

40 Hwang Li Hsiang, Nanking, Nov. 23, 1940

Dear Friends:

I know you are wondering what is to become of me and your other friends in the Far East. Of course we are wondering too, and really are still in the situation where we must say I don't know. We are not planning right now, however to take our departure, but our plans are all very tentative and subject to change without notice. Those of us, like myself, who have no special reason for wanting to go home, no health problem, and are recently back from furlough will stay on as long as possible, and then probably will be transferred into "Free" China, probably West China.

I don't know if I told you that since July I have had a new job, different from any previously held in my checkered career. I took over the work of a missionary who went on furlough, and the list of schools of which I am principal is (if I do say so myself) impressive. Beside that I have the evangelistic work in a big city church. In fact I have so many jobs that all I have time to do is to run from one to the other with no time to stop and do anything. I smooth down the feathers of those in one school, only to find that a little difficulty has arise elsewhere and I have to start all over again in the next place.

But seriously it is very interesting and very stimulating and I am just sick at the thought of going off and leaving it. In fact that thought does not occur to me as often as it should. I expect I am indulging in some wishful thinking when I assure myself (and anyone else who will listen) that nothing is going to happen, and that we won't have to go after all. Something like hoping it is all a bad dream and isn't true after all and in just a minute we will wake up and everything will be happy.

However a situation like this has its values. It makes everyone stop and take stock, like the man in the parable who was starting to build a house, to see if we can see the job through. It has been very inspiring to see the reaction of our fellow workers. We can go, but they have to stay and take what comes, certainly some ~~uns~~ insecurity of income, and possibly persecution and interference with their work. They seem to have no thought but of staying on the job and keeping things going as long as they can.

A few missionaries, especially in North China, men and women, have decided to stay, that it is their duty to stay regardless of what is ahead. Most of us take the attitude that we will stay as long as we can be of service, but that the time is likely to come when we will not only not be able to do anything, but that we will be an actual source of embarrassment to our Chinese fellow-workers. The Chinese are rather urgent that we should go before the situation actually gets serious. It seems to me that it is a matter for each person to decide for himself, and to decide if he has the resources, spiritual and physical to see such a thing through. Some people have and others have not.

The group which is hit the hardest are the married folks. Women with children of necessity need to take their children with them, but that means the separation of families. The wives hate to go and the husbands hate to be left. It may be years before they will be united again. If war came, they (husbands) would try to get out into free territory and make their way west, and it would be months before anyone would know what had happened to them.

In the meantime we are going on as if nothing was going to happen. We are making plans to turn all responsibility over to the Chinese so far as possible, and making such financial plans as are possible for their future. I am going to give everything away if I leave, just so I will know who got the things I left. That surely ought to make me feel like Santa Claus or somebody important. I've always wanted to feel like somebody important and never succeeded.