire. The new Republic would take several decades to reach reasonable stability. Its first president, Yuan Shih-kai, died in 1916. There followed the so-called Warlord Era, a twelve year period of clashes between regional military governors. Sun Yatsen, who was revered during most of this time as the father of his country, died in March, 1925. All-out civil war then followed and finally brought the Warlord Era to a close in 1928.

It was several years before Dr. Sun’s death that the Junkins returned to China, in 1923,. They were hopeful about their work, as Will shows in the essay that starts on the following page. But three major incidents between 1925 and 1929 unmistakably brought the national disorder home to Suqian. In November, 1925, troops from Manchuria attacked the city and kidnapped the magistrate. During the civil war of 1927-1928, armies from both sides repeatedly occupied and despoiled the city. And in 1929, after the civil war was supposedly ended, rural peasants besieged the city, attacking bureaucrats of the new regime. In addition to all that, Will was personally ambushed by country bandits, in 1926.

So 1925 to 1929 were five difficult years. We will seek to see how Will and Nettie could be mediators and peacemakers in the midst of it all. But

first we will look at Will's 1923 summary of the state of the mission.

THE MISSION (1923)

AS WILL AND NETTIE returned to China in the summer of 1923 for their fourth term, Will wrote an essay on the progress of the mission, found just below. The years from 1906 to 1923 had been important for the work of the mission. In 1906–07 and again in 1910–11, Will worked hard at famine relief. The Warlord Era began in 1916, and the Suqian area increasingly felt the seriousness of the social disorder. But despite disruptions, work in the country chapels grew steadily; and in Suqian itself, medical, educational, and evangelistic work made gratifying progress.

Earlier, in their second term, Will had been laid low twice by physical problems — a fractured femur caused by the kick of a horse in 1909, and a bout of famine fever in 1911. Both required weeks in bed. A furlough of sixteen months in Austin, Texas, followed, longer than usual because Nettie was seeking to throw off incipient tuberculosis. Their third term lasted from April, 1915, through July, 1922. After that came a 1922–23 furlough in Staunton, Virginia, during which their oldest daughter, Nettie D., began her college work at Mary Baldwin.

When Will and Nettie returned to China in 1923, for the first time they left a child in America — Nettie D., at Mary Baldwin. Agnes, their second, stopped off at Shanghai to begin her secondary education in the American School. Only Bill, ten years old, came back to Suqian.

That was the context, then, in which Will wrote his 1923 essay.

SOME FACTS ABOUT THE PROGRESS OF MISSION WORK
AT SUTSIEN, NORTH KIANGSU, CHINA [1923]

Twenty six years ago (he wrote), when I first arrived at Sutsien, the Station had been open three or four years. Mr. and Mrs. Patterson, who with others had opened up the work, were the only missionaries living there. There were then four or five church members, mostly from the

very dregs of society. Only those who had no “face,” as the Chinese express it, would associate with us...

Eight years later, at the time of our first furlough (1905), there were 81 baptized communicants in this Sutsien Station field. There was one efficient Chinese helper [*Mr. Shu Yanji*], a man whom Mr. Patterson and I had carefully trained through many years, and who is still living and doing good work. There were three or four outstations. (An outstation is a city or town or village, out from the main station, where there is a group of worshipers and where there is Christian service every Sabbath.)

Eight years still later, when we came home on our second furlough (1913), there were 376 baptized communicants. There were 17 outstations and 17 outstation schools.

Last year (1922), when we came home on our third furlough, there were 1723 baptized communicants, nearly five times the number nine years before; there were 52 outstations and 50 outstation day schools. In these day schools, the Bible is taught every day as well as Chinese literature and something of Western science.

We now have excellent boys and girls boarding schools of high school grade in Sutsien city with about 200 boarders. Last year there were in our Sutsien Station schools [*Will includes here the fifty outstation schools*] about 1500 pupils under daily Christian instruction. Three hundred and thirty of these pupils were *girls*! This meant much to us who are cognizant of conditions as they were just a few years ago! Seventeen or eighteen years ago, there was not a single girls school, Christian or heathen, in all this field with its two million people. The Chinese did not see any use in educating the girls! We attempted then to open a girls day school in Sutsien city, but, although we offered free tuition and books, we could not at that time find as many as five or seven girls in that city of forty or fifty thousand people whose parents would send them to school! I wish you could see the Sutsien Girls School now with its nearly 100 pupils, most of them boarders. I wish you could see them with their happy faces and *natural* feet, at play as well as at their studies. I wish you could see something of their influence in the homes from which they come, scattered all

over that north country. There is now a government girls school in Sutsien city, and there are a number of government girls schools, besides our Christian schools, throughout the district.

We have now in the Sutsien Station field twenty male evangelistic helpers, or preachers. Two of these are regularly ordained Chinese pastors [*Pastor Cheng Pengyun at Suqian; the other may have been situated at Suining, in Craig's territory*]. Several are licensed preachers. Others are lay preachers. There are five Bible women giving all their time to the work.

Last year there were treated in the Sutsien Hospital between seven and eight thousand different individuals, more than 27,000 different treatments.

Now consider for a moment the differences between now and twenty-six years ago, when we first went to Sutsien [1897], or thirty years ago, when the station was first opened [1894]! Then we were *despised*. The regular name for us was "foreign devil"... Now the whole attitude towards us has changed. We are cordially received into the best homes in Sutsien city and all over that north country. We have access to and social fellowship with the most wealthy, the most cultured, the best educated; and some of those who were so proud and haughty, leaders in their communities, are now members of the church of the lowly Nazarene, and earnest Christians ...

After the first twelve years of labor and prayer and tears at Sutsien, we could count only 80 baptized communicants in the whole field. Last year, there were received by baptism on confession of faith, during the one year, nearly three hundred.²

At the end of Will's first term, in late 1904, there were two operative "out-stations," Guanhu and Chenjialou. By the end of his second term in 1913, there were seventeen, of which presumably eight or nine would have been in his section of the field. Points that became outstations in Will's territory during his second term (by the criteria he stated) included Qipan, home of the young man with a hunched back; Pixian, original home of Mr. Du, the hospital evangelist; and Yaowan, the canal town

where Elder Liang carried on his cloth merchandising business.

Outstations of the third term (1915–1922) included Ixu, home of Mr. Zhu, the activist; and Huweize, home of Will's close friend, Mr. Hu. Will was purposefully expanding his work through all of the area for which he held responsibility. This is exemplified in another outpost of the third term, Gaoliu. This town was at the eastern border of Will's field, about as far from Ixu and Huweize as one could get and still be in Will's territory. Regular outpost services began at Gaoliu in 1919. It was a sufficiently large town to have been occupied in the early 1930's by an army of fifteen hundred bandits, all at the same time!

Hugh McCutchan arrived in Suqian on Christmas day, 1908, and his sister, Mada McCutchan, in the fall of 1911, just before the Chinese Revolution. Both were trained educators, and they were sent to Suqian to become administrators for the two high schools, the Chong Shi ("Pursuit of Truth") Middle School for Boys and the Pei Shan ("Character Builders") Middle School for Girls. Most of the resident students attending the two high schools transferred there from outstation elementary schools, so to that extent at least the schools of the larger Suqian field functioned as a system. The arrival of the two educators completed the roster of first generation, long-term missionaries in Suqian: the B. C. Pattersons, the Junks, the Scottish ladies, the Bradleys, and the McCutchans.

The Suqian Benevolent Aid Hospital (*Ren Ji Yiyuan*, more literally the "Humane Aid Hospital," or more freely, the "Mercy Hospital"), built under Dr. Bradley, lay in open country southwest of the city in an area that had once been in the flood path of the Yellow River. The hospital opened its doors to patients at the new location in 1911. By 1923 its staff included several Chinese medical doctors.

"SETTLE DIFFERENCES": A RAID ON THE CITY

IN OCTOBER, 1925, eight months after Dr. Sun's death, troops from Manchuria began to move through Suqian on their way to do battle in

Anhui Province, sixty miles to the south. Many of the soldiers entered stores and homes, taking what they wished and often harassing women. Deeply alarmed by the thought of after-dark intrusions, some three hundred women began to seek refuge each night in the Protestant compound at the north-end of town, bringing their children along. Any available space in missionary homes was quickly filled, as were the school buildings, the church building, and even the modest courtyards that were found in the compound. Local church leaders and missionaries worked around the clock to guard the front gate and to find necessary food.

When this had continued for two weeks, Nettie thought that the compound had reached the limit of its capacity. But worse was to come. The troops from Manchuria lost their battle and began to retreat northward in considerable disarray, looting vigorously as they came. The people spending nights in the compound rose to a thousand. On Tuesday, November 10, the General in charge of the soldiers arrived and began to threaten the city. That night the number seeking refuge rose to fifteen hundred. Nettie's comment: "There was hardly room to move!"³

The General demanded that the city fathers open wide all the city gates to soldiers, and that the *Xian* [*Hsien*], the city magistrate, who had earlier put up resistance against looting soldiers, be handed over for punishment. City authorities agreed to send a negotiator to talk. As he started out at about 3:00 P.M., he asked that Will go along as an observer. Later, another delegation, two men besides Will, tried. Then a third, still larger group. Then a fourth, a contingent of four hundred Suqian men. Finally, in a fifth attempt, the *Xian* himself, accompanied by six hundred unarmed citizens, went out late at night to meet the General. For the *Xian* to go in person was almost asking for death. Will participated in all of the delegations, including the fifth.

The fifth parley, to be held directly with the General, was at his canal headquarters. Rain had been falling, and the night was dark. The large

group of six hundred men, herded together by the General's soldiers, started out a little after midnight to walk through fresh mud and heavy darkness towards the canal, each of the six hundred carrying a stick of burning incense as a propitiation to the General. Will recalled, some time later, what he had been thinking as he walked:

On that awful night of November 10th, after having knelt with our Suqian Magistrate under the threatening Mausers of those unprincipled Fengtyan soldiers, pleading for his life and for the sparing of our city, just outside the north gate⁴ of the Suqian suburbs, I keenly realized that there was but one step between me and death. As we marched two miles further on in the mud to the banks of the Canal, I had time to think and to pray. Of course I prayed for the Magistrate, whose life was so direly threatened. Of course I prayed for the city and for the safety of our dear ones there. Realizing that it was quite possible that I might never return, I found myself making, as it were, last requests for my precious ones, and the burden of my prayer for our two girls and their kid brother was that they each might keep the faith.⁵

Reaching the General's encampment, Will took up a position by the *Xian* and gave him support during the painful confrontation that followed. When some of the soldiers started to beat the *Xian*, Will dropped to his knees and begged, and the beating stopped. That a foreigner would be willing to *kowtow* to a marauding general left a deep impression on those who were present.

Since Will's role in this tense incident was that of a peacemaker, it is worthwhile to read Nettie's description of how he was able to contribute:

As a middle man and not an enemy, Will could plead for [the Hsien's] life. The Chinese all say, if he had not been there the Hsien would have been killed, but Will could tell [the General] how the soldiers had acted and looted, etc., and the other men could not, as they were included in the alleged sin of shooting these looting soldiers.⁶

After about two hours of pleading, it was clear that the General had

no intention of letting the *Xian* return to the city. Some of his soldiers finally used one of their canal boats to carry him off, along with five additional members of the Suqian gentry. Will reached home at 5:00 A.M., exhausted and deeply despondent, anticipating that the magistrate might very well never again be seen alive.

Earlier, at about the time that Will and the six hundred citizens were heading towards their midnight rendezvous, the General had ordered a fusillade of cannon shot to be showered on the city, apparently to build up pressure for handing over the *Xian*. The shelling began at 1:15 A.M. In general, the shots were directed toward the *yamen*, the city police headquarters located in the city's northern section. Unfortunately, the Protestant compound, densely crowded by both school girls and the throngs of women and children seeking refuge, was immediately next to the *yamen*. About thirteen shells exploded in its vicinity, two of them falling directly on the Protestant compound itself. One put a large hole in the schoolhouse roof. The eaves of various buildings were damaged and almost all of the window panes were shattered. A few people were temporarily deafened, and a few had their breath knocked out when explosions threw them down. Remarkably, however, not a single one of the fifteen hundred people who were jammed into the compound was killed or seriously injured, not even by flesh wounds from flying glass.

Nettie's letter of November 12 told of Will's participation in negotiations and of the shells that were dropped onto the north-end compound. The original letter also had a handwritten note from four days later: "The southern soldiers are here, and the city is safe, but our captive magistrate is still in the hands of the swiftly fleeing soldiers." (For reasons unexplained, the Missionary Correspondence Department in Nashville did not include this postscript when it distributed Nettie's letter.)

Chinese short stories sometimes end with a smashing surprise. This one, which we might now entitle "The Beggar's Bribe," leads to just such

an ending. The Suqian magistrate apparently had considerable sagacity. He sewed some paper money into the linings of his garments before he went to meet the general and he managed to keep it hidden at the time of his abduction. He and the five other hostages were able to bribe the guards, elude the guns of soldiers, and escape along rural roads. Mrs. Bradley reported that they fled in the guise of beggars:

...After [the city made] many attempts [at appeasement], [the outlaw soldiers] took the Magistrate with the promise that they would wait till the city paid an immense sum of money [*and perhaps then release him*]. But while they were escaping from the pursuing [*sic*] troops, the Magistrate got away and walked miles in beggars clothes, actually begging till he got back.⁷

The magistrate and the other hostages were absent from Suqian for ten days. A special service was held on Sunday, November 29, in the courtyard of the Protestant compound at the north-end, to give thanks for their safe return and for the safety of the city. The magistrate and two of the five hostages related their experiences, and two elders and a missionary participated in the service. Over two thousand citizens gathered.⁸

Will's role in this incident would be long remembered. Seventy years later, in 1995, an American visitor⁹ was able to talk with some of the older Christians who had lived in Suqian since early childhood. One of them brought up and retold this very story of the dark and rainy night in November, 1925, when Mr. Junkin helped to save the city!

“AVOID QUARRELS”: A BANDIT INCIDENT

IN SOME of the villages to which Will regularly itinerated, as many as a quarter of the men, or even half of them, practiced intermittent banditry. As a general rule, these bandits-incognito did not pose a serious problem for Christian work. People in the various villages knew well enough who the bandits were and the church declined to take into its membership

those who were still active. The bandits considered this to be acceptable. Their families, meanwhile, could line up for relief during famines, their children could be educated in church-sponsored village schools, and the bandits themselves, when necessary, could get medical treatment for gunshot wounds at the Suqian Benevolent Aid Hospital.

But on three occasions — perhaps more, but three times that we actually know about — Will was explicitly attacked or seriously threatened by bandits. If we consider the three incidents chronologically and rate them by possessions lost or by the amount of bodily harm threatened, their severity seems to have diminished as the years passed. Whether this apparent fact is anything more than mere coincidence is unclear.

First, there was the “Zaoho incident” of 1897, just two years into Will’s career, when he was stripped and robbed (see above, Chapter 3). This was the only one of the three incidents in which Will had any of his physical possessions actually taken or destroyed.

Second, there was a “canal incident” twenty years later, in early June, 1917. It had a benign ending — or at least, a benign ending for the Junkins. Nettie and the three children were along, so the incident had at least the potential to have been even more serious than the one at Zaoho. The family, accompanied by an assistant, were headed to Guling [Kuling] and had begun their trip southward on the canal, going towards Zhenjiang. They were a day’s travel out from Suqian, and as evening descended the crew moored the boat near a little village for the night. As it happened, a gang of armed bandits was intending to attack that very village on the same night, and they decided to raid the tied-up boat first. Probably they knew that the foreign family on the boat included a four year old son, and perhaps they calculated that the child might fetch a high ransom.

The Chinese assistant traveling with the Junkins went out to negotiate. What arguments could he possibly have used? In another connection, a few years later, Will suggested how bandits might be influenced:

... Besides the fact that the missionary has come to be looked upon as the poor man's friend, and the undoubted feeling of gratitude for much hospital work and famine relief work, there has been in the past a wholesome fear of the Western Governments, of the consequences of kidnaping a foreigner.¹⁰

Whatever arguments were used, the assistant successfully persuaded the bandits to let the boat that was carrying the Junkins move on to another place. The nearby village, however, was not so fortunate. The bandits fired on it, and captured and ransacked it.¹¹

The third bandit incident brings us back once again to the last half of the nineteen-twenties. As Will and Nettie were jointly itinerating north-east of Suqian, ruffians ambushed and captured Will and threatened to hold him for ransom. The exact date of this incident is uncertain, but it was perhaps October, 1926. (A note with fuller discussion of place and date will follow at the end of the present section.)

Will's captivity probably lasted no more than twenty minutes or so, after which he was set free. Does the shortness of time involved make the incident minor? Well, it hardly seemed so to Will at the time! But minor or not, it deserves attention for the unusually vivid picture it gives of the *modus operandi* of rural bandits and also for what it shows about Will's reputation among *all* the people of the Suqian area, even bandits.

Will and Nettie, itinerating together, had made plans to work separately for several days and had agreed on a spot for a rendezvous. After Nettie left, Will decided to walk over to a smaller village where he would be able to visit with some friends. (In a letter to his children, Will mentioned "two Christian friends.") But as he neared the village, approaching the gate at the *east* end, the gatekeeper refused to unlock the gate and called out in a tense voice that he should "get away!" Will was wholly unprepared for this hostile reception. What he did not know was that on that very morning, before dawn, a group of bandits had arrived

and taken over the undefended *west* end of the village.

Will was puzzled by the rebuff, but he accepted it as fact and turned to leave. Just then a rough-looking man accosted him and demanded that he come along. At that point we can turn to Will's own narrative. He speaks of his captor as a "bad man," perhaps a vernacular way to say "bandit." But how did Will know that? The surviving sheet of his letter picks up in mid-sentence, so we can only guess what the earlier part of the sentence once said. We may be wrong in supposing that Will was alerted by the man's gun. Could it have been simply a scowl, or a tone of voice?

...[*I could see from his gun that he*] was a bad man. Nothing to do but to go with him!

He took me on behind the trees to a threshing floor of the second home from this west end. There were several men standing around. None seemed to have guns. These were doubtless hidden in the homes. As we came on to the threshing floor he motioned for me to go on into the house, saying: "We are going to keep you." I knew then what they were and felt that the "jig was up" and thought of [my] Wife and her anxiety and of the coming days. I still HOPED that, seeing the "*dang-jia-de*," i.e., the "Boss" (head robber) I could maybe beg off.

As he said this, a small better looking man, evidently a man in some authority, if not the "Boss," said: "He is a Jesus Church man!¹² What are you keeping him for?"

Maybe you think that was not good to hear!

This small man took my man aside and they spoke a few words together. They turned and said to me: "You can go."

Well, children, those words were sweet to my big ears! I bowed and thanked them, and apologized to them, in Chinese style, that I had troubled them, and "beat it"!

I walked in a very dignified pace on out of the village and down the road, fearing they would call me back. When some distance out I dared look around. No one following. I began to quicken my steps. I had been very tired when I entered the village, but I was tired no longer, my youthful energy all came back!

Reaching Han-jia-kou-ye, I went in there. At the home of the head man of the place I told my story. They knew nothing, but one of them had heard that before daylight that morning some robbers had gone into that village to hide. They told me that the fortified east end, where I had been told to “get away” was what they call “strong land,” i.e., land where robbers have no access without fighting, and that [the villagers] were simply closely guarding the fortifications and would fight to the death in resisting any attempts of the robbers to enter their enclosure.

I stayed there with my friends all that night. They were fortified, had plenty of guns, and were not afraid. There were only twenty-odd robbers, so reported.

The next morning our two Christian friends came. They had been away from home all that day. When they returned they had been told that I had been there, had been detained and then released. They said there were between twenty and thirty robbers. [The robbers] had come into the village before day that morning; had gone into the unfortified homes at the west side of the village and had remained hidden there all day. They had not attacked the fortified enclosure; poor people in there, with only a few guns, but they would fight. Some of the robbers would be killed if they should [try to] take this enclosure, and nothing much to gain, so [the people in the enclosure] did not fear attack. They did fear surreptitious entrance, in which case they would be lost. Hence strict guard.

These naughty men had not gone on this second night, so the people about were a little worried, fearing they might stir up local bad men (robbers in quiescence) and make trouble. They evidently had not found a good place to go. They are being hunted down in all these parts now.¹³

The extant sheet of the letter stops at that point. Will’s description of his visit to Han-jia-kou-ye sounds as if it was not previously planned. He does not mention seeing Nettie there, so presumably their rendezvous had been arranged for a subsequent evening.¹⁴

Additional note: Place and date of the 1926 incident. *The primary source for the incident described above is a letter of Will’s, probably to his children,*

probably originally having three pages. The undated middle sheet, now found in the Junkin papers, is all that survives. It is included above in its entirety.

Place: Han-jia-kou-ye, mentioned by Will, is a variant way to say Han-kou-ye. Will's routes of itineration, which can be partially reconstructed from his preaching records, show that Han-kou-ye and Shaodian were near each other. That puts Han-kou-ye about twenty miles northeast of Suqian.

Date: The preaching records show Will at Han-kou-ye only twice, in October, 1926, and June, 1928. We know that Will and Nettie were travelling together when the incident happened. Nettie might plausibly have been itinerating with him in October, 1926: she was in Suqian, and Bill, their last child at home, had left for boarding school. But she could not have been with him in June, 1928, as the civil war kept her in Shanghai for most of that year. So October, 1926, is a reasonable date for the incident — though we would be surer of it if the first sheet of Will's letter, presumably dated, had survived!

“ADVISE ALL TO LIVE IN PEACE”: CIVIL WAR

THE CIVIL WAR of 1927–28 began within two years after the death of Sun Yatsen. Suqian was occupied repeatedly, by both southern and northern soldiers. Much of the city was destroyed. The Chinese Church, the boys' school, and missionary residences were damaged but not destroyed.

In order to understand what was happening in Suqian, we need a brief review of the national situation. Dr. Sun had earlier founded the Nationalist Party or Guomintang [formerly transliterated “Kuomintang” and hence known as the “KMT”]. After Dr. Sun's death, the KMT rallied in Guangdong [Canton], far to the south, to organize a military campaign, hoping through it to unite the country by force and finally end the Warlord Era. Two men who later would be bitter rivals for the supreme leadership of China, Jiang Jieshi [Jiang Kai Shek] and Mao Zedong [Mao Tse-tung], were in Guangdong together at the time.

Nationalists finished their preparations in July, 1926, and under the

leadership of Jiang began their military thrust northward. Coming from Guangdong, they were commonly referred to as the “southerners.” The inland army of the KMT entered Nanjing in March, 1927, a major success for the Nationalists. However, one division unexpectedly launched an attack on foreigners, sacking consulates and killing six internationals. This “Nanjing Incident” severely hurt Jiang’s reputation with Western powers, and those who ordered it may have been crypto-communists. A few weeks later, the KMT’s coastal army captured Shanghai, and Nationalists immediately turned to battle the communists in their own midst. Mao and some of his associates retreated southward and set up a Communist movement in Jiangxi and Fujian provinces. When Nationalists dislodged them from that location in 1934, they began a retreat to the northwestern provinces, the famous Long Trek of 1934–35. There, among the peasants, they gradually built up a new party base.

We return now to the year of 1927. During the lull that followed the taking of Shanghai, Jiang and the Nationalists came increasingly to be identified with the mercantile and entrepreneurial classes of China. On December 1, Jiang married into the wealthy and powerful Sung family. In late December the KMT resumed its northward push. When Jiang entered Beijing on July 6, 1928, he declared that the country was now unified under the principles of Sun Yatsen and that the civil war was ended. In truth, however, many years of fighting lay ahead.

At the end of March, 1927, immediately after the “Nanjing Incident,” American consuls telegraphed to missionaries in Suqian in no uncertain terms: “Get out!” Suqian missionaries held a consultation with Chinese church leaders and agreed that the most recent missionary couple to have arrived, the Houston Pattersons, who had a two-year old child and were expecting another child soon, should leave. Within six hours they were gone. In mid-April the consuls conveyed a still more urgent message to the missionaries who remained. After another consultation with Chinese

church leaders those who remained were convinced that their presence in Suqian would do more harm than good, and they evacuated to Shanghai. They reached it by following a northern route through Haizhou [Haichow] and Qingdao [Tsingtao]. Otherwise, they would have had to cross the active battle front separating the northern and southern troops.

Suqian lay between the two factions, and the line of battle swept over the town several times. Southern forces held it for two months in the summer of 1927, after which it was recaptured by northerners. With the northerners in control, Will was able to get back in November for a two-week visit. What he found dismayed him. Unlike the occupying armies of 1900 and 1911, soldiers this time, both southern and northern, commandeered *all* buildings that looked useful, making no distinction between Chinese-owned and foreign-owned. When Will arrived, he found soldiers occupying the hospital, the boys' school, the recently built Suqian Christian Church (this was Chinese-owned, dedicated only a year earlier by the independent Suqian church), and all missionary residences. He stayed in a small shed behind his own home. None of the occupied buildings were actually destroyed, but soldiers from both sides looted the contents, carried off hospital beds, ripped out doors and window frames to use for kindling, broke up furniture for the same purpose, and put holes into wooden floors for primitive waste disposal.¹⁵

Will had no connections in high places that would have given him opportunity to influence the civil war at the national level. But he did have daily contact with soldiers who were stationed locally, some thousands of whom were recent inductees into the "northern" forces. In a letter written after his November visit, he tells about these contacts:

The soldiers just at present encamped at Sutsien are "chao an tei" [zhao an dui]. "Tei" means troops, and "chao an" means "enlisted for peace," and refers to bandits who have been brought over and enlisted in the regular army. There are tens of thousands of such in this part of China ...

Changed only in form, only half fed and clothed, their hearts are robber hearts ... They were very disrespectful, most of them, laughing at me as I passed on the streets, evidently amused that I was there and unable to command our own property. Some would curse me to my face, calling me “foreign devil” and “old hairy” (a disrespectful term they apply to Russians) ... After being there two weeks and passing back and forth and speaking pleasantly to these rough, ignorant, wretched men, their attitude to me seemed to have become noticeably more friendly.¹⁶

These soldiers had entered into and looted between one and two thousand homes of Suqian people. They were from a section of Shandong Province not very far from Suqian, and as the soldiers were looting, their wives and children also poured down to take part! As we said, Will had no national-level influence. But his letter suggests that at the local level he had at least a modicum of success in making friends with the soldiers.

Eight months later, in July, 1928, Will indicated in a missionary correspondence letter that he was back in his own home and had hopes that Nettie, Miss Mada McCutchan, and Miss Johnston would be able to return by September. Nationalists, the “southerners,” had already entered Beijing and Will referred to them as “now supreme.” Troops who still remained in Suqian were Nationalists. Their numbers had been reduced, but probably five hundred or more were still stationed there.¹⁷

“TAKE AWAY EVERY OCCASION OF HATRED AND STRIFE”:
A PEASANT UPRISING

NATIONALISTS WERE now in power, but the civilian core of the party in the Suqian area was small, numbering perhaps two hundred out of a population of two hundred thousand. At least by their own lights, party members were trying to reform China. Members of the new government spoke of themselves as tutors, whose job it was to implement a “tutelage stage.” Actually, though, they were autocrats. They imposed a new and burdensome tax on the renewal of land deeds, onerous for both business

people in the city and farmers in the rural areas. They were out of touch with the beliefs and customs of the people whom they governed. Openly atheistic themselves, they arbitrarily despoiled temples and seized the property for public use. They were noticeably hostile to foreigners, partly because of the treatment China had received in the treaties that ended World War I. As for Christianity, they were hostile to it both because it was a religion and because it was a religion of foreigners. They pointedly put pressure on mission-related schools through newly-imposed regulations. For the general population, a final straw was the magistrate's 1929 proscription of family feasts and of ancestral greeting rituals, both being customs by which the people traditionally observed the Chinese New Year.

In mid-February, 1929, just after the festival of the New Year, the patience of the peasants ended. Crowds poured into the city, broke into "party organization" offices and trashed them, broke windows, tore down two public buildings, and ransacked most of the public schools. Interestingly, they did not molest any of the mission schools. Neither did they touch the hospital, though it was outside the walls and undefended. They did carry off some hostages from the governing party to use as pawns in future negotiations, but no one was killed.

Peace talks got under way within a few days. The magistrate, however, had broken some of his earlier promises, and no one trusted his new promises. Then a new development urgently escalated the seriousness of the whole incident. Anti-government, underground societies known as "Small Sword Societies" existed in many parts of North China. These groups were connected to the earlier groups that had sponsored the Boxer Uprising. Society members in the rural areas of Suqian appealed to their fellow members in other counties for help, and great numbers of men began to gather in the fields around the city, some armed with heavy swords, some with rifles. When gunfire broke out, Nationalist soldiers

retreated inside the walls, bolted the gates, and returned fire. When this new level of hostility had persisted for several days, the magistrate became enraged and undertook to retaliate. He led some soldiers out of the South Gate into the nearby countryside and burned to the ground the simple village homes of about four hundred families.

On Sunday, March 3, Will and others saw the soldiers going out with kerosene again, and later saw the smoke of burning villages. But on Tuesday morning the people of Suqian woke up to discover, wholly unexpectedly, that the magistrate, the party organization, and the soldiers had all fled the city. The town was left completely undefended. Older heads in the city called a meeting, asked Will to sit in, and decided to establish a defensive position within the city walls. The few professional soldiers who remained were given arms, and the gates were kept tightly closed.

Crowds of people from the Society gathered on Tuesday night outside the walls, but the city elders talked them out of making an attack. Other crowds gathered on Wednesday. On Thursday, the city offered terms of settlement. The proposal was to give help to those who had been burned out and needed to rebuild, to provide a coffin for a certain man who had been killed, and to petition the national government to settle this quasi-rebellion peacefully.

Will, in company with Pastor Cheng of the Suqian church, played an interesting role in the negotiations. This is Will's description:

At the height of the troubles, when strenuous efforts were being made for peace ... God's providence brought Pastor Cheng and myself to the fast closed East Gate just as some leading men from the country had come there to try to arrange terms of peace. The Magistrate¹⁸ had been talking to them. Through the cracks of the big gate we assured them that the city "elders" were sincere in their regret at what had taken place and in their promise to contribute for relief of the distress. It was noised abroad that we were backing the negotiations, and now we hear from all sides that this had much to do in restoring confidence.¹⁹

The lapsed period of time from the initial peasant raids, to the soldiers' withdrawal behind the walls, to the eventual reopening of the big gates, was about three weeks. Nettie was in town the whole time, her chief responsibility being to take care of the school girls. Their bobbed hair made them easily identifiable in a crowd. The enraged peasant mobs considered teachers in the public schools to be "moderns" who had been brought in by the party, and there was a risk that their hostility against the teachers might be extended to school girls — even though the latter, at least those in Suqian, would hardly have counted as "moderns"!

In an account of the incident Nettie wrote later, she gave some additional information about Will's and Pastor Cheng's roles in negotiations. After they had spoken with rural leaders "through the cracks of the big gate," some of the rural people were still quite skeptical. City leaders requested the two of them to go to the top of the wall and speak again to the crowds. Afterwards, Pastor Cheng was lowered over the wall in a basket to finalize negotiations for damages. As Nettie told it, "the farmers figured up their losses and the city promised to raise what they asked. The gates were opened and the city was saved from death and looting."²⁰ Will, and even more Pastor Cheng, really helped to "take away every occasion of hatred and strife."

Will noted some of the factors which had contributed to his and Pastor Cheng's work as peacemakers:

Now many people congratulate me on the score that I talked the peace, but this is not true at all! We certainly have the reputation for *honesty* and *mercy*, and we certainly have the good will of the *people*. Pastor Cheng, during all these troubles, has been a help to the whole city. People of all classes know that he is trustworthy and true, and it is interesting to see how many have turned to him.²¹

So the last five years of the nineteen-twenties drew painfully and fitfully to their close. Will, in earlier years, had committed himself strongly to

famine relief. Now, in his later years, he committed himself once again to social service, this time as a peacemaker. As an “outside” mediator and a person whose integrity was trusted, he, and along with him Pastor Cheng and others, were able to make an important contribution to the quality of Suqian’s peace. □

NOTES

1. Remarks on Mt. 5:9, in *Commentary on a Harmony of the Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, and Luke*, tr. by William Pringle (Edinburgh: Calvin Transl. Soc., 1845), I.264.

2. The essay in the text is dated Sep. 5. Will’s liner reached Yokohama on Sep.9, 1923, eight days after the great Tokyo earthquake. So the essay was written at sea. Incidentally, the carbon copy found in the Junkin papers comes from a typed original (2 pp.), so Will had a typewriter along when he returned to China in 1923.

3. For this whole incident, two contemporary missionary eye-witness accounts are primary: Nettie Junkin, m.c.l., Nov. 12, 1925 (MCD, Jan., 1926); and a pamphlet, “The Suqian Field” (privately printed at Suqian, June, 1926; author not named, but probably C. Houston Patterson), pp.20–22. See also C. Houston Patterson, *My China That Was*, second edition, pp. 42-44; and Frank A. Brown, *He Made It His Ambition* (Nashville: ECFM, n.d.g. [1947]), p. 6.

4. The main city wall had no north gate. The gate mentioned in the text actually was the northeast gate of the *weizhe* wall, an outer earthen embankment that enclosed some of the suburbs. To reach the *weizhe* north gate from the missionary north-end compound involved a roundabout walk of several miles.

5. W. F. Junkin, address to a joint meeting of the Mid-China and North Jiangsu Presbyterian Missions (Junkin papers: typed ms., 5 pp., n.d.g.).

6. Nettie Junkin, m.c.l., Suqian, Nov. 12, 1925 (MCD, Jan., 1926).

7. Agnes Bradley, m.c.l., Feb. 1, 1926, cited in James E. Bear, Jr., *The China Missions of the P. C. U. S.* (ms., faculty archives, UTSV), V.264.

8. “The Suqian Field,” pp. 21f.; and a letter, including a photograph of the service, from Mada I. McCutchan in *William Francis Junkin: 75th Birthday Book*.

9. The Rev. Robert Donnell McCall, formerly a missionary in Taiwan.

10. Wm. F. Junkin, Guanhu, Oct. 19, 1923 (MCD, date not available). Pressure from a foreign government, transmitted via the Chinese national government, sometimes prodded local authorities to pursue bandits more vigorously.

11. Agnes Junkin Peery’s personal recollection of the 1917 incident helped greatly to determine the year it happened and to describe the assistant’s role.

12. “Jesus Church man” [*Jidu Jiao ren*]: “Jesus Church” is the Chinese way of saying “Protestant,” so “Jesus Church man” means “a Protestant.”

13. This is the surviving sheet of the letter referred to in the Additional Note on pp. 89-90.

14. Apart from Will's three bandit incidents, we might mention also a later incident, near Haizhou [Haichow], in which his brother-in-law, John W. Vinson, was killed. See E. H. Hamilton's moving account, "I Am Not Afraid: The Story of John W. Vinson, Christian Martyr in China" (20 pp., Nashville: ECFM, n.d.g. [ca. 1932]).

15. Wm. F. Junkin, m.c.l., Xuzhoufu, Nov. 23, 1927 (MCD, Dec. 1927).

16. *Ibid.*

17. Wm. F. Junkin, m.c.l., Suqian, Jul. 17, 1928 (MCD, Aug. 30, 1928).

18. Presumably one of the city fathers; the previous magistrate had fled.

19. Wm. F. Junkin, m.c.l., Suqian, Mar. 8, 1929 (MCD, Apr. 11, 1929). Probably Will wrote the letter on the next day after his "through the gate" interview.

20. Nettie D. Junkin, Sr., "Dr. Wm. F. Junkin — Missionary to China" (1939: for the source, see Ch. 1, n.1). A letter from Craig Patterson to Will, now in *William Francis Junkin: 75th Birthday Book*, diverges slightly from Nettie's account. Craig wrote: "Do not forget ... when you and Pastor Cheng were let down over the city wall to guarantee the good faith of the rulers." Nettie mentions only that Pastor Cheng was lowered. Since Nettie was in Suqian during the incident and Craig was not, perhaps her version is to be preferred.

21. Wm. F. Junkin, letter of Mar. 8, 1929. See n. 19.

Japanese Aggression

IN EARLY 1932 A GRIM EVENT, one that boded ill for future Chinese-Japanese relations, occurred. On the twenty-eighth of January, seventy thousand sea-borne Japanese troops delivered a surprise attack on Shanghai, landing there and occupying it. It was only eight days earlier that the Junkins had disembarked at Shanghai from the *Empress of Canada* to start their fifth term in China. Fortunately, by the time of the attack they had already left to go up into the interior, so they were spared the actual fighting. Within about six weeks, international negotiators persuaded the Japanese to withdraw their troops. But people in China always viewed the incident as the first episode of a coming full-scale war with Japan.

1937, INVASION

THE WORLD KNEW by 1937 that further Japanese aggression against China was imminent. Japan was steadily increasing its buildup. China, for its part, was doing what it could to prepare. The United States and Russia were both making low-profile efforts to balance the far-Eastern arms race by giving more-or-less surreptitious military aid to China.

When full scale war broke out at Beijing in mid-July, 1937, the superiority of Japanese mechanical equipment became quickly manifest. And even as the Beijing battle developed, a greater shock was moving down the coast. Drawing on the experience they had garnered in 1932, the Japanese on August 11 again made a surprise landing at Shanghai. (Americans, remembering Pearl Harbor, might say that surprise attacks seem to have been Japan's favorite tactic in those days.) Shanghai fell on November 8. A rapid advance up the Chang Jiang followed, leading to the fall of Suzhou on November 20 and of Nanjing on December 13. The latter,

especially, was shocking. It had been the seat of the Chinese national government until only weeks before.

Suqian missionaries in China in 1937–1938 were the Junkins, Miss Johnston, Agnes Bradley, the McCutchans, and the most recent additions, the Edgar Woodses.¹ Craig and Annie Patterson had moved to Tengxian by then. The mid-July onset of hostilities caught all of the Suqian people away from home, out in the Himalayan foothills at the summer station of Guling [Kuling]. In August, just when they might have been starting back to Suqian, the invasion of Shanghai turned the Chang Jiang into a war zone. A quick conference led to a consensus that women and children could not make the return trip safely. Will, Hugh McCutchan, and Edgar Woods returned to Suqian to start the fall work and to fetch winter things back for their families. As the lower reaches of the Chang Jiang were impassable, the men took a northern rail route.

They reached Guling once again about six weeks later. While they were gone, U.S. authorities ordered all Americans to leave the country. However, war conditions blocked immediate implementation of the order; and when the passing weeks showed that active fighting was stabilizing, the consuls somewhat eased their pressure to evacuate, leading missionaries from most parts of China began filtering back to their stations. Messrs. McCutchan, Junkin, and Woods did their best to help their families prepare for the famously severe Guling winter and then returned to Suqian a second time. They arrived there about mid-October.

Early in 1938, Nettie and the other women at Jiujiang and Guling heard that active fighting had reached something of a standstill and that by taking a train southward to the British colony of Hong Kong and sailing up the coast to the now occupied city of Shanghai, they could probably get safely back to Suqian. Nettie and Nettie D. were the first to leave. The Junkins were living in Guanhu at that time,² so Nettie went there. Nettie D. went to Yixian, her regular station. A few weeks later,

Mada McCutchan came to Suqian. By early in the new year, all three were in Suqian or nearby. Thus dawned the difficult year of 1938.

1938, A YEAR OF WAITING

1938 WAS A TENSE YEAR in Suqian. To the south, Nanjing had already fallen to Japanese forces advancing from Shanghai. To the north, Xuzhou fell to forces advancing from Beijing, in May, 1938. People could see that the pincers were closing. Guanhu was a casualty of the campaign for Xuzhou, making Will and Nettie into refugees as they returned to Suqian. Will noted in a letter of September, 1938, that “our churches in all these parts have been affected by the awfully disturbed state of the country for the last year.” Still, although it was an anxious time, churches in and near Suqian continued to hold their regular services through most of the year. Will, too, by using Suqian rather than Guanhu for his base, was able to carry on much of his regular itineration.

In the fall of 1938, Will wrote what is probably his single best description of one of his rural evangelistic trips. It touches on all the places he went and briefly describes what happened at each. The trip, which lasted from August 27 to September 20, originated and terminated at Suqian. The preaching dates, given in brackets, come from Will’s sermon records.

I am just back home from a most interesting itinerary of twenty-four days, visiting twelve outstations, and I want to tell you something about it. Mode of travel — the old reliable wheelbarrow;³ roads — because of recent rains, bad as bad; inns — dirty as ever. This trip was partly in my own field and partly among outstations that have been under the oversight of Mr. Edgar Woods, now on furlough.

At the first place I stopped, Shao-tien [Shaodian], an old outstation, where I stayed from Saturday night till Tuesday morning, I had the privilege of baptizing five adults and five infants. [*Shaodian became active in 1919. Will preached there on the first Sunday of the trip, August 28, and stayed over on Monday.*]

Next I visited two new points, which Mr. Woods opened a couple of

years ago. In each of these places I baptized two adults — the very *first fruits*. These were the first baptisms that have ever been seen in these two places, and at the market town of Wang-er-chuang [Wangerzhuang] we held a Communion Service, the first time in all the ages that Christians had partaken of this Holy Feast in that town. It is a most interesting experience to conduct these two Sacraments in a place for the very first time, surrounded by thousands of heathen people, a privilege I have often enjoyed. I am sure many ministers at home envy me.

At the next place, Hsin-tien [Xindian] I baptized seven adults. This is a growing little church. It had been raining several days and the roads were considered by most people impassable, but the chapel was about full. The greater part of the Christians and inquirers were from out-of-town, coming on foot from the villages. [*Will spent Saturday there, and stayed over to preach on the second Sunday of the trip, September 4.*]

The next four places (all under one preacher) were discouraging points. At two of them, each a group of less than a dozen members, there seems to have set in a kind of dead rot. The third has a membership of thirty odd and some good people, but the church has ceased to grow. At the fourth there is some encouragement as to outlook, but no new members were at this time received.

I then came to Hsin-an-Chen [Xinanzhen], a large and important town where we have a very small work and no church building. A big band of robbers had just recently left the town, and the whole place was in wretched moral condition. The leader of this band of robbers is a man of property, has been the “mayor” of the town, but a very wicked man. He had turned bandit and had taken off many of the ne’er-do-wells of Hsin-an-chen with him. For a while the town was in a most precarious condition, for these bandits had been occupying it and soldiers [*presumably Nationalist troops*] had come to fight them ... Several tens of wives and mothers and fathers of robbers were still being held in confinement [by the soldiers] as hostages. During the fighting these hostages had been placed in front of the soldiers, and they held up their hands, crying “Don’t shoot, don’t shoot! You will kill us!”

Our churches in all these parts have been affected by the awfully disturbed state of the country for the last year. But at Hsin-an-chen, in

spite of troubles, I baptized three adults. [*He preached there on Saturday, September 10.*]

At Tao-lin [Daolin] I had the privilege of baptizing two, a man and his mother, the first Christians in this town of 5,000 inhabitants. And here, again, we held a first Communion Service. [*He preached at Daolin on the third Sunday of the trip, September 11.*]

From Tao-lin I went to O-hu, another town of about the same size, where there is only one professing Christian. This man is not a native of the place and he seems to have no Christian influence. Though he has lived there for several years he has won no one to the Gospel and he has no Christian service in his home. We have no preaching point or work there. Two nights there in an inn.

From O-hu I went to visit Meng-chung [Mengzhong], five miles further east, where we have a little group of Christians. Stopping to visit a Christian family about a third of a mile from the place, I was advised that there was a small band of robbers hidden in the town (it is a very bad place) and that I had better not enter and try to have a gathering in the chapel. So we held a service with a few Christians in this, Mr. Li's home, and I talked to them for quite a while and tried to comfort them. That day, on the road, I could distinctly hear cannon and bombing over northeast, at or near Haichow [Haizhou], about forty miles away ... Our hearts feel deeply for our Chinese friends [there]. [*Preaching began at Mengzhong in 1923. The cannon and bombs that Will heard are heavy weapons and probably came from the Japanese, not from bandits.*]

Then I came to Kao-liu [Gaoliu], an old point. Here we have had a most discouraging work. It is a very wicked place. The group of Christians there has not been able to obtain property of its own but has for some years been worshipping in some leased rooms. I am thankful to say that on this trip we at last succeeded in obtaining a small but fairly suitable piece of property with some straw covered rooms on it that will, with repairs, serve as a chapel and home for the preacher for the present. For this we praise the Lord. And here, on a Sunday, though there was the grief of having to drop from the roll three unworthy members, I had the joy of baptizing three new ones. [*The chapel at Gaoliu had been active since 1919. For an additional mention of the town, see above, p. 81. Will*

preached there on September 18, the fourth and last Sunday of the trip. He stayed over on Monday, no doubt partly in order to participate in negotiations for the property.]⁴

And from there, back “HOME—wife, clean house, good food, soft bed!” The Japanese had not overrun any of the towns and villages Will visited on this trip, but he mentions that six of the towns had been bombed on market days. Still, judging from his account of the trip, homegrown bandits were even more of a threat for the area than invading Japanese.

Will was sixty-eight years old when he undertook this trip, one which often required him to slosh through deep mud for hours. He was now “back home.” But if home seemed secure, the impression was misleading. The battle for Suqian, which lay just ahead, included some of the worst days that Will ever experienced in China.

THE BATTLE OF SUQIAN

THE MAIN Battle of Suqian was fought on November 22, 1938. Earlier in the year, on May 14 and 16, the town had been hit by several relatively light bombing raids, hardly more than diversionary actions. A much more serious attack came on Thursday, May 19. Eighteen planes dropped fifty or more large bombs, some of them incendiary. Many of the houses in Suqian had highly inflammable straw roofs, and fires which raged that day in every section of the town destroyed some three thousand homes, about a quarter of all of the town’s residences. The Protestant girls’ school at the north-end, as well as the still relatively new mid-town building of the Suqian Christian Church, were hit by bombs. However, despite the destruction of buildings, loss of life was minimal. When subsequent weeks produced no follow-up raids, those in the city who still had habitable homes began to return to them, and life went on.

In late August and the first three weeks of September, Will made the

itinerating country trip that we told of just above. Also in September, the Girls' School opened. In October, the Women's Bible School reopened. Missionaries judged the hospital compound outside the walls to be safer during bombing raids than a house inside the city, so as a precautionary measure they moved their place of residence to the south end.

On November 5, a single plane dropped bombs on the city, killing over twenty people and injuring about as many more. The plane went on to strafe the Benevolent Aid Hospital, leaving machine gun holes in its walls and roof and killing one patient. This was a protestable action. In 1938, and indeed up until Pearl Harbor, relations between Japan and the United States were officially friendly. United States citizens in China were considered to be friendly foreign neutrals, and not only they but also their property were theoretically to be given some protection. The hospital building was still technically American property, and a large United States flag had been painted on its roof to claim immunity from aerial attack. When the Japanese plane strafed it, a formal protest was in order.

Suqian's telegraph service extended only to Qingjiangpu. Will wired news of the attack to Dr. Nelson Bell, there. Dr. Bell, probably by previous understanding, relayed the message immediately to the U.S. consul in Shanghai. An original copy of the telegram that Dr. Bell sent has come down to us among the Junkin papers: "AMERICAN CONSULATE GENERAL/SHANGHAI/JAPANESE PLANE RAKED AMERICAN HOSPITAL AT SUQIAN WITH MACHINE GUN ON SATURDAY KILLING ONE PATIENT BUILDINGS PLAINLY MARKED AND VISIBILITY PERFECT/BELL." Presumably the Consul General in Shanghai protested to Japanese authorities. We will see below that this series of messages may have led to an important result a few weeks later when the Battle of Suqian took place.

After the November strafing attack the girls' boarding school closed immediately and most of the girls returned to their outlying homes. Sui-

ning, twenty-four miles west of Suqian, fell to the Japanese on November 15. People took this as the signal of an imminent attack on Suqian and fled wholesale, many going to country villages, some fleeing as refugees to the Protestant compound at the south-end, or alternatively to the Catholic compound within the city or to an interfaith compound under the auspices of the *Wanze Hwei* (“Swastika Society”). (A note with additional information about the Suqian Swastika Society will be found below.)

Sunday, November 20: many air-raid alarms. An immediate attack on the city was rumored, and Sunday services were omitted. *Monday, November 21*: raids from the air continued, accompanied on this day by ground-level exchange of machine gun and cannon fire between opposing forces. People in the south end compound spent most of the day in large dug-outs, facilities prepared in advance and located near the hospital. *Tuesday, November 22*: the day of the Main Battle. Cannon began shelling the city at 7:00 A.M., joined by raids from airplanes from about 8:00 until 10:00. Enemy cannon-fire was concentrated on the northern part of the city, site of the primary attack, so the south-end compound was spared that threat. When airplanes aimed their machine guns at soldiers in buildings near the hospital, the bullets seemed to come very close to the compound, but none actually hit it. The battle inside the city was over by 10:00 A.M., though airplanes circled overhead until about 1:00 and intermittent firing continued in the nearby countryside, as tanks raced about firing into village settlements where they thought soldiers might be hiding.

The compound where the missionaries were staying was filled that day with about seven hundred refugees. Will commented:

It was one awful day. We had been, as it were, in the battle and under it. But NOT ONE PERSON in this big and crowded compound was scratched ... I went around to the big dug-outs and prayed with the

inmates and gave thanks for the Father's marvelous, gracious care.⁵

Will went on to consider how the compound had escaped.

We feel sure the Japanese forces must have had special orders to keep from harming our compound. Otherwise they could hardly have missed us with bomb or cannon or machine gun fire. We are right under the fortified *weize* [*the outer, earthen wall*], from which there was constant firing. Nine bombs fell in the Roman Catholic premises [*inside the city*] and much damage was done there. But there also no one was hurt, and they also had many refugees. It was wonderful. No damage this time to our North End city compound.

A most friendly Japanese official (a Christian) has told us that because of the desire to protect our place (outside of the south-west end of the city) the Japanese army had made their attack from the north, instead of from the west and south, which would have been more convenient and advantageous for them.⁶

One notes with interest that the attack came from the north, a place where the main city wall had no gate. Would the *feng shui* practitioners of an earlier century, who had predicted that disaster might come from the north, now have felt vindicated? In any case, the Japanese shift of plans suggests that the protest from Will, relayed by Dr. Bell to the consul in Shanghai, had borne fruit.

On the day after the main battle, probably no more than two hundred citizens remained in Suqian. An additional fifteen hundred or so were in the three refugee compounds.

Unfortunately, a follow-up engagement after the main battle still lay ahead. Within a week or ten days, the greater part of the Japanese army went back to Xuzhoufu, so Nationalist soldiers roaming the countryside decided to renew the battle. When they began to shell the city on December 2, people at the hospital could hear the shells whizzing over. That night, several hundred Chinese soldiers climbed the outer *weize* wall and penetrated the city's suburbs. Japanese soldiers in the city successfully

repelled them, but in retaliation they killed large numbers of Suqian citizens, drove most of the others out, and burned much of the city. Fires burned all over the city for six nights. Then the battle front moved on.⁷

Additional note: The Suqian Swastika Society. *Suqian missionaries first mention the Swastika Society at the time of the Japanese invasion, so perhaps the organization was founded about then, or perhaps it simply became more visible locally at that time. The term “swastika” in the name has no Nazi implication; it refers to a Buddhist symbol that originated in India.*

Miss Mada McCutchan, in a missionary letter from Suqian, December 2, 1938, characterized the society as follows: “The Red-Swastika Society has done good work in caring for the dead. This is an organization something like the Red Cross, but representing five religions. Dr. Junkin and Hugh [McCutchan] have helped with the dead, too.” In comparing the society to the Red Cross, Miss McCutchan seems only to have meant that there was a similarity of function, not a formal relationship; but the two organizations may have recognized one another. The “five religions” presumably were popular Taoism, Buddhism, Islam, Catholicism, and Protestantism. Chinese consider Confucianism to be a “teaching,” not a religion.

Protestants, Catholics, and the Swastika Society apparently were able to cooperate harmoniously in humanitarian work during the occupation.

THE JAPANESE OCCUPATION

SUQIAN PEOPLE settled down for what appeared likely be a long stretch under the Japanese. The story of 1939 to 1941 can perhaps best be told by giving separate consideration to the ongoing effects of the war, the disruption of medical and educational work, and the gradual withdrawal of missionaries. In a later chapter we will note another effect that came about indirectly: a new independence and maturity in the Chinese Church.

The most immediate ongoing effect of the war was destruction. Since

many of the villages that Will visited around Guanhu, and Guanhu itself, had already been destroyed in the spring of 1938, the destruction associated with the later battle for Suqian took place mostly in the territory to the west and south of Suqian, the area formerly served by Craig Patterson. Church property that was lost included the church at Dawangji, near Suining, burned; the church at Suining, looted and occupied by Japanese soldiers; the preacher's residence at Yangho, burned, as was most of the town (though the chapel escaped).⁸ In Suqian itself, the central church was partly destroyed. Two years later, seven hundred homes at Shingung [Hsin-kung], including the chapel, were burned down; and in November, 1941, Huweize was completely destroyed by fire.⁹

Another ongoing effect of the occupation was that three separate regimes were now competing. The Japanese controlled the main cities and rail lines, but not much else. They could make occasional raids out from their urban strongholds, but the total number of their troops was limited and they could not maintain permanent control of the rural areas. Guerrillas loyal to the Nationalist Central Government roamed the countryside. Other guerrillas, loyal to the communists, were also there. The three regimes maintained three county magistrates, three systems of taxation, three forms of monetary currency, and jealous punishments for anyone who fraternized with a competing group. Bandits were also plentiful. A band of guerrillas or of bandits would occupy a village, demand sustenance for its members, and sometimes then destroy the village for having previously consorted with another group. On top of everything else, the three different currencies were all rapidly depreciating.

DISRUPTION OF MEDICAL AND EDUCATIONAL WORK

MEDICAL WORK, despite problems, continued for several more years in Suqian. The station's missionary doctor, Norman Patterson, M.D., was on furlough. But the Benevolent Aid Hospital survived the battles and its

building was not commandeered by occupying forces. Dr. S. Y. Yang, M.D., a respected physician who had been on the hospital staff for more than two decades, was able to carry on the work, along with Miss Margaret Wood, nurse and administrator, and others. However, to secure medicines and supplies, or even food, was increasingly difficult. The number of patients treated in 1940, estimated at 3600, was definitely smaller than the number treated in 1936;¹⁰ but at least the hospital was still functioning. Eight months later, however, Will reported to Nashville that the hospital was closed.¹¹ This may be because Miss Wood had been repatriated to America at the behest of the State Department.

Educational work was seriously disrupted. Neither the boys' nor the girls' middle schools opened in the fall of 1937. The boys' school remained closed for the duration of the war. The girls' school moved to the south-end compound and opened in September, 1938, only to close as the Battle of Suqian loomed. It moved back into the city and reopened in the fall of 1939. A furlough for the McCutchans in 1940–41 meant that the girls' school did not open in the fall of 1940. As of August, 1941, both Suqian middle schools remained closed. The Women's Bible School was able to open sporadically between 1939 and 1941, but only for local women and only for a few hours each day.

In a report of August, 1941, to the PCUS mission board in Nashville, Will says this about church-related education in the city:

Our Boys High School is now closed. To in a small way meet our needs we are helping to operate this fall two Jr. High Schools, very limited in number of pupils, at selected out-points ... We would like to open a number of such small schools ... As no Boys High School now at Sutsien, would like to send some selected boys to Tenghsien High School.

We have between 40 and 50 small primary day schools at various out stations. These mostly supported by local patrons. If more than 40 pupils, we give ... help for two teachers ... Number of boys in out station day schools about 900. Number of girls in out station day schools about

350.¹²

In a limited way, then, the station was continuing to try to help in the education of its young people. In view of the difficulties of life in Suqian in 1941, one is startled to learn that 1,250 students were still able to be registered in the outlying elementary schools.

END OF THE MISSIONARY PRESENCE

GROWING TENSION between the United States and Japan from 1937 to 1941 led to a gradual but steady withdrawal of missionaries. This happened all over China, and Suqian did not escape. An extra handicap for Suqian was its lack of railroad transportation. Under wartime conditions, mission boards were reluctant to locate missionary families, especially those with children, in stations where travel was difficult.

The problem played out in various ways for different individuals and families. The C. H. Pattersons were due to return after furlough in the summer of 1937. They had already left the eastern U.S.A. and had reached Vancouver, ready to sail, when the Japanese invasion of Shanghai stopped them short. That left the Junkins, the McCutchans, Margaret Wood, and Edgar Woods in Suqian for the winter of 1937–38, a total of *six*.

In 1938, Norman Patterson, M.D., and his family were not able to return from America, and Edgar Woods went on furlough. Thus, during the Battle of Suqian at the end of 1938, missionaries in Suqian were the Junkins, the McCutchans, and Margaret Wood, in all, *five*.

In the fall of 1939, Houston and Frances Patterson returned to the city, bringing their six-year-old daughter Anne, but the Junkins went on furlough. With two missionaries arriving (plus a child) and two leaving, the total of adult missionaries remained at *five*.

In the fall of 1940, the Junkins and Edgar Woods returned to Suqian (Lydia Woods and the Woods children stayed with relatives in Qingjiangpu [Huai'an] at first, then after Christmas moved to Xuzhou). But the

McCutchans left on furlough, and the Houston Pattersons were reassigned to Tengxian. With four leaving and only three returning in the fall of 1940, missionaries in Suqian fell to *four*.

In late 1940, the U.S. State Department ordered American women, children, and “nonessential” males to leave the country. The *U.S.S. Washington*, a ship which normally plied the Atlantic and one of the great passenger liners of the steamship era, made a special December trip to Shanghai to transport them “home.” That led to the departure of Margaret Wood. Those remaining were now *three*.

Edgar Woods was reassigned to Haizhou in the fall of 1940, where he could be with his family, and in the spring of 1941 he was asked to go with another missionary out to West China to check on its suitability for possible future missionary work. Will wrote in June, 1941, that “Mrs. Junkin and I have for some months now been the only members of the Station here.”¹³ The number of missionaries in Suqian was down to *two*.

In November of that same year, internment as enemy aliens appeared to be imminent, and Will and Nettie went to Xuzhou to join forces there with the Frank Browns. Charlotte Brown was quite frail, and Shanghai appeared to be the best place for her. The French Concession in Shanghai afforded foreigners a separate residential area; foreign nationals from many nations were already gathered there; and if a neutral diplomatic intermediary were needed, there was a Swiss consular office. So Nettie and Charlotte Brown went ahead. Will stayed in Xuzhou to wait for Nettie D, whose application for a travel permit had so far received no response from Japanese authorities. On the day of Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941, Americans were immediately interned wherever they happened to be. That left Nettie in Shanghai, Will in Xuzhou, and Nettie D. in Yixian. Missionaries remaining in Suqian were now *none*.

Internment lasted for about six months. It must be said that the Japanese treated internees in China better there than they treated their counter-

parts in either Korea or Japan. In Xuzhou, Will, Frank Brown, and Lois Young, another missionary, had liberty of movement within the city and no restrictions on visitors. International mail was blocked, but mail internal to China could get through. No money could come from America, but physical needs were supplied via the Swiss consul in Shanghai. Nettie and Charlotte Brown, in Shanghai, had considerable freedom. Nettie D, in Yixian, was restricted to her compound but not molested.

In a sense, Will's seventy-first birthday — December 26, 1941 — had a certain resonance with the birthday of forty-five years earlier that came as he was sailing to China the first time. The earlier one had been during his initial voyage across the Pacific, with storms raging as the liner steamed westward. His seventy-first birthday arrived while he was interned and waiting for one last voyage across the Pacific, this time eastward. The storms this time were the storms of war.

Will spent his time in Xuzhou constructively, using weekdays to make visits in the Christian Hospital and preaching on Sundays at the hospital chapel.¹⁴ In early May he was escorted to Suqian by guards so he could turn mission property over to “the authorities,” that is, a puppet regime set up by the Japanese. In a typed letter of May 26 to his daughter Agnes in America (which only reached Montreat three months later), Will noted in telegraphic style that in Suqian he was “not permitted to stay in own house” but was “nicely entertained in Chinese Magistrate's home”¹⁵ (Does the clipped style reflect a scarcity of writing paper?)

For a few years after the Pacific war ended in 1945, missionaries could enter China once again. Some itinerated to Suqian, notably E. H. Hamilton of Xuzhou, but none became residents there. The 1941 ending of a resident missionary presence in Suqian proved to be permanent. □

NOTES

1. Miss McRobert, one of the two Scottish ladies, died in June, 1924, and was buried at Guling. Dr. John W. Bradley died at Qingjiangpu in November, 1929, and was buried

at Zhenjiang.

2. The Junkins made Guanhu their home for two years. See below, pp. 121f.

3. From about 1915 to 1930, Will's mobility was greatly increased by his having an Indian motorcycle. It gave out in the early thirties, however, and had to be junked.

4. William F. Junkin, m.c.l., Suqian, Sep. 23, 1938 (MCD, Nov. 8, 1938).

5. William F. Junkin, m.c.l., Suqian, Nov. 28, 1938 (MCD, Feb. 6, 1939). War conditions account for the delay of over two months between Suqian and Nashville. Will's letter is the best description of the main battle of Suqian.

6. *Ibid.*

7. Mada I. McCutchan's m.c.l., Suqian, Dec. 2, 1938 (MCD, Feb. 6, 1939), gives an excellent summary of attacks on Suqian, May through Dec., 1938.

8. Hugh W. McCutchan, personal letter, Suqian, Feb. 11, 1939 (Patterson papers).

9. Typed note found among the Wm. F. Junkin, Sr., papers.

10. In 1936, the hospital had served 3000 inpatients and 13,000 outpatients ("1936 Report of the Suqian General Hospital," 12 pp., privately published). The 1940 number of 3600 comes from Nettie Junkin, m.c.l., Jan. 13, 1941 (MCD, Feb. 24, 1941). Numbers for the two years are not directly comparable, but they do give an idea of the relative level of activity.

11. "Questionnaire from Nashville. Filled out 8/18/41," a brief in-house report sent to the Board in Nashville, containing much useful information about the state of Suqian work in 1941 (typed, carbon copy, 3 pp., Wm. F. Junkin, Sr., papers).

12. *Ibid.*

13. Wm. F. Junkin, m.c.l., Suqian, June 17, 1941 (MCD, Aug. 5, 1941).

14. Wm. F. Junkin, m.c.l., Oct. 2, 1942, Tazewell, VA (MCD, Oct. 5, 1942); Frank A. Brown, *He Made It His Ambition*, pp. 7-8, 11.

15. Wm. F. Junkin, letter to Agnes (Mrs. Albert G.) Peery, Tazewell, VA. The letter was written May 26, 1942, and sent via Dr. Frank W. Price, of Chengdu in Sichuan Province in West China, beyond Japanese occupied territory. It reached Nashville on August 17, 1942, where it presumably was sent on to Tazewell.

8

Messages Across the Sea

IN THE SUMMER OF 1942, arrangements were completed for the *S. S. Gripsholm*, a Swedish ship, to repatriate American internees in Asia, many of them missionaries. Once in America, Will accepted a small pastorate in Jewell Valley, Virginia, where he and Nettie could continue their missionary work, though now it would be in North America rather than North Jiangsu. The new location also put them near Tazewell, the home of their daughter Agnes and her family.

FROM JEWELL VALLEY, A MESSAGE OF FELLOWSHIP

THE PACIFIC WAR ended three years later, in the summer of 1945. Will's health had deteriorated since 1942, and he knew that he could never return to China. But he remained very much concerned about his friends there, and in November he wrote a general letter to churches in the Suqian field. He wanted to ask how they had fared during the war and to convey recent news about missionaries whom they had known.

[November 19, 1945]¹

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:—

I hear now that letters can go to you. Excuse me for writing in English, but you know *woa pu hui hsie tsë* [*"I cannot write Chinese"*].²

How we have been thinking of you, talking about you, praying for you! There are so many to whom I would like to write personal letters that it is quite impossible for me to do this. So please take this as a letter to each one of you who sees it or hears it read.

I am making two copies. One copy I send direct to Suqian to Pastor

Wu. I ask Pastor Wu to have it translated into Chinese and sent to Pastors Cheng and Liu³ and to the other Pastors and Preachers in the three *xian*.⁴

The other copy I am sending to my friend, Dr. Robert P. Richardson [*a PCUS missionary who had returned to China*], in Shanghai, and am asking him to have it translated and to send it to Pastor Wu.

We are longing to have news from you all. We think of you individually and I have been praying for very many of you by name. For three and one-half years now we have had no word from any of you.

I do hope the churches have all been kept open and worship service carried out on every Sabbath, and that the preachers have been able to continue in their fields, and that none of them has been hurt. I hope that many people have been born again and have been received into God's Church.

Now, during these days of transition, we are very uneasy about you all. We fear there is much disorder. But I hope good government will soon bring things into shape and that you may be able to live in quiet and peace. We do so rejoice in the grand victory over Japan.

We had a letter the other day from Miss Johnston. She had been in prison camp and nearly starved, but she had been released and was still alive—eighty-two years old.⁵ We have heard that Miss Helen Bailey is safe and well in Honan Province.⁶

Mrs. Junkin and I are living at Jewell Valley, only about one hundred *li* [*thirty-three miles*] from where our second daughter [*Agnes*] lives. She and her husband now have two children, strong and well, one boy and one girl. We are now quite old, but still are able to work for the Lord. Many unsaved people are in this mining camp.

Our first daughter [*Nettie D*] went back to China — to West (Free) China — and is now in Hunan Province. Our son [*Bill*] and his wife [*Jessie*] were imprisoned in the Philippines for more than three years. A son was born to them in prison, and this little boy is now three and one-half years old. They were released by American soldiers last February, and are now in America. They were hungry all those three years in prison, but God took care of them. They have now regained flesh and are well and strong. We praise our God. They plan to go back to China, perhaps next summer.⁷

We saw Pastor Cheng's son, Philip, two and one-half years ago, and we enjoyed him so much. He visited us in our second daughter's home. As I have not heard from him in a long time, I think he has returned to China.

Mrs. Junkin and I wish that we could go back to North Jiangsu and help in the work there for a while longer, but as we are now so old our Church Committee of Foreign Missions will not send us back. Pray that we may be able to work for the Master a little longer here.

Old Dr. and Mrs. B. C. Patterson are still alive and fairly well. Their first son is a pastor in an adjoining state. Their fourth son, the doctor, is the head of a hospital at a town not far from us.⁸

Mrs. Bradley, Mrs. White, and Dr. Woods have gone on to Heaven.⁹ Miss Wood expects to return to China next month.

I am sending this by air mail, so I hope you receive it quickly. Please let us hear from some of you very soon.¹⁰

FROM SUQIAN, A REQUEST

THE WAR left Suqian's buildings in ruins and its population depleted. Several missionary residences at the south end, with repairs, could still be used; but the hospital in that compound had been burned and was gone. The main church in town, the Chinese Church in the center of the city, had lost its bell tower, its outer wall and gate house, and part of the roof over the pulpit, but there, too, with repairs, the building could be used. At the north end, one missionary house — known to missionaries as "the Hopkins house" because Mr. Martin Hopkins had supervised its building or as "the Patterson house" because the Houston Pattersons had been its last missionary occupants — still stood, though it presumably was among the missionary properties that Will was required to hand over to a puppet regime. Except for that one house, apparently none of the other missionary buildings at the north end survived the war. When foreigners later visited the town, nothing remained of the Women's Bible School, the Cai Ancestral Hall used in later years for the girls' school, the

residence which housed the Scottish Ladies, or the Junkin house.

In June, 1946, the Executive Committee of Foreign Missions, Nashville, sent a survey team to China to find out the kinds of rehabilitation that were most urgent and to explore how the church in America might best help. Under the chairmanship of veteran missionary Lewis Lancaster, a consultation was held at Xuzhou between leaders of the Chinese church and members of the team.

Church leaders from Suqian Presbytery were greatly dismayed to learn that Will would not be able to return to China. Their delegation included Pastor Wu and Pastor Emeritus Cheng, of Suqian; Pastor Liu, who probably by then had returned to Guanhu; and seven elders. They wrote immediately to the Committee in Nashville to request that it reconsider the decision about Will's return to the field.

Their letter, dated June 28, 1946, begins by noting the disarray of property within Suqian, both that of the Chinese Church and that of the mission:

The property of the Sutsien station has been fearfully wrecked, and the house that the Puppets bought by force,¹¹ by means of the power of the Japanese, has not been paid for, the excuse being that money was frozen. The property of private persons was looted completely ... The church, hospital and schools, the fruit of many years, are to be swept away. It is all very sad.¹²

The letter then turns to the disarray among the members of the church and makes an eloquent plea that Will be permitted to return to Suqian after all, even if only for an abbreviated term:

Now we especially write this letter pleading that you gentlemen allow Dr. Junkin to return to settle the uncompleted affairs of our church ... The people all have great respect for his ability to help and lead in Church and society ... Moreover, in our humble locality, after the destruction of war, we feel a great weakness of spiritual life, as a boat

without its rudder has nothing to direct it ... Some say that Mr. Junkin is old and would not be able to travel in the country, but his spiritual power is full and rich. His experience is expert and deep. We hope that he may come to China and lead us, just as in a great drought the land looks for clouds and rain ... Please, for the sake of the glory of God, and for the love of men and the saving of property, approve our request. Even though he may not be able to stay seven or eight years, we hope he may stay at least two or three years.¹³

The three pastors who signed the letter, Pastors Wu, Cheng, and Liu, were the same ones whom Will had named in his letter of November 19, 1945 (see above).¹⁴ Among the seven elders who signed, one name is familiar: Elder Qian Zaitian (the name as a whole, if translated in King James Version language, would mean "Treasure in Heaven"). His mother, Mrs. Qian, had been the pharmacist in Mrs. Patterson's early clinic and was one of the women present in 1897 at the women's service on Will's first Sunday. By 1945, Qian Zaitian, who was then in his mid-to-late forties, had become a seminary-trained Christian teacher. Since he signed the letter as an elder, he evidently had not yet been ordained. After ordination he was pastor of a church in Suzhou, and in the early years of the communist period he published a church paper from Nanjing.¹⁵ We are not told the home towns of the various other elders, but one wonders speculatively if Hu Cenren may have been related to Will's good friend, Mr. Hu of Huweize; or if Meng Guangpin was a son of the devoted Elder Meng of Chenjialou; or if Zhu Minglu was one of the four Christian sons of that energetic extrovert, Mr. Zhu of Ixu.

On August 6, 1946, the Executive Committee of Foreign Missions, meeting at the Missions Conference in Montreat, with deep regret replied in the negative to Suqian's request. The minutes said:

We are grateful to our brethren in the Chinese Church for these tender expressions of love for Dr. Junkin, and we can well understand their desire to have him back in their midst. However, Dr. Junkin ... is not

enjoying today that health which would be necessary for the return of a missionary even if he were still upon the roll of active missionaries.¹⁶

IN SUQIAN, A MEMORIAL SERVICE

WILL DIED a little less than a year later, on May 27, 1947. Five and one-half years had passed since the last time he had been in Suqian, years that for people in China had been extremely difficult. Now that Will was gone, what particular things from his life in Suqian would Christians there find to be especially important? As it happens, we have a partial answer to that question. About a month after Will died, his nephew, Chal Vinson, attended a memorial service for him held in Suqian and afterwards wrote about it to Nettie and the family.

Chal, more properly T. Chalmers Vinson,¹⁷ went to China as a medical missionary immediately after World War II. When he received definite news of his uncle's death, he arranged to visit Suqian to confirm the news to the church. He wrote:

I did not [reach Suqian] until nearly dark Saturday [*June 21, 1947*], as the bus I was on kept breaking down. But, soon after I got there, Pastor Wu called a meeting of the Elders to decide what was to be done. The Elders, K'ang, Shih and Ch'eng, with Pastor Wu, decided to have a Memorial Service after the morning Church service the next day.

The next morning ... (a group) prepared a banner ... on a long strip of white cloth. The strip of cloth was then stretched between the two pillars just over the pulpit. The banner set forth the fact that Pastor Junkin had gone to his heavenly Home and that the gathering was in his honor.¹⁸

A Mr. Cheng, neither the pastor emeritus nor the elder but a city businessman, conducted the service. It was opened with the hymn, "Must I Go, and Empty-Handed?"¹⁹ Prayer was then offered by a Mr. Wu — not the pastor, Chal tells us, but a teacher in the school. (If Mr. Wu was a teacher in the boys' middle school, it must have reopened by then.)

Earlier, Chal had shown Pastor Wu a letter from his sister, Jean, telling of Will's death. Relying on information given there, Pastor Wu told the group that Will's going had been mercifully quick and that his sole thoughts towards the end were for those who remained behind.

The service continued with recollections of Will's life in Suqian:

Elder K'ang recounted ... how fifty years before, in 1897, (Will) came to Sutsien to begin his work and how three years later he went to Suchow to get his bride ... He then told how (Will) fell out of the mule cart and broke his hip ... He spoke of how Uncle Will had founded so many, many Churches all over the area, chiefest of which was the Sutsien Church, his pride and joy. ... He spoke of how he had gotten Pastor Ch'eng and the others out of the Japanese jail;²⁰ and how he had saved the city of Sutsien from the Japanese when he went out to meet them when they came.

The elder's final statement, as reported here, is problematical. Will did not go out to meet the Japanese when they came. Rather, he spent the day in a dugout. And Sutsien was by no means "saved." By stretching the language a little, we might argue that the elder was speaking of later visits that Will made to Japanese occupational authorities and his subsequent efforts to ameliorate the hardships brought on Suqian by the occupation. But that does not sound much like "he went out to meet them when they came." An earlier statement of Chal's suggests a different approach. He said, "As I was on the platform behind the speakers, *I did not catch all that was said* ... I could not take notes, so what I am writing is from memory" [*italics added*]. Perhaps he correctly heard that the incident had to do with soldiers attacking Suqian but misidentified *which* soldiers. Was the elder perhaps thinking of November, 1925, when Will did indeed "go out to meet" marauding soldiers and did indeed help to save the Magistrate and the city? (See the account of this incident in Chapter 6.)

Elder K'ang was followed by Elder Ch'eng (Chal continued), who

made more remarks along the same theme. The latter told how Uncle Will had brought grain all the way from Shantung to feed the starving people of the Sutsien area in the famine of 1908, this being only one of several instances he gave to show the love Uncle Will had for the people.

Chal went on to tell about some special music sung by a children's choir:

Then came what was, to me, one of the most touching parts of the program. About eight boys and eight girls got up on the platform, ranged themselves, the boys on one side and the girls on the other side of the pulpit, and sang "Jesus Loves Me." At first, I could not figure out what the matter was, but then it hit me. The girls had started out in one key and the boys in one about four tones lower! They both kept on in their same groove, and neither group realized the difference, but the effect was strange to say the least, as, more often than not, no harmonious effect was reached. Their part in the service, though, had come from the heart and in that bit of service in honor of one who loved children, they honored their Lord.

The closing hymn was "God Be With You Till We Meet Again." Pastor Wu ended the service with prayer and a benediction.

Will was buried on a peaceful hillside in the Maywood Cemetery, near Tazewell, Virginia. Nettie, who died on November 2, 1956, was buried by his side. When Nettie D. died in 1986, she, too, was buried there. A single stone stands as a memorial to all three. It bears their names, their dates of birth and death, and a single verse of scripture: "They that are wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever" (Daniel 12:3). □

NOTES

1. The date is not found on the letter.. It appears on the outside of a brown paper envelope that contains the letter. The envelope is presently among the Junkin papers.
2. Will had been three years away from China, and writing a sustained letter in

Chinese would have been difficult. His unusual *woa* spelling may reflect Suqian pronunciation.

3. Wu Shida, Cheng Pengyun, and Liu Deshen were all associated with the Suqian church during Will's and Nettie's last years in China, Wu as pastor (see below, pp. 114–116), Cheng as pastor emeritus (cf. pp. 137f.), Liu as associate pastor. Associate Pastor Liu is probably to be identified with the Pastor Liu who had to flee Guanhu when the Japanese destroyed it in 1938 (see below, p. 121, including note 8). Pastor Liu Deshen's relatively young age in an existing photograph fits the probable age of the Guanhu man.

4. For the three *xian*, "counties," see the opening paragraph of Chapter 11, below.

5. For Miss Johnston, see p. 32. Along with her sisters, she was interned at Guling. After the war she stayed there, and on her death she was buried there.

6. Helen Bailey went to China in 1923 as a missionary educator and was stationed in Suqian. In 1936 she chose to become independent of the Mission. Her evangelistic work gradually led her further and further inland, and by the time of Pearl Harbor she was beyond the area controlled by the Japanese. As a result, she was never captured or interned.

7. Further information about Nettie D., Agnes, and Bill may be found on p. 38. In August, 1947, Bill and Jessie returned to China, going to Hangzhou in Zhejiang province. See pp. 142–143. They were there for two years, and after the communist take-over returned to the United States. In 1953 they became missionaries to Taiwan.

8. Craig and Annie were in retirement at Tinkling Spring, Va., near Staunton. The Rev. Houston Patterson was in Bluefield, W. Va. Dr. Norman Patterson, M.D., was in Richlands, Va.

9. Agnes Bradley, Dr. John Bradley's widow and Will's sister, was a missionary in Suqian for some years. Mrs. Hugh White had been an early Suqian missionary. Dr. Woods, presumably Dr. James Woods, M.D., was stationed in Huai'an (Qingjiang), but perhaps he was known to Suqian people.

10. Sent from Jewell Valley, VA. The text is written in pencil on seven half-sheets of paper, with two insertions written on separate scraps (Junkin papers).

11. To identify "the house that the Puppets bought by force" with the Hopkins/Patterson house is not certain, but it is a plausible guess. Located at the north end, the house is made of sturdy brick, and it survived the war. Located immediately next to the former *yamen*, it was taken over at some point to be used as headquarters for the county police, a purpose that it was still serving as of 1996.

12. Letter to Dr. C. Darby Fulton, Secretary, Executive Committee of Foreign Mis-

sions, Nashville, signed by three pastors and seven elders from the Suqian field. The Chinese letter is dated “35th Year/6th month/28th day,” that is, June 28, 1946. The English translation is inscribed “Xuzhou” and dated June 29, 1946. Both the letter and its translation are bound into *William Francis Junkin: 75th Birthday Book*, about ten pages before the end of the volume (the volume is unpaginated).

13. *Ibid.*

14. In 1946, Pastor Wu was still at Suqian. We do not know if Pastor Cheng had completed his service as Presbytery Evangelist. Pastor Liu was back in Guanhu by 1947 (see Chap. 9, n. 8), so he seems likely to have already left Suqian by 1946.

15. B. C. Patterson, *The Gospel Comes to Suqian*, p. 49.

16. Committee action, reported in a letter from C. Darby Fulton to Wm. F. Junkin, Aug. 12, 1946, now in *William Francis Junkin: 75th Birthday Book*.

17. Chal was the son of John Vinson, Will’s brother-in-law who was killed by bandits. See Chap. 6, n.14.

18. Letter from Chal Vinson to Nettie and the Junkin family, 3 pp., typed, sent from Shanghai, June 29, 1947 (Junkin papers).

19. A hymn widely used in evangelical churches in the first half of the twentieth century, often for funerals. The words of the chorus are: “Must I go, and empty-handed? Must I meet my Saviour so? Not one soul with which to greet Him: Must I empty-handed go?” The Suqian church would have sung the hymn in Chinese, but set to the familiar American music.

20. We will come to Pastor Cheng’s imprisonment in Chap. 11.

PART TWO. ALIVE AND GROWING

9

An Independent Church

WILL'S VISION OF A THREE SELF CHURCH

IN DECEMBER of 1931, the fourth American furlough for Will and Nettie was ending. Will had become accustomed over the years to highlighting his hopes for the term ahead in an essay written just on the eve of a return to China, for friends and supporters, and he did so once again.

He was convinced by 1931 that the seed-planting stage for the Church in China was complete. He now believed that a primary future emphasis should be to help an already existing church become mature and independent. The Japanese attack on Shanghai in early 1932 reemphasized the Chinese Church's need for self-governance. But that attack still lay six weeks in the future as Will was writing, so it played no part in his essay.

The essay was titled, "Our Forward Movement in North Jiangu." "

In considering this ... subject (he wrote), think first:—"As Missionaries, *What Is Our Task?*"... The missionary must found a Chinese Church, and this church must eventually be self-governing, self-supporting, self-propagating. Then, aside from the broad proclamation of the Gospel and the constantly exerted effort to save individual souls, our ultimate aim is the establishment of a *completely indigenous Church*.¹

The terms "self-governing," "self-supporting," and "self-propagating" came from Dr. John L. Nevius, a UPUSA missionary of an earlier generation.² Dr. Nevius began his missionary work in 1854 as a rural evangelist in Zhejiang Province. He later moved to Shandong and continued the same work until his death in 1893. His village work became the basis for his philosophy of missions. *Self-governing*: Dr. Nevius felt that if his village-centered congregations were to grow to maturity, they must have full

freedom for self-governance — even if in the process they made some mistakes. *Self-propagating*: He discovered that Chinese Christians in villages could far more effectively spread the Gospel among other Chinese people than foreign evangelists could ever do. *Self-supporting*: He felt that if new Christian groups in villages were to be soundly independent, resources for the maintenance of chapels should come from gifts and offerings made by the group's own members. He also felt that using mission funds to place a professional minister in a village might disrupt village life in unintended ways. Thus, Dr. Nevius sometimes preferred not to import a minister into a village and instead to designate a local layman as chapel leader, expecting him to continue supporting himself in his usual vocation.

Dr. Nevius's three-pronged theory of missions came to be known as the "Nevius Plan" or the "Three Self Principles." During his lifetime, none of the established missionary groups in China ever formally adopted his plan. Within a few years after his death in 1893, the experiments that he had himself begun in Shandong Province came to an end. In Korea, however, his plan had greater influence. At a conference in 1890, with Dr. Nevius present, Korean missionaries adopted it as a guide for their work. In that nation, at least, it turned out to be highly effective.

During Dr. Nevius's later years in Shandong, he served for a time as mentor to Absalom Sydenstricker, the man who afterwards was to be the pioneer itinerant missionary in Suqian. When Dr Sydenstricker moved to Jiangsu Province, he patterned his own work, at least in part, on the "three self plan." For example, he trained Chinese nationals to be itinerant evangelists and delegated to them one hundred percent of the actual preaching of the gospel — thus, "self-propagation." His Chinese evangelists traveled to towns and villages all over the northern part of the province. We noted previously (p. 40) a certain Mrs. Jiang who in the early

years of the Guanhu church was an influential member there. She is an example of a person introduced to Christian faith by one of Dr. Sydenstricker's itinerant preachers.

In 1910, twenty years after Korea adopted Dr. Nevius's plan, the North Jiangsu Mission sent a small delegation to check out how it had worked. Will and Hugh McCutchan, the latter newly arrived in Suqian as an educator, were members of the group. On its return, the group recommended that North Jiangsu adopt the Nevius Plan in ways similar to Korea, not indeed as a binding directive but at least as a guideline.³

Another twenty-odd years went by. The year was now 1931. Events of 1927 had given new urgency to the question of church independence, and Will once again made reference to the "Nevius Methods":

For more than thirty years (Will wrote in his 1931 essay), many members of our Mission have been trying to put in practice certain phases of these "Nevius Methods," but we have been *swamped* by very dissimilar practices of the missionary body in general in China. Now it is along this line of self-support that our North Jiangsu Mission has projected and is vigorously pushing a Forward Movement.

After the troubles of 1927, we as a Mission came to almost unanimous conclusions as to these methods and are pushing forward with one mind a very definite self-support program. It is now the established policy in our Mission not to supply with mission funds preachers for the growing Chinese Church, but to only *help* in this supply ... Thus we are striving to make the churches self-supporting and independent just as fast as possible and as they are born and grow.⁴

The various different denominational agencies that were at work in China still diverged seriously about how to implement self-support and independence. Will spoke for the North Jiangsu group:

As a Mission [we] are ... most emphatically opposed to doing what is now being done by many missions in China, turning mission funds over to the Chinese Church courts to be used as they see fit. *There can be no*

genuine independence without self-support.

There are two distinct policies now being pursued in China. One looks to the complete absorption of the mission, missionaries, and the foreign funds by the native Church. The other looks to the establishment of a native Church entirely self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating, as a separate entity from the missionaries and funds, these being released for new work not now reached.

Our mission believes strongly in and has unanimously adopted the second of these policies.⁵

Missionaries in Korea had used the “second” policy with success. But missionaries in China, including those in North Jiangsu, had long allocated mission funds for the support of pastors. Will described how his own North Jiangsu Mission now intended to implement the new policy. A church with fifty communicants would be subsidized for no more than 75% of its minister’s salary. When it grew to one hundred communicants, the subsidy would be reduced to no more than 50%. A church or a group of churches with two hundred or more communicants would be considered ready to pay the full salary of its minister and would receive no further assistance from the mission for that purpose.

Will cited the Suqian City Church as an illustration of what could be done. It had been fully independent and self-supporting for a about fifteen years and had accepted responsibility for all Christian work done in the city as well as for some outreach work in nearby villages. Missionaries were thus released from duties within Suqian and could work elsewhere. (Will described the Suqian Church accurately. But he did not mention that this church was really quite exceptional. In all of China at the time, probably no more than twenty well-established, independent, self-supporting Protestant churches, comparable to the one in Suqian, existed.)

In the spring of 1932, shortly after his return to Suqian for the new term, a second church that Will worked with, the church at Yaowan,

became entirely self-supporting and extended a call to a Chinese pastor.

In his 1931 essay, Will said he was convinced that all these efforts to encourage self-support would eventually lead to “a virile, dignified, consecrated, indigenous Church ... We rejoice in what there is, and we look to the future with glad expectations.”⁶ The years from 1932 to 1937 did in fact witness encouraging growth in the Chinese Church in the Suqian area, both in numbers and in progress towards independence. Those years were also a time of widespread spiritual awakening in the Church.

FOUR PRE-WAR SUCCESSES FOR INDEPENDENCE

WHEN WILL returned from Guling in August of 1937, leaving Nettie up on Guling Mountain because of the Japanese invasion of Shanghai, he came back to Guanhu rather than to Suqian. By then, he and Nettie had moved their permanent residence to that town. Their decision to move may have been related to the fact that in 1933 their older daughter, Nettie D, had come to China as a missionary. She came out under the UPUSA Board and was assigned to the town of Yixian [Yi Hsien], Shandong, a short distance northwest of Guanhu. So the move would help Will and Nettie in the development of cooperative missionary projects with their daughter. At the same time, it brought them nearer to the center of their own primary area of itineration. And, of course, it also gave them more of an opportunity for personal visits. They bought a mud-brick house at Guanhu, installed wooden floors and a flue for a stove, had the windows glazed to conserve heat, and moved in 1936.

It was from Guanhu, then, that Will wrote his missionary correspondence letter of September, 1937. In it he noted with great joy that four additional churches, or groups of churches, in his part of the field had committed to full self-support. His letter began by speaking of the Nevius principles: “We have been working for, looking for, many self-governing, self-supporting, self-propagating, individual churches, for only thus

can there be a really indigenous Chinese Church.”⁷

Will again reminded his readers about the already independent Suqian City Church. It now had over five hundred communicants and carried on work in six nearby outstations. He reminded them, too, of the church at Yaowan, which by 1937 had been independent for five years. Yaowan’s membership had grown to about one hundred and fifty. The church was continuing the full support of its pastor, and it had recently undertaken additionally the support of a male pastoral assistant and a Bible woman.

Then Will came to what was for him the most gratifying part of the letter, four churches that were newly committed to self-support: —

- Pixian Church, in the town where Evangelist Du had once been jailor, now had ninety members. Pixian and Huweize had shared the services of Pastor Wu Shida since 1930, and Pixian was now ready to move beyond the paired arrangement and call Mr. Wu to be its full-time pastor. Sadly for Pixian, just a little over a year later Wu Shida accepted a call to become pastor of the Suqian church. Perhaps the Suqian call at least confirmed the Pixian Church’s judgment about his abilities.

- Ixu, home of the now deceased extrovert, Mr. Zhu, and still base for much of the Zhu clan, had called Mr. Tai Mingqing as pastor. The Ixu church had fewer than sixty members. But the town was a prosperous trading community and the members were relatively well-off, so it was hoped that the congregation could adequately handle Mr. Tai’s support.

- Guanhu, where Will was writing, had united with the nearby village of Chenjialou to provide full-time support for a certain Pastor Liu. Membership of the combined locations was approximately one hundred. Less than a year later, Pastor Liu showed marked courage and faithfulness as he ministered to refugees during the Japanese invasion of Guanhu.⁸

- Finally, Qipan and three other nearby worshiping communities had come together under one session and called a recently-ordained pastor, Wang Hongjie. The combined membership of the four groups was about

one hundred and thirty. Not one person among them could be called well-to-do, so supporting a full-time pastor would be a challenge.

None of these four churches or church-groups had as many as two hundred members and two of them had fewer than one hundred, so by mission guidelines all four still qualified for partial subsidies. Will recognized that the path of independence to which they had now committed would be difficult, and he asked his American readers to support the churches with their prayers.

FAITH HEALING AND AN INDIGENOUS CHURCH

DR. NEVIUS'S "THREE-SELF" teachings, taken together, convey the meaning of *independence* quite well, but they do not really convey the full meaning of *indigenoussness*. For a minority group in a larger community, "indigenoussness" means to be perceived, in at least some respects, as having grown up "on native soil" and as being no longer "foreign." For example, one important way that the Church in China became more indigenous was to translate the Bible and the church's creeds and hymns from Hebrew, Greek, Latin, or English, into Chinese, using Chinese characters to convey faith's meaning. We will now consider another way, of a quite different sort, in which the church moved ahead on the road to indigenousness, namely the greater emphasis given by Chinese Christians to bodily healing as a function of faith. "Greater," here, means in comparison to the home denominations from which most of the missionaries came. Probably the increased emphasis on bodily healing happened without a conscious decision on anyone's part. It just came about because the church was situated within Chinese culture. In other words, it was a genuinely indigenous development.

When Nettie remained at Guling in the fall of 1937, planning to spend the winter there, she had an unexpected opportunity to see faith healing in action. A steady flow of seriously wounded Chinese soldiers was being

brought upstream on the Yangtze River to Jiujiang [Kiukiang, “Nine Rivers”], a port city just down the mountain from Guling. The Methodist hospital at Jiujiang was soon swamped, and in mid-November its nursing staff asked missionary women who were wintering at Guling to come down and help. Nettie, Nettie D., and Mada McCutchan were among those who responded.

Nettie did this work for six to eight weeks. She afterwards described some of the healings she observed:

One young soldier had been pierced by a bullet straight through his body. Frequent hemorrhages occurred. The missionary nurse lay awake, one night, praying that she might find a remedy. That very day he, too, had begun to pray. God answered their prayers. A successful treatment was found. With a beaming face, a few days later, he said: “Since I have begun to pray, I have not had a hemorrhage.” And from that time he was very much in earnest and read the tracts and Gospels and seemed really to trust in Christ for salvation.⁹

Another story tells of a young soldier whose badly wounded leg had become gangrenous and who was struggling to hold on to life. Nettie refers to the young soldier as “Little Giffen”:

“Little Giffen” (so called because he just “wouldn’t die”)¹⁰... young, pale, with a leg swollen, fractured, crushed, was so poisoned by infection that he was, at first, barely out of a stupor. Two pictures were put on his wall: that of Christ healing the blind man, and one of some men bending under the burden of sin. They came to the Cross and the burdens dropped off and they ran joyfully upward to a shining glory.¹¹ Little Giffen learned to pray. When he was improved enough to have his leg amputated, he was happy. “Old Toothless” [*the nurses’ nickname for another patient*] said, “Jesus is making him well.”¹²

We may note, first, that none of the people involved — not the Methodist nurses, not the wounded soldiers, not Nettie — had any problem

about combining the best available medical science with the offering of prayers to God for healing. But when Nettie tells us that the young soldier who had taken a bullet through his body said with a beaming face, “Since I have begun to pray, I have not had a hemorrhage,” we might wonder if he thought of his prayer as a magical action, an “open sesame” that would work its wonders simply by ritual repetition. If Nettie had been asked about this, perhaps she would have said that the soldier was new to Christianity and would grow in understanding as he grew in faith. Anyway, in both of the little narratives, Christian faith was attractive to the wounded men because it was clearly linked to bodily healing.

In the China of today, healing experiences or even healing miracles continue to be important for the church. Consider a 1996 article in *Tian Feng*, a Church of China magazine. Sang Wei, the author, who is presumably a pastor with seminary training, begins with the blunt statement that “healing of illness is one of the main reasons why rural folk in China become Christians.”¹³ The article then makes some practical suggestions about how Christians can visit the sick and pray with them for their health without planting false hopes. A slightly different point of view was expressed a 1997 interview by the Rev. Wang Jisen, Vice General-Secretary of the Zhejiang Christian Council. He discussed four or five reasons that new converts in Zhejiang commonly have for coming into the Christian church. One was that “some people, especially in the countryside, are drawn to the faith after having witnessed miracle healings.”¹⁴

Sang and Wang agree, then, that faith healing contributes importantly to the growth of today’s Chinese Church. But they differ about how it functions. For Sang, healing is apparently an *everyday* phenomenon, something that many Christians experience. For Wang, on the other hand, it seems to be an *extraordinary* or miraculous event, something impressive to witness. No doubt both men are reporting what they know. The limited experience of the Chinese church that Don McCall and I had during our

trip to China in 1996 lent support to the “everyday” point of view. We saw no extraordinary healing events at church meetings, and certainly we saw no theatrically staged healing events. We did not even hear any second hand reports of especially dramatic faith healings. But we did talk to a number of rural Christians who witnessed in a simple way to the effectiveness of God’s healing for their own ailments.

Sang and Wang both suggest that faith healing among Christians is to be found mainly among “rural folk” or “countryside Christians.” Perhaps it is appropriate to add that Don McCall and I also met some urban and educated Christians who spoke of God’s having restored their health.

Various forms of traditional Chinese healing were widely practiced in the China of the Junkins’ day. Since their day, the fame of those methods has spread around the world, as attested by the widespread interest now found among Americans in *tai ji* or *qi gong* exercises or *yin/yang*-based diets. Within China itself, further evidence for the continuing importance of traditional healing may be seen in the apparently burgeoning popularity of Falun Gong, a contemporary quasi-Buddhist healing sect related to *qi gong* that has now been thrust into international prominence through the Chinese government’s unrelenting campaign to suppress it.

We may conclude, then, that when Chinese people come into the church after having to some extent already experienced Chinese traditional healing methods, they easily assume that healing will be a part of their new faith. Once in the church, they discover the many instances of bodily healing to be found in the Christian Bible, notably the healing miracles of Jesus. The resulting emphasis on faith’s connection to healing is one of the ways that the church in China makes a natural and unforced cultural adaptation as it moves towards greater indigenesness.¹⁵ □

NOTES

1. Wm. F. Junkin, “Our Forward Movement in North Kiangsu,” Dec.5, 1931, typed, 4 pp. (carbon copy, Junkin papers). Intended for the *Miss. Surv.*

2. G. Thompson Brown, *Earthen Vessels and Transcendent Power*, pp. 84-85, 142.
3. Will's account of the trip was published as "Our Work in Two Countries" (*Miss.*, Feb., 1911, pp. 72-3). A different account of the trip, handwritten and quite frank in its content, also exists: W. F. Junkin, "A Trip Through Korea: Some Impressions" (Chosen, Korea: ms. in pencil on Nippon Yusen Kaisha stationery, 10 half-pp.; Junkin papers). The title page, in ink, is probably a later addition. The date, "about 1912," in different ink, may come from still later. In any case, Will was in Chosen in 1910, not 1912. Hugh W. McCutchan tells of his part in the trip in a letter now bound into *William Francis Junkin: 75th Birthday Book* (1945).
4. Wm. F. Junkin, "Our Forward Movement in North Kiangsu."
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*
7. Wm. F. Junkin, m.c.l., Guanhu, Sep. 7, 1937 (MCD, Oct. 11, 1937). This letter tells about all four churches.
8. Nettie D. Junkin, Sr., m.c.l., Suqian, June 9, 1938 (MCD, July 22, 1938). We mentioned earlier the probability that this Pastor Liu is the same person as the Pastor Liu who was later assistant pastor in Suqian. A 1947 m.c.l. from Jessie Junkin, wife of Bill Junkin, suggests that Pastor Liu was back in Guanhu by then.
9. Nettie D. Junkin, m.c.l., Hong Kong, Jan. 27, 1938 (MCD, Feb. 21, 1938).
10. "Little Giffen" is the name of a poem by Francis O. Ticknor about a young Confederate soldier who was wounded in 1864 and almost died from gangrene. Dr. and Mrs. Ticknor took the sixteen-year old boy into their own home and nursed him back to health. The boy later returned to his unit and was killed in one of the closing battles of the war. Nettie quotes from the line in the poem which speaks of little Giffen as having "a spirit that wouldn't die."
11. Nettie does not say who put the pictures up. Quite possibly she did it herself.
12. Nettie D. Junkin, Sr., letter from Hong Kong. See n.9.
13. Reported in *ANS*, 5.4, 1996, p. 8.
14. *ANS*, 6.11/12, 1997, p. 21.
15. For further discussion of the place of faith healing in the Chinese Church, see Claudia Währisch-Oblau, "The Healing Power of Faith" (*ANS* 1996.2, p. 9); and Katrin Findler, "A Matter of Intensity" (*ANS* 2000.9/10, pp. 13-14). For information about the church and Falun Gong, see "Church Leaders Support Suppression of Falungong Sect" (*ANS* 99.9/10, p. 2).

The Three Self Patriotic Movement

THE 1949 CAPTURE OF BEIJING by the People's Army signaled that the People's Republic was now the established regime of China. The new government moved rapidly to redistribute land holdings, restructure social institutions, and hold public confessional meetings. Religion was one of the institutions that was restructured. Each major religious group in China was required to consolidate its national leadership into a single patriotic committee. The committee was to unify that particular religious group, to terminate foreign entanglements or foreign dependencies of any kind, to ascertain that leaders at all levels were exclusively Chinese nationals, and to foster patriotic activities. The last item referred to policies espoused by the government, notably socialism. An official paper of the time interpreted the new guidelines as meaning that "the path of great effort for the religious world [is] the construction of a new China."¹

This program for restructuring at least provided a definite niche into which religious groups might fit. Fortunately, a substantial number of able, national-level Chinese leaders were present among Protestants by 1950 — presidents of seminaries, presidents of church-related universities, Chinese theologians, Church historians, pastors with a wide repute. Some forty came together to work out an appropriate response to the new directives. In September of 1950, their work led to the inauguration of the "National Committee of the Chinese Protestant Three Self Patriotic Movement." As the name suggests, the nascent organization drew on the language of the Nevius plan to articulate its goals. The new central committee agreed that Protestantism would "break off any contact with foreign churches and ... follow the three self principles — 'self-govern-

ment, self-propagation, and self-support.”²

THE OPENING PHASE, 1950 TO 1966

AS OF THE PRESENT day, the most influential Protestant leader in China is probably Bishop K. H. Ting, now retired. He delivered a speech in September, 2000, the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Three Self Patriotic Movement, celebrating its accomplishments. He divided its fifty year history into two main phases and then described a third phase that he considered now ready to occur.³ We will follow his three-phase approach as we, too, look at the Movement’s history, or, to say what amounts to the same thing, as we look at the most recent fifty years in the history of the national Christian Church in China.

The opening phase lasted from the founding of the TSPM in 1950 until the onset of the Cultural Revolution in 1966, a little more than fifteen years. A primary objective at that stage was to collect the many strands of Chinese Protestantism into a unified whole and to establish administrative structures for the emerging organization. This was no small task. Twenty or more mainline Protestant denominations were present in China by 1950, and at least forty other substantial groups or sects were there. Remarkably, the TSPM was able to bring together a large majority of these into a single organization. Ecumenically-minded church leaders in other parts of the world had tried in their own countries to accomplish the same objective, without success. Bishop Ting probably had a point when he suggested, in a different context, that one reason Chinese denominational groups were able to unite in this way was that they did not have the long history of deep loyalty to their separate denominational existence that characterized Western churches and missionaries.

The Three Self Movement was not one hundred percent successful in achieving Protestant unification. The two largest groups that declined to join were Seventh Day Adventists and the Little Flock. Seventh Day Ad-

ventists were a conservative church founded by missionaries. They were not ready to give up Saturday as their day of worship, and they remained apart from the TSPM. The Little Flock was a sectarian group that originated in China. It expected its ministers to itinerate throughout life, after the example of the early apostles, rather than settling down in one place. This practice contravened a government regulation that ministers must reside in a single location, attached to a single definite congregation. The TSPM and the Little Flock were unable to reach a compromise, and the Little Flock remained outside the TSPM.

The task of becoming a unified group, so difficult for Protestants, was no problem for Catholics — they were already unified. But Catholics had more trouble with the requirement to end all dependency on foreign agencies. Chinese Catholics were loyal to the Pope. Further, they cooperated with the worldwide college of bishops in the election of bishops, including those who presided over the Catholic Church in China. For Protestants, the severance of relationships with Western missionary boards was disruptive, but at the same time it was in some ways liberating, and it was certainly not disastrous. But for Catholics, to sever ties with the Pope and with the college of bishops came closer to disaster. In the event, Chinese Catholics organized a Patriotic Catholic Association and formed an independent Chinese Catholic Church, no longer subordinate to the Vatican. Some priests and bishops chose to go to prison rather than cooperate with the new church. Today, the non-Vatican Chinese Catholic Church continues to be widely active in China. Its growth since the end of the Cultural Revolution, however, has not matched that of Protestantism.

A DIFFICULT INTERLUDE

THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION began in 1966. During the ten years that it was active, from 1966 to 1976, life became a nightmare not just for the church but for everyone in China. Those who were most affected are even now reluctant to speak of it. Will once said that if the Church in

China were ever subjected to public oppression and persecution, it would persevere, even if “underground and in hiding,”⁴ and this now became everyday reality. As for the TSPM, the Cultural Revolution simply leaves a gap in its history — or, at the least, if it had any functions during those years, they had to be carried out in private. It is not by accident that Bishop Ting makes no reference to the Cultural Revolution in his speech on the fiftieth anniversary of the Three Self Patriotic Movement.

Front line troops for the Cultural Revolution were the youthful Red Guards. They considered all religion, whatever its variety, to be reactionary, and during their time of flourishing they largely eradicated *all* public expression of religion throughout the land — incense burning by Taoists or Buddhists, the honoring of ancestors by Confucians, attendance at public worship by Protestants or Catholics. Moslems were defined by the country’s new National Constitution as an ethnic group, not a religion, theoretically protecting them from molestation. However, this did not keep the Red Guards from closing at least some mosques, probably many.⁵ Christian churches and chapels were closed throughout the land and the confiscated buildings put to other uses. In a minor concession to diplomatic nicety, one or two Chinese-language Beijing churches, the ones often used by foreign diplomats, were permitted to remain open.

All things temporal finally come to an end, and the Cultural Revolution eventually ended. Chairman Mao died in 1976. The title of “chairman” was allowed to lapse, and Deng Xiaoping became premier. The “Gang of Four” who had spearheaded the Cultural Revolution went to prison. Over the course of several years Chinese society began gradually to move back towards some semblance of mutual toleration. By 1980, a few former church buildings in Shanghai and elsewhere had been returned to the church and were available for use by worshiping congregations.⁶

THE SECOND PHASE: RAPID GROWTH SINCE 1980

As the Church began to resurface, the Three Self Patriotic Movement found that its duties were enormously expanded. Bishop Ting identified this new period as the second main phase, one that continues until the present, and specified several of the most pressing needs that the church had to face: "...the training of lay persons and pastors, the construction of church buildings, the regaining of church property seized during the Cultural Revolution, and the publication of church material."⁷

The "training of lay persons and pastors" was essential if the church was to maintain its identity, and indeed, not only "was" but "still is." For one thing, trained leaders who date back to the missionary period are by now all but gone. For another, since 1980 the church has had extremely rapid growth, and integration of large numbers of new adherents into the community continues to be a major task. To have such a problem is gratifying, of course, but it almost overwhelms the current church.

In response to this situation, the post-1980 church inaugurated and continues to develop two levels of leadership training, corresponding to the two groups identified by Bishop Ting — "pastors" and "lay persons." For pastors and evangelists, that is, for prospective church professionals, the national church has established fourteen theological seminaries, offering ministerial degrees, and also four post-secondary institutions offering Bible training. All of these have opened since 1980. (Names and locations of the eighteen institutions may be found in an additional note at the end of this section.) The first to open, Jinling Seminary in Nanjing, is now the leading seminary in the country. It offers initial-level degrees in theology and also graduate-level degrees for those who may later teach at other seminaries. Ministerial candidates enrolled at one of the seminaries usually require three years to complete a degree. Areas of study include Bible, theology, church history, sermon preparation, church administration, and sometimes also liberal arts.⁸

Lay leaders, the nonordained people who minister in the large number of smaller chapels, primarily rural, also receive extensive training. These leaders do not enter a multi-year course or earn seminary degrees. They take up residence at lay training institutes for a month, or two months, or occasionally up to a year. The lay institutes, usually sponsored by regional branches of the Three Self Patriotic Movement, meet in the larger churches of a district or in specially built facilities with classrooms and dormitories. In some cities, the church has permission to use former missionary residences for the purpose. These large houses — Victorian-style edifices, with downstairs rooms opening to one another by sliding doors and multiple upstairs bedrooms — fit the use nicely. The importance of lay institutes is underlined by the fact that lay leaders in the rural chapels are often the first informed Christians that a new convert meets.

Bishop Ting noted another area of urgent need for the growing church, the “publication of church material.” Many Bibles of older Christians were destroyed during the Cultural Revolution, and most newer Christians have never owned a Bible in their lives. In the mid-eighties the national church addressed this need by establishing the Amity Printing Company at Nanjing. Between 1988 and the end of 2000, Amity Printing has produced a total of over twenty-five million Chinese Bibles, including a printing of the Catholic version for the Catholic Church. Besides the current production of about three million Bibles a year, Amity also prints on the order of a million hymnbooks per year. Economies of scale permit the company to sell its products inexpensively and yet maintain good quality printing and binding. Distribution is made through seventy centers scattered around the country.⁹

The TSPM also gives direct aid to local churches in several ways: help in the recovery of buildings seized by the Red Guards, counsel for fundraising when congregations undertake to build new buildings, and legal help to minimize improper implementation of national religious policy in

situations where local religious affairs officials are inadequately informed.

Bishop Ting once spoke of the Three Self Patriotic Movement as the church's "scaffolding." By this he meant to suggest that its on-going work, at least up until now, has been more administrative than theological. All of the second-phase activities which he listed — leadership training, seminary development, Bible printing, church reclamation, new church building, political relations — fit comfortably under the rubric of administration. The Chinese church has shown, in the last twenty years, that it can be self-governing and self-supporting. During the same period, unprecedented growth of the church has shown especially clearly that it can also be self-propagating.

Additional note: Seminaries and Graduate Bible Schools.

One national seminary: Jinling Union Theological Seminary, Nanjing.

Five regional seminaries: East China: Huadong Theological Seminary, Shanghai; North China: Yanjing Theological Seminary, Beijing; Northeast China: Dongbei Theological Seminary, Shenyang, Liaoning; South-Central China: Zhongnan Theological Seminary, Wuban, Hubei; and Southwest China: Sichuan Theological Seminary, Chengdu, Sichuan.

Eight provincial seminaries: Guangdong Union Theological Seminary, Guangzhou, Guangdong; Fujian Theological Seminary, Fuzhou, Fujian; Zhejiang Theological Seminary, Hangzhou, Zhejiang; Anhui Theological Seminary, Hefei, Anhui; Shandong Theological Seminary, Jinan, Shandong; Yunnan Christian Theological Seminary, Kunming, Yunnan; Henan Theological Seminary, Zhengzhou, Henan; and Inner Mongolia Training Center, Hubhot, Inner Mongolia.

Four graduate Bible schools: Shaanxi Bible School, Xi'an, Shaanxi; Hunan Bible School, Changsha, Hunan; Jiangxi Bible School, Nanchang, Jiangxi; and Jiangsu Bible School, Nanjing.

For mailing addresses, see China News Update, May, 1998, p. 4.

That brings us to what Bishop Ting called the third main phase — the future. Bishop Ting believes that the first two phases of the TSPM have brought the church to true three-self *independence*, though he stresses that the church will need to continue its effort to carry out the three-self functions *well*. But he hopes that a third phase, now at hand, will be one in which the church may move on to true theological *indigenouness*.

Bishop Ting urges leaders and intellectuals in the Chinese church to proceed now with the development of a new Chinese theology. He envisions that the new theology will have strong roots in Chinese culture and that it will speak boldly to the life situation of Chinese people. He calls on writers of the new Chinese theology to embody the Church's reflection about what it means to be the branch of God's Church located in that land. He asks also that the new theology articulate the meaning of the Christian message for those who are presently outside of the church. Bishop Ting hopes that the new theology he envisions will kindle a new attentiveness to the Gospel. He hopes, too, that it will reopen a door — a door that was once at least partly open but that was then closed for a time — for Chinese theologians to take an active part in international theological discussions.¹⁰ □

NOTES

1. From a government policy statement of the early 1950's, cited in *Suqian Xian Wen Shi Ze Liao* (*Suqian County Cultural History*), 3rd printing, Aug., 1984, p. 163. This book, a government publication, is written from an unabashedly ideological perspective, but its three-page chapter on Protestantism nevertheless provides much helpful information. It tells the history only up to 1966. The chapter on Protestantism, with a translation, is available on request from the author of the present book.

2. *Suqian Xian Wen Shi Ze Liao*, *loc. cit.* See also "50 Years of Three-Self: Voices and Visions" (*ANS* 2000.3/4.1), and "Without the Three Self, There Would Be No Chinese Church Today" (*ANS* 2000.9/10.1).

3. "Looking Back on 50 Years of Three-Self,," *ANS* 2000.9/10.2.

4. William F. Junkin, "Looking Ahead to a Greater Glory," a pamphlet published by

the ECFM, n.d.g. [1943].

5. In a 1998 address, Rev. Cao Shengjie, CCC Vice President, noted that “during the ten years of turmoil known as the ‘Cultural Revolution’...temples *and mosques* were closed. Clergy...were all persecuted.” *ANS* 1998.9/10.7, italics added.

6. In September, 1999, Shanghai Christians celebrated the 20th anniversary of the reopening of Mu'en Church. The sanctuary, in good condition, is located in downtown Shanghai. The plot on which it is located is now very valuable real estate, so the fact that it is allowed to be used as a church is worth noting. A church in Hangzhou was also reopened in 1979. See *ANS* 2000.9.1/2.9.

7. Bishop Ting, *loc. cit.* (*ANS* 2000.9/10.2).

8. For more information, see Don McCall, “A Report of a Trip to China March 30–April 26, 1996” (Montreat, NC: 14 pp., privately distributed). McCall's purpose for being in China was to visit seminaries and see what needs they had that Western Christians might help to meet. See also “Theological Centers” (*CNU*, Dec., 1989, pp. 6-15), a report that is now somewhat dated but is nevertheless still useful.

9. Fairly up-to-date information on the Amity Printing Company may be found on the internet. One might try <www.chinapartner.org> or <amityhk@pacific.net>.

10. “Reflections by Bishop Ting,” *ANS* 2000.9/10.2.

The Suqian Church – I (1894–1942)

TO MISSIONARIES, “the Suqian mission field” meant three counties — Suqian, Suining, and Pizhou. The government later combined the eastern parts of Suqian and Pizhou Counties to make a fourth county, Xinyi.¹

Though Suqian City was designated the “central station” for this field, it was not really at the center. If efficient country itineration had been the only thing that mattered, Yaowan, a canal town forty miles to the north, would probably have been better. One notes that just a few years after Protestants arrived, the Catholic Diocese of Xuzhou did in fact choose Yaowan for its Eastern District headquarters. But Suqian was, and is, a larger town than Yaowan. Protestant missionaries moved there when they first came from Qingjiangpu, and they remained there except for the two years the Junkins spent at Guanhu. The main Protestant non-church institutions for the Suqian field also developed there — the Benevolent Aid Hospital, the Chong Shi Middle School for Boys, the Pei Shan Middle School for Girls, and the Women’s Bible School.

The *Suqian County Cultural History* overstates the importance of Suqian for Protestantism when it says “the Suqian church had jurisdiction over the religious affairs of the three counties.”² This sounds more like a promotional push for Suqian than a serious statement of Presbyterian polity. However, the Suqian City church did have early and steady growth, it did have a number of able leaders, both lay and ordained, and it did take an active part in regional church affairs, so there is at least some justification for the *Cultural History*’s assertion. We may note that in 1950, when local churches entered the Three Self Patriotic Movement, Suqian was asked to oversee the rural meeting places in its own county.

REGULAR SERVICES of worship began at Suqian in 1894, the year the station opened. The first place of meeting was a thatched-roof, dirt-floored chapel (or perhaps, at the very beginning, a rented room at the Zhang Inn). By the time Nettie came to join Will in 1900, services had been moved to the Cai Memorial Hall at the north-end, now rechristened the Gospel Hall. In 1907, the Suqian Christian community numbered fifty-three members, and the congregation elected three elders and three deacons to become an organized church. Mr. Shu Yanqi, already serving Suqian as an evangelist, became the unordained minister of the new church.

By March, 1918, just eleven years later, the church had grown to two hundred and seventy-five communing members and was ready to assume full responsibility for the support of a pastor. Mr. Cheng Pengyun, a native of the Suqian area and a graduate of Nanjing Theological Seminary, was called to be the first ordained pastor. Church membership grew under his leadership to more than five hundred. The church continued to be self-supporting, and it continued to participate in outreach work in the larger Suqian area. Indeed, it began to be recognized regionally as an example of what a Protestant church could be. One of the congregation's accomplishments under Pastor Cheng's leadership was to build the first Chinese-owned sanctuary in the Suqian field. Located near the center of town and able to seat a thousand, it was dedicated in September, 1926. Mr. Cheng also made significant contributions to life in the wider Suqian community. We noted, for instance, his help in the resolution of the farmers' uprising of 1929 (see Chapter 6). For reasons to which we will come just below, Pastor Cheng retired in 1939, at the age of fifty-nine. He died ten years later, on July 7, 1949, soon after Communist Liberation. Widely beloved and respected, he expressed in his dying words a message for the entire Christian community: "Love one another."³

SUQIAN PRESBYTERY

AS WE SAW, deteriorating relationships between the United States and Japan and eventually outright war between the two nations caused a

sharp decline in the number of missionaries in Suqian. But even as World War II drew near and as the missionary presence diminished, the Chinese Church was manifesting a new maturity.

Two developments at the presbytery level during the period from 1937 to 1941 will illustrate this. First, there was the 1939 creation of Suqian Presbytery itself. Chinese presbyteries in North Jiangsu were institutionally separate from the Mission and provided a place where churches that had previously been subsidized could now establish themselves as independent. When Will first came to the field, Suqian City had four Christians, and a few more were at Guanhu. A few years later, in 1911, Jiangbei Presbytery [*The Presbytery of North Jiangsu*] was formed, incorporating churches from both the Suqian and Xuzhou fields. By 1939 the work in the two fields had sufficiently matured to permit separation. Suqian Presbytery now emerged, a new presbytery made up in large part of churches that Will had helped to found. It was a fitting culmination for his years in China. In addition, it signaled the growth towards independence that many churches in the area were experiencing.

A second important development occurred when Suqian Presbytery appointed Pastor Emeritus Cheng Pengyun of Suqian to be Presbytery Evangelist. The Japanese had arrested Pastor Cheng and five or six other regional pastors in 1939, imprisoning them at Xuzhou for seventy days. The whole incident was apparently intended as a gesture of intimidation against the general populace. Will helped to negotiate the pastors' release. Torture while in prison left Pastor Cheng's health permanently impaired to such an extent that he had to retire from the Suqian church. The new presbytery asked him, in 1941, to become overseer of small churches in the Guanhu area, a position in which he would directly replace some of what Will had been doing. It was a clear action by the Chinese Church to lessen its reliance on missionaries and accept responsibility for its own affairs, and as such it was highly gratifying to Will and Nettie.

Will described the apprehensive mood of Suqian Presbytery at its fall meeting in 1941:

A year ago last October [*in 1941*], just before Pearl Harbor, our

Sutsien Presbytery was meeting at Chi-pan [*the church that traced its beginning back to Will's 1903 encounter with a hunchback*]. It was a very solemn meeting of most serious minded men. We felt that it could not be long before America would become involved in this war. I looked into the faces of these dear men, and I thought I would probably never again see them in the flesh. They said to me: "You may have to run away, or you may be sent to a concentration camp." And they, that day, made a solemn covenant with me. They said, "Pastor Junkin, you can rest your heart. We promise you that, if mission help is all cut off, and come what may, we will do all in our power to see to it that every chapel is kept open and that the work is kept up in all this field."⁴

That was Will's last chance to attend Suqian Presbytery. Six years were to pass before it would be able to meet again, in October, 1947, at Suqian.

WILL'S ASSESSMENT IN 1942

THE JAPANESE interned Will and Nettie immediately after Pearl Harbor, in December, 1941, thus cutting short their sixth term. When they had returned to China in 1940, they had no way to have know, of course, just what the future would hold. But their ages let them know that this would be their last term, whatever else might happen.

With Will aware that he was serving his final years in China, his mind turned to writing a valedictory statement about the work he knew so well. As things turned out, he did it three times: first, a 1939 article for the *Christian Observer*, a remembrance of things *past*, the road already travelled by churches in the three counties;⁵ second, a general letter to Suqian churches, which included a brief summary of the church's *present* at that time, written during internment in early 1942 (selections from the letter will be found in the following section of this chapter); and third, an essay written for the Executive Committee of Foreign Missions in the fall of 1942, just after he and Nettie had being repatriated to America, expressing Will's hopes for the *future* of the church in China.⁶

All three statements include statistics. Happily, they mostly reinforce one another. Statistics may be misleading, of course, but on a comparative basis they may also be quite revealing. In the section entitled

“Early Outposts” (Chapter 3), we considered the state of mission work in the Suqian field in 1905. In “The Mission” (Chapter 6) we looked at the state of the work in 1922. Now, twenty years later, in 1942, we take another look. Numbers from the three separate years show clearly that the church was moving forward (*see table*). Between 1922 and 1942 the number of communicants approximately doubled, while the number of organized churches increased four-fold and the number of ordained ministers more than six-fold. Churches in the Suqian area were making a strong effort to move beyond the need for mission support, to cultivate a trained Chinese ministry and strong Chinese leadership, and to increase the number of Christians who tithed — and they were having success.

In each of his three summarizing essays, Will emphasized how the Chinese Church was growing in autonomy and maturity. For example:

One strong church [*the Suqian City Church*] supports, in addition to the Pastor, two male assistants and three Bible women, and maintains seven missions, or outposts, in the villages nearby.⁷ Another church with only seventy members — all, with one or two exceptions, poor people [*perhaps Qipan?*] — was supporting its pastor in full; and now, since mission help has been cut off, has assumed full support of a Bible woman as well.⁸

As of 1942, Christians in the Suqian area were financially on their own, and they were earnestly committed to keeping the work going:

	BAPTIZED COMMUNI- CANTS	OUT STATIONS*	ORGAN- IZED - CHURCHES**	ORDAINED MINISTERS	OTHER WORKERS (MALE)	BIBLE WOMEN
1905–06	104	3	—	—	2	2
1922	1,723	51	4	2	25	6
1942	c. 3,000	96	16	13	35	15***

* Numbers include Suqian, other self-supporting churches, and chapels holding regular services of worship.
 ** Churches that had elected officers and that often had also called ministers.
 *** This number is found in “Questionnaire from Nashville (8/18/41).” Twelve of the women were employed with mission help, three by independent churches.

Self-support and independence have been tremendously enhanced [*since Pearl Harbor*]. It has been wonderful to see how Christians ... are *carrying on*. At several points small groups, very poor, and with a membership of only thirty or forty, are still trying to support their preachers, though they themselves are being harassed by roving bands of robbers and depredating soldiers, and the cost of living, because of the depreciation of currency, is twenty or thirty times what it was a few years ago. They say: “We *must keep* our preachers, and not let our regular services lapse.”

Will added that “in some instances preachers are supplementing their ... meager salaries by teaching, or farming, or by small trading.”

Will was well aware of difficulties that might still develop in the future. When he wrote the passage that appears just below, he was thinking of the occupation of China by Japanese forces; but his actual words seem like a prophetic vision of the dark days that the church would live through a generation later under the Cultural Revolution:

Even though the Church in its outward form may become a “subject Church,” a conforming, non-evangelical Church, I am sure that “underground,” in hiding, will continue the true Church of the Living God; there will be many times the “seven thousand” who do not bow the knee to Baal.

A LETTER OF ENCOURAGEMENT

THE ATTACK on Pearl Harbor and the internment of American nationals proved to be a decisive moment in the life of Suqian-area churches. In effect, the Japanese had thrust Suqian into the post-missionary period.

Will wrote a general letter to churches of the Suqian field in early 1942. He was himself interned at the time and experiencing the frustrations associated with that, but the letter was one of encouragement. He suggested that the compulsory removal of missionaries gave churches a chance to demonstrate that they were part of an on-going and truly *Chinese* church. The issue that Will touched on here would be of prime importance for the church in China for the next sixty years.

Suchowfu, Ku [*Jiangsu*], China. Jan. 14, 1942

My beloved Friends:

Though it is impossible for me to come to you or to see you, my heart is constantly turning to the churches of our three counties. In spirit I see your faces, think about you, and pray for you. I eagerly look forward to visiting you again some day. “I thank my God upon all my remembrance of you, always in every supplication of mine on behalf of you all making my supplication with joy, for your fellowship in furtherance of the gospel from the first day until now; being confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ; even as it is right for me to be thus minded on behalf of you all, because I have you in my heart.” (Phil. 1:3-7)

As missionaries, we cannot for the present help at all, either in our persons or with finances. It is impossible now for money to come to us from abroad or from Shanghai ... I know that it is going to be very difficult at many points to carry on and retain your preachers. I rejoice with all my heart in the full independence of quite a number of churches. Very great progress has been made this last year. We now have thirteen ordained pastors in our Presbytery. There are a number of points where I think new Sessions could be organized, and there are seven points where, I think, now or very soon pastors should be called and ordained.

Dear brethren and sisters in Christ Jesus, I beg you to press forward in the work of the Lord. This is God’s testing time for you. Stand the test and come out victorious ... The world is watching you. Now that God in His providence has removed the foreigner, stand up, and do away with that false charge that you are a *foreign* church. This year will MAKE YOU STRONG!

... Let the stronger help the weaker ... And my God shall supply every need of yours according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus. Now unto our God and Father be the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

(Signed) Wm. F. Junkin⁹

Just a few months later, after repatriation to the United States, Will wrote: “I verily believe that this calamity will prove, *is now proving*, a real spiritual blessing to God’s Church. Self-support and independence have been tremendously enhanced.” □

NOTES

1. About one-third of Xinyi County comes from the former Pixian County, about two-thirds from the former Suqian County.
2. *Suqian Xian Wen Shi Ze Liao (Suqian County Cultural History)*, 3rd printing, Aug., 1984, p. 162. The chapter on Protestantism is found on pp. 162–164.
3. B. C. Patterson, “News from Communist North Kiangsu, China,” *The Southern Presbyterian Journal*, Mar. 1, 1950, p. 23.
4. Typed ms., 4 pp., no title, Tazewell, VA, Nov. 7, 1942 (carbon copy, Junkin papers). For the published version, see n.6, below.
5. “It Grew and Waxed a Great Tree,” *Chr. Obs.*, Jan. 3, 1940, p. 5. The printed version is slightly variant from the ms. found in the Junkin papers.
6. “Looking Ahead to a Greater Glory,” pamphlet, 8 cols. on vertically folded paper (ECFM, n.d.g. [1943]). A slightly variant ms. is found in the Junkin papers. A useful fourth source is “Questionnaire from Nashville. Filled out 8/18/41.” For bibliographical information, see above, Chap. 7, n.11.
7. In the 1940 *Christian Observer* article, Will said that the Suqian Church was also supplying the entire salary for a tent evangelist who traveled the three counties of the Suqian field. Apparently that activity had ended.
8. Wm. F. Junkin, “Looking Ahead to a Greater Glory” (pub. 1943). This is the source for all citations through the end of this section.
9. Frank A. Brown, *He Made It His Ambition* (ECFM, n.d.g. [1947]), pp. 7, 8-10. The translator notes that underscoring and capitals are in the original.

The Suqian Church – II (1945-2000)

By 1945, the War in the Pacific was drawing to a close. Japanese troops in China, realizing that defeat was inevitable, had begun to loot churches, hospitals, and mission homes, carrying off furniture and belongings and also doors, windows, and floors. Presumably the latter were to be used as fuel. The Japanese usually did not destroy the shells of the buildings they looted, and sometimes they left whole buildings intact. However, for about a year after the Japanese left and before the Nationalist government was able to reestablish its authority, communist guerrillas controlled large parts of the area around Suqian. Quite a number of the little country chapels around the town, both brick and adobe, were destroyed at that time. During same the period, the shell of the Suqian hospital, which was all that was left of it, was burned down.¹

Just after the end of the war, in November, 1945, Will wrote a general letter to friends in the Suqian area (the text is found in Chapter 8, above). One of the addressees was Pastor Liu Deshen. At the time of Will's letter, Pastor Liu either had recently returned to Guanhu or was about to do so. A 1946 answering letter from Pastor Liu to Will reported that out of a population of about 700,000 formerly in Pixian County, 140,000 had become refugees and were gone. The population of neighboring counties, particularly in larger towns like Suqian, was similarly depleted.

THE CHURCH IN THE IMMEDIATE POSTWAR YEARS

WU SHIDA succeeded Cheng Pengyun as pastor for the Suqian church in 1939, and he continued to serve there both during the war and for

¹ Wm. F. Junkin, *et al.*, "Report of [Abingdon] Presbytery's Committee of Foreign Missions, Spring Meeting, Apr., 1947" (typed. ms., 5 pp., Agnes Junkin Peery papers), pp. 1-2.

several years afterwards. Despite the postwar depletion of population in Suqian and the postwar political upheaval, Suqian's Sunday and weekday services were held as usual in 1946 and 1947, with good attendance. The boys' and girls' schools and the Bible School for older women all reopened. Their combined enrollment for 1946 was some two hundred students.² Chal Vinson's description of the memorial service for Will held in Suqian in June, 1947, provides an appealing glimpse of Pastor Wu at work (see above, Chapter 8).

In August, 1947, soon after Will's death, his son Bill and Bill's wife Jessie sailed for China as new missionaries, along with their two children, Billy and Alice. They were assigned to Hangzhou [Hangchow], in Zhejiang. In October of the same year, Bill was invited as a visitor to the first post-war meeting of Suqian Presbytery. One of Jessie Junkin's missionary letters tells of the visit and provides a brief but valuable survey of the state of the church in the larger Suqian field in late 1947:

[We had] a chance to contact the presbytery at Sutsien, where Bill was born. He was invited as a visitor because, in a series of memorial services honoring the first missionaries who began Christian work in the North Kiangsu area, they held a special service in memory of his father and his work. It was a thrilling meeting. This was the first meeting the Presbytery had been able to have for ten years³ because of Japanese occupation followed by Communist control. Although Mr. Hamilton, who lives eighty miles away, has been able to recently aid this area, all of this particular meeting was planned and carried out by the Chinese leaders except as they called on Mr. [Martin A.] Hopkins, Mr. Hamilton, or Bill to speak. During the public meetings, they almost filled a church building which seats a thousand; and this is at a time when Sutsien city has been cut to a fraction of its former population, and the country is a series of fortified villages because of unrest. In spite of this the presbytery is made up of nineteen organized churches and has eighteen ordained pastors besides other workers and leaders, carrying on two primary schools and a small Bible School,

² *Ibid.*, p. 2.

³ Six years, actually. For the 1941 meeting of Presbytery, see above, p. 147. Probably Jessie was thinking of the lapse of ten years since the 1937 invasion by the Japanese.

with 106 preaching points! It was a thrilling experience to [see] the faith and ability of these who have suffered so and are still in danger in many areas.⁴

So the Christians of Suqian Presbytery had been able to carry out the solemn covenant they made with Will in 1941, to assure “that every chapel is kept open and that the work is kept up in all this field”!

No missionaries took up residence again in Suqian after the war, but a few missionaries had come back in such nearby stations as Xuzhou and Huai’an (Qingjiangpu). In late 1946, the total number of Presbyterian, U.S., missionaries in China was thirty-eight, down from approximately 200 before the war. The Suqian hospital having been destroyed, no attempt was made to revive medical work there. Margaret Wood, the nurse formerly located at Suqian, was reassigned to the hospital at Huai’an. As Jessie Junkin pointed out, the Rev. E. H. Hamilton, of Xuzhou, included Suqian in his rounds of itineration.

In 1946, Dr. C. Darby Fulton, Executive Secretary of the Committee of Foreign Missions, Nashville, visited Asia. On his return to the United States, he reported that “in general an effort is being made in [China and other Asian countries where the PCUS had work before the war] to conserve the gains that were made during the war in native initiative, leadership, and self-support, and to turn over to [national] direction and control such activities as the Christians ... are able to carry.”⁵

After World War II, Communists and Nationalists fought each other for four years for the control of China. When the Communists emerged victorious, the readiness of the church to be independent of missionaries, foresightedly encouraged by Dr. Fulton, was about to be given a full test.

THE PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC

From 1949 on, policies promulgated at the national level by the People’s Republic and decisions made at the Suqian level by local Commu-

⁴ Jessie Junkin, m.c.l. From Huaiyin [Qingjiangpu], Dec. 6, 1947.

⁵ Wm. F. Junkin, *et al.*, “Report of [Abingdon] Presbytery’s Committee of Foreign Missions, Spring Meeting, Apr., 1947,” p. 3.

nist authorities were a major factor in the life of the Suqian church. At the national level, the Protestant Three Self Patriotic Movement was inaugurated in 1950. At the local level, decisions about whether to join the TSPM were probably made by individual congregations in response to local authorities, rather than by a presbytery or some other regional grouping of churches. The overall process may have taken several years. The Suqian City Church, apparently in conformity with all of the other former Presbyterian congregations of the area, joined the TSPM in due time and became part of the TSPM's North Jiangsu branch.

We mentioned earlier that Seventh Day Adventists and the Little Flock opted to remain separate from the TSPM. Neither of these groups was strongly represented in the Suqian area, and it is therefore probably fair to say that the proportion of Protestants in Suqian County who remained outside of the TSPM, those groups whom Chinese refer to as “unregistered churches” and whom people in the West sometimes refer to as “underground Christians,” was, and is, relatively small.

Published information about the Suqian City church or other churches in the Suqian area during the early years of Communist Liberation is almost nonexistent. The only published source I have found is a three-page chapter on Protestantism in a book entitled *Cultural History of Suqian County*.⁶ This book, an official county publication, is decidedly ideological in its point of view, but its presentation of factual information seems to be reasonably accurate. The chapter on Protestantism provides a succinct sketch of the missionary period, followed by an equally succinct sketch of the first decade and a half of the post-Liberation period. Coverage ends at about 1965, just before the Cultural Revolution.

PASTOR WU DENG TANG AND OTHER POST-LIBERATION PASTORS

We have already touched on Suqian's first three ministers — Evangelist Shu Yanqi in the early days (1907-1918), and after the church became independent, Pastors Cheng Pengyun (1918-1939) and Wu Shida (1939—ca. 1950). The *Cultural History* gives us, in addition, the names of the five

⁶ Suqian Xian Wen Shi Ze Liao, p.162.

ministers who served from ca.1950 to 1965 — three pastors and two evangelists. Their five names, in order of service, are Pastors Wu Yunhe, Wu Dengtang, and Liang Longye, and Evangelists Jia Guiling and Tan Xiangwen.⁷ This rapid turnover of five leaders in fifteen years presumably reflects a stressful period for the church. Mr. Ji Tai, formerly Associate Dean of Nanjing Theological Seminary, confirms this supposition when he speaks of “the late 1950s campaigns to destroy Christianity.”⁸ The *Cultural History* itself tacitly recognizes what was happening with its laconic statement that “the government made appropriate arrangements for ministers ... and helped them change their lives from that of dependent, exploited believers to persons supporting themselves by their own labor.”⁹

Among the five post-liberation ministers named, Wu Dengtang appears to emerge as the most important. If Pastor Cheng was the first pastor to serve the Suqian church after it became independent, then Wu may be recognized as the fourth to occupy that position. His incumbency occurred during the mid-to-late fifties, a difficult time for the church. Judging from the activities that are ascribed to him, he must have served somewhat longer than the other men who are named by the *Cultural History*, but exact dates are not given for any of them.

From missionary records we know something of Wu’s earlier life in the church. The Huweize and Pizhou churches had been yoked together to support a minister since the early thirties. By 1936, they were ready to separate from one another. Huweize extended a call to Wu Dengtang, the man of whom we are now speaking (see p. 66). This was his first position after seminary, and the fact that his first call was to a church near Suqian probably means that he came originally from the Suqian area. That, in turn, means that he probably attended Huabei Shenxue Yuan [*North China Seminary*] in Tengxian.¹⁰ Will preached the sermon for Wu’s

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 163.

⁸ *ANS* 1997 6.9/10, p. 24.

⁹ Suqian Xian Wen Shi Ze Liao, p. 162.

¹⁰ Suqian Presbytery and Huabei Seminary had an ongoing close relationship.

ordination and installation on November 25, 1936.¹¹ When Huweize was destroyed by fire in late 1941, Wu presumably became a minister in another church, or perhaps became a teacher in a church school. His call to Suqian may be dated to about 1955.

The *Cultural History* mentions him by name and says that in 1957 he joined with evangelists, elders, and deacons to merge all the churches in Suqian County into a total of twenty-eight. The selection from Jessie Junkin's missionary letter that we included above said that outposts for the Suqian field numbered one hundred and six in 1947, a total that includes the entire three-county field. Discounting church growth in the next ten years, the number of outposts for a *single* county in 1957 presumably should be about a third of Jessie's number, or thirty-five. Also, Suqian County had shrunk in the interim.¹² So when we read that meeting places were consolidated into twenty-eight in 1957, the action is perhaps fairly reasonable. The *History* adds, however, that one year later, in 1958, meeting places were consolidated into eight — Suqian City and seven county towns that the *History* individually names.¹³ An explanatory statement accompanies the report of this drastic reduction—that “the people became greatly involved in production and construction.” This observation may quite well be true in itself. But to go in one year from twenty-eight to eight meeting places suggests intentional suppression.

In 1958, the TSPM established national union guidelines for Protestant worship. The new forms embodied “low church” informality rather than “high church” formality, that is, they encouraged practices that were similar to what Suqian Presbyterians already did. So their adoption, presumably still guided by Pastor Wu, was probably not disruptive.

Suqian public authorities gave recognition to Pastor Wu at some point, inviting him to become a member of the Suqian County Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC).

¹¹ The event is noted in Will's preaching records.

¹² See p 151, n.1.

¹³ Besides Suqian, the towns were Zhuoma, Sanshu, Zhangzhuang, Buzi, Yanghua, Zaohe, and Nancai.

Wu's successor, the third man in the *Cultural History's* list of pastors, was Liang Longye. The *History* had previously identified Liang as an instructor in the Chong Shi Middle School for Boys, so clearly he was an educated man, very probably a seminary graduate. In that previous reference, the *History* explicitly identified his home county as Pizhou rather than Suqian, a seemingly obscure piece of information not otherwise explained. However, the fact that it was said at all does prompt speculation. A certain Liang Jinzhen, a respected church elder of the previous generation, lived at Yaowan in Pizhou County (see Chapter 4, "Elder Liang"). Was the new pastor, Liang Longye, perhaps Elder Liang's son?

Evangelists Jia Guiling and Tan Xiangwen are the last two ministers in the *Cultural History's* list. We are told their names, but we are given no information about their previous experience in church work, their dates of service, or the state of the church during their tenure. The fact that they are called "evangelists" rather than "pastors" probably means that they were not ordained, presumably because they were not seminary graduates. The combined terms of service for the last three ministers in the list — Pastor Liang, Evangelist Jia, and Evangelist Tan — must be fitted into a space of about five years (roughly 1960 to 1965), so their individual tenures must have been very abbreviated.

THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION

The Cultural Revolution arrived in 1966. We have very little direct knowledge about what this meant for Christians in Suqian, though we may assume that all churches and chapels in the territory were closed down. Almost certainly any ministers still employed in 1966 were assigned to do "productive labor," perhaps in the Suqian area or perhaps out in a western province. During the years that Red Guards blocked the Suqian congregation from using its mid-town building, county authorities began to use it as a courthouse. The hospital building, and quite possibly the buildings of the boys' and girls' schools, had already been destroyed during the Sino-Japanese war and the subsequent guerrilla interlude. But three of the former missionary residences were still standing and fit for use in 1966, as in fact they still are. Two of these, near the former hospi-

tal at the south-end, were taken over by a new municipal hospital for use as clinics. At the north end, the former Hopkins residence came to be used as police headquarters, though this appropriation may have taken place during the Japanese occupation rather than during the Cultural Revolution.

Except for the “listening post” provided by Hong Kong, China was essentially closed to the West from 1949 to 1976. But in 1976 Mao Ze-dong died, the Cultural Revolution ended, and China began to relax tensions, both internal and international. By about 1980, international visitors could once again enter Shanghai and other larger coastal cities. Ten more years would pass before the gates of Suqian would swing open. (The reference to “gates” is figurative, however. Cities in the China of today no longer use encircling walls to protect themselves, and Suqian’s main wall, its secondary *weize* wall, and its various gate towers are all levelled and gone, no traces remaining.) In the years since Suqian was opened to non-Chinese visitors, a modest number of Westerners have traveled there. They report that Christianity still lives.

After the end of the Cultural Revolution, authorities in some cities began returning church buildings to local congregations. But there was little chance that authorities in Suqian would be willing to return a building that was now their courthouse. Perhaps by way of recompense, the county granted the Suqian congregation the right to use a small residential building at the southwestern edge of town. At first only a few Christians were willing to risk making a public appearance. But numbers grew, and for twenty years now, new adherents to the Christian faith have been coming into the church at a surprisingly rapid pace.

AT PRESENT

Unless they specifically ask to see it, visitors to today’s Suqian will not readily detect the presence of any Christian church in town. As they alight from the motor vehicle that brought them there (arrival is no longer by canal boat), they will see tall hotels, restaurants, commercial office buildings, and public parks. Over by the canal, the heavy black

smoke that billows twenty-four hours a day from tall brick smokestacks gives ample evidence of Suqian's industrial development.

If the visitors specifically ask to see a church, their hosts may politely inquire whether their interest is in Protestantism or Catholicism. The Catholic church, about a mile west of town, lies in open country, surrounded by farm fields. It is an attractive, moderate-sized building in Gothic style with a central rose window and steeples on the two front corners, each steeple topped by a cross. The church's windows are glazed with *faux* stained glass; the building faces the Suining Highway.

The Protestant church, for its part, is inside the city, located not very far actually from the former site of the Benevolent Aid Hospital. The church's courtyard is separated from the street by a swinging metal gate, and on it a small sign about the size of a human hand identifies the location as a church. This is quite useful, as the design of the building does not at all convey its identity. The pastor of the church at present is a relatively young man with two years of training at Nanjing Theological Seminary, a certain Elder Sheng. Three unpaid lay evangelists oversee the one hundred and sixty meeting places scattered through this single county, places which missionaries once spoke of as "active outposts." Christian presence cannot be measured in numbers alone, of course, but one is still impressed to learn that when Protestant Christians in the Suqian Church are combined with those of the county meeting places, the total comes to about fifty thousand, perhaps five percent of the county's population. In terms of both numbers and percentages, the increase over the pre-1941 church is fifteen-fold or maybe even twenty-fold.

When members of the Suqian Church were asked in 1996 about various churches outside of Suqian dating back to the missionary period, they estimated membership as follows: Zaohe (near the spot on the canal where Will was once ambushed), 500; Yaowan (where Elder Liang lived), 2000; Paoche, 1000; Lingcheng, 1000 (a big church for the size of the town); Yanghua, a canal town south of Suqian, 1000. Linkages between these current Christian centers and the earlier chapels of the missionary period are difficult to trace. For one thing, a town that earlier had only one chapel may now have six or eight meeting places, quite possibly all

of them located in private homes rather than in chapel buildings. Thus: Buzi, just south of Suqian, now has seven or eight meeting places and total Sunday attendance of 1500 or more, but not a single place that goes by the old name of “Buzi Chapel”; Tushan, twelve Protestant meeting places and also a Catholic church; Xiaodian, six meeting places, total attendance of 800 or more. The erosion of historical links between the earlier chapels of missionary days and the more numerous present-day meeting places may actually be of some advantage to the modern church, helping it to emerge as a truly indigenous *Chinese* religious movement rather than a missionary implant.

Everything we have been saying applies not only to Suqian County but also to the other two counties which once made up the larger Suqian mission field. A September, 1998, paragraph that appeared in *Amity News Service*, an official English-language church paper, tells about developments in Suining County, the district just west of Suqian:

The church in Suining County, Jiangsu Province, has over 70,000 believers worshipping at some 90 different church meeting points. The county is in desperate need of qualified pastoral workers to care for the needs of these believers. Up to the end of last year, the church in Suining had held 16 different training programs but has no fixed location where classes can be held. As a result, a church hall has to be found for use as a classroom before each program, and students have difficulty arranging a place to live, eat and study during such courses. In February this year, work began on a permanent lay training centre in Suining. Believers donated money and labour and, within only two months, the three-storey building was erected at a cost of 200,000 *yuan* (=US\$ 24,160 approx.).¹⁴

On Easter Day, 2000, hundreds of bicycles crowded into the streets and lanes near the Suqian Protestant church. Beginning at an early hour, people surged into the small building of the church, quickly filling the benches there. They soon filled, too, the rough benches in the courtyard. Combined attendance at the two Easter services was above two thousand. If Will and Nettie had been there, perhaps they would have mused

¹⁴ *ANS* 1998. 9/10, p. 9.

within their own hearts on the long series of wars and disturbances that has characterized Suqian's most recent century and would have wondered, from a human point of view, about what the new millennium might bring. But even if such thoughts had troubled Will and Nettie, we can be sure that they would have been bolstered by their faith in the providence of God. Their hearts would have been filled with joy to participate with the people of Suqian in the worship of God on that Easter Day and to hear at each service the powerful resonance of a thousand Suqian voices lifted up to sing, "Christ the Lord Is Risen Today!"

Epilogue: From the First Day Until Now

A REUNION OF FORMER MISSIONARIES TO CHINA was held at Columbia Theological Seminary, Decatur, Georgia, on October 14–16, 1994, fifty-two years after Will and Nettie last saw China. Attendees included a few pre-World War II missionaries, a larger number of post-World War II missionaries, and many former missionary children. Five of the attendees had Suqian connections: Agnes Junkin, now Mrs. Peery, the second daughter of Will and Nettie and a person whose childhood had been lived in the early days of Suqian station; Lydia Daniel Woods, a missionary in Suqian from 1932 to 1937, and her daughter Lydia, now Mrs. Peale; and two sons of the C. H. Pattersons, Houston and Bob.

An address by Bishop K. H. Ting entitled “An Update on the Church in China” deeply moved conference participants. Bishop Ting gave voice to the appreciation still felt in the Chinese Church for the work done by former missionaries, people such as Will and Nettie:

The [missionaries] brought the Christian gospel to our land. For all the good work missionaries did, we are grateful to them and thankful to God. ... I assure you we do [recognize] a difference between colonialism and imperialism ... on the one hand; and, on the other hand, the missionaries themselves, who were inspired by Christian faith and sacrificed themselves for their love of the Chinese people.¹

Bishop Ting also spoke of how the Chinese Church had moved beyond its dependence on missionaries and into self-sufficiency:

There is a time for missionaries to come and also a time for them not to remain. All good missionaries worked hard to make themselves

¹ Bishop K. H. Ting, “An Update on the Church in China,” p.3. This address, delivered at the Presbyterian China Missionary Reunion, Columbia Theological Seminary, Decatur, Georgia, Oct. 14-16, 1994, was afterwards circulated in mimeographed form. In the passage cited, the sequence of words has been slightly altered to enhance clarity.

dispensable as early as possible. We like the former China missionaries to see the Chinese church as it is now, not as a denial of their foundation work, but as the fruition of their labor.²

One thinks back to some of the dreams and yearnings Will had while he was in China. He once stated that the theme for his life was to be “a preacher of the gospel of the grace of God.” From his very first day in Suqian, Will longed to see the power of the gospel at work in the lives of many people. As the years went by, he also developed an effective vision for the growth of the visible church, and he came to look for the day when the church in China would be a “virile, dignified, consecrated, indigenous church,” or, in words that he could comfortably use, a “Three Self Church.” Will’s concern for the emerging visible church meant that he frequently counseled young men about a call into the ministry. When promising ministerial candidates had been found, he yearned for them to attend a Chinese seminary and to study with well-qualified and devoted Chinese Christian professors. Will was convinced that this would make the candidates’ work among Chinese people more effective.

Will was also concerned about needs that manifested themselves in the wider Suqian community. He worked to alleviate famine and to prevent floods, and he dared to dream of a time when the waters of the Yellow River would no longer inundate the fields of North Jiangsu. He yearned for a day when Jiangsu cities would no longer need to bolt their gates against errant soldiers or marauding bandits, and he himself became a mediator for peace, even at the risk of his own life. He hoped to see the day when little girls would no longer have their feet bound. He and Nettie knew the men who pushed wheelbarrows and the women who beat out laundry on the canal banks, the farmers in the fields and those who hawked food from trays, and they looked for a day when the children of those people would be able to attend school and grow up literate. To that end, Will and Nettie not only hoped but also worked — helping to found fifty or more schools. Will hoped, too, for a time to come when a laborer’s daily wages would be sufficient to support a family.

² Ibid.

Now it is sixty years later. When we look back to the dreams that Will had — both the ones concerning Christian life and the ones concerning wider community life — we can see that all of them have found fulfillment in considerable part and some have been fulfilled entirely!

The rebirth of the Church of China after the end of the Cultural Revolution and its rapid growth from then until now stands out as one of the truly remarkable events in all of church history. Does this mean that the Chinese Church of today is without problems? Of course not.

- Some of its problems emerge from the very growth that has been so impressive. We touched on one of these earlier when we talked about “unconverted folk beliefs” (Chapter 5). Another problem, one which is first-cousin to “unconverted folk beliefs,” is the distinction sometimes drawn, even in church publications, between rural Christians and more educated Christians. One can have confidence that education in the countryside will eventually catch up and that the church will move on beyond this distinction.

- Again, the church in China, like churches elsewhere in the world, is still learning how to respond to the epidemic of AIDS.³

- Another problem, really a whole set of problems, grows from what Chinese refer to as “modernization,” a term by which they mean industrialization and economic growth. An overwhelming quest for wealth currently grips China’s people. Even now the church in China seeks to determine what its position should be towards this. In a 1999 essay, Professor He Guanghu, of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in Beijing, expressed effectively some of the negative spiritual implications that are associated with his country’s rapid modernization:

Manifold serious problems have [already] surfaced ... Some of the-

³ As recently as the summer of 2001, Chinese government officials acknowledged for the first time that China has a serious problem with AIDS, nearing a million cases. The prognosis for controlling the epidemic over the next ten years is guarded, at best. Perhaps official recognition that there is a problem will give a boost to greater church involvement in prevention of the disease or in provision of care for those who have it.

se are frenetic desire for material gain, the alienation of personal relationships, the disintegration of community life, ecological degradation, and other consequences that are deleterious to a spiritual civilization, traditional morality as well as the natural environment.⁴

In whatever ways the Church of China is able to meet some of the recent social problems, we may hope — indeed, we may expect — that it will not abandon the special sensitivity for poor and needy people which has traditionally been one of the church's hallmarks.

If one goes back to the arrival of Nestorianism, the span of the church in China is about fourteen hundred years. If one looks back only to the arrival of Protestantism, the span for the history of the church is about two hundred years. Or, from another point of view, one may say that the church that has emerged in the last twenty years is wholly new, that the church that has now emerged and that is now growing in China is a genuinely post-colonial church.

For too long after 1949, the Church of China was isolated from other parts of the world church. But now it has rejoined the World Council of Churches and the voice of China's Christians will increasingly be heard there. Since the reunion of Hong Kong with China, visits between Christians on the mainland and those in Hong Kong have become more frequent. Even reciprocal visits with church groups in Taiwan are occasionally possible.⁵ Both ordained leaders and lay people in the Chinese Church are visiting the churches in other parts of the world, including the United States, and the visits are becoming more frequent. The worldwide character of the Church is becoming clearer.

In 1942, after Will had been under internment for only a few weeks, he wrote his first general letter to the churches of the Suqian field (see "A Letter Encouragement," Chapter 11). The Japanese had only recently interned foreign missionaries and thrust Suqian churches into the very

⁴ "China's Modernization and Christianity: Some Contradictions," *CNU*, Jan., 1999, p. 3.

⁵ See, e.g., "Chinese Church Leaders Visit Taiwan," *CNU*, Sep., '96, pp. 8-9.

early days of the post-missionary period. Will drew on the words of Paul to express his greetings to the churches he was writing to:

“I thank my God upon all my remembrance of you, always in every supplication of mine on behalf of you all, making my supplication with joy, for your [partnership in] the gospel from the first day until now; being confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ.”⁶

Paul’s first-century words, “... from the first day until now,” would have had a special meaning for Will when he was writing in 1942: “... from a certain cold Sunday in January, 1897, when we first saw one another ... up until this present darkening and yet promising time of 1942.” Since then, sixty more years have passed. If Will were with us today, he would write again to the churches of China to express the fullness of his joy at the blessings God has poured out on them, far beyond what he himself could ever have imagined. And as he thought about the future towards which those churches are ever moving, he would once again make supplication unto God on their behalf, extending to them his greetings of thanksgiving, fellowship, and hope.

⁶ Phil. 1:3-7. In the bracketed phrase, the RSV translation has been given in place of the KJV.