Church of the Brethren China Relief, circa 2002

E. Joseph Wampler
D. Eugene Wampler

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.bridgewater.edu/digitized_primary_sources

Recommended Citation
https://digitalcommons.bridgewater.edu/digitized_primary_sources/6

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Special Collections and College History at BC Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Digitized Primary Sources by an authorized administrator of BC Digital Commons. For more information, please contact rlowe@bridgewater.edu.
Church of the Brethren China Relief

E. Joseph Wampler\textsuperscript{1} and D. Eugene Wampler\textsuperscript{2}

\textsuperscript{1} 330 Llama Ranch Lane, Santa Cruz, CA 95060 jwampler@cruzio.com
\textsuperscript{2} 321 Morris Road, Harleysville, PA 19438 genewamp@verizon.net
1 Introduction

The Church of the Brethren was Founded in 1708 in Schwarzenau, Germany and was part of the the Anabaptist/Pietist movement. Relying on the New Testament as their guide, they believed that Jesus had intended a different kind of life — one based on peaceful action, plain and compassionate living, and a shared search for truth.

In the early days of the Church their pacifistic beliefs conflicted with the war mentality of 18th century Europe. Starting in 1719 they began moving to America to escape religious persecution. They originally had only lay ministers, but by the 20th century, they had also developed a cadre of professional pastors. The Church of the Brethren, together with the Quakers and the Mennonites were considered the three classical peace churches.

Their religious sacraments closely followed New Testament scriptural precedents. For instance, they believed in adult triune baptism by total immersion in water. Because of this practice, the Brethren were sometimes referred to as Dunkers, a name they did not consider pejorative. Their communion ceremonies were elaborate affairs that recalled Jesus’ last supper. A foot-washing ceremony was followed by a meal (usually a hearty stew) and then the sharing of communion bread and wine (unfermented grape juice for the teetotaling brethren.) Foot-washing in China caused a problem; traditionally the Chinese considered the uncovered foot of a woman with bound feet as highly erotic: much as we would view an uncovered western woman’s breasts. The solution was a symbolic sprinkling of her shoe.

They had a strong commitment to a liberal arts education and founded some of the earliest co-educational colleges in America. Until the twentieth century the Brethren we primarily farmers living in their own communities, separate from the general society. Education, both religious and secular, was conducted mostly in the home. But in 1857 the denomination cautiously permitted Sabbath schools and by the early 1900s several denominational colleges had been established.

The early twentieth century also saw the development of foreign mission activity. Missionaries were sent to India in 1894 and to China in 1908. By 1920 they had built large western-style hospitals and schools in their four main Chinese mission stations. As part of their educational outreach in China they had a literacy program focused on educating at least one girl in every village surrounding the mission stations. This both increased the status of girls and insured that each village would have at least one person who could read newspapers and understand official documents, since educated boys would leave the village.
2 Early Highlights of Church Programs and Relief Work

2.1 Medical relief

In 1918 there was a serious outbreak of bubonic plague in Shanxi province. Governor Yen Xi-Shan asked Dr. Fred Wampler to supervise the control of this epidemic. With strong official backing, strict quarantine procedures were instituted and within two months all the territory in Shanxi south of the Great Wall was declared free from the disease.

Plague victims were buried in quicklime pits.

The Ping Ding hospital quickly became a center for medical training. It was a valuable resource in a community with poor care for accident victims and patients with medical problems that were beyond the skills of traditional healers.

Dr. Fred Wampler performing a cataract operation in Ping Ding hospital.
2.2 Road construction work-relief

1920-1921 was a year of the Great Famine in North China. Twenty million people (40% of the population in five provinces) were dependent on relief. In February 1921, with funding from the International Red Cross and the Church of the Brethren, a work-relief project began to build an eighty mile motor road from Liao Chou to the railroad station at Yang Chuan.

Because the missionaries were more trustworthy and more respectful of the Chinese workers than the Red Cross managers (many of whom were foot-
loose veterans of World War I) all available missionaries were diverted to this project.

Women evangelists, working with village leaders, interviewed families who need relief, prepared lists of eligible families, recruited a worker from each family (when possible) and explained the program of paying for labor with food. Several of the mission men became work-team supervisors. Others supervised the food distribution centers, maintained records and provided medical services. The road was completed in July, 1921.

Relief grain at the railroad head.

Camels with grain for the Road workers.
2.3 Wool cooperative

Ms. Nettie Sanger, working in Qinxián, had a good idea. Chinese women knew how to spin. If the mission started a wool factory the farmers could sell their wool locally and local women could earn extra money processing the wool.
Nettie Senger in her wool workshop.

Farmers knitting in the winter during the fallow season.
Wool exhibit in Qin xian.

Women spinning wool for the Cooperative.
Sara Wampler views an early loom at the small wool factory. This loom, which made cloth that was much wider than the native loom, was a copy of a loom Ernest Wampler’s mother used in Virginia.

The result of cross-breading a French Merino (Rambouillet) ram (right) with a native Chinese sheep (center). The cross breed sheep (left) produced more wool than the native sheep and withstood the harsh winters of Shanxi province better than the pure-bred French sheep.
3 Relief during the Sino-Japanese war

3.1 1938-1939

Shouyang incident

By the winter of 1937, the Japanese had occupied Shouyang in their drive to conquer Shanxi province. On December 3 Mary Harsh sent a letter to her mother describing the occupation. She wrote:

“When the Japanese first came into this town there were 50 Chinese and we three foreigners here on our mission property and no one else in town which before their coming numbered 1800 people.

“Of course the soldiers had to have food but no one to help get it. Naturally the town was very badly looted and so some parts entirely destroyed.

“Yesterday when Alva went to the R.R. station I went along. This was the first I was outside of the court for over four weeks. The town in these weeks took on a very different aspect. What was once a busy little market town is now almost a complete desolation with soldiers going and coming any hour of the day, stray horses and mules and donkeys going thru [sic – but a common attempt at spelling reform] field and streets, a few natives returning but wearing a forlorn expression as they view the remains of their town, a few lonely looking dogs, and a few cheerful chattering birds. You perhaps wonder if I couldn't picture a more hopeless picture, well the half has not yet been seen nor could we tell it. But tomorrow the Japanese official is going to Tientsin and offered to take our mail along, and we really believe in two or three weeks we can get our mail. Our food supply is quite abundant, and since the Frenchman of whom we previously told you plans to live at Yang Chuan he gave us the opportunity to buy his large supply of coal, so in view of the coming winter we are abundantly blessed. Since this conflict has come into our town in these five weeks we entertained no less than two hundred people in our home, and from the highest to the lowest but Christ said 'In as much as ye did it unto these least ye did it unto me.'

“Each day Alva makes a tour to our Church compound and the Hospital to see if all is intact, and follows the oxcart to haul coal etc. Most of the rest of the time, besides meeting officials and acting as go between, I visit the women folks on the compound and to try to keep them sweet in such close quarters.”

Marie dispatched her letter in the care of a Japanese officer who was going to Beijing. That night Marie, her husband, Alva and Mineva Neher were called out to the French Station master’s home to mediate a dispute between the station master and his Japanese wife. They then disappeared and were never
There were few foreign missionaries in the Brethren mission stations. Rev. Crumpacker was the only foreign male in Ping Ding, Rev. Oberholtzer was the only foreigner in Zuoquan and the Rev. and Mrs. Wampler with their two children were the only foreigners in Qinxian. Communication in the war zone away from the rail line was extremely poor. Letters had to be hand carried. A month after the Missionaries’ disappearance, the news reached Marine colonel Evans Carlson who was imbedded with an 8th Route Army guerrilla band traveling in the Tai Hang Mountains and he informed Rev. Isaiah Oberholtzer in Zuoquan via an 8th Route Army radio transmission. On January 24 the news reached Qinxian. Of course this caused great concern among the missionaries as it seemed that their status as neutrals was not going to be respected by the Japanese. Mr. Hugh Mackenzie the Mission Treasurer who was living in Tianjin, wrote: “Mr Crumpacker was very much broken up over the matter and had been carrying a very heavy load all these past three months being the only man at his station. This was almost too much for him and I am sure I do not know how he stands up under it all.”

On February 19, 1938 the Wampler house was bombed during an air raid on Qinxian by six heavy Japanese bombers. While the explosion shocked and covered Elizabeth Wampler, her two children and the family of Mr. Dou, their Chinese cook, in dust they were otherwise unhurt. Unable to use their home the Wampers moved to a small cave room owned by one of the parishioners in a tiny village, Hojiachun, three miles east of Qinxian. Here they stayed until the beginning of April. By the end of March they had decided that it was not feasible to administer help to the local populace from their cave room, particularly since they had two young sons, the oldest just five years old. Despite having no way of knowing travel conditions and with no news from the mission station at Zuoquan, they decided to move and live in one of the American style houses there. They knew that Rev. Isaiah Oberholtzer was the only foreigner living in the large Zuoquan station.

The Church of the Brethren was a pacifistic denomination but their Chinese friends were vigorously engaged on one side of the war. Would using Mission resources to help the Chinese be a violation of the Mission neutrality? Should the missionaries follow the recommendation of the US Government and retreat to Beijing? The war had come to the pacifistic Brethren missionaries. How should they respond?

Once the Wampers arrived in Zuoquan they were able to resolved several issues that had caused tension between the Chinese authorities and the mission. And since Mrs. Wampler was a nurse, they reopened the Mission hospital.
that had been closed.

The Wampler’s Qinxian house after bombing

The Dou and Wampler children outside their Hojiachun cave home.
Initial war relief work

Shortly after the Wamplers arrived in Zuoquan Oberholtzer, Wampler and several Chinese evangelists, toured the mission field. Mr. Oberholtzer described what they found: “At Yu-she we found the greater part of the city in ashes. Not a single person was to be found at home. We could find no food or water to drink. Only a pig or two were wandering about the streets in search of food which was not there. The county seat at Wuxiang, and Qinxian and many market towns met the same fate and looked much alike. Everywhere the Chinese would estimate that three out of four homes had been totally destroyed. Surrounding Tsinchow there were twenty two villages that had been destroyed. And in another river valley there were some sixty villages destroyed in a short distance of twenty miles.

“We saw the aftermath of war in all its forms. We saw where Japanese and Chinese armies had waged a battle and where the Japanese had buried hundreds of animals on top of great quantities of ammunition which they were unable to carry along. We came upon hundreds of wounded who had no hope of living. We saw scores of innocent men and women who had been bayonetted many times. We saw old men who had been rolled down high terraces for no reason whatever and were now pleading with us to either take them to the hospital or kill them. And we saw the places where many other atrocities were enacted. We saw men of wealth who now had nothing left of home but stacks of debris, brickbats and broken tile. Scores of cattle were eaten up, eighty head of goats and sheep were burned on the hoof, great bins of millet and soy beans lay charred and useless in one home that I visited. And the woman of the home had nothing to offer me for food. She too had to return to her mountain friends for food. And this was one of our well-to-do members of the church. This was the first invasion of our southern mission territory.

“In the days that followed we made visits into the country villages far and near to investigate what relief was necessary. Wherever one would go where the invader had been, there was the same sorry sight of destruction, waste, poverty, and sorrow.”
China Relief

Rev. Wampler in ruins of Qinxian

Burned wool factory in Qinxian
In May of 1938 Rev. Oberholtzer returned to America leaving the Wampler family as the sole foreigners in Liao Chou. In mid June they were reinforced by missionary Anna Hutchinson, and nurses Laura Schock and Corda Wertz. Later, Brethren nurses Velma Ober, and Myrtle Pollock transferred from the hospital in Ping Ding to assist nurse Elizabeth Wampler and the Chinese staff at the mission hospital. Dr. Wang Yu Gang joined the hospital staff in December 1938 and the inpatient department was reopened. In 1939, Dr. Brown from Hankow arrived with Red Cross funds and helped enlarge services
for soldiers and civilians. The Zuoquan Mission hospital was open to all who needed medical help and could reach the mission. Orphan children were fed and housed in the school dormitories until their relatives could come for them. Because of crowded conditions in the dormitories, 50 of the orphan children contracted typhus from their lice infested clothing. To rid the clothing of lice the cloths were baked and the sick children were treated in the hospital. None of the fifty children who contracted typhus in Liao died, but because there was a shortage of typhus inoculation serum at Liao, nurse Myrtle Pollock, gave her quota to a colleague. In January 1940 she died from typhus contracted while nursing these children.

The reinforcements from Ping Ding not only helped in the Mission hospital, but also established a church relief camp at the Mission hospital and school to distribute relief to the Chinese population that was homeless and scattered into the surrounding Tai Hang mountains. Many Chinese Christians were involved in these efforts, but the foreign workers were needed to monitor the transfer of US relief supplies from Mission controlled property into Chinese channels and, because of their neutral status, to accompany supply shipments to insure that they were not commandeered by army or bandit gangs. From May to August letters urgently requesting more relief workers were sent by Rev. Wampler to the central missionary offices in Elgin Illinois, in America. Of particular concern was the distribution of relief to the population that had fled and were living in caves in the high mountains surrounding Zuoquan. On May 13, 1938 Wampler wrote: “If possible send out someone with good red blood to help out in the relief.”

Men’s ward in the Zuoquan mission hospital where military as well as civilian patients were treated.
Howard Sollenberger, together with his father “OC” Sollenberger volunteered to respond to the call. Howard, just 22 years old, had grown up in the Zuoquan mission station. He was a vigorous young man and was fluent in Chinese. While the Brethren Mission Board quickly agreed to send the Sollenbergers to China as a relief workers, the U.S. State Department was reluctant to issue passports, as it was felt that their proposed field of operation was too dangerous. But the Mission Board finally obtained the needed passports and
in September 1938 Howard and his father returned to China.

Howard recorded the first efforts of the relief effort thus: “During the initial invasion the mission stations were havens of refuge for fear-stricken refugees. Thousands of women and children who huddled together within the confines of the mission compound walls found protection because resolute missionaries dared to stand between them and an unscrupulous army of occupation. But in the devastated mountain regions, no organized aid to the victims of the “scorched earth” existed. And here the need was greatest. So in these mountain areas Brethren Service was organized to aid the victims of this military madness. Food was distributed where existing supplies had been destroyed. Peasant and refugee women were organized in a cooperative cloth weaving project to provide much needed clothing and bedding. In a few months they produced by hand over one 120,000 feet of cloth for themselves and for relief purposes. And when the armies swept through the countryside, emergency relief units were sent to aid the fleeing refugees who were scattered in small out-of-the-way mountain villages, in caves, and even protected gullies. Here an attempt was made to feed the hungry. Local peasants who could slip through the Japanese lines were sent to other areas to purchase and carry back millet (a food staple in the area), raw cotton for spinning and weaving, and other necessary tools and supplies. First aid and medical care were given to the sick and wounded. Missing children were found for parents, and parents for orphaned children. As soon as the armies had completed their mission and had gone on, the refugees were encouraged to return to their homes where they were given what aid was necessary for existence. Lean-to huts were sometimes built among the ruins of what were once their homes. Often seed grain and a few simple farming implements were provided to a peasant so that he might provide for himself and his family. But of the total who were in need, only a few could be helped.”

Left to Right: Li, Howard, Lui, Tien, Lien, Nieh – the mountain relief team. In Wu Ma they were fed by the local 8th Route Army troops.
A refugee family receives cotton to weave into cloth.

Spinning cotton into thread for weaving.

A refugee woman weaving.
A major problem faced by Howard was the contradiction between being an effective administrator of relief for the Chinese refugees who were fleeing the Japanese and his status as a citizen of a neutral country. And the Chinese armies were sometimes puzzled by his pacific stance. In a telling diary passage he describes the tension: “The reception here has reached the limit. Something must be done. I was met at the south of the village by all the school children. There must have been a hundred and fifty or more. They carried banners and slogans such as, ‘Welcome to our foreign friend.’ ‘America is our friend in time of need.’ ‘The hope of our refugees is relief from America.’ ‘Honor our friend who comes to help us.’ These school children were lined up along the road singing lustily when we came along. Then when I stopped they shouted their slogans with fists in the air. There was twenty minutes of such program before I could move on toward the village. The entire garrison was there to meet me with more slogans and songs. This time I was called upon to make a speech.

“It was quite obvious that they were surprised and not a little disappointed to see me come in without pretense. They had expected me to come on horseback and with an armed escort like a general of the Nationalist Army. And here I was trudging along beside my donkey without even a personal pistol at my side for protection. I made use of this situation to explain what I was trying to do. The peasants and guerrillas understood rather easily, but the soldiers of the Second Route Army couldn’t quite get the point. General Hsi had even gone so far as to put a guard of honor in front of the home where I’m staying. It is rather embarrassing to have these guards come to attention and salute whenever I come or go. The first one to see me shouts ‘Attention!’ And when I come abreast of them he shouts ‘Salute!’ I didn’t care to return the salute but I couldn’t ignore them. I remember how I felt when I had to bow to
the Japanese guard and they ignored me. I compromised my conscience and recognized them with a half salute and a half wave. I also went out of my way to fraternize with them and try to persuade them that I didn’t want to have a guard. But they had their orders.

“Another part of the reception was colorful posters of welcome plastered all over the village. There is also a big sign out in front of my quarters that reads, ‘Headquarters of Mr. Sollenberger, American Relief Administrator.’ I can see where all this fanfare can have its complications. I wish that I had never written to the County Magistrate telling him that I was coming to his county to investigate the refugee situation. If the Japanese spies are around they will wonder what manner of man this is out in the mountains less than fifteen miles from them. I wouldn’t be surprised but what it wouldn’t sound a bit defiant to them. My problem is how to avoid such circumstances.

“The end is not yet, but it was nearly so this afternoon. My headquarters was bombed – the room I was staying in, in fact. Fortunately I was about three miles away from home investigating some refugees in the mountains to
the north. Looks like I'm being forced to live up to my regulation of never staying in a village for more than one night when this close to the Japanese. Of course there is no way of knowing if the bombing was directed at me or not. The local commander thinks that it is just incidental to the opening of a Japanese attack.

8th Route army preparing for a night raid on He Shun.

News and information in the mountain refugee camps was quite poor. Howard tried to ameliorate the problem: “The Bureau of News and Safety is also doing a thriving business. I have several connections through which I can get rather reliable news. Some of this news we pass on to the refugees and local inhabitants through the Bureau. It is the best way I have found to stop rumors which cause fear and disturbance in such times as these. The safety division of the bureau is to inform the peasants and refugees as to the best way to protect themselves under war circumstances. I am hoping this will prevent panic in the future. I have already addressed two public meetings on the subject of Air Raid Precautions, Conduct Under Fire, and Poison Gas. The use of the latter in this campaign has thoroughly frightened the people.”

Despite Howard’s best efforts, the Japanese general in Zuoquan called him in to inform him that he would have to stop his mountain relief work. By
September 10, 1939 Howard had been forced by the Japanese to relocate to Beijing. There he wrote to the Church of the Brethren Mission Board: “Satisfactory explanations are hard to give to a military man. As a result of our conversation, I was gently but firmly told that our relief work in free China was not appreciated and would have to stop. On the other hand, I could sit around Liao reading books, magazines, papers (censored ones at that), entertain them, and maybe give relief to the good patriotic people who had come back to serve them. Either this or beware! Just look at what we have been doing to the British. And of course it would be best if you moved out. We know that you don’t have the right attitude towards the New Order in Asia.

“It was quite a surprise to me to know that this spy system is so effective. They shadowed us in Ping Ting, and I just found out today that they have tracked me out here. Well, it’s a new experience to be on the live black list. However, the embassy informs me that at present there is no personal danger because of the change in Japanese attitude towards Americans. Since the breaking out of the European war they are bending over backwards to please us. The Japanese know too well that we can stop their war by clamping the embargo down on them.”

Traveling to Xian Howard and Lewis crossed areas flooded by the Yellow River.

To avoid Japanese control of his activities, Howard recruited Louis Whitaker and arranged to transfer aid monies from Shanghai to Xian, which was well behind Japanese lines and was well defended by the Chinese. From Xian Louis
and Howard planned to re-enter Shanxi from below the Yellow River and travel behind the military lines into the Tai Hang Mountains near Zuoquan. In the early spring of 1940, both Louis and Howard nearly died of Typhoid fever while they were trying to cross into Shanxi province. They were rescued by Dr. Jean Chiang, of the Chinese red cross and nurse Katheen Hall, who had worked with Dr. Bethune in the Wu Tai Shan mountains. After they recuperated in Xian, they again attempted the move into Shanxi. By late spring the Japanese were attacking the Chinese military and civilian population centers that were north of the Yellow River. 

A biography of her life has been published by Mr. Tom Newnham ("DR. BETHUNE'S ANGEL, The Life of Kathleen Hall" (Graphic Publications: Auckland, New Zealand (2002))

These were mostly Nationalist and Shanxi Provincial troops, although under the "United Front" agreement there were a few communist observers. The main Communist forces were mostly north of Changzhi.
Louis and Howard met Nieh Chin Hau, the Church of the Brethren evangelist from Zuoquan who had earlier worked with Howard in the Zuoquan relief group, but who had since moved south. From the middle of April to the middle of May, these three investigated and distributed relief in the mountains south of Nuanchangcun, which itself is south west of Yang Cheng. They were in an area of desperate need. The Japanese were pressing south and were attempting to cross the Yellow River. There was frequent bombing raids in the area where the relief workers were operating; about 10 miles behind the front lines.
They had established their temporary center of operations in a small town Ma-Di-Cun that lay in a river valley. On May 2nd the town was bombed. Howard describes the attack: “It’s been a hectic day. We were planning to distribute relief after breakfast. But while we were eating an airplane came over and circled once. Nieh got scared and left his breakfast. Louis and I finished eating in spite of the airplane return. But when the alarm sounded again we went to the south edge of the village and luckily too. The plane circled twice and then dove from the south releasing two bombs. I watched the bombs all the way down. At first it looked like they were headed directly for us, but they went over our heads and exploded in the village about 40 yards back of us. Again it went up, circled, dove, machine gunned, and released two more bombs. These hit the fields 50 yards in front. The little ditch we were in was right in line of the plane as it dove each time. After the second I decided to move towards the S.E. corner of the village to get out of the direct line. But alas, I went the wrong direction. Two more bombs, one fifty feet above and one fifty feet below, machine gunning too, just a few feet to the right. A piece of shrapnel went through the corner of my coat. And a fourth time the plane dove releasing two more bombs a bit to the west. They were all around us. Pretty lucky I guess. Got a bit excited, but not scared. Was too busy taking pictures. Got six or seven good ones I think. Twelve people were wounded and two killed. Several had terribly messy wounds. Found a little boy of twelve who had a double compound fracture in the leg. Carried him in to the military hospital and fixed him up as much as possible.

Bombing raid at Madicun. Left: Children sheltering in a fresh bomb crater. Right: Soldiers relocating just after bomb explodes and aircraft circles for a new attack.
A result of the bombing raid. The boy, with a compound fractured leg is lying on the improvised stretcher used to carry him several miles to an aid station.

Dr. Paul Dohan, a Jewish refugee doctor from Austria via the Spanish civil war treating a wounded soldier. Howard reports that he was very good with his patients.
On May 14 Howard met Yin Guang-Yu, a medic from Zuoquan, who had been trained in the Hospital there. Howard was impatient to head north towards Zuoguan. He wrote, “We were on our way north but the big Japanese push into southeastern Shanxi had already held us in Yang Cheng county for over a month. There was almost continual fighting along the whole front so it did not seem advisable to attempt sneaking through the lines. The Eighth Route territory toward which we were headed was completely surrounded by the Japanese. If we went now it meant going through the fighting lines. If we were to wait maybe the Japanese would be driven away from their present positions. But a week later the situation was the same as it had been for the last month.

“In talking the situation over one evening Louis suggested that one of us attempt to break through the lines and proceed north. The other would stay in Yang Cheng and Tsing Cheng to carry on the work that we had started there among the refugees. After a rational discussion it was decided that Yin and myself should make the trip. We were to take about twenty thousand dollars along to take care of what ever emergency situation we might run into. But our main task was to investigate the possibility of work in the Eighth Route Army territory. When I returned we were to go back to Sian to get more funds and then, if it seemed advisable, we would both proceed north again together.

“I reduced my baggage again so that it could be easily carried by one person. I had learned before that too much baggage might mean that you
would lose it all. Take what you think you will need, divide it by half and you will still have too much for such an adventure as we were headed to. " Yin obtained permission from his medical unit to join the relief group for a month. On May 22, Howard and Yin set out for the mountains outside of occupied Zuoquan.

![A guerrilla squad changing from peasant farmer’s clothing into military uniforms.](image)

To reach Zuoquan, Howard and Yin had to cross the line of battle. Here is Howard’s description. “But when we got to Chue Shan, where we were planning to spend the night, we met up with a group of the II War Area Guerrilla Division. They had come from Loyang and were on their way to N.E. Tsing Cheng Hsien. They were going to cross the motor road at night. They said that it wasn’t safe to do it by day. They had gotten information of a small opening between two Japanese forts that were about half a mile apart. There were large concentrations of Chinese troops in the vicinity; the 9th Army. They were planning an offensive soon so it was quite certain that the Japanese would not be out wandering around after night. This group of guerrillas was ready to start when we met them, and could not even wait until we found something to eat, so we started off with them without our supper.

“There were forty six all together in our party — twenty five soldiers, 19 carriers and Yin and myself. We made quite a string walking single file along the mountain paths. The first part of the night was dark. The moon didn’t

---

5In addition to personal requirements and the money, Howard was carrying an extensive medical kit. This kit was to be much needed on his trip.
show itself until 12:30.

“The small path that we were on was difficult to follow. It was rocky and took us through several deep ravines. The narrowness of the path made it necessary for us to move along single file. Silence was the absolute law. Even whispering was taboo after we had passed the last Chinese outpost. Nor were we permitted to bunch up. We could clearly see that the Chinese were preparing for a counter attack. They were placing their field guns, making machine gun nests and digging trenches. But we went on our way. There was one steep slope that we had to descend that was only two hundred yards from the first Japanese outpost. In the daytime they could command the whole slope with their machine guns. There had been a group of Chinese soldiers who attempted to follow this same route that morning. But they had been spied by the Japanese who turned their Machine guns on them. We passed several dead bodies along the path. I imagine that the rest of our group were thinking the same thing that I was. ‘Wouldn’t it be wise to turn back before it gets too late?’ But no one offered the suggestion.

“Every time that someone would stumble or start a little stone rolling down the hillside, the rest of us would hold our breath and listen. If there was no response from the [Japanese] fort on the hill we would silently move on. From time to time a light would flash from the fort above us. I was expecting to have a searchlight thrown on us any minute. But they were evidently only signaling to the other forts.

“Going up the other side between the two enemy forts we met three Chinese scouts. They reported all quiet, so we proceeded with confidence. Yin, our two carriers, the guide and myself were near the middle of the line. The two carriers in particular were nervous. They wished that they could turn back. But maybe some of the rest of us did too. They merely were freer in expressing their fear than the rest of us. The line moved on through the shadows. We had reached the ridge which was directly between the two Japanese forts. There were light clouds moving toward the moon. I wished that they would veil the moon and leave us in complete darkness. Ah, they were going to be obliging.

“It must have been about one o’clock when we started down the slope on the other side away from the Japanese forts and toward the Chinese lines. A rifle shot suddenly broke the stillness of the night. The bullet whistled by overhead. Every one dropped in their tracks and crawled toward some protection. The members of our party slipped behind a terrace. There was silence again so we slipped out from behind the terrace and once more started down the slope. Five more shots. Three of the bullets sounded dangerously close to us as they whistled overhead and buried themselves in the bank behind us. We dropped under cover again, and none too soon, for a spray of machine gun
bullets followed. The Japanese had spotted us. It was too late to turn back, and the road before us was far too open to fire from the Japanese guns. But during the spasmodic firing we were able to creep a little further down. It was slow going but the moon would soon drop behind the hill. Then under cover of darkness we might be able to slip behind the Chinese lines. But it wasn’t to be as easy as that.

“We were just beginning to congratulate ourselves on a lucky escape when all Hell broke loose all around. Mountain guns began to boom, machine guns were sputtering, with rifle fire keeping up a lively accompaniment. ‘My God!’ All this could not be directed against us. It was coming from all sides. Then it suddenly dawned on me that the Chinese were launching their attack. We were caught between the two armies. Yin and our three men had found a place between two pretty good sized rocks. I would have crawled in with them, but the place was already over crowded. I told Yin to keep an eye on the men so they wouldn’t get away with our things. Then I crawled on to find a place for myself behind another rock. The battle increased in heat as the time went on. One group of Chinese had reached one of the forts. We could see the sputtering and explosion of hand grenades as the Chinese threw them into the Japanese trenches.

“The method of fighting of the two groups was entirely in contrast. The Chinese were having a big time out of it. They would shout and yell as they went into battle; ‘Sha, sha, sha ... Da tao je pen’ (Kill, kill, kill ... Beat down the Japanese.) On the other hand the Japanese were taking things on the serious side. We didn’t hear a word out of them. But their machine guns were pouring out a continual stream as they sprayed the hillside. And their cannon blasting away at the unseen enemy. It continued for about an hour without a let up. I was afraid that it would get light before we could get out, in which case we would be in an extremely difficult position. Suddenly one of the guerrillas above me let out a yell and started rolling down the hillside. Hit by a machine gun bullet. I crawled over to where he was gasping, but there was nothing that I could do. In a few minutes it was all over. One of our number was gone. I began to wonder how many of us would be left by morning. Being anxious about Yin and our carriers I slipped down to see them. There was twenty thousand dollars in one of the bags they were carrying. They didn’t know it, but it caused me a great deal of concern. And when I discovered that they were not between the two rocks where I had left them, my hair all but turned gray. There were too many stray shells flying around so I stayed where I was. They had probably found a safer spot. An hour and a half later things began to quiet down, so I slipped out of the shelter and started to look for Yin and the carriers. I couldn’t call to them, and it being dark, my efforts to locate them were futile. The battle was over. The Chinese had been unable to dislodge the Japanese and were withdrawing to their own lines. Our group also began to move up the hill toward the Chinese lines. I asked one
of the Guerrillas if they had seen my men. ‘Oh yes, they are on ahead.’ So I fell into line without giving them further thought. All along the way we were challenged by Chinese sentries. But we had the password, so had no difficulty.

“Arriving in the Chinese camp we stopped to count noses. There were nine men missing, and to my distress four of them were of my party: Yin, the two carriers, the guide and my twenty thousand dollars. The other five were guerrillas. I knew that at least one of these would never be found. As to the others, could they have met the same fate? I should have been able to relax and have some sleep before morning, but sleep was far from me as long as my men and money were missing. So several of the guerrillas and I retraced our steps in an attempt to find our lost comrades. Back in the spot where we had been hiding among the rocks we found the bodies of three men. They were all guerrillas. But there was no trace of my men and the other two guerrillas. It would soon be light so we could not continue the search. Back in the Chinese camp I dropped to sleep in the general’s bunk. It seemed only a minute later I was awakened by an exploding shell very near to the home I was sleeping in. Jumping out of bed, I almost stumbled over three men who were asleep on the floor. I looked again. Yes, they were my men. And there beside them was my baggage.

“Another shell exploded in the courtyard next to us. The four men on the floor were now awake and we all ran to a spot of safety. And while we were waiting for the bombardment to stop, I heard their story. The carriers, being frightened by the battle, decided that they would run. Fortunately the guide had remained loyal, so he and Yin had taken out after them. The carriers, having the baggage, could not move very fast and were soon caught. The battle was so intense at that time that they did not dare venture back to the place they had been. When things finally quieted down, they were unable to find the path and the rest of the party. The guide thought that he knew the way, so they started out on their own. But before they knew what they were about, they almost walked into one of the Japanese forts. They were followed by a spray of rifle shots as they turned tail and ran, but were able to get back to the valley. There they found two of the guerrillas that had been in the party. Both of them were slightly wounded and were trying to crawl toward the Chinese lines. The wounded soldiers knew the general direction of the Chinese camp, so together the six of them pulled into camp shortly after dawn.”

By the second week of June, Howard and Yin had reached the familiar mountains to the east of Zuoquan. Now Howard needed to find a way to distribute his relief funds to the families of the most needy. For this, he sought out Li Di-hua, who had worked with him earlier. His described the conditions and the negotiations for distribution of relief funds:
“I am surprised to see how well dressed the Eighth Route soldiers are this year. As far as uniforms go there is no distinction between them and government troops. The trouble is that they still have their old guns. We met several officers and a unit of soldiers marching south. They looked pretty snappy.

“Gossip and propaganda is playing havoc in the internal friction. In Yang Cheng we heard that the 8th Route Army had redivided the land in this region – 3 mu to an adult and 1 mu to a child. Nothing of the sort has happened. The situation is not so different from what it was before.”

But on June 8 Howard also noted: “There is a purge of all Guo Ming Tang [Nationalist] party members past and present going on now. It doesn’t look very good for China’s future. Soldiers came into our room to search three times last night. It sounds like the stories that come out of Russia.

“Every one in Liao county who had more than 100 mu [about 17 acres] has been liquidated or is in custody. About 130 persons have lost their lives during the purge.”

On June 11 Howard traveled east into Honan to the Third District Gov. Headquarters to discuss the distribution of mission funds:

“Li Yü She [Brethren Qinxian evangelist], Yang [sic?, Yin?] and I crossed the provincial boundary into Honan today. We went across in search of the Third District Gov. Headquarters and Mr. Li Di Hua. Found both in a little village close to She Hsien.

“Had a meeting with the government officials this P.M. Discussed the relief propagation. Everything but the National Currency problem was ironed out. They want to change the National currency into local currency. I can’t do that because it would mean that the peasants would only receive from 40% to 60% of the value of the relief funds that I brought. We’ll see about it tomorrow6.

“They held a big reception meeting for me this evening. Their idea is for me to carry a good report of them and their work back behind the lines and to America. The speech that the president of the anti-Japanese and National Reconstruction University gave started out by praising my enthusiasm and ability to undergo hardship. Then he presented six points that he hoped that I would carry back with me in hopes that I could serve China by bringing

---

6According to Evans Carlson (in Twin Stars of China), the Communists were short of China’s Central Bank funds (National currency) that would be needed to purchase needed supplies that were only available from outside the regions that they controlled. This may have been the reason that the directors were trying to obtain control of Howard’s relief monies at the best possible terms they could achieve.
about a better understanding between the two parties now at odds. It was a very good speech and very much to the point. I only wish their actions would follow their words.

“After an early breakfast of gaoliang [Kafir corn] noodles and scrambled eggs, we again went into conference over the problems of relief distribution. It was decided to form a committee to handle the funds. We will both have committee reps. The funds will be used principally in the Eastern parts of Ping Ting, Si Yang, He Shun and Liao Hsien counties.

“Again we got stuck on the National currency question. Both sides refused to give in. After about an hour’s debate (a bit heated at times) we came to terms. We would distribute neither National currency nor local currency, but would distribute grain. The amount of currency to be determined by the purchasing value of National currency.

“After the meeting Li, Yang, [Yin?] and I started back toward Ma Tien. It is only 25 li, but it took us five hours. The weather these few days is terribly hot and dry. We would stop under about every tree and cool off.”

The political directors also gave Howard a letter of appreciation for his work:

“The Japanese have ignored all human rights and violated the peace by forcefully invading and devastating many parts of our country. The burden of military occupation on our people has been extremely heavy and the suffering severe. Spring flood and summer drought have conspired with war to bring to this region the most intense suffering that it has ever experienced.

“We hesitate to describe the situation in which we find ourselves for we know that there is suffering in your country and even among the suppressed people of Japan. But you can not know what is happening here if we remain silent. In many parts of eastern Shanxi and western Hopei the people are collecting leaves, bark and grass for food. Even the chaff of millet and wheat is a luxury which few can afford. It is pitiful to see the people as ashen grey skeletons and the children with protruding abdomens. Every day numbers are dying from privation, exposure and disease.

“We are anxiously calling both day and night for those who will relieve our distress. And we are led to believe through the expression you have already made that your organizations have an interest in uplifting humanity. The coming of your representatives have given us new faith in the friendship we have always felt toward you and your country.
“In representing the people of this region we wish to express our highest respect and most profound gratitude for the deep sympathy and generous help which you have given us. It will remain a source of encouragement and stimulation to us through the dark days ahead. And we fervently hope that you will find it possible to continue your work in raising funds and in sending administrators to relieve our suffering and to free our people from their misery.

Most respectively yours,

Signed: The Political Directors,
Bureau of the Guerrilla Base Regions”

An ancient temple on the road between Ma Tien and Zuoquan. This temple is dedicated to Lord Guan, a “Three Kingdoms” hero who became the god of war.

A recent photo of the flood plain in the Tai Hang mountains where Ma Tien lies surrounded by natural mountain beauty.
In Ma Tien the district Government had set up a high school. Howard was very interested in education in general, but in particular he was interested in how China was coping with loss of its educational facilities in occupied territory. On June 19 Howard was again in Ma Tien and took pictures of the school there:

“Returned to Ma Tien by noon. Took most of the afternoon taking pictures of the Tai Hang [named after the mountains] High School. If this series turns out well, it should make an interesting story. About 400 students, 1/8 girls. Study hygiene, drawing, music, world and Chinese history, geography, math, Chinese and the Principles and Practice of Communism. Four full time teachers. Older students help younger students. Students and faculty are given food, two changes of clothes per year, plus spending money. Principal and business manager $5 per month, teachers $8, and students $1.”

Students from three different provinces arriving at Ma Tien school.
The daily routine at the Tai Hang School at Ma Tien was announced by a bugler. The old bell was an air raid alarm as the school was completely surrounded by Japanese.

Idols were removed from the temples, the walls whitewashed and the buildings were converted to schools. These students in Ma Tien are having study hour.
Teaming up with Li Di-hua, Howard traveled West to the 8th Route Army headquarters to ask Zhu De for safe passage through guerrilla held territory. Zhu De was not there, but while there he became friendly with Peng Dehuai, who not only gave him a military pass but also a captured Japanese horse to carry his baggage. On his first attempt to return to Xian, Howard and Yin were nearly trapped by a Japanese circling movement that had also nearly surrounded a group of students from the coastal Universities who were being escorted towards the Communist headquarters at Yenan, Shaanxi Province. The students and their guides were unfamiliar with the territory but Howard who had hunted in the region was able to avoid the Japanese and lead the students and their guides to safety.

While at the Army headquarters, Howard was able to visit their military academy and talk with the staff and other visitors who were in residence. These included Gung Pung and Lee Kun-po.

Howard was particularly impressed by the ways the Chinese armies explained their aims to the peasant population:
“The Chinese have always been very fond of drama, so this method of propaganda is particularly effective. There are several well-trained play troops that spend all of their time traveling up and down the country explaining China’s plight by the use of drama. Most of the actors and actresses have been trained at the Yenan School of Dramatic Art. Here the students are directed by one of Shanghai’s former cinema actress. She is turning out some excellent players.

“One would naturally expect that all of this propaganda would be directed against the Japanese. It is a surprise to hear that Fascist Imperialism, not the Japanese people, is the enemy of China. It is more than idle words; it is practiced. There are very few captured guerrillas that ever live to tell the story. But every well-behaved Japanese that falls into the hands of the Guerrillas is treated as a friend and guest of China. When traveling he is furnished with a mount. His food is much better than what his captors eat, and he is given the opportunity of attending a special school where he can learn the Chinese language, culture and habits. I have attended a reception that a city put on for a group of captives. The friendliness of these people, who have suffered so much at the hands of these men, is remarkable.”

Students, led by Howard, escaping a Japanese trap. These student were from Eastern China and were heading toward the Communist headquarters in Yenan. Howard received a commendation for the rescue.
Military academy students studying under a walnut tree. From such students came the new Communist leadership.

Tribute to Howard from Lee Kun-po.
Gong Peng, at 8th RA headquarters in June 1940. At this time she was secretary to Marshal Zhu De and was in charge of Japanese prisoners of war. She later worked for Zhou Enlai. In 1949 she joined the Foreign Ministry, becoming the first woman department head. She is drinking hot chocolate supplied by Howard Sollenberger.

Japanese prisoners of war studying Chinese history.
End of June, 1940. Peng Dehuai addresses the headquarters 385 battalion of the Eighth route army. Nearly all these men were veterans of the long march.

After the safe arrival of the Chinese East Coast students at the 8th Route Army headquarters Peng Dehuai introduced Howard to his troops in the following way:

“The motivation bringing him to us [is] the Christian principle of Under Heaven one Family. We have no quarrel with this kind of Christianity for it is the assistance of one brother who is in distress by another who is more fortunate. He comes to us with a spirit of the family relationship of Humanity. ... Our struggle is not against the Japanese who are also members of this world family, but with the Imperialism with which they are trying to burden us. The Japanese are not the sole proprietors of Imperialism. Even the country of this friend who is with us today exercises a degree of Imperialism. Our struggle is with Imperialism wherever it is found. Nor are the elements of this struggle only with foreign powers, but also within China. Here, too, we resist it as an enemy.”

Howard and Yin now returned to the south of Shanxi province, reunited with Louis and crossed the Yellow river. First they went to Loyang where they met Dr. Jean Cheng, her husband Dr. Paul Dohan and Ms. Kathleen Hall. As Kathleen Hall was anxious to go to Wu Tai Shan with medical supplies for Dr. Bethune, Yin decided to accompany her north. He later joined the 8th Route Army as a medic and worked near Zuoquan.
In compensation for the dangerous journeys and strenuous hiking, the scenery was often breathtaking. Here are a few examples with Yin. The picture at upper left is at “brushing shoulders pass” near Zuoquan. At upper right Yen is leading the horse “Guerrilla”, a gift from General P’ung De-huai and the 8th Route Army.
Howard and Louis set out for Kunming in hopes of taking an airplane to Hong Kong and then a ship to America. However Louis, weakened by his hard life and earlier Typhus bout, became sick and died of Typhoid fever in Chengdu. He was buried in Chengdu.

The human cost of the Mission relief operation was heavy. In August of 1940 the 8th Route Army launched its “100 brigade campaign” and attack Japanese forces throughout their region of control. The Japanese casualties were massive. Because of this the tension between Japanese forces and the missionaries rose still further. In Zuoquan the Japanese arrested and later executed 13 Chinese mission workers. Counting the three missionaries lost in Shouyang, Ms. Pollock and Louis Whitaker, of about 20 foreign relief workers, five were lost. Of about 40-50 Chinese relief workers, 13 were lost. This does not count the mission carpenter who was beaten to death for going too near Japanese fortifications, nor the gateman who was killed for not bowing low enough. Thus the overall mortality rate for this operation was about 25% — for both the foreigners and the Chinese. A true test of the doctrine of non-violence.

In 1941 Howard attempted to return to China with the Friends ambulance service. He journeyed as far as Durham, South Africa before a new law passed by the US Congress prohibited draft age men from serving on foreign soil. In preparing for his trip, his experiences in China from 1938 – 1940 was in close harmony with The American Friends Service Committee instructions for their China unit. Their May 1943 Memo included:

3.2 “The Pacifist Dilemma:”

“That do you want to go to China? Is it to be of service to the people of China? To help bring about understanding and reconciliation between peoples of various nations? To help the Chinese in their struggle to gain freedom and continue existence? Yet you as a Conscientious Objector cannot participate in the method of violent resistance which China as well as your own country has chosen to employ in its struggle? Then what can you do to dissociate yourself with the method which they are using and yet identify yourself with the people who are suffering and bring help to them? This is the dilemma which the pacifist faces in any country in which he wishes to serve during war time.

“You will discover that the AFSC leaves much of the decisions as to fields of service up to its individual foreign service workers, always asking them to remember that all people are our brothers under the fatherhood of God and should be helped regardless of race, creed, or political affiliation. Some activities will have but remote connection to the war effort. Perhaps relief and refugee work, agricultural aid, and work with crippled soldiers and civilians
represent this category of the work possible. But is not the need just as great in war areas? If you feel a concern to work there, you will have to accept certain conditions laid down by the military authorities. Often you may be asked to do work which you feel you cannot do. Unless you have been demonstrating through the spirit and usefulness of your previous service your belief in the way of love and non-violence as an alternative to the method of force, your refusal will be misunderstood and your usefulness will be much curtailed.

“Could you justify your “keep” in China? Here is the most serious question which each man must face before volunteering for service in China. Let us explore the implications. It is only when we examine China’s problem that we see the crux of the question. China does not have enough food to feed all its own people. CPS men will be unable to take food in with them so they will add to the food shortage by going in. Looking at it realistically you will be responsible directly or indirectly for the starvation of several other persons in China. This is a sobering thought if there ever was one. Can you ever repay these lives you have taken by either increasing China’s food or drug supply or by sharing your knowledge in such a way that you may help others to live?”
Howard’s final report for the 1938-1940 Church of the Brethren Mission relief project:

- During the initial invasion the mission stations were havens of refuge for fear-stricken refugees. Thousands of women and children who huddled together within the confines of the mission compound walls found protection because resolute missionaries dared to stand between them and an unscrupulous army of occupation.

- But in the devastated mountain regions, no organized aid to the victims of the scorched earth existed. And here the need was greatest. So in these mountain areas Brethren Service was organized to aid the victims of this military madness. Emergency relief units were sent to aid those who were scattered in small out-of-the-way mountain villages, in caves, and even in protected gullies.

- Food was distributed where existing supplies had been destroyed. Peasant and refugee women were organized in a cooperative cloth weaving project to provide much needed clothing and bedding. In a few months they produced by hand over 120,000 feet of cloth for themselves and for relief purposes.

- After one year in our mission territory new work was organized along and behind the Yellow River front. Here relief was carried to over two hundred communities. It was almost impossible to secure food. And even when food was secured, coal mines had to be reopened so that they might have fuel to cook the food. In some areas the destruction was so complete that it was necessary to organize home industry to make pots and bowls for preparing the food which we provided for them.

- Hundreds of wounded who were left in the fields to die were also cared for by organized groups of peasants under the direction of our personnel. And thousands of refugees were aided in their migration from the war area to the free territory in the west.

4 The postwar Plowboy and Heifer Programs

In May of 1946 M.R. Zigler, the executive secretary of the Brethren Service Committee, received a telegram from the Chinese office of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) requesting 50 young men who understood the maintenance and use of tractors and other farm machinery to instruct the Chinese in their use and maintenance. Donated tractors and equipment were to be used to reclaim flooded and war despoiled lands and
bring them back into productive agricultural use. Howard Sollenberger, who was to administer the project for the Church, arrived in Shanghai in August 1946. The 50 tractor specialists were nicknamed “Plowboys.”

In addition, a heifer relief program started by Dan West with the aim of restocking farm livestock that had been depleted by war, was also expanded into China. UNRRA contracted with the Brethren Service Unit to supply attendants for the livestock. In return, UNRRA agreed to ship free of charge heifers that were collected by its “Heifer Project.” The Church of the Brethren advertised widely for “seagoing Cowboys.” The add read:

“Two thousand men wanted to serve as livestock attendants on board UNRRA ships carrying livestock to Europe to replace killed-off animals. Applicants must be able to work with animals, willing to do manual labor, and of good moral character. Men especially desired who will conduct themselves without reproach in foreign ports. Age 16-60. Trip takes 4 to 6 weeks. Pay $150.00 per trip. Apply Brethren Service Committee, New Windsor, Maryland.”

In 1946, the first shipment of 550 high quality dairy cows were sent to China and some of the Plowboys were assigned to help distribute and instruct in their care.

In 1947 Mr. Zigler arrived in China to visit the Church of the Brethren sponsored relief projects.
4.1 The Plowboy Program

US Navy sailors unloading a crate containing a war surplus tractor from a LST ship in Shanghai. This picture is probably at Point Island, Shanghai.

The Church of the Brethren insisted that aid be given to all in need, regardless of political affiliation. Here 133 tractors bound for Communist areas are lined up on Point Island waiting shipment to Hulutao on the SS Lin Ying Ping. They were intended for use in UNRRA tractor training projects in 9 Communist areas.

(UNRRA photograph)
Examining a prospective reclamation area that had been flooded by the breaching of the Yellow River dikes.

Chinese tractor trainees driving their war surplus tractors to the fields near Kaifeng.
A 4-share plow being pulled by a sturdy little war surplus tractor.

Chinese trainees using Massy Harris tractors to cultivate fields on the flood planes near Kaifeng
In assessing the results of the tractor project in flooded areas Howard concluded that “The use of tractors is definitely an important factor in food production in the flooded areas. The practicality and feasibility of their use has been adequately demonstrated.” But there were also problems:

- Part encumbrance of operation by conflicting administration (now corrected).
- Location of project in no-mans land between Central Government and Communist troops promises potential involvement in the civil war. To date, however, there has been a minimum of interference.
- Land clearance. The problem of stumping is partially being met by the use of bulldozers. Farmers in village groups are able to keep ahead of the eighteen plows but the clearing is not always uniform or in areas of economical size for plowing. This problem will increase as additional tractor units are located in this area. Village organization and publicity work along with some flour distribution in payment for work done, will be a partial answer to this problem.
- Shortage of fuel and lubrication has seriously handicapped the Fan Chia operation. Many days of operation have been lost on this account. The problem of F.O.L. can be remedied by keeping supplies for food production separate and having them unloaded directly from transport to a tractor service compound instead of through the general CNRRA warehouse.
- Lack of sufficient spare parts and repair equipment.
- Training problems are the same as in Fan Cheng. Equipment is definitely suffering from inadequate servicing and general carelessness on the part of the operators.
- Supervisory personnel. Foreign supervision is in the hands of three young Mennonites. They also face the problem of discipline which could better be handled by an older UNRRA person who could hold them rigidly to the care and proper servicing of the equipment. One of the older BSU personnel may assist here temporarily.

On the second of November 1946 Howard left Kaifeng with Harry Sherwood, Hu (CNRRA Tractor Trainee) and Li (Communist Tractor Trainee) to investigate the feasibility of tractor operations in Communist held areas. He concluded that despite the need and desire of the Communists, it would be difficult to operate safely in Communist areas.
When the team met with Communist officials, the UNRRA/CNRRA operations were severely criticized:

“The evening was spent in conversation with a liaison officer and a political relations officer. They were very vocal on the civil war and the US/UNRRA/CNRRA aid to the Nationalist forces. They pointed out the seeming contradiction of our seeking to aid victims of the war on one hand and providing aid and assistance to the Nationalists who were creating destruction. They used as an illustration the bombing of a village one li from where we were staying. The bombing had happened that same morning. Over 100 peasants had been killed while attending a fair. They pointed out that the planes and bombs were American. The point they were illustrating was that with one hand we were assisting the destruction of China life and property and with the other we professed to be interested in rehabilitation of the same people.”

Howard concluded:

- “It is impractical and impossible to undertake an operation such as tractor plowing in or near an area of military activity.

- “The problem of transportation would be difficult. There would be the constant danger of air attack. No concentration of personnel would be safe.

- “The fact that we would be suspected and under constant protective custody would make operations difficult.

- “Any operation undertaken should be sufficiently behind active lines to insure some stability.

- “The communist areas are anxious to have tractors and would probably make very good use of them. Certainly the type of country we covered in south west Shantung is suitable for tractor operations should the political and military situation permit.”

4.2 The Heifer Project

While working to feed hungry babies and orphaned children during the Spanish Civil War in 1938, Dan West conceived the idea of sending live cows rather than powdered milk. Returning home to Indiana his idea developed among local dairy farmers and by 1942 the Brethren Service Committee approved Heifer Project as part of its relief program. Because conditions prevented shipments to Europe, the first three cows (named Faith, Hope and Charity) were sent to Puerto Rico. When the war in Europe ended a shipment of twenty-six cows left New Orleans for Greece on June 24, 1945.
A unique aspect of the Heifer Project was a promise by the receiving family to give the first female calf to another needy family and thus perpetuate the gift. This policy had the additional benefit of giving the grateful family a tangible way to express their gratitude.

China received its first shipment of heifers in 1946 when 550 high-quality dairy cows were sent under the auspices of UNRRA. In China a sister organization was named the China National Relief and Rehabilitation Administration or CNRRA.

Heifer Project was not without its critics. Because cattle were sent to needy areas regardless of political affiliation participants were occasionally harassed for helping communists. When board members expressed concern over shipments to enemy countries Dan West replied: “A cow cannot distinguish between the hungry cries of a capitalist baby and a communist baby.”

In the fall of 1946, after successfully shipping farm livestock to Europe at the end of hostilities there, the Church of the Brethren Heifer Project turned its attention to China. UNRRA welcomed the expansion of the Heifer program to China. The animals were intended to improve China’s cattle breeds and furnish milk and meat for welfare institutions and hospitals. The following is a letter of thanks from UNRRA:

UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND REHABILITATION ADMINISTRATION
1344 CONNECTICUT AVENUE
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

Heifer Project Committee
New Windsor, Md.
November 26, 1946

Dear Mr. Bushong:

I am informed that your organization, the Heifer Project Committee of the Brethren Service Committee, has assembled a boatload of heifers which you will contribute to UNRRA for shipment from New Orleans to China in December. This will be the first boat of cattle to go to China, and is one of the most important gifts that UNRRA has received. Thousands of the cattle you have donated are now in Czechoslovakia, Greece, Italy and Poland helping the farmers there to restore their war-torn lands and feed the populations – rural and urban – of these countries which lost 50% of their livestock in the war. The artificial insemination program in Greece, set up by UNRRA with your assistance, has materially helped to improve the depleted breeding stock of that suffering country.

The fine spirit of practical Christianity and the faith that your group has shown are examples to us all in these days when, without faith, we cannot progress. Your movement, beginning modestly as it did, has spread its spirit and its work. Transcending barriers of nationality and religious conviction, it has drawn to itself members of many denominations, and illustrated what can
be accomplished when conviction and efficient enterprise and fine Christian generosity are combined.

I understand that your organization has decided to continue its work for two years after UNRRA ceases. This is further exemplification of its validity. May I congratulate and thank you in the name of those we have all been trying to help and wish you every success in the future.

Sincerely yours,
F. H. La Guardia
Director General

Among the notable Church of the Brethren volunteers who worked with Heifer Program in China were Cyrus Kiracofe and Rev. John Eller.

Kiracofe was 63, a retired cattleman Eaton, Ohio, USA., and the oldest of the Brethren volunteers. In China he escorted the UNRRA-imported cattle to the interior regions. Thus, in addition to being the oldest of the volunteers, he was also the most most widely traveled member of the Church of the Brethren serving with UNRRA. Rev. John Eller had graduated from two Church institutions: Bridgewater College in Virginia and from Bethany Theological Seminary in Chicago, Illinois. He was chief of UNRRA’s livestock section in China.

Kiracofe described his trip to China in an article on Brethren Service in the May 24, 1947 edition of the *The Gospel Messenger*, the Church newsletter. “We experienced an excellent ocean voyage from New Orleans, La., to Shanghai, China, via San Pedro, Calif. The loss of livestock was kept at a minimum by the excellent care which they received from the thirty-two cowboys.

“We left our load of 700 heifers in China and then set sail for Christchurch and Auckland, New Zealand. We brought 406 head of cattle and 1,050 head of sheep from those two ports to Shanghai, China. While in New Zealand we were cordially invited to church services both at Auckland and Christchurch. After the services we enjoyed an afternoon of fellowship with the members.

“It is inspiring to be a part of such a great program as this.”
Cattle donated by the Church of the Brethren, recently arrived in Shanghai, July 1947. Note the CNRRA label on the feed box. (UN Archive)

Cyrus Kiracofe, instructing a young Chinese in the proper way to milk a cow (Photo by Wipperman). (UN Archive)
Powerful Holstein bull part of the SS Lindenwood Victory’s cargo of 800 Canadian dairy cattle and 90 Yorkshire hogs is examined by HS MacKenzie (left) of UNRRA’s investigation department and Rev. John Eller. With this shipment 2,596 cattle had been imported by UNRRA (Photo by Wipperman). (UN Archive)

Fat Yorkshire hogs imported on the cattle ship Lindenwood Victory are examined on arrival by John Eller. (Photo by Wipperman). (UN Archive)
Dr CSM Hopkirk, right, of Upper Hutt, New Zealand, director of UNRRA’s veterinary activities throughout the world, examines and treats a cow in China for boils. Watching him is Cyrus Kiracofe. (Photo by Wipperman). (UN Archive)

UNRRA immunized more than 200,000 Chinese cattle against rinderpest using vaccine imported from the United States and Canada, and is worked with the Chinese to establish vaccine-producing laboratories in China. (UN Archive)
At the end of a 1,200 mile journey by CAT airplane from Shanghai into the Chinese northwest, 25 thoroughbred Corriedale sheep, donated to the Bailie School for Industrial Cooperatives at Shan-tan, Kansu, by New Zealand breeders, were unloaded Saturday at Lanchow under the supervision of UNRRA animal husbandry experts. These sheep were the first sheep to travel by air in China. Photo of the arrival was taken by CAT pilot Robert Rousselot, who used to raise sheep himself, back in Missouri. The blue-blooded gift animals were selected by UNRRA in a competitive market against counter bids by world sheep buyers. They arrived from New Zealand last week with a shipment of 1,000 UNRRA-bought sheep and 500 milk cows. (UN Archive)
5 Conclusions

- In February 1951 the last Brethren missionaries left Shanghai China for America. What was the impact of their more than forty years of mission work?

- The work of the mission has been largely forgotten by the Chinese government, but for individual Chinese there is still a connection: One mission-trained doctor became head of China's lung disease medical division. A Chinese Brethren minister became the head pastor of an influential church in Beijing. The wool factory in Qin Xian has been revived and produces woolen goods. Because Mission trained students were literate, many obtained good positions in the new Chinese government. Chinese, sponsored by Church-connected individuals have studied in America. And Missionary children have returned to China, to teach, and to assist in the development of China.

- Internationally, the UNRRA funded Tractor and the Heifer Projects – young people working under an international umbrella – was a direct forerunner of the Peace Corps. Howard Sollenberger briefed President Kennedy on the lessons learned in the Brethren relief programs as Kennedy was establishing the Peace Corps. The Heifer Project – which was started as an effort to re-populate Europe and Asia with farm animals, turned out to be such a good idea that by 1953 it had outgrown its humble Brethren roots and became Heifer International, a global nonprofit organization. Since 1944 “Heifer” has helped more than 18 million families in more than 125 countries.

- In 1997 Howard Sollenberger visited the terra cotta army in Xian. On striking up a conversation with a woman and her daughter, he discovered that her grandfather had been helped by the tractor project. The little girl, who was in 3rd grade, then did a very Chinese thing. She took off her necklace with a jade locket and gave it to Howard. When he protested, she insisted, saying: “I’m giving you this because of what you did to help my grandfather.”

- The concept of nonviolence seems to have taken hold in Europe. At least the nations of the European community no longer settle their differences by war – as they too frequently did up to 70 years ago. Perhaps as international society evolves further, a time will come when people will look back and wonder at our belief that violence would result in anything except more violence.
### Those Who Lost Their Lives Supporting Church of the Brethren Relief Operations 1937-1940

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chinese Women</th>
<th>American Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chang Shu-mei</td>
<td>Mary Hykes Harsh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chao Si-ti</td>
<td>Minneva J. Neher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chao Yu</td>
<td>Myrtle Pollock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liu Chin-lan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tien Mei-hsiu</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chinese Men</th>
<th>American Men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chao Chung-jen</td>
<td>Alva C. Harsh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Li Cheng-chang</td>
<td>Louis Whitaker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liu Chun-jung</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lu Fu-jung</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wang Kuei-Jung</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wang Kuei-lin</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wang Pao-lo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wang Yu-Kang</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>