

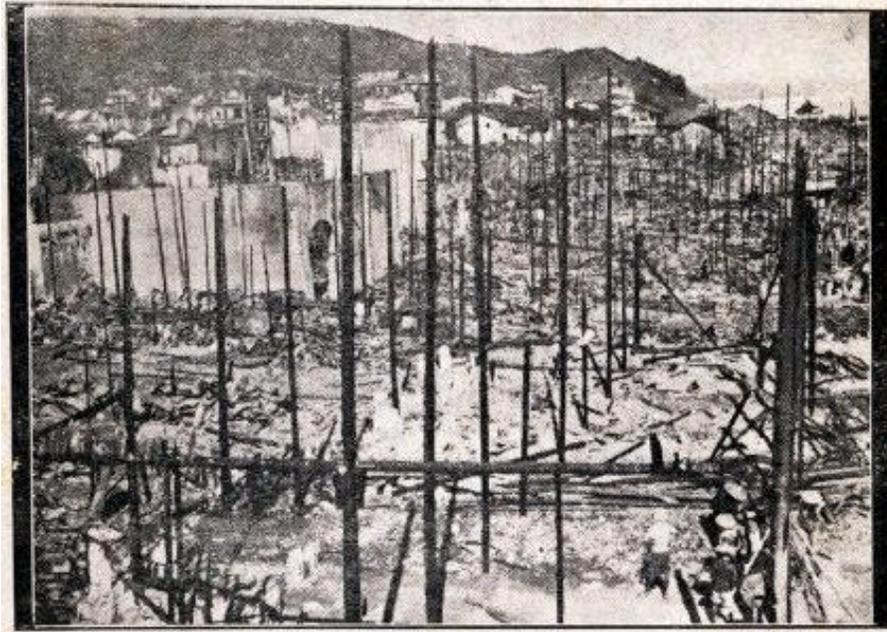
The Herald

Vol. II

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No. 1

Wuchow after the Sept. 17, 1938 Bombing



The Story of the Wuchow Bible School

1938 - 1940

Under War Conditions

The School Staff and Student Body Fall Term 1938-1939



Bloody Saturday, September 17, 1938 will always be remembered by those who were in Wuchow. The horrors of war were at last brought home to us all. Three of the members of our own Alliance Young People's organization were killed and one wounded when bombs fell on a High School building. Hundreds of others were killed and wounded, in addition, a large section of the business district was destroyed by fire.

As a result, many considered Wuchow definitely unsafe and evacuation on a large scale began. Naturally, the Bible School was affected. There were those who concluded it too difficult to conduct a school or study, under such conditions, therefore some teachers and students left us. Immediate steps were taken to move to the hill opposite the city, where is located the headquarters of the Alliance.

The picture above represents the reduced student body and staff. Looking again at the group I cannot help but praise God that in His wisdom He mercifully draws a veil over the future. Who would have dreamed that death from the air, long and trying journeyings, threats on our lives by brigands, living with native tribesmen, building our own mud school house, heartbreaking disappointments, and many other trying experiences were facing the above group in the not too distant future. No, for the majority, the Lord requires a day by day, step-by-step trust. There are not many to whom the Lord speaks as He did to Paul, ". . . I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my Name's sake."

"Step by step I'll walk with Jesus,
Step by step, and day by day."

Students on Way to Dug-out after the Air Raid Alarm has Sounded



Take a good look at this picture. It realistically portrays what took place sometimes thrice daily on the Wuchow hillside.

We required all classes to disband as soon as the alert air alarm was sounded and proceed at once to the tunnel which had been dug in the hillside. It was only about a five minute walk from our School building, and as you can see, was well hidden by trees and shrubs.

The tunnel ran deep into the hillside having two entrances to protect us against bomb blasts. As soon as the planes were heard we went into the tunnel, each one with a mat or piece of paper to sit on. Soon the sound of the droning planes seemed to fill the tunnel. The bursting of the bombs was always followed by a great swishing noise. In fact all sounds seemed to take on a new character when we were inside. We were so grateful that no bombs fell close to our hide-out. It was strange too, how quiet everyone was while inside; even the very small children who came in with us kept perfectly quiet during air raids.

In the midst of the bombing we often prayed for those who were not so well protected as ourselves and for Christian friends and property. Then also, there was always

the committing of oneself to the Lord. Trials certainly should bring greater fellowship, if the heart is right with God.

“Tis so safe to walk with Jesus,
Leaning hard upon His Arm,
Following closely where He leads us,
None can hurt and naught can harm.”

Teaching on the Hillside between Alarms

On a bright sunshiny day two or three alarms were nothing unusual and often several hours elapsed between the first alarm and the all-clear. The alarm usually sounded while a class was in session, thus hours of teaching were lost. It was perfectly obvious that something would have to be done about it.

Finally, we decided that if the planes did not put in appearance shortly after the first alarm, then we would conduct our classes on the hillside, close to the tunnel. It was a novel experience for all of us and we have often wondered if any other Bible School in China went through such an ordeal in order to keep up with the curriculum.



The picture above shows Pastor Timothy Lin and his class. In spite of their unusual environment I do not remember one who complained; this in spite of the fact that the seats were not always comfortable and the sun persistently “penetrated our leafy defenses.”

When classes were thus held on the hillside, there were three or four groups in session at the same time. It was an interesting sight. The flatest places were chosen—and there were none really flat. The students scattered about as close as possible to the teacher, and looked for back rests. Trees, tufts of grass and even tombstones were chosen. Many times, teachers becoming enthusiastic over a certain thought, would nearly

lose their balance on the steep hillside. However the Lord was very real to us and the classes held between the air raid alarms at Wuchow will always have a special place in our memory.

Evacuation Orders



Even after the Japanese occupation of Canton we refused to consider evacuation. Wuchow was now very close to the front line and the University and High Schools were ordered to move to new locations. The removal of so many students affected the city's morale and thousands of citizens also left. Those were exciting days for all of us. Fearing a fire in the city if a battle were fought for its possession we had most of the School equipment brought up to the hill-top. The students helped in this work, also in carrying in a supply of water. Then assisting our chairman Rev. W. H. Oldfield we burned all dry stubble, completing a swath yards wide right around the Mission property on the hill-top. An attack on Wuchow really seemed imminent. The only two British boats prepared to leave for Hong Kong convoyed by a gunboat. We all were given a chance to evacuate but the convoy left without any from our Mission or School abroad. No, we did not intend to leave Wuchow.

Air raids, threatened attack and general evacuation were our portion during the School term yet it was the testimony of all, that it was the best in years.

Toward the close of the term our Chairman was granted an interview with the Wuchow district Garrison Commander. The subject was the iron doors in front of our Bible School. (Most business houses and schools in China use large iron doors.) The authorities wanted them removed for fear that if Wuchow fell they would be of use to the invader. During the conversation the Commander asked if our School were still operating in Wuchow. Upon learning that it was, he immediately ordered us to either close or move to another locality.

The School Board met at once in emergency session and decided to move the School to a little village in the remote part of southwestern Kwangsi. We left Wuchow January 22nd, 1939, accompanied by Rev. and Mrs. Pennington with family. The picture shows us all ashore at Kwei Ping, shortly before an air alarm had sent us scampering for convenient hiding places.

Mrs. Lin's Homegoing



After the Bible School removed to the hill top, Pastor and Mrs. Lin took a more active part in the School, eventually becoming Principal and Matron respectively.

They were both very young and the decision to remain in Wuchow, cut off from their home in the North, cost them much. They spent days in prayer, seeking guidance from the Lord whether they should or should not leave. Tickets were available for them to leave on the convoy, escorted by a British gunboat, but they both decided to stay. They

felt their example would mean much to the students in the future. Yes, the decision was to cost them a great deal. They were willing to stay in Kwangsi even though it meant death—and that is just what it was to mean.

Beloved friends, we must never forget that God often requires of His children their supreme sacrifice, that His Name may be glorified. After all, a full, complete consecration is not an experience to be lightly entered upon. God's acceptance of that consecration may require our walking "through the valley of the shadow of death"—with Him.

After the decision of Brother and Sister Lin to remain, months of blessing followed. To us now, it seems as though Sister Lin gave herself to the work as though conscious that her time on earth was short. The order to evacuate did not dismay her and she gladly managed the packing—from books to chopsticks.

January 30, 1939, found us aboard the river steamer nearing Nanning. Suddenly, three planes appeared and attacked the boat with machine-gun fire. Mrs. Lin and Mrs. Newbern were crouched close together. Mrs. Lin was struck with the first burst of machine-gun fire, and being a trained nurse, she knew the wound was mortal.

Death came shortly after and we buried her in the Christian cemetery at Nanning. Never have I witnessed such a service as took place at Mrs. Lin's grave. Students and teachers alike consecrated themselves afresh to God, imploring Grace to glorify Him in this great trial.

Over the Mountains to Revival Village



The trip from Nanning to Lungchow required our traveling over a route almost daily subjected to heavy bombing. We all dreaded that journey. The military authorities who know the experience through which we passed, placed three large trucks at our disposal. February 7th found us safe at Lungchow and already preparing to leave for Revival Village. Rev. and Mrs. H. E. Lang, stationed at Lungchow, assisted us in every way possible to make arrangements for the last lap of our journey.

During this time Pastor Timothy Lin had been going forward in His Name and strength. Certainly no one will ever know what his sufferings were when he laid away the earthly remains of his wife on the bleak Nanning hillside and left with us for Lungchow.

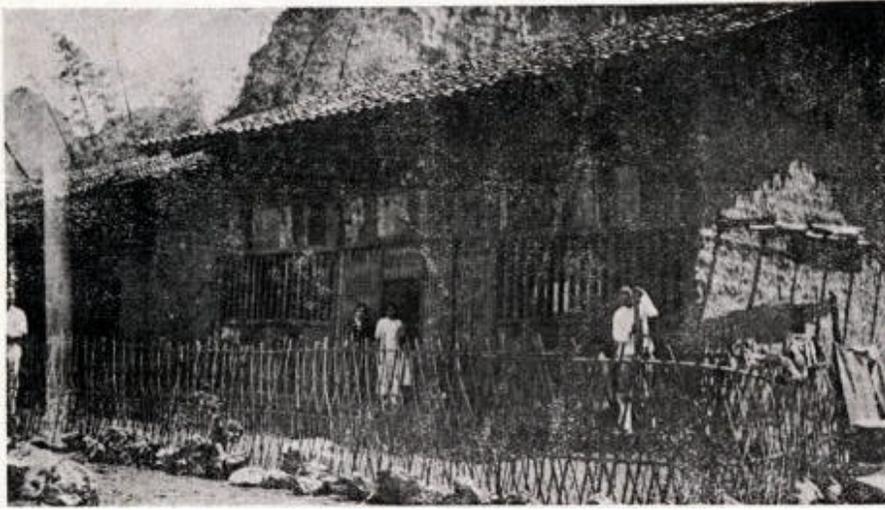
By February 10th we were ready to depart and I quote from my dairy, “a terrific downpour of rain deterred us from leaving until 10:30 a.m. at which time we eventually got away—21 carries, 4 pack horses, 2 sedan chairs and 17 of us walking. The roads were terrible, but we made 70 li (23 ½ miles) to P’ai Chong arriving at dark. Did not get food until 10 p.m. and eventually got a drink of boiled water at 11 p.m.”

We spent the first night in an open barn-like structure. It was not a hotel, but a barrack provided for the native militia. However, we were grateful for the shelter it provided and soon were asleep.

Early next morning we were off for the last 50 li of the journey. A look at the picture will reveal the mountainous trail over which we had to travel. In the foreground you will recognize Mrs. Newbern, the only foreign lady, and Pastor Lin with the black band around his arm.

The young lady students proved to be excellent walkers. Only the one who was wounded in the ankle had to be carried all the way. Another student, a young man, was wounded badly in the leg and remained behind in a Mission hospital in Nanning. An so at noon February 11th we arrived at “journeys end,” praising God, that His Grace was sufficient.

Revival Village



The building you see in the picture is the best building in Revival Village. The type of building construction is unvarying—walls of mixed mud and grass. Windows were simply openings in the walls with boards as shutters. There was not one glass window in the entire village. The building in the picture served as dormitory for the girl students, Chinese teachers, Mr. Pennington and Mr. & Mrs. Newbern, as well as for the School dining room and class room. The church served as dormitory for the boys.

Are you wondering why such a place was chosen for our School? The reasons are, it is a village which is friendly to us; an area removed from bombing; and a district close to French Indo China where food supplies were available.

Perhaps you are wondering about the name of the village. Revival Village was, of course, not its original name. As is often the case in China, the Gospel entered this dark village because of answered prayer for the sick. Gradually the head of each house accepted the Lord until it could be said the village had received the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the past they had been given to demon worship. Right back of the village is a very peculiarly shaped mountain. This mountain was called “Devil Mountain” and was much feared. No one dared ascend it and all were afraid to cut its trees. Many are the tales of the punishment meted out to those who disobeyed.

After the village accepted the Lord all this was changed. “Devil Mountain” was ascended whenever they so desired and its trees now provided them with needed firewood. In fact there was such a great change that there seemed to be only one thing to do—change the name of the village.

Chuang Tribesmen



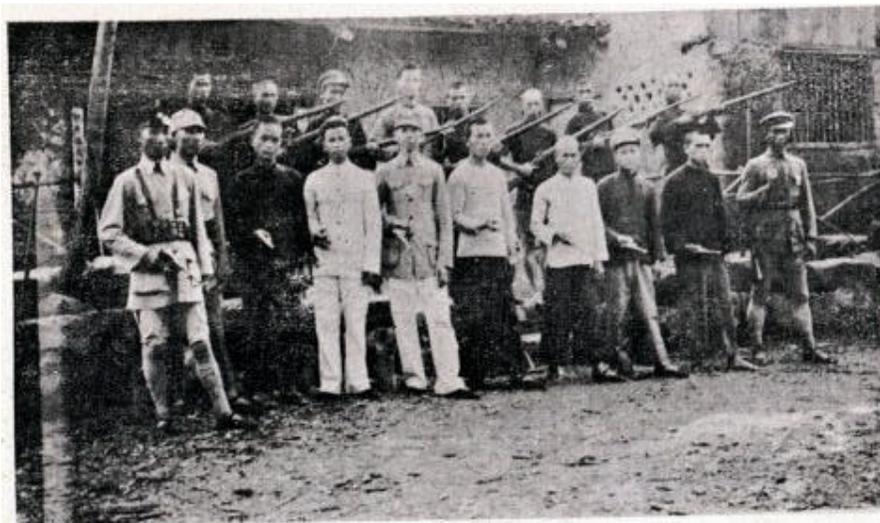
The group in the above picture may appear to you to be Chinese. They are, in the sense that they are citizens of China. Actually they are members of the great Tai race which, etymologists tell us, extends as far south as Siam (Thailand) and sweeps north as far as Kweichow Province in Central China. Their language and customs are quite distinct from the Chinese. It is true, however, that they are the most progressive tribal people of China and in many of the larger cities are being absorbed by the Chinese through intermarriage and education. Certainly, it can be safely said that the great Tai race represents one of the greatest challenges to the Church in China. There are many millions still unreached by the Gospel.

By far the largest part of the population in and around Revival Village are Chuang tribesmen. How wonderful that we should come to such a center at this time. It certainly seemed to be a challenge to our School. Here was an opportunity to study the Chuang people at close range—to see their need and how it should be met. Surely it was far better than reading, or being lectured to, on how work should be done among them.

Visitation work was found to be the best way to contact the neighboring villages. Volunteers were sought from Revival Village as interpreters. What a strange sight it would have seemed to you to have watched our students entering a village and yet not being able to converse with the inhabitants, but that was the case. Very few could speak Mandarin, China's official language, or Cantonese, the main language medium of South China. Here was where the Christian interpreter was necessary. Sentence by sentence the Gospel was preached, and perhaps heard, for the first time.

Yes, our opportunity was unique and great. Pray that the Gospel seed sown by the students around Revival Village may bring forth fruit.

The Village Guard



Life at Revival Village was always interesting. Carpenters and mason were not to be had, so most of the necessary repair work had to be done by the students, often assisted by the villagers. We built the brick stove in the kitchen, the students' beds, partitions for the rooms and laid the wooden floor in the girls dormitory—using coffin boards. Yes, it was interesting and different.

There were no stores at the village so trips were made daily to the market town three miles away. This town, during troublesome days, was known far and wide as a rendezvous for robbers. Posing as a tailor, there lived in this town a man who was really the secret leader of a large band of local bad characters. He decided to plan the kidnapping of our girl students and foreigners.

One of the brigands invited to participate had a nephew who was a Christian. When he learned he was to help kidnap his nephew's friends he felt it would be a "loss of face" and so turned "State's evidence."

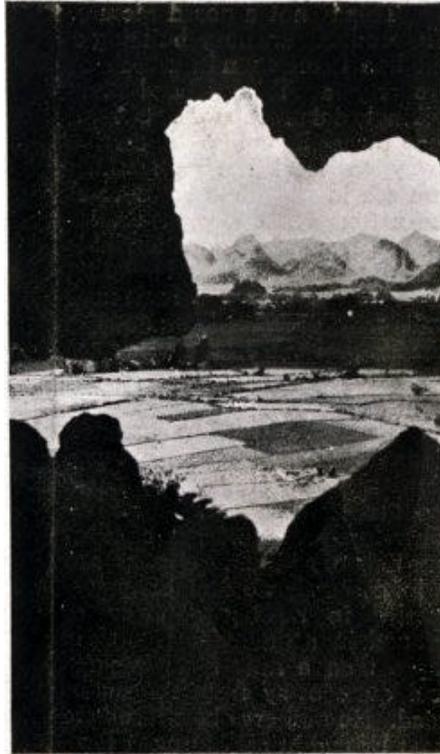
We were awakened after midnight, April 25th, by a courier from the local authorities at the market town, with instructions for our villagers to post guards at all the mountain passes.

Since there were no village police, the government required that the villagers themselves assume responsibility for our protection. Three soldiers were sent to strengthen the village guard and they remained until the end of the school term. The tension was so great on a few nights that some of us never bothered to change our clothes upon retiring.

During this time the Government succeeded in capturing the robber chief and many of the gang. As a result it was feared revenge would be sought upon our village.

This robber experience resulted in the entire School praising God for our remarkable deliverance, also in arriving at the decision that the School should be in a place where the local people would not be compelled to protect us. Therefore when graduation day came, we said a reluctant farewell to our Chuang Christian friends, committing the future of the School to the Lord.

Tsingsi



Hanoi, the capital of French Indo-China, was less than a day's journey by car from Lungchow. The Mission Executive Committee decided to move the School there, if possible. Negotiations with the French Government were necessary and our fellow Alliance missionaries in that field undertook the responsibility of securing necessary permission for us.

The Governor General was favorable to our request and we daily looked for the arrival of his written permission. Suddenly the European war clouds overshadowed every thing else. War was declared and Indo-China's Governor was also changed. Our request was eventually refused and as a result, the Fall School term had to be cancelled.

About this time a successful attack on the city of Nanning in southern Kwangsi was launched by the Japanese. Our students, who were out in evangelistic work, nearly all evacuated to Tsingsi, a city in the south western part of Kwangsi, the field in which Rev. and Mrs. A. Kowles and Rev. R. Kowles are working.

Thus it seemed wise to proceed to Tsingsi and conduct a special term. Emergency plans were made and soon a party comprised of Rev. C. M. Pennington, Rev. W. H. Holton, Rev. C. C. Fowler and Rev. and Mrs. W. C. Newbern were on their way from Hanoi via the new international highway which has just been opened. What a welcome we received from missionaries and students! So Tsingsi became the home for our School during the spring 1940 emergency term.

Tsingsi is a small city built by the Chinese as a trading post for the Chuang and other tribes of that area. Situated in a lovely valley, it is surrounded by fantastically shaped limestone mountains. The above picture was taken from a cave which some used as a hiding place during air attacks. In the foreground are fertile fields with Tsingsi in the distance.

Laboring for the Lord



This is not a posed picture. The students are busy building a bamboo fence round our School property at Tsingsi, and they willingly did much more. Several tons of earth had to be carried away to level the path which you see in the picture. Several more tons of large stones were carried from the mountain side for use around the School building and for the walk. The fresh mud walls were patted smooth and the dirt floors leveled. However we are ahead of our story.

Experience with war conditions forewarned us that Tsingsi, since it was on the main road, would soon be a military objective. Therefore we could not conduct our School within the city. After a long search we eventually succeeded in renting a piece of ground in a tiny village slightly more than a mile from the city and quite away from the motor road. No military objectives were near by and in addition, our location was embraced in the leafy foliage of lovely bamboo trees.

The question we had to face with regard to our building project was, if it were worth erecting even a native structure for only one term, for we could not be sure the Mission would approve of continuing the School at Tsingsi, nor was it safe to say war clouds would not threaten even this remote area. But praise the Lord, all felt the building should be erected and best of all, the funds necessary were received through free-will contributions.

We contracted for the erection of a rectangular shaped building with a lean-to kitchen, to be built of bamboo, with straw and mud for plaster.

Hebron



How pleased we all were with our new mud School house! Everyone had had some part in its construction. Mr. Glorious Truth Loh who graduated while the School was at Revival Village was now the Tsingsi preacher. Having a natural gift for working with bamboo, he gave himself unstintingly to supervising construction and beautifying the building. The doors were arched with a laced bamboo border and the windows were of criss-cross design, this not only provided safety but was also a work of art. He even managed to make a figured flower in mud and lime around each window on the outside.

The new building meant so much to us all that we decided to give it a name. A meeting was called and Hebron, meaning “Fellowship” was chosen. It was the heart cry of these young men and women, to know God in true fellowship.

Then too, there was the human side. The trials which we had gone through had been the means of drawing us very close together.

The School had become as one large family, even racial differences were seldom thought of. Nothing but the power of the Gospel could bring such fellowship in days when the spirit of Nationalism is so prevalent. We had feared death, great danger and disappointments together and our hearts were joined in unique Christian love and fellowship.

Helping in the construction of Hebron gave all an opportunity for showing our determination to go on with Him and to not accept defeat. Many of our young students were bearing heavy burdens. Some had not heard from their homes in months, other had heard, but the news was not good, perhaps it was loss of property or sickness in the family. They told us all their burdens, often between sobs and tears, thus Hebron became for us all, in fact as well as name, a "place of fellowship."

The Daily Routine



Since what School equipment we had was kept at Hebron it was necessary to have someone living there. This lot fell to our young men students. Accordingly a very crude loft was built, its most attractive feature being that there was plenty of fresh air. The lady students and the missionaries lived at the Mission in the city.

Breakfast was at 6 a.m. and the trek to Hebron began at 6:30. Usually we were able to leave before the air raid alarm sounded, but not always. We took the street leading through the West gate and in a short while were outside the city, following a small path to our destination. We are not the only ones out so early. Hundreds of people were pouring out of the city gates. Mothers with small children, carrying their lunches with them, were in the majority, but there were also many aged, and most pitiful of all, the sick.

The first thing on the schedule was chapel at 7:30 and classes began at eight and were over at 4 p.m. Meals were served from the lean-to kitchen at 10 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.

In the somewhat dark interior we were able to carry on our classes with much greater regularity than if we were in the city. True our equipment was quite primitive, crude benches for seats and plain boards on stools served as desks, but these were quite in conformity with our surroundings. They met our need and served the purpose.

Tsingi was bombed for the first time on April the 11th. Following this event we decided to take the students to the hillside when the alert air raid alarm sounded. All this was reminiscent of Wuchow days and we praised God for the Grace He gave to go through this trial once again.

Numerous caves in nearby mountains provided shelter. Once the local people asked us to leave a cave we had been using, for in times past it had been a leper's home—this we were very glad to do! Thus, in spite of air raids we were able to keep up with our schedule, praise the Lord.

Evangelistic Work



The weekends provided opportunity for evangelistic work. Messrs. Holton, Fowler and Pennington were able to accompany the students on trips.

The picture shows a group ready to leave with Messrs. Fowler and Holton. It also provides a good close-up of Hebron. Notice the window construction. At the time the picture was taken we had removed the design of lime and mud around the outside of the window because it made our building too conspicuous. Note the woven bamboo fence, also how the sun cracks the walls.

One of the places chosen for visitation was the market town of Hwa Tong. This town had no Gospel Hall and, since with the opening of the new motor road it had become very important, we felt that we were Gospel debtors to the people of Hwa Tong.

Nearly every weekend found an evangelistic party in Hwa Tong. The response was most encouraging. The interest on one occasion was so keen that an inquirer begged the missionary to sell him his personal New Testament when the supply had been sold out. Hundreds attended the Gospel meetings held in the market place. It was with joy that the witness to the Power of the Gospel was given.

When we are faithful to our responsibilities there is little room for remorse. The tragedy of the Hwa Tong bombing was keenly felt both by believers and unbelievers. It occurred during a market day. A scouting plane spotted several thousand people congregated at Hwa Tong. The plane approached but the tribes and village people never even bothered to run, not suspecting they would be considered “a military objective.” Suddenly a bomb exploded in their midst and an hundred lives were snuffed out, in addition scores were wounded.

Pray for the Word as it is given forth in war torn China these days. Who knows—it may be the hearers last opportunity.

The Faculty and Student Body 1940



We present the faculty and student body of the special spring term 1940. The picture was taken on the happy occasion of the visit of our Chairman Rev. W. H. Oldfield. We celebrated by having an air raid alarm.

By God’s Grace we were able to complete our term as planned. The students were once again sent out to the surrounding districts to work during the vacation period.

After the close of School the missionaries left for the coast via French Indo-China. Since then there have been great political changes in the Far East. It is now probably impossible to return to Tsingsi via French Indo-China. We are counting on your fellowship in prayer for the Bible School.

Editor Wm. C. Newbern

5 Belfran Road, Kowloon, Hong Kong

Prayer Requests.

The Mission Conference convening in Hong Kong Oct. 28 - Nov. 2 unanimously decided that the Bible School should return to Wuchow. This action was taken because of the changed situation. Wuchow seems to be out of the area of present military activity.

Pray that we may benefit from the many lessons He taught us during the past two years.

Pray for our great need for Chinese teachers.

Pray that more candidates for the School will be forthcoming from Kwangsi.

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