

JOHN SUNG

my

TEACHER

TIMOTHY TOW



JOHN SUNG
my
TEACHER

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

- 1 An Anthology of Sermons and Verses
- 2 Songs and Verses from the Holy Land
- 3 Pioneering in Dyak Borneo by Jason Linn
(Translation from Chinese)
- 4 An Abridgment of Calvin's Institutes of the Christian Religion Vol. 1, Book I & II
- 5 Forty John Sung Revival Sermons Vol. 1 & 2
(Translation from Chinese)
- 6 In John Sung's Steps —
the Story of Lim Puay Hian
- 7 The Gospel of Life
- 8 The Gospel Prophets
- 9 The Law of Moses and Jesus

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CHRISTIAN LIFE PUBLISHERS

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JOHN SUNG MY TEACHER

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FOREWORD

The story of John Sung is simply the story of Holy Spirit Revival, not of the spurious ecumenical sort currently infecting churches around the world. John Sung unequivocally rebuked the tongue speakers, the liberals, modernists, apostates and ecumenists of his day. Were he alive today, he would not spare these false prophets the reproof of God's Word.

Dr John Sung's ministry was unique. His one consuming passion was to turn men and women from sin in repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, and thus to revive the Church. Wherever he preached no meeting place could hold the overflowing crowds. His preaching was direct, piercing and electrifying. At every meeting convicted sinners repented in tears and lives were changed. One of his co-workers in China, William E. Schubert, in his book "*I Remember John Sung*" wrote:

"Dr John Sung was probably the greatest preacher of this century. I have heard almost all the great preachers from 1910 until now, including R.A. Torrey, Billy Sunday, Henry Jowett, the great holiness preachers, the Methodist bishops, including Bishop Quayle, even Harry Emerson Fosdick, who set a great example of the homiletic art, though I did not agree with him, and finally Billy Graham. Yet John Sung surpassed them all in pulpit power, attested by amazing and enduring results. . . ."

By the fruits ye shall know the tree. John Sung's converts bear lasting testimony to his astonishing ministry. Today, fifty years after his first visit to Singapore, John Sung fruits are scattered everywhere, faithfully serving the Lord in every nook and corner of Southeast Asia. Many recall with tearful nostalgia the Spirit-blessed hours sitting at the feet of God's beloved servant. In not a few hearts, the fervour of revival fire lingers on.

Books have been written about John Sung, but this one is different. Rev Timothy Tow writes from an intimate personal knowledge of the man, with access to material hitherto not available, including Dr Sung's unpublished sermon

notes, Bible commentaries and private correspondence, released by Mrs Sung. As one whose life and ministry have been profoundly blessed by Dr Sung's preaching, Timothy Tow writes warmly and with rare spiritual insight of China's greatest evangelist.

To Christians and church workers who dream of revival, I heartily recommend this latest biography of John Sung. For me, reading "*John Sung My Teacher*" is to re-live those unforgettable days at Telok Ayer Methodist Church when God's Spirit first ignited the fire of revival in my heart.

May some reader be challenged to follow in John Sung's steps, to forsake all, take up the cross and serve the Lord before He comes. In this day of ecclesiastical confusion, ecumenical deception and theological compromise, John Sung sounds out a message loud and clear. It is the good old Gospel, the faith once delivered unto the saints and handed down to us by the Apostles and Reformers of old.

John Sung burnt out for his Lord in fifteen flaming years, in the process ushering several hundred thousand fellow Chinese into God's everlasting Kingdom. To God be the glory!

Tow Siang Hwa

PREFACE

The Lord be praised for the timely publication of this book in this Jubilee Year of Dr John Sung's first coming to Singapore to revive the Christian Churches here and in Malaysia. To me, who personally shared all the spiritual blessings from beginning to end in all Dr John Sung's four revival campaigns in Singapore from 1935 to 1939, this book, the manuscripts of which I finished reading with great delight and interest almost non-stop for 12 hours, has warmed up my heart and brought back the fondest of memories of those days when we sat through three long sermons a day without any sleepy nodding of the head. This reading has also led me to pray for God's continued keeping that I may remain true to the end to the whole-life consecration vow which I made at the same time as the author in September 1935.

Now, after a lapse of 50 years, many who were set on fire for the Lord through Dr Sung's ministry have gone Home to be with the Lord. Not a few others have by the grace of God been preserved to this day in His service, but even more have lost that revival fire or even have gone the way of Demas. The reading of this book not only will warm up the old timers like me, but should instill in the younger generations now and to come a revival zeal and fire so lacking in this age when the world is intruding more and more into the Christian Church both in doctrine and life and when hearts generally are growing colder and colder.

The author, Rev Dr Timothy Tow who already has had eight books to his credit, has gathered and edited by translation, reproduction and original writing, such historic facts and valuable material as to make this new volume far excel other publications written before on Dr John Sung.

Besides, the author's personal experience of the rich spiritual blessings from the ministry in Singapore and Malaysia of Dr Sung, his very descriptive accounts, in beautiful English, of past events, his translation, at times humorous, of Chinese names and idiomatic expressions, and above all his very appropriate quotations from the Holy

Scriptures to evaluate different situations in the life and ministry of Dr Sung make the reading and study of this book a most delightful, profitable and inspiring one. So much so, the reader once he or she begins will most probably, like me, be anxious to finish reading it. To every English-speaking Christian who wishes to know why there was such a great spiritual revival half a century ago in the Church of Jesus Christ in China and Southeast Asia, and wherein lie the secrets of Dr Sung's mighty ministry, I heartily recommend this book for reading.

Would that the Lord will raise some inspired reader to undertake the translation of this book into the Chinese language for the benefit and spiritual blessing of Chinese-speaking brethren everywhere.

Rev Quek Kiok Chiang
Moderator, Bible-Presbyterian
Church of Singapore and Malaysia

Dedicated
to
young men and young women
whom
the Lord Jesus
is calling
today
to serve in this generation
as
Dr. John Sung, B.A., M.Sc., Ph.D.
had served
in
his generation.
Amen.

“Remember them which have the rule over you,
Who have spoken unto you the Word of God:
Whose faith follow,
Considering the end of their conversation.”

(Hebrews 13:7)

MAP OF CHINA

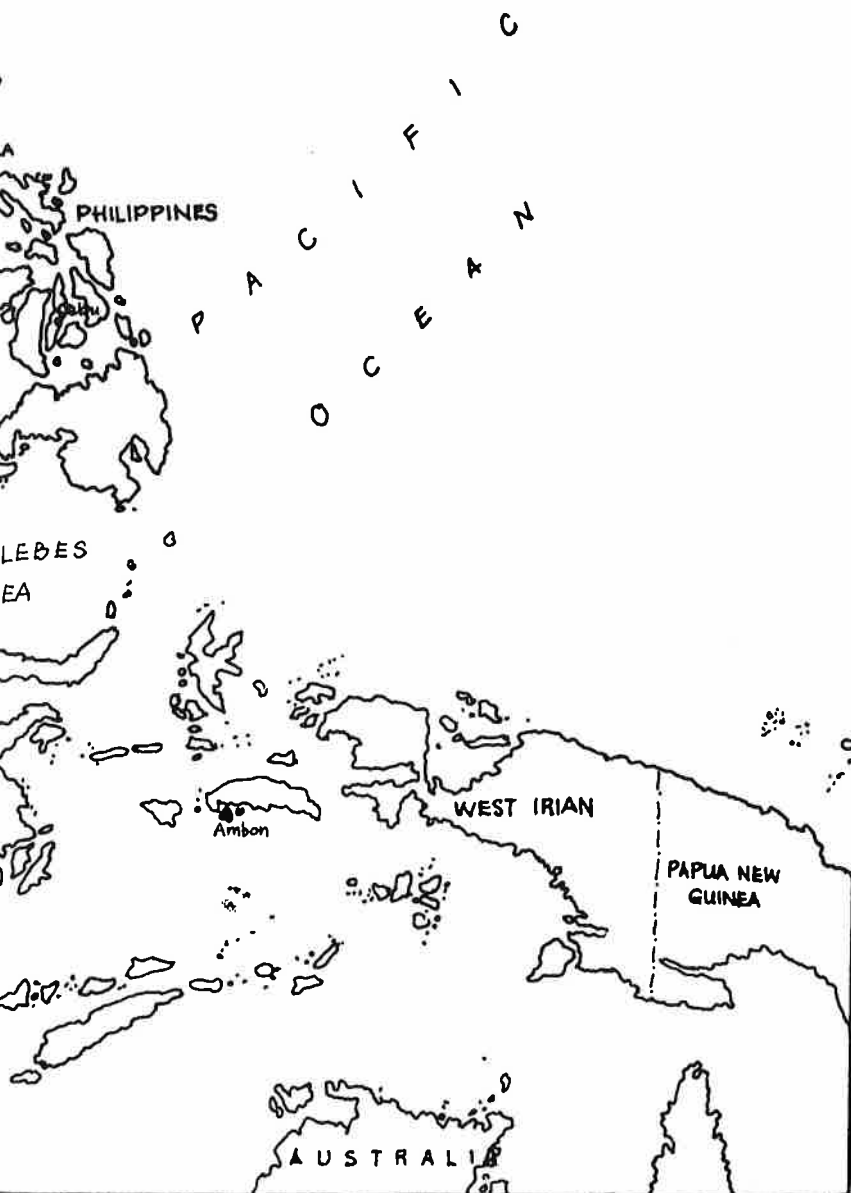






AN

MAP OF SOUTH-EAST ASIA



A. INTRODUCTION

Chapter I

MY FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH DR JOHN SUNG 1935

August 1935 was a time of happy home-coming for the Tow boys, who along with their parents lived in Kluang, a railway town in Johore, Malaya — 80 miles from Singapore.

Under British Colonial Administration this was our Second Term School Holidays. To go to school in Singapore where a better education was sought at the Anglo-Chinese School of the American Methodist Mission, we boarded with Grandpa who was pastor of the E. P. Mission Church, 4¾ miles Upper Serangoon Road. Every school vacation saw the four of us riding the Kluang “Express” to visit Dad and Mum.

Back in Kluang we attended the Chinese Presbyterian Church, for Church-going was a high tradition with the Tow clan. The congregation had just completed building a diminutive brick sanctuary which stood a stone’s throw from the railway station. Recently arrived at the little new Church was a lady-preacher from China, who also taught a kindergarten class. She was Miss Leona Wu, a saintly woman in her late-thirties, recently graduated from Ginling Women’s Theological Seminary, Nanking. She came from a well-known family in Amoy, for she was an eminent pastor’s daughter. Dressed always in a three-quarter length white linen *cheongsam*, with white stockings and white shoes, she wore an aura of consecration and holiness.

Ever since her coming to Kluang (through Rev. A S Moore Anderson of the English Presbyterian Mission), the spirit of worship at the little railway-town church was transformed. This came about not only by her introduction of lively new sacred songs and choruses, for she was an accomplished musician, but also through her diligent visitation of the flock and heart-warming messages.

No sooner had we returned to Kluang for the school vacation than our spirits were further enlivened. For several weeks the lady-preacher in linen-white had been reporting from the pulpit of a great revival sweeping China. The revivalist was (in Hokkien pronunciation) Dr Song Siong Chiet. Known to the west as Dr John Sung, he was a brilliant American-trained doctor of science. A Ph. D. in Chemistry, he had given up a high position and good-paying job to preach the Gospel. Under his preaching, hundreds, yea literally thousands, were being saved and set on fire for the Lord throughout the length and breadth of China. Miss Wu urged the whole church to go and hear the preacher, now coming to Singapore! A two-week Revival Campaign was being planned at the Telok Ayer Chinese Methodist Church, which could seat a thousand people, August 30th to September 12th. The little congregation of sixty-seventy was astir with great expectations. At Lord's Day worship and at mid-week cottage meetings, Miss Wu led in fervent prayers for the coming of God's messenger. "Who is this Dr Song?" I wondered. The thought of hearing him thrilled not only Mum and Dad, but also my youthful heart. Mother was converted in her teens under Miss Dora Yu Tzi-tù, China's famed lady-evangelist, whose life and work had also greatly influenced Watchman Nee.

One day before the campaign started, Miss Wu led a sizeable number of her parishioners to board the train to Singapore. Not the least to join the pilgrim band were the Tow family. But, alas, minus me and second younger brother Siang Yew and fourth younger brother Siang Yeow! I was fifteen, Siang Yew twelve, and Siang Yeow eight. We three boys were detailed to guard the shophouse — Nansun Dispensary at 53 Jalan Station. Siang Hwa who was ten years old was the lucky one to board the train with Dad and Mum.

Two days after the church party had left for Singapore, while we were gleefully playing like the three blind mice when the cat was away, there came a sharp knock on the door of the shuttered shophouse. Telegram! As eager fingers tore open the sealed envelope, it read, "LOCK SHOP. COME IMMEDIATELY. GREAT BLESSING." (signed

SIEW AI). Prancing with delight, like naughty boys let out from a stay-in class at school, we packed our meagre belongings and books, for school-reopening was round the corner. We caught the 3.30 pm "Express" to Singapore in the nick of time, arriving back at the Church-parsonage in the twilight.

The Church-parsonage was an old wooden attap house with a big sitting hall, flanked by two bedrooms on either side. This was built for the pastor and his family below a slope upon which stood a brick-and-wood Church sanctuary facing the road. Founded in 1883 by the English Presbyterian Mission, the Church sanctuary was in disrepair by the mid-nineteen-thirties. For safety it had to be torn down leaving the brick pillars standing, which became a haunt for bats and owls, and a hideout where we children could play out of Grandpa's sight. Now that the Church sanctuary was gone, the congregation was obliged to assemble in the sitting hall of the parsonage. Hence this combination of a Church-parsonage.

As we entered this our second home, the shades of night had already invaded the brown void of its high-roofed attap canopy. We were glad to be back in time to light the kerosene oil lamps for Grandpa in the gathering gloom.

Receiving his grandchildren as usual with outstretched hands, Grandpa thanked the Lord for our safe arrival, as he would pray for our going-out. Then he broke into a glow that outshone the oil lamps, as he related the joy of attending the Revival Meetings. He taught us a new chorus he had learned on the first day from Dr John Sung:-

Never Fear! He is Near!

John Sung Choruses

Ne-ver fear! He is near! Look to no man

The image shows a musical score for a chorus. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff on top and a bass clef staff on the bottom. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The melody is written in the treble staff, and the bass line is in the bass staff. The lyrics are placed below the treble staff, aligned with the notes. The lyrics are: "Ne-ver fear! He is near! Look to no man".

Care not what the world may plan. On - ly trust in the

Lord. All the way to Beu-lah Land.

The image shows a musical score for a hymn. It consists of two systems of music. Each system has a treble clef staff on top and a bass clef staff on the bottom. The lyrics are written between the staves. The first system of lyrics is "Care not what the world may plan. On - ly trust in the". The second system of lyrics is "Lord. All the way to Beu-lah Land." The music includes various notes, rests, and bar lines, indicating a specific melody and rhythm.

Under the spell of a heavenly wonderment we three hungry boys had let dinner-time slip by. For we had "meat" to eat that we never knew before.

When Dad and Mum returned from the Revival Meetings with Big Sister who sent the telegram, with Siang Hwa and the younger ones, and there were also Third Aunt Alice, Second Aunt and Fourth Uncle trooping in, a chorus of praises, "Olo Choo, Chan Bee Choo," filled the house.

Suddenly, Father brought out from his room a parcel wrapped in old Chinese newspaper. A stern disciplinarian that he was, he now looked sheepish like a schoolboy going to see the principal. Beaming with a joy never seen before in all his life, he testified how the Lord had saved his soul at today's meetings. Not only that, he had snapped his life-long smoking habit, Hallelujah! Then he made a bonfire in the Church-yard under the durian trees of his tin of "Craven A" and packets of "Rough Rider" cigarettes, stock of Chinese "red" tobacco, "Luzon" cheroots, pipes and all. All these infernal titles I knew by heart, for I was Daddy's errand boy to the cigarette stalls. As the poisonous substances went up

in flames and ash trays were also smashed, so vanished Father's craving for tobacco once and for all. Prior to this, Father had tried to rid himself of the bad habit with peppermint sweets under Miss Wu's tutelage, but to no avail. Praise the Lord, a spontaneous chanting of Dr Sung's Revival theme song flowed from every lip:

In the cross, in the cross, Be my glory ever; All my sins are washed away In the blood of Yesu.

For the three of us who were not "initiated", that spell of heavenly wonderment now grew into excitement: "O, that we could have been at the Revival Meetings from the beginning!"

When the old German "eight-day" wall clock struck eleven with a rusty note, Mother urged us all to bed. For the special English meeting scheduled for students was but hours away — 7.00 am the next morning! That night when I knelt to pray in bed, the presence of God was felt in the attap Church-parsonage as never before, as sounds of subdued vibrant prayers reverberated from every room through the chinks in her aged wooden partitions.

Early next morning, while the last shadows of night lingered still, Siang Yew, No. 2 of the boys and I mounted our bicycles. Never before did we pedal at such breezy speed — all the five miles to town. We made our way for the first time to Telok Ayer Street where the Chinese Methodist Church sat, like a fortress, and like a fortress she sits to this day.

Racing upstairs to the main auditorium of the four-storey Church complex which was solidly packed with young people, even overflowing into the aisles, our attention was immediately arrested by the doctor-preacher. Attired in a light white Chinese gown rarely seen in Singapore, with a shock of black hair flapping his high forehead, he was jabbing away in American English at the youthful audience in a hoarse voice, "You ought to die, to die!..." The strange-looking evangelist was charging away from one end of the pulpit to the other as he preached from Abraham's pleading with God before fire came down on Sodom and Gomorrhah. Was Singapore a better city than Sodom? Was

Singapore holier than Gomorrha? Were there to be found in Singapore ten righteous persons? Not a single one of us could stand before a holy, just and angry God! As the preacher thundered God's message with lightning effect upon a wicked city, the walls of resistance began to crumble.

When the invitation was solemnly given at the close of the message, a goodly number of boy and girl students capitulated. As one by one surrendered themselves to the Lord by going to the front, the preacher led them to confess their sins, item by item. "Do you worship idols? Have you disobeyed your parents? Have you stolen anything from your friends? Have you cheated in class? Do you go to the cinema? Have you done bad things in secret? Have you told lies? Do you play mahjong? Do you smoke? Do you gamble? Have you borrowed books without intention of returning them and they are now on your shelves? This is theft! . . . You ought to die, to die . . . You cannot wash away your sins. But Jesus can. He died for you on the cross to pay for your sins. For you! For you!" Many a sob was heard as warm tears fell thick and fast, to the strain of:

Coming home, coming home, Never more to roam. Open
wide Thine arms of love, Lord, I'm coming home.

As for me and younger brother Siang Yew, however, we joined the remaining silent crowd on tip-toe out of the Church hall. "How dreadful is this place! This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven" (Gen 28:17).

When the next service resumed after lunch, Dr Sung led us, waving a white handkerchief (for he was his own songleader), in the chorus, "Ye must be born again! Ye must be born again! I verily, verily, say unto you, Ye must be born again!" This was so new to us! Like Nicodemus this was the first time I ever heard about being "born again". Expounding the story of his encounter with Jesus in John 3 verse by verse, Dr Sung pointed his finger at me, "Are you born again? If not, you can never go to heaven! Do you have the new life of Jesus in you? If not, you are bound for hell!"

Every word the preacher had said this time pierced my trembling heart. But Satan, who did his level best to keep

me away from Christ, beguiled me with all kinds of sweet excuses. "But you are a Christian boy all your life," he whispered. "You were baptised at birth, and now you're taking the Lord's Supper. You are a regular Church-goer, and you attend Sunday School. Your Grandpa is a minister. Your mother gave you to the Lord. . . ."

Praise the Lord, at whatever Satan whispered into my ear, there came the Holy Spirit's rebuttal, loud and clear, through every quickened heart-throb: "But, you are not born again! But you are not born again! But, you are not born again. . . ." Though crestfallen from my high self-esteem and pride of a strict religious upbringing, realising for the first time I could not save myself by my good deeds which I had tried to do always, I nevertheless stiffened against raising my hand to the preacher's call. As I struggled within, I caught a glimpse of younger brother Siang Yew's hand going up. While the struggle raged there came a nudge suddenly from his side. This shot my hand right up, as by an electric shock! As my hand went up, my sin-burden rolled down! I saw myself kneeling with Pilgrim at the foot of the cross, released forever from the sin-burden.

Rolled away, rolled away, I am happy since my burden
rolled away; Rolled away, rolled away, I am happy since
my burden rolled away.

"Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile" (Ps 32: 1,2). O the joy of knowing that all my sins were now washed away by the precious blood of Christ! That spell of wonderment that grew into excitement, but abruptly deadened to a stony burden, now burst into sunshine flooding my soul!

O there's sunshine, blessed sunshine,
When the peaceful happy moments roll;
When Jesus shows His smiling face,
There is sunshine in my soul . . . in my soul!

Now I began to experience the thrilling joy of a soul born again, a soul set free. Now I began to sing with spirits lifted to heaven the new choruses of His wonderful saving grace.

Revival-time was sing-time, heart-warming sing-time, reverberating sing-time! Like Ezekiel in the spirit, our souls were lifted, as it were, to the outskirts of heaven.

Hallelujahs fill the heavens,
For the saints have all come home
To Jerusalem, to Jerusalem!
Joyfully they shout Hosannas:
Come and crown Him King of kings
In the New Jerusalem, Jer-u-sal-em . . .

As I look back to that glorious noonday when Jesus washed my sins away, there must have been forty to fifty of us who went up to the pulpit. Assisting Dr Sung was the chubby Rev Chew Hock Hin of Paya Lebar Methodist Church. I can still hear him calling earnestly with outstretched hand in English, while Dr Sung pleaded in Mandarin, and Miss Wu interpreted into Hokkien, "Who wants to be saved, come right up to the front! Who wants to be saved, come right up to the front!" The earnest evangelists spared no effort to haul in every struggling soul.

Now that we were born again by the washing of regeneration of the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5) a wonderful surge of new life was felt in our innermost being. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God" (Rom 8:16). That surge of new life soon burst upon our lips in a spontaneous cry of "Abba, Father", when the evangelist called us to pray. Hitherto, whenever I prayed, it was the perfunctory repeating of a few stock phrases or the mechanical saying of the Lord's Prayer. To pray to a Heavenly Father with tender filial feeling and with assurance of loving acceptance was something quite unknown before this day. I felt like a long lost orphan found by his real father.

As the revival meetings progressed and more and more were born anew, the auditorium of Telok Ayer Church was transformed into a power house. The phenomenon of tongue-speaking was wholly unknown nor any such manifestation of unbridled unruliness as intruding into today's charismatic meetings. As in the days of the Apostles who "lifted up their voice to God with one accord," every message was closed with the whole congregation standing to

pray in a loud yet harmonious chorus of praises and supplications. As the petitions and praises welled forth in a lively stream from deep within (John 7:38), there was no need of padding up with so many repetitious and stuttering Hallelujahs. But one phrase so characteristic of the John Sung Revival was their fervent and spontaneous Hokkien equivalent, "Olo Choo, Chan Bee Choo" which also means "Praise the Lord."

In between meetings, small groups of young people, old people, middle-aged people could be seen gathered in their own corporate prayers, on bended knees. What a joy now to call on the Name of the Lord! What a release to bring our burdens to him!

Revival-time is not only sing-time. Revival-time is prayer-time, earnest, fervent, united, corporate prayer-time!

One prayer chorus that caught on immediately was:

Don't Stop Praying

Don't stop praying the Lord is nigh! Don't stop praying He'll hear your cry.

God has promised, and He is true. Don't stop praying, He'll answer you.

The image shows a musical score for the hymn "Don't Stop Praying". It consists of two systems of music. Each system has a vocal line on a treble clef staff and a piano accompaniment line on a bass clef staff. The key signature is one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is 2/4. The lyrics are written below the vocal lines.

As newborn babe needing milk, I suddenly realised I had

no Bible. Practically everyone of the forty to fifty who went to the front with me were in the same boat. Perhaps I could excuse myself for not owning one, since there were plenty in the Church-parsonage. The real reason why we possessed no Bibles of our own was quite obvious. Could a dead man eat and a blind man see? "Except a man be born again, *he cannot see the Kingdom of God*" (John 3:3).

The first good thing that happened to us that day after my brother and I were born again was to go to the Colporteur's table downstairs in the lobby to buy each one a Bible. During the two-week campaign I bought in all three Bibles. First an English Bible, then a Chinese Bible, and last but not least, a Chinese-English New Testament.

For the first time in my young life, I awoke to the importance of the Chinese language, since after a few English meetings Dr Sung switched entirely to Mandarin, our spoken national language. This was translated into Hokkien. Hokkien was the common vernacular of the Chinese in Singapore and remains to be what I'd call the "unofficial national language" of Singapore. (Singapore is 76% Chinese.)

Incidentally, Dr Sung had a male interpreter, a Government Chinese-language teacher who happened to be Miss Wu's elder brother. Unable to cope with Dr Sung's rapid-firing preaching, he had to step down after a few engagements. His position was filled by his sister our lady-preacher from up-country Kluang to the satisfaction of the whole congregation. Especially to me, for I admired her, she being Mother's best friend. How true is the saying, "The last shall be first, and the first last" (Matt 20:16).

The Bible Society's stock of Chinese and English Bibles and bilingual Testaments sold out in less than a week. To cope with the situation large quantities were rushed from Kuala Lumpur the Malayan (Malaysian) capital. Revival came also to the Bible Society.

To confirm us in our newfound faith, Dr Sung would autograph our new-bought Bibles with an appropriate verse, signing his name John Sung in English. One favourite verse of his was I Cor 15:58. Another was Psalm 23:1. Furthermore he told us to write on the front page of our Bibles the

day, month and year of our second birth. So I printed in the best handwriting in every Bible I had bought: "Born again on September 1, 1935. Praise the Lord!" To strengthen my desire to follow the Lord, I added many a resolution in the back page for the next few years.

Dr Sung told us he read eleven chapters of the Bible a day and thirteen on the Lord's day. So he exhorted us to read ours everyday. If we read an average of three chapters a day, he said, we would cover 1095 chapters out of a total of 1189 in one year: Reading the Bible was no chore then, but a wonderful new experience: "O how love I thy law! It is my meditation all the day" (Psalm 119:97).

As for me, attending the John Sung Revival Meetings not only made me realise the importance of the Chinese language, but also helped me to study it as a subject for the Cambridge School Certificate Examination. By reading the Chinese Bible through, which has a vocabulary of about 2,000 different Chinese characters, I had gained not a little to equip me for the test. Praise the Lord, this was one added blessing in reading God's Word in Chinese for me. Reading the Bible in English had also improved my English. When one of the earliest modern translations by Moffat appeared, I bought a copy to further improve my English.

Another benefit I had gotten from the Revival Meetings was the unction of "linguistic gear-shifting" of my native Teochew to Hokkien. The two dialects are very similar, nearer to each other than Portuguese to Spanish. The important element in learning any spoken language, however, is acquiring the right accent. It was a marvel for me a Teochew, who rarely had contact with the Hokkien-speaking before this, to adapt to fluent Hokkien after a mere two-week campaign. This was a gift of tongues from the Holy Spirit I had experienced in my own way! Not only was the Lord preparing me for ministry among my own people in Mandarin, but also to the various vernacular groups, and Hokkien was just the beginning!

Apart from Bibles, we bought each one a lightly-printed booklet of 130 John Sung Revival Choruses. Three quarters of these choruses were new to us who were hitherto either tethered to the 120 Swatow Presbyterian Hymnal or the

bigger 200 Amoy Hymnal. Though we went to English school, we attended Church service, the Teochew in Teochew, the Hokkien in Hokkien. English services were not in vogue then. Nor was Mandarin spoken popularly as it is today.

Another piece of literature that was quickly snapped up was Dr Sung's "My Testimony" in Chinese. This Chinese text was soon translated into English by Mr Tipson, the English Secretary of the Bible Society, himself a fluent speaker in Cantonese. The sale of books was brisk not only because it satiated our spiritual hunger, but also because Bibles were sold at a subsidised price anyone could afford. The English Bible which I bought at the Revival Campaign was one printed on thin paper with imitation leather cover. It cost \$1.65. Chinese printed matter cost but a fraction of the English, which had not yet condescended to paperbacks in the thirties.

During the two-week campaign at Telok Ayer, Dr Sung preached forty sermons. The forty-first session was given to praying for the sick and the forty-second and last for testimonies and farewell. Although the doctor's sermons lasted two hours, there was never a dull moment nor the resultant embarrassing subconscious nod of a drowsy amen. For the messages were graduated and presented in logical progression. Not like some dry-as-dust lecture-type sermons based on some abstract truth, Dr Sung clothed the doctrine he was putting across in vivid, lively figures, like Bunyan in *Pilgrim's Progress*. He excelled most preaching biographical and allegorical sermons.

The theme of his message was further emphasised by an appropriately chosen chorus. This he made us sing time after time in order to drive home the message on one hand, and to keep up our attentiveness on the other. The preacher was no professional perfunctorily spinning out some stereotyped liturgy. A bundle of super-charged energy with one consuming passion to save souls, he used every audio-visual aid well in advance of his time, to put across the message.

Once while he was preaching on the Five Loaves and Two Fishes, he plucked out a French loaf from nowhere. And as he continued with the preaching he peeled. As he peeled he

propelled the peeled pieces into the pool of faces. Upon whomsoever the morsels landed there was added a sweetness to the mouth upon that sweetness to the ears. And has not that double sweetness remained with me unto this day?

On another occasion Dr Sung fanned a little charcoal stove so that it became a miniature furnace. The fan represented the Holy Spirit and the charcoal stove our heart, kindled by the new birth. As it is written, "He shall baptise you with the Holy Ghost and with fire" (Luke 3:16).

The evangelist used the blackboard most as a form of visual aid. How he caricatured our carnality and spiritual impotence by chalking a big head which was our pride, a big belly our laziness, little twigs of hands and feet our inability to do anything good. John Sung was no graduate of an approved theological school, but he spoke with refreshing originality and with power. Some foot-bound old ladies were overheard assessing their preacher, "Dr Sung can make us laugh and also make us cry". Dr Sung spoke to every heart old or young, male or female. We young people enjoyed his sermons no less than the old, and there was not a word he said that we missed.

Half-way through the campaign, the preacher began to call for volunteers to his Preaching Bands. Now that we were saved, we were saved for a purpose — to witness Jesus Christ to those who had never heard. Dr Sung lamented the fact that Chinese pastors were consigned by an unconscionable congregation to every chore, big or small, in the church. The pastor was treated like an old amah, he said. Unless members would go out evangelising, the prospect of church growth was dim. With these admonitions he drew in batch after batch of volunteer preachers. Thus the Singapore Christian Evangelistic League was born.

Every band was made up of at least three members. As for me I teamed up with Grandpa and a younger brother. Every band was given a number. This was indicated on a triangular flag on which was imprinted the red Christian cross. The whole wording in Chinese read: "No. ____ of the Singapore Christian Evangelistic League". This flag was carried about without shamefacedness wherever we went witnessing. For a while the Lion City, for that is what Singapore means, was taken by storm.

As the Preaching Bands were being formed in the course of the Revival Meetings, we went up to the pulpit to covenant with the Lord to preach Christ at least once a week. Dr Sung prayed movingly for us as hearts further yielded in solemn consecration. Every team would congregate at a monthly meeting on a Saturday afternoon at one of the Churches participating in this revival campaign, in a district by district rotation. Miss Wu, Dr Sung's interpreter and successor in Singapore, was elected president, which position she held year after year until her promotion to glory in 1974.

Like an army on the march the Preaching Bands could be seen at every street corner in the Telok Ayer district during recesses of the campaign, singing with one voice the famous theme song, "In the Cross . . . All my sins are washed away in the Blood of Yesu." This was followed with distribution of Gospel tracts and invitation to come and hear Dr Sung in Church.

A higher call came to us when Dr Sung followed up with an appeal for "whole-time consecration". Now that we had found salvation full and free from the Lord Jesus Christ, should we not further dedicate our bodies a living sacrifice to serve Him all our life? Like the ageing Paul calling Timothy into service, Dr Sung was enlisting beyond the "reservists" of the Evangelistic League "regulars" of the whole-time consecration.

When this call was made I was one of the first to go up front. In all there were 85 old and young. One of the young men a few years my senior who stepped forward that day, September 8, 1935 was (Rev) Quek Kiok Chiang. He is now moderator of the Bible-Presbyterian Church of Singapore and Malaysia and a leader of the Twentieth Century Reformation Movement, the International Council of Christian Churches. Another who did not make a public profession but always looks back with joy to the John Sung campaign is third younger brother Dr Tow Siang Hwa. He is another pillar of the B-P Church, President of Far Eastern Bible College, founder and editor of RPG Daily Bible-reading work-books with a worldwide circulation. Indeed, the spirit and vitality of the B-P Church has stemmed in great measure from the Singapore Pentecost of 1935.

Before the doctor's appeal, insofar as I was concerned, it was crystal clear what I should be when I grew up. When I was born, Mother gave me, like Hannah gave Samuel, to the Lord. Grandpa prayed the prayer of dedication. From a tender age Mother would tell me of her vow and that when I grew up, I should serve God as a pastor. Thus, as the working of the Holy Spirit in my heart deepened with the quick passing of the days of the Revival Campaign, I was resolved to give the Saviour my all.

As Dr Sung related how a young man surnamed Lee was taking the Gospel to Mongolia, with overgrown beard and feet shod with Chinese straw-sandals, I vowed to carry the cross, if need be, even to Tibet! Such was my zeal to serve my Lord, constrained by His dying love and reinforced by Mother's vow.

Now the Whole-time Consecrators were to be doubly nurtured above the Preaching Bands. Whereas the Preaching Bands had a scheduled monthly meeting, we consecrators, on top of that, had another. This second monthly meeting was in charge of Mr Phoa Hock Seng, a Government school teacher. Gloriously saved from dead Anglicanism with his whole family of many sons and daughters, he turned his big bungalow house at Pasir Panjang on the remote West Coast into a preaching station, and from a preaching station into a Church. After World War II he was ordained pastor of his Church. Under his wife still living today, they built a sanctuary on a slope of the Pasir Panjang hills overlooking the Singapore Straits. This Church not only serves its own congregation, but others who come here to camp during school holidays.

Though Dr Sung laboured day and night without let-up, he never seemed to tire. What was the secret of his strength? No doubt he was sustained by "one chicken a day". He would not eat pork as relished by the Chinese race, because he disdained such an unclean animal. He was given dilute chicken soup to sip on the pulpit in order to make up for profuse sweating in the course of intensive preaching. Whereas Samson's strength lay in his unshaven long hair, Dr Sung's strength came from the joyful satisfaction he derived from his work — the countless souls saved, campaign after

campaign. "For the joy of the Lord is your strength" (Neh 8: 11).

Thus in between the preaching sessions the good doctor found strength to counsel and pray with the heavy-laden and broken-hearted, and time to read from anyone who would unburden his or her heart to him by letter. After every Revival he would carry in his personal luggage a bundle of such letters. Thus he was not only an evangelist and a preacher but a pastor as well — to an evergrowing flock in the Far East.

On the flat-top of Telok Ayer Chinese Methodist Church there stood a curved-roof Chinese pavilion. Here with the cool seabreezes blowing in from Telok Ayer Basin, Dr Sung would be reclined on an easy chair as those who needed further spiritual help went to see him. Out of curiosity I also went up the pavilion, only to be solemnised by more tears of repentance on bended knees. One I could recognise was Elder Heng Mui Kiah, father of Rev Philip Heng. Not only tears of repentance, but tears also of restitution and reconciliation. Stolen sums of money were publicly returned to the Lord. Feuding elders and deacons of the same church made up with one another. Heading a list of sinners come to repentance was one Rev Huang Han Kwang, pastor of the "self-supporting" Mandarin-speaking Jesus Church of China. I can remember him well for his pockmarked face. A stout man, he can be identified seated next to Dr Sung in the photograph of the 85 whole-time consecrators taken in the Telok Ayer Church compound, September 1935.

On the last day at Testimony Hour, he was one of the first to witness with beaming moon-face how he came to be born again at the Revival Meetings. "Praise the Lord", echoed Dr Sung, who abruptly had him stand down in order to give a long line of others a chance. The testimonies went on without let up, punctuated by spontaneous choruses of "Olo Choo, Chan Bee Choo". I would have gone up the pulpit to say a word for the Lord had I not felt inadequate as a school-boy. Since I did not go up my conscience troubled me, but I made it up by testifying for my newfound Lord at the Literary Society of my class in the Anglo-Chinese School. Only then was my conscience saved!

Time will not suffice to retell a fraction of the vivid testimonies I had heard which remain deeply impressed on my mind to this day. Let me relate three or four more of the outstanding ones.

Mr Gan was a rich import-export merchant with head office located in the Telok Ayer district. Was it by this geographical proximity that he was drawn to the Revival Meetings? I cannot say. This man came with his three wives to the meetings, and he and his three wives, together with their sons and daughters, were gloriously saved. He made an appropriate settlement for his second and third wives, and committing his business to his eldest son, went about his new enterprise as an itinerant evangelist. He became one of Father's bosom friends so that whenever his preaching circuit would take him to Johore State in Malaya (now West Malaysia) he would preach at Father's church and stay in our house. He continued faithfully year after year to the end. He published a commentary on the Song of Solomon in Chinese.

The two wives of a commercial artist whose studio was on Cecil Street, next to Telok Ayer where the Chinese Methodist Church is, were surely attracted by our singing. They both came to the meetings and were also gloriously saved. Both the young women came not only in tears of repentance, but also to offer their lives to serve the Lord fulltime. They both left their unrepentant husband to study at Chin Lien Bible School, the continuing ministry of John Sung through Miss Leona Wu in Singapore.

Before World War II the elder of the two women, Madam Ang, migrated to the inland Malay State of Pahang. There she founded a Church on a hillock at the gold-mining town of Raub. After the War she built another at Bentong an adjacent town, both of which were visited by this writer and the Rev Hsu Chiang Tai, another John Sung convert, in our missionary journeys to inland Malaya in the early fifties.

Mr Lim Kim Seng was a Buddhist when he came to the Revival Meetings. A young man of nineteen, he gave up his old religion. With no promise of support from anywhere he also went out preaching Christ. He affiliated with a Brethren group and later founded a Church at Bukit Panjang (Long

Hill) which flourishes to this day. Now nearing seventy he keeps going, preaching Christ as he first did half a century ago!

One great haul of souls by Dr Sung extended to a remote part of Singapore Island — to a chicken farm by Johore Straits in the backwaters of Lim Chu Kang. Mr Sim Eng Koon with his wife and several farmer-and-fisherman sons and daughters were among those who entered God's Kingdom by "violence". As they had to travel a long distance to town and were further bogged down by their farm work, they prayed for a way out. "Olo Choo, He answered our prayer," said old Mr Sim. "In one night all our 700 chickens were taken by a sudden epidemic. This released us to go to the Meetings to hear the Word." Mr Sim and his wife, sons and daughters, were all turned to the Lord like the house of Cornelius. Whenever the monthly meeting of the Preaching Bands came around, he would be seen trooping into the meeting hall with his wife, sons and daughters, after riding 20 miles in an open lorry to town. Mr Sim was a man of ardent prayer and how I felt drawn closer to God as he wrestled with Him in prayer! He was a tower of strength in the Evangelistic League until he was called home. I always enjoyed his testimonies of God's mighty workings in his life, particularly, deliverance from Japanese soldiers who landed on their farm by the sea after they had crossed the Johore Straits.

Today he is survived by several sons, one of whom is an elder and another a deacon. The eldest son Sim Choo Un is Senior Elder of Glory Presbyterian Church, chairman of their overseas missions committee. He is a separatist fighter in his Church against Ecumenism, a frequent co-labourer with this writer in our outreach to the Riau Islands of Indonesia. Said he to me of his father's conversion, "He smashed up his wine bottles, and threw his cigarettes and Chinese tobacco into the drain."

And so I could go on with many more accounts of the abiding fruits of a Holy Ghost Revival which swept not only Continental China, but also the sprawling lands and archipelagoes of Southeast Asia or Nanyang, as the Chinese call it.

Last, but not least, of my first encounter with Dr John Sung is his practice of divine healing. Not like charismatic faith healers today who put healing above preaching, Dr Sung did not announce praying for the sick until one day before the event. In fact, he had emphasised elsewhere he was called to preach the Gospel and not to heal. In view of many in North China woefully lacking medical facilities and were groaning under a heavy burden of sickness and disease, he was constrained to this work of mercy in the Spirit of Christ. He was persuaded to do so by a missionary!

On that afternoon of the last day of campaign, many sick people among those who had received the Lord formed a queue to go up one side of the pulpit. The doctor knelt by a chair while the patients went up one by one and knelt beside him. A number of those closest to the doctor also knelt, praying with one accord. As each patient knelt before the chair where Dr Sung was, he dipped his fingers into a bowl of olive oil. With a quick smack on the forehead he commanded in a hoarse voice, "Be healed of your sickness in the Name of Jesus Christ!" At which the patient rose up quickly and left by an exit on the opposite side.

The healing session had taken a whole afternoon. At the final and closing session of the Campaign those who were healed gave testimony briefly culminating with "Praise the Lord, thank the Lord". To these praises came loud echoes from the doctor himself. Dr Sung was careful not to usurp any glory, and would rebuke sharply any who mentioned his name or gave credit to him.

I cannot remember seeing any blind man opening his eyes or any lame man who walked. But I can recollect those who, like Father, were delivered from their smoking habit. Delivered not only from cigarettes but also delivered from opium. Opium-smoking was a particular social evil of the Chinese race. In the thirties when Singapore was a British Colony one could see Government-operated Chandu (Opium) retail shops. These were patronised by scrawny sunburned rickshaw pullers and pale-faced coolies. It was said of them that they would rather eat "black rice" than white rice. What a manifestation of the total depravity of the human heart. Praise the Lord, I saw one of the these

scrawny opium smokers rise up to testify to the saving power of God with a new gleam in his eyes.

As for me I was healed of a recurrent gnawing gastric pain that had plagued me since childhood, though I did not go up to Dr Sung that afternoon. For the joy of the Lord was become my strength (Neh 8:10). As I had come to trust in the Lord, and to acknowledge Him in all my ways, this had become health to my navel and marrow to my bones (Prov 3:5-8). That there is a close link between a person's psychological and physiological make-up is a latter discovery of modern medicine.

As all good things must come to an end, the night of September 12, 1935 descended on us, a new generation of born-again, God-praising people, too soon! As the doctor himself led in the singing of "God Will Take Care of You", tears streamed down his face while our eyes became dimmed.

We share our mutual woes, Our mutual burdens bear.
And often for each other flows The sympathising tear.

Committing us his Singapore flock to the Lord, Dr Sung bade us farewell. His next campaigns would swiftly take him to Muar and Malacca and up the Malay Peninsula to Seremban and Penang. From Penang Island he crossed the Straits of Malacca to Medan in North Sumatra, Indonesia.

On October 18, 1935 Dr Sung returned to Singapore for a week of "spiritual-nurture" meetings. Again the Church hall where he had so recently said farewell to his sheep was packed to overflowing. Many who came this time were from up-country where he had lately been. Through the second campaign in Singapore 21 Preaching Bands were added so that the Evangelistic League now swelled to 132. All inclusive more than 5,000 souls were won in Dr Sung's first expedition into Nanyang (Southeast Asia). The meetings closed on October 25 with further zeal infused into his followers.

When the doctor finally took leave of us, I was one of the thousand disciples who went to the wharf at Keppel Harbour to bid him good-bye. How the triangular banners with the red Christian cross of the Preaching Bands fluttered in the wind as one by one wended up the gangway to say to one

they had come to love, "Fare thee well". As he looked down with deep emotions at his spiritual children, like a mother leaving her brood, he felt the Lord saying to him, "Feed my lambs, feed my sheep. Feed them the whole Word of God in a Second Bible Institute." As for me, though I lingered on the wharf until my spiritual father was lost from sight, I no longer felt lonely and listless as before. I had the Risen Saviour with me and in constant communion. Wherever I went pedalling the bicycle I loved, He was always by my side. How I wished I could serve God someday, answering to His call through this song introduced by Dr John Sung:

Follow Me

GEORGE D. WATSON
DUET

Arr. by HERBERT G. TOVEY

1 I hear my ri-sen Sa viour say: -- Fol-low me, fol-low me, fol-low me
 2 "Tho' thou hast sin-ned I'll pardon thee, -- Fol-low me, fol-low me, fol-low me
 3 Bring un-to me thy ma-ny cares. -- Fol-low me, fol-low me, fol-low me

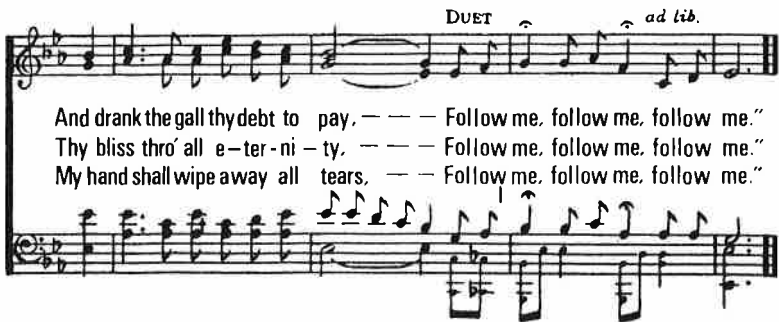
me" His voice is calling all the day, -- "Follow me, follow me, fol-low me,
 me; From ev-ry sin I'll par-don thee, -- Follow me, follow me, fol-low me,
 me. Thy heavy load my arm up-bears. Follow me, follow me, fol-low me.

FULL CHORUS. (Or Soprano and Alto Duet.)



For thee I trod the bit-ter way, — — For thee I gave my life a — way,
In all thy changing life I'll be. — — — Thy God, thy guide on land and sea,
Lean on My breast, dismiss thy fears, — — And trust me thru' thy future years.

DUET *ad lib.*



And drank the gall thy debt to pay, — — — Follow me, follow me, follow me."
Thy bliss thro' all e — ter — ni — ty, — — — Follow me, follow me, follow me."
My hand shall wipe away all tears, — — Follow me, follow me, follow me."

B. YEARS OF TRAINING

Chapter II

EARLY YEARS

1901-1909

In the year after the Boxer Rebellion, the last decade of Manchu rule, there was born at Mid-Autumn Moon the 27th day of September, 1901 a sixth child to a Chinese pastor's home in South China — in the Village of Hong Chek, Hinghwa Prefecture, Fukien Province. It was a boy, but what distinguished him from his elder brother and sisters was his big head. And because he was the first child to be born after the conversion of his mother, and in gratitude was offered to the Lord's Service, Pastor Sung named him Chu Un (the Lord's gift).

In a land of teeming multi-millions which was and is China, eking out a livelihood for a growing family was an ever uphill climb. And so much the more for a poorly paid Chinese pastor. When Chu Un arrived, the family was going through a period of "washed-out poverty", as the Chinese saying goes, so that this extra mouth to feed was not particularly welcome. So, from a very young age, Chu Un had to learn to live a life of frugality.

The Chinese country parsonage under the American Methodist Episcopal Mission, as living standards went in those days, was sparing in household comforts, save for a few sticks of furniture. But though the cottage in which Chu Un lived was lacking in amenities, the world outside was a treasure house of scenic beauty and abundance. Brownish mountain ranges in the pale-blue of morning haze made a brodered border for a panorama of lush green ricefields, tier upon tier, while gurgling streams and leaping brooks made music to the peering skies as the mists lifted before the morning sun. Uphill and downdale little Chu Un would wander, and wonder, in this kaleidoscope of God's country. "Day unto day uttereth speech and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech where their voice is not heard" (Ps 19:2,3). In these poetic surroundings that spoke

so often to his inquiring soul lived the Sung family in that rustic parsonage until the country pastor was promoted 1909 to Assistant Principal of the Methodist Bible School in Hingwa.

Pastor Sung Hsueh Lien was a man with a quick temper. In this respect Chu Un, above his brothers and sisters, was a chip of the old block. As the boy grew up he began to come into clashes with his disciplinarian father. The bamboo rod that hung on the wall was a constant reminder of fatherly authority. More often than not, it was applied on the bare back of the rebellious young Sung. Not only did Chu Un clash with his father, he was found at odds also with his brothers. In retaliation for his pranks around the house, they would call him by his nickname, "Big Head".

Once a quarrel broke out between "Big Head" and a brother while eating together in the courtyard. That blood from his hothead father surging in his veins, plop came his bowl of steaming-hot rice porridge onto his brother's head, scalding him face and neck. Realising how he would end up for this transgression, he tried to escape by jumping down a well. As the well happened to be covered, he disappeared in no time into hiding under a bed. There he remained, like a mouse, for the good part of the day until Dad found him out at nightfall. The hiding he now got from that bamboo rod, however, brought him into the daylight of his senses. In the solemn stillness that followed the thrashing, however, Father Sung was seen buried in his study in a flood of tears. There did the young Sung catch a glimpse of the mystery of fatherly love contending with fatherly wrath.

On another occasion, in a fit of rage, Big Head charged at a clay water jar like a young bull seeing red. Crash! The water jar crumbled to pieces, but Big Head stood up unhurt!

Though Chu Un was a hothead, he nevertheless had a soft and pliable heart. Meditating on the mystery of life and death in moments of solitude, this is one perplexing problem that vexed his troubled soul. Why must a man die? I don't want to die! It was this morbid fear of death that bridled him to God. In a revival sermon he preached in after years, this is what he said of his first brush with death:

"When I was nine years old (seven or eight by Western

reckoning) I saw a small black object placed in front of our door. I asked Mother what it was and she said it was a coffin for three-year old (one to two by Western reckoning) sister to sleep in. Mystery of mysteries! I only knew how lovable little sister was, but Mother was speaking of her death. I entered the room. I saw her face now pale and white. Her hands and feet were ice-cold. I did not realise I had seen death.

I called to her but she did not reply. I came out and saw Mother brimming with tears. I did not know what to do. I did not know how sister died. How was it that I who was older than she had not died? Just then I saw someone lift little sister into the coffin. I called out to Mother. Mother did not listen, nor did anybody else. They carried the coffin out. I asked Mother where they took sister, whether she would return. Mother said they had taken her to the countryside and she would not return. Hearing this I burst into tears, and I asked Mother whether I would become like little sister, and Mother said yes. I grew more gloomy. That night I dreamt I died like sister, and was put into a coffin. I was afraid and cried to Daddy and Mummy, "I won't die, I want to stay with you." I woke myself up with loud sobbings which brought Father and Mother out of bed. I said, "I dreamt that I died. I was afraid. I do not want to die. Death is so frightful. It takes me to the lonely countryside. No, I won't die! I want to live with Daddy and Mummy forever!"

Now, in spite of conflicts of temperament, the Sung parsonage was like any normal home and a happy one at that. Chu Un had a big brother and four older sisters. Four younger brothers were born after him, not counting the younger sister who had died in infancy. With so many eager mouths to feed the larder was more often empty than not. "But godliness with contentment is great gain" (I Tim 6:6). So, after an evening meal of coarse rice and vegetables with a modicum of fish or meat, the parsonage would be filled with songs of praise and worship. "Where Jesus is 'tis heaven there," a famous John Sung chorus, is one he had learnt from the nightly family worship.

Of particular attachment to the father was Chu Un in spite of that bamboo rod. In another sermon John Sung preached

in his revival campaigns, he said of him, "My father kept a diary. It is from him that I have acquired the habit of keeping a diary. Every Saturday he would climb a hill to pray for his Sunday sermon and congregation. He was not a strong man. He was often plagued with coughs. Once he coughed so badly that he almost died. Mother and I got together to pray for him. Thanks be to God, He heard our prayer and healed him. My father was a devout pastor. He served in the ministry for forty-four years. I thank God for such a father who loved me, taught me and fed me with spiritual food. What I am today is all from my father."

Chapter III

“HINGHWA PENTECOST”

1909–1913

One event in the young life of Chu Un that had made such an indelible impression upon his soul was what has become known as the “Hinghwa Pentecost.” This happened in the year 1909. At that time Pastor Sung had transferred to a big Church in Hinghwa city. Under his ministry the number increased from two hundred to six after one year and to one thousand in the third year. “I have never seen such a prosperous Church”, said John Sung when he testified of his father in another sermon. But God had greater blessings in store for the people of Hinghwa. As it is said that “the wind bloweth where it listeth,” so the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Pentecost of Hinghwa came all of a sudden one afternoon when the parishioners met in annual convention to commemorate the death and sufferings of our Lord.

The preacher was a young pastor surnamed Lim who had earlier impressed Chu Un as an effective and interesting speaker at Sunday School. But as he spoke now on “Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane” there was felt a penetrating power never experienced before. His words, like arrows, pierced the heart. As he preached his hearers were moved to bitter tears. The preacher himself also broke down and wept for his own sinfulness that sent Jesus up the cross. Under a similar conviction of sin, more and more of the congregation capitulated — weeping and groaning. No more were the arguments as to what was sinful and what was not sinful. Under the searchlight of the Holy Spirit the people confessed their faults one to another. Feuding elders and deacons in the same Church held one another’s arms in mutual forgiveness. Stolen articles were returned to their owners. According to John Sung’s “My Testimony” published two decades after the event, several hundred stolen balls were returned by convicted young people! Wherever possible restitution was made and if not possible “trespass-offerings”

were directed to the Church Treasury.

As the fire of God swept on, as many as three thousand, like the first Pentecost, were saved! The Hinghwa Pentecost was so noised abroad that visitors came from as far as Amoy in the South and Foochow in the North, yea, even from distant America.

Among the repentant was nine-year-old Chu Un. He also was moved to tears so much so that his coat lapels became soaking wet. Leslie Lyall, in his book on John Sung — Flame for God in the Far East — thinks the young lad had found the Lord as Saviour at the Hinghwa Pentecost. Liu Yih Ling in his Chinese version on the Life of Sung Shang Chieh, quoting John Sung's own testimony of his spiritual crisis in America concludes differently: "At the time of this revival John Sung was nine years old (by actual reckoning, only seven-and-a-half, if we count from September 27, 1901 to Easter 1909). Although he went everyday to the meetings he had not gone through the experience of repentance from sin nor received the new life, though he had felt a power bringing him to the meetings." "Nevertheless," continues Mr Liu, "this was a beneficial lesson John Sung had learned for his future evangelistic ministry. Thanks to the Lord, from such a young age there was inculcated in him such an important lesson — the secret of revivalistic evangelism. Such an indelible impression of such a great work on his young heart."

"The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is everyone that is born of the Spirit" (Jn 3:8). Birth is a mystery. The spiritual birth is a greater mystery.

Now, while it is true that revival is sent or withheld by the good pleasure of a sovereign God, the human factor involved in revival as evidenced in the Hinghwa Pentecost cannot be by-passed. As there was a ten-day prayer meeting held by one hundred and twenty disciples of the early Church preceding the descent of the Holy Spirit, so there was united intercession by two elderly ladies in America for revival in response to a request made by a missionary in Hinghwa. As the two American women were pleading for

Hingwa month after month suddenly they felt a quickening assurance within that God would do something great by the Good Friday of 1909, whereupon they wrote to tell their friend in Hingwa about it. As mail by sea was slow, this letter did not arrive until after Easter. Nevertheless Pentecost did come down on Hingwa, to be exact, the afternoon of Maundy Thursday, eve of Good Friday, 1909.

Lord, send the old-time power, the Pentecostal power,
Thy flood-gates of blessing on us throw open wide!
Lord, send the old-time power, the Pentecostal power,
That sinners be converted and Thy name glorified.

Chapter IV

LITTLE PASTOR AND STUDIOUS SCHOLAR

1913-1917

The fires of the Hingwa Pentecost burned on for several more years. During this period, insofar as Pastor Sung was concerned, there was a doubling of his thousand-member congregation. As the old Church was too small, a campaign to build a bigger one was set in motion. In the spirit of the Revival members gave liberally to the building fund, so that with further help from well-wishers a new auditorium, capable of seating 2,000, was erected the next year. The gentry of Hingwa began to take notice of this new surge of power in God's Kingdom. The Prefect of Hingwa, in matters that concerned the populace, would call on Pastor Sung for consultation.

With the building of the new Church, the pastor was in need of an assistant. Little did he know that God had prepared one who was standing by his side — his own son! Although the Little Pastor, as Chu Un now came to be known, began with stammering lips, he soon got over this nervousness. With a little more training under his Pastor father, the boy-pastor was soon preaching from the pulpit of the new church, and wherever he was needed. For, by the year 1913, Pastor Sung had added to his ministry an orphanage and two Bible Schools, a boys high school and another for girls. No doubt these increases were outflowings from the Hingwa Pentecost.

A bundle of energy, young Sung was ever ready to venture out with his father to outlying villages on evangelistic tours, or on circuit, as the Methodists call it. He stood in for Father on not a few occasions when the latter was preoccupied with more urgent business, or when he was indisposed. To make the most out of his work the Little Pastor would pack a satchel of tracts for distribution and

Bibles to sell. He delighted in open-air preaching and was his own songleader. God had surely endowed the budding preacher with a melody in his heart for, as Martin Luther has said, "Music is next to theology."

From a young age Chu Un loved to study. Like his father, whose name Hsueh Lien means Scholarly Link, the son was a bookworm. Pastor Sung, poor as he was, was a spender on books. So, whenever he could spare a little cash, which were strung together like a row of beads, he would unloose a few from the cash-string to bring home a paperback or two — to the dislike of his illiterate wife. Slowly and surely a small library took shape which grew to sizeable proportions in the city parsonage. This became young Sung's happy browsing ground. Of an ever-inquiring mind he would leave no book in Father's study unturned, including women's magazines and periodicals. With such a love for books it was no wonder that Chu Un stood first in his class at every school examination.

Now it was the custom for a young scholar, as he progressed in school, to take on a new name above what was given him at birth. Thus, apart from Chu Un, his birth or "milk" name, he now called himself, at father's suggestion, Shang Chieh. Roughly translated, it means Noble and Frugal. And what a young scholar, noble in thought and frugal in life, Shang Chieh was!

About this time there appeared an advertisement from the Fukien Naval College. It was an invitation to the Entrance Examination to be held in Foochow, the Provincial Capital and naval station. When Pastor Sung saw this opening he told his son to prepare for it. (In old China father's word was law.) Now, Foochow lay 100 miles to the north of Hinghwa along many a narrow and tortuous mountain track. Over this terrain every young aspirant from the south must tread.

Why did Pastor Sung now change his mind about the young man's career? Did he not offer him to the Lord at birth, yea, even while he was in his mother's womb, in thanksgiving for what the Lord had done? Wasn't his wife sick unto death and was restored in answer to prayer, and born again upon her recovery? The pressure of livelihood (there were ten young mouths to feed and educate) and the

opportunity to a free education for Shang Chieh could have been the reasons.

To qualify for a naval cadet officer one must have good physique and a good head. Endowed with robust health, young Sung had no qualms about the physical test. As for the written examination, there was only one requirement: Write an essay on "The Princely Man Does Not Strive." This aspect of Confucian philosophy was well taught in the schools inasmuch as every young scholar had to memorise chapters from the Four Books of Confucius.

"A man's heart deviseth his way: but the Lord directeth his steps" (Prov 16:9). Though high were the hopes of the Sung family for their illustrious son, the restraining hand of God dashed every lofty and haughty thought to the ground. For when the day of examination drew near Sung Shang Chieh, the respected young scholar from Hingwa, was overtaken by a sudden swelling of the legs. Despite the ailment he made it by sheer determination to the capital city. But though the spirit was willing the flesh was weak. In a state of near exhaustion at the end of such a laborious journey, Shang Chieh failed the physical test. Try as he would to do better in the written examination, the result was the same. What a let down and deflation of pride to one hitherto borne high on wings of success. O the shame of loss of face so poignant to such a princely man as Shang Chieh!

But a Christian will never say "die," for he has "the God of all comfort who comforteth us in all our tribulation" (II Cor 1:9). For Sung's future success, the Father above must put him through the mill of failure. To a Christian each failure is a stepping-stone to success.

Of the hundreds that took the Naval College Examination only two were chosen. The irony of it all was that in after years when duty called them to battle they were lost in action. When Shang Chieh learned of this, would he not have thanked the Lord for his overruling power? "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (Rom 8:28). All things, including failures and disappointments!

As it is also said that "failure is the mother of success" the

rebuff Shang Chieh sustained in Foochow spurred him to greater heights of study. Now, China at this time had become a Republic with the fall of the Manchus in 1911. As a young nation, political activities and patriotic demonstrations were the order of the day, and not the least affected were middle and high school students. Though it was fashionable as well as exciting to join in the "strike-down" campaigns, particularly against Japan at this time, Shang Chieh would have no part with the rabble rousers. Standing like a crane among the crows he was nevertheless ostracised and dubbed a "slave without a country." His courage to stand alone on what he believed to be right was beginning to be noticed.

Notwithstanding the taunts of his classmates and fellow students, Shang Chieh was elected editor of the school weekly newspaper. In Church he helped his father to produce the Revival magazine which had a widening circulation. It was about the year 1917 that he started, in the steps of his father, to keep a diary, which habit he maintained without fail to the end of his life.

Soon Graduation Day came. Up to now school boy Shang Chieh paid little attention to his attire. Most of the children and young people went to school barefooted, and some almost bare-backed. When it was noised that the young scholar had come first in the School Graduation Examinations, his father was so pleased that he had a light blue gown specially tailored for him by his mother. This he wore with great satisfaction on Prize-giving Day. And this blue gown he would wear for every function and festival after this.

After High School the thought of going on to Ginling University in Nanking was broached by the whole family. As Shang Chieh began to pack up his baggage with many stirrings of heart for a brighter future, there came a bolt from the blue in the sudden death, within a few hours, of his eldest sister. "Man's life's like morning dew," a common Chinese saying, must have flashed across his mind. Or, as God's Word says it, "For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." (James 4:14). Young Sung's aspirations for higher study was again thwarted by this sudden turn of events. "Why must a man die?" made him sit down and ponder.

Chapter V

WESTWARD HO!

As it has been noted that student life in China at this time was a round after round of patriotic outbursts against foreign powers, strikes and frequent absenteeism from school, young Sung came to the conclusion that to advance in higher education there was no way out other than America. For a poor pastor's son such ambition was not unlike that of "a lazy toad aspiring to eat swan's flesh"! But Shang Chieh had learnt the lesson of faith from his religious upbringing and from the days of the Hinghwa Revival.

Without compunction he went straight up to his father: "Papa, I have decided to go and study in America." Too stunned for words, old Sung sat down to compose himself. After a while that seemed an eternity to young Sung, he retorted, "Are you dreaming? Do you think that by my own blood and sweat I could send you abroad to drink foreign ink and puff up your big head? Who do you think I am? I'm not the Prefect of Hinghwa. I'm no better than a poor church mouse of a pastor."

Undaunted, young Sung looked up to the Heavenly Father. Alone he traced his steps up the hill he was wont to climb. There he poured out his heart to God. "O Lord," he cried, "With You all things are possible." For one whole week he went up the hill to pray until he felt quite assured that his prayer was answered. Sure enough, as he mused about crossing the blue Pacific and that bright day when he would set foot on Gold Hill (Chinese name for California) there came to visit him a missionary friend with a letter from one Miss "Kan" in Peking. In brevity Miss "Kan" said she had heard of young Sung's scholastic attainments and of his earnest desire to study in the States. She felt moved therefore to recommend him to the Ohio Wesleyan University for a scholarship. Moreover she promised to find him a job upon arrival in America.

"Olo Choo! Chan Bee Choo," (Praise the Lord, Sing to the Lord's praise) came Shang Chieh dancing into his

father's study, the missionary's letter of recommendation held high in his hand. "Papa, see this letter! The Lord has answered my prayer!" "Very well indeed! But who is going to foot the bill of your travel to USA? In all my years as a preacher I have not saved so much as a hundred dollars. Should I empty all my savings, that would not pay half your fare. Living from "elbow to sleeve," as you can see, what can I do? What father will not want to see his son go abroad?"-

Still undaunted, young Sung climbed that hill-top again. Again he poured out his heart to God, "O Lord, with You nothing is impossible." "Yes," the Lord comforted him, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be open unto you: For everyone that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened" (Matt. 7:7,8).

As news spread around that Shang Chieh had been awarded a scholarship to America, friends and co-workers in the Methodist Church of which Pastor Sung had been a faithful servant for over a decade rallied to help. From the Bible Schools under Pastor Sung's supervision came graduates, now also pastors and fulltime workers in various ministries of the American Methodist Episcopal Mission. In no time a sum of over \$500 was collected. Shang Chieh was careful to enter into his note book every item, intending to repay as soon as he got to his Newfoundland.

As it is promised that "God is able to make all grace abound toward you" (II Cor 9:8) and that "all things work together for good to them that love God," on the day young Sung went to the travel agent to buy his ticket, the American dollar had plunged to 95 cents against the Chinese dollar. By this favourable rate of exchange he not only had enough for the boat fare but also a little margin to spare. This allowed him to find for himself one or two suits of Western clothing and articles of daily use for the long journey ahead. Father Sung seeing God's hand clearly upon his son gave his blessing.

Alas! As young Sung was about to set out, it was discovered he had meantime contracted trachoma. This would ban him from entry to the United States all the same.

As he looked up to God in prayer again, the Lord led him to a barber who in the Chinese tradition is also known to treat eye ailments. With an unsterilised bone scraper the barber landed a few hard strokes on his affected eyelids. This process he repeated a number of times until the inflammatory granulations had disappeared. God had answered prayer through the bone scraper of a Chinese barber as he would by more civilised means were he treated in America. All things are possible with God! Bone scraper or stainless steel, the Lord had confirmed this trip to the West, whereupon more praises to the Lord were sung by the Sung family.

February 10th, 1920! With seven companions, young blood from Hinghwa also seeking advancement abroad, Shang Chieh took leave of his brooding mother, for father was away from home on Higher Service. Not looking back, he left the parsonage he loved abruptly, accompanied by his elder brother and some friends to the jetty. Here he boarded a coastal steamer that took him northwards to Shanghai to catch the mail boat to America. Did he know what would become of him seven years hence, as he noted in his diary February 10th, 1920, the date of his leaving home?

When the party of eight spirited students reached Shanghai, and had found accommodation in a hotel to await the sailing date, only Shang Chieh stayed in. The rest of the party ventured out on a sight-seeing spree. Country bumpkins, they were mesmerised by the sights and sounds of Shanghai, China's megalopolis. Young Sung meanwhile kept strictly to his daily programme of study, prayer, Bible reading, and writing up his diary. By this he killed two birds with one stone because in keeping indoors he conserved all that he had in the world, and that was not his, but borrowed. "Economy, the mother of prosperity" is one law the young man had learnt since birth! By not joining the crowd he became the butt of many a ridicule and sarcastic remark.

At last, March 2nd, the sailing date, arrived. All aboard, the S.S. Nile weighted anchor at Woosung wharf, located at the estuary of the mighty Yangtse River before she headed for the open sea. As the ship began to pitch and roll in the evening sun those seven rowdy companions beat a hasty retreat from the open deck they were enjoying to the cabins.

As for Shang Chieh he took to the sea like a duck to the pond. He helped himself to every course prepared by a first-class cuisine, with second and third helpings from the untouched dishes left on the table by his seasick friends. "He who laughs last laughs best."

As he stood on the bow, drawing in deep draughts of fresh ocean breezes into his lungs, suddenly, tears welled up his eyes — not because of homesickness, nor troubled by the thought of an insecure future, but overwhelmed by the immensity of God's loving-kindness like the boundless ocean upon his young life!

Westward Ho!

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Chapter VI

DAYS OF STUDY AND TOIL IN AMERICA

1920-1923

When the S.S. Nile docked March 22nd in San Francisco, Golden Gate to the American Continent from the Pacific, a sudden sense of loneliness seized the young Sung. No more days of leisure and high feasting on a luxury liner but an endless dusty road lay before him now. With a smattering of Hingwa-accented English, he felt quite lost in this New World. Moreover, to get to that missionary friend's home in Delaware, there stretched before him yet three thousand more miles of road or rail. Finally, when he made it to the East Coast it was told him that his missionary friend was still in Peking!

Man's extremity is God's opportunity. Dependence on God and not on man was a first lesson young Sung must learn in his new domicile. "Self help, with God's help, is the best help."

Nor would he take advantage of other people's money committed to his trust. Seeing that he still had \$246 in his wallet he decided to keep only the small change of \$6 to himself and remit the round sum of \$240 back home to repay his debt. The Lord helping him again, the American dollar had now overturned the Chinese dollar! The Chinese dollar equivalent to US\$240 was quite sufficient to refund all the friends who had so kindly rallied to his help.

From Delaware Shang Chieh hitch-hiked 400 miles backwards and eastwards to Ohio Wesleyan University. Though he was enrolled as a scholarship student, with only \$6 in his pocket, he must quickly find work in order to keep soul and body together.

As a foreign student he must humbly start from the lowest rung of the ladder. He found a first job as a shop-cleaner at only 25 cents an hour. From there he worked his way up to Westinghouse where he got \$27 a week. Now, while this Chinese student toiled in his work he alleviated his burden

by giving vent to crooning. The tunes of the Orient so captivated the manager that he promoted him to a machine job that paid \$1 an hour. This plus a janitor's job at a hotel at \$27 a week with free board and lodging earned him \$600 for his first summer in America. This sum was to pay for all his expenses through his Freshman year. Comparing notes with other foreign students earning their way through school, he found he topped them all by his overtime work.

Soon after entering Ohio Wesleyan, Shang Chieh found a bosom friend in Dr Rollin H Walker, Professor of Bible. He called him his "American father," and a father to Shang Chieh he was from beginning to end.

As a student Sung excelled in chemistry and mathematics. With a confidence he could finish his degree course in three years instead of the prescribed four, he went to see his supervisor. To which came the reply, "With your broken English, it would be more likely for you to take five years instead!" When at the end of the Freshman year Sung topped his class with straight A's, the supervisor began to reorientate his western mind. Everybody started to talk about this wonder boy and whiz kid from China.

When his elder brother joined him in 1921, America was going through a recession. With mounting unemployment it was difficult for Oriental students to get good-paying jobs. In these trying circumstances, when bread and butter had to be found also for his "greenhorn" brother, Shang Chieh was discovered to grow an abscess in his spinal region. This required an immediate operation and hospitalisation of several weeks. But how could he find the means to pay the medical bills? "O Lord, with You all things are possible", prayed Shang Chieh in his new trial. Sure enough, two Christian friends came forward to take care of this need, but the kindness shown him by Christian nurses and visits from Church members were equally vital to nurture him back to health. Shang Chieh learned yet another lesson of God's providence, for has not the Apostle testified to the Philipians, "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Phil 4: 19). How true is another saying, this one from our Lord Himself, "There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife,

or children, for the Kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive manifold in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting" (Luke 18:29,30). Did not young Sung come to America with the view of preparing for the preaching ministry? And has not his close association with the Church brought him help in time of need?

The heavy stresses and strains of class studies and ill health as a result of overwork and undernourishment could not but affect Shang Chieh spiritually. It was only by clinging to the Lord and to the Church that he continued to find succour and sustenance. By organising preaching bands among his fellow classmates, he found occasion to visit outlying churches. As he and his colleagues were entertained in Christian homes, especially at Easter, Thanksgiving and Christmas he found a warmth and solace in America not known in China. This gave him an idea that he should promote a Christian home movement with family worship when he returned to his fatherland.

It was on Thanksgiving Day, 1922 in the home of a Christian friend who lived at Smithville, Ohio that he had an unforgettable experience. In visions of the night, in a most unusual dream, he saw himself back in Hinghwa his beloved home country. He saw himself standing on the hill he was wont to climb. Below was the river that flowed to the sea he knew equally well. Suddenly he heard a cry from the river, a cry of sore distress. He flew down in the flash of a second, for there was a man drowning in the swift flowing water. But when he tried to render help, he found himself in danger of drowning instead. Whereupon he negotiated a firm place to plant his feet, which turned out to be a cross anchored in midstream. Sure of foot, he began to rescue the drowning man. Not only him, but a long line of others, and so many more that they could not be counted. Suddenly the river scene changed. Shang Chieh was now transported to Heaven. A throng gathered around him who clasped his hands gratefully for his help, praising God! Sung realised this was an allegory of his future ministry, and related it to his audience wherever he went preaching. This moved many a hearer to return to God and moved Shang Chieh to reconsecration whenever he told it.

Returning to his daily programme of hard study and endless toil Sung began to slip away from God. Neglecting his daily Bible reading and prayer he got into a temper easily with his brother then depending on him. He bullied his elder brother right and left, making him practically his slave. He made false claims to the hours he had put in at the factory. Worst of all he succumbed to cheating in one of his examination papers. These were black marks on an otherwise immaculate record. "If Thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?" (Ps 130:3).

With deep remorse Sung did his best "upon his honour" in the 1923 Bachelor degree examinations. Three other students and he graduated at the top of a class of three hundred. He was awarded a cash price for physics and chemistry with a gold medal, and elected to the Phi Beta Kappa Fraternity, cum laude.

As this was the first time that a Chinese student had attained such distinctions in spite of many hardships, doing his Bachelor's in only three years, Sung's photo was splashed across the States. Indeed, his fame spread even to Europe, so that the name of Sung in academic circles was on everybody's lips.

In the light of this achievement, he received offer of a job from the University of Minnesota and of a scholarship from Harvard. These were followed up by several other offers, including one in theology from some quarter which knew the original purpose of his coming to America. He finally came to the decision to study for the M.Sc. at Ohio State University, which offered him a scholarship plus a grant of \$300. This was brought about by an assistant in the Chemistry Department at Wesleyan, brother-in-law to a missionary in Hingwa. "Man's goings are of the Lord; how can a man understand his own way?" (Prov 20:24).

Chapter VII

BETWEEN SEARCHING AND SERVING

1923-1926

Although Sung had made a name for himself as a budding scientist, although he was endowed with another scholarship, this one for the Master's programme at Ohio State University, his soul was restless and often depressed. Why? The answer might be found in St Augustine's famous utterance: "O Lord, Thou hast made us for Thyself and our souls are restless, till they find rest in Thee."

In search of that indefinable something called rest, farthest from the young scholar at this time, Sung signed up for an international student convention which was scheduled to be held at Lake Geneva, the long summer vacation of 1923. Being a poor student with only "two sleevefuls of cool breezes" he was glad to find a companion to hitch-hike together to the convention grounds.

As part of God's training of His chosen vessel, Sung must go through the school of hardihood. For a whole hot summer's day he and his friend did not make much headway. By nightfall they were still struggling through some isolated farmland. As there was no sign of any habitation in sight, they made the best of a bad situation by sheltering in a haystack under the starry sky. Too tired to do anything they fell asleep with neither food nor drink.

Waking the next morning Shang Chieh remembered to pray. Man's extremity is God's opportunity. Trusting that God had heard his supplication, he and his companion continued their hike with higher spirits. Jehovah Jireh, no sooner had they hit the main road this time than there came along a young honeymoon couple from Wesleyan their alma mater. With God's help they who were so far from home and friend were brought so near. Immediately the couple recognised Sung to be the one whose photograph had recently appeared in the papers, the "whiz kid" from China everyone were talking about. As the couple was headed for Chicago

they would not be far from their destination now. “Commit thy way unto the Lord, trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass” (Ps 37:5).

Though Sung had come to the convention with high expectations, he soon discovered to his dismay he was barking up the wrong tree. As there was nothing in the meetings that could satiate his longing soul, he withdrew without apology to a corner, to a hillside overlooking the Lake to meditate by himself. As he sat above the Lake his thoughts were drawn to another, to the Sea of Galilee upon whose slopes our Lord had fed Five Thousand.

But how did Jesus perform the miracle to begin with? Was it not by first accepting five loaves and two fishes humbly brought to Him by a little boy? Suddenly it dawned on him that small and insignificant though we might be, we can equally be used of the Lord. If we are to “present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy acceptable unto God” (Rom 12:1), what five loaves and two fishes can we offer Him? Every Christian can make his life count if he will yield himself totally, wholeheartedly, to Him.

A beautiful sermon was projecting itself allegorically on the screen of his mind. And the words he could hear, almost audibly, spoke thus: “Don’t you have the powers of your five senses, five viscera, five fingers and five toes to serve Him? Two eyes, two ears, two hands and two feet? What God wants of us is not so much our possessions as our being — body, soul, spirit. One little lad who gives himself up to God can feed thousands upon thousands! But to give up oneself to God, one must pay the price of holy consecration. “And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God” (Rom 12:2).

The Lake Geneva trip that led him to this encounter with God was not taken in vain after all! Brimming with joy and with a new determination to walk in His ways he returned to his daily grind. For, there were near four months that intervened between end of May and mid-September in what was called the summer vacation. This gave the self-earning student a wonderful opportunity to work his way through College. This is one genius of the American educational system.

When Sung got back to Ohio, he was glad his brother had found a factory job. As for himself Delaware seemed to be his second home. There he also got a factory job, but before he had gone very far he was downed by a running fever.

Tuberculosis! What a dread disease in the twenties before the advent of modern drugs. If he was to work, and he had to, it would not be in a factory, but on a farm or in some other open air situation. After further hard knocks and disappointments in job hunting, the Lord led him to one he liked – mowing grass by the roadside at 45 cents per hour. Basking in the sun that brings with it “healing in his wings” (Mal 4:2), Sung found a natural cure in a matter of weeks! His health fully restored and his spirits refreshed, he returned to his new alma mater with a greater determination to achieve than ever before.

Ohio State University had a student population of ten thousand hailing from thirteen countries. It exuded an atmosphere conducive to the fostering of international understanding. “Like fish taking to water,” he plunged into various students’ activities, foremost among them being the resuscitating of the International Students Association. For taking a leading role he was elected President. He joined another students club — the International League for Peace. As president of the former he organised concerts and an international food club at which menus from different countries were prepared on a rotary basis. By such intercultural activities he hoped to promote goodwill between students from different nations and backgrounds and therefore remove colour bar and racial prejudices. He organised a students aid society whereby money earned from students’ functions would be loaned to needy ones free of interest.

As he trotted the Broadway of social service he unwittingly stepped on the snares of the social gospel. His ideas of Jesus his Lord began to fall in line with the doctrines of modernistic and liberal theology. He began to trample underfoot the Blood of Christ, like Cain refusing to bring a lamb but rather the fruits from the ground, the works of his own hands. How precarious! He had forgotten that the social gospel propounded at Lake Geneva could little alleviate his sinsick soul. Neither could he now offer a solution to

seekers of peace and rest. He became like one lost in “a five li (pronounced lee) fog” (one li = one third English mile). But what he did was in line with the world and from the world he received many rounds of applause. The press spoke of him as “Ohio’s most famous student.” Oh the folly of falling into the webs of flattery! “A man that flattereth his neighbour spreadeth a net for his feet” (Prov 29:5)!

After nine months of study at Ohio State University, Sung was conferred the MSc in June 1924. Again he stood at the forefront of his class and received further honours – the Science Society’s medal and gold key. Being an Oriental, he became the cynosure of all eyes. Strutting down the podium with the highest academic decorations, he felt an irresistible urge to go on to the PhD.

Chemistry being his forte and favourite subject, he resolved to take the doctor’s degree along this line of least resistance. Now, to qualify for the PhD in Chemistry he must have French and German. French he had studied, but not German. This challenged him to bury his head in the new language the summer of 1924. Having grasped the rudiments of the German language in two months, he applied to take the test. Given a German book on chemistry to translate, he did so well that the professor thought he had studied the language for years!

Being a doctoral student and a Chinese subject it qualified him for a grant from the Chinese Government. He also applied for a part-time lectureship in the University. Sung was no more that poor student with “two sleevefuls of cool breezes”. By working on the subject he loved day and night he covered all readings and assignments in one year and nine months, way ahead of the others. March 1926 saw Sung Shang Chieh obtain his PhD “with all the rights and privileges pertaining thereunto”. Offers of jobs and high positions came from his alma mater, from China his own country and from Germany. He was now carried to the dizzy heights of his own achievements, floating on golden clouds of glamour more than even before.

Waking up the morning after the glamorous night of his self-exaltations, there came a still small voice, however, from his innermost being, “For what is a man profited if he

shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" (Matt 16:26). Again the words came, now loud and clear, "For what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" From the pinnacle of inflated egoism he was plunged suddenly into a swelling tide of emptiness. Musing over this famous saying not from Confucius, nor from Laotse, he heard a knock-knock, so sudden, on the door. Of all people, Rev Wilbur Fowler, the Wesley Foundation man at Ohio State, had come to visit: "Why, you don't look a bit the scientist that you are. You are more of a preacher," remarked the unexpected visitor.

In the ensuing conversation Dr Sung revealed his original purpose of coming to America and the conflict ever more raging in his soul! "Why not study at Union Theological Seminary in New York then?" suggested Rev Fowler.

The attractions of seeing America's No.1 City where is located the world-famous Columbia University were in his consideration, but the yes he said to Rev Fowler at the end of this fateful visit had been prompted from Above. "The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the Lord" (Prov 16:1). Pastor Sung having dedicated his son from birth to the Lord, and the same having yielded to the vow of his father, would not the Lord accept the twice-uttered offering in the fulness of His time? The die was cast for Union Seminary.

On his way to New York City, God showed Sung a greater sight than the skyscrapers of New York, the mute work of puny man, which seemed to beckon him. The thunderous waters of Niagara Falls, booming the awesome majesty of the Creator like a thousand-thousand voice choir humbled him to the dust. Rising up, he prayed, "O Lord, let me be a Niagara for Thee."

Chapter VIII

A "CEMETERY" WHOSE PRESIDENT WAS A "COFFIN"

1926—1927

The autumn of 1926 saw Dr Sung Shang Chieh, B.A., M.Sc., Ph.D enrolled at Union Theological Seminary, New York City. It had a newly installed president Dr Henry Sloane Coffin by name. In after years Dr Sung made a humorous word-play of this situation, "I was enrolled in a seminary that taught a 'God-is-dead' theology, under the caretaking of a principal surnamed Coffin. But this seminary became a cemetery to my troubled soul." A hotbed of rankest modernistic and liberal theology it boasted amongst its professors Dr Harry Emerson Fosdick, world-renowned orator and pastor, later on of New York's famed Riverside Church. (Interestingly, the senior pastor of Riverside Church today is William Sloane Coffin the son of Henry Sloane Coffin who receives homosexuals and lesbians into the Church and sanctions their election to high office). The only conservative professor in Union at this time was Dr C S Deming, on sabbatical leave from Union Methodist Theological Seminary, Seoul, Korea, where he had been Professor of Theology. Sung was naturally drawn to him, while Dr Deming and his wife welcomed him often to their home for dinner.

In this Mecca of liberal theology, the Bible was taken at best to be a partially inspired book, but riddled with human inaccuracies and errors. Every subject for discussion taken from the Bible was put through the sieve of human reasoning. Science judged the Bible and not the Bible science. The first eleven chapters of Genesis were written off as myth or saga. Miracles could not be accepted. Therefore the virgin birth of Christ, His substitutionary and vicarious death for man lost in sin, His bodily resurrection, were consigned to the winds. Jesus was merely a man, and a good man at that — for our example. Heaven meant to be full and hell to be

hungry. Prayer was regarded to be some psychological process and auto-suggestion or in Dr Sung's words, "hypnotism". Could a more confusing bedlam of theological training be found than this to confound a soul in conflict?

Slowly and steadily Dr Sung's faith in God was whittled away. Coming close to being an atheist, the brilliant scholar in science but befuddled student in theology turned to sages and sutras of the Orient. If Christ be not risen the study of theology was in vain, to be sure! (I Cor 15: 14). If Christ be not risen Christianity was no better than Buddhism or Taoism. Dr Sung in veering away from Christ took to Taoism. Tao, the Way propounded by China's own metaphysical philosopher, taught "chastity and stillness." He attempted a translation of Tao Teh-ching, the writings of Laotse.

From Taoism he branched into Buddhism. He indulged in chanting the Buddhist scriptures hoping that by practising the self-denial of Buddha he might earn his salvation. But these exertions availed him nothing. He finally searched the Koran, but again to no avail. He concluded neither science nor religion could satisfy the quest of his soul. "My soul at this time," he wrote, "was lost in a desert country. I could not eat or sleep. My faith was like a storm-tossed ship without captain or compass. My heart was filled with misery and sadness. Vanity of vanities, all is vanity . . . of making of many books there is no end; and much study is a weariness of the flesh" (Eccles 1:2; 12:12).

In this hour of darkest night, Dr Sung found solace in the companionship of a lady student. From companionship it grew into sympathy and from sympathy to love. This all the more added to his sorrows, because in the old tradition he had been betrothed to a girl in the same village even before he knew what marriage was. Marriage was arranged between parents, in many cases, before the children were born! With a future wife contracted to him by his parents before he embarked on America, there was no possibility of a closer romance. Frustration of frustrations!

Just then it was advertised that an evangelistic campaign was going to be held before Christmas at Calvary Baptist Church in the heart of New York City. Out of curiosity and

no doubt frustration, Sung joined some classmates on the road to Calvary. The speaker was a fifteen-year-old girl, dressed all in white, with a gold-edged leather Bible in her hand. Her impassioned utterances in prayer and articulate reading of Holy Scripture made an immediate impact on the audience. Sung could sense a power not ordinarily present in Church services, much less at the Seminary's chapel hour. As she spoke, tears of repentance could be seen falling in the pews, and when the invitation was given one by one went up to the pulpit to get right with God. While the seminarians scoffed out of their learned ignorance and academic blindness Sung confessed, "Even I, a proud man, was moved by her. My soul's thirst was somewhat quenched." An irresistible force drove him back to Calvary Baptist Church, night after night. Now he was resolved to find out the source of power that worked through the girl evangelist, being sick with the whole outfit at Union Theological "Cemetery". "As for the girl evangelist," said he to himself, "she alone would qualify to be president or professor of a theological seminary. Our president should humble himself to learn the Truth from her. Without her spirituality in thought and deed, one who might put on an air of dignity as a seminary president is no different from a paper puppet."

Writing to a friend after the evangelistic meetings Sung discussed further the qualification of a minister of the gospel, "A preacher without life is repudiated by his Lord. To pass the test of Christ a preacher must examine if he has the baptism of the Holy Spirit and received the abundant life. During the days of the Apostles, Apollos went forth to preach without being baptised by the Holy Spirit. So the believers under his ministry knew nothing of what it was to be baptised by the Spirit."

But as he wrote those words Sung was pricked deeply in his own heart. He felt regretful that though he had joined a seminary with a view to holy service, yet he had not received the Spirit's baptism. So he stopped short penning the letter at this point. He could bear it no longer. He began to sob.

In a post-mortem of the evangelistic campaign at Calvary Baptist Church some fellows criticised the girl evangelist to be too emotional and superstitious. But Sung soliloquised,

“I couldn’t care less if she was too emotional or superstitious. O that I could preach as lively as she and pray with equal power.”

During the winter vacation Sung devoted his time to the study of biographies of great men of Church history. He wished he had a fraction of their abundance of life and power. He would follow their footsteps in search for God. While he was thinking on these things on New Year’s Eve suddenly there whispered a voice from within which said, “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent” (I Cor 1:19). What sounded like a still small voice from the recesses of his heart suddenly burst into a thunder clap, “I WILL DESTROY THE WISDOM OF THE WISE AND BRING TO NOTHING THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE PRUDENT!!” Trembling under the impact Sung recalled once again the words of the Preacher, “Vanity of vanities, vanity of vanities, all is vanity. What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun?” (Eccles 1:2,3). Then came an echo, “Scholarship is vanity. Talent is vanity. Life is vanity. Death is vanity. North, south, east, west, everything is vanity. Vanity, vanity, vanity!”

In the seclusion of Room 415 Sung was locked in a prolonged spiritual battle. His continued absence from the lecture theatre was noticed. In “My Testimony” which was published in 1933, he vividly remembered, “The heavy burden of my soul became heavier day by day until on February 10th I got to the point where I no longer had any desire to live.” His heart became the battleground between Satan and the Holy Spirit in a life-and-death struggle to the end. “That night,” recalled Sung, “I prayed. I prayed earnestly, intensely, in tears of penitence, asking the Lord to cleanse me by His precious Blood. I would live not for self anymore, nor for the glitters of this world, nor for my empty dreams. I bared open my heart asking the Lord to deliver me from the ravages of Satan on my body, soul and spirit.”

It was about 10 pm that night of February 10th, 1927. As he prayed he saw all the sins he had committed, not the four Chinese vices of womanising, gambling, drinking and smoking but of pride, hypocrisy, doubt and unbelief spread

before his eyes one by one. He felt miserably condemned to Hell. In this predicament he searched for his long neglected, much read and underlined Bible. He found it in his trunk, and as he turned, it fell on Luke 23, the story of Jesus' Trial and Crucifixion. As he read and wept for the misery of his sins on bended knees, he realised it was midnight as the clock struck twelve.

Suddenly the Lord with pierced hands and wearing a crown appeared to him in a vision, standing before him and speaking in a compassionate voice, "My son, your sins are forgiven! Your name is now changed to John." John, no more the old noble and haughty Shang Chieh, said, "Lord Jesus, please don't leave me! I am sorrowing terribly because of Your death for me." As the vision receded John felt a wonderful relief in the sudden rolling away of his sin-burden. "Yes, that heavy burden that has oppressed me for months is suddenly lifted." Leaping to his feet with a shout of Hallelujah, Praise the Lord, he sang loud praises to God. His songs of praise rang through the corridors rousing some early sleepers in the dorms of the fourth floor.

Recalling Feb 10th, 1927 he said in an interview, "That night of nights, Feb 10th, 1927, was the birth of new life in me after forty days of wilderness struggle. I shall never forget. The same night I received our Lord's commission to go into all the world to be His end-time witness. The Lord changed my name to John that I should be a forerunner to Him in this age, like John the Baptist in His first coming. The Lord is coming very soon. He needs heralds before His return. Our Lord's Second Coming is different from his First Coming. He requires many forerunners, not one, today. We are to preach, "The Lord is at hand. Christ is coming very soon!"

Early next morning an entirely new person of a seminary student greeted everyone with joy shining all over as he began to tell the story of his salvation. The Hallelujahs that rang through the corridors the night previous now followed into the dining hall, the lecture theatre and into the library, wherever John Sung reappeared. At the first opportunity, he asked to be given time to speak at the International Club of which he was a member. O the pent-up joy of knowing

Christ and the Way to Heaven that must be released to a world lying in sin! Wherever he went, whoever he met, his talk was Christ and His cleansing Blood. As he pleaded with individuals, tears welled up from within at every encounter.

As if to confirm the Great Commission upon him, a couple of days after that night of nights, Feb 10th, 1927, a man totally unknown to him presented him with a globe of the world. Sensing this, he bowed before the Lord with another prayer of dedication, "Lord, help me to fulfil Your will for my life." As he looked at the globe it seemed to change into a man carrying a cross out of which came forth weird creatures. As Sung looked closer at these creatures they were none other than the pastors, bishops and theological professors he had hitherto respected. At that the vision vanished.

Now while John Sung was gentle as a lamb to those who heard him gladly, he had the boldness of a lion against every power of darkness. Seeing with Spirit-anointed eyes the professors of the Seminary in their true colours he went straight up to his favourite teacher Dr Fosdick. Without ceremony he ejected, "You are of the devil. You made me lose my faith, and you are causing other young men to lose their faith." To which Fosdick replied, "Now, now, Brother Sung, you have been working too hard. You need a rest, so we will find you a place for you to rest."

Chapter IX

IN GOD'S APPOINTED SEMINARY

1927

One week after his conversion, the 17th day of February, 1927, John Sung felt a sudden urge to buy a fountain pen and a new Bible, for henceforth the Bible was the only Book he would read. On the way back from buying Book and pen, as he walked through the pedestrian mall, he noticed the cherub of a young child writing across the pavement: REST. When he saw a second child writing REST and yet a third writing REST further on, he felt there must be something behind all this. No sooner had he said this to himself than he arrived at the Seminary gate. What was before a home away from home, Union Seminary with her castle-like walls and high towers suddenly appeared to be Satan's stronghold. Her professors and students seemed like Satan's hordes entrenched within. These, said John Sung to himself, who misappropriate God's money to do Satan's work at God's expense! At the thought of such misuse of God's funds, he began to weep. He felt a contest between God and Satan was raging, right in the Seminary.

Sure enough the doorway leading to Room 415 was locked against him. He was politely but firmly requested to go to a prepared place to REST, for it was observed he had had no rest for a whole week. For a whole week, truly, John Sung had gone all out to tell one and all about His Saviour. A feverish fatigue was being felt within and without. Perhaps following the Seminary's suggestion to the place of REST would be a good proposition after all. Not permitted to go upstairs to pack his belongings, he was given a hurried send-off, only Bible and pen in hand.

The place of REST booked for him turned out to be Bloomingdale Hospital and his "room" the psychopathic ward. A fine hotel to be sure, since the timing of his arrival was after dark. What John Sung projected to be a one-week vacation in some country hotel became a six-and-a-half

month ordeal, 193 days to be exact! Let him tell his own story according to Paragraphs 75 to 79 in "My Testimony" his own Chinese publication:

"The next day after I entered the Mental Hospital doctors came to examine me in detail. First they took my blood to see if there were cells related to mental disorder. Then they questioned me about my ancestry. They wanted to know if there was any heredity in this case. My answers bordered on the humorous, but in effect this was what I said to the doctor, 'I can examine myself whether I am mentally ill or not. For I very well know, scientifically, the blood and hereditary connections. Though I am not a well-known M.D. I have also read the books you have read. If you don't believe me, you can investigate with the faculty and students of Ohio State University.'

"While they came to examine me again if my faculties were normal, to induce further evidence the doctor read me a short story and asked me to put it on paper. I retold the story without missing a sentence, not even a word. They were astonished with my retentive powers. Said I to them after this, 'I have recently translated a thick volume of the Tao Teh-ching, written the history of a British Orphanage plus a commentary on the Prophecy of Jeremiah. You can read through these works to gauge my thoughts.'

"The doctor said not a word to all my explanations. He ordered me to lie down in bed to rest my body. Truth to tell, I was feeling quite fagged out. I needed very much a rest and reorientation. I saw my pale emaciated face in the mirror, and I thanked God for this opportunity to rest, without paying a cent. With restored health and strength I could resume my testimony for Him with renewed spirits.

"Before this you would count me one of the robust ones. How did I become so weak and thin? From what I've said earlier it was obvious I had come under the oppression of sin. I was torn between the law of sin and the law of righteousness. This made me not only restless but put me into a state of confusion day and night. My sin-load weighed heavier and heavier on me each passing day. This drove me into earnest quest for a new life. I forgot to eat or sleep. I was desperately looking for the way out of my sinful life. I

found as a result of this searching the new birth and forgiveness of sins from my crucified Saviour. Hence I ceased not to testify His wonderful saving grace and to praise him from the bottom of my heart. Night or day I was engaged in prayer, Bible study and singing praises to the Lord. Seeing that the loving Father had desired me to take a break, I therefore lay me down to sleep. At that, the scene of the three angelic children writing REST across the pavement came back to mind. I understood then these children were giving me a message from the Lord.

“Everyday an X-ray was taken. Everyday I was given a bath under super hygienic conditions. Everyday I ate the most nutritious food. What better treatment could there be found? Never since this treatment have I enjoyed such luxury, but all this wonderful treatment I got consisted of the material which was not my lot. All the material enjoyments could never take away my spiritual woes.

“What made me suffer most was their non-recognition of my sanity and scholarship. I did not mean I wanted them to worship the golden degree of a PhD and hero’s welcome that I had got. All I had desired of them was that they would not take me to be mentally deranged and deprive me of my freedom. On the contrary they regarded me like a criminal sentenced to solitary confinement with strictest surveillance. I was under the scrutiny of the nurse day and night who wore the severe demeanour of a judge. How could I stand all this?

“And what a ludicrous method of examination by the doctor who gathered my pile of correspondence left behind in my Seminary room to examine them one by one. Judge for yourself: Wasn’t this funny? If they wanted to read my thoughts wouldn’t it be more reasonable to read the letters I had sent out? To think of them scrutinising each one of the letters sent in! Fortunately I wasn’t like one of those modern youths with a string of girl friends each twining him round and round with love letters. How embarrassing I should have been!

“All correspondence coming in to me at the Hospital were censored by the doctor. The clerk-in-charge became my secretary. He wrote every reply to letters I had received from relatives and family, saying I was too ill to answer and

asked them not to write again. Under such a ban, life became even more miserable and isolated. Worse than a prison, such a control system reduced peace and tranquility within me to zero but enlarged my misery and sorrow to the nth degree. But God instructed me to walk in His Way, so I devoted myself rather to the quiet study of His Word under the lectureship of the Holy Spirit. The spiritual teachings I received here would suffice me for a lifetime of service.

“Now that Mental Hospital was a famous one. There were seven wards planned on a grand scale to perfection. When I first entered the hospital I was warded at No. 4. Having put on weight and regained my spirits I was transferred to Ward 6. The date was February 28th. One week after that I was taken to Ward 2. Each ward took in a particular category of sickness. God used my rotation from ward to ward to show me the different mentalities around, and from each personality God taught me a different lesson. On the walls of these wards were hung all kinds of pictures to my delight. I specially lingered to enjoy religious art.

“Now the doctor had promised to release me after forty days. As the days slid by this did not come to fruition. There was no ray of hope of my getting out. Not able to stand it any longer because the doctor did not keep his word, I lost my temper on him. I argued vehemently with all of them which rubbed them on the wrong side. They retaliated by locking me up in Ward 7. Here I stayed with the violent ones. Here I was bombarded with cursing, and swearings day and night. The day I entered happened to be the 9th of May, China's National Day of Shame. On this day when I began my deepest round of suffering in a foreign land, I turned homewards to China. As I thought of father and mother and their love to me and of the sympathies of home, I burst into tears.

“The din around me gave me not a moment of peace. I pleaded with the doctor to no avail to let me shift to Ward 3. So, after a few days, the afternoon of June 23, when I saw that my young warder had fallen asleep, I thought this was a wonderful opportunity to escape. Jumping off the verandah I almost in one breath ran two or three li (lee) = almost an English mile. I hid myself in a wheatfield from my pursuers,

but I was foiled in the attempt by an Alsatian. Pinning me down like a criminal they hauled me back to hospital. They clapped me into the ward for violent cases.

“At Ward 7, as I have said before, I was bombarded by a tirade of jangling sounds — from self-scoldings to strident singing, from jumping to clapping, from striking to cursing. Unless you were there you could never comprehend what I am trying to tell you. My mind could hardly snatch a moment of peace under these circumstances — what a mental torture! As I look back, I can truly praise the Lord that He took me through this bitterest phase of my journey. To go through that situation was taxing one to the extreme of extremes.

“One night Satan tried to ensnare me. In the faint light of the setting moon come through the window into my bed, the words of the ancient poet came back to mind:-

Before my bed in the moonlight
The earth seemed covered with frost.
Looking up at her so bright
It made me pine for home.

“As my thoughts wandered from home back to self, to my past, present and the future, I saw my past all gone in smoke. There was no need to look back. But when I considered the present and projected it into the future, I suddenly thought a bad thought — to take my own life. As the idea began to take hold of me in the stillness of the moonlit night, as tears welled up at the thought of home again, I wanted to take the plunge.

“In this moment of despair there suddenly came a voice from above telling me of the Grace of God. ‘The hand about to strike Isaac’ relented. I heard the Lord’s still small voice: ‘My child, you have been bought by my precious blood. How can you take your life so lightly?’ I said, ‘Lord, I’m a worm. I’m born into a sunless world. Since I can’t return to you my filial piety, to live is worse than death. So I thought of taking my life.’ The Lord’s voice continued, ‘All things work together for good to them that love God. If you can endure a little more, for 193 days of sorrow you must go through, you will have learnt the lesson of carrying my Cross and walk the road of obedience after Me to Golgotha.’

Suddenly that thick darkness that had surrounded me gave way to God's glory shining over me.

"After one week I pleaded with the doctor to shift me to Ward 6. I explained to him that my escapade was not due to mental disorder. I was driven to it because by nature I am an active person. I ran away because I just couldn't help it. He relented and I moved out.

"During my days in the asylum America underwent a great flood. Many people were drowned. As it affected a great area the price of goods soared. But God had put me in a place where I was physically well provided. What more could I want? My complaint and unhappiness was only about the loss of freedom.

"Gradually my nurse changed his attitude towards me. No more did he put on that devil face so harsh and sullen against me. He was now willing to be my messenger and postman. Thrilled by his change of attitude, I quickly wrote a letter to my Ambassador. I lodged a complaint to him that I was illegally confined in a mental hospital. I had lost my freedom of movement and speech. I begged him to take up the matter with the American Government.

"On the 30th day of August my bosom friend (Dr Rollin Walker) an American missionary had returned from Europe. Immediately upon his arrival he heard I was confined in a lunatic asylum. He came in haste to New York State to see me. I wept bitterly when he visited me. I told him all my troubles. He comforted me. He went to see the Superintendent of the Hospital and got me signed out at once. Simultaneously the Superintendent had received an inquiry from the Government. This matter had put him in a quandary. Thus with a guarantor on hand what better solution could there be? What better opportunity to return a favour, to do a good turn to someone? I was now a free man!

"Looking back on this episode of my life I consider it rather a drama of paradoxes. From the day of my admission to the Hospital to the evening of my discharge, according to God's timetable, there was a total of 193 days. What I'm going to say hereafter is a recounting of the lessons I've learned in the Mental Hospital.

The first lesson I've learned is how to become an obedient

servant. God has thoroughly moulded my character and temperament. The day of my complete capitulation and surrender to Him was the day of my graduation from God's Seminary!

"The second lesson was my understanding of Holy Scripture. So, I have declared the Mental Hospital my Seminary from which I have graduated. The Holy Spirit was my Teacher, teaching me the deep things of Truth. The day of my leaving the Hospital was the day I received my diploma.

"The Bible was my textbook. Other teaching materials consisted of visions, pictures, circumstances, inter-personal relationships.

"The Bible comprises 1189 chapters. By the Lord's instruction I've derived 40 methods of study, reading the Bible 40 times. Of course I did not read the Bible crudely word by word. When I read the Bible I was so carried away by it that I kept on and on, like enjoying a delicious meal.

"The Bible is the inspired Word of God, written by the moving of the Spirit of God. Therefore the Bible reader, unless it is revealed to him by God at the instruction of the Holy Spirit, how can he understand it? I thank God that He has shown me the mysteries of the Bible. I know that every chapter, every verse, every word has something good for my spiritual life. At first God taught me through pictures and diagrams, giving me the key verse to each chapter of the Bible. Then He showed me certain key words like 'love', 'faith', 'righteousness' which led me to link them up through the whole Bible. He showed me certain words which had a deeply religious meaning and I would trace such word through the whole Bible. I recorded the findings of every method of Bible study. In a few days I had filled a stack of notebooks. I have told some of my dreams and visions but there are those I have never divulged from the recesses of my heart.

"At first I made my notes in English. When I realised these were open to prying eyes I changed to Chinese, and to this day I've kept my notes in Chinese.

"The day I had completed the lessons God had prescribed for me in my Wilderness was the Day I was 'bailed out' — it was the 200th day of my spiritual life. How I praised God to

know that when God wanted to train His servant, it was not a simple matter. God had His time-table, His method, His will. Wonderful, wonderful is my God, my Father.

“After leaving the Hospital, that American missionary most cordially invited me to stay with him in Cincinnati for a month. The principal of my Seminary had all my belongings and baggage returned to me. So I sat before the Lord in quiet meditation, waiting for His Will to be revealed.”

During his sojourn in Cincinnati, John Sung was invited to dinner at a pastor's home. There he was asked to play a tune on the piano. Before he played the pastor set a blind, deaf and dumb girl by his side so that her hand might feel the piano as John played. Immediately after the playing this “three-unwholesome” girl was asked to play. Wonder of wonders, she reproduced the tune John Sung had played without a hitch.

This encounter made a deep impression on John. There he learned another lesson from the Lord. He said in one of his sermons, “God wants me to serve Him in these end-times like this blind, deaf and dumb girl. To be a servant of the Lord one must not look at the world and its riches, nor listen to man's ridicule and criticism. Unless one remains silent to taunts around him one cannot carry the Cross to follow Him. But these two hands are to do His work daily to fulfil His will.”

“Who is blind but my servant? or deaf, as my messenger that I sent? who is blind as he that is perfect, and blind as the Lord's servant? Seeing many things, but thou observest not; opening the ears, but he heareth not?” (Isa 42:19,20).

C. YEARS OF PROBATION

Chapter X

“HOMEWARD BOUND I GO”

1927-1928

The words of Chinese poet Ouyang Hsiu, “Homeward bound I go,” sang in John Sung’s ears as he packed up for his homeland. It was a high autumn day, the 4th of October, when the yellow leaves on the trees were turning into orange, and from orange into red. John Sung said good-bye to Dr Walker his “American father” and friend in need with mixed emotions like the changing mood of the autumn leaves.

From Cincinnati in Ohio he headed westwards to Seattle in Washington State on the West Coast. His ship lifted anchor on the 11th of October, and by the 8th of November 1927, after a smooth sea trip, he stepped back onto his native soil of Hingwa — after an absence of seven years and nine months, short of two days.

During the prolonged days of sailing, a spiritual battle was waged once again in his soul. With his scientific achievements many openings in the national universities in China were waiting for him. Especially, in the sphere of chemistry. As it was expected of him to earn a good sum first to help the family, should he not take up a job for a season before launching out into preaching? As he felt drawn to this line of action, the Holy Spirit brought to remembrance the various deep experiences he had had even before his thorough conversion on Feb 10th, 1927. But one that stood out most prominently during the voyage was the dream he had a few days after Feb 10th. In this dream he was looking into an open coffin. Lying inside was a corpse dressed in academic cap and gown, its hand clasping a diploma. A voice said, “John Sung is dead.” But, no sooner was the voice receded than the corpse began to stir. At this, the angels in heaven began to weep. Suddenly the corpse stopped moving and a voice said, “Weep not, ye angels, I will remain dead here — dead to the world and dead to my selfish ambitions.”

Should John Sung now rise again to return to the world?

"No, No; No!" he resolved in his heart. Digging into his baggage he took out every diploma (save the one with the PhD to present to his parents in filial piety) and every decoration, medals and gold keys. As the ship ploughed through the Pacific Ocean, nearer and nearer to Shanghai her destination, John Sung recited with the Apostle Paul, "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ" (Phil 3:7,8). Then, like casting a floral wreath on the wave for some loved one lost at sea, he threw them likewise as an act of burial of his old self "into the depths of the sea" (Micah 7:19).

Amidst the joys of home-coming one cloud of sadness that floated across Sung's eyes were the many wrinkles added to his father and mother — wrinkles no doubt of the fears and anxieties of loving parents for their long lost child. Nevertheless, every springing step he took in and out of the house, into the street or to the waterfront, was accompanied by a joyful throb in his heart. There is no place like home!

Immediately after his setting foot on Hinghwa Mrs Sung prepared a big homecooked feast, with the help of many female hands, to welcome their son. After the meal, however, Pastor Sung had to divert their lighter talk at table to one big subject obviously looming before their American-returned son.

"Chu Un," old Pastor Sung opened up, "Now that you have returned with all your degrees and diplomas, we hope you will take up some high position offered to people like you by the national universities. You know too well that as a pastor my present salary remains at only \$30 a month. Unless your mother has worked hard and stinged every cent, it had not been possible to feed a family of twelve mouths. I hope you will help to educate your younger brothers."

Having settled in his mind to serve the Lord, come what may, after throwing away his degrees, etc into the ocean, Chu Un replied curtly, "I have already died. The one now returned is not my former self."

“Not you? Who then? Are you a ghost?”

“God has called me to be a preacher.”

“If you wanted to be a preacher why need you go all the way to America?”

“No wonder they say you are mad. You are alive, how is it you say you are dead?” chimed his four younger brothers.

All left off speaking to Chu Un save his loving mother: “You know how your father and brothers have waited for your return, that you should bring fame and honour to your ancestors. Why did you say all those words?”

“God wants me to be a preacher.” Chu Un maintained.

That night he could not sleep. Then came the Word of the Lord to him, “He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me . . . (Matt 10:37) Since you love Me you should give all you have to your parents and brothers.”

Now there was brought back from America among John Sung’s possessions the sum of US\$1,768.00. This whole sum he gave up to his dad: “This sum was earned by Sung Shang Chieh before he died. This sum can be divided among the younger brothers for their education.” Moreover he gave over to the younger brothers all his clothes and books. As to the PhD diploma, that he presented to his Mother. All that he now possessed was his body, bought by the precious blood of Christ, to be used henceforth for His glory.

As it had been communicated to his parents that Shang Chieh was mentally deranged, the whole family kept a watching brief on him in all his movements. After one week all in the house were assured in their observation that he was sane and sound. Therefore Pastor Sung gave his blessings to his son’s decision to serve God fulltime. He encouraged him to go forth, in the strength of the Lord.

Though “man shall not live by bread alone” (Matt 4:4) it is also true that “if any will not work, neither should he eat” (II Thess 3:10). To upkeep himself he got a job with the Methodist Christian High School as a part-time chemistry and Bible teacher, three times a week. The rest of the week he was free to do the Lord’s work in his own sphere.

For a young man like John Sung with all his academic qualifications, coming home meant also getting married. It has been noted earlier that according to Chinese custom, to

him had been betrothed a young lady since their school days. Had he not gone abroad their marriage would have been consummated earlier.

Without further delay, Dr Sung Shang Chieh and Miss Yu Chin Hua both of Hingwa were united in holy matrimony at the Methodist Church, early 1928.

In John Sung's autobiography published in 1933, while he talks at length of his training in God's appointed Seminary, he mentions not a word about his marriage. But during a visit, three days after the wedding, to Rev and Mrs Frances P Jones, his former high school teachers, John was heard to say, "I wish I were not married." Nevertheless Mrs Sung became his "wise internal helper" without whose assistance "the external partner" could not have gone so far in the work of the Lord. For, a bishop must be "the husband of one wife" (I Tim 3:2) in the primary sense that "it is not good that the man should be alone" (Gen 2: 18)

There is no doubt that it was a successful marriage, for three daughters and two sons were born to them in their eighteen years of married life. Though Dr Sung lived with his wife at most one to two months a year during the heyday of his ministry, his sermons were full of illustrations from his family life. He often used the first love of a newly married couple to illustrate the love of Christ and His Church.

Apart from Chinese names, father Sung attached Biblical names to each of his five children. These were called in order of the Five Books of Moses: Genesis (girl); Exodus (boy); Leviticus (girl); Numbers (girl). But when he came to the fifth and last, a boy, he named him Joshua. Some say the fifth child was not called Deuteronomy because "Deutero" which means "second" might connect him with the first son who died in early infancy. It is more likely that Joshua was chosen because this reflected his zeal to finish his crusade against sin inasmuch as Joshua was to conquer the heathen tribes of Canaan. To name the second son Joshua was to remind him also that "there remaineth yet very much land to be possessed" (Josh 13:1). When he spoke to us in Singapore in his subsequent campaigns he told how God had given him only fifteen years to finish his work. Did he gather this from the life of King Hezekiah (Isa 38:5)? He was very

conscious of the shortness of his days, showing us how his fifteen years were made up of cycles of three. William E Schubert his missionary friend whose booklet "I Remember John Sung" was entrusted to our publication, whom when we visited in his last days in Los Angeles 1980, verified: "The five times three years of his ministry consisted of the periods of Water, Door, Dove, Blood and Tomb." "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom" (Ps 90:12). Without a "wise internal helper" the apostle of China could not have lived and worked through those crucial cycles of his life, particularly the Tomb period, as we shall see.

Chapter XI

THE WATER PERIOD

1928–1930

According to a Chinese proverb, “Any start in life is difficult.” To launch out as a part-time teacher and preacher with backing from neither Church nor Mission against a rising tide of nationalism, with anti-Christian agitation also from Communist machinations, was fraught with many difficulties to say the least.

No sooner had John Sung begun to preach than he ran foul of Government authorities. This happened at Sienyu where he was conducting a Bible class in the wake of a revival kindled by the Bethel Worldwide Evangelistic Band under Rev Andrew Gih, May, 1928. A preacher of righteousness and a prophet against sin, he was not afraid to denounce evil in high places. A touchy issue was the practice of thrice-bowing to the portrait of Sun Yat Sen, Father of the Chinese Republic (1867–1925). In this nationwide practice, Church leaders had acquiesced and lay Christians would comply under a subtle pressure for conformity. This was extenuated by the age-old Chinese custom of bowing to one another as a polite form of social greeting. Nevertheless, the prophet against sin maintained that bowing to Sun Yat Sen’s portrait would come under the prohibition of the Second Commandment which plainly says, “Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image or any likeness of anything... Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them...” (Ex 20:5). To bow to the portrait, to the likeness of Sun Yat Sen now dead, was tantamount to breaking the Second Commandment. This was like ancestor worship. This was idolatry. In this connection he had the concurrence of Rev Timothy Pietsch, who knew John Sung when he was in China, but is now veteran missionary to Japan. Rev Pietsch humorously put it this way — if the idol or image could bow back to you, then you could bow to him.

When the Kuomintang (Nationalist Party) heard of this

“subversive” or “counter-revolutionary” doctrine, they set about to arrest Sung. In order to do this they first took action with the school board under which John Sung was part-employed. A plot was hatched whereby the very students he had so diligently taught both Chemistry and Bible were stirred against him. Just as these misguided young people had him cornered in a classroom and were about to beat him up, suddenly a thunderstorm broke loose over their heads which so struck fear into their hearts that they melted away. Thanking God for this marvellous deliverance, he also perceived that he should no more serve God, “one foot in evangelism and the other foot in Chemistry.” He resigned forthwith to become a fulltime preacher.

Under the Kuomintang’s surveillance John could no longer preach freely in his home town. Like the early disciples fleeing Jerusalem under persecution, “and went everywhere preaching the Word” (Acts 8:4) he went out to every remote countryside, to the fishing villages by the sea coast, and even to some offshore islands. As he went he gathered a band of young men and young women whom he trained as lay preachers. In the steps of the Saviour coming apart to some secluded place from the hubbub of city life, John led fifty of his disciples to the Heavenly Horse Mountains for eight days of concentrated Bible study. After this they branched out to the villages below in small groups, visiting a hundred country churches as they went. Incidentally some of these young people were the fruits of the Bethel Worldwide Evangelistic Band whom he first met at Sienyu. Indeed, when he was at Sienyu he had observed how the Band worked and had since adapted to some of their methods. “Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man the countenance of his friend” (Prov 27:17).

During his itinerant preaching, John would speak as many as eight or nine times a day. Once he preached so hard that his voice was reduced to a whisper. Any other preacher would have gladly called it a day, but not the intrepid herald of God. “A voice crying in the wilderness,” he must let it be heard, now that they were come on such a long journey. To do this he had a member of his team stand with him on the platform. As he whispered the words of the message, this

fellow would rehearse in a loud voice — an ingenious improvised human P.A. system that worked with wonderful effect. After the meeting, the rest of the team took over the counselling to further relieve their voiceless leader.

By summer of 1928, John Sung was feeling the strain of several months of concentrated preaching and teaching. Remembering once again the places of retreat our Lord had frequented, he said to himself, “I must get away to some quiet spot for solitary meditation.” Just then it was reported that a Christian Summer Conference was going to be held at Kuling. Kuling is one of China’s famous mountain resorts overlooking the Yangtze River at Kiukiang, Kiangsi Province. Kuling was a meeting place of many of China’s Church leaders of hallowed memories. Here would be gathered in conclave the Nation’s highest leaders, even Generalissimo Chiang Kai Shek. So to Kuling he went, now not to speak but to listen. His name beginning to be heard outside of Fukien Province, he was asked to give a testimony. This he willingly did, and this was the first time he was introduced to the Chinese Church at large.

Coming down from the mountain resort to the plain, to Hinghwa his hometown, he happily noted that the Holy Spirit was kindling a revival fire again. His joy was multiplied as scenes of the Hinghwa Pentecost of 1909, two decades ago, flashed back across his mind. One of his younger brothers, waxing zealous for the Lord, organised a Christian Boy Scouts Troop. This he led to nearby villages where the boys, advanced the Gospel by drama in their own way. Playing Chinese tunes on both wind and string instruments they attracted crowds to hear the Gospel. Many of the Gospel choruses sung were from John’s growing collection, not a few of these composed by himself.

“The zeal of Thy house has eaten me up” (Jn 2:17) is quoted from Ps 69:9 and has direct reference to our Lord’s cleansing of the Temple. By application His servant’s concern for the revival of the Church was growing in intensity. Let John Sung speak for himself according to his Autobiography, paragraph 88:

“In late autumn of 1928 I formed an itinerant preaching band of three persons consisting of myself, a western miss-

ionary and a brother. As we went, we preached, and wherever our feet had trod we sowed the good seed in the fields of men's hearts. We did two things in every Church: 1) revived the hearts of believers to love the Lord; 2) investigated their particular needs. As there were more Churches than we could visit we stayed at each place at most two or three days. The Lord being with us, we were welcomed wherever we went. Revival came after our visit. But, alas, we lacked good workers for the follow-up, so that the reviving could not be sustained for long.

“Nevertheless we learned many lessons in our ‘circuit-riding’. We saw the difference between weak and strong churches and noted the reasons behind them. One conclusion was this: We hoped that many of the graduates of our Seminaries and Bible Colleges might not be stereotyped products relying on their certificates to procure their rice-bowl. We hoped that every theological school would train every student a spiritual man. In Christ, I submit to every seminary president this word: The best is that no certificate be awarded merely on academic qualifications (if so, what difference is there from the secular?) Certificates and degrees should be given to those who qualify academically, who also have the abundant life of Jesus Christ. For the ‘recession’ in the Chinese Church today is due not to a lack of theological graduates, but rather to a lack of Spirit-filled men with the new life to do a holy work. These observations are gathered after our going through a dozen villages from Pinshan to Chengchuan.

“Since my preaching has now extended to all parts of China, I am more than ever convinced from more things I have seen that preaching does not depend on man-made scholarship, intellectualism, or talents, but rather on whether one has the new life or not. The results of a preacher with the new life and of one without it are like the ‘gold, silver and precious stones’ versus the ‘wood, hay and stubble’ mentioned by the Apostle Paul (I Cor 3:12).

“An evangelist might light up the fire of the Spirit, but to maintain the fire depends on the follow-up of the resident pastor or preacher. Thus we evangelists, when we see the fire burn on after we leave, have nothing to boast of. We

must thank God for His faithful ones who stay on the job, who keep the fire burning.”

As John Sung’s voice in the wilderness began to echo in his native province, Churches in the south that heard of his good work were the first to invite him. January 1929 saw John Sung taking a boat to Changchow. Here the people who came to hear him, many out of curiosity, numbered seven to eight hundred a day. After one week he advanced to Amoy, the stronghold of Presbyterians, whose founder was William Chalmers Burns (1815–1868). From Amoy he moved on to Chuanchow where God wrought a mighty work in turning many in repentance. The victories he had won in this southern Fukien crusade gave him abounding joy. This made the budding evangelist to aspire farther afield, yea, to advance now to Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth (Acts 1:8). But God’s time had not yet come. “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord” (Isa 55:8). He was obliged to return to Hingwa.

Following the ideals of theological training he had earlier enunciated, Dr Sung now formed an itinerant theological school. Five students were enrolled who lived a peripatetic life with their teacher, learning as they went preaching, preaching as they went learning.

One practical lesson the itinerant theological school learned at the outset was from three young ladies teaching on an off-shore island. Why did they forsake the comforts of city life to live among the fisher folk? Why were they willing to teach after school hours illiterate women to read, and street urchins to be good? “When I saw their sacrificial service, I felt deeply ashamed of myself,” said John Sung. “We learned from them the lessons of faith, sacrifice, love for souls, perseverance in sufferings. That they were able to maintain such good works stemmed from a new power from within.” As for the visiting Gospel team they played the equally needed role of reapers. Not a few heathen families who received Christ as a result of their preaching turned in their idols for burning. “One soweth and another reapeth. I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour . . .” (Jn 4:37,38).

In the course of their itineration they came to Hong Chek village, John Sung's birthplace. It was a season of busy planting in the paddy fields so that when they knocked on the doors the houses were deserted. Both teacher and students, like our Lord and His disciples, were now found in the fields among farming hands, after they had so soon left the fisherfolk. By going down to the paddy fields in the morning hours, they had gathered a full audience in the evening. As they preached from the Parable of the Sower, and the Seed sown had fallen on good ground, they experienced there and then a hundredfold reaping! For it pleased the Holy Spirit to work a mighty work in his own village. The whole church turned to the Lord in repentance as it did years ago. This encouraged the Lord's servants not a little.

In another village, the theological school visited a Church that was practically deserted. It was a hot summer day and seasonal sickness had kept the people indoors. This did not discourage the Gospellers. They literally practised what the Lord in the Parable of the Great Supper told to the servant, "Go out quickly into the street and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt and the blind. . . . Go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled." (Luke 14: 16-24). As a result of going out into the streets to "compel them to come in" they were able to haul in between one and two hundred hearers of the Word each night. Not a few of those brought in were undertakers and grave diggers, funeral pipers and professional mourners. These now found a way out of the pit. By receiving Christ as their Saviour, death was no more the dark chamber they dug, but a tunnel — an escape route to a brighter life on the other end.

While the itinerant theological school was learning as they went preaching, they observed that the Church already had an improvement programme for the people. This was mainly educational in emphasis. Literacy was the word! While the literacy movement was beneficial, what was lacking was its spiritual counterpart. To comply with the order of the Bishop, the poor village pastors had to work doubly hard in the literacy drive in order to turn in a good report. This the village pastors did for the sake of retaining their rice bowl.

Thus, wherever the evangelists met with such a situation they would hardly get any support from the local church. This spurred the Team to redouble their efforts to revive the Church.

Dividing one hundred churches of a certain district into ten training groups, John held Bible classes with each of them by rotation. He presented to these groups materials such as new songs and choruses and pictorial aids for teaching. Moreover he gave much time to start a family worship movement that involved a thousand homes.

Every training session registered forty to fifty candidates. These were made up of church leaders mostly. There was also a junior training scheme for the youth fellowships on how to assist their pastor. In view of the fact that Methodist ministers were often transferred from one church to another, the training of the laity had a definite stabilising effect on the local scene. In personal contacts with the people the teacher of the itinerant theological school learnt many valuable practical lessons himself, particularly from the live testimonies of the people. "Truth is stranger than fiction."

For one whole year John was involved in this training of Christian workers on the spot. This work was evidently blessed of God because requests for help were received from many outlying churches in the south, from as far as Yung Chun and Teck Hua.

In the hour of success, there came, however, the Tempter to dislodge John from his commitment. One day during Passion Week of 1930 when he should have looked upon the Saviour with deeper contrition, he turned instead to look at self in a comparison with others. If he had taken a chemistry professor's appointment, he would now be drawing five to six hundred dollars a month. In his present predicament, being a free-lancer, he could hardly make ends meet. By this time, the couple had a girl and a boy. On top of the economic pressures he was heaped with criticism and ingratitude. Wherever he went all these long months he was his own baggage bearer, trudging uphill and downdale bare-footed and bareheaded. It was a work that involved blood, sweat and tears. Like Simon the conscripted Cyrenian, John

found himself no more bearing the cross with joy. Just then came the Word of the Lord to him, "Can you not obey Me to the very end? Can you not give your all to Me? I know your works. Your failures today are a forerunner to the success to come." "All things work together for good to them that love God. . . ." In the solemnity of these words John held his peace.

Soon after this he received invitations to hold revival meetings in Nanchang and Nanking. Thinking that the time had come for him to leave his native province, he sought the Lord again. To this came the reply: "My son, don't be hasty. Your time has not yet come."

Instead of sitting still, he bolted away like an unbridled horse. John was determined to go north at all costs. Though boils had erupted on his body, he nevertheless packed his suitcase to head for Kiangsi Province, hoping these would subside on the way. But God had His way to deal with a wayward child. On the morning of setting out, he began to vomit violently. He was overwhelmed by cholera! A cholera epidemic had suddenly invaded Hingwa and John was one of the first to succumb to it. When he began to pray for forgiveness, willing now to submit to His will, to stay forever in Fukien as a country evangelist, the sickness left him almost immediately!

Now, when God's appointed hour for His servant to depart drew near, He confirmed this also by immediate circumstances inasmuch as He had worked through such circumstances to prevent him from leaving. A few months after his recovery from boils and cholera, Hingwa suddenly came under a spate of murder and arson. These disturbances were further aggravated by an invasion of rebel-soldiers, for this was a period of warlords striving against the Central Government established by Generalissimo Chiang Kai Shek. The Methodist missionaries working in remote areas quickly regrouped in the cities. John Sung's co-workers had to leave him because the opportunities for evangelism were gone.

Under these sudden changes of fortune when "no man can work" the Methodist Bishop of Foochow who had oversight of John decided to send him to North China on a study tour

— to learn from their Literacy and Mass Education Movement. Though his interest was evangelism and not education, but realising this was God's appointed hour for him, John took leave of his family as abruptly as before, sickness in the family notwithstanding.

On the eve of departure for North China Mrs Sung and Exodus the baby boy of three months (also called Tien Cheng = Heavenly Journey) were both heavily stricken. The baby boy died after a brief illness, adding sorrow to sorrow. The parents sought comfort in the analogy of Baby Moses being cast upon the waters at three months old, which led to his salvation. They believed their beloved little son had got out of this sea of sin below to the land of glory above. Three days after the burial of their son John Sung left his wife behind, still lying on her sick bed. He sailed for Shanghai from where he would proceed north to Peking. And it was winter.

D. YEARS OF SERVICE

Chapter XII

THE DOOR PERIOD I

Study Tour of North China

1930

The purpose of the Bishop of Foochow's sending Dr Sung to North China was that he might learn from Dr James Yen at Tingsien near Peking the mass education Dr Yen was so famous for, and that Dr Sung should return to Fukien to improve on their own. Upon reaching Shanghai, "China's Grand Central Station," to entrain for the north, Dr Sung heard that a East China Conference of the Christian Home Movement was about to open at Huchow in Kiangsi Province. A hundred delegates were expected from the Eastern Provinces.

Though John Sung had no prior arrangement, he felt drawn to Huchow before heading northwards. At the Conference the doctor was attired as ever in his coarse Chinese gown. His face was weather-worn. Not conversant in Mandarin nor Shanghainese he was obliged to sit quietly, uttering not a syllable. So he was left in a corner by himself and taken for a country bumpkin. No one could know he was an American-trained scientist.

At a prayer session, however, the bashful doctor was moved to pray, and pray he did the best he knew how — not in Mandarin nor in Shanghainese, but in English. And that prayer was so moving that Mrs Frank R Millican of the American Presbyterian Mission and the Christian Literature Society went to seek him out. Having discovered the Hing-hwa country preacher to be no less a Ph.D. in Chemistry from her own country, Mrs Millican warmly invited him to join her discussion class. There he was further given an opportunity to tell of his experiences in launching his family worship programme. But what led to God's opening a nationwide door to preach the Gospel was when he was asked to give his testimony to the whole Conference. It

happened that the speaker on that occasion was not able to come and what better substitute could be found than one so ready of speech? Romans 8:28! Suddenly, the name of Dr John Sung, Ph.D., one who had given up a professor's appointment to become a country preacher, was on everybody's lips.

From Huchow John made his way to Hangchow, China's most famous resort city situated on the West Lake. This was in answer to a first invitation from a little church. Returning to Shanghai he was entertained in the home of the Millicans. During his short sojourn he was invited to speak at the Christian Literature Society on his three year's experience in rural evangelism, the literacy movement and family worship.

Hastening on his mission to North China John Sung, nevertheless, broke journey at Nanking, newly established national capital under Chiang Kai Shek, to visit with Rev Francis Jones, former principal of the Memorial High School of Hingwa. Rev Jones was now on the faculty of the theological school affiliated to Ginling University. This was the College John had earlier aspired to attend but was turned away from it by the sudden death of his elder sister.

Crossing the Yangtse River to Pukow on the opposite bank he was right on course to Peking on the Tientsin Line. For a Southerner like John Sung this was a miserable journey, for he was inadequately clad against the icy winds blowing down the frozen Siberian plains. Knowing a friend in Rev H E Dewey, an alumnus of Ohio Wesleyan University, John got down at Changli, before Tientsin, to warm up a little. A warmer fellowship was kindled when his host advised him against spending too much time on the literacy movement. How this inspired his heart that here was a missionary who agreed with him on the need of revival for the Chinese Church.

Taking advantage of the journey John made a short visit to Shanhaikwan (Mountain and Sea Pass) where the Great Wall reaches down to the sea. From Shanhaikwan he headed for Peking to Rev R W Backus who had invited him to speak on rural evangelism in Fukien to a pastors' seminar then in progress. As Rev Backus was a man of God and a fundamentalist he spoke the same language as John Sung. This

gave him further warmth of fellowship to compensate for the freezing northern weather.

When he finally arrived at Tingsien his destination to meet with the world-renowned Dr James Yen, the southern doctor was mightily impressed with the northern doctor. Dr Yen was a man of energy and sincerity in the promotion of education of the masses. Everyone engaged in this work who wished to succeed must come to seek his advice. His methods of teaching were well in advance of his time, original and thought provoking. The secret of his success was his devotion to a great cause.

Be that as it may, this was not the work God wanted John Sung to do. In a dream during the night the Lord said, "These are beautiful flowers that bloom for a little while, but bear no fruit. Keep that which is given to you and guard it diligently. What you should become is a fig." (In Chinese the fig is called a no-flower fruit.) Instead of staying a month to learn from Dr Yen as previously planned, John took leave of the great educationist the very morning after. From Tingsien to Peking!

In Peking he found good company with a Presbyterian missionary who intimated he was on the point of writing him to hold a six-month course on Christian workers' training. What a wonderful coincidence that he should appear when he was thinking of him! Though this seemed to be a confirmation, the Lord forbade John to stay: "This is not your ministry. I want you to do a greater work! Arise, go and revive a Laodicean Church which is neither cold nor hot lest when Jesus returns she be spued out of the mouth. (Rev 3:15,16) Go quickly with the message that Jesus is coming again real soon! Prepare the Bride to meet the Bridegroom! Meanwhile an express letter came from Mrs Millican to invite him on behalf of Pure Heart Church of South Gate, Shanghai, to speak to their Boys and Girls High Schools. Being persuaded this was the Lord's timely direction John returned to Shanghai immediately by the train that brought him to Peking.

Upon arrival in Shanghai, it chanced that the world-renowned Japanese pastor of the slums, Dr Toyohiko Kaga-wa, was lecturing at Shanghai Christian University. Having

heard so much of him, Dr Sung went to observed him. A social gopeller, what he said was no different from the old stuff he had got at Union under Dr Fosdick.

When courteously invited by the Japanese Doctor of Divinity to speak at a prayer meeting, the "Chinese Kaga-wa," as he was so introduced to the audience, boldly testified for His Lord, the efficacy of His Blood to cleanse every sin. He stressed not so much the physical as the spiritual which led to John's favourite theme: The need to be born again, and to be filled with the Spirit. A testimony to the Truth was given despite his sensing a nonchalant audience. Evidently John was a square fundamentalist peg in a round modernistic hole.

Speaking at the South Gate Pure Heart High School of the American Presbyterian Mission where Mrs Millican had arranged the meetings, Dr Sung found a more receptive audience. From there he went on to speak to a CMA (Christian and Missionary Alliance) Church in North Szechuan Road. He felt a real difference between speaking in a big city like Shanghai and among the fisherfolk of his native Hingwa.

One of the items on the agenda at the back of his mind was to visit the Bethel Mission which had sent a team to Sienyu May 1928 under Rev Andrew Gih. When he stepped into the Mission compound he was warmly welcomed by Dr Mary Stone and Miss Jenny Hughes the leaders of the Mission, for they mutually had heard of his good work through Andrew. A Gospel Vanguard of the Mission, the Bethel Worldwide Evangelistic Band was founded in 1925 with Andrew as the leader.

A door of preaching was immediately opened to him to speak to Bethel High School and nursing students at the daily chapel service. He spoke on his favourite subject "Five Loaves and Two Fishes" to a gathering of seven hundred. Though the message was well received, John felt something was drastically missing. As he searched his own heart, he realised that expounding on "mysteries" could never release the power to save a soul from sin.

Though Bethel extended an invitation to join their Evangelistic Band about to leave for North China, Dr Sung

politely declined, promising to return to speak at their Summer Conference the next year. He felt his first duty was to return to Hinghwa to report back to his Bishop, and of course to see his dear wife.

As he sat awhile in the winter snow to wait for a boat back to Hinghwa, he received an express letter from Nanchang earnestly inviting him to hold a revival campaign. As a civil war was then raging between Nationalists and Communists and the countryside was infested with bandits the Bethel friends dissuaded him from Nanchang. Weighed down by a desire to return home early John Sung's zeal for revival in Nanchang began to wane. Suddenly he seemed to hear a voice saying to him, "Go! The time to labour in Nanchang has come! Go, fight the good fight of faith." Bandits or soldiers on the way, come what may, John decided without a doubt it was the Lord's call to battle. The next morning John took a Yangtse River boat and sailed upriver to his new engagement — Nanchang!

The Acts account of God leading Peter to Cornelius and Cornelius to Peter is a thrilling story of Divine guidance in missions (Acts 10:1-22). While we have John Sung's account on how he felt called to Nanchang, we have on the other hand the words of William E. Schubert telling of the events that led to inviting John Sung. In his booklet, "I Remember John Sung," Schubert writes:

Dr Sung's Wider Ministry Begins

The second or "Door" period, being in November 1930, opened a wider ministry in all China. It came about this way: There was a big Religious Education Conference near Shanghai, and John Sung was sent as a delegate, not as a speaker, but to learn from others. However, he took a big suitcase full of religious education materials he had used in the rural districts. A noted missionary lady saw these materials, and asked him to take her place as a speaker the first day. After they heard him, different ones asked him to speak, and he became the main speaker of the Conference.

"One of my Chinese preacher friends from Nanchang was

there, and came back enthused, and all aglow with interest and zeal. He said, 'Oh, Mr Schubert, we Chinese have our own Paul. He preaches the Bible like I never heard anyone preach before.' He asked, 'Could we have him come to Nanchang?' I replied, 'Yes, why don't you invite him; you have your own church.' He said, 'I asked the Chinese district superintendent, and he didn't approve.'

"I said, 'You don't have to have his approval.' (In those days it wasn't necessary as it is now.) John Sung was also a Methodist preacher. 'You can invite him; you have the authority.' He said, 'Yes, but how will I finance it?' I replied, 'If he is as good as you say, it will take care of itself, but if not, I'll underwrite it.' Which was all that was needed.

"Pastor Hsu promptly wrote to Dr Sung, who had promised to come if invited. But meantime, the bishop and the lady 'archbishop' (the senior missionary) had written that Sung must return to his work in Hinghwa, so he answered Hsu that he couldn't come. This was a great disappointment to us. However, he got sick, and while he was in Bethel Hospital in Shanghai, God told him to come to Nanchang, so he obeyed God, with marvellous results."

That God had diverted John Sung to Nanchang became the turning point in his whole ministry. Having more time to himself on the river boat, he began to take stock of the work he had done in his native province the last three years. While he had been zealous for his Lord, he had no definite objective. He was like one beating the air (I Cor 9:26). Though he had striven his level best to revive the Church, he was also involved in so many side-tracking movements — religious education, family worship, youth work, literacy, social service, etc. Many of these projects were good, but what he got from their cultivation were only leaves and flowers.

No doubt he had won many to Christ, but without the follow-up of likeminded pastors or resident preachers, these were brought like the lame beggar to the gate of the Temple, not inside it. (Acts 3:2) All this while his efforts were spent within the fold of liberal and modernistic Christianity. To use a Chinese proverb, he was "weeding another man's field." Whatever good he had done in revivalism was

consumed by the cancerous cells of liberalism. John Sung resolved henceforth to hew a clean line. If he was prophet against sin, he must resist the most subtle form of sin lurking inside the Churches — the sin of unbelief. Then, as he called to mind the message on “mysteries” so recently delivered at Bethel with insipid results, he reminded himself to deal rather with the needs of sinners, with the blood of Christ as their only cure.

While John was searching his heart before God and preparing for spiritual battle in Nanchang, it is interesting to note that all this while Rev William E. Schubert and a young teacher-preacher were praying for revival, and for Dr Sung their speaker. In fact this two-man prayer meeting had begun as early as January 1st, 1931 and continued on and on for fifty days. Just as it ended John Sung came!

Now Nanchang was a stronghold of Methodism. The Methodist Church there extended to seven or eight districts. To call a general meeting was a simple matter. As the Church was in a lukewarm condition all the efforts taken to bring the people to the long-projected revival meetings, by posters and announcements, drew but a handful of hearers. “This really dampens my heart,” said John Sung to himself at the inaugural meeting.

Nevertheless he first opened up on the students of Baldwin Girls’ School and on the boy students of Nanchang Academy in the mornings. In the afternoons he went over to Pastor Hsu’s place (the man who had invited him) and preached in the Women’s and Children’s Hospital run by Dr Ida Kahn. In the evenings he spoke in one of the downtown churches.

For one week he strove apparently against great odds. He re-examined himself and asked the Lord why souls were not yielding to Him? He realised one reason why the results were meagre was that he had not come to grips with the people’s need — their being held in the clutches of sin.

In his mind now, sin was like the shut up city of Jericho. To attack sin he needed the cooperation of the missionaries, the staff of the mission schools. He needed them to join him, like the tribes of Israel under Joshua in the assault. Group prayer meetings therefore were held by the missionaries, by

the mission school staff at his request.

As Joshua in the earlier part of the Exodus account was battling the Amalekites in the plain, there was Moses, holding up holy hands praying for him on the hill-top. A revival campaign succeeds or fails, observed John Sung, on the same pattern. For a church desiring revival to leave it all to the revivalist is a great mistake! John Sung says in his Autobiography, "There is nothing that a revivalist can brag about: I have realised that it needs the support of many praying people. It was only after we had united in such a warm-hearted praying session that I felt something great was going to come in this campaign."

What moved John Sung's heart most took place on that memorable night of March 5th, 1931. On that night, as he was about to retire, he heard someone praying upstairs. Not only praying but pleading in tears on bended knees. It was his host, Rev William E. Schubert, crying out to God for a real revival on Nanchang. "O Lord," he cried, "if You will not revive Nanchang, all the long distance I've travelled to serve You here would be wasted. I had given my life to You to come to this place from the very beginning. O Lord, show forth Your power. Glorify Your own Name. Amen." When John heard this supplication above his head, he echoed from below, "Lord, Amen, Amen."

After that long Night of Prayer, John Sung launched out with a full broadside on sin. For the next whole week all he spoke about was SIN. As the Holy Spirit began to focus His searchlight into the deep recesses of hearts, one by one, two by two, until the repentants swelled into a troop, cast themselves before the Lord in tears and groaning. The school principal capitulated to confess his faults to the students. The school staff and the students themselves embraced one another in mutual forgiveness.

As sin was cast out, the Living Waters poured in. If not, the heart chamber that was now swept clean and empty would be taken over by Satan bringing in seven other demons, "and the last state of that man is worse than the first" (Matt 12:45). What is the Living Waters? None other than the Holy Spirit!

As Rev William E. Schubert was host to John Sung and

chief supporter of the Nanchang Campaign, let him give an on-the-spot account of the Nanchang Pentecost:

“During that first week practically all the students were converted

“The second week Dr Sung preached three times a day in Baldwin Girls’ School chapel. Students and teachers from both high schools, missionaries, doctors and nurses from our Nanchang Hospital, and many from our four city churches attended. The interest deepened, and some of the teachers were converted.

“Dr Sung preached much from Mark, on ‘Sin.’ But one day he spoke from Luke 15, on the Prodigal Son, who fed husks to pigs. He said, ‘If in your school here, you teach only English and History and Mathematics, and don’t let the young people find God, you are just feeding husks to pigs.’ Some of the teachers were quite upset and said he was insulting our students, calling them pigs. They told the Chinese lady principal she should not allow him to preach in her chapel. She was inclined to agree with them. That night, however, she got under tremendous conviction of sin herself. She wrote a letter to Dr John Sung saying, ‘Not only are we feeding husks to pigs, but I am a pig myself.’

“Dr Sung showed me this note, and I suggested, ‘Why don’t you have a time of testimony today?’ So he asked if anyone had anything to say. The Chinese lady principal got up in front of everybody — the students of her own school and of the boys’ high school, teachers and missionaries — and she said, ‘I objected to Dr Sung saying that we were feeding husks to pigs. But I decided I was a pig myself. I knew that I wasn’t good enough to be principal of this Christian school; however, I thought I was good as any of the other Chinese teachers and I might as well have the salary and the nice house, and wear the good clothes. But from now on my purpose will be to help my students find God and salvation.’

Teachers Wept All Night

“One night two of the men teachers, both preachers’ sons, got under terrific conviction. The cries and loud prayers of

one wakened the other (one lived upstairs and one down) and they both wept and prayed most of the night until they found peace with God. One of them, Paul Wang, was the son of the Chinese district superintendent I had worked with several years. Rev Wang Shih-tsing was a very capable administrator and preacher, but there were some questions about his ethics and morals.

“Now the son talked to the father about repentance. I happened to come into the room just then, and I believe if it had been the old days in China when the father could kill the son, Pastor Wang would have done it. But he finally broke down and confessed his sins. His wife was released from her inhibitions, and he told me, ‘Aggie is happy again like she was before we were married.’

“The other young teacher was in war work with me in West China in 1945, and he handled millions of dollars honestly, a rare phenomenon in those times. These were some of the social benefits of Holy Ghost evangelism.

The Nanchang Pentecost

“During this time Dr Sung preached three times a day, and every time like a house afire. He wore out the paint on the platform, and they asked him to wear rubber-soled shoes. He would come back to our house, take off all his wet garments, and throw them ‘plop’ out of his room into the hall, as I had suggested, and our amah would wash them — three sets a day!

“One noon we had all our Fu River pastors come to our house for lunch with Dr Sung, including Hsiung Fei, our district superintendent. Hsiung was a bright and capable man, but he was very proud. He asked Dr Sung: ‘This morning you said that some leaders in our work would betray Christ as Judas did. What advice would you give us, so that we would not be that leader?’ Dr Sung replied like a flash: ‘Don’t be a leader!’ Hsiung Fei dropped his head like he had been shot. No one said anything, for all knew that leadership was Hsiung’s temptation

“At the end of the first two weeks, Dr Sung announced on

Sunday morning that he would not preach that night, that he would pray, and any who wants to pray with him could come: 'If six or eight or ten come, that is all right.'

"In the afternoon 193 students and teachers went to a village, Bean Sprout Lane, about two miles outside the city. I had conducted a 'Thousand Character School' there in previous years, but nobody had been converted. The students and teachers went two by two into the village homes to witness. They would come out of the houses with the villagers bringing their idols. The stone idols they threw into the river. The wooden ones they burned. The entire village gave up idolatry.

Water Baptism and Holy Ghost Baptism

"On the way back it 'rained pitchforks,' a tremendous rain. Only one student had an umbrella, and the wind turned it inside out. The water was running down over their faces, and their hair was plastered down over their foreheads. But they came to me with shining faces, saying, 'Mr Schubert, John the Baptist said, "I baptize with water, but Jesus will baptize you with the Holy Ghost."' We are getting our water baptism now; maybe we will get our Holy Ghost baptism tonight.' And that is exactly what happened.

"That evening, instead of the six or eight or ten coming, there were 250 to 300 present in the Baldwin School chapel. The place was filled. Dr Sung had us sing some choruses about prayer. Then he told us to pray. But nobody prayed. It was rather embarrassing at first. Then two little high school girls stood up and began to pray at the same time. I can still see their double braids. We had never had that; never more than one person prayed at the same time. I remembered what Gypsy Smith had told about when he was preaching in a 'Gothic' church in Virginia, controlled by a 'Gothic lady.' When two persons prayed at the same time, this 'Gothic lady' said, 'Mr Smith, you tell them to stop; we can't have two persons praying at the same time.' He told her, 'Sister, God has two ears.'

The Holy Spirit Fell on All Present

“Just then the Holy Spirit fell on everybody. All began to pray at once. There was no rushing wind, and there were no tongues that I know of. But God spoke to everyone in Chinese, and it seemed the natural thing to pray in Chinese, with utterance beyond what I had ever experienced. God spoke to me in Chinese, and I prayed in torrents of Chinese.

“At first, Dr Sung was very much surprised, and not pleased. He called out for us to stop: ‘We don’t want any fanaticism here.’ I don’t think he had ever been in a place where all prayed at one time, though later in his meetings it often happened. Later, it became common, and still is practised in Taiwan and among most evangelical Chinese groups everywhere. But at the time we had never seen or heard it before. The whole outburst was unplanned and spontaneous — a moving of the Holy Spirit. But that night in March 1931 Dr Sung stopped us.

“He asked all to go to their rooms and pray quietly. He said, ‘Now I’ll pronounce the benediction.’ But as he prayed, the Holy Spirit fell the second time, and everybody began to pray in chorus again. Again he stopped us: “You didn’t understand; I didn’t say to pray here; please go quietly to your rooms and pray there.’ I later asked him why he stopped us, and he told me, ‘I didn’t want the missionaries to say “That crazy Sung made all the students crazy.”’

Communist Students Converted

“Then, as he began to pronounce the benediction again, the Holy Spirit fell upon the whole congregation the third time. So he finally let us go on, and the spontaneous prayer must have continued forty-five minutes to an hour. Christians got under conviction and confessed their sins. There were about seven or eight communist students, who later confessed that they had been paid to come there to school to cause trouble:

“These communist students were in the center of rows, scattered throughout the audience where they could make

the most disturbance. When they got under conviction, they tried to get out, but the Christian students wouldn't let them out of the rows. The Christian students had been praying for them. I can remember seeing the Christian students beating their own knees for joy when the young communists got so under conviction. All the agitators could do was to stand up and beat their breasts and cry out, 'Oh, my unspeakable sins.' They all become earnest Christians.

All My Preachers Born Again That Night

"When the Holy Spirit fell on us that night in Nanchang, all the Chinese preachers from my Fu river District had come in for the district conference. The Kan River and Nanchang District pastors were there also, as well as the students and teachers of both high schools and the doctors and nurses of our Methodist Nanchang Hospital.

"Up to that time most of my pastor friends had not been born again, I fear, though I had worked with them for several years, and had prayed for them, and had talked and preached the New Birth. But that night I think every one of them was born again, including Pastor Wang Shan-chih. I had been his assistant pastor several years before, in the big institutional church in Nanchang. He once confessed to me: 'Mr Schubert, I don't even know if there is a God,' I exclaimed, 'Why, Pastor Wang, how can you be a Methodist pastor when you don't even know if there is a God?'

"He replied, 'I believed in God until I went to America. But there I lost my faith while in Union Theological Seminary. Later, when I was visiting in England during the war, I went to see Oxford University. There I saw the pictures of the great preachers, and I thought, 'It is all empty.' But something said to me, "No, anything that can produce men like this, there must be something to it."

"That was the extent of his theology: 'There must be something to it.' Someone asked me, 'What did he preach?' He preached Comparative Religion. In his big institutional church, which he patterned after some he had seen in America, he had an English school (which I ran the

year I was with him), a library, a reading room, and many social activities. In that way he eased his conscience, but he wasn't able to preach any Gospel of salvation.

Hadn't Wanted to Do Pastoral Visiting

“Once when I suggested that we might call on the church members, he said, ‘That is what we have the Bible woman and colporteur for, to tell the church members on Saturday that tomorrow is Sunday, and to come to the church.’ Soon after that, Bishop Birney came and wanted to call on the church members, not just the rich leaders, as Pastor Wang suggested, but the poor in the hovels, the bishop said. So Pastor Wang had to go with him. But his heart was not in it of course. This was more or less the attitude of most of the pastors. They did call with me, rather unwillingly, but they didn't want to sell Scripture portions, or hand out tracts.

“Pastor Wang also told me that day in Oxford University, ‘something’ told him that if he would keep on and do the best he could, someday it would all come clear, ‘and that,’ he said, ‘is what I am doing.’ Eight years later, after we had prayed for him all these years, Pastor Wang got back to the Lord in the meeting in Nanchang when the Holy Spirit fell. He really found God, and became a fervent evangelist. He was so zealous that a visiting bishop was afraid of him and appointed him way out in communist territory in Kingtehchen. This was a city of 300,000, but with only twelve Methodist church members in a rented street-front chapel.

A Self-supporting Indigenous Church Developed

“Pastor Wang went out there, but his wife refused to go. She hated the church and the bishop, and talked against them. As a result, their little adopted son grew up to become a communist. Twenty-some years later, when I was in communist China, in Chungking, Pastor Wang's son was a communist leader there. But Pastor Wang Shan-chih went to Kingtehchen and built up the church from a dozen members

to a hundred communicants, with over two hundred attending. He also led three denominations in evangelism.

“Then entirely with Chinese funds, and no American mission aid, they built a three-storey brick building, with a preaching hall and reading room on the first floor, sanctuary on the second (and a room for the visiting missionary) and children’s school on the third floor with quarters for the women teachers. He had a young men’s gospel team, mostly his own converts, who went everywhere preaching through the countryside. The last I heard, about 1967, Pastor Wang Shan-chih, then over 80 years of age, was still preaching in that self-supporting church under the communists.

“But Pastor Wang was not the only one: Whatever is left of our work in that part of China is the result of the Holy Spirit working in that first great meeting of Dr Sung’s ministry. This is true in many other places in China and throughout the Far East. But it was in Nanchang in 1931 that the Holy Spirit fell in a new way on Dr Sung and our students, teachers and preachers, and on all of us who were present.

“That was the beginning of the ‘Door’ period of Dr Sung’s ministry, of which Jesus had told him in his seminary room in New York City. He later said it was in Nanchang that the Lord gave him his special anointing. It was the first of many great meetings he held all over China and Southeast Asia. It was not planned by Dr Sung nor worked up by anybody. It was a great surprise to him, as it was totally unrehearsed and spontaneous. It showed Dr Sung and us that there is a Holy Ghost power far beyond man’s ability. It is no glory to any human, but it is available to anyone.

A China-Wide Ministry

“We asked all those who were converted or filled with the Spirit in the Nanchang meetings to write out their testimonies. Our Chinese teachers copied them, and we posted them around the school chapel for all to see and read. Then we sent copies of these testimonies to the Christian papers throughout China. The news went everywhere, and as a result John Sung was invited to preach in many places. The

‘Door’ was opening.”

Now that we have Schubert’s firsthand report on the Nanchang Pentecost, let us hear another missionary giving his to the Church in the summer of 1931 which is recorded also by Leslie Lyall in John Sung: Flame for God in the Far East. This missionary said, “We are having a Bible revival in Nanchang (and Kiukiang) . . . Dr Sung can take any Bible passage you suggest and make it live as I have heard no other man do. He still spends hours daily with the Book, and that is the secret of his success.”

As for the doctor himself, he was convinced more than ever before that the work God had appointed him was that of a John the Baptist. His job was to denounce sin wherever he went, that men might be prepared for the coming of the Lord. He was merely His herald, “a voice crying in the wilderness.” The particular lessons he had learned from Nanchang were: 1) utter confession of every sin; 2) prayer for the filling of the Holy Spirit; 3) witness everywhere for Christ. He had read the life of John Wesley how every time he preached people were convicted and turned to the Lord. He had longed for Wesley’s power and now he had experienced it. Nanchang was just the beginning of a new dimension in the Chinese Wesley’s ministry. Nanchang was the commencement of the Door Period of his five times three years of a quick changing life. “Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.” (Rev 3:8)

Like Joshua winning victory after victory in campaign after campaign after his setback at Ai, John now kept up pursuit of his enemy SIN as invitations poured in from every quarter. Between the two series of meetings in Nanchang he had pressed in an equally successful campaign at Kiukiang. Now he raced down to Wuhu on the Lake for a short skirmish before swinging back to Shanghai.

In Shanghai he took on several engagements in a row, the first one at the Bethel Mission. More confident of the Lord’s mighty presence with him, it was here that he first began to call sinners to the front to bow their knee to God. Three hundred were so slain by the message that they went forward

in deep sorrow for their sins. Then when they had confessed their sins item by item at the behest of the evangelist, they were filled with the joy of salvation and the fulness of the Holy Ghost. But no one spoke in tongues. The only tongue present at such a conclusion was praise and singing with choruses of "Chey Mei Tze, Chey Mei Tze" = Praise the Lord, Praise the Lord! in Shanghainese. A new lesson John Sung learned in the first storming of China's megalopolis was that an evangelist must help a troubled soul to come to Christ by giving him an opportunity to make public profession and to confess his sins. He must then follow up with words of comfort and assurance for the broken hearted. An evangelist is like a midwife to bring a new life into the world. (Attorney James E. Bennett, a Bible-Presbyterian elder and soul-winner of New York City, when challenged by hyper-Calvinists in such a procedure, would rather agree with John Sung. He quoted the case of Jesus asking Martha, "Believest thou this" in respect of His Resurrection Power as the basis for calling for a decision at the end of a Gospel Message).

From Bethel Dr Sung caught up with an All-Shanghai Campaign held at Moore Memorial Church, a Protestant Cathedral opposite the Race course that could seat two thousand. Again the Lord's House was packed to overflowing and again several hundred were saved, openly confessing their sins.

The campaigns in Shanghai had barely concluded when a call was received from Nanking. Five Methodist districts had united to invite Dr Sung to speak at a retreat for pastors and Bible women. As there was another speaker, a professor from Yenching University in Peking, Dr Sung was apportioned one hour.

By popular demand, however, his speaking time was doubled, for from his lips flowed living waters that could quench the parched and thirsty. Now the Yenching professor, after delivering his message, stayed behind to hear John Sung out of curiosity. Though rather sceptical at first, the Holy Spirit began to convict his heart. At a luncheon held in honour of the speakers the two doctors sat together. To show his appreciation, the one said to the other who was known to read eleven chapters of the Bible everyday, "I

confess I have not read my Bible as I should." No wonder the people would rather hear the doctor from the countryside, for he had richly the Word of Life to give to his hearers.

While in Nanking Dr Sung received an invitation from Miss Ella Leveritt of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Changchow, a small town near the silk manufacturing city of Wusih. At first he thought of going, but owing to a heart ailment he gave the excuse of needing a rest. Moreover he had received a telegram requesting him to return to Hinghwa. Returning to Shanghai he was told by the doctor to stop work for six months, as the heart trouble was getting worse.

One night the Lord indicated to him he must go to Changchow, for a door to an ever widening sphere was opened to him. Pride was the cause of his sickness! The real reason why John Sung had declined the Changchow invitation was it was too small a place. One lesson he had to learn from the Bethel Worldwide Evangelistic Band was their willingness to go to any place, big or small.

Meantime the Bethel Band had returned to their base in Shanghai to attend the funeral of "Mother" Stone who was called home April 25, 1931. As they accepted the Changchow invitation which John Sung had declined, he felt obliged now to go along. This was the first time he went out under Bethel's banner.

At Changchow his heart troubled him the first day of campaign. The second day, it troubled him again. Brushing it aside John preached with all his might, saying to himself, "Should this be the last time I'm preaching, I will not mind. To God be the glory." When he got down from the pulpit after much jumping and thumping, he said to his colleagues, wiping away a browful of sweat, "Praise the Lord my sickness is all gone." "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it" (Matt 16:25).

Rev Andrew Gih who had been detained in Shanghai by his mother's illness now caught up with the team, to interpret for John Sung. This was the beginning of a cooperative ministry between two evangelists with multi-

plied results. "One man of you shall chase a thousand," (Josh 23:10) "and two put ten thousand to flight" (Deut 32:30).

It was raining heavily when Andrew Gih arrived at the meeting place. As he entered the hall he found a young lady weeping profusely with John Sung about to kneel to pray for her. This lady prayed for by the two evangelists later became the composer of John Sung's Autobiography. A further confirmation of the Lord's pleasure upon this joint ministry!

The next field awaiting the Bethel Band was Tsingtao. Now, Tsingtao means "Green Island". When Andrew asked John if he would go along, he immediately said yes, because he had prior indication from the Lord that the next place he should go would be an "island".

At Tsingtao the Band came to a head-on clash with a number of charismatics. These stressed a great deal on speaking in tongues, spiritual songs, visions and dreams, as signs of being filled with the Holy Spirit. John wanted to straighten them out, but on the spot he had no ready answer. He prayed earnestly for understanding to deal with their problem.

When they came to Tahsingting, the home town of Pastor Ting Li Mei, China's first revivalist, John recalled afterwards, his mind was so preoccupied with answering the charismatics that he had no heart to preach. So, he sat in the pew to hear Andrew preach on the Samaritan Woman. Suddenly, he saw the light! The fullness of the Holy Spirit is not tongue speaking or any of the other phenomena that the charismatics stressed, but rather the living waters springing up like a fountain from within every born again believer. Tongues and other so-called spiritual gifts are not God's blessings. Once a person's sins are cast out from his heart through the saving grace of the Lord Jesus, immediately there spring the living waters of the Holy Spirit from within him, which flow on and on without quenching. Every Christian must become an empty, clean channel through which the living waters of the Holy Spirit might flow to many a parched and dried up heart. This was the answer he later passed on to the Tsingtao charismatics.

When the Band came to Tsimu they heard of the death of

Miss Dora Yu Tsi-tu, one of China's leading Christian women and a mighty evangelist in her younger days. It has been mentioned she was one who led the author's mother to Christ, as well as Watchman Nee. As one generation of God's chosen workers was passing from the scene, there was need of a new generation like the Bethel Band to take their place. Simultaneous with news of the passing on of Miss Dora Yu came another of the serious illness of Andrew Gih's grandmother. This obliged him to return to Shanghai immediately so that leadership of the Bethel Band now fell on John for the time being.

Repudiating the charismatics, John had a better presentation of the work of the Holy Spirit. Seeing such a potential spiritual power in his converts, he first organised them into Preaching Bands at Tsimu, covenanting with them to go out for Christ at least once a week.

From Tsimu John advanced to Tsinan, provincial capital of Shantung. Having found the key to the Holy Spirit's power, he preached on the Samaritan Woman with a newfound freedom. His preaching was becoming more and more confident as he advanced under the Door Period.

After Tsinan the Band headed for Taian where nearby lies the grave of Confucius. A centre of Christian schools and missions, Taian had of late been ransacked by anti-Christian forces. Churches were attacked, schools were closed, missionaries and pastors were dispersed. Houses left unguarded were stripped to the last stick of furniture, except for the k'ang bed. Now the k'ang bed is made of brick, within which burning charcoal is stoked as in a furnace to warm up for winter use. In one of these looted houses was the Bethel Band stationed. Here the message delivered by Dr Sung was one of consolation which encouraged the gentry not a little. One hundred and three publicly came to the Lord after three days' meetings.

In one of his sermons of a later date, Dr Sung recollected his visit to Taian near where lies Confucius' grave. Quoting Confucius' search for the Truth that if he found it in the morning he would gladly die in the evening, (子曰：朝聞道，夕死可矣) he concluded, "Had Confucius been born five hundred years later (Chinese speak in

round numbers) so that he could know Christ, I'm sure he would become a Christian." What a contrast with some missionaries he met during his days in Shantung. These who were sent from a Christian country and were supposed to teach the Truth rejected parts of the Old Testament, and spurned the Blood of Christ. Not knowing Dr Sung's background he was asked to comment on science and religion. To which came the reply, "Science is good up to a point. One thing it cannot do is to deliver a sinner from his sins!" When it was suggested to him that Dr Fosdick and Mahatma Ghandi were fine types of Christianity, Dr Sung replied, "Confucius' teaching is far greater than theirs, yet what China needs is Jesus and His Cross. People quote Fosdick but what do they know of him? I have studied under him in New York City, but I totally repudiate his teaching and philosophy."

Any Christian coming to Shantung in those days must visit Tenghsien, not because it was a tourist attraction or some great metropolis. A mediocre city it was nevertheless "the chief centre of one of the biggest missions in China". Tenghsien was the stronghold of American Presbyterianism as Amoy was of English Presbyterianism. Tenghsien was famous for North China Theological Seminary which produced a great pastor and evangelist like Ting Li Mei and a great theologian like Chia Yu Ming. Not only a theologian, but also a reformer, for he was one of the founding fathers of the International Council of Christian Churches which was inaugurated in Amsterdam, 1948. Both these senior ministers were friends of John Sung.

Now none of the four young "lions" had completed a theological training, but with the Lord by their side they gathered courage to enter "Daniel's Den of Theology."

The morning meetings were given over to high school students. A good many of these who were burning with anti-Christian feelings and were come to look for trouble completely capitulated to the Gospel message. The evening meetings were held particularly for the Seminary students. One by one of the student body came under deep conviction of sin, and these were helped in making public confession. The final battle was won when as many as three hundred

souls sought the Lord's mercies, amidst scenes of deep contrition and bitter tears of repentance.

As the revival fire spread the campaign had to be shifted to the largest meeting hall in the city. This city of a cool and dignified Presbyterianism was taken by storm. When sins were confessed and wrongs made right, waves of joy and choruses of praise swept through the whole congregation. One senior pastor confessed to a sin that had lurked in his heart for thirty-seven years. The Registrar of a hospital confessed to stealing public funds which he now returned to the authorities in complete restitution. That God had used babes in theology to speak to men with formal training reminds of Jesus' observation of a theological paradox, "Because thou hast hid these from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, *for so it seemed good in thy sight*" (Matt 11:25,26). The sovereignty of God was now taught to Calvinists from outside of the lecture hall! "But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty That no flesh should glory in His presence." (I Cor 1:27-29)

As August 1931 the month of Summer Conferences was drawing near and the Bethel Band had fulfilled several more appointments in Shantung Province, it was time for them to return to base — not to rest but to enter into another battle. Particularly Dr Sung, for he was slated to be chief planner and one of the speakers at the Shanghai Bible Conference. Other speakers were Rev Andrew Gih and Rev T.C. Ting. The theme of the Conference was REVIVAL. As for the sub-themes they were Prayer Revival, Song Revival; Bible Revival, Service Revival, Testimony Revival. Dr Sung, speaking on Bible Revival, restated it: "A Bunch of Keys to the Word." Under Service Revival he used Acts as his text.

Although Civil War was raging unabated and banditry was a terror to travellers on every hand, delegates were coming from all the places visited by the Bethel Band. These numbered between seven and eight hundred. Plus four hundred from the Shanghai Megalopolis the enrolment exceeded a thousand two hundred.

With the Civil War on and with Japan threatening invasion any day, the Conference felt a pressing need to evangelise all of China “while it is day” (Jn 4:4). At the conclusion of every message a redhot fervour was engendered whereby the congregation would rise as one man and pray with apostolic unction, “lifting up their voice with one accord,” (Acts 4:24) and pleading for God’s deliverance of China now in their time. At this Conference every province was represented save one. The last session was given to testimonies. As the people were so blessed by the messages and by such fellowships as never experienced before, extra time was given which went on for hours. Many young people gave their lives to the Lord and vowed to take the Gospel to the uttermost borders of China, even to Mongolia and Tibet. But, Bethel Worldwide Evangelistic Band was now setting its sight on Manchuria. Now called the “Three North-eastern Provinces,” Manchuria was on the young evangelists’ immediate schedule because signs in the North-east looked ominous.

Chapter XIII

THE DOOR PERIOD II

With Bethel to Manchuria

1931

Upon Andrew Gih's invitation to formally join Bethel, John Sung promised to go with the Band to Manchuria. Others on the team were Frank Ling from Foochow, Lincoln Nieh and Philip Lee. The latter two were in their late teens. All were musically attuned, especially Philip Lee the singer who could also play on wind and string instruments. Andrew would leave first with Lincoln and Philip. John would have to return with his wife who came from Hinghwa to attend the Shanghai Conference. Upon settling his wife back in their native Hinghwa, Dr Sung would pick up Frank Ling and proceed to Dairen where the whole Band would join hands.

Returning to Hinghwa were a goodly number of John Sung associates who had come to the Summer Conference. This brought back old times as John looked forward to a closer fellowship on board. The boat they had booked to sail on was the Tong Kang (Eastern Harbour).

When the sailing was delayed, John had a premonition that something ominous was before them. Would it be shipwreck? pirates? death? serious illness? The Lord had withheld that fateful something from him. Yet he would not turn from it, as he also felt he must return by this boat. When John told his fellow travellers of his premonition, they jokingly admonished him not to say such an "unlucky" thing. It's taboo to those going out to sea. Be that as it may, he was confident God would take good care of them, for he had not completed his life's work.

It was smooth-sailing the first day and everybody was happy. On the second day what kept bothering John Sung at the back of his mind happened. There was a loud explosion. One boiler was immediately put out of action. The ship

listed dangerously and the passengers became alarmed. John Sung called for a prayer meeting but no one responded. Suddenly the second and remaining boiler also exploded. This brought the ship to a standstill. Now the hull sprang a leak and water began to pour in. Weeping and crying came from every side, despite the crew's pumping out the sea water being in progress. John called the people again to pray, and this time some came, including non-Christians. He comforted his fellows and urged them to trust God, remembering Paul's ordeal also at sea and his final deliverance.

As they prayed, sure enough there appeared a bigger ship on the horizon. A sigh of relief was heard, but soon joy turned into misgiving, for it was a Japanese ship. As relations between China and Japan were increasingly unfriendly at this time, would they give a helping hand was a big question. Waving a red flag feverishly, John Sung led the passengers who could speak English to call out to the Japanese vessel, "Help us! Help us!" In answer to their prayer, the Achiyama Maru turned around. She let down one life boat that could carry ten people. As the life boat came alongside, there was a stampede which ironically ended in three deaths. One woman who left behind her goods worth \$600 to jump into the life boat missed it and disappeared into the ocean. A man who did the same also missed his step and fell overboard. A third man who fell but was hauled up the side of the life boat was too weak to hold on. He slipped back into the deep and was never seen again. O what tragedy, what untimely death! What a picture of a world of sinful men crying, wailing and slipping into the abyss of hell. God spoke to his servant once again through this traumatic experience.

Finally, when all hands were safely hauled up the Japanese boat, the Tong Kang did not sink after all! So why did they panic? The difference between a Christian and a non-Christian can be seen in this aspect of life. When danger comes the latter is at wit's end corner, and so he panics. As for the Christian, as shown in John Sung's conduct, he has a Very Present Help to Whom he can look up in prayer (Ps 46: 1). So the lesson that God's messenger learned for

himself was that the Lord would surely keep him safe wherever he would be sent: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me." (Ps 23:4) Amen.

When news of this episode was broadcast, Christians everywhere thanked the Lord for sparing His servant. His life no more his own, as John Sung kept reminding himself, after a brief stopover to see his father and settling his wife back in their humble home, he was off again to the megalopolis to liaise with Frank Ling. As the two headed north for Dairen in Manchuria, he could see the shadow of the Cross lengthen across their path with his inner eye.

When John and Frank Ling arrived as scheduled to join the three other members of the Band, they had already accomplished their purpose at Dairen. Now there was in progress at Fengfangchen the biennial Conference of the Lutherans attended by two hundred delegates from all over Manchuria. Given a chance to address the Conference the five-member team each played a part for his Lord. Lincoln Nieh led the singing and taught some new choruses, Philip Lee sang. After a powerful message in testimony from John Sung an invitation was given. Twenty-five Chinese and two missionaries whose hearts were touched came forward to confess their sins, and there were some loud cryings and tears. This so upset the Western leaders of the Conference that their invitation was terminated the next day. This was the first time that the Bethel Band was rebuffed.

Thanking God that they were counted worthy to suffer loss of face for Christ's sake, they packed up to entrain for Mukden, the capital city. Leaving midnight, they were touched to their heart to see so many delegates and one missionary come to bid them Godspeed. A Post Office man who was meeting the train brought a personal message that surely comforted their hearts. He happened to be listening to Dr Sung outside the window the night before, and he had received Christ as his Saviour. "Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters, that send forth thither the feet of the ox and the ass" (Isa 32:20). And was there not "joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth" (Lk 15:10)?

Now before the western missionary bosses had cancelled the invitation, there were these string pullings behind the scene. An order was given to the Chinese pastors that unless they stopped the Bethel young men from preaching, the Mission would withhold their financial support. Is this not one of the charges levelled by Mao's Communist Government against the Chinese Church that she was the vassal of foreign missionary imperialism? The arbitrary action of the Lutheran missionaries led Dr Sung to write in his diary: "Beloved fellow workers and fellow Christians, why do you still depend on the financial support of foreigners? You should look to the Lord for all things and realise that the time has come for the church to be self-propagating, self-governing and self-supporting — truly independent!"

By their sudden early departure they arrived in Mukden one week ahead of schedule. But we shall see how this fitted into God's higher plan. Nevertheless the time for a revival was ripe, with the City coming under intensifying Japanese pressure. Owing to an advancing of the date for the meetings, attendance was small on the first day. But the impact of a Holy Ghost revival was so great that by 5.30 am the next day the Church was packed to capacity. After a marathon of twenty-seven meetings at three meetings a day, one thousand earnest seekers came forward to confess their sins. Since Jonathan Goforth (1859-1936) the Canadian Presbyterian missionary-revivalist, this was the greatest outpouring of blessing on the Manchurian Presbyterian Church. Incidentally, the first Presbyterian missionary to enter Manchuria (at Newchwang) was William Chalmers Burns, English-Scotch pioneer to China (1815-1868). But it was a team of Chinese young men that was used in this greatest revival Manchuria had ever seen.

Reporting on the Mukden Pentecost Dr Sung wrote Dr Mary Stone, Jr and Miss Hughes of the Bethel Mission:

"Before leaving Shanghai for Manchuria the Holy Spirit foretold me that we should be led by Him into the wilderness to be tried. Now we find we are really in the wilderness, and actually have met three kinds of temptation."

"The first trial is to change stones into bread. We thought that the Conference to which we had been invited to speak

would give us an open door to Manchuria because in that Conference all the preachers and workers of the Mission thought Manchuria can be reached But this is not the way of the Lord. He did not allow us to change the stones into bread. The missionaries with fixed ideas and those preachers with traditional opinions are in the eyes of the Lord merely stones. The Lord can change them into bread, but they would not let Him do it. We were glad we were driven out from that place because this experience has helped the young evangelists to be humble, not to be too arbitrary and try to turn the world upside down in one minute's time All I left there was my personal testimony Of course, after leaving there we prayed more for the Holy Spirit's guidance."

"Thank God the name of the next place (Fengtien) we came to means 'Listen to the Will of Heaven'! Several great evangelists have been here. They helped create an appetite. On our part our previous experience taught us to trust more in prayer and leaning upon the Word of the Lord, for one day we prayed eight or ten times, something we had never done before. After the shame of the Cross there was the glory of the Resurrection and for this reason we have about one thousand sound conversions and 279 beautiful testimonies have been handed to me. New Bands have been organised among the converts. This is the greatest revival I have ever seen in my life. Praise His Holy Name!"

When the train that carried the Bethel Band to Heilungkiang, their next campaign destination, pulled out of Mukden September 18th morning, that was the last train to leave before the Japanese took over the city. September 18th, 1931 or 9-1-8 in Chinese annals, is a day that is still remembered. When Mukden fell to the Japanese on this fateful day (Japan played it down by calling it an "Incident") repercussions were felt as far south as Singapore. The Chinese Chamber of Commerce in Singapore issued black arm bands which were also distributed to us school children to wear as a sign of Chinese National mourning. As for the British Colonial Government in Singapore, they adopted a "no-hear, no-ask" attitude.

Coming back to the five young men of the Bethel Band,

their hearts surely must have been filled with praises for God's precision timing in this deliverance. Had not the Lutheran Conference cancelled their meetings at Fengfangchen, they might have fallen into Japanese hands, or be prevented from further movement outside of Mukden. Again Romans 8:28!

With Japan gripping Manchuria by the throat, a shudder was felt throughout the Three Northeastern Provinces. Christians in this Manchu country advised the Band to return home immediately, but as doors were wide open and more were being opened before them, the evangelists felt constrained to press on, for "the night was coming, when no man could work." This might be their last opportunity, and so it was, for under Japanese imperialism, Manchuria became Manchukuo in a matter of months. Manchukuo means Nation or Kingdom of the Manchus and Prince Henry Pu Yi of the defunct Manchu Dynasty was "restored" to the throne. The Chinese called him Puppet Pu-Yi.

The last train to pull out of Mukden the morning of September 18th brought the Bethel Band to Hailar. Hailar was the last big city on the railway before it crossed into Russian Siberia at Manchuli. From Manchuli one could take a train to Europe on the Trans-Siberian line. When the five young men came so near the Russian frontier they invited suspicion. But by being interrogated, they were enabled to witness to the frontier officers in return.

Now the church at Hailar was in a pitiful condition. After only one meeting at which thirty souls were surrendered to the Lord, the campaign was cancelled because the railway was being bombed. But the real reason behind this sudden cancellation was John Sung's denunciation of sin by name which scored many a bull's-eye against the leaders. For, the pastor himself was not born again, and one of the two ruling elders was a smuggler. By so cutting off a whole week's meetings which was originally planned, they missed the Gospel Train themselves, and kept others from taking it to the Heavenly City. This was the second occasion the Bethel Band "lost face."

Their next appointment was Harbin. With two cancellations on hand thus far, they were two weeks ahead of

schedule insofar as Harbin was concerned. Knowing the Lord had gone before them as at Fengfangchen, they pressed on without a doubt but that everything would fall in place. Arriving in Harbin they were first taken to see Dr and Mrs Deming, Methodist missionaries now stationed in Harbin. The Demings were friends to John Sung when they were posted to Union Theological Seminary in New York City. They had also served in Seoul, Korea. Nevertheless, Mrs Deming had no trouble spotting out from among the five youngsters the scholar they had in their home in New York. In fact they had been following the progress of his good work ever since they were transferred to Manchuria. They had been reading from the Bible Union for China periodical his victories, campaign after campaign.

There had been many squabbles in the Churches in Harbin. There were Chinese Church leaders who turned their tables on the missionaries in a misguided spirit of nationalism to prove they were no "running dogs of foreigners". The congregation of the big Union Church where the revival campaign was held was split in two, so that separate services on Sunday were held to the fancy of the contending factions. By the advance working of the Holy Spirit all factions, except one, were drawn together to hear the evangelists. As there was no prior notice to the people of a change of date, the inaugural meeting could not help but be a last minute set up. Two loud explosions from bombs dropped by a Japanese warplane rather signalled the start of the revival campaign. These were greeted without a wince by a hall filled with happy chorus singing. When Dr Sung stepped up to preach with a new burning zeal, a counter action to the recent pressures, he captivated his listeners with an irresistible power. It was a Saturday night meeting when the campaign was launched. When the sermon was delivered to his utmost perspiration despite the wintry weather, Rev Gih took over with the appeal and helping the penitent to confess their sins. Rev Gih also preached in the morning sessions.

In between meetings the other members of the Band had the opportunity of visiting churches of other nationalities such as the Korean, Russian and German. Harbin was

rather international like their native Shanghai (except for John Sung and Frank Ling).

In spite of one church being critical of the unorthodox ways of the young men, the Harbin campaign, after the one in Mukden, was a record success. As the messages were directed to a disunited Christian community, John Sung had less words of condemnation than words of consolation. Not a few of the lay leaders and preachers were saved, including a YMCA secretary. Pastors, missionaries, church workers, elders, deacons humbled themselves and went up to kneel at the communion rail. After they had confessed their sins to the Lord they confessed also to one another in a mutual shower of tears. Now, tears had been one outstanding phenomenon of these campaigns and not tongues! And these were not crocodile tears as the readers might conclude because they are mentioned so often. But these were the tears so well-received of God, and so often shed by none other than David, a man after God's own heart. Hundreds of conversions and hundreds thirsting for righteousness is a true photo, not touched up, of the Harbin Pentecost.

Now the Bethel Band were quartered at the YMCA. Since Dr Sung and the Demings were old friends, the latter invited him and his friends to stay with them to rest up awhile as well as to speak to the Koreans. At the Korean Methodist Church John preached and Dr Deming interpreted. The Lord gave them twenty souls. Although Dr Deming was for a time linked to Union Seminary, he was a fundamentalist to be sure, not only by this fishing for souls together, but also by the way the couple entertained the Lord's servants.

As the Deming home was not particularly roomy, they made shift with the sitting room to be shared by John and Philip Lee. They cramped Andrew, Frank Ling and Lincoln Nieh into the study. At this new home away from home, the young men worked and lived by a common programme. They rose by 4.30 am for "quiet time," each one communing with his Lord in prayer and Bible study. Some time in the morning before they went to the meetings, Dr Sung would go over with his interpreter Frank Ling, who was also Fukienese like John, no matter how many times the same

message was preached. For the ingenious doctor had always something new, something bright and refreshing, never touched upon before.

When the team came back at night, John Sung particularly would look such a spent force that as he lay on the couch he would be like one dropped dead. To say he was burning his candle at both ends would be a fair description. How he felt about it all, his over-fatigue to be sure, was expressed to us at a Singapore Conference using Paul's words: "Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for the body's sake, which is the church" (Col 1:24). The Scripture that came to mind for Mrs Deming as she looked upon Dr Sung lying there still "in his work clothes" was, "This is my body which is broken for you" (I Cor 11:24). "John Sung," said Mrs Deming, "was already living up to the limit of his strength and, like his Lord, pouring out his life for God and His hungering children." He was never long free from pain from the old wound left by the operation on his back in America. The pain always returned when he was overtired or upset. But like Paul, he regarded it as his "thorn in the flesh" and was able to glory in his own weakness. (II Cor 12:7). He would read his Bible and write his diary on bended knees when rested up, without fail. It had become his second nature to do this.

John Sung who was well known for his queer ways was no easy guest to entertain either. Lacking the social graces by refusing to attend any public function or be invited out to dinner, he nevertheless required of his host "a chicken a day". He would not eat pork, beef or mutton but chicken! Frank Ling who knew him best explained, "If you have ever attended his meetings and seen how he preaches, often three times a day and as long as two hours a time, exerting every ounce of his physical and nervous energy from beginning to end, you could not blame him for asking for chicken soup to sustain him. Without such nourishment, he could never have kept up his strenuous work."

Now if we will retrace our steps to the Mukden Pentecost, the following is Dr Sung's continuation of his letter to the Bethel headquarters in Shanghai.

“ . . . Then we came to Harbin. God just prepared workers and preachers for us to work with. He wanted us to learn how to work step by step and build the revival upon a rock We helped them to realise the wonder and stability of the Bible. When this battle was won, invitations came not only from the Chinese but from the Russian, Korean and German Churches Now we are beginning to meet our third temptation, ‘Kneel down and you can have everything.’ We could stay on and work with the Russian and German Churches, thus opening the way for world-wide evangelism, but God wanted us to go forward and we have come to a small cold place called Hulan. There is a hard battle ahead of us. Pray that we may be humble enough to meet this third and hardest trial Yours in soul-saving service, John Sung”

As usual, after every campaign Dr Sung’s post bag would contain a big bundle of letters from his converts. Many simply related the blessings they had received by being saved from a wicked life. Others were problems still existing, and so his counsel was sought to help solve those problems. Having read ten-thousands of these intimate letters, no wonder the doctor had so many illustrations from life in his sermons, for the true stories of life are often stranger than the fictitious.

What gladdened the hearts of the Demings most was that as a result of the revival, the squabbling churches and factions of Harbin now came together. And the best way of coming together was on bended knees which they did. Prayer meetings were held by rotation in the churches participating . Prayer groups were started in houses, as in the days of the apostles. Preaching Bands that were organised and covenanted to witness Christ outside the four walls of the Church at least once a week brought new members and inquirers.

Not to be left out in the Harbin campaign were the Russians. Like the Koreans they managed to get some crumbs from the great spiritual feast enjoyed most by the Chinese and Manchus. It must be remembered that these who were domiciled in the kingdom of Cathay for generations were conversant in the Chinese language!

In order to expedite the work and to save expenses, the Bethel Band decided to split in two companies: Frank Ling and Philip Lee to go with John to Hulan and Suihwa; Lincoln Nieh to partner Andrew to Asahur.

Inasmuch as Dr Sung and his co-workers had had a glimpse of the Russian Church, now they were formally introduced to a Slavic people for whom Christ also died. Speaking on the Five Loaves and Two Fishes through a Russian pastor he had fifty Russians come to the front to dedicate themselves to evangelising their own people in Manchuria. At Hulan the Lord further set His seal on his servant when by his hand he cast out a demon who so possessed a man that he burnt a Bible ten times. Salvation came also to a YMCA school when its principal, four teachers and most of the students turned to the Lord in repentance.

When the Band came to Suihwa they met a more hopeless situation of fightings in the Church than that of Harbin. Here was a model of what was known as a Mission Compound. In this Compound usually surrounded by a brick wall so that it resembled a miniature ancient walled city, there were constructed a hospital, a school, a church and missionary residences that far superseded the homes of Chinese pastors. Missionaries of the professional type lived in utmost comfort in the days of western imperialism, with servants galore paid at a pittance against their own salaries.

Now the nationalistic spirit was running high, so that Chinese workers employed by Western Missions began to sulk against their missionary "masters". The missionaries were not all to blame for their superiority complex. The Chinese co-workers themselves were not a few "rice" Christians. (They worked in the church for their bowl of rice.) This fair criticism was levelled by John Sung in Fukien against his own compatriots.

Who could ever make peace between contending parties all so worked up as at Suihwa when Dr Sung and his colleagues arrived? Unless the Holy Spirit Himself would come as by a whirlwind at Pentecost? Borne along by His Spirit the doctor was able to break down all barriers between missionaries and nationals by a loving pleading to the two

parties. By his gentle persuasion in the tone of a mother to wayward children he began to melt their hardened hearts.

At the end of a sermon, as he felt an urge from within, he acted like a principal addressing his staff and students by first calling on the missionaries, doctors, nurses, teachers, Bible women, pastors to the front. Like obedient pupils they willingly responded. As they faced the people he asked them in the pews, "Do you love your leaders?" Receiving a big "Yes" from them, he instructed them to pray for them and to work together in harmony. At this he asked everyone to kneel, and as all began to pray aloud, some leaders wept. After a season of praying like this, the evangelist asked if any still harboured hatred in his heart. When the reply came from several who betrayed a lingering hatred, he admonished these to go and make up with those they were at odds. Then turning to the missionaries and the "higher-ups" he pleaded with them to also ask for forgiveness from their juniors.

An evidence of their conviction under the "brooding" of the Holy Spirit were the cases for counselling that Dr Sung had to deal with after the service. When the whole campaign was over there was joy as expressed in singing. What a change from the first impressions of a silent undercurrent of resentment and hatred. One chorus John Sung composed to bring feuding brethren together, which was also sung in Singapore, was taken from Ephesians 4:32, "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you."

Another special feature of the Suihwa campaign was that since there was still time between the last meeting which ended in the night and their departure the next morning at 7.30 am, seventy who loved the Lord asked for a special meeting to be held at 5.30 am. "Until the day break and the shadows flee away, turn, my Beloved..." (Song of Solomon 2:17).

The two teams converged on Harbin again for a repeat campaign, but this one was for "spiritual-nurture". As time was running out and more invitations were received, a "field" council was held to determine future strategy. To solve a stalemate in their planning they used the ancient

Bible method of drawing lots. The lot fell on Andrew to branch out to Chaoyangchen while John was to head for the bigger cities of Changchun and Kirin. While at Harbin John expounded to the Church the doctrine of the Holy Spirit from the Book of Acts. When John and Philip Lee took leave of Harbin for Changchun there was such a rousing sendoff in the lusty singing of the new Bethel choruses that Japanese and Russians seeing off important officers were pleasantly taken aback, while the station guard came up to investigate what it was all about.

Changchun was another Presbyterian stronghold, so the visiting evangelists were warned by the pastor not to make appeals nor any emotionalism. But as the Holy Spirit convicted the hearts of the hearers there was a spontaneous outpouring of confession of sins, as one by one stood up, praying with strong cryings. And one of them was the pastor himself!

Upon arrival at Kirin they found the City already taken over by Japanese troops. Korean Christians were the first to be dealt with. Though some escaped, many were arrested. A wave of uneasiness ran through the Chinese Churches. Nevertheless there was still one church, a flourishing one with a good pastor-preacher, that opened its door to Dr Sung.

At Kirin, in a manifestation of power against evil forces in such trying times as the Japanese invasion, God gave John grace not only to convict sinners by his sermons but also to restore the incapacitated. One man who had come to hear Dr Sung was a "Boxer" in the 1900 Rebellion wherein a hundred and eighty missionaries were slain by the order to exterminate from the Empress Dowager. This "Boxer" had killed a missionary, so his arm became paralysed after that. One day when Dr Sung preached on the good thief on the cross who got saved and asked, "Do you think that the Lord who saved the thief on the cross can save you also?" Believing with all his heart he spontaneously shouted, "Yes!" Immediately his paralysed arm could move. As in the days of the Apostles fear came upon the church (Acts 5:11).

As if to confirm God's special presence with His servant,

there was a Christian doctor who heard John Sung, but when the evangelist commanded everyone to kneel for prayer, he haughtily resisted. Sometime after this, while he was operating in the theatre, a sudden numbness ran through his arm. Realising he had offended the Lord by not kneeling to pray as commanded by His servant, he quickly dropped down on his knees and cried out for mercy. The Lord answered his prayer and so the patient was also saved. Now he went everywhere testifying to the awesome majesty of God.

At Kirin another new thing happened in John Sung's ministry. Many of his converts, particularly those from outside the Church numbering two hundred requested the evangelist to baptise them. According to the Church regulation these must first go through a catechism class lasting some months. Basing his authority on Mark 16: 16, "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved" and Acts 8: 36, "What doth hinder me to be baptised . . . If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest," the evangelist discussed with the pastor Rev Chi Shang Rong if he could. Sensing the special circumstances under which the "candidates" for baptism had requested, the resident pastor acquiesced. So Methodist evangelist John Sung, unordained of men but ordained of God, baptised the two hundred of them — by sprinkling! This was one day in his life to remember.

John had also learned from Rev Chi the secret of "laying hold," a Chinese term which literally translated is "catch hold". Perhaps Jacob is best the personification of this vigorous Chinese expression. He learned from Rev Chi now how to "lay hold" of God, to "lay hold" of God's promises. By using this new term his faith in God answering his prayer increased. Now the northern wintry cold had descended in earnest. As he a southerner needed more warm clothing and he liked a skin-lined gown very much, he "laid hold" of God's promises and asked specifically for it. Lo and behold, an old lady brought him a skin-lined gown shortly after this. "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?" (Matt 7: 11).

After this Dr Sung and his partner Frank Ling headed south via Chaoyangchen to rendezvous with Andrew Gih

and the others at Yingkow. Using the method of casting lots again John was detailed to speak at a Bible School and Andrew to hold meetings in a Church.

At the Bible School John felt a message on the "new birth" was what these Bible students needed. When the invitation was given to those who wanted to be born again a good many came forth. This got the evangelist in trouble with the principal who vouched his students were all "saved." Despite the principal's assurance and a superior theology the students were happy to make a public profession any way. Dr Sung merely broke off argument with the principal but prayed the more for victory, knowing that spiritual warfare cannot be won by energy of the flesh or a superior intellect and knowledge.

Returning to Chaoyangchen to keep a promise, John scored another first in the northern country. It was at Chaoyangchen that he preached his first "Open the Coffin" sermon. As he preached he suddenly popped out a pint-size Chinese coffin, the full version of which is most ugly to behold. Opening the lid, he began to pull out its contents — slips of paper on which the name of every conceivable sin was written — from A to Z. As the Holy Spirit was mightily present with His servant when he called out these sins by their proper names one by one, many were convicted, drooping their heads. Church leaders, from as far as Kirin, came forward to confess their sins, and as John Sung prayed for them laying his hands, many were not only spiritually, but physically, restored.

The results of the Manchurian campaign bringing 3,000 to Christ in the autumn months of 1931 were so encouraging that plans were discussed to extend a Bethel Conference there. Another outreach was to go to Korea the summer of 1932. These plans nevertheless could not be carried out in a volatile Far East.

The time had come for the Band to return to their home base in Shanghai, but Dr Sung could not enjoy rest as the others. For, he had to keep an appointment with the American Southern Baptist Mission at Hwanghsien in Shantung Province. Here was a large mission centre replete with schools and a hospital. Here was a group in complete

sympathy with Dr Sung's message and method. For months the people's hearts were prepared by prayer, so now they were ready to hear the Word. With such co-operation from the missionaries, quite different from the situation in Manchuria, Dr Sung had an easy reaping. Many hearts were softened, and many were challenged to live for God.

Now, it was at Hwanghsien that one of the missionaries urged Dr Sung to lay hands on the sick. This was necessary not only for this part of China but practically everywhere. For medical services in China then were not only primitive but few and far in between. It happened there was a Mrs Lo who was a paralytic for eighteen years. Taking courage from the Lord John laid his hand upon her and commanding her to move, she got up and walked to the great joy of the people gathered. Being an illiterate woman her testimony was all the more straightforward. Her testimony turned many more to Christ over the Pintu district. "Verily, verily I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do: because I go unto my Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." (Jn 14: 12,13).

When John revisited Tsinan the "tongues" group accosted him again and even claimed him to be a charismatic. But John repudiated them as at the first, having found the answer of the gift of the Holy Spirit as that living spring of water flowing out of a born again people yielded to the Holy Spirit. John Sung's stress was tears and confession, not tongues in confusion.

In Tsinan Dr Sung was asked to speak to a group of students from Cheloo Christian University at the home of Dr Thomson Stearns. Out of this contact forty to fifty of China's future leaders were won to the Lord. John was one who would leave no stone unturned in his prosecution of the work of soul saving.

By this time war had disrupted railway communication to Shanghai. By being diverted to sail home from Tsingtao, the "Green Island" mentioned at the outset of his formally joining the Bethel Band, he would not let the days of waiting for a boat to slip by without something done for the Lord.

Therefore he was content to speak at some specially convened meeting before taking leave of the disciples. Truly John Sung was China's John Wesley in that he had the same spirit as Wesley to go all out for Christ — by every means, to the utmost, at all times.



Miss Leona Wu, lady preacher of Chinese Presbyterian Church,
Kluang, Johore, Malaysia.

Telok Ayer Methodist Church, as it appears today.



“THE MAN WITH THE BOOK”



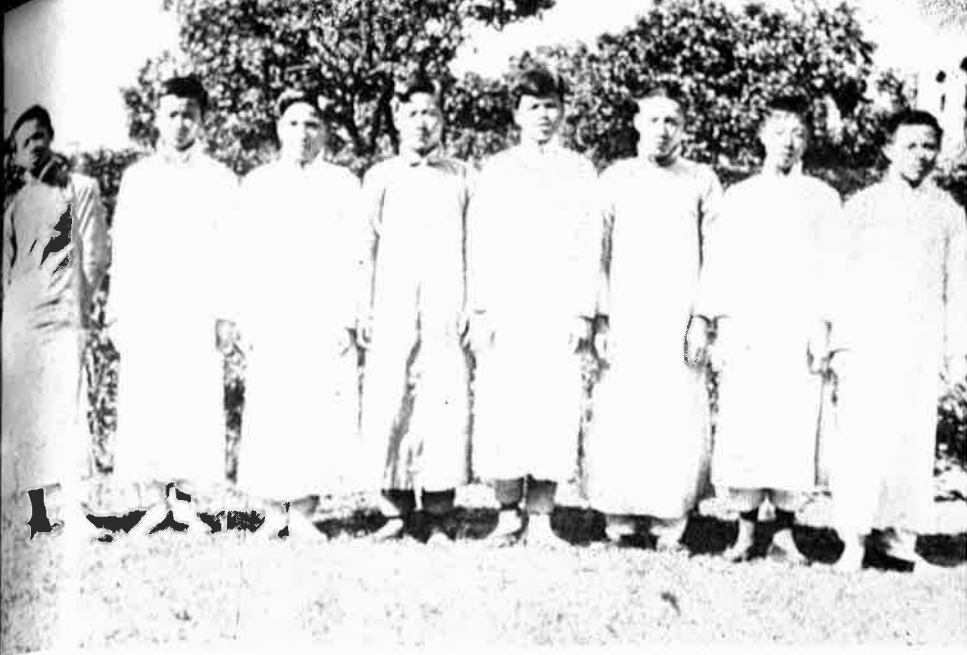
William Chalmers
Burns, M.A.
First Pioneer of
English Presbyterian
Mission to China,
1815–1868.



The West Gate of Hingwa city through which John and his father often passed on their way to the villages.



River scene at Yung-chun, Fukien Province.



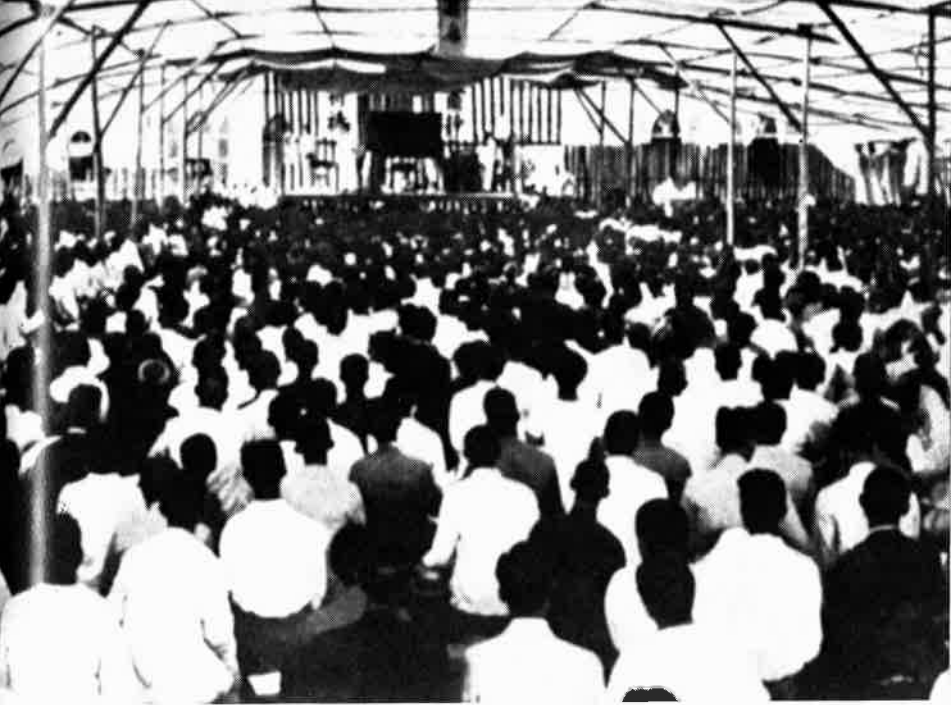
“The little pastor” (on the left) with one of his schoolboy preaching bands.



Pastor Sung, John's father, preaching in the open air.



The Bethel Band in Harbin, 1931
*Back (from the left) John Sung, Philip Lee, Frank Ling.
Front Lincoln Nieh, Andrew Gih*



A crowded evangelistic meeting in Formosa held in a specially constructed auditorium.

Dr Sung after his first Singapore visit in 1935, about to sail for Shanghai.



門基督教奮興會宋博士主領導演之盛況元西

Dr Sung's Evangelistic Campaign Open Air Meeting, Amoy, November, 1934.



John Sung sits among a group of Christians in Formosa who have dedicated themselves to become voluntary preachers.



Dr Mary Stone, first Chinese Woman to take the M.D., founder of "Bethel".



Wang Ming-tao, preacher and writer, pastor of the Tabernacle,
Peking.



Dr John Sung preaching at Telok Ayer Methodist Church with Miss Leona Wu interpreting.

同心
 合意
 興旺
 福音

Specimen of Dr Sung's handwriting which reads, "Unitedly promote the gospel," and, in smaller characters, the words, "the least of the Lord's servants," followed by his signature.

Dr Sung's family in Shanghai in 1940. From the left: Heaven's Child (Genesis), Heaven's Truth (Leviticus), Heaven's Power (Numbers), Heaven's Will (Joshua), Mrs. Sung. Joshua died soon after this picture was taken.



至微僕人
 尚節敬祝
 11/23/40.



John Sung and family.



Chin Lien Bible Seminary, John Sung's second home and field headquarters in Singapore.

宋尚節博士傳畧
 博士籍福建莆田父為教習名牧生
 於一九零七年九月廿七日少聰穎
 學冠同儕長留美工讀獲化學博士
 學位既而蒙召委辦其好學華生致
 力於傳道有求方答應之稱已九州
 五年教涯差主領會興大會宜揚真
 道痛斥異端受感敏 主與缺身傳
 道者無慮千萬博士到處領會報立
 佈道團員助當地各堂會曾應南洋
 各地教會之請四度經理道踪所至
 靈恩豐碩教會因大復興已九四四
 年八月十八日博士鞠躬盡瘁勞
 錫天降於北平享年四十有四金鍊
 靈修神學院同人暨星洲基督後佈
 道團特建斯堂以資紀念云爾
 主曆一九五六年十二月廿三日 立石

IN LOVING MEMORY OF DR. JOHN SUNG, PH.D., THE FLAME OF GOD IN THE FAR EAST, WHOSE EARNEST DEVOTION TO HIS LIFE-MINISTRY OF IMPROVING THE CHURCH OF CORRUPTION AND APOSTASY BROUGHT WHOLESALE REPENTANCE AND PENTECOSTAL REVIVAL THROUGHOUT CHINA AND S. E. ASIA. HE VISITED SINGAPORE AND MALAYA IN 1935 AND AFTER, AND WON THOUSANDS TO CHRIST, FROM WHOM EVANGELISTIC BANDS WERE ORGANISED AND SCORES CONSECRATED FOR FULLTIME SERVICE. THE NEED OF BIBLE-TRAINING FOR YOUNG CONVERTS RESULTED IN THE FOUNDING OF THIS SEMINARY ON MAY 14TH 1937. DR. SUNG WAS BORN AT PUTIEN, FUKIEN ON SEPTEMBER 27TH 1901 HE RECEIVED HIS HIGHER EDUCATION IN U.S.A. FROM 1920 TO 1927, ATTAINING HIGHEST HONOURS IN CHEMISTRY, BUT THE VERSE, 'FOR WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT A MAN IF HE SHALL GAIN THE WHOLE WORLD AND LOSE HIS OWN SOUL' (MARK 8:36), MADE HIM FORSAKE ALL TO FOLLOW HIM. HE DIED AT HSIANGSNAN, PEKING ON AUGUST 18TH 1944, BURNT OUT IN THE MASTER'S SERVICE. DATED 22.XII.58.

John Sung Memorial tablet in Chin Lien Bible Seminary.



Lim Puay Hian — disciple of John Sung.



Tombstone of John Sung

THE DOOR PERIOD III

With Bethel to South China

1932

All five young men of the Bethel Worldwide Evangelistic Band returned safely to Shanghai after an expedition that lasted four months, that took them close to the borders of Korea and Siberia. Though it was mid-winter, it was not as freezing cold as the far north, inasmuch as Shanghai was their base and the home fires were burning. Like heroes returned from the battlefield, the five young men were given a rousing welcome, with many praises and thanksgivings to God for the souls brought into the Kingdom.

But like a platoon of seasoned commandoes much needed for frontline action again, the Band was plunged into service for the Lord with hardly a day or two for recreation. Bethel had just taken a new batch of nursing students who had not heard the evangelists before. To these they were assigned to do a work of soul saving. Indeed the fields of China from north to south were white to harvest under a hot political climate.

Since the fall of Mukden through the so-called 9-1-8 Incident of September 18, 1931, China began to brace for war. Where would the enemy strike this time was on everybody's lips. As the shadows seemed to be slanting southwards toward Shanghai, the Ministerial Association felt all the more the need of holding special meetings. The Allen Memorial Church at Chapei in the Chinese city was chosen, and the opening day was scheduled for January 1st, 1932. Sure enough, the church was filled from the inaugural service and "mountains and seas of people" kept coming, more and more each night, so that the original programme was twice extended, to make up ten full days. The climax was reached at the close of the campaign with hundreds

converted and thousands revived. Did the Church leaders know it was the Spirit of God Himself breathing life, and more life, into a city that was about to be gripped by death?

A fortnight after the close of this All Shanghai Campaign, at midnight, January 28th, 1932 the enemy struck. The Japanese army came by sea, landing at Woosung at the estuary of the Yangtze River. In no time they had the city under siege, though the Chinese army fought back heroically against superior odds. Soon shells fell on the Allen Memorial Church and killed some of its workers. Pandemonium had broken loose in the Chinese city. Like a tidal wave refugees poured into the International Settlement. Bethel, the House of God, found a temporary shelter too, moving its hospital, schools and orphanage in the nick of time. Bethel doctors, nurses and evangelists suddenly found themselves working overtime in a new situation of mutual suffering, tending the sick, healing the wounded, comforting the bereaved. When war comes, there will be no more distinction between rich and poor, educated and uneducated, official and unofficial. "The lofty looks of man shall be humbled and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day" (Isa 2:11). One flag that flutters above every other flag is the Red Cross, that fights the good fight of mercy, but what does it reflect but the Cross of Calvary upon which the Saviour of mankind died? The Lord was supreme over this latest Sino-Japanese Conflict. The Lord took care of John Sung His servant.

The Bethel Programme had included a short term Bible School from February. With this outbreak of hostilities, the Bethel leadership wanted to disband it, inasmuch as the main body had shifted into the International Settlement. But with eight delegates from Manchuria having arrived, Dr Sung was determined that the Bible School must open. Despite many sincere pleadings to leave the war zone, Dr Sung stuck to his guns during the whole fighting that lasted a month and a day. Meanwhile he took his pupils through twenty-three books of the Bible, while they stayed put together to guard the Mission property. The Lord was their refuge, directing the shells and shrapnels to fall wide of the

Mission compound. "A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee" (Ps 91:7).

Meanwhile a six-month itinerary to South China was chalked up for the Five-man Team to begin in March. With the signing of peace between China and Japan on March 2nd, 1932 it seemed the war had ended too soon for John! For as Editor of the "Guide to Holiness," Bethel's official magazine, he had to gather material for the six months he would be away. Like the whirlwind that he was in preaching, he was inspired to edit even a whole year's work during the two week's "rest" before war came, so that the magazine was able to continue publication while the editor was away. During their Manchurian campaigns, the Band had collected eight hundred new subscriptions, fully paid!

On Friday March 4th the Lord expeditiously brought the Bethel Band to Hong Kong, British port for South China. As the ship originated from Shanghai a war zone and was small-pox prone, it had to go into quarantine. A big welcome party from the Peniel Mission went to the harbour, but not a shadow of the Band could be seen. It was not until Sunday afternoon that the ship was released. When the Bethel Band finally found their way to the Evening Service they entered a church built for five hundred now crowded with a thousand, leaving no standing room.

As English was spoken in Hong Kong, Dr Sung preached in English and Philip Lee interpreted into Cantonese. The meetings "persevered" through six days at three meetings a day, because sickness and loss of voice threatened to hinder their smooth progress. Nevertheless, God kept John Sung the chief speaker in the pink of health, and his messages diminished not in power. One of his fervent supporters was the Rev John E. Su, a graduate of North China Theological Seminary, and a prolific writer and gifted musician. Some of his "Heavenly People" Bible-verse choruses were incorporated by John Sung into his. Many other church leaders in Hong Kong must also trace their conversion and consecration to this series of revival meetings.

Dr Sung had prayed for the sick and spiritually affected since that first request made by a Baptist missionary in

Shantung. It was in Kowloon, the mainland side of Hong Kong, that he held a healing session at the request of a number of converts. Precipitated again by that universal need of a mankind fallen into sin and resultant sickness, the Band felt led to administer it. Fifty sick people were directed to a special meeting at which they were thoroughly purged by a full confession of their sins under the Blood of Christ. When this was done Dr Sung and Rev Gih laid hands on them, one by one. Whether olive oil was applied or not it was not stated. Among the sick who came for the healing were several western missionaries. "Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him" (James 5: 14,15). At testimony hour the same evening, which was the end of campaign, many who were sick, including the missionaries, praised the Lord for being made whole. Hallelujah!

The campaign advanced to Canton (Guangzhou) well inside the Chinese mainland to the big Union Church on the south bank of the Pearl River. Here the same process of powerful preaching with deep conviction and confession of sins resulted. One outstanding case of a prodigal son come home tells the story of a praying mother. As it is said that the son of a praying mother cannot be lost, though this prodigal son had studied in America and looked down on John Sung as a madman, he was soundly converted by "condescending" to attend the meetings. As son sought mother out after the meeting, both were in a mutual shedding of tears. When the Holy Spirit seeks to "lay hold" on anyone, as John Sung had observed, there could be no escape. Is this not what Calvinists mean by "irresistible grace"?

From Canton the Bethel Band proceeded by boat up the Pearl River to Wuchow in the "twin" province of Kwangsi. Here the Christian and Missionary Alliance had established a Bible School under Dr R A Jaffray which produced an outstanding Chinese missionary in Jason Linn of Pioneering in Dyak Borneo fame. One of the Bible School students at that time was Newman Shih. This young follower of John

Sung had been blessed the year before at the Bethel Summer Conference in Shanghai. Therefore he did his best to prepare the hearts of Christians to hear the Shanghai evangelists.

The campaign opened up on March 27th, 1932, but it did not seem to make much headway. There was disappointment all round. But it was a different John Sung the next day as the Spirit of God mightily fell on the hearers. As the whole Bible School came under deep conviction of sin, the principal, leading staff and students and many Church members went up to the front. In further contrition they knelt before the Lord. The fire of Revival being thus lighted, it burned brighter and brighter until it closed after ten days, like the days of the first Pentecost. As hearts were now stirred to pray as never before, those who found release and relief went on a prayer marathon lasting several nights. A woman who had stolen a gold bangle twenty-three years before made restitution by converting it to three hundred dollars, which sum she penitentially offered to the Bethel Band.

The word Wuchow is made up of two Chinese characters. The first character *wu* is composed of two radicals, wood and self. Now the character wood has a cross in it. A fertile mind like John Sung's immediately read from this word a message which he imbibed for himself. He saw the need of nailing himself to the tree of the cross. The night before leaving Wuchow he was heard singing in his sleep, "If I leave the Lord, I never can do. If I leave the Lord, I never can do. Cast outside, I'm left to burn. If I leave the Lord, I never can do." From now on his emphasis was more on the need of abiding in Christ, the need of loving Christ. "He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing" (Jn 15:5).

One group of students who attended the Revival meetings were the blind girls from Kweih sien, the labour of love by two missionaries of the Faith-Love Society. The membership of this Mission numbered about a hundred, including the blind girls. When these girls did not respond to the invitations, Dr Sung spent extra time with them. The message of Love finally melted their hearts. Tears of contri-

tion bathed their blind eyes. "Love is the greatest" was the message of a maturing evangelist. (I Cor 13).

During the Wuchow meetings invitations were received from Nanning near the Vietnamese border and from Yulin. The evangelists again decided by lot. After completing their tasks in these uttermost parts of Southwest China, the Band regrouped in Canton. From Canton Andrew branched off to Swatow, but the rest returned to Hong Kong.

A second campaign was held which lasted from April 26th to May 1st. The campaign climaxed with a baptismal service on the last day, whereon Dr Sung was invited to participate. "You know I'm a Methodist. I have not been immersed before," said he to Rev A. K. Reighton. But he added, "If you will immerse me, I can immerse the others." So the Methodist evangelist got immersed, before he in turn immersed twenty-one women and twelve men.

This baptism episode brings to mind his baptising two hundred in Kirin, Manchuria — by sprinkling. Was he now forgetful of Kirin, or had he changed his view on the mode of baptism since then? Enigma of enigmas!

To understand Dr Sung fully we must examine his statements on baptism made after the event. In a sermon preached at either Kimchi (Gold Well) or Kulangsu, Fukien Province between October and November 1934 expounding I Timothy 1:1-20, touching baptism he said, "Don't listen to those who say that sprinkling does not fully portray, but immersion does, that by immersion is obedience fully displayed. More important than this is whether you are saved or not. If you have not the Blood of Christ to wash away your sins, you may be immersed again and again, but you will go to hell." Is there any ambiguity now in his stance on baptism? We can remember Dr Sung's declaration on this subject in a lighter vein in one of his sermons preached in Singapore (all of which we had heard without fail), "If you want it from me: More faith, less water; Less faith, more water," which statement is verified by Liu Yih Ling in "John Sung's Anecdotes and Sayings," p. 133. "For Christ sent me not to baptise, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect." (I Cor 1:17).

The spirit of revival carried them over to a final All Hong Kong campaign on Hong Kong Island from May 2nd. In the morning they spoke at the Methodist Church and in the evening at Hop Yat Tong (Unity Church). As the Spirit more and more worked through Dr Sung it was inevitable he became the chief speaker. Andrew Gih took care rather of prayer meetings and counselling while the three younger men dealt with the practical side. The Hong Kong campaign which began from March 4th came to a grand finale May 8th, with side trips to Canton and the remote towns of Kwangsi Province in between. Hong Kong which means "Fragrant Harbour" must henceforth see a Church that offers "an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God." (Phil 4:18). Amen.

June saw the Band wheeling eastwards along the Fukien coast. As familiarity breeds contempt which in Cantonese is "local ginger is not hot," (the evangelists had picked up some Cantonese in Hong Kong) John Sung avoided his native Hinghwa to press on to Foochow with Frank Ling, himself a Foochowese, as interpreter. Andrew Gih, Philip Lee and Lincoln Nieh, lot or no lot, were obliged to visit Hinghwa. Over this scenic route of brown mountains and lush green paddy fields, the three had to crawl at a snail's pace by sedan chair, by rickshaw, by river launch, by sampan. This was Fukien, familiar ground visited three years before when Andrew came to Sienyu. The churches in the Hinghwa and Sienyu vicinities were brought to a closer bond of brotherly love as a result of this round of meetings, as attested by Rev W. B. Cole.

At Foochow John Sung and Frank Ling were greeted by a continuous rain that dripped on for twenty-seven days. But their spirits were not dampened, neither the enthusiasm of high school and university students, for there were four hundred of the latter who came to swell the meetings. The spirit manifested in Foochow was so fervent that after the morning meeting, a great many would remain in their seats lest when they returned for the afternoon, these would be occupied. Foochow was another of those mountain top experiences of John Sung for over one thousand were born again. Those who "accepted" Christ were deeply convicted,

so much so restitutions and reconciliations between friends who had fallen out were readily made. One of the fruits of John Sung was a high school girl Tay Swee Lan by name who became the composer of his Autobiography Part II. Miss Tay gave her life to the Lord and graduated from Ginling Women's Theological Seminary, Nanking. Having served in the Church for a lifetime, she is now on the staff of Chin Lien Bible Seminary, Singapore.

There is a Chinese Church saying, "When the Holy Spirit works, Satan will also work." Seeing that so many students were won to Christ at the revival meetings while the classrooms were left empty, the press began to level charges against Dr Sung that he had charmed young people by his crafty speeches. Anti-John Sung posters were pasted on the city walls warning him to leave or face going to gaol. Such pressures resulted rather in a greater commitment of the young people. At the close of the campaign one hundred and twenty-seven of them signed up to attend Bethel's Fifth Summer Bible Conference which was soon to follow in Shanghai.

The 1932 Bethel Bible Conference opened in Shanghai July 4th-14th. In spite of a deteriorated communication system resulting from war with Japan peoples were pouring into Shanghai from every part of China. These belonged to the Kingdom of Man who were headed here to earn a living, to look for business contacts, to go to the universities, to make a fast buck. But there were another people that belonged to the Kingdom of God and they were coming to the megalopolis because the Church was here, and Bethel's Bible Conference was here. Many of these arriving were from South China — Hong Kong, Swatow and Foochow as noted last, but the charm of Shanghai over sinners and saints could not be ignored! With Shanghai being one of the most densely populated cities on earth, finding accommodation for the saints was a hard job for the Bethel management. Nevertheless all found "a roost for the body" somewhere. Everyday one thousand five hundred delegates and visitors crammed the Bethel auditorium. The thirst for God's Word was so great that an extended three-week Bible School was offered to paying delegates. One hundred and twenty-seven,

the same number as those coming from Foochow, enrolled. Spending three hours in the morning and more hours at night, the students were taken through sixteen books of the Bible. The Bible Study Programme was one that kept up the interest of new believers, who having been weaned from the milk of gospel messages must eat strong meat. (Heb 5:14).

During the year that Dr Sung formally joined the Bethel Worldwide Evangelistic Band, from July 1931 to July 1932, they had covered a total of 55,000 miles holding 1,200 meetings. They had preached to 400,000 people in thirteen provinces and recorded 18,000 decisions. They did not leave the converts to fend for themselves but had organised them into Preaching Bands and Bible Study groups. Thirteen missionary societies were helped and no denomination was a barrier to them except one or two traditional diehards.

Immediately after the Short Term Bible School Dr Sung, accompanied by Philip Lee and Lincoln Nieh returned to Swatow to hold a Baptist Summer Conference, the latter part of August and the earlier part of September. The Spirit led them on and on and gave them no let up, for "the King's business required haste" (I Sam 21:8).

Chapter XV

THE DOOR PERIOD IV

With Bethel to North China

1932–1933

Of all the doors God had opened to the young evangelists, no doubt there was none that commanded their attention as Peking. Peking, the ancient capital of China and cultural centre, so rich with history! Here was the fabulous Temple of Heaven where ancient kings worshipped Shang Ti (Chinese term for God the High Emperor) by killing sheep. Here was the Forbidden City. Beyond was the 1,500-mile Great Wall built by Shih Hwang-ti, China's first emperor, at the cost of ten-thousands of lives. But here were buried the remains of others, western missionaries and Chinese Christians who died for a better Cause, who were martyred in the Boxer Rebellion of 1900. Here was the Peking National University that had offered Dr Sung the Chair of Chemistry in his heyday before he diverted to theology.

With the fall of the Manchus, the nation's capital was shifted to Nanking by Generalissimo Chiang Kai Shek. Now Peking had become Peiping, which means "Northern Peace." Would these young men bring Peace to the restless hearts of cultured men and women equally ensnared by sin as the common masses? In the Name of Jesus Christ the Prince of Peace the Bethel Worldwide Evangelistic Band launched out once more against SIN the Disturber of Peace, full of courage and confidence, like Joab and his men taking the citadel of Jerusalem for David their king (I Chron 11:6).

The strategy for this northern expedition was by a two-prong attack. John Sung would advance by way of Hankow while the other four members should go by the Pukow-Tientsin Express, taking on Kaifeng, Loyang and Tsinan en route. They should rendezvous in Peking by end of October, 1932.

With Japan now become China's open enemy, the anti-

Christian movement that the Band had personally encountered in Shantung, by being quartered in one of the looted houses, had now spent its force. But more subtle was the Enemy of souls who had infiltrated into some indigenous Christian movements with their successes. Though these movements were started by sincere men, as time went on, they went off on a tangent. Some of these movements that had to be corrected by the Bethel preachers were the Yesu Chiating (Jesus Family), the Chen Yesu Chiau (True Jesus Church) and last but not least the charismatics known as "Spiritual Gifts Society." As for the doctrine and practice of the Bethel Band, Dr Paul Abbott, Chairman of the Shantung Mission of the American Presbyterian Mission had this to say in the 1932 China Christian Year Book: "Their work impresses one as sane and constructive with emotion released in laughter and song under control, and with no excesses or results to undo or live down. Their follow-up work with correspondence, prayer list and printed material is skilfully carried on as part of their services to the churches."

Taking the young men lightly at first, the Presbyterian Church Committee did not expect many, especially for the prayer meeting at 7 am. In the advancing autumn the days would not only grow colder but shorter. Seven o'clock in the morning would still be dark. Nevertheless when the campaign opened with the first prayer meeting there was almost a full house. From then on it was packing them in to "watertight density." The Lord was especially with his servant John Sung so that the same phenomenon as in South China was repeated here in the North, with wholesale conversions in tears and repentance.

One outstanding conversion was that of the "Bureau Chief of Public Peace" the Chinese euphemism for Chief Police Officer. He was saved with his whole family. As for himself, he confessed to the crime of murder and the usurpation of property. In penitence he made restitution the best he could. When that was done, he was filled with joy and the fulness of the Holy Spirit.

Another outstanding case of restitution concerned a pastor who had misappropriated or stolen (in John Sung's

plainer speech) a sum of \$20,000 from the Church funds he had handled.

Yes, John Sung said in New York after his conversion that the Lord had changed his old name Shang Chieh to John because he was to be a John the Baptist. One of the requirements from John the Baptist's preaching was that the repentant should bring forth fruits, and is not restitution a glorious fruit of repentance? "Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance" (Matt 3:8).

Seeing these wonderful results, Rev James P Leynse of the American Presbyterian Mission wrote to the Bethel Mission in Shanghai in glowing terms of what they saw as being plainly the work of the Lord which was marvellous to their eyes. He confessed that though he was brought up in the formal, reserve Presbyterian tradition, he must now accept the way these young evangelists led the whole congregation in loud public corporate prayer and praise. One thing the missionary had learnt was the need of "continuance in prayer, in fellowship and in the truth of Christ's indwelling and a manifested longing to abandon ourselves to the will of our Lord . . ."

Another missionary acknowledged that while he had come to China to lead the Chinese to Christ, he discovered rather it was the Chinese who had led him to the higher step of fulness in Christ. If the Bethel Band had qualms when they started out the first day at the early morning prayer meeting, they had no more now, being doubly approved by the missionaries. "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver" (Prov 25:11).

From the Presbyterian enclave the evangelists went over to the Methodists inside the Hata Men in the South City. This 1,200-seat Church was filled to the last with people from all walks of life. The Lord did a mighty work with the young people especially. Ten seminary students who were now converted from a modernistic theology had a personal interview with the doctor. This led to a "cross" interview by their principal, but Dr Sung gave him no face. Having tasted the poison of liberal teachings under Dr Fosdick at Union Seminary, New York he knew what he was talking about. His denunciation of modernism and the social gospel from

the pulpit now and again was a reflection of his stand for Truth at all times.

After bringing revival to the Methodists Dr Sung went over to the Salvation Army, whose Auditorium was the biggest in the city. On November 6th the Band held their last campaign in the church of the American Board Mission which could seat 1,500. Hundreds of Preaching Bands were formed in all these Peking meetings, amidst great fervour and singing of praises to God.

John Sung's crusade against sin almost brought him to a close shave with violence, but God again protected him. An elder of the Church having embezzled \$50,000 from a flood relief fund was deeply convicted when John Sung preached an "open the coffin" sermon. Thinking it was a planned attack on his character the elder marshalled two hundred students to assault the preacher on an appointed night. Like the mina going to catch a grasshopper, oblivious of a sky hawk about to swoop down on him, neither did the elder who had come to beat up John Sung know the Police was after him. Before he could hurt God's servant he himself was nabbed by the Police the same night and charged for that very crime John Sung had unwittingly hinted at. "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee, the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain." (Ps 76: 10).

After Peking the Band divided up again. While Andrew and the three younger men headed for the mountainous Province of Shansi, John was specially invited to Tientsin. A ten-day meeting was called at the largest Methodist Church. As the Spirit further magnified Christ, John had the boldness to command every one to bow the knee to Him when prayer was announced. Some resisted, but when "arrested" by the Spirit, they personally called on the evangelist in his YMCA room to seek spiritual help.

An outstanding conversion recorded from the Tientsin campaign was one by the name of Meng Chao-ran. A prodigal son revelling in the four Chinese vices of womanising, gambling, drinking and smoking, he became a thoroughly new creature in Christ. He dedicated himself to be travelling secretary of the Northwest Church Association. For the Gospel's sake he banished himself to the distant

provinces of Chinghai and Kansu, a desert country that stretches from Tibet to Mongolia, like Cain going to the land of Nod (Gen 4: 16).

Confucius says, "The young are to be respected," which is better stated by the Apostle Paul to Timothy: "Let no man despise thy youth — but be thou an example of the believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (I Tim 4: 12).

When young people are touched by the Spirit, with their youthful vigour, they can do great things for God! A group of these whom the Lord had blessed in the Tientsin Campaign sought to have the evangelist come to the Methodist Church in the south suburb. But their pastor vetoed. Nevertheless the meetings were held and after eight days all oppositions from high or low were swept away. A goodly number of the rich, yea even powerful officials, were won to Christ (the rich also need the Gospel) and these were new lifeblood added to the Church.

In Tientsin the strongest Preaching Bands were organised. Fifty of these were formed in the second campaign. When the time for John Sung to say good-bye came, several hundred thronged the railway station, who put him into the First Class compartment. Said John Sung in his memoirs, "This was the first time I had experienced such luxury, but I did not really enjoy it or feel comfortable." But Paul, if travelling together, would have answered, "I know how to be abased and how to abound: everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need" (Phil 4: 12).

On his way back to Shanghai John Sung must needs pass through the railway junction town of Chengchow. Here he could pay the Gospel debt with little expense of time and energy since he was en route. He would capitalise on every opportunity to do good. As there was no large building for a union meeting, the churches combined to erect a tent. This attracted many outsiders and passers-by, but most of them who entered the tent were the poor and uneducated, street urchins and simple country folk. As it was a cold winter and the winds blew hard on the tent it aroused deep feelings in the preacher. What a contrast this tabernacle was with the

big city churches and cathedrals. But there was this difference too. These who came from a humble background were more easily led to the Saviour. He made a note in his mind to send Preaching Bands to evangelise such underprivileged ones who lived in the slums. The Gospel is specially for the poor (Lk 7:22).

John Sung returned to Shanghai with quickened steps this time because his home was now shifted from Hinghwa to Shanghai. As he entered his quarters, was not his wife happy to see him her long lost husband? According to John he averaged one month in the year to spend time with Mrs Sung. Before the husband could speak a word, however, Mrs Sung said, "As you have returned ahead of Rev Gih and company, who are still in the backwoods of Shansi, some leaders here are criticising you! They say you love the limelight of big cities and let your co-workers take on the more difficult jobs in the backwoods." The intrepid evangelist had a ready answer to give his critics. Nevertheless when Andrew and company finally made it to Shanghai, they came to an understanding to work together more closely. But the seeds of a coming parting of ways were already sown.

For the sake of the Gospel, however, the five young men set out together early 1933. Like Paul revisiting his first contacts in his second missionary journey, the Bethel Band set out for Shantung again. As Dr Sung was now speaking less by the recent understanding, he could feel the estrangement rising again.

Insofar as John Sung was concerned, he worked the hardest for his Lord. On this his third visit to Tientsin he concentrated on Cheloo University where the future leaders of the nation were. At Tsining he preached to the prisoners. As for Andrew Gih he had opportunity to minister to the school for CIM missionary children at Chefoo. From these children Andrew later received letters of appreciation telling the evangelist how they had received the Lord through his messages.

March saw the Band crossing into the province of Honan, to Kaifeng the provincial capital. At the Baptist High School the results obtained were a mere fifty young people coming to

Christ. What a contrast with other places! At Kih sien where the audience consisted mostly of illiterate old women the evangelists had a hard time because whenever an invitation was given at the end of a meeting the same old women would come forward to confess their sins. This they would do over and over again!

When the Band returned to Kaifeng a second time minus Andrew Gih they found the fullest cooperation from the missionaries. One of them was CIM founder Hudson Taylor's grandson, Rev James Taylor. At the Free Methodist the glory of the Lord shone again when seven hundred people were cleansed of their sins and many songs of praise and thanksgiving were sung to the Lord.

Changteh was their next stop. Here they were on stony ground for the missionaries belonged to the liberal school, who despised John's preaching as that "out-of-date-stuff." This made John to preach with greater unction so that the congregation came under greater conviction and began to cry to the Lord. The star witness to God's special grace upon this campaign was the pastor himself. He was the first to stand up and testify how he was not born again until now, and would henceforth preach no other message than Jesus Christ and Him crucified. (I Cor 2:1).

At Shihkiachwang in Hopeh the Band stepped on charismatic territory again, for the meetings were held at the AOG Church (Assemblies of God). John pointed out to them an anomaly. These who stressed on tongue-speaking as a sign of the Holy Spirit nevertheless had never repented of their sins. These so-called Holy Spirit filled ones were exhorted to come forward to confess their sins. Therefore Dr Sung stressed again, "What a sinner needs is not the gift of tongues but the gift of salvation. Too many who claimed to have the Holy Spirit ended up having an unholy spirit! Instead of being filled by the Spirit, they were felled by the Spirit." Some twenty missionaries who came from the surrounding cities were greatly blessed.

The Band pressed on resolutely from Hopeh into mountainous Shansi. They came to Taiyuan the provincial capital where the English Baptist Mission had their schools, churches, hospital and orphanage. Then they came to Pingting

where the liberal influence was overpowering. Nevertheless when the Holy Spirit's irresistible grace came into operation, every stronghold of opposition and pride broke down. A pastor dismissed by the missionaries for bad conduct and had brought much contentions in the church solved the problem himself by publicly confessing his covetousness and professionalism. With this sin in the pastor put away the storm in the church immediately subsided. He did not know he was the Jonah until then!

From Pingting they made it to Pinyao, a China Inland Mission field. Here laboured in past days Pastor Hsi Sheng-mo. The final campaign was held at Hungtung, the headquarters of the CIM in Shansi. This area extended to thirty-eight counties. Here was the biennial conference scheduled for their coming, and they were to preach the first three days. Though a welcome party for Dr Sung and his team was prepared he flatly refused it as at any other place. For he said this was no time for such function. They were together a needy people gathered to seek the Lord. A great outpouring of the Spirit came upon both missionaries and Chinese pastors, evangelists and lay people. "Those stirring days are a vivid memory for all those who were present, Chinese and missionaries alike."

When the Band of tired preachers returned to Shanghai they came right into the midst of a Bethel Conference in session. Without let up Dr Sung joined in with Rev Marcus Cheng and Dr French Oliver, guest speakers. The subject under consideration was the Great Tribulation. In this subject various viewpoints were held as to the timing of the Rapture. Dr Sung who believed in the Pre-Millennial Return of Christ nevertheless took his stand against Dr Oliver as to whether Christians would go through the Great Tribulation. With this participation in a seminar on eschatology the North China campaigns with Bethel came to an end.

Chapter XVI

THE DOOR PERIOD V

From “Door” to “Dove”

1933–1934

“To everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven. A time to be born and a time to die; a time to plant and a time to pluck up that which is planted” (Eccles 3: 1,2).

The seeds of dissolution having been sown in the Bethel Band for sometime, as noted in the last chapter, the time of its dissolution was ripening fast. This happened immediately after the Bethel Summer Conference, 1933.

The first one to leave was Philip Lee the musician who sailed for the United States to study music at Moody Bible Institute. The second was Lincoln Nieh who was now detained in the home office. Thus the Band of Five was reduced to three. Restrictions were also placed on John as editor of Bethel’s official magazine, the “Guide to Holiness”, giving him now only half of its space for his sermons.

The depleted three-man team was to be sent to North China again but with a longer range into the border provinces which formed part of Inner Mongolia — to Chahar and Suiyuan. With a little time on hand before this third northern expedition, the three-man Team made a brief trip to Kwangtung in the South in response to an invitation from the Baptists. This was August–September 1933. An intermezzo, so to speak, it is recorded in John Sung’s Autobiography Part II in three sentences, for his sight evidently was set on the untouched interior of inner Mongolia. For the same reason Leslie Lyall gives but one sentence to his book on John Sung, like entering a log book.

An Unexpected Catch

Be that as it may, it was on this side trip that John Sung

caught one of his biggest fishes, the conversion of Lim Puay Hian of Swatow.

Born the year after the Boxer Rebellion (1900) like John Sung, Lim Puay Hian was also a pastor's son, nurtured with the strictest Presbyterian upbringing from birth, and groomed in the Mission School. "To everything there is a season," so before God's hour struck, all the attention given Lim Puay Hian by his parents and the Church could only counter-produce a rebellious spirit. For Puay Hian was an ambitious man like any other young man of his time, aspiring to be somebody so that he might rise above the tumultuous times in which he lived. When Chiang Kai Shek came to his domicile at Kieh Yang, Swatow in his Eastern Expedition soon after Sun Yat Sen's death in 1925, the young hothead almost joined the Revolution by taking up arms under Chiang. This did not tally with God's will for his life, so he was obliged to self-study to be a physician.

But when God's hour chimed, he became soundly converted, and realising for the first time the sacredness of his father's vow on him that he should serve God fulltime, he yielded the very day of his conversion with all the abandon of those who burn their boats behind them. Lim Puay Hian, though hailing from an unknown fishing village called Iam Tsau (near Swatow) nevertheless shot up to be a star for Jesus Christ in the wake of John Sung's conquests, to become a Little Sung. Whereas God had given his spiritual father but fifteen years, Lim Puay Hian lived to serve his Master for double that number, his fields being Fukien Province and all over Southeast Asia up to Burma. While John Sung had won souls by the ten-thousands Lim Puay Hian had his share of thousands (as we shall see later), though the time of bumper reaping was limited to a brief five years. Nevertheless scores of souls continued to be saved through him in Southeast Asia up to the outbreak of the Second World War. After the War he found particular acceptance with the Chinese Churches in Indonesia. This same Lim Puay Hian, this minor prophet raised up of God in John Sung's steps, is made known to the English-speaking world by this writer in a 150-page book titled "In John Sung's Steps." This same Lim Puay Hian is survived by a

lawyer son Joshua Lim Heong Wee, a founder of Life Bible-Presbyterian Church and now an elder of Calvary Bible-Presbyterian Church, Singapore.

As different people see John Sung differently, it will help the reader to understand the nature of his ministry by reproducing from the life story of Lim Puay Hian the full account of the process of his conversion. This is taken from "In John Sung's Steps," pages 47 to 52.

Life's Purpose Found

"Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it." (Mark 8:34,35).

One decade after the "August Second Typhoon" of 1922, Swatow was visited by a spiritual whirlwind that brought mighty showers of blessing. Whereas the Typhoon of 1922 destroyed much life and property, the Revival campaigns conducted by Dr John Sung and Andrew Gih, with other members of the Bethel Worldwide Evangelistic Band, 1932-33, revived the lives of thousands and brought quickening to the church. Several subsequent meetings from 1934 to 1937 by John Sung himself rounded off the Swatow Revival with long-lasting results.

In August 1933, while the third campaign conducted by China's famed evangelist was upon everybody's lips, it was noised abroad to a little town seven miles up-river from Swatow. Here Puay Hian had recently established himself as a physician. Christians were heading for Swatow from every direction, not the least from Puay Hian's up-river abode. Puay Hian could not resist an inner urge to follow the crowds to the metropolis.

Now, Puay Hian had expected him who held such a high reputation, a doctor of philosophy, to be some genius and orator, with all the refinement of a Western education. Instead, he found Sung attired in a coarse white Chinese gown, his hair shabby and unkempt. His Mandarin spoken with a Hinghwa accent could little impress the intelligentsia,

and when he started to preach, he dashed about the pulpit like one gone crazy. "What's all this excitement about?" he scoffed. With that he turned his back on John Sung. He was home by the next up-river boat.

That night Puay Hian addressed a haughty letter to John Sung. He posed some questions for the doctor to answer, like one of the lawyers of old tempting Jesus. The first thing next morning he took the letter to the post office. As he dropped it into the box, he complained like a spoiled child, "If old Sung refuses to answer them, then I will not hear him again." But, no sooner had this jargon escaped his jabbering lips than his conscience gripped him.

Back from post office he found himself unable either "to eat or sit," much less attend to clients waiting at his "medical hall" downstairs. All he could do was sink into a canvass couch and sulk. More than ever before, the dark cloud of a bitter, futile, struggling life surrounded him. He felt, as it were, swarmed by all the evil hordes of hell let loose. That night, he tossed on a bed that echoed to his groans, as happened once some years before. He wrestled with his wretched self till early morning.

When he got up with the sun, he felt an irresistible force driving him back to John Sung. A power stronger than the down-river current hastened his footsteps again to Swatow. Arriving a couple of hours before time, he found a seat at a vantage point. While he sat waiting, he was moved at the sight of a steady stream of earnest seekers, Bible and chorus book in hand, returning from an early lunch to secure their seats. For, the meeting hall that seated over a thousand would soon be packed, leaving no room to stand. Strangely, not a gossip or murmur disturbed the sanctity of the church hall. Little groups that gathered were engaged in earnest prayer. "O God, break my hardened heart!" Puay Hian groaned on his part.

Nevertheless, when the hour of service began and John Sung once again started to hop like a huge grasshopper while delivering his sermon, Puay Hian suddenly stiffened, "What sort of a preacher is this?" With that he scampered off to Kakchieh, the "Horned" Rock residential district across Swatow harbour. The Revival was too hot for him, and he

had gone there to cool off. And for his body too from the city's sweltering summer heat. Incidentally, Kakchieh was his mother's resting place since seven years ago.

Now, it happened that Puay Ngee his younger brother, whose birth-name is Juat Kia (Delight-in-the-Scriptures) was lying sick at the Theological College at Kakchieh, and needed his attention. This turned him temporarily into a nurse for his brother's sake.

Puay Ngee was in the employ of the China Inland Mission. He had also come all the way to hear John Sung. After two sermons, he was completely changed. Moreover he pledged to serve the Lord his whole life. Puay Ngee's conversion and consecration for fulltime service were attested by his own handwriting on a front page of his glittering new-bought Bible, autographed by John Sung with a Scripture verse. Reading the words of a born-again Christian in his brother made a solemn impression on his heart. This removed the prejudice that earlier jolted him from his seat in Swatow. Puay Hian softened to give John Sung another "chance."

As it happened, the evening meetings were shifted over to Kakchieh the very day of his "escape," as if to catch up with him. What could he do except go and hear John Sung again? Try as he did to get something out of the sermon, before God's time arrived, however, all he heard was a rumbling echo of unintelligible sounds from the preacher's lips. Though seated inside the auditorium, his soul was carried outside by rambling thoughts and fancies.

Paradoxically, this night at Kakchieh found Puay Hian soundly asleep, like Jonah stowed away in the ship's hold. As night sped into the early hours of morning, suddenly a chorus of angelic voices sweetly penetrated his slumbering ears. Was he dreaming? As he struggled to shake himself loose from slumberland, the heavenly voices flowed in more sweetly than ever, borne on the wings of an early southern seabreeze. Springing to his feet, Puay Hian made straight for the window. Like peering into Heaven's outskirts, his eyes were glued to a beeline of women and girls, faces aglow in lantern light, stepping fairy-like up the hill to pray. These faces he had seen at the Revival meetings shone with a radiance and peace Puay Hian sorely lacked. In that mo-

ment of ecstasy, Puay Hian could have responded as beautifully, "Hearken all! what holy singing... 'tis a hymn with grandeur ringing!" However, as the songs of John Sung faded in the predawn gloom, Puay Hian, the "respectful and lofty," was plunged into a swelling tide of woe. No, his soul was still in outer darkness. He could not join in the song of the redeemed, just now.

Came August 30th, 1933, the last day of campaign. Not willing to miss this day of days, Puay Hian went. Contrary to expectation, there was no sermon that morning. Rather, it was a special, faith-healing session. As one by one knelt up the platform, John Sung would slap a hand dabbed with olive oil onto the patient's forehead, "Be healed of your sickness in the Name of Jesus Christ!" At sight of this and offended the more by John Sung's hoarse command, Puay Hian revolted for the third time: "If you can do this, so can I!" Turning thrice from the grace of God, where could such a soul in conflict after conflict go?

Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit?

Or whither shall I flee from Thy presence? (Ps 139:7)

Now, the first thing Puay Hian asked his wife upon reaching home that afternoon was, "Has Dr Sung's letter come?" When all he got from her was a plain no, Puay Hian could not hold out any longer. The growing burden of sin, especially this thrice-repeated rebellion against God, was crushing him to death.

Brushing aside the food his good wife had laid out for him, he escaped to an upstairs corner by himself. Falling upon his knees, he let go like a sobbing child. Just then, the old German wall clock struck one!

"O Lord, be merciful to me, this condemned sinner! O Lord, forgive me this big rebel-sinner! As You forgave that thief on the cross, You can save this robber chief today. Lord, I have rebelled against You the last three years. I have fought You, and doubted even Your existence. O Lord, I now repent. I come back to You. Be merciful to me a condemned sinner!"

Confessing and weeping, weeping and confessing, he spent almost the last ounce of his physical strength. Though

he managed to raise himself, he fell repeatedly before the Lord under that crushing load. Sorrowing to death for his sins, he recalled a preacher's word, "When you feel miserable, then read your Bible." At that Puay Hian lost no time to turn to God's Word. One portion that brought him relief and comfort was Rom 2:4,5: "Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness; tolerance and patience, not realising that God's kindness should lead you to repentance? But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed." (NIV)

Repeating these words of grace and admonition, it dawned on him that God had already forgiven him for Jesus' sake. As his sins were washed away by His precious blood, the living waters of His life gushed in. Joy that quickened his whole being flooded his soul. Praise the Lord, Hallelujah, a life-long conflict of soul, from schooldays till now, was ended. Brimming with tears of joy, Puay Hian burst forth into this John Sung chorus:

How bountiful His grace,
How bountiful His grace!
From deepest sin He ransomed me,
How bountiful His grace!

As Puay Hian tasted the sweetness of bountiful grace, the salvation he little deserved, there came to him a question, clear as daylight, "How must I repay my Saviour's love?" Immediately he heard a still small voice within, saying, "When you were in your mother's womb, I had prepared you to preach my Word today!"

"Yes, Lord, I give you all my heart, I will serve you till I die." Just then, that old German wall clock struck four!

Praise the Lord, not only is that conflict of soul ended, Puay Hian's life's purpose is found! Henceforth, he can say with the Apostle Paul, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live, yet not I; but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." (Gal. 2:20)

From this South China intermezzo, let us pick up where

we left off. Let us follow the three-man team now in the ancient city of Kalgan, provincial capital of Chahar. Here was a modern city of two-hundred thousand Mongolians where by the faithful labours of missionaries several churches were established. The names of the Norwegian Mission, the Salvation Army and Methodist Protestant must be honourably mentioned. But even in such a faraway country modernism and liberalism had extended its tentacles.

Kweihua in Suiyuan, a hundred miles west of the Great Wall was their next destination. Awaiting them were gathered one hundred fifty leaders of the China Inland Mission from all over Suiyuan Province, many of these from bandit-infested areas, so that coming to Kweihua was a hazard itself. But more dangerous was the Enemy of souls who infiltrated the ranks of the depleted Bethel Band so that their power against sin was dissipated. For, a dissatisfaction over the financial aspect of the Bethel Band seemed to have cropped up at this crucial moment. No one can escape from this temptation of temptations, not even God's most faithful servants, yea, from that which is described by the apostle, "the love of money is the root of all evil" (I Tim 6: 10).

It all arose from a love gift of \$300 being sent by a sister to Dr Sung's father in Hingwa because it was learnt that Pastor Sung had retired from his church. How did this sister know Pastor Sung's address? It was suspected therefore that all this was a sleight of hand on John's part to divert funds for himself which, according to Bethel regulations, should come into the common pool. When John Sung demanded a proper inquiry and it was proven the love gift remitted to John's father was a spontaneous act, the matter was then laid to rest. Nevertheless, it left behind a scar on the team's mutual trust. As for John Sung he also learned a lesson on the financial management of a Church body from the Yesu Chiating (Jesus Family) which had put an over-emphasis on money. Hence, one of his famous remarks on money was, "If a pastor has a sideline in money-making, he is bound to go bankrupt!"

From Kweihua the Bethel Band headed straight for Paotowchen, terminus in Inner Mongolia of the Peking Line. Here was another CIM station (Swedish Alliance

Mission). From Paotow they pushed on the Saratsi where an orphanage was run by the CIM (Swedish Alliance Mission). This was a work of fighting infanticide, for baby girls were often left to die in the open or simply killed according to that heathenistic Chinese concept that boys are preferred to girls. (But what about the practice of abortion in the West where both male and female foetuses are killed in whatever stage of development?)

Though the loving missionaries had saved the foundlings with their tiny bodies they had a harder time saving their souls when they grew up. For this reason the Bethel Band was called. At a campaign at which five hundred attended, a sizeable number coming from the orphanage, God worked through His servants mightily to bring these young souls to Christ.

At Saratsi there were buried many of the one hundred eighty missionaries who died in the Boxer Rebellion, not a few of these being CIMers. Taken on camel back to visit their graves how their souls were solemnised before the God of earth, and how they must have thanked the Lord for the good seed the martyred missionaries had sown over three decades ago. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints" (Ps 118: 15).

A long ride back to Peking from where the Band turned southwards to Hopeh Province, they came to Paoting for another great revival which a lady missionary described as the most wonderful thing that ever happened. For the Church, being revived, new Preaching Bands were organised who went everywhere praising God, seeking to win the lost.

As they headed southwards and southwards to Changsha, capital of Hunan Province the Band paid a return visit to Changteh where one pastor was born again. What a glorious situation now to meet with a revived church when its pastor was saved! Instead of a couple of hundred, over a thousand came to the meetings, the fruit of their previous sowing. What could not be accomplished by the intellect of the liberal missionaries, the power of the Blood had brought countless souls into the Kingdom.

Changsha (Long Sands), capital of Hunan Province, to

the South of which lies Kwantung Province, is the city where Hudson Taylor founder of the China Inland Mission (1865) is buried. To his loving memory there was erected a hospital here, and here was also a Bible Institute affiliated to BIOLA (Bible Institute of Los Angeles). Changsha was also the headquarters of other missions and institutions, and of Government offices. To this citadel the Bethel Band was sent to take it by storm.

The excitement aroused by the visit of the Band was so great that Chinese and missionaries alike rushed with all haste to get a seat in the meeting hall lest they be left "in outer darkness." A German missionary of the Liebenzell Mission, associated with the CIM, remembers vividly how she was received by Dr Eitel of the Hudson Taylor Memorial Hospital when she arrived at Changsha after a tiring journey from Shanghai: "Leave your baggage and get into the rickshaw, quick! The meeting is on and we won't get a seat. Hurry!" Instead of the usual cup of tea she was shuttled right away to the meeting, where she met other missionaries also in the rush.

Preaching on the Prodigal Son, one of John Sung's favourite themes and singing with emotion the chorus "Coming home, never more to roam" the evangelist melted many a sin-hardened heart to bitter tears of repentance. It was another glorious day when through the praises of sinners saved by grace, earth was lifted up to heaven. It is observed that when a revival occurs, it is God's preparation of his own for a day of testing. True enough, when the Sino-Japanese War finally broke out in July 1937 Changsha became a mini-Armageddon between the two clashing armies. The horror of fire and bloodshed that overwhelmed Changsha is another tearful page in the annals of China's War of Resistance.

But Changsha is tearfully remembered also as the scene of the final split between John Sung and Bethel. On the way from Changteh to Changsha, Andrew Gih, on behalf of Bethel, challenged John to "open the coffin." His three charges were: 1) he did not stress the eradication of sin in his sermons; 2) he was greedy of filthy lucre; 3) he drew men to himself. John's reply was: 1) he did not believe in the

doctrine of eradication of sin but he did stress the need of believers to let the Holy Spirit deal with the flesh to mortify it, moment by moment; 2) he challenged his accusers to bring out one instance of his having taken from others or asked from anybody. Whatever the Heavenly Father and the brothers and sisters gave, these sums were publicly accounted; 3) as to drawing men unto himself, he admitted he had exerted more than any other in the Lord's service. Being a member of an itinerant Gospel Team how could he draw men to himself? To work for peace between members of the Band Dr Sung concluded, "May God help me to improve myself. Please forgive me if I have done anything wrong. But if they try to thwart my work they will be defeated. As for me I need labour to sow and water. Let others happily reap. As for me I know I'm building on a good foundation. Let each be examined by His Lord before the judgment seat of Christ. God is One who looks into "the heart and the lungs" (I Sam 16:7).

In Changsha the Band stayed with Rev Marcus Cheng, who was a faculty member of the Changsha Bible Institute. It was at this home that came the parting of ways between Andrew and John. A telegram was received from Shanghai summoning Andrew to return forthwith for the purpose of organising two new Preaching Bands to the "twin" provinces of Kwangtung and Kwangsi. With deep sorrow John and Frank sent Andrew to the station. It was like the parting of Paul and Barnabas. As for Frank he would stick with John until their present schedule was accomplished, even as Rev Marcus Cheng, a third party, had advised with this telegraphic reply, "Hengyang meetings fixed. People first, self last. Work completed will return."

From Changsha the duet detoured to Changteh in the same province where the Canadian Holiness Mission had a chapel, but other denominations would not cooperate, which drew this remark from John, "These many denominations which are brought to China from the west are a hindrance to spreading the Gospel in China."

Returning to Changsha en route to Hengyang, John got what he was expecting, a letter from Bethel asking him to leave and make alternative arrangements for his family then

In 1976 William E Schubert, John's missionary friend, published through this writer a booklet "I Remember John Sung." Frank Ling was asked to write a Preface to Schubert's account of sketches of John's life. This is what Frank Ling says of the man and his devotion:

"I have read several books regarding Dr John Sung, and reports of his work, both in English and Chinese by various authors, but none of them was Dr Sung's intimate friend as Rev Schubert, who knew him, prayed with him, worked with him, and has shown sympathy for him in his difficulties. The contents of this book are very rich, its facts are accurate and interesting. I took a whole afternoon to read it from the first page to the last. I felt what a great blessing that forty-two years ago I was Dr Sung's co-worker in his second three-year "Door" period, when the Bethel Worldwide Evangelistic Band was organised by us five Chinese young men.

"After I finished reading the manuscript, the way of Dr Sung's leading revival meetings was refreshed in my memory. Now it seems to me that I am in his revival meeting again, and he is standing before me. I should carry on his unfinished work. I have never forgotten that when he and I were in Bethel Evangelistic Band, he said to me, 'Frank, we are both Fukienese, why don't we band together to go on with our work?' God did not allow me to make this decision because I knew I was not as strong in spirit, in self-denial, in sacrifice, purity, and in faithfulness as God's servant, Dr John Sung. Yet God has had pity on me and has not put me aside from His work. The other three co-workers left him; I was the only one with him from the beginning to the end. I saw him and his family to the car, and said good-bye to him. From that time on each one had his own future and the work of God put upon him.

"When I read of Dr Sung's fifth, or "Tomb" period, it made me think of what he told me one morning. He said, 'The day will come that I need not run here and there to bring God's message to the people, but they will come to me, to my home, seeking the knowledge of God and studying the wonderful Word of the Bible.' God fulfilled Dr Sung's prediction in a miraculous way which Dr Sung never dreamed of."

Chapter XVII

THE DOVE PERIOD I

Striking Out Anew

1934-1935

Leaving the sheltered protection of the Bethel Mission Compound, John Sung understood more fully the meaning of Abraham leaving Ur to go to a strange country "not knowing whither he went" (Heb 11:8). Nevertheless, he found a house through Rev Tang at twenty-five dollars a month where he could live in peace. As he reviewed the three years he had worked under the Bethel Banner, he wrote in his diary, "As I look back, I can trace clearly the leading of His gracious hand. During these three years He has trained me and moulded me, and kept me from facing sudden hardships. Now that my feathers are grown He has seen fit to stir up the nest and has He not spread His wings to bear me up and keep me from falling?" (Deut 32:11). When asked about the separation, Andrew Gih commented tersely, "Dr Sung supplied energy to the Bethel Band, and the Bethel Band opened a door to Dr Sung."

No sooner had John rested his feet than invitations began to come in as news of his leaving Bethel spread. Logically he answered those that came from nearby, from Shanghai itself. He fulfilled a string of four requests during the Chinese New Year season, for it is a custom to this day for Chinese Churches to time their special meetings to coincide with this lunar festival. The four Churches that invited him were the Foochow-speaking Joy and Peace Church, whose name John perceived was a message of comfort to his own soul. The others were the Abundant Virtue Church, the Woods View Church where over a thousand attended. Finally, there was the Pure Heart Church where two hundred children were won to the Lord. "Whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein" (Mk 10:15).

When several Churches invited him to be their pastor, he remembered the ministry to which God had called him. So he prayed, "Lord if you want me to be an itinerant evangelist show me a sign. Send through your children \$800 within a month. If you want me, Lord, to continue as an evangelist, open me doors to reach five provinces." As God answered Gideon by dew (Judges 6:31-40), He sent through the post gifts of money exceeding the stipulated sum. Invitations came from exactly five provinces, viz., Anhwei, Chekiang Hopeh, Kiangsi and Shantung. Being fully persuaded that this was the way he should go, the way of an itinerant evangelist, he knelt before the Lord again to reconsecrate his life.

Therefore he wasted no time to enter the arena again. Carrying a light suitcase he took off to Chingkiang, upriver from Shanghai, and from there to Suchow South. Having run in his stiff Hinghwa Mandarin through three years of interpretation, he plucked up courage to break through into near-standard Mandarin, the "plain language" or "official language" of China. Lo and behold, it worked! While he thanked God for loosening his tongue, he was sure glad for the three years of "tuition" under Frank Ling his versatile companion in interpretation.

From Suchow South he pressed onward to Tsinan on a fourth visit. Tsinan, provincial capital of Shangtung where all the intelligentsia were concentrated, nevertheless, flocked to hear him again. From Tsinan he toured through most of the big towns in Shantung, correcting those who had gone on a tangent, for example, the charismatics. He reconciled Chinese Church leaders and missionaries who were at odds. Signs and miracles followed him as did the apostles in olden days. That demons were cast out and paralytics were enabled to walk was John Sung's own testimony in sermon after sermon without apology as he demonstrated the power of God. So the Lord gave him two paralytics healed while a demon-possessed man was also delivered in his tour of Shantung.

When John Sung came into Tientsin there was a change of attitude in the Church leaders. When he was refused a hearing by the elders, young men who were his supporters

rented an ancestral hall. In the ensuing contention between two parties in the Church, three hundred who were sympathetic to the evangelist seceded which resulted in the erection of a new sanctuary for freedom of worship and for the unrestricted proclamation of the Gospel. This new house of worship raised up by Preaching Bands was the only case of secession in all of John Sung's ministry. This was not to John's liking whose ministry was to the Church and not "out of" the Church.

In this connection the work of Watchman Nee against the established churches, substituting with his own brand of the "Little Flock" was castigated by John Sung, though he did not mention by name. Nor did John Sung agree with Watchman Nee's stress on unleavened bread for the Lord's Supper, and his requirement of women to cover their heads in Church.

But, John Sung was for separation from those who denied the fundamentals of the Faith. He himself had separated from Union Seminary in New York City, and pointed out the Unbelief of its professors. Thus, when Dr Chia Yu Ming separated from Ginling Women's Theological Seminary in 1935 to form the Spiritual Training Theological Seminary in Nanking, Dr Sung was one who sent the senior minister his felicitations. When this writer was a student under Dr Chia in Nanking 1946, he often heard Dr Chia pray for another John Sung to arise and evangelise all of China.

From Tientsin the doctor made a hurried visit to Peking before returning to Shanghai. In Peking he held a three-day meeting. It happened Wang Ming Tao was gone to Taian when Dr Sung called. To return the courtesy Mrs Wang telegraphed to her husband to meet Dr Sung when his train passed through Taian. This gave the two servants of God a precious ten minutes of fellowship, when Wang greeted Sung as the train pulled into Taian. It fell on the 4th day of May 1934.

Not stopping over to see his wife John transferred at Shanghai to the first train to Hangchow to keep his appointment. In a ten-day campaign many old-timers who had grown up in the Church, but not in the Lord, were born

anew, as much fallow ground was broken up. Fifty Preaching Bands were organised. Just then it was reported that Dr Sherwood Eddy a liberal Churchman was coming to Hangchow. This led Dr Sung to expose his liberal theology, for he said, "If you starve you'll not die. If you take poison you will die."

Returning to Shanghai to his dear wife after a short absence of two months John was refreshed to hold a ten-day "spiritual-nurture" campaign at the 2,000-seat Moore Memorial Church because many who were zealous for Christ were dropouts now. It is a dangerous thing indeed for a Christian to stop attending Church! Hence his stress on this apostolic injunction, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" (Heb 10:25).

From Shanghai the Spirit led his servant to Huchow where he first "made debut" to the East China Conference of the Christian Home Movement, 1930. At Huchow on this occasion, while John Sung was preaching away, the Holy Spirit "laid hold" of one Rev Wang Chau Hsiang, a professional pastor for fifteen years. After a great struggle with Satan who hindered him from public confession, for it would make him "lose face," he plucked up courage, God helping him, to tell the congregation his deliverance from his old carnal ways. "Praise God, I am a born again pastor now!" he declared. A drastic change came over his pastoral ministry. Instead of movies and socials which he employed before to draw men to his Church, he now stressed on preaching the Gospel and expounding the Word. His Church increased seven times; fifty preaching bands were organised; a dozen young men and women consecrated themselves to serve the Lord fulltime. The same Pastor Wang became pastor of a church in Shanghai in 1946, and was introduced to this writer at a special meeting where Dr Chia Yu Ming was speaking. When a pastor is converted he brings forth fruit a hundred-fold!

Angered by the loss of such an able pastor hitherto under his grip, Satan hindered John Sung in the campaigns following, both at Hangchow and Nanking. When John Sung

preached on the need of renouncing self, some school children in Nanking took this to mean a relaxation of study, which invited the anger of their parents against the evangelist. Despite these hindrances the power of the Lord rested upon John Sung, as he prepared himself for wider service.

Chapter XVIII

THE DOVE PERIOD II

From Strength to Strength

1934-1935

Hitherto John Sung's own province had been ravaged by a civil war between General Chai Ting-kai and the Central Government. As the rebellion died a natural death, invitations from Fukien began to pour in to the evangelist.

Again to Foochow he went, in September 1934. The glories of the first campaign were repeated with ninety-six new Preaching Bands organised.

Deaconess Loader on behalf of the Church of England Zenna Missionary Society entertained Dr Sung at Loyuan. At the Anglican Church at Loyuan four meetings were held everyday beginning at 6.30 am in true John Sung style!

From Foochow Dr Sung travelled south to Amoy after paying the Gospel debt at Chuanchow, Changchow en route. In Amoy the Five Year Movement Committee of the Synod of the South Fukien Church had scheduled meetings with much prayer. As the Lord poured out His Spirit on the people the attendance increased and kept on increasing, so that a gigantic mat shed had to be rigged to accommodate two thousand five hundred people in Amoy. When this figure was doubled the people broke loose to a mass meeting on the football field of the Anglo Chinese College, Kulangsu where seven thousand could be seated. Kulangsu is an islet, a stone's throw across Amoy harbour. The afternoon meetings remained under the gigantic mat shed in Amoy. Breaking all previous records, between four and five thousand souls were saved in this Amoy campaign alone!

Now while the winds of revival had swept through Amoy and bigger cities like Chuanchow and Changchow, there were scores of village churches in the hinterland impossible to visit. Communication between these remoter congregations was restricted to the footpath or cart-track. A fifty-mile

trip by river sampan from Chuanchow to Yung Chun, scaling many an upstream rapid as experienced by the writer in his travels in China 1946, took almost a week. Into such undeveloped terrain to do a more thorough spade work was Lim Puay Hian, John Sung's disciple, sent.

As these inland churches were stirred with a new zeal for spiritual blessings, a half-dozen of them would join hands for a united campaign. In the Changpu sector, half way between Swatow and Amoy, Lim Puay Hian raised up twenty-nine preaching bands to add to the original thirteen organised by John Sung. Two hundred and forty-two were born again and one hundred and sixty-two letters requesting prayer were received. In John Sung fashion, Lim Puay Hian laid hands on the sick at the close of the campaign. Nor were the Puay Hian campaigns limited to the inland churches. As his exploits for the Lord became more well known, invitations were received from the bigger ones along the coast. The church at An-hai, an important sea-and-land junction between Amoy and Chuanchow, where this writer had spent a night, held a ten-day meeting, with Puay Hian preaching, also John Sung style, three times a day. To the thirteen preaching bands formed under John Sung were added another fifteen. Three hundred and fifty-five souls were saved and one hundred and ninety-two letters for prayer received.

From An-hai the Spirit swept northwards through Chuanchow and Yung Chun and a half-dozen other towns. In five campaigns held one after the other, a total of one thousand eight hundred and six souls were born again and two hundred and seven preaching bands organised. A new high in Lim Puay Hian's ministry was being reached.

In many ways the work of John Sung and Lim Puay Hian in the Hokkien churches (Hokkien is the Amoy dialect, quite different from the dialect of Foochow or Hinghwa) was complementary to each other. And inasmuch as Lim Puay Hian treated the doctor with deference, who was his spiritual father, the latter had a kind word for his disciple wherever he went. When John Sung came to Yung Chun in the spring of 1937, rather "in the steps of Puay Hian" who preceded him the year before, he humbly remarked, "The

groundwork has been laid by Brother Puay Hian. I am merely resting on his laurels.”

Coming back to the great Amoy campaign, it is to be noted that as the Holy Spirit mightily worked, so did Satan try to hinder His servant. Once again the press attacked John Sung for using bewitching speeches and magic art. To thwart his healing session which was held before the close of campaign, his opponents brought some of the worst cases for treatment. Holding to His promises with the prevailing prayer of many brothers and sisters, John Sung laid his hand on the sick — a marathon that dispensed blessing to over a thousand people. A woman paralytic of forty years was healed instantaneously, who sent a photograph thereafter to Dr Sung for remembrance.

But it is in the spiritual realm that lasting results were produced. One sin that John Sung did not fail to attack was gambling, a Chinese vice and pastime. As a result of converted gamblers quitting, one gambling house in Amoy had to close down. All the churches in Amoy were filled to overflowing. On Sunday the Amoy-Kulangsa Ferry would be swamped with Bible-carrying Christians riding to and fro to Church singing praises to God, a phenomenon never seen before. The whole city of Amoy seemed to be taken over by the Church of Yesu (Jesus). How happy would William Chalmers Burns be were he living to see the Amoy Pentecost, who planted the Gospel seed here 1851.

Like Joshua making the breakthrough against the five Amorite kings when the sun stood still for a whole day, the Amoy Victory opened to John Sung so many fields of service that he could not cope with them. Now you see him in Swatow, Canton and Hong Kong. In a month's time he is over in Nanking the national capital. Again he is back in Fukien his native province which takes in the stride stations in Hakkaland of Kwangtung Province, when in a little while he “flies off” to Peking. You might want to call him the Flying Evangelist though he never got on an airplane but once, as you will see later.

In the midst of faster and faster movements, he had a dream. This took place while he was riding a coastal steamer en route to Nanking. This dream occurred at the time his old

father was on his sick bed. Suddenly he saw him standing before him: "Siong Chiet (his old name in Hinghwa), I am now in Heaven. But you have seven more years to go. So, work your hardest for the Lord." Surely this was a reminder to the pattern the Lord had shown him before, that his ministry was divided in five times three-year periods, viz: Water, Door, Dove, Blood, Tomb. He was now half way through the Dove Period.

As for Pastor Sung Hsueh Lien, the Lord took Him the same month.

Chapter XIX

THE DOVE PERIOD III

Southward Ho!

1935

From time immemorial China (Chung Kuo) has called herself the Middle Kingdom, when kings and emperors ruled. Although there are no more kings or emperors and the land has become a republic under Sun and Chiang, and now a people's republic under Mao and Teng, the name of Chung Kuo remains. Since there are no kings today China can call herself the Central Country or Nation. That is to say, China, having the largest population in the world, with a most ancient culture, has looked with pride upon herself, under any regime, as the centre of mankind. All not of China, or on the borders of China, are considered barbarians.

With China as the centre of the world, the seas and oceans south of China are called *Nanyang*, which can be translated Southern Ocean or South Seas. The term *Nanyang* does not refer only to the water bodies but rather to all the lands and archipelagos that make up the southern regions, such as Indo-China, Thailand, Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia.

From time immemorial, wars and famine have driven the Chinese people, particularly those of the two southern provinces of Kwangtung and Fukien bordering the China Sea, to emigrate. As early as a thousand years ago, the Chinese began to migrate to the lands and islands of Southeast Asia, for in West Borneo (Kalimantan) there is a town called Sambas visited by the writer which has evidence of a thousand-year old Chinese settlement. The story of Chinese Admiral Cheng Ho calling at Malacca on the Malay Peninsula in the fifteenth century is well-known to Malaysians and Singaporeans, for an ancient well purporting to mark his exploits may be seen in Malacca town on the main

highway to Kuala Lumpur the Malaysian capital.

But it was in the early nineteenth century that the people of Southern China began to embark on *Nanyang* in earnest, for example, the new trading station of Singapore, where with a wise government under Sir Stamford Raffles (1819), many had come to seek a better fortune. By the nineteen thirties, it was estimated there were over ten million Chinese all over *Nanyang*. This figure did not include five million Chinese of Fukienese stock settled in Formosa, then a Japanese colony.

Through the labour of western missionaries, an overseas Chinese Church was established. This Chinese Church was strengthened by converts from Kwangtung and Fukien who mingled with their compatriots to sail southwards, decade after decade, to *Nanyang*. The life of the far flung overseas Chinese Churches, however, was closely linked to the Church in China.

The Pentecostal Revivals shaking China through the labours of John Sung in the thirties found repercussions in the South Seas. "The voice of one crying in the wilderness" of the Church in China began to echo to her sons and daughters in Southeast Asia. It was the voice of a Chinese John the Baptist, the greatest preacher China had ever heard. As the overseas Chinese Church, like her mainland counterpart, was hungering and thirsting for righteousness, having heard of God's grace pouring down like the rain through His servant John Sung, they sent a Macedonian call to China, to Dr John Sung himself, "to come over and help us" (Acts 16:9). The first to send such an appeal was the Philippines.

Three churches in Manila — The Episcopal, the United Evangelical and the Christian Assembly Churches extended a united invitation to Dr Sung to conduct meetings, June 6th to 14th, 1935. Dr Sung gladly responded. Chinese of Hokkien extraction especially came from Luzon and outlying islands to fill up the Chinese United Evangelical Church. Pastor Silas Wang of the United Church was the chief representative to welcome the doctor.

In true John Sung fashion meetings commenced as early as 5.30 am and 8 am. In the afternoon special services were

held in English for the Filipinos. At night over a thousand attended. Out of this series of Revival meetings a strong Preaching Band was organised, headed by Miss Kho, headmistress of the Westminster School. She led a party of twelve to attend the first Bible Institute at Hangchow, July 1935.

An outstanding convert was the Consul-General of China to the Philippines. A gambler and a drunkard this overseas Chinese official, however, did not repent until John Sung accosted him again in Nanking. Nevertheless he came to the meetings in Manila and here the seed of the Gospel was sown. This consul converted later in Nanking became warden of a Bible School in Jakarta.

From Manila Dr Sung was taken to Cebu in the South where a special tent was erected in a timber yard. Here the Lord healed a man by his hand. This miracle is attested by Miss Hwang a deaconess of the Cebu Church. A newspaper editor surnamed Chow had a crooked back. Upon prayer being offered for him at the healing session, with the laying on of hand, he was seen to run outside the church where he stood up straight shouting, "I'm now straight again. I'm now straight again!" In gratitude this man organised a "Seed Sowers Fellowship" to propagate the Gospel.

Before the Manila crusade, Dr Sung was burdened for some months about the lack of systematic Bible teaching in the churches. To remedy this need he contrived a two-week Bible Institute to convene at Hangchow, July 1935. The Hangchow Bible Institute was an immediate success so that a foundation was laid for a second Bible Institute in Amoy.

From the Hangchow Bible Institute Dr Sung ventured out of China to *Nanyang* the second time, this time to Singapore, which is described in detail in Chapter I, out of which this book is written. Praise God from whom all blessings flow, as a result of the John Sung visit, the lives of one thousand five hundred in Singapore were changed, whose fruits have remained to this day, fifty years after.

By way of refresher from another angle, it may be profitable to read the editorial comment on Dr Sung's visit to Singapore which is found in the October issue of the *Malaysia Message* 1935, official organ of the Methodist

Church, as follows:-

“The evangelistic campaign which has been held in the Chinese Churches by Dr John Sung during the month of September has been to us a revelation of the beauty and power of the Gospel of God. We are deeply grateful to the Singapore Chinese Church Union Committee for their wisdom and vision in inviting Dr Sung to come with his stirring messages into our Churches. Surely God has called Pastor Sung to be a mighty prophet and witness of the truth in these days when the spiritual life of society has been at such a low ebb. Through these meetings thousands of Christians have repented of their backslidings and of their spiritual torpor and have rededicated themselves to the service of the Master. Thousands of non-Christians have been attracted and won by the meetings and have declared it to be their purpose to join the Church and openly witness for Christ. The Bible Society of Singapore has never enjoyed such a sale of Chinese Bibles as has been the case during the last month. Thousands have learned to read and study in Chinese the Christian Gospel and what is equally important have learned that singly and in groups they can pour out their hearts to God in prayer. Thousands have joined hands to God in prayer. Thousands have joined bands of Christian workers who as lay evangelists have declared their purpose to spend at least one hour each week to testimony and evangelistic work, either in the homes or in the open air. One Sunday afternoon in Singapore one hundred preaching bands went out to various parts of the city to tell Christ’s good news to those who would hear.”

On the Malayan scene the following towns were visited, viz, Muar on the southwest coast, and Malacca, where William Milne helped Robert Morrison, first missionary to China (1807) to translate the Chinese Bible.

From Malacca Dr Sung motored to Seremban and from there to Penang. Here a union meeting of all the denominations was held at an English-speaking Church. An outstanding example of repentance came from a brother of a Brethren Church who claimed he was following Jacob’s example by marrying two sisters. Having seen the light by Dr Sung’s sermons, he made proper settlement for this

double involvement. When Satan quotes Scripture, beware!

From Penang Dr Sung crossed over to Medan in North Sumatra, then under Dutch rule. After Medan the evangelist returned to Malaya where he ministered at two more cities, Sitiawan on the west coast and Kota Bahru on the east.

Returning to Singapore where he had a second series of meetings, he returned by boat to China. In all these journeys Miss Leona Wu was his faithful interpreter. A total of five thousand souls were claimed in *Nanyang* for the Lord.

Chapter XX

THE DOVE PERIOD IV

From Power to Power

1935-1936

From the end of 1935 to April 1936 we see John Sung visiting his native Hinghwa, and from Hinghwa we see him holding another mammoth meeting at the Moore Memorial Church in Shanghai. By March he is seen busy again at Tsinan and Tenghsien in Shantung Province where over a thousand thronged to hear him. He was highly commended by Dr Martin Hopkins of North China Theological Seminary, for in Tenghsien another five hundred souls were saved and one hundred and thirty preaching bands organised. From Tenghsien the doctor moved on to Liuho, Kiangsu Province, where he organised another fifty preaching bands in March 1936. But what God was leading him to was a repetition of Amoy and Kulangsu over Formosa (Taiwan) where he landed April 1936.

Before we go with John Sung to the three major cities he evangelised, it may be profitable for us to learn a little of the geography and history of this fabled island.

Formosa as she was called in the thirties is a beautiful island, and that is what this Portuguese word means. Known to the West as Formosa, the Chinese call it Taiwan, ie Terraced Bay, the terraces no doubt referring to the lofty ranges rising one after the other from the coast. Crossing the Formosa (Taiwan) Straits from the mainland on a sunny day, a magnificent view of the mountains, tier upon tier, can be obtained. A journey to the foothills will earn the traveller some of the most beautiful scenery in the Far East. Mt Morrison soars to a height of 13,000 feet.

Formosa first received the Gospel in the seventeenth century when it was occupied by the Dutch, 1624-1661. When the island was taken back by Coxinga (Cheng Ch'eng Kung), a hero of the old Ming dynasty, Christianity was

extinguished except for a few broken relics.

The Gospel vine so luxuriantly cultivated by the English Presbyterians in the Amoy region (1851), 100 miles across the Straits on the mainland, was bound to spread its branches to Formosa, where the dialect spoken is the same. Thus in 1865, a permanent work was established with the founding of a Christian medical work in Tainan by Dr James Laidlaw Maxwell. The first English missionary was accompanied by three Hokkien assistants: an evangelist, a male nurse, and a janitor.

The establishment of another work on Formosa, in the north, was effected in 1871 by George Leslie MacKay, sent by the Canadian Presbyterian Mission. MacKay's life was deeply influenced by William Chalmers Burns (1815-68) when the latter held revival meetings in Canada before he became a missionary to China.

MacKay was a pioneer of great daring and originality. He gathered from his early converts a band of young men whom he taught in a "peripatetic school" as he made long safaris with them. He instructed them not only in the doctrines of the Gospel and the way of preaching, but also how to "pull teeth." They drew a good hearing all right, for many among the crowds with toothache from decadent molars offered themselves readily for treatment. This extraction session over, MacKay would douche them with a soothing sermon on "relief from the pain of sin." MacKay's annual reports on conversions were tallied with a column on extractions!

The churches flourishing from the Gospel seed sown by English and Canadian Presbyterian missionaries were united in a common Synod in 1912.

In 1895 Japan took Formosa from China and colonised it for fifty years, returning it in 1945 at the conclusion of the Second World War.

When John Sung landed on Formosa (Taiwan) in April 1936, it was a matter of months before war between China and Japan flared up again. As William E. Schubert has said with regard to the mighty revival of John Sung during his Dove period, "it prepared many for the coming persecutions. Persecutions always follow revival."

John Sung opened his campaign in Taipeh. Under

Japanese “police protection”, one thousand attended the meetings. When he moved on to Taichung, however, many from Taipeh went along with him, so the numbers at Taichung doubled. When the evangelist came to Tainan the last on this Gospel trail, the crowd swelled to four to five thousand. Was this not a reenactment of Amoy?

In the overall Formosa campaign five thousand souls were born again. The people gave \$4,000 and many articles of jewellery and gold to the Lord for the support of six hundred Preaching Bands. Although the Japanese authorities tried to hinder the healing meetings, nevertheless, many of the sick were prayed for. Six hundred converts registered to attend the Second Bible Institute that was now scheduled to convene in Amoy, across the Straits. (The Japanese authorities, however, cut this figure down to three hundred.)

From the number of people saved and energised by the mighty working of the Holy Spirit, the Formosa or Taiwan campaign could well be termed another Pentecost. Now, if we examine the first Pentecost as recorded in Acts 2, what the Scripture stresses is not so much the speaking of tongues (languages) per se as its result. If we can see a connection between the “strangers of Rome” who heard Peter in Latin and were baptised, and a Church already existing in Rome when Paul wrote the Epistle to the Romans, we must conclude that Pentecost’s main objective is the expedited extension of the Gospel and the founding of churches.

In the light of this perception, let us return to Lim Puay Hian, John Sung’s convert and disciple from a side-trip John had made to Swatow nearly three years before. We have noted that Lim Puay Hian later complemented John Sung’s work, particularly in the South Fukien (Hokkien) field. Did Lim Puay Hian have anything to do with John Sung in Taiwan, which is only 100 miles of water from the Fukien coast? If what Dr Sung had done was of the Spirit, there would be an outflowing of the living water of the Spirit even unto life everlasting (Jn 7:38,39), on and on. Indeed, there is a connection between John Sung and Lim Puay Hian also in the Taiwan field.

After the Second World War when Dr Sung had been received into glory, Lim Puay Hian made a first trip to

Taiwan. There he tried to pick up from where John Sung left off. But it was a different Taiwan altogether. Edward Band reporting this post war situation in Taiwan in his *Hundred Years' History of the English Presbyterian Mission* wrote: "To the usual aftermath of the war – devastation, unemployment, inflation, shortage of materials, food and medicine – were added the corruption and incompetence of the new officials from the mainland, most of whom could not speak the Amoy dialect used in Formosa. After fifty years of Japanese rule, efficient if ruthless, the people had hoped to find themselves in the land of Promise, soon to flow with milk and honey: but in fact they were being exploited much as they were before, only this time by a vastly inferior government."

Into this post-war situation, when the hearts of many had "waxed cold," came Puay Hian in the spring of 1947. The days of white-hot enthusiasm for the hearing of the Word under John Sung over, Puay Hian nevertheless was welcomed by a hardcore of old faithfuls. Arriving by cross-channel steamer from Chuanchow on the mainland, where Puay Hian had a warm reunion with his pre-war converts, he was handed a string of ten preaching engagements starting from Tainan.

After a northern circuit to Taipeh and Keelung, Puay Hian returned to the south where he was requested to organise a short-term Bible school called "Spiritual Workers Institute." This Institute lasted three-and-a-half months. But there was no more that astounding chalking up of statistics as in former days. (We had noted that Puay Hian's revival ministry lasted only five years against John Sung's fifteen years.) Nevertheless, His Word, as the prophet Isaiah had promised, "shall not return unto Me void" (Isa 55:11). Whether Puay Hian knew what would result from his sowing in tears or not, here is the testimony of one of his fruits from the Taiwan field.

Rev Tai Po-fu, a Taiwanese missionary and evangelist to Singapore, was converted during Lim Puay Hian's first visit to Taiwan in 1947. At the time of his conversion he was thirty-three years of age and an elder of a Presbyterian Church. But his eldership was accorded rather by the will of

man and influenced by a consideration of hereditary prestige. For, he is the grandson of one of the earliest converts of the Canadian pioneer, George Leslie MacKay, and his grandaunt was married to the missionary.

Tai was an officer in the Finance Ministry, both under the Japanese and the new Chinese Government. Having been born again under Puay Hian's ministry, he yielded his life to fulltime service. He became one of the first students of Puay Hian's Spiritual Workers' Institute. After another season of study at the Tainan Theological Seminary, he was ordained in 1955.

Since then he has served as pastor of a big church in Taiwan, and from 1961 to 1973 as shepherd of his home church at Bang-Kah. From 1973 to 1978 he was sent as a missionary by his home church to Singapore. While in Singapore he had the pleasure of visiting Puay Hian some months before his home-going (1975), and must have gladdened the latter's heart. "But he that received seed in the good ground is he that heareth the Word and understandeth it, who also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty" (Matt 13:23).

Isn't this a wonderful case study of the work of the Holy Spirit flowing with streams of living water from one to another, and from another to another? From John Sung to Lim Puay Hian, from Lim Puay Hian to Tai Po-fu? When we see the final tally of John Sung's converts run into hundreds of thousands, praise God, what a mighty river of life that flows wider and deeper it shall ever be.

Now let us go to Amoy to participate in John Sung's marathon Bible Institute, but before that this intermezzo!

Before the opening of the much heralded Second Bible Institute, from the conclusion of the Taiwan Pentecost, May 9th to July 10th, John Sung made lightning strikes upon Canton, campaign after campaign, invaded Anhwei Province, then swung back to Hong Kong, an important citadel already captured for the Gospel.

Mr George A Birch of the CIM, Suancheng, Anhwei Province, wrote gloriously of the things he had seen and experienced. Of the hundreds of converts he saw two men who destroyed, one his mahjong set costing \$20 and the

other his cigarette making machine. A gambler who had won \$87 surrendered this sum to the Methodist Church. The missionary's servant got saved while his mother a nominal Christian became a soul-winner, bringing friends to the revival meetings. The cook's wife also repented with tears.

Mr Gordon Dunn, superintendent of the CIM in Anhwei testified in 1953 that many of the outstanding evangelists and leaders in Christian work he met testified of the blessings they had received through the ministry of Dr Sung.

The purpose of the Second Bible Institute was precipitated by the number of zealous converts now dropping out from the scene, and by the heresies that were claiming a good many of these to veer from the Truth. The Institute was held in Amoy July 10th to August 9th, 1936. One thousand six hundred delegates (plus local auditors, two thousand) converged on Amoy from all over China with a sizeable number from Nanyang — Singapore, Malaya, Penang, Philippines, speaking many dialects like those gathered at the first Pentecost, but Mandarin was understood by all. These were lodged in six schools then on summer vacation while the Institute was held in Trinity Church. Most of the delegates were members of the Preaching Bands.

As it was mid-summer, the study sessions were so timed as to take advantage of coolest parts of the day — 7.30 to 11.00 am and 7.00 to 10.30 pm. Beginning from Genesis 1:1 Dr Sung led his pupils chapter by chapter to Rev 22:21 all within the scheduled time of one month.

To get a taste of the spiritual food that was presented to the 2,000 Bible students, here's a sample of Dr Sung's exposition of Holy Scripture in Genesis Chapter Three:

“The most cunning of all, the Snake, is seen here tempting Eve. Now Eve loved beauty, so the Snake tempted her in her desire: (Are not girls today desirous of new fashion?). When Eve saw the Forbidden Fruit in all its beauty, in all its sweetness, she became the more infatuated by it. She doubted God's Word. Perhaps she would not die. But God had told them, to eat it would bring certain death. She doubted, ‘Not surely die!’ She gave Satan a loophole to enter. Pity of pities!

“Now the Snake’s tail is rather curly. Doesn’t it resemble the curl of the question mark? The Snake causes us to doubt. Eve ate and Adam also ate. Satan need not entice everyone. He need entice just one person! When the woman was enticed, naturally her husband followed suit in the enticement.

“After their enticement, they knew what was good and evil. Before they were children, now they became adults, knowing the shame of nakedness. They trusted in their own righteousness by making tree-leave garments to cover their bodies, but to no avail, because they trusted in their own method.

“When God called for them, they were afraid of Him, so they hid themselves. Before this they loved God. Now they feared God. This was due to their sin — so sin separates us from God. They could find no shelter, so they were confronted by God when they had eaten the Forbidden Fruit. Adam blamed it on ‘the woman You have given me, who enticed me.’ The woman blamed it on the Snake, each one blaming the other. But God gave them no chance to excuse themselves, and punished them. The Snake would eat dust — eat Adam. But God had a Great Promise: ‘The Seed of the woman will bruise the Snake’s head.’ This is a preview of Jesus coming to bruise Satan. Now they had been too free and idle, and does not idleness lead to sin? But henceforth they will be very busy. (Truly the sons of a rich household, being too free and idle, often fall into the Devil’s trap.) God did not want them to wear tree-leave garments for long, but made coats of lamb skin for them, showing righteousness comes not from their good deeds, but from Jesus the Lamb that is slain. After this God drove them out that they might not eat of the tree of everlasting life. Henceforth death came into the world, separating us from God. How pitiful!”

Testifying to the tremendous value of this Bible Institute, Paul E Kauffmann of Asian Outreach refers also to the permanent record of this month-long Bible study, “When published, these messages occupied (an octavo volume of) 554 pages. Has anyone else ever attempted such marathon expositions of the Scriptures?” The addresses were taken down verbatim and published before the year was out. A

“Now the Snake’s tail is rather curly. Doesn’t it resemble the curl of the question mark? The Snake causes us to doubt. Eve ate and Adam also ate. Satan need not entice everyone. He need entice just one person! When the woman was enticed, naturally her husband followed suit in the enticement.

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second printing of the same in one volume was executed by Miss Alice Doo the author's aunt in Taiwan 1952. Now, in its third printing, it is available in three volumes from the Bellman House, Hong Kong under the management of CLC (Christian Literature Crusade).

The method of Bible study as exemplified by his commentary on Genesis 3 was sound, illustrated mostly from the teacher's own experiences, augmented further by the experiences from the tens of thousands of letters he had read of converts. His emphasis was holiness and a victorious life, but he did not believe in sinless perfection. Touching eschatology, he was a pre-millennialist. One great asset of Dr Sung was his wit and humour, without which the teacher would have elicited many a semi-conscious drowsy amen in the summer heat.

The good seed of the Word which he had sown in the thousand and six hundred delegates coming from every corner of China and Southeast Asia, and four hundred local auditors cannot be over estimated. His expectations in his pupils cannot be gauged unless we listen to his closing remarks on the final night, which are recorded as follows:

“Dear brothers and sisters: I have been with you the last thirty days. Now it can be said that my work is done. Before God and man, I have a clear conscience, because what God wanted me to say, I have said. We were worried about the stamina of both teacher and interpreter. Thank the Lord, He has enabled us to stand here to see your face. During this month God has provided everything for us, enabling us to study the Bible book by book. Henceforth this Bible is become your Book, to be brought back. I have merely given you a key that you might open the Bible yourself, to discover many hidden treasures, now waiting for you to explore. May God use you mightily as soldiers for these end-times — this is our greatest objective insofar as the Bible Institute is concerned.

“I do not know when I shall leave this world. But while I am on earth I live a day at a time, to fulfil my daily duty. Now that I have given you the Word God has given me, I can see the Lord without a qualm when I leave this earth.

“During these thirty days, I have trembled before God as I

endeavoured to deliver God's Word, according to its correct meaning. My duty is now discharged. You are going home, and I will pray for you always. May this work produce great results. 'They that sow in tears shall reap in joy' (Ps 126:5). I believe God will not let this Bible Institute come to nought.

"Though we have been reviled, I feel I am guiltless before God and man. I have striven my level best to preach the Gospel, not coveting a single dollar. During this month I have been, as it were, living in imprisonment. Many wanted to see me, but I could not receive you properly and I am very sorry for this. But this could not at all be helped. For I had to prepare your daily spiritual rations. I was completely wrapped up in this. I could hardly open the many letters you've sent me. I'll read them, however, on board the ship. Henceforth, I must pray the Lord's blessing upon you. When you return, promote Bible study! 'Freely ye have received, freely give' (Matt 10:8). Great have been the expenses for this month, but God has supplied all our needs! Satan has attacked us in vain! May God use us as His end-time soldiers. Therefore whatever be the criticisms, I would accept them. The Lord knows our every trouble during this month, but I have committed to Him to take care of every misunderstanding.

"Dear brothers and sisters, after we disperse, there are those bound for Nanyang. May you be a lighthouse in Nanyang. Many are returning to Taiwan. May you be a lighthouse in Taiwan. There are those of you from North and Central China. May God be with you. As to delegates from Kwangtung Province and Hong Kong I know you have more difficulties than the others, but God help you to fight victoriously. Though there are losses in the preaching bands in Fukien I pray God will preserve you. Brothers from Amoy and Kulangsu, I beg your excuse for troubling you during this month. But may you be comforted in the Lord.

"Let me tell you of the marvellous grace of God. Before the opening of this Bible Institute I asked God for three things: 1) cool weather; 2) good spirits in attendance; 3) health for every member.

"Thank the Lord! He loves us. He has not only given us coolness of weather, He has increased our spirits with each

passing day. During this month every seat has been taken. For God has given you the spirit of thirsting for righteousness. Though some members were sick, you have been healed through prayer. Hallelujah, Glory to God!

“Now may the love of God go with you, that you may share the grace you’ve received with others. The more we give the more we receive. If you keep it to yourselves you’ll lose everything.

“I don’t know where I’ll go from here. But I trust in the Lord’s arrangement. Maybe we won’t have a third Bible Institute next year. Maybe I could hold a retreat with some brothers who love the Lord.

“Finally, the Lord be with you till He comes! Amen.”

In typical John Sung style, our Bible Institute teacher took no time to rest. In a matter of days he appeared in Foochow for a seven-day campaign.

Chapter XXI

THE DOVE PERIOD V

Third Nanyang Campaign

1936

September 1936 saw Dr Sung leaving home for another campaign in Nanyang — destination Sarawak. Sarawak is situated on the northern part of the island of Borneo, whose greater southern portion is called Kalimantan, which are part and parcel of the sprawling Indonesian Archipelago. Sarawak today is incorporated into East Malaysia along with Sabah (formerly British North Borneo) and the free port of Labuan. In the nineteen-thirties Sarawak was a British protected state governed by Sir Rajah Brooke.

One of the chief cities of Sarawak is Sibu, but what is pertinent about this town is her Christian heritage, a heritage somewhat akin to Plymouth in New England which was colonised by the Pilgrim Fathers in 1620. Sibu was founded in 1901, the year John Sung was born, by Wong Nai Siong, a Methodist entrepreneur. With six hundred Christian settlers sailing in two junks from Foochow, his purpose was to provide a better livelihood to all Foochow Christians emigrating to Southeast Asia who might choose Sibu's Christian Colony as their new home.

The founder of this Foochow Christian Colony in Sarawak being a devout man, he saw to it that services were held on the Lord's Day for the settlers. Indeed, the new-comers from Foochow were gathered together to a Thanksgiving Service the first Sunday, led by Bishop Frank Warne from Singapore, who simultaneously organised the same as a part of the Singapore District of the Methodist Malaysia Mission.

Though Sibu was almost all Christian in the thirties, it had degenerated in three decades to a nominal Christianity, not a little of it a dead Christianity. And how dead could the Sibu Church become? According to Miss Leona Wu, Dr Sung's interpreter, a lay preacher there had asked her if

Nicodemus meant Nico's mother. Now in Chinese philological construction, *de* is the equivalent of the English 's and *mus* which is *mu* in the Chinese character means *mother*. To confuse the Chinese mind further Nicodemus was told by our Lord that he needed a second birth. Now, if Nicodemus could not understand our Lord about the second birth, how could Nico's mother, who wasn't in the discussion between Jesus and Nicodemus anyway?

The circumstances leading to Dr Sung being invited to Sibü were the conversion of one of Sibü's sons at Malacca and of one of her daughters in Singapore. On fire for the Lord after hearing John Sung, they both returned to Sibü to rouse up the Church, so much so the Church leadership was obliged to invite the doctor for a revival campaign.

In a ten-day campaign from September 21st to October 1st, 1936 the old citadel of a dying Christianity fell to John Sung's assault. A total of one thousand five hundred and eighty-three persons were saved, an event never seen or heard of in Sarawak's hundred years' history (1841). There was not a Christian house that was not affected by the coming of God's messenger.

As we have narrated the story of Taiwan's Tai Po-fu, a spiritual grandson of John Sung through Lim Puay Hian, so Leslie Lyall tells of a Chinese living in London in whose heart the seeds of God's Word were sown by the Sibü Pentecost. At that campaign he was a little boy living with relatives who were not interested in the Gospel. But John Sung's dramatic preaching had left such an indelible impression on his young mind that when he came to England and heard the Gospel a second time, that seed planted in his heart in Sibü many years ago sprouted into life everlasting!

On top of the thousand five hundred conversions, Sibü's sacred statistics read: fulltime consecrators: 100; Preaching Bands: 88, plus 38 for outlying regions. Sent to study theology in Nanking: 4. In spite of restrictions put on the Church by the Japanese regime during World War Two, the Preaching Bands which were the nucleus of a revived Church carried on to nurture the faith of the believers at a time when pastors were few.

From Sibü Dr Sung returned to Singapore en route to a

consolidation ministry of the towns in Malaya he had visited the year before, beginning with Muar. Of late the Christians in Muar, practically all Presbyterians, were plagued by one Rev Lin Hong Pin from Shanghai. Incidentally this pastor Lin had a little church on a side street in Shanghai which was noted by this writer when he was in Shanghai as a student in 1946. Now, what he taught that ruffled the Church was that without a triple immersion, to Father, to Son and to Holy Spirit, practically no one could be saved. Moreover he preached on the Second Coming of Christ with date setting and forbade the saying of the Lord's Prayer.

So persuasive was his teaching that an independent Church at Rawang on the other side of the Muar River succumbed to it. Immediately a big concrete tank was built in the yard of the leading Elder's bungalow, and through this credulous elder, the whole Rawang Church (which was Presbyterian in background) was thrice immersed. However, after Rev Lin Hong Pin had left the Muar scene and World War Two had broken out, the new ritual of a thrice-repeated immersion was discarded. This of course was due partly to Dr Sung's corrective preaching, for he was not slow to join the fray whenever the Word of Truth was assailed or distorted. When this writer became moderator of the Rawang Church on the other side of the Muar River in the sixties, he was shown the big tank that Rev Lin Hong Pin built, but was now become a haven for breeding pet tortoises!

Having consolidated the faith of Muar believers, Dr Sung revisited Kuala Lumpur the Malayan capital. From there he went to Klang, the port of Kuala Lumpur and from Klang he landed again on Penang, famous tourist island of Malaysia today. Why did he take this route? Because these towns and cities were on his way to his new destination, Burma, and it was but a forty-eight hour boat ride from Penang to Rangoon, Burma's chief port and capital city. John Sung believed in cost-effective evangelism, and the economic arrangement of time schedules.

Now Burma is a super-Buddhist country. The Christian Church there is strong particularly amongst the Karens, who were converted under Adoniram Judson (1814), pioneer of

the American Baptists. It was by him that the Burmese Bible was translated.

Before the missionaries arrived, the Karens had a belief in a Creator and told a story somewhat similar to the Biblical account of man's fall into sin. They cherished also a story handed down from generation to generation of the loss of a sacred white book by their fathers and of a day when a white teacher would restore it to them. Thus when white missionaries came to the Karens they were readily received.

Other tribes that came much under the attention of the Baptists were the Kachins, Chins, Shans, Lahus and Was, though the strongheaded Buddhist Burmese were the very first to be evangelised, with too little success.

John Sung was not sent to these tribes of Burma (though Lim Puay Hian was, in John Sung's steps). John Sung was invited by the overseas Chinese Church. When he came to hold a revival campaign this far end of China's "backyard," a totally different culture greeted him – not the three Chinese abundances of "happiness, longevity and sons" but of "crows, monks and pagodas." Like St Paul on Mars Hill faced with a pantheon of gods, how John Sung had sighed that the light of the Gospel should also shine into this dark land of countless pagodas, monks and crows.

Nevertheless his first job was to revive God's people now become degenerate, so with zeal and great boldness he lashed at the sins of the Chinese Church. Now the Chinese Church in Rangoon that invited him was without a pastor, for it had seceded from the Methodist Church, and was managed by a panel of twelve deacons. The Superintendent of the Methodist Church after inviting him once to preach at his Church tried to use him to bring back the secessionists but John Sung would not enter into any Church politics. "This one thing I do" (Phil 3: 13), he concentrated on saving souls and reviving the Church. As the crowds were limited so were the results – three hundred were converted and thirty Preaching Bands organised, plus one hundred and fifty letters asking for prayer received. Among those who came to the Lord were two sisters, now set on fire for God, who were instrumental in inviting Lim Puay Hian to follow up on John Sung's work. Through these two sisters Lim

Puay Hian made Rangoon his new domicile, spending nearly a year in Burma before he left his family for Borneo. The big Sung and the small Sung seemed to cross one another's path quite frequently.

During the revival meetings in Rangoon a goodly number of Indians attended, bringing their sick with them. Though they couldn't understand Chinese, they believed the Christ John was uplifting and found healing as a result. "Look unto Me and be ye saved all the ends of the earth" (Isa 45:22). "Though you don't fully understand, you can be saved by looking to Jesus," concluded John Sung in his Burmese experience.

Returning from Rangoon to Singapore, Dr Sung conducted a ten-day "spiritual-nurture meeting" from December 11th to 20th, 1936, in which members particularly of the Evangelistic League under Miss Leona Wu were taught three Books of Moses and three Books of the New Testament. The writer can vividly remember the charts in full colour that showed the Tabernacle in the Wilderness with details of its structure not without spiritual dimensions. Miss Leona Wu again served as interpreter. What drew Dr Sung's converts to him again and again was the rich, graduated Biblical contents not only of his sermons but also of his ever refreshing Bible studies. Truly he was an instructed scribe "which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old" (Matt 13:52). This basic Bible knowledge, particularly of the Old Testament, has served me a long way, even for a student of theology, and a pastor to this day. This is partly what William E. Schubert, John Sung's missionary friend, meant when he said, "I learned more from Dr Sung in three weeks than I learned in three years in theological seminary."

On the afternoon of December 22nd 1936 I was one of hundreds who went to the wharf to say farewell to my beloved teacher. I can still see him finally coming out of the lounge to stand on the gangway, not in his flowing white Chinese gown, but in white shirtsleeves and white pants, to wave us goodbye. Tears freely flowed both ways, and how our triangular red and white banners with the Cross of Christ fluttered lugubriously in the breeze. Such a spectacle rarely seen in Singapore's history attracted a reporter of the Straits

Times to publish this write-up, dated December 23rd, 1936:

“A young Chinese (he was 35 years then) stood in the lounge of the Italian liner *Conte Verde* in Singapore last night and brought tears to the eyes of more than 500 people. He was John Sung, the Chinese evangelist, who was returning to China after his second campaign for Christianity in Singapore. He was seen off by more than 1,000 excited Chinese, who paraded at the wharf waving flags and invaded the decks and saloons of the liner. Dr Sung addressed his followers briefly; they sang hymns and smiled cheerfully, but fully half of them were weeping, some silently and some emotionally. They were saying goodbye to a man who claims to have made thousands of Chinese converts of Christianity, to a man who was once locked in a mental asylum in the United States and who is now the ‘hot gosseller’ of China and the Chinese.

“Sung is a man who puts himself and Christianity into the news by his unorthodox ways, which always annoy the orthodox. He has made whirlwind tours of Malaya and everywhere he has left behind bands of converts. I watched him last night aboard the *Conte Verde*. Around him were hundreds of Singapore Chinese – mostly working-class men and women with a fair sprinkling of young men and good-looking girls – and he turned the liner’s lounge into an improvised mission hall.

“His supporters, who wore the badge (shaped like their triangular flag) and waved the flag of the Chinese Christian Evangelistic League, rarely took their eyes off him. He spoke but little and then usually an intimate word to someone near him. Then someone, moved by the occasion, burst into the first line of a hymn in Chinese (God will take care of you, Through everyday, o’er all the way) which was taken up by everybody. Stewards, travellers, dock officials and ship’s officers looked on amazed. And most amazed of all, let it be said, were a number of Roman Catholic priests returning from Rome to their stations in the Far East. I noticed two nuns attracted by the waving of the flags bearing the insignia of the Cross go into the lounge; they seemed to wonder what it was all about and certainly never identified the young Dr Sung, who looked more like a

tennis player than an evangelist.”

Through days of toil when heart doth fail,
God will take care of you;
When dangers fierce your path assail,
God will take care of you . . . y-o-u . . .

Chapter XXII

THE BLOOD PERIOD I

Feverish Work Behind the Lines

1937

When Dr Sung was in Singapore he not only told us he had fifteen years given by the Lord, but also that his life was undergoing a change every three years. William E. Schubert confirms this who heard the doctor give to each period a name — Water, Door, Dove, Blood, Tomb. As to the Blood Period, Schubert says it extended from November 1936 to 1939 which was the period wherein Japan attacked China, and China was bleeding profusely before she learnt guerilla warfare. During this time Dr Sung also bled, having fistula and bleeding bowels, until he had to cease from travel and go into the hospital in Peking. The last few times he visited Indonesia he had to preach sitting down, and the very last time he had to lie on a camp cot while he spoke.

Knowing that his days were numbered, Dr Sung pressed on resolutely in the work God committed him to do. Between February and July 1937, when the Sino-Japanese War “formally” broke out, we see the intrepid Gospel messenger advance in a South China campaign that captured inland cities beyond Swatow, such as Chaoan and Kiet Yang and inland cities beyond Amoy such as Yung Chun and Chuanchow, after a groundwork had been laid by Lim Puay Hian his disciple. He made a final loop that took in Foochow, Hockchia and Hinghwa his hometown. Wherever he went God gave him hundreds and thousands as before. Four thousand turned out in Hinghwa his hometown to hear him of whom one thousand and forty-nine surrendered to the Lord.

No sooner had he returned to his dear wife in Shanghai than he embarked on a North China campaign. Again the Lord worked mightily through him as he visited Nanking the capital when he called on Dr Chia Yu Ming, China’s doyen

theologian. From there he proceeded to Hangchow and a string of cities along the way until he reached his final destination Taiyuan, capital of Shansi Province.

In Taiyuan a tent was pitched to hold a thousand people as there was no building big enough. In this revisit of North China John Sung's message was not so much on sin as on love, for many who heard him now were born again by his previous visits. He was humble enough to admit, "When I was with you in 1933 I exerted more in the flesh. Now you can see that my emphasis is more on the spirit."

During his visit to Taiyuan an invitation was received to hold a Bible Institute in Peking, but being warned of God that war was imminent, he preferred rather to hold it in Foochow away from the frontline. The meetings in Taiyuan ended on the 5th of July, two days before the "Double Seventh," when the Marco Polo Bridge Incident in Peking ignited a prolonged conflagration that led to the Pacific War. When John Sung arrived back in Shanghai on July 7th what was bothering him at the back of his mind came true, as the evening papers splashed the news of war being declared between China and Japan.

John Sung was glad to enjoy the warmth of home with his wife and children for a fortnight this time, when he is seen rushing off again, a light Chinese suitcase in hand — to keep his Foochow appointment.

The Third Bible Institute opened, after all, in Foochow July 24th and lasted till August 9th, 1936. Apart from several hundred local auditors, again there were registered one thousand six hundred delegates like the Second Institute, but this time from only nine provinces and none from abroad, for war between China and Japan was now on. One thousand and two participants who had "done well" received certificates, in the tradition of the previous one in Amoy.

John Sung left Foochow on August 10th, arriving back in Shanghai August 12th. The same night, in the wee hours of the morning of August 13th, the ravages of war spread to Shanghai when shells from the Japanese navy outside Woosung wharf came crashing down. The Period of Blood was announced in John Sung's face. "I must hurry on." he

said to himself.

And hurry he did, to go to the interior unaffected by the fighting. So he set out to the Northwest, but en route he preached again in many a city he had ministered before. He arrived in Sian the capital of Shensi Province in October. Sian on the ancient Silk Route was first evangelised by the Nestorian missionary Alopen in 635 AD during the Tang Dynasty, but what was left of it was a monument, the famous Nestorian Tablet (781 AD). What God wants is a man, not a monument, nor a machine, and here was the man whom God sent to preach Christ all over again, deep inside China.

Rev H. W. Burdett of the English Baptist Mission was thrilled with Dr Sung's visit because it spurred up a lethargic missionary outreach. He admitted in his report on John Sung's visit to Sian that he was God's gracious gift to the Chinese to prepare them for the fiery trial that would try them, referring to the Japanese invasion and communist uprising, but a far greater trial on their heels was Mao's Cultural Revolution.

One outstanding conversion in Sian was a heavy smoker of a woman who was gloriously delivered, who became a "Bible woman" (more appropriately a missionary) to Lanchow, capital of Kansu Province. The war was a blessing in disguise in that it pushed the Gospel farther inland, not belittling the pioneering efforts of western missionaries.

After going through a dozen more towns and villages in the Northwest, where John Sung met with many hardships in travel, jostling with refugees and troops along the way, he made a long detour by way of Hankow from where he took a train south to Hong Kong. Sailing away from Hong Kong he arrived back in Shanghai January 31st, 1938 which happened to be Chinese New Year, to find his wife and three children driven out of their old home by the vicissitudes of war, to one located at "Fool's Garden" Road. "Fool's Garden" or "Wiseman's Paradise", there is no place like home! One of John Sung's famous Revival Choruses is married to the refrain of "Home Sweet Home."

Chapter XXIII

THE BLOOD PERIOD II

Doubling Up Towards the South

1938

Having settled his family in their new home Dr Sung held a retreat February 22nd–27th, 1938 for the Shanghai Preaching Bands in order to consolidate them in their faith “in times like these.”

After this he answered another call from his native province where he went preaching from town to town in the interior before coming again to Foochow for another revival campaign, April 25th to May 6th, 1938. As the war was on Dr Sung came under closer Government surveillance, who hinted that he should speak on the Christians’ duty to fight Japan. John Sung, while a patriot at heart, would not veer from the one message he had received from heaven for a lost mankind — the fires of hell are a thousand times worse than the fires of war.

Another significant event that happened to him in Foochow was his ordination. This was the consensus not only of Methodist Bishop John Gowdy but of all the missionaries and pastors from Hinghwa, and from other districts. The solemn ceremony took place on the second last day of the revival campaign, the 5th of May 1938, 9 am. “Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy with the laying on of hands of the presbytery” (I Tim 4:14). The ordination could only strengthen John Sung in his ministry, for this was the apostolic practice that set apart a man to holy service. The ordination showed Dr Sung’s brotherly submission in the Lord’s service without which a servant of the Lord would not prosper or continue for long. No doubt he was specially ordained of the Lord, but there is the ordination of the Church, to fulfil all righteousness.

Making haste Rev John Sung sped to Amoy, but alas, he

missed the boat that should take him to Hong Kong by only five minutes! His intention was to sail from Hong Kong to answer the Macedonian call of Indo-China.

Indo-China Campaign May to August 1938

On May 10th, 1938 the Japanese invasion of China spread its tentacles to Amoy. Fortunately John Sung was able to scramble up the S.S. Hong Keng which was loaded with a thousand eight hundred refugees, which managed to escape early the next morning. When the refugee ship steamed into Hong Kong Harbour on the 13th, Amoy had fallen into enemy hands.

John Sung found a ship sailing on the 20th for Haiphong, on the tip of North Indo-China. Not willing to waste any precious minute, he had the Preaching Bands of Hong Kong lined up for a five-day "spiritual-nurture" meeting at the Mun Sun College, using loud speakers to an overflowing crowd.

Arriving in Haiphong, John Sung held a preliminary meeting before going on to Hanoi and then turning south to Saigon. While the results in the north were rather limited to a few hundred, the Lord gave him great victory in Saigon, particularly in Cholon the Chinese city on the outskirts of Saigon. Two hundred and twelve souls were saved on the first night! Thirty-one yielded their lives for fulltime service and fifteen preaching bands were organised.

Kunming Sortie

From Indo-China John Sung made a quick trip by rail to the southwestern most province of Yunnan which has a common border with Vietnam, Laos and Burma. He had an appointment with its provincial capital Kunming. Although the work in Yunnan was still primitive so that evangelism was more suitable than revivalistic preaching, the impression the evangelist had left behind was a lively one. Reporting on

John Sung's ministry, Mr G.E. Metcalf of the China Inland Mission stationed in Kunming affirmed the churches in Kunming were stirred up as they never had been before. Moreover, three Lisu Christians who attended the meetings were so set on fire for God that they returned to their tribal church and stirred up a mini-revival so much so that public confession of sin was also witnessed, as well as a new zeal to evangelise the lost.

Visit to Thailand

In regard to Dr Sung's visit to Thailand, it seems best for a son of the soil, even a John Sung convert's son, to tell the story of how revival came to his own country. He is Prachan Rodruan a young Thai minister just graduated from Far Eastern Bible College, Singapore, September 1985. In his thesis on "Pioneers of Protestant Missions in Thailand" submitted in partial fulfilment of requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Theology, these are his findings on John Sung and his work in Thailand:

"In the autumn of 1938, Chinese evangelist John Sung visited Thailand. He came by private invitation, not by official Church sponsorship. Through him God sent a season of repenting to the Chinese Christians. In the large Chinese Church at Bangkok, he preached twice a day for a whole month. The morning meetings focused on Christians; the evening ones were for non-Christians. His meetings were crowded with 800-1,000 people. Many Christians rededicated their lives to God. Nominal Christians were converted. Leslie T. Lyall says there were about 700, already Christians, who professed conversion. A new spirit arose in the Chinese Church

"John Sung's impact on the Chinese was dramatic. He spoke with directness and plain speech in a high and loud voice. While preaching he would walk back and forth on the platform, or down the aisles, frequently pointing his finger at someone in the audience. He was uncompromising and often blunt in speech, but evidently anointed by God's Spirit. Wherever he spoke Holy Spirit conviction was felt.

“John Sung’s visits produced ‘considerable tension’ in both Mission and Church. His ‘Billy Sunday’ profile was accepted by the Chinese, but often criticised by foreign missionaries and the Thais. Thai decorum, quietness of spirit and ‘coolness of heart,’ were said to be offended by John Sung — a common defence against acceptance of the Gospel. Nevertheless, the Spirit of God spoke through him to the Thais, though less forcefully than to the Chinese. Dr Chinda Singhanetr believed that during John Sung’s 1939 visit the Thai Church received more blessing than the Chinese Church, but many of those revived were actually from Chinese or Siamo-Chinese backgrounds.

“While his primary audience was the Chinese he did hold Thai meetings through interpretation. Smaller crowds attended the latter. As months of itinerant visits to the Chinese and Thai churches across the Kingdom passed, a reviving strength infused the Church.

Impact of John Sung’s Ministry

“During visits in 1938 and again in 1939, entire congregations fell on their knees, wept in repentance, confessed their sins, and asked for forgiveness. Quarrels and debts were settled. Backsliders righted their lives. Christians were quickened with renewed spiritual interest in prayer, Bible study and witness. Decisions for Christ, especially among nominal believers, were crystallised. Many came forward to accept the Lord. Most of this effect fell on those who were already Christian in name. The two visits seemed to be of minor impact on the Thai Buddhists.

“Clear evidence of change in lives sparked a new zeal in evangelism. Two hundred men, women and youths joined ‘witness bands.’ These seventy evangelistic bands went out once a week to proclaim Christ in outstations, churches, and to Buddhist neighbours.

“During John Sung’s visit Sook Pongnoi, who died in 1972 (who is known to the author through the International Council of Christian Churches) was pastoring his second year at Trang Church in South Thailand. He travelled to

Bangkok to hear the Chinese evangelist. Quickened and encouraged, Pastor Sook, himself as much Chinese as Thai, invited John Sung to go to Trang Church for meetings. He agreed and the Church was set on fire for God. After the evangelist's departure, the Trang Church continued to be packed. Public Bible reading became a strong emphasis of the Church. One Sunday soon after John Sung's departure, sixteen women and five men were baptised. Twenty baptised children of Christians also publicly professed faith in Christ, and all united with the Church. The backslidden believers confessed their sin. This is typical of the effect John Sung had on the existing Churches. Though new additions were made to some congregations, few, if any, new Churches were planted. No great influx from the animistic Buddhists resulted.

“Urgent requests from the Churches, mainly non Chinese, brought John Sung back to Thailand early 1939. His itinerary included such Churches as Chiangmai, Lampang, Nakhon Pathom and Petchaburi.

“When using the term revival here, it doesn't mean evangelism. Basically revival under John Sung was the renewal of Christians, the restoration of backsliding members, and the conversion of those who claimed the name of Christ but who lacked a personal ‘born again’ experience.

Evaluation of Revival

“These revivals were timely in the history of the Thai and Chinese Churches. Many who were or who were to be key leaders in the Church were converted from their nominality during these campaigns.

“On several occasions Pastor Sook related his experiences with John Sung. This revival encounter upheld his faith and kept him turned to Christ to the end. During the testings of the War (1942–1945) Sook suffered persecutions and arrest, but always stood firm for the Lord. He visited the Churches regularly during the war. He later became a conference speaker, a keen evangelist, and a noted pastor. His name was a household word in Thai Christian homes and in many

non-Christian ones, too, because of his wide ministry. He attributed it all to God through John Sung.

“This deep work of God’s Spirit prepared the Church for the fires of testing under the nationalistic Buddhist movement of 1940–1941 and Japanese War 1941–1945.

“Martin Jarrett-Kerr says that John Sung’s ‘most spectacular work’ was among the ‘Chinese of the Dispersion.’ It no doubt strengthened the Chinese Christians to stand through the Japanese domination:” (end of Prachan research paper).

Leslie T. Lyall reports that between 1915 and 1935 the number of Church members in connection with the Presbyterian Church decreased from 8,000 to less than 7,000. Two years after Dr Sung’s visits, this Church membership had gone up to 9,000. While there is a query in Prachan’s research in regard to the above figures, it cannot be denied that a great impetus to Church growth had resulted from John Sung’s double visit. It must be recorded that prior to his first visit Lim Puay Hian, his disciple, had preceded him by stirring up great interest for revival with the Chinese Church in Bangkok in preparation for John Sung’s coming. But the story of Lim Puay Hian, John Sung’s disciple, does not end here.

In early 1941 Lim Puay Hian returned to Thailand for a second visit. Entering Thailand by train from Malaya he ministered at Haadyai where his brother (Lim Puay Ngee) later established a church. Stopping at several other towns en route to Bangkok he found opportunity to speak to Thai Christians. This ministry with the Thais in South Thailand so impressed the nationals that word soon spread to the north.

After holding a twelve-day revival campaign at the Baptist Church, Bangkok where he ministered three years ago, he was entrained northwards to Chiangmai, centre of American Presbyterian endeavours. Meetings were held both in Church and at the Theological Seminary. At three sermons a day for eight days (John Sung style) Puay Hian pounded away with sledge-hammer blows in the Spirit’s power. It was marvellous to see how when the Spirit worked, the hardest of hearts crumbled before Him. The sceptical among the missionaries also yielded to the Lord. Students were released from the day classes to attend the meetings. Of the

converts 101 joined the preaching bands founded by John Sung.

The success of Chiangmai led to further exploits and conquest of several other centres, in John Sung's steps, before Puay Hian returned to his base in Singapore.

Inasmuch as Elisha was needed to round up Elijah's work, Lim Puay Hian was undoubtedly raised of God to complement John Sung's revival ministry, particularly in Fukien Province and in Nanyang or Southeast Asia.

Chapter XXIV

THE BLOOD PERIOD III

Running the Race to the Very End

1938-1939

If Shanghai in the north where John Sung had established his base of operations since the beginning of the Door Period was most ministered unto by Dr Sung, Singapore in the south may be said to be this field headquarters. Singapore was his field headquarters by reason not only of its central location in Southeast Asia, but also of her kindred spirit towards him in Miss Leona Wu, his faithful interpreter and successor. As president of the Singapore Christian Evangelistic League which was the organised body of the preaching bands founded by John Sung, and as principal of Chin Lien Bible School which she established May 14th, 1937 to further train John Sung converts for the Lord's vineyard, she was the power, with the united support of the League, to invite the evangelist to several more campaigns after the initial one (which was under the auspices of the Inter-Church Union). Chin Lien Bible School with Miss Ng Peck Luan, Miss Wu's assistant, was a Bethany to John Sung as the house of Martha, Mary and Lazarus was for our Lord and His disciples. Indeed, this Bible School which is located at Green Lane in the suburbs, and over-shadowed by coconut palms in the midst of green meadows, was become his home away from home.

Under the auspices of the Singapore Christian Evangelistic League a ten-day convention was scheduled for October 1938 at Zion Presbyterian Church, in the vicinity of the Bible School. In these meetings fifty-one more preaching bands were formed, raising the total number to 183.

Leaving Singapore for Malaya Dr Sung revisited "K. L." the Malayan capital, Ipoh, Taiping, Sitiawan and Penang. Through Singapore God's abundant blessings by His servant were channelled to the big towns of Malaya, as it is written,

“How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace and bring glad tidings of good things” (Rom 10: 15). But at what a sacrifice of bodily strength on John Sung’s part, one who did not spare himself to witness for His Lord, without a break! In this trip to Malaya he began to feel the old ailments coming back to him. The abscess operation he had in America left a pimply scar, small though it was, which became a thorn in his flesh.

But instead of taking rest from a creeping weariness and recurring pains, Dr Sung pressed on, like one running the last leg of a race, now, to witness for His Lord in the Dutch East Indies. January 13th, 1939 saw him take an aeroplane for the first time from Singapore to Surabaya in East Java whereby his campaign for Indonesia was launched.

“Pulanglah, pulanglah!” — Coming home, Coming home (never more to roam) the first chorus the congregation was taught to sing signified the fact that in this new land of Nanyang the currency of the Malay language could not be ignored. So, for every meeting John Sung had to have two interpreters, one to translate into Hokkien or Hakka depending on the prevailing local Chinese dialect, and the other in Indonesian (a stronger strain over Peninsular Malay).

The Dutch East Indies being of a Reformed background, they who inherited a formal and reserved culture were taken aback by John Sung’s unorthodox style in preaching and praying which was uttered in a loud voice with everyone taking part. Nevertheless the power of the Gospel soon became its own credentials so that the audience adapted themselves to the preacher’s ways without much difficulty. Miss Cornelie Baarbe a Dutch missionary to Central Java, though a little sceptical at first, threw herself into the campaign with all her might.

The power of the Gospel was manifested again in a contention between two opinions, that of John Sung desiring an early morning meeting and that of the locals who felt it impractical. As the doctor had only one week for his sermons, he needed that extra morning meeting, so the people yielded. The Name of Jesus Christ was greatly magnified when these early morning meetings were fully

attended because those Chinese who were shop keepers closed down their shops and came to Church en bloc — to the amazement of everyone.

As John Sung had no energy this time to counsel between meetings, he asked all those who desired prayer to write their testimonies and submit them with a passport size photo attached. But he did not relent in his daily private devotions, getting up between 4 and 5 am, reading eleven chapters of his Bible on bend knees as always.

Neither did Dr Sung relent in getting his converts organised into preaching bands for he saw that in a great archipelago like the Dutch East Indies, with its teeming multi-millions, unless the saved ones went out to look for the unsaved, how could the task be done? Besides the preaching bands he appealed the more for fulltime consecrators as he did everywhere before. Though he was tired of body, he continued to pray for the sick. One woman from Miss Baarbe's parish who had a grave illness was cured who thus became a ready helper to the missionary in gratitude for the Lord's healing touch upon her sick body.

From Surabaya Dr Sung pursued his course, running resolutely his home stretch, faster and faster, taking on Madiun and Solo, the twin cities in the heart of the cultural centre of Java, Bandung and finally Batavia (Jakarta) the capital city. In Batavia the old Portuguese Church was filled with two thousand people every night, from which about five hundred were converted to Christ. The Dutch missionaries were amazed with the results and commented that the Pentecost that was brought by John Sung was like the revival in Wales. Besides the converts, forty-six Bible study groups were organised. This first campaign to the Dutch East Indies was concluded at the end of March when he was totally exhausted, which obliged him to sail back to Shanghai for a well-earned rest.

But his heart became restless again the moment he felt well enough to run, so by May 18th, 1939 he appeared in Singapore again to take part in the first graduation exercises of Chin Lien Bible School. (Chin Lien means Gold Chain, which name was chosen by Miss Wu according to Song of Solomon 4:9). Simultaneously he had a special two-day

conference with the Evangelistic League at which he exhorted members as follows:-

- I 1. Do not cease from your monthly fellowship meetings.
 2. Be united and be “replenished with oil” if you are to shine for Christ.
 3. Be united in finance as proof of your unity in Christ.
 4. Monthly meetings of members should not exceed two hours. Participants in the presentation of items in song or testimony should come well prepared. Light refreshments should be served to promote closer fellowship.
- II Branches of the League should not go on their own without consultation with the leaders. Special attention must be paid to the choice of speakers, lest modernists and liberals infiltrate the flock. “To starve will not die, to eat poison will die!”
- III Establishment of Preaching Stations. These should be named after the district in which they are located, and should remain independent and self-reliant. The establishment of preaching stations is to win more souls for Christ.
- IV The copyright to John Sung Choruses is given to the Singapore Christian Evangelistic League.

Between May and August Dr Sung made a final trip to Malaya, holding more campaigns in the major cities and in Penang.

Keeping his promise to return to the Dutch East Indies Dr Sung made a direct route to Batavia the capital city, August 10th, 1939, reappearing first in the old Portuguese Church. Again he received a tumultuous welcome, especially from the Chinese community. A rich towkay (proprietor) from Buitenzorg (Bogor) being enamoured by the doctor, though not a Christian, presented him with an envelope containing money. Seeing through this man that he had not yet received Christ, he rejected the gift outright, which was a great loss of face for the opulent inquirer, but the evangelist did this not

out of discourtesy, but rather with the earnest desire to bring him to the Lord in repentance.

When John Sung came to Bogor for the next campaign his host, perhaps with the above incident in mind, asked of the doctor what was the secret of his success. To which he replied, "Beware of money, beware of women, and beware of self-will, lest you walk outside of the Lord's will. If it is God's will, He will see to it all the way."

Owing to some Immigration formalities Dr Sung was delayed from going to Bogor for his next campaign, but this served the higher purpose of God to get a tent seating 2,000 erected, for there was no church in town able to take so many. Despite much pain and discomfort Dr Sung preached with greater power so that when the invitations were given a total of nine hundred came to the Lord, weeping in repentance.

From Bogor Dr Sung pressed on to the northern port of Cheribon (Tjirebon) and from Cheribon to Semarang when again the attendance, mostly Chinese, exceeded a thousand. Pressing on farther eastwards in volcanic country, he preached in Magelang and at Poerworedjo and then at Djocja (Djocjakarta), the centre of Javanese culture, the famous Borobudur situated in its vicinity. After revisiting Solo he reached the climax of this expedition by coming back to Surabaya, his previous port of entry to Java.

When Dr Sung arrived he found a mat shed erected which could take in 4,000 which reminded him of both the Amoy and Taiwan Pentecosts. Here was to be held a ten-day All-Java Bible School, September 19th to 29th. Apart from a total turnout of Christians in Surabaya to this mammoth meeting, two thousand from all over Java, from every city visited by the evangelist, converged to hear Dr Sung for the last time. On this occasion Dr Sung taught the Book of Mark, the purpose of it being to train the 635 Preaching Bands how to witness to the millions around them. These 635 Bands were recruited from a total of 4,000 souls saved.

In the evening the mat shed erected for 4,000 was found to be too small. At least 5,000 representing many races and languages were attracted to the meetings because John Sung preached none other doctrine than Jesus Christ and Him

crucified, risen and coming again. Yes, the last meeting was reserved for the proclamation of the Second Coming of Christ. Before our Lord's Coming the evangelist warned of many sufferings, even of wars, which was prophetically fulfilled in a couple of years. Dutch missionaries who stood aloof when John Sung came the first time now threw in their lot heartily with the evangelist which was to their own good and to the glory of God.

Having received invitations from Celebes and Ambon in the Moluccas, Dr Sung boarded a ship at Surabaya September 30th, 1939 when he was sent off by hundreds of well-wishers, which reminded him of Singapore. For the call had come first from Macassar (Ujung Pandang) in the Celebes (Sulawesi) where there were Chinese churches and a big Chinese community. Macassar was where Dr R. A. Jaffray of the Christian and Missionary Alliance and Rev Leland Wang had established the headquarters of the Chinese Overseas Missionary Union which appointed Rev Jason Linn and Rev Paul Lenn of Pioneering in Dyak Borneo fame to the interior of East Borneo.

From Macassar the intrepid messenger of God made the last leg of his marathon to Ambon in the Moluccas, beyond which are the wild tribes of New Guinea. Settled by the Dutch in the very early days of colonisation the population had become nominally Christian. Holding to a stiff Dutch tradition some of the Church leaders in Ambon were prejudiced against Dr Sung and his methods, particularly laying hand on the sick. In spite of opposition, the Lord gave His servant resounding victory in this his final run to the Indies.

Returning to his "field headquarters" in Singapore on November 13th, 1939, Dr Sung spoke to the members of three Fukienese Churches at the Foochow Methodist Church, not knowing this was his farewell message to the whole of Singapore. During a week's meetings he registered another three hundred forty-nine conversions with the forming of twenty-one more preaching bands. When the week's meetings were concluded, he made his last trip to Malaya where he preached in the inland mountain town of Bentong on the other side of the famous Fraser's Hills. From Bentong

he went on to Klang and from Klang to Penang.

When he returned to Singapore to embark for Shanghai he lovingly promised to return in 1940, but that was the last we saw of him.

“I’ll go where you want me to go, dear Lord,
O’er mountain or plain or sea;
I’ll say what You want me to say, dear Lord,
I’ll be what You want me to be.”

E. YEARS OF SECLUSION

Chapter XXV

THE TOMB PERIOD

1940-1944

If there is anyone who can unashamedly say with the Apostle Paul; "Neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus to testify of the Gospel of the grace of God" (Acts 20:24), it is none other than John Sung — "the Flame for God in the Far East." When John Sung threw his degrees and medals into the ocean on the eve of his arrival back in China and stepped out by faith to serve the Lord in November 1927, the Lord had already indicated to him he would have fifteen years of service with changing periods of three clearly marked out. Throughout all these years of service it was an upward treading of the Way of the Cross, but, with the Apostle Paul, despite many sufferings and oppositions, he had looked to Jesus his Saviour, so that he could finish his course with joy.

Though John Sung returned from the Dutch East Indies and from Singapore where he preached his last to Shanghai January 18th, 1940, totally sick and exhausted, which required him to undergo surgery, he still looked fondly to the South as he had promised. It was this ever upward and onward look that lifted him out of the miry clay, so that when a request was made to him by Grace Church in Shanghai to conduct meetings on the occasion of its Inauguration he did not shy away from it. And still with that fiery spirit of a prophet in him (though he was indisposed) he started the service with a loud bang on the pulpit to silence the droning of an irreverent crowd. "Is this a Church or a theatre?" he thundered. Having silenced the audience at one stroke, he announced his text from I Thess 5:2: "The Day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night." When he made an appeal for salvation at the close of the message was he not elated to see ninety odd hands coming forward to receive Christ? But the audience did not realise it was with

great pain within that he kept on preaching to the last. When he reached home, he collapsed and that was the last of the last.

On November 15th, 1940 the old wounds in his body erupted again, so much so that he was advised to go for treatment at the Peking Union Medical College, China's most prestigious medical institution. The patient had delayed on too many an occasion, but by December 4th, Dr Sung acquiesced to embark for Peking, leaving wife and children in Shanghai. Realising he had entered the Tomb Period of his life, he remarked, "All this while I have been praying for others. Now others must pray for me."

At the Peking Union Medical College he was diagnosed for cancer and tuberculosis. On December 24th, 1940 he underwent a first operation. Two weeks after the operation he addressed a letter dated January 6th 1941 to Miss Leona Wu and the Evangelistic Leagues in Nanyang (Southeast Asia) as follows:

"Though I am lying on my sick bed I cease not to pray for you every morning.

"My passport for Nanyang was all ready last November to enable me to continue in the work I've not finished. But the British mail boat did not come though I waited day after day. In the meantime I answered the call to preach for seven days at Grace Church (Shanghai), November 10th to 16th. How did I know that my old sickness would erupt! It got worse day after day. So, on December 4th Mr Chang Chou Hsin, president of the Tientsin Evangelistic League, came to take me to Peking. On the day of departure, I was running a temperature of 101°. By God's mercies we arrived in Peking safely and on December 9th I was admitted to Peking Union Medical College Hospital.

"The doctor's diagnosis discouraged me. Nevertheless, I underwent a successful operation on the morning of December 24th. Now two weeks have flown, but I might have to go through another. Thanks be to God, He has put me through the sufferings of the cross, yea, even of a long duration. However, I believe all things come of God. Though I may not understand now, I shall know later. Whenever I go through the suffering, I look to the Cross, from which I

derive a power to go through my own cross. When will this sickness leave me? I can't tell now. I hope you all will pray the more with tears and cryings that my duration of suffering might be shortened.

"I feel the Lord's coming is near. Let us prepare for the Rapture. But these grinding sufferings are necessary to take away our dross, so that we might face our Lord without fear. Though in the sight of men I'm somebody, being His servant, I can only shut my mouth to Him after going through the baptism of fire. I'm humbled to the dust. There's nothing to boast about, save in the Cross of Christ. Since I have undergone such long suffering I feel it is not good to remain on earth. If I should live on to preach the Gospel, that no doubt is good, but to depart and be with the Lord is far better!

"Before this I would preach on the Rapture, but in my heart I did not really look up to this. Now, when I think of the Rapture, I yearn thirstily for it.

"You who live in Nanyang no doubt are surrounded by worldly temptations, and there are the tribulations of the flesh. May you cleanse your hearts from all worldly lusts.

"The day gets darker and darker for me from now. I can only wait for the Light to come. May the Lord preserve you till He comes.

"As I have no opportunity to write to every Evangelistic League, I write only this one. Please pray for me, always. Jehovah-Shalom.

"This letter is dictated from my sick-bed in Peking Union Medical College Hospital."

*Sung Shang Chieh, the
least of the Lord's servants.
January 6th, 1941.*

On January 28th, 1941 he went through a second operation. During this confinement Dr Sung wrote another letter dated April 28th, 1941 to Miss Leona Wu and the Christian Evangelistic Leagues of Nanyang (Southeast Asia):-

"I have not written for some time because I have not

heard from you. Let me report to you the latest, that you might pray more often for me before His Throne of Grace. I believe the sufferings I've gone through are beneficial to you. I have gone under the surgeon's scalpel twice, and it is now three months since the second operation. All the wound mouths have healed, except for a small one which has persisted for a month. Last week it was discovered there is more fistula that needs surgery to complete the cure.

"It is five months from December 9th to date. This is a long rest. During this period there have been many trials and pains, which gave me much discouragement. Now that these trials are over, as I look back, they are truly God's mercies and grace.

"Thanks be to God, He has put me into a hospital cold and stark in this northern region, as it were shutting me up in a tomb, that I might get closer to Him. By His great love I have received many precious messages. Never in all my life have I undergone such a testing, such an indescribable testing.

"Beloved brothers and sisters, the Day of the Lord is at hand. That Man of Sin, the son of perdition, is soon to be revealed. The fearful scene of Rev 13 is beginning to unfold before us. Be patient and faithful if you are to conquer. While the Beast will control the world and the world receiving his mark will marvel at the Beast and worship him, we can easily identify his mark. Our insignia is the cross. Their insignia is a metamorphosed cross. Do you see it? Without this mark no one can buy or sell. No one can take any profit. So, brothers and sisters, if there are still among you those who love the world with its money and fame, when the world will worship the Beast you will be caught in it. Prepare to suffer in the steps of our Saviour, who left behind Him footprints of suffering that those who love His appearing may follow in His steps.

"They are:- 1) Steps of poverty. Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nest, but He found no place in the inn save a manger for his body, though angels brought good tidings. Lord, we will lie down with you without a pillow, but we have a resting place for You in our heart!

2) Steps of refuge. You had to escape to Egypt in a cold

dark night soon after Your holy birth, taking refuge in an alien country from Satan's murderous clutch. O God, show us how to follow in His fugitive steps.

3) Steps of hiding. See how the Lord of Creation has hid Himself in the person of a labouring carpenter, earning little money, a friend daily to his insensitive tools, to his saws and knife blades and blocks of wood. All the money He had earned by blood and sweat were given to His mother to bring up a brood of orphans. O God! Give us patience to follow our Lord in these hidden steps!

4) Steps of waiting. When He patiently waited for God until John was cast into prison, He had already undergone the Wilderness Temptation, whereby He passed the test of holiness before He came forth to preach the Gospel. O God! Help us patiently follow our Lord in the steps of waiting.

5) Steps into No-Man's Land. Often we think of working in big cities and towns. As for our Lord He laboured for years in Galilee among the village folks. He used the simplest parables to expound the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. Thus He made those sitting in darkness and death to see a great light. In the wilderness He made miracle bread. By the lonely Jacob's well He preached the Wonderful Word of living waters to a woman. O God! Help us follow the Lord humbly to No-Man's Land.

6) Steps unknown to men. Praise the Lord, He did not preach in a big church, nor did He advertise big. He preached in Peter's little cottage to those who thirsted for the Word. Moreover He raised a paralytic and in an off-the-track spot in Syria. He praised a Canaanite woman for her faith. He opened the eyes of a blind man outside Bethsaida village. At the Pool of Bethesda He healed another paralytic of thirty-eight years and left the scene immediately. O God! Help us follow the Lord to No-Man's Land.

7) Steps up the Mountain. We are afraid of ghosts at night. We dare not go up the mountain. But He often climbed a hill at night to pray. He prayed a whole night before He ordained twelve disciples. He prayed on the mountain to avoid the multitude who wanted to make Him king. At the fourth watch He secretly led three disciples up

the mountain to hold a Bible class with them. He showed them the mystery of the Cross and the glory to come. We do not have time to relate many another mountain experience, such as the Sermon on the the Mount and the Mandate from the Mount. O God! Help us follow Thee in Thy footsteps up the mountain.

8) Steps of great risk of life to save souls. After a terrible storm, He came to a graveyard where He saved one possessed of a devil. He also walked on the sea at midnight in order to render help to the twelve rowing lonesome in a little boat. On a crowded road He took pains to push His way through to Jairus' house to raise his dead daughter. O God! Help us tread the steps of One who risked His life to save souls.

9) Steps of being misunderstood. Oftentimes the steps He took were misunderstood by the people. Why did He enter Matthew's house to eat with publicans and sinners? Why did He enter Zacchaeus' home to stay with a rich man? Why did He eat in a Pharisee's home and allow His feet to be washed by the tears of a harlot? Why did He delay two days before He came to Bethany to raise one He loved? Why did He allow Mary to break the alabaster box of precious ointment? Why did He preach to another harlot alone by a well? Why? O God! Help us walk a holy path in His steps of being misunderstood.

10) Steps of being detested. At Nazareth Synagogue where He preached He was almost pushed down a cliff. At various other places where He preached He was not applauded but stoned instead. These were steps of being detested.

11) Steps of drinking the bitter cup. We all like to drink the sweet. He drank only the bitter, the bitterest of cups, in Gethsemane, willingly. O God! Help us walk in the steps of drinking the bitter cup.

12) Steps of being abandoned. His own brothers thinking He was mad did not believe Him. His beloved disciple sold Him and that disciple who obtained highest marks denied Him. On the night He was betrayed the disciples whom He had painstakingly trained for years left Him, but God stood by to strengthen Him. O God! Help us walk in the steps of

being abandoned.

13) Steps of fulfilling God's will. Whenever He met with suffering He would encourage Himself with words of promise from Scripture. He gladly obeyed to do anything so long as He fulfilled the Will of God. Whether He was betrayed by Judas, or taken into custody in the Garden, be it ever so bitter, He was willing if that was to fulfil Scripture.

14) Steps of being falsely accused. After He was arrested and tried before the Tribunal, He was falsely accused, but He said not a word in reply. Before Pilate He was declared innocent and yet He was to be crucified. He remained silent like a sheep led to the slaughter. O God! Help us walk in the steps of the falsely accused.

15) Steps to Golgotha. What a Via Dolorosa! He plodded on, step by step, until He reached the hilltop. There He was hung on a cross to bear our sins. Thanks be to God, He has left behind many more of his footprints which I cannot pen. Nevertheless, His footsteps, steps of bitter suffering, had fulfilled the will of God. Let us follow the Lord in His steps in order to see His Resurrection power and the glory of the Rapture. Thanks be to God, He will lead us in these steps that we might conquer through Him, leaving behind that sweet fragrance.

“Dearly beloved brothers and sisters, be Christians in these end-times! Unless we firmly follow the Lord, persevering in the way, we will surely fail. Now, my time is up. Here comes my food and my secretary has to go. I have many more things to say, but May the Loving Saviour be with you always, unto the end of the world.”

Emmanuel

*Dictated by the Lord's servant
through the pen of Hsu Han Ming
April 28, 1941.*

He was confined in hospital for the next six months.

On June 7th he left hospital, and on July 3rd he moved to his new abode at *Hsiang Shan* or “Fragrant Hill.” But no

sooner was he settled in than word came from Shanghai of the death of Joshua his only living son. Must misery tread upon one another's heel? Surely this son in whom he had great hopes that he would follow in his steps was now a total loss! But, like Job, he quietly submitted to His Higher Will. "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away: blessed be the name of the Lord." (Job 1:21).

Rallying his spirits during this Period of convalescence he gathered around him a few sisters in the Lord to begin a deeper Bible study and prayer ministry. By August 26th Mrs Sung and their three daughters (minus son Joshua) had moved up to Peking. During this time the Lord's servant had composed fifteen new hymns and written nineteen open letters addressed to Church and Evangelistic League leaders in China and Southeast Asia.

Of the nineteen open letters he had written, here's his last addressed to Miss Leona Wu and the Evangelistic Leagues of Nanyang dated October 9th, 1941, two months before the outbreak of the Pacific War, when all overseas communications were cut off. In this last epistle Dr Sung writes:

"I have not written for two months. I'm sure you are waiting for my news while earnestly praying for me. Since I sent you the first letter after coming up the hill, I've not ceased to pray daily for you. May the Lord raise up among members of the Evangelistic Leagues in Nanyang, many, many workers to accomplish the work of the Father in these last days. Would that every member of the Preaching Bands become a worker for God.

"Oftentimes we put our hopes in the educated, in the knowledgeable, in the honourable, to lead us. But what God has chosen are the weak, the lowly, the uneducated, from our midst—the lay people to labour for Him in these end-times. The Father will establish His power through the lips of infants and from those who suck. The Father did not use those mighty warriors to kill Goliath; nor those encumbered with steel armour and bronze helmet to defeat Goliath. He used one who was despised even by his own brothers, but his heart was single, fully trusting the Lord. He was David who had close communion with his Lord. He picked five stones, despised by the people. What are the five

stones? They are five truths: To suffer with Christ, to crucify with Christ, to bury with Christ, to rise with Christ, to ascend with Christ! With these five stones we have more than enough to kill Goliath. So we can boast of nothing, but the Lord. We can boast only of our weakness, and the mighty power of the Cross, the mysterious working of the Holy Spirit and His clear testimony, the hope to come.

“While praying on the hill here, the Holy Spirit clearly told me, the Father will do a new thing in these end-times—He will open up rivers in barren high places and springs in the valleys, turning the desert into a pool, dry places into fountains. I pray God to give me a deep spiritual understanding that I may know I’m all emptiness, all barren. Not only zero, but failure, that I may be ‘poor in spirit’. Not only a failure, but totally dried up, like the desert.

“Before the Father works a great revival, He must give us a deep thirst. During this time of spiritual thirst many put their trust in some revivalist and his preaching. They put their trust in a shot in the arm that brings revival for a little season, like Hagar’s bottle of water that will not last but a few weeks. These people are not satiated, then how can they satiate others? Now let us come to the fountain of living waters which gives an endless supply. The Lord is that fountain. ‘Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out.’ He will be satisfied.

“I wish every member of the Evangelistic League will become a member of a Prayer League. In no time Nanyang will turn to Christ. If every Band, consisting of five or seven, will meet once a week and pray in the Spirit and kneel before the Throne of Grace, then let them ‘open up their coffin’ to let His precious blood wash them clean. After this let them read a chapter of the Bible for meditation under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and pray in the context of that Scripture on rotation, every one according to the light he has received. This will be a mutual help to prayer. This is like washing one another’s feet, edifying one another, loving one another. Praying for one another, we bear one another’s burdens and sorrows, comfort one another, share with one another. The more we pray in this manner the more we love one another, the more we are united. It will result in your

need of me and in my need of you, so that we all will become one in the Lord, never to separate till death. When we attain such taste for prayer we will pray not only once a week, but once every day, and if we pray three hours per session, it will not be too long. At that stage you won't worry about your food. The sweetness of prayer in the Spirit transcends every other sweetness. Those who have tasted this sweetness naturally have no desire for the cinema, mahjong, gossip, novels, gambling. If one hundred of the Preaching Bands of Nanyang will attain to that sweetness of praying, they will win the whole of Nanyang to Christ. This is not some ideal, but a reality I've experienced up the hill here. I have been praying for ninety-eight days with a band of brothers and sisters. We pray sometimes for five or six hours at a stretch and this does not seem too long. The more we pray the more we love the Lord, the more we are united. The more we pray, the more we know the Father's will. The more we pray, the more happy, the more rested, the more we long for the Lord and the more we want to linger in prayer. The more we pray, the more our heart is set aflame, the more we understand one another, love one another. The more we pray, the more we find the zest for prayer, the more we die to self, to the world, the more we see our own weakness and become humbled. May you practise this prayer life. If every Preaching Band can pray in the Spirit it will be preserved until that Day. It will not be a Band in name only. If every Church has such a Praying Band it will more than revive that Church.

“On July 28th, little Joshua (Heaven's Will) left this world. He was our only male child from God, who used him as a type. According to Revelation 12, the great Red Dragon who hated the man-child would want to eat him up. But God the Father brought him to hide in His throne, lest he be swallowed. Now the Evangelistic League is a son of God and Satan who hates him tries his level best to eat him up. He uses science, rudiments of learning, law, tradition to catch him. The son of God the Father need to go to the throne of grace daily to hide, to pray always.

“On the Mount of Olives the Lord saw what Satan would do in the last days, so He told His disciples, ‘Watch and

pray, lest ye enter into temptation.' Without prayer even the elect would fall into temptation. When the power of darkness ruled supreme, see how our Lord asked His three disciples to pray together in the Garden of Gethsemane. The Lord prayed with all His might till his face was covered with sweat. The Lord prayed on till an angel came down to strengthen Him. I have seen how the Evangelistic League has failed many years — it has stressed on work and not on prayer. So their work in the past did not find acceptance with God. For these failures God has used my sickness these two years to lead me up the hill, that I might see the importance of prayer, the sweetness of spiritual communion, the great importance of communing with God.

“Though I cannot return to Nanyang, I can only correspond with you on what I have experienced in the spirit to console you.

“On August 26th my whole family moved up from Shanghai to the hill. The Lord took care of them all the way. Our Shanghai home is temporarily under the care of Sister Chien, who takes charge of all my correspondence. My body is improving day by day, though the wound-mouth still leaves a small opening. It seems God has purposely left a thorn in my flesh to train me deeper in prayer, that I might enter deeper into His abiding.

“The weather has changed these few days, and has caused me to weaken. Today I have improved a little, so I take this opportunity to write. I remember your love for me in the Lord.

“In my recent prayers, God has required me to rent a place at Hsiang Shan (Fragrant Hill) to open a North China Spiritual Training School. I have two co-workers in Miss Pih and Miss Liu. They help out in this School. Please pray for all this. May God use this Spiritual Training School to nurture many workers to serve Him according to His will. Amen.

“Working together in love, we have unity in spirit.”

Dictated by John in the bosom of the Lord.

As summer yielded to autumn John Sung began to regain his stamina so that he could stroll the neighbouring hills in the glory of golden leaves turning into vermillion and from vermillion to crimson. As he beheld a cloudless sky in the evening sun how he yearned for the Son of God to break through the blue as he began to look for Him more and more. For that was his testimony during the Tomb Period against the times he was so bent on his work.

As he had now all the time to himself, he began to compose his Bible Allegories. Gathering his friends in evening family worship he would spin out these Allegories as he felt moved by the Spirit. The purpose of these Allegories was to stress the importance of building up the Church and nurturing workers for the harvest fields. In the Bible Allegories published in July 1951 Mrs Sung said in the Preface, "These Bible Allegories are the result of God's Word infused in Dr Sung's life, who coupled his understanding of the Bible with the spiritual experiences he had gained during over one decade of service." Through these Allegories he wanted to nurture a generation of workers who are crucified with Christ and risen with Him as the only effective means to accomplish the work of the Lord. All these themes are woven into the Allegories, but the Cross remains the centre of all his thoughts.

Gaining more strength in the new year of 1942 he declared the informal Bible classes he had been holding to constitute "Grace Hall." "Students" could come and go freely, but should stay not more than six months. During this period he had visits from Mr Wang Ming Tao and Pastor David Yang Shao-tang as well as from Rev Wang Chao-Hsiang who was born again under his ministry. Despite Peking being under Japanese occupation, the Lord so watched over his flock that they enjoyed a good measure of religious freedom.

Meanwhile Japan had bombed Pearl Harbour and thus embroiled the United States in the Pacific War. Insofar as Southeast Asia was concerned, one by one of the countries visited by the Lord's herald fell into Japanese hands. How the pastor-at-large for Nanyang must have prayed for his flocks scattered over these farflung territories, from Burma on the West to the Moluccas in the East, from Hong Kong in

the north to Surabaya in the South.

A downturn in his health occurred in the Spring of 1943 so that he was sent to Tientsin for a third operation on March 27th. There he stayed under observation for three months before he was returned to "Fragrant Hill," Peking. Realizing that he had outlived the fifteen years given him and the seven years since his father told him in a dream, he continued to be a faithful undershepherd of Jesus Christ by praying for all his sheep. He received a constant stream of visitors who came from all parts of China to bless him as well as to be blessed. In June 1944 his health began to deteriorate rapidly so that his family had to send him to hospital again — this time to the German Hospital in Peking where a last operation was performed. Now let Mrs Sung continue the story as she narrates it in a letter addressed to Miss Leona Wu and the Singapore Evangelistic League, dated December 23rd, 1945, after the end of World War II when communications between Peking and Singapore were restored.

She says "After he was returned to 'Fragrant Hill' from the German Hospital, the 1st day of July 1944, his condition became worse and worse. At one critical moment on August 16th he summoned his colleagues to tell them about their Bible study and how they should carry on the work. Addressing his close associates in Grace Hall he intimated, 'Do not take it I will recover from this illness. I have prayed to the Father and He has shown me I must leave this world.' This indicates the Lord had made it clear to him.

"On the morning of the 17th, his condition became even more acute, for he lapsed into a coma. Many gathered to seek the Lord with earnest pleading and tears, so that he began to be himself again. As soon as he regained consciousness, he called all who had come to retreat at Grace Hall to receive further instructions: 1) Those of you who come to this Hill to pray and study the Bible must have an objective; 2) Pray, pray, pray. Our work henceforth is to pray. 3) No one should stay here more than six months after which he must go down from this Hill to work. I have many more words to say, but this pain in my leg irks me. I have no more

strength to speak. Now may you all return.” He remained all right to the afternoon hours. At five o’clock the next morning his condition took a sudden downturn. At 7.07 am on the 18th day of August the Lord took him, releasing him from his earthly tabernacle and sorrows. He left with a smile on his face, indicating he had found rest in the Lord’s bosom. He was encoffined the same afternoon. The funeral service was conducted at Grace Hall, 51 South Garrison, Fragrant Hill. Those who came to say farewell comprised various Church leaders and delegates from the Evangelistic Leagues, numbering three hundred. He was laid to rest at the cemetery and on the 1st October 1944 a tombstone was erected over his grave. His coffin, made from a fragrant wood, and his grave, were all provided by the Lord, Jehovah Jireh. His body lies but a stone’s throw from the main road, a spot where my husband was wont to wander and to ponder”

Now the minister who officiated the farewell service to Dr John Sung was Mr Wang Ming Tao. He spoke from Jeremiah 1:4–19 applying it to the Lord’s servant, a Jeremiah raised up of God for this age. John Sung was one prophet God had raised up for the Chinese Church for such a time as this. Like the Apostle Paul he had preached the Word, instant in season, out of season. He had fought a good fight, he had finished his course, he had kept his faith. Henceforth there was laid up for him a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge shall give him at that day. Amen and Amen.

It is not death to die —
 To leave this weary road,
 And 'mid the brotherhood on high
 To be at home with God.

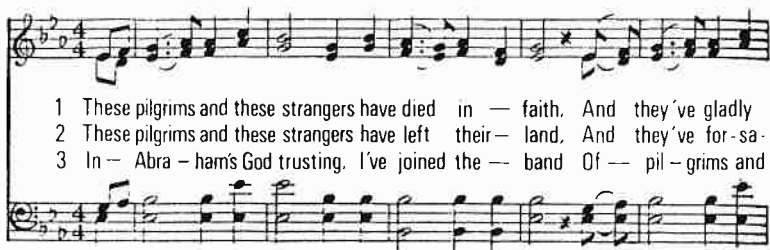
It is not death to close
 The eye long dimmed by tears,
 And wake in glorious repose.
 To spend eternal years.

It is not death to fling
 Aside this sinful dust,
 And rise on strong exulting wing,
 To live among the just.

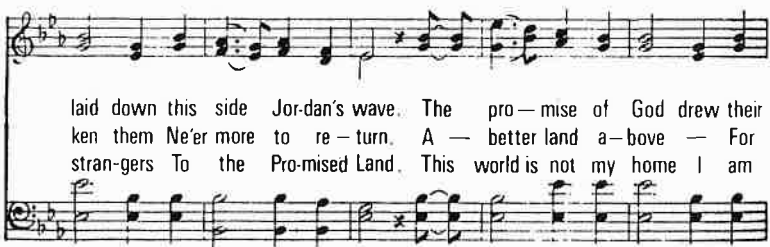
Jesus Thou Prince of Life,
 Thy chosen cannot die,
 Like Thee, he conquers in the strife,
 To reign with Thee on high.

The Pilgrims' Home Sweet Home

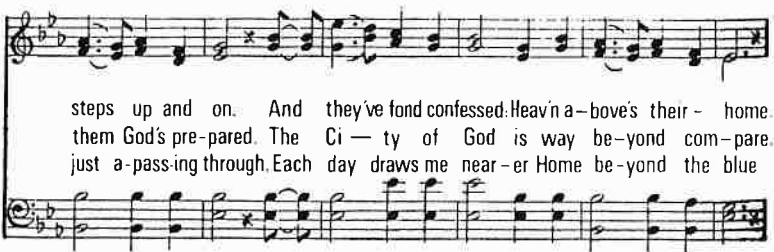
by Rev Timothy Tow



1 These pilgrims and these strangers have died in — faith. And they've gladly
2 These pilgrims and these strangers have left their — land. And they've for — sa —
3 In — Abra — ham's God trusting. I've joined the — band Of — pil — grims and

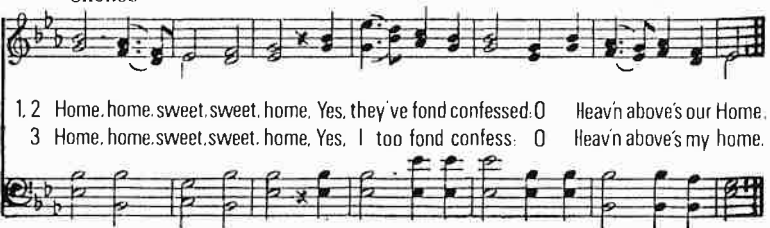


laid down this side Jor — dan's wave. The pro — mise of God drew their
ken them Ne'er more to re — turn. A — better land a — bove — For
stran — gers To the Pro — mised Land. This world is not my home I am



steps up and on. And they've fond confessed: Heav'n a — bove's their — home.
them God's pre — pared. The Ci — ty of God is way be — yond com — pare.
just a — pass — ing through. Each day draws me near — er Home be — yond the blue

CHORUS

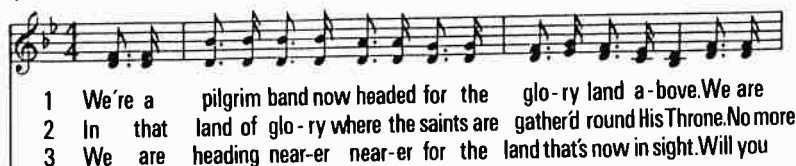


1, 2 Home, home, sweet, sweet, home, Yes, they've fond confessed: O Heav'n above's our Home.
3 Home, home, sweet, sweet, home, Yes, I too fond confess: O Heav'n above's my home.

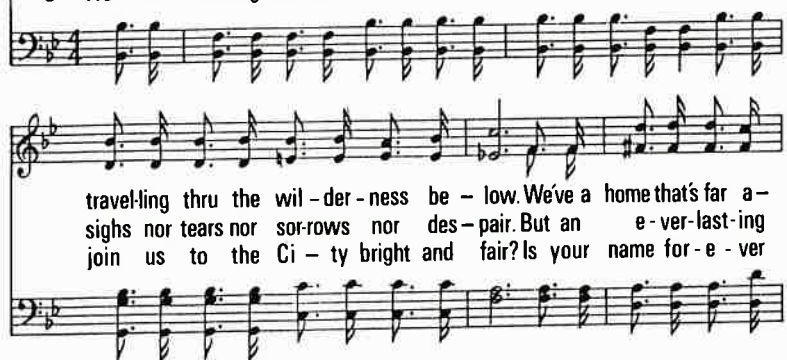
In the New Jerusalem

T. Tow

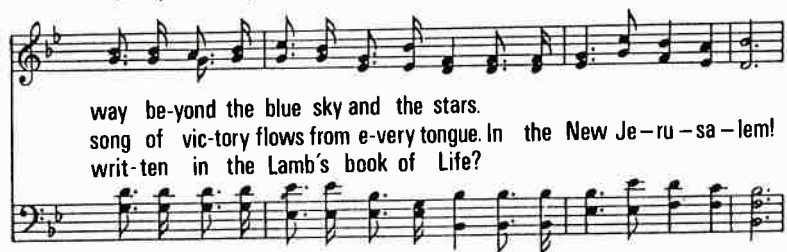
Bethel Hymns



1 We're a pilgrim band now headed for the glo-ry land a-bove. We are
2 In that land of glo-ry where the saints are gatherd round His Throne. No more
3 We are heading near-er near-er for the land that's now in sight. Will you



travel-ling thru the wil-der-ness be-low. We've a home that's far a-
sighs nor tears nor sor-rows nor des-pair. But an e-ver-last-ing
join us to the Ci-ty bright and fair? Is your name for-e-ver



way be-yond the blue sky and the stars.
song of vic-tory flows from e-very tongue. In the New Je-ru-sa-lem!
writ-ten in the Lamb's book of Life?

Chorus



Hal-le-lu-jahs fill the heavens For the saints have all come home



To Je - ru - sa - lem! To Je - ru - sa - lem!

F. CONCLUSION

Joy-ful - ly they shout Ho-sannas Come and crown Him King of Kings!

In the New — — — Je-ru - sa - lem!

The musical score consists of two systems. Each system has a vocal line on a treble clef staff and a piano accompaniment on a bass clef staff. The key signature is one flat (B-flat major). The first system contains the lyrics 'Joy-ful - ly they shout Ho-sannas Come and crown Him King of Kings!'. The second system contains the lyrics 'In the New — — — Je-ru - sa - lem!'. The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note bass line and chords in the right hand.

Heavenly Melodies

Timothy Tow



- 1 There is a hap-py land far a-way, Far 'bove the blue,
- 2 Come a-way, come a-way to this Land, O don't de-lay!
- 3 Won-der-ful, won-der-ful, this new Land, Far 'bove the blue.



Where saints in glo-ry stand, bright as day, Prais-ing the Lord God Tri-une.
Come join us, this Christian Pil-grim band, O don't be left in the way!
Hap-py our days on earth as in Heav'n, When Christ our life has made new.



Where saints in glo-ry stand, bright as day, Prais-ing the Lord God Tri-une.
Come join us, this Christian Pil-grim band, On-ward and up-ward a-way...
Hap-py our days on earth as in Heav'n, When Christ our life has made new.



Hal-le-lu-jah, hal-le-lu-jah, I can hear them sing.
Hal-le-lu-jah, hal-le-lu-jah, Hark how sweet they sing.
Hal-le-lu-jah, hal-le-lu-jah, Raise our voice and sing.



Chapter XXVI

CONCLUSION

Dr John Sung died on August 18th, 1944 one year before the conclusion of the Second World War. When news of his passing began to spread to Nanyang, to us who live in Southeast Asia, we who are his disciples gathered lovingly to commemorate one who had shown us the Way of Life Everlasting and totally changed our view of life, so that those who gave up a selfish worldly ambition numbered literally by the thousands — out of several hundred thousand turned to Christ in repentance.

In remembering him further a commemorative stone tablet is laid in the hallway of the new wing of Chin Lien Bible Seminary, Singapore which briefly tells the story of God's servant.

At another sanctuary of God's House, viz., Calvary Bible-Presbyterian Church, Pandan Gardens, Singapore, John Sung is remembered by the sign, "John Sung Memorial Chapel," written over its entrance.

But a greater monument (and a living one) than the stone tablet are the books written on the life and work of John Sung, according to Hebrews 13:7, which says, "Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God, whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation (way of life)." The standard work in English is by Leslie T. Lyall and in Chinese by Liu Yih Ling. William E. Schubert, missionary friend of John Sung, came out with a booklet, "I Remember John Sung" which was entrusted to this author for publication in 1976. What need is there for the addition of this book to the above three, and to a host of articles published in various magazines both Chinese and English?

The writing of this book was never planned nor dreamed of. It all arose so suddenly in October 1984 from a question put to this writer by his doctor brother over the phone: "Do you know that 1985 will be the Golden Jubilee, the 50th year of John Sung's coming to Singapore? There should be a

good programme planned to commemorate that great event." To which came this spontaneous reply, "As for me, I must write a book to retell the story of his life." The prompting must have come from the Lord!

But there is another reason why I must write this book. If William E. Schubert says John Sung was his teacher, and he had "learned more from Dr Sung in three weeks than he learned in three years in theological seminary," then I can say the more. For truly I was a pupil of the great doctor, having been born again under his preaching and moved to offer myself for fulltime service, and have practically sat through all his sermons and Bible lessons in his four or five campaigns held in Singapore, 1935-1939. Moreover I have researched into his life when writing the Story of Lim Puay Hian his disciple titled "In John Sung's Steps" and further translated forty of his hundreds of sermons in Chinese, and have been in touch with his movements through Miss Leona Wu until the outbreak of the Second World War.

Having studied theology in a Seminary in America so that every recollection of what Dr Sung had said and done can now be seen in sharper focus, I can say with Schubert there are many deep things I've learned from Dr John Sung what my Seminary professors could never have imparted. In order to share what I have learned from my teacher I have tried my level best to present John Sung to you in as accurate an image as possible, quoting pertinent Scriptures that apply.

Surely the unsaved Reader, though Christian in name, must come face to face with the Saviour after reading this book. Now that you are born again, young Reader, what is it but that you also, in John Sung's steps, present your body a living sacrifice to serve the Lord fulltime?

Having sat under his preaching and teaching for literally several hundred hours, I have learnt some good music and homiletics from him which cannot be imparted here except as you will join our homiletics class at Far Eastern Bible College!

The greatest lesson is not the academic, but as Dr Sung has stressed, that which comes from God, infusing new life and new devotion in every sincere servant of God. Character and morality are prerequisites to Christian service far great-

er than knowledge learned from books. While we do not discount the great works of spiritual men, both commentaries and treatises, John Sung has taught us to read the Bible much more than we ever will. As to character we have not only his warning against money, sex, and self-will, but he was a paragon of meticulous holiness, selflessness and obedience.

Nowadays, ministers of the Gospel are becoming more and more professional, measuring themselves in dollars and cents, so much so it is observed by the congregation that as far as so and so is concerned it is with this calculation: "More pay, more preach. No pay, no preach." In the case of Dr Sung, we see that wherever he went he never wasted a minute in service. For example, when he had to wait five days in Hong Kong for a boat to Indo-China, he summoned the Evangelistic League there to convene, at little notice, a five-day campaign. Between sermons (there were three times two hours a day in Singapore) he would still spend time with those that mourned for their sins to counsel and to heal. He would belabour himself to pray over the photos of hundreds who wrote him seeking further help.

Leslie T. Lyall in his latest book, "God Reigns in China" published by OMF says, "When Communism triumphed in 1949 the Protestant Church numbered fewer than one million communicant members. . . . Today, the number of professing Christians is claimed to have reached a staggering 50 million." "Christianity in China, perhaps more than in any other nation," avers Lyall, "has constantly been under attack. And yet the Chinese Church has not only survived but flourished. . . . Where did it all begin, and how was the life maintained through the years of torture and persecution?"

This question can be answered from various angles, but William E. Schubert's statement on over 100,000 converts won by John Sung between 1933 and 1936, preparing many for the coming (communist) persecutions is relevant. And he further states, "Persecution always brings revival" or, as it has been quoted earlier in this book that "the blood of martyrs is the seed of the Church," we are assured that the gates of hell shall not prevail against the Church of Jesus

Christ. Yet there must be the living bodies of the martyrs before blood could be shed. In other words the countless numbers of truly born again Christians that had multiplied by leaps and bounds through John Sung's ministry as contributing to the growth from one million to 50 million cannot be ignored. Not only the seed of new life in these John Sung converts, but also the seed of the everlasting Word of God so richly implanted in them as attested by three Bible Institutes held in China, at which thousands from every province in China save one attended. The constant Bible studies he held wherever any Church had been revitalised added many more thousands implanted with God's Word who must have been used to bring forth new crops of believers through the years of torture and persecution under Mao.

One message that Dr Sung never failed to preach and teach was the Second Coming of Christ. He testified that when the Lord called him in Room 415 in Union Seminary He changed his name to John. He realised he was not the only herald but only one of many for these end-times before He comes. What do you say my Reader as you consider the ominous times in which you live? What are your fond ambitions as you struggle through an evil age with multi-nuclear mushroom clouds looming ahead? Death to multi-millions may be unleashed any time over this shrinking globe. "For what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" If by quoting this golden verse that turned John Sung from a scientist to a preacher so that it will change your attitude towards this empty life, the writing of this book on John Sung My Teacher will not have been made in vain. Amen.

EPILOGUE

The Conclusion to this book on the life and work of Dr John Sung by one of his pupils is a sort of epilogue. Yet, we have here another written by the same pupil, but since it was penned in 1970, thirty-five years after his first visit to Singapore, so that the Singapore Pentecost was seen from a nearer perspective, it may be well for us to reprint it. Titled 'John Sung, Man With A Mission,' it was a contribution to the 35th year commemorative magazine of the Singapore Christian Evangelistic League founded by the evangelist, and faithfully carried on by his followers under Miss Leona Wu. The article reads:

"The commemoration of the thirty-fifth year of the founding of the Singapore Christian Evangelistic League on September 8, 1970 would be in vain if the spirit and ideals of her founder, Dr John Sung, are not revived in her dwindling members! As one who received a portion of his spirit in the days of Pentecostal power outpoured on Singapore, 1935-1939, and as a member of the first preaching bands, I would like to point out one aspect of Dr Sung's ministry that brought such mighty success.

"John Sung was a man with a mission. He was a man doing something not only under Mandate from a Higher One, but also with an Urgency to Finish it. Well could China's apostle say in the words of our Lord, 'I have meat to eat that ye know not of. . . . My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.' (John 4:32,34). This is my observation as I recall the urgent tones of the evangelist pleading with souls from the Telok Ayer Methodist Church pulpit in a fortnight-long campaign of forty-two graduated, power-charged sermons lasting two to two-and-a-half hours each. This is my observation as I remember his parting words, evidently in the words of Hezekiah (Isa 38:5), 'The Lord has given me only fifteen years to finish my work. So I can afford no let-up in this revival ministry to turn all China and Southeast Asia to Christ.' No wonder he was able to cover the China continent and the following countries of Southeast Asia with his evangelistic footprints, viz., Hong

Kong, Formosa, Philippines, Indo-China, Thailand, Burma, Malaya, Singapore, Sarawak, and Indonesia. Wherever he went he 'won thousands to Christ, from whom evangelistic bands were organised, and scores consecrated for fulltime service,' according to a tablet in the John Sung Memorial Chapel, Chin Lien Bible Seminary. Lyall's book on John Sung, 'the Flame for God in the Far East,' relates from an investigation he made in these lands of the lasting effectualness of the fruits of John Sung's ministry. Truly the Holy Spirit had worked intensively through him, and very extensively too — because he pursued relentlessly the course and extent of the mission mapped for him by the Master.

"Whilst it has not pleased God to raise up another John Sung after two-and-a-half decades (he died in Peking 1944), I believe it is God's will that his followers (I Cor 11:1) renew the understanding of their original call and resolve to accomplish it within their lifetime. Let them also say with the Lord, 'My meat is to do the will of him that sent me and to finish his work.' Are you and I men with a mission?

"In this connection it gives me consolation to note that one of John Sung's co-workers, Miss Leona Wu, has understood clearly God's will for her life and has been faithfully following through to finish her work. The evidence of this observation is the Chin Lien Bible Seminary from which 168 women and men during the last 33 years have been trained to carry on the Gospel ministry in Southeast Asia.

"As those having a part in the training of the English-speaking through the Far Eastern Bible College it is our prayer that we might be reimbued with the John Sung spirit. What is that portion of work God has committed to our charge? Be it so small, so insignificant? Let us do it now, and finish it!

"Jesus Christ, the God-Man with a heavenly mission, came down to earth 1970 years ago. He began to preach at thirty but was abruptly cut off after three-and-a-half years. However, He finished His ministry, culminating in the saving work on the cross. He hastened on with each day's work toward this End, as He said in healing the man born blind, 'I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work' (John 9:4).

John Sung, man with a mission, followed in His steps to finish his work. If we do likewise, we shall yet see another outreach of the gospel with Pentecostal dimensions.”

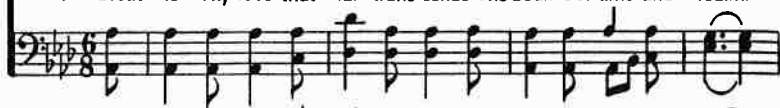
I want to walk where Jesus walks
 Along life's narrow way
He comes to our Emmaus Road
 And talks with us today!
He hears our sighs and all our woes,
 He kneels with us to pray.
I want to walk where Jesus walks:
 He wipes my tears away.
May pathway leads from the Empty Tomb
 Where He arose from the dead!
It brings me to the Upper Room
 Where all my friends are met.
With Thomas I shall worship Him,
 And I'll call Him my Lord.
O won't you give your heart to Him?
 Jesus the Son of God!
And from the lone Emmaus Road
 Christ leads His followers on:
He meets with us in Galilee,
 And gives our hearts a song.
Returning to Mount Olivet
 We hear His last command:
Go ye, go into all the world
 Go ye, go into all the world
Go ye, go into all the world
 And preach the Word of God!
I want to walk where Jesus walks
 And serve Him all the way

Jesus, My Lord, I Yearn For Thee

(Hymn taken from JOHN SUNG CHORUSES)



- 1 Je - sus, my Lord, I yearn for Thee, How sweet art Thou to me!
- 2 In all the world there's not a sound That can Thy mer-cies sing,
- 3 Tho' hearts are faint and tears do flow, Our sighs we can't con - trol.
- 4 Great is Thy love that far trans-cends The bounds of time and realm.



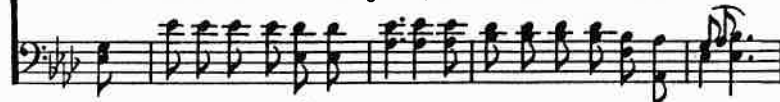
O that we're ta - ken up to - day For - e'er with Thee to stay.
Nor has that heart on earth been found, Thy brimming love con - tain.
When of Thy com - pas - sion I think, Grief goes and joy comes in.
'Tis the Be - lov - ed who can tell: Thy love all loves ex - cell.



CHORUS



O Thou the Balsam of the garden, O Thou the sweet Rose of Sha-ron,



Thou art the Li - ly of the valley, How shall I part with Thee?



APPENDIX

I

An Analysis of the Sermon on the Mount

by Dr John Sung

(From the 554-page octavo volume *Bible Expositions* given at the Second Bible Institute, Amoy, 1936.)

The three chapters of Matthew 5-7 (which constitute what is popularly known as the Sermon on the Mount) are re-stated briefly as follows:

Chapter 5

Life

In this chapter there are nine aspects of life, which we may call nine ways, or figuratively a nine-storey wonder tower.

1. Lowliness of heart
2. Mourning
3. Meekness
4. Thirst for Righteousness
5. Mercifulness
6. Purity of heart
7. Peaceableness
8. Persecution for Righteousness
9. Accusation for Jesus' Sake.

May every Christian inculcate such abundant life.

Chapter 6

Way

1. When we give in secret, God will reward us openly.
2. When we pray in secret, God will answer openly.
3. When we forgive others, God will forgive us. Conversely, if we forgive not others, God will not forgive us.
4. When we fast in secret, God will reward us openly.
5. To offer up everything is to deposit treasures in heaven.
6. When we seek God's Kingdom and His righteousness, then we have everything given to us.

This is the Way of communion with God. If everyone can do this, they will receive God's pleasure and acceptance. This way is opened by the Lord Jesus through His death on the cross for sinners. He died for the sins of sinners to open this living way.

For this reason we must:

1. Cultivate a lowly heart.
2. Mourn for sin.
3. Be meek like children.
4. Thirst for righteousness as for milk.
5. Love when showing mercy.
6. Be purified to see God.
7. Be peacemakers between men.
8. Suffer persecution for Righteousness' sake.
9. Suffer reviling, persecution and accusation for Jesus' sake.

From the nine-storey wonder tower let seven beams of light shine, which are:

1. Be salt to the people of the world.
2. Be perfect towards the Law.

3. Be peaceful between brothers.
4. Be chaste towards women.
5. Be honest in speech.
6. Be prayerful towards enemies.
7. Be holy towards the Heavenly Father.

Chapter 7

Truth

In this chapter there are seven aspects of truth.

1. Knowing whom to judge — ourselves and not others. If we judge others we become hypocrites.
2. Knowing whom to give — Do not preach the truth haphazardly, as in giving pearl to swine, holy thing to dog.
3. Knowing what to ask — bread and fish and not stone and snake.
4. Knowing how to go — through the strait gate, on the narrow way.
5. Knowing how to discern — between true and false prophets. From where comes the discernment? — from the fruits they produce we shall know them.
6. Knowing how to build — on the rock, which is firmly established.
7. Knowing how to differentiate between true and false preachers. Jesus preaches with authority and power. The scholars (scribes) have none.

This chapter gives us truth rooted in knowledge.

Praise the Lord! Jesus gives us a most sumptuous feast, for He comes into the world to save sinners, and this feast is for sinners.

When I Fear My Faith Will Fail

HE WILL HOLD ME FAST

Irregular

ROBERT HARKNESS (1880-1961)

1. When I fear my faith will fail, — Christ can hold me fast!
 2. I could nev - er keep my hold, — He must hold me fast!
 3. I am pre - cious in His sight, He will hold me fast!

rall.

When the tempt - er would pre - vail, He can hold me fast!
 For my love is oft - en cold, He must hold me fast!
 Those He saves are His de - light, He will hold me fast!

Refrain a tempo

He will hold me fast, He will hold me fast;
 He will hold me, hold me fast, He will hold me, hold me fast;

rall.

For my Sav - iour loves me so, — He will hold me fast.

4. He'll not let my soul be lost,
 Christ will hold me fast;
 Bought by Him at such a cost,
 He will hold me fast!

ADA R. HAULSHON (1861-1918)

APPENDIX

II

Looking Unto Jesus

(A sermon preached by Dr Sung during the Amoy Pentecost, November 3rd to 13th, 1934)

Text: Mark 5

v. 21 "And when Jesus was passed over again by ship unto the other side, much people gathered unto him: and he was nigh unto the sea." After Jesus had cast out the devil in the country of the Gadarenes, he took a boat to Galilee. When he got ashore, the Bible tells us, "much people followed Jesus." Although the number is not recorded, we can visualise a very great crowd. But of such a great crowd only two persons, a man by the name of Jairus and a woman, one who had an issue of blood, needed Jesus and sought after Jesus. O that we who have heard the Word of Jesus here will seek after Jesus!

v. 22 "And, behold, there cometh one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name; and when he saw him he fell at his feet." This Jairus was warden of a synagogue, superintendent of a synagogue, a man of high position. When he saw Jesus he fell on his knees. It is not a simple matter for a man of such a position to kneel before Jesus. When a man needs Jesus he will humble himself before Jesus.

v. 23 "And besought him greatly, saying, My little daughter lieth at the point of death: I pray thee, come and lay thy hands on her, that she may be healed; and she shall live." He did not pray once or twice. He prayed repeatedly — because he needed Jesus, he earnestly prayed because his daughter was very near death. He wanted Jesus to heal her. This daughter was his life, or was his other life. He needed

Jesus, because his life was fast ebbing out. On ordinary days he did not need Jesus, but now when he was on the point of death, he needed Jesus. There's a rhyme: "When there is a way, ask the Taifu (doctor). When there is no way, ask Yesu." So that's the kind of person Jairus was.

Once I was in Kwangsi Province. A sister came to get my help, asking me to go with her immediately to hospital because a woman patient was dying. Many doctors could not help. So I went with her. When I got there I prayed over her, anointing her with oil. She recovered. But this was a case of calling on Jesus in an hour of hopelessness.

v. 24 "And Jesus went with him; and much people thronged him." When Jesus went along with Jairus the Bible tells us there were two types of people who followed Jesus. The first type followed. The second type thronged him. Of course Jairus was one who followed, and he did so because his heart was with Jesus. The rest of the people merely jostled along to see the fun. Jairus said to Jesus, "Lord, be quick! My daughter is fast dying!" How did Jesus answer? Jesus said, "Cannot." Now if there were airplane or train, one would take plane or train. But in those days there was neither plane nor train. They had to walk. They could not rush. How often do we hurry the Lord, but the Lord will not let us hurry. Jairus had not faith in nor knowledge of Jesus. Jairus said, "Lord! Be quick!" There's a song: "With Christ by my side, why should I worry?" Now, Jairus had Christ by his side, yet you see him worrying. There are many in the Church today who are like Jairus, who worry their heads off in this and in that. Let us learn not to worry when Jesus is by our side! (Only Jesus! Only He can satisfy. Every burden becomes a blessing, When I know my Lord is nigh.)

v. 25 "And a certain woman, which had an issue of blood twelve years . . ." While Jesus was on the way there came a thin woman who had been suffering from bleeding for twelve years. I'm sure there are some in our midst who have this sickness. What is to suffer from an issue of blood? It is like a Christian coming to a revival meeting whose heart is now washed clean by Jesus' precious blood. But when the revival meeting is over, he cools off, like the issue of blood draining away . . . And this process is repeated whenever

he attends a revival meeting. This woman was plagued with such an issue of blood for twelve years. I think there are many church members who are “bleeding” members. May such members with the issue of blood receive the Word of the Holy Spirit and be healed this afternoon!

v. 26 “And had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse.” This woman’s sickness was very serious. Not only was she not cured by the many doctors she consulted, she got even worse. When she had a way out, she consulted the Taifu (doctor). Now that she had no way out, she consulted Yesu.

v. 27 “When she had heard of Jesus, came in the press behind, and touched his garment.” This woman had great faith, so she thought a touch of Jesus’ garment would be enough, because there was such a crowd and it was not easy for her a woman to get to Him. Her faith was very great!

v. 28 “For she said, If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole.” Brothers and sisters, Do you want to have your bleeding cured? There’s only one way. Touch Jesus’ garment every day, and you will be healed. The woman knew there was power with Jesus’ garment, so in spite of the great crowd, she sought to touch Jesus’ garment.

v. 29 “And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of the plague.” She found Jesus. She touched his clothes. She was instantly healed! Brothers and sisters, Do you fear you’ll cool off after the revival meeting? Then you are to touch Jesus’ garment everyday! Jesus’ garment is the Holy Bible!

v. 30 “And Jesus immediately knowing in himself that virtue had gone out of him, turned him about in the press, and said, “Who touched my clothes?” Now when this woman touched Jesus’ garment she was healed, while Jesus felt power had gone out of his body. If we read our Bible everyday, Jesus’ power will flow into our bodies, to keep us from cooling off.

v. 31 “And his disciples said unto him, Thou seest the multitude thronging thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me?” Jesus asked, “Who touches my clothes?” The disciples answered, “The multitude has pressed on you!” But there’s

a great difference between touching and pressing. Many people read the Bible like touching the garment. They regard the Bible so precious, so sweet like honey. But there are others who read the Bible like pressing it in a throng. They read the Bible like one “viewing flowers on a race-horse,” which is quite unprofitable. When we read our Bible and pray everyday, we must be like her who touched Jesus to be profitable. For Jesus’ Word has great power.

I am deeply touched by the way my father read his Bible. He would get up everyday at 5 am when it was dark. First he would light a candle. Then he knelt down to pray before he read his Bible. Sometimes he laughed, sometimes he wept. When I saw this one day, I asked my father, “Papa, what Book are you reading?” He said, “I’m reading what the Heavenly Father is telling me.” When I heard this I was deeply moved. From that time on I loved to read the Bible.

Many read the Bible like reading an ordinary textbook. O that everyone will love to read his Bible like the way I study the Bible with you, touching the Bible, verse by verse. In this way only can our revival be preserved from being a temporary thing.

v. 32 “And he looked round about to see her that had done this thing.” If we read our Bible everyday our heart will gradually enlarge, like Judas’ heart. (Here is a play of words for the two Chinese characters for Judas: Yu-Ta means become bigger – enlarge.) Not only large, but extra-large, yea even to the size of that of Judas Iscariot’s — we become proud. So, we should not only read our Bible everyday, but also witness for Christ. Then it will not become like Judas’.

Now this woman, having touched Jesus’ garment, found that her blood had stopped, so she wanted to get away. Would Jesus let her? Having been healed, she must now witness to it.

v. 33 “But the woman fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and fell down before him, and told him all the truth.” She would not testify, she was afraid to testify, so she trembled. Many are in the Church today who are afraid to witness. Let me tell you, Don’t be afraid! When you witness, just look to Jesus. We who have touched Jesus’ garment are duty-bound to witness for Jesus. There-

fore every pastor, elder, deacon, layman must witness for Christ!

v. 34 “And he said unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of the plague.” Now that she has testified, she has become Jesus’ daughter. So when we witness for Jesus, we become His children. Jesus having seen her testimony said to her, “Your faith has saved you.” Jesus said, “Go home in peace.” Her testimony was not in vain. Jesus wanted her to testify in order to strengthen Jairus’ faith. This woman was sick for twelve years, which marvellously tallies with Jairus’ daughter’s age of twelve years. The doctor could not cure this woman, nor cure Jairus’ daughter. They were all at their wit’s end, so they come to Jesus. If Jesus could heal the woman with an issue of blood for 12 years, so can He heal Jairus’ daughter. Jairus’ faith now came alive! His faith rose to 100°.

v.35 “While he yet spake, there came from the ruler of the synagogue’s house certain which said, Thy daughter is dead: why trouble thou the Master any further?” Now when Jairus’ faith was at the zenith, suddenly there came someone reporting, “Jairus, your daughter is dead. It is hopeless! Why bother Jesus anymore?” When Jairus heard this, he wept before Jesus, “I asked you to come quickly, but You simply took your time. Now my daughter is dead, I won’t follow You.” From 100° plus his faith plunged to 100° minus! Seeing him stumbling, Jesus nevertheless would not permit him to fall. So will Jesus not let us fall!

v. 36 “As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken he saith unto the ruler of the synagogue, Be not afraid, only believe.” Jesus said to Jairus, “Jairus, don’t be afraid, only believe. I have the power.” Hearing this, Jairus’ faith rose from $-100^{\circ} + 75^{\circ}$. His faith increased again.

v. 37 “And he suffered no man to follow him, save Peter, and James, and John the brother of James.” At this the Devil said to Jairus, “Jairus, only fear, do not believe!” Hearing this Jairus’ faith dropped back to -75° . So Jesus would not let any other person follow. He brought along only Peter, James and John. For these three disciples were the most faithful. These three disciples said to Jairus,

“Jairus, Don’t be afraid. Only believe! Our Master’s words are reliable.” When Jairus heard this his faith increased again — to +50°. Ah! A person’s faith is never sure. Now high, now low, how pitiful like Jairus’ faith!

v. 38 “And he cometh to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and seeth the tumult, and them that wept and wailed greatly.” Jesus went with Jairus to his house, and when Jairus saw his wife weeping, the relatives weeping, the friends weeping . . . everybody weeping, so he also wept — bitterly. In the face of all these weepings, his faith dropped to -50°.

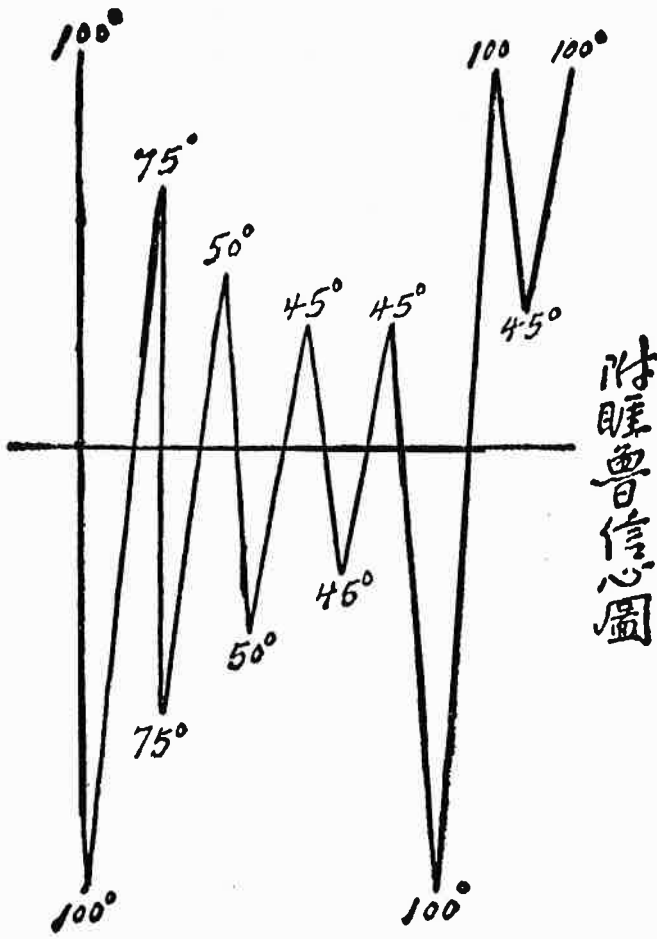
v. 39 “And when he was come in, he saith unto them, why make ye this ado, and weep? the damsel is not dead but sleepeth.” Jairus hearing this that his daughter was not dead, rose up in faith to +45°. How unstable is his faith.

v. 40 “And they laughed him to scorn. But when he had put them all out, he taketh the father and the mother of the damsel and them that were with him, and entereth in where the damsel was lying.” When they heard Jesus say these words they thought Jesus was crazy. Those who were weeping now laughed: ha, ha, ha! When Jairus saw them laughing his faith dipped once more to -45°. When he heard their criticisms and scornful laughter, he was stumbled again.

When Jesus saw that their laughter hindered Jairus’ faith, He chased them all out. Jesus said to Jairus again, “Do not fear, Only believe.” Jairus’ faith increased again to +45°.

So Jairus followed Jesus to his daughter’s room. Jairus thought before his daughter was asleep. Now he saw her with his own eyes lying on the bed, not a breath left, motionless, plainly dead. Jairus burst into tears again. His faith plummeted to -100°, for he only looked at circumstances, he looked at the outside, and not unto Jesus. How unreliable is a man’s faith!

v. 41 “And he took the damsel by the hand, and saith unto her, Talitha cumi; which is, being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto thee, arise.” Jesus said, “Jairus, what a faithless man you are!” Then Jesus pulling her up by the hand, said, “Girl, I tell you to get up. At this the girl sat up on her bed and called out, Daddy! Now Jairus’ faith soared back to



+100°.

v. 42 "And straightway the damsel arose and walked; for she was of the age of twelve years. And they were astonished with a great astonishment." When his daughter sat up, her body was weak and without strength, for she had not eaten for days. Jairus, seeing her, said in his heart, "She is so weak, she might die again." Down to +45° did his faith slip!

v. 43 "And he charged them straitly that no man should know it; and commanded that something should be given

her to eat.” Jesus said, “Jairus, where is your faith? Now she lives. Her body is weak because she has not eaten for days. Now give her some milk. Having taken the milk, she received strength, and was restored to her former self. Jairus seeing his daughter fully recovered, regained his faith +100°. How pitiful! Jairus looked at appearances but not to Jesus. So his faith fluctuated, even to zero degree.

Brothers and sisters, Jairus’ experience has been my experience. When I became desperate and lost heart my faith dropped simultaneously. When I felt the Lord was with me, helping me, my faith rose. . . . pitiful! O that everyone here this afternoon will not look at circumstances, not look at the outside, will look only unto Jesus, in adversity or prosperity, following Him to the end. Whom shall we fear when the Lord is with us? Amen.

APPENDIX

III

Rev William E Schubert on Dr Sung's Last Days

A Great Revival Promised

August 5, 1941, Dr John Sung wrote to me: "Peace to Mr Schubert, Fellow-laborer in the Lord: Since we parted at PUMC (Peking Union Medical College) I have remembered you without ceasing in my prayers. On June 7 when I left PUMC Hospital there were three wound mouths. By God's blessing, two of the three were entirely healed up while I lived in the home of Dr Hsu, head of the Peiping Gospel Teams."

"On July 3 my wife hurriedly returned to Shanghai because of the serious illness of our son. The same day I came to Hsiang Shan (Fragrant Mountain) and temporarily rented a house for a summer retreat. I have already been here a month, and the mouth of the wound is nearly healed."

"Many years ago God used his child to do the first step of His work. Now God has been using more than two years of illness to prepare His child to accomplish the second step, a much deeper work, not only to lead His children out of Egypt and across the Red Sea into the Wilderness, but also to lead His children across the Jordan River into Canaan to receive that Eternal Rest."

"In my prayers God has shown me clearly that the great revival time of the Chinese church will come. This great revival is not through man but through the work of the Holy Spirit Himself exercising the hearts of a certain class of workers, moving them with one accord, one heart and mind to unite in an out-of-the-way place for a long time of prayer, to do prayer work in the Spirit."

“During this time of prayer in the Spirit, God Himself will begin the work, will lead them into the depths of truth, will lead them to utterly die out, will lead them to want, not self, just want the Lord alone.”

“God will lead them with one heart to run with united footsteps, will lead the members to strengthen each other, and in the Spirit to have mutual fellowship, to edify themselves in love.”

“He will lead them to love what the Lord loves, to see as the Lord sees, to hate what the Lord hates, to pray as the Lord prays, to complete what the Lord would complete, will lead them to break every fetter, to be free in the Spirit, to use faith to finish the work that God would finish.”

“God during this time will do a wondrous work. There are many things I cannot write with a pen, but I hope you will pray much about this, and I believe the Holy Spirit surely will speak in your heart, so I will not say more.”

“In my prayers, God also entrusts you with responsibility for the great revival of the Chinese church. May the Spirit that worketh in my heart also work in your heart, together with the Lord to hear still small Voice, in these last days to finish the work He himself would finish, even a work with ‘gold, silver and precious stones,’ which can go through trial by fire. Isaiah 62: 1,2,6.” These last words of Dr Sung to me were no doubt a prophecy of impending persecution for the church.

All the Missionaries Would Leave

About that time Dr Sung also told a missionary friend of ours that God had revealed to him that there would be a great revival in China, but that the missionaries would all leave first. A few years later the missionaries were all forced out by the communists. Now we look for the revival. It is interesting that in his August 5, 1941 letter John Sung speaks of the “trial by fire.” The church in China surely went through, and is going through, that time of testing. The Lord had used John Sung to raise up a people scattered throughout China that were able to stand the test, some even unto

death, but others whose spark will be fanned by the winds of God's Spirit until the flame of revival will burn away unbelief and materialism and atheism with Holy Ghost fire. Our work is to pray for this.

A Continuing Influence

Why did John Sung's ministry have such lasting results? He was different from all others I have ever known in his prayer life. In Nanking, we were in adjoining rooms, and I heard him pray. He had hundreds of prayer requests, even thousands, on prayer blanks. In each place where he held meetings, Dr Sung would have seekers come to him for group or private interviews. In order to have such a prayer interview with Dr Sung, each of them must bring a prayer blank (costing one copper each) with name, address, sex, age, photograph, prayer requests, and a testimony. These represented never-dying souls, hearts open to His gaze.

By the nature of the prayer requests, usually three or four each, he could tell how far along the seeker had come spiritually. Some asked for selfish benefits, such as a job, etc. Others felt their need for heart purity or holiness, or were concerned for the salvation of others, or for revival in their home churches. Dr Sung kept all these prayer blanks, and carried them with him, thousands, in two big suitcases, and he would pray fervently for these people afterward, even while preaching three times a day and having many interviews, besides hours with the Word.

In Nanking I heard him weeping and groaning, in agony of soul, praying for these people in places where he had held meetings previously. I don't know how he did it, except that he had a great spiritual passion, even an obsession, which very few have, and which is to be coveted. "Seek earnestly the better gifts." More exactly Paul says, "Covet earnestly the best gifts." I Corinthians 12:31. This gift of intercession is surely one of the greater gifts. It takes dedicated will power to exercise it, and that will power comes from a God-given love for souls. I Cor 13.

Some who have written about Dr Sung thought he was

proud, but he could not have lived so close to God as to intercede in this way if he had been proud, because "God resisteth the proud." (James 4:6 and I Peter 5:5). John Sung's humility came from having seen and talked with Jesus, and from living in the light of Jesus' Cross and the daily searching of the Word of God. Most of us are too busy and proud to pray in this way.

Daily Intercession for Others

That is one secret of his success, and of the lasting results of his ministry: that he prayed for the seekers after he left them. He prayed one day for all the seekers in Peiping, another day for all those in Tientsin, then for those in Shanghai, Foochow, Hinghwa, etc. So wherever John Sung had been, there were Christians who remained true and faithful. Wherever I have been in China, including Taiwan, the most faithful and dependable members in the churches were those who had been saved and blest in Dr Sung's meetings. Others have said the same. This is because he prayed for them afterward. Not long ago I talked to a pastor from Indonesia, who has a thriving church during this great revival time there, and he said that the forty strongest members and best soulwinners of his church in Indonesia were the product of John Sung's ministry.

So as the Lord promised John Sung, it will happen again, and in even larger measure. As Robert Porteous predicted: "The desecrated churches and chapels of China will yet resound with the praises of God." For that we wait and pray.

Dr Sung's Last Illness, Sorrow, Humility, Death

The fifth period of Dr John Sung's ministry was the "Sepulchre" or "Tomb" period. Near the end of the "Blood" period, when he was in Indonesia, Dr Sung had to sit down to preach, and in his final meeting there he lay on a camp cot and preached. Then he came home to Shanghai, and was unable to travel anymore in evangelism.

During this time of illness in Shanghai, Dr Eugene Erny, chairman of the Oriental Missionary Society, himself a fervent evangelist and soul-winner, went to see Dr Sung. In the course of their conversation, Dr Erny asked why Dr Sung was so sick when God had used him in the healing of so many others. Sung replied that he needed someone to pray for him. However, none of us were able to pray effectually for him, and he got worse, and had to go to Peiping to the hospital for several operations. Later, they found that he had cancer. Evidently he had “run his course.”

This was the “Tomb” period, 1939–1942, in which Dr Sung was shut up. And China was also shut up: all the ports of China were closed by the Japanese blockade. There wasn’t as much bloodshed as there had been, because the Chinese had learned guerrilla warfare and had gone into the interior, but China was definitely sealed. At first, Dr Sung was in the hospital, then he and Mrs Sung went to the Western Hills in the mountains out from Peiping. He was in bed, and people came to him from all over China. He still had three meetings a day, preaching from his bed, and two Chinese lady secretaries wrote letters for him.

Dr Sung’s Criticism of Missionaries

While Dr Sung was in the hospital in Peiping, and I was living in Shanghai, some of the Fukien missionaries in Shanghai asked me to take his wife to Peiping, as I was going there anyway to hold meetings. Mrs Sung went with me, to see him, and of course I visited him in the hospital. At that time he said to me with tears, “Oh, Mr Schubert, God has been dealing with me. God tells me that I have been too critical of missionaries.” I replied, “No, Dr Sung, we needed it; I think it was of God that you found fault with us.” He insisted, “No, you left your homes and families, and your own land, and made great sacrifices to preach the Gospel in China, and yet I criticised you.” So he said, “I ask you, on behalf of the missionaries, to forgive me.” So he showed his humility.

My “Morning Worship”

There had been times when Dr Sung did have a critical attitude toward us. Once he told me I “might amount to something” if I would not give so much time to my family. When he was staying with us in Nanchang in 1931, he came down to breakfast one morning, and saw me down on my knees by the couch playing and talking with our baby Lois. She was our first child after thirteen years of marriage, and was very precious to us. Dr Sung said, “Oh, I see you are having your morning worship.”

He himself always put God and God’s work ahead of his family. Some criticised him for that, but I never felt he was wrong in it. He was merely taking the call of God seriously, even “hating his own family” as Jesus said one must do if he is to be worthy to enter the kingdom of God and be Christ’s true follower. The rest of us do not take God’s call and God’s work seriously enough. He had a one-track mind. How wonderful if we could all be that way. One had to know Dr Sung, and see him work and the results, to appreciate his attitude in his respect. His own family appreciated him; Mrs Sung seemed to feel he was doing the right thing. I never felt that she was critical of him. His own daughter became a Christian young people’s leader, and the communists put her in prison because she had too much influence. In 1974 she still had two-and-a-half years to serve.

His Only Son Died

When Mrs Sung got back to Shanghai from that trip to see Dr Sung in the hospital, she found their son seriously ill. It was a fatal illness, though we prayed for his healing. Dr Sung told me when I saw him again in the hospital in Peiping, “Shu Sien-sen, God had only one begotten Son, and He died. I had only one son and he died.” It is true that John Sung in many ways typified the ministry of God in the world, especially as regards China. His ministry, in his own body, typified the sufferings, and the spiritual victories of China and the church in China and the Far East. China was in

agony, and John Sung had this great sorrow in illness.

When we began to come to the end of Dr Sung's fifteen years of ministry, of which Jesus had told him in his room in New York City, I began to pray about it. I wept and prayed, and I said, "Lord, we need him. Please continue his ministry. Extend the time as you did with King Hezekiah." He did live two or three years after the fifteen years, but without any public ministry. He died August 18, 1944.

Greatly Blest by Dr Sung's Memory

At the close of the war, in the autumn of 1945, I was in Peiping, and I went out to the Western Hills and saw Mrs Sung. She took me to Dr Sung's grave. As I stood there by the stone cross, I was greatly blest by the memory of his wonderful life. At that time Mrs Sung gave me one of two personal copies of his Chinese chorus book. I used it in many evangelistic and revival meetings in mainland China and in Taiwan, as we broadcast the Gospel back into communist China and around the world.

This chorus book is the one used in the Nanking meetings. Dr Sung's personal copy lies before me as I write just now. It has his name in his own writing in Chinese on the cover. It is one more thing to challenge and inspire me to be more faithful in my soulwinning and intercessory ministry. However, I despair of even approximating Dr Sung's zeal in Bible study and prayer. But we hope that God will raise up others who will be inspired by his life to a similar ministry in the Orient or the West.

So, as we remember John Sung, we pray that God will produce another, perhaps even greater, evangelist in this century. God often calls His leaders from the ranks of Jesus' persecutors. When this man, or men, come on the scene, then China and the Far East will be aflame for God with the preaching of the irresistible Gospel.

The Great Commission

Adapted by
JANE B. WALTERS

THURINGIAN FOLK SONG



Go into the world, into all the wide world,
And tell the joyful news to ev'ry perishing soul,
And tell the joyful news to ev'ry perishing soul.

For you I have sent into all the wide world,
And you shall be my witnesses from Jerusalem,
And you shall be my witnesses from Jerusalem

But first receive power, the Spirit of God,
And you'll go through Judea, Samaria, all the earth,
And you'll go through Judea, Samaria, all the earth.

Go ye into all, into all nations,
And make them My disciples, and baptise them for Me,
And teach them all My word, for I'm with you to the end.

(Scripture: Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46, Acts 1:8, Matt 28:19,20)

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Dr John Sung was probably the greatest preacher of this century. I have heard almost all the great preachers from 1910 until now, including R. A. Torrey, Billy Sunday, Henry Jowett, the great holiness preachers, the Methodist bishops, including Bishop Quayle, even Harry Emerson Fosdick, who set a great example of the homiletic art, though I did not agree with him, and finally Billy Graham. Yet John Sung surpassed them in all pulpit power, attested by amazing and enduring results, of which we will give examples later.

— William E. Schubert

John Sung was one of the most colorful characters of all time, an evangelist of striking spiritual power as well as a prophet whose eccentricities matched some of those known through the Old Testament. John Sung was converted during the Hinghwa Pentecost, a local movement in Fukien Province that was part of the nationwide revival in China in the years following the Welsh Revival of 1905. He had a brilliant academic career in the United States, but gradually lost his own faith while studying in seminary in New York. His recovery was so spectacular that the seminary authorities thought him mentally deranged.

Dr. Sung returned to China and was caught up in a revival in Fukien Province, becoming an ardent evangelist. He joined forces with Andrew Gih and the Bethel Bands for a number of years, then continued in itinerant ministry alone. Converts by the tens of thousands resulted from his China Ministry, a trail of blessing his journeyings overseas wherever Chinese people were dispersed.

By Dr. J. Edwin Orr
D. Phil (Oxford) Ed. D. (U.C.L.A.)

In spite of my fifty-one years in China and the islands of the Pacific, I missed meeting and hearing Dr. John Sung. This was one of the deep regrets of my life. However, when our dear Chinese brothers and sisters were in the "fiery trial," I became director of a Christian publications firm and book room in South China. This position brought me wonderful opportunities to meet and speak with many who personally had known and heard this devoted servant of God. Through books such as "My Testimony," by Dr Sung, and others, I became aware more fully of Dr. Sung's dedication and fruitful ministry. It was like the cut of a steel die sharp and clean. His fruits still glow like the sun of a cloudless bright morning. This "flame of fire" (Hebrews 1:7), this Chinese prophet of God, whom Brother Schubert firmly believes to have been the greatest preacher of this century, warmed my own heart, humbling, challenging, and inspiring me. And he swept thousands into the Kingdom of God.

By Rev. Roy J. Birkey