

A Biography of John Sung, Flame for God in the Far East, by Leslie Lyall, China Inland Mission, London, UK, 1956. (115 Quotes selected by Doug Nichols)

1. God Determines Times of Revival.

Other students have detected in the timing of revivals a certain arbitrariness, suggesting that the sovereign Lord brings revival not just when the Church is pleased to desire it but when He is pleased to give it. [page x]

2. Great Sacrifices to Follow the Lord.

[John Denney states] “There must be great renunciations if there are to be great Christian careers.” [page x]

3. Devoted to His Task before God.

Missionary hospitality during these remarkable meetings was brusquely refused and the best efforts of the Chinese leaders to provide warm entertainment coldly received. The Chinese were as perplexed as the missionaries. But they recognized that here was a man with no time for social niceties, his whole heart and mind being absorbed in his task. And God honored this devotion and poured out His blessing. [page xviii]

4. Revival in Shansi.

The revival which was already on the way received a tremendous impetus and was to continue and grow in momentum during the coming years, preparing the Shansi church to survive the long trials which lay ahead. Many a life was cleansed and transformed as a result of the ministry of this unusual servant of God. [page xviii]

5. The Greatest Evangelist in China.

China had to wait for many years for its apostle. And when he came, what an unusual character he was! A flaming evangelist, but a man uncouth in appearance and seeming to lack the ordinary Christian graces. A scholar and a scientist of the highest academic attainments, but a man whose simple gospel sermons never bore a trace of erudition or display of learning. A man who persistently advocated the custom of family worship, yet who would fain have remained single himself and who found little joy in family life. Noisy and acrobatic and full of humor on the platform, but silent and almost morose off it. Owing much to missionaries and other foreigners, but so critical of them and so off-handed with them that many regarded him as anti-foreign. Denouncing sin vehemently wherever he found it, but able as no one else to move audiences with the message of God’s love. A born organizer and leader who resisted the temptation to found a new organization of his own. A man greatly loved, yet greatly hated; bitterly criticized, yet utterly careless of criticism. Such was the greatest evangelist China has ever known. [page xix]

6. A Man of Prayer.

Born again in a revival, with the godly, praying example of his father always before him and with such outstanding experiences of God's intervention in human circumstances, it is little wonder that John Sung was such a man of prayer to his dying day. [page 11]

7. Living a Consistent Christian Life.

But Ju-un was discovering, like many another young person, that it was easier to appear an earnest Christian away from home than to live a consistent Christian life among his own family. [page 13]

8. A New Gown for Graduation.

The Sung family had no extra cash for luxuries and Ju-un himself, being a book worm, was not fastidious about his dress. But the promise of a new blue gown for Graduation Day spurred him on, and he was gratified to find his name at the top of the list of graduation students. So on Graduation Day at Memorial High School young Sung wore his new gown for the first time as he went up to receive his diploma. This gown went with him on all his subsequent travels in China and was worn on all special occasions. [page 14]

9. Christian Home Life in China.

He was deeply impressed with what he saw of Christian home life in some of the homes where he stayed and he longed to see such homes set up in China. Secretly, he promised himself that one day it would be one of his tasks to promote Christian home life among the Christians in China. [page 21]

10. Great Pressure Brought Neglect in the Word.

The final term before graduation was one of great pressure. Sung was under constant strain. His whole mind was on his coming examinations and he had to find extra time to give study. So Bible study and prayer began to be neglected. And this soon began to tell in his personal life. He grew arrogant and impatient towards his brother. His behavior was, he confesses, unbearable. He failed in other ways too. At the factory where he was working he made false returns of the hours he had worked so as to have more time for study. And, what caused him equal remorse, he fell into the common practice among students of cheating in one of his examination papers. These lapses remained in Sung's memory like blotches marring his life record. [page 21]

11. A Life Wholly Yielded to God.

God will marvelously transform a body so presented to Him and cause multitudes to find satisfaction through us, and many hungry and thirsty after righteousness will be comforted and filled. This was enough for Sung. His heart was filled with joy as he saw

possibilities of a life wholly yielded to God. God had met him at Lake Geneva—not in the convention, but by the lake. [page 24]

12. Wandering from the Fold of God.

So far had he strayed from God and so full was his mind of doubts and question that Dr. Sung, in spite of all his earlier spiritual experiences, felt that he could no longer call himself a child of God. Here was a true Prodigal who had wandered far from the Father's Home; still a son, but a wayward and back-sliding one! [page 28]

13. In a Mental Hospital Did God Reveal Himself.

The mental hospital thus became John Sung's real theological college! It was there that he began to appreciate the deep truths of God's Word and it was there that he was taught the difficult lesson of quiet submission to the will of God.

"He disciplined me to become His submissive servant. He took away my very obstinate and bad temper." [page 38]

14. Renunciation of All the World Held Dear.

One day, as the vessel neared the end of its voyage, John Sung went down to his cabin, took out of his cabin trunk his diplomas, his medals and his fraternity keys and threw them overboard. All except his doctor's diploma, which he retained to satisfy his father. This was later framed and hung in his old home. The Rev. W.B. Cole saw it there about 1938. Dr. Sung noticed Mr. Cole looking at it one day and said: "Things like that are useless. They mean nothing to me!"

"There must be great renunciations ... if there are to be great Christian careers." Dr. Denney's words might have been written with Dr. John Sung in mind. It is probably the chief secret of John Sung's career that there came a day when he made just a renunciation of all that this world holds dear. [pages 40-41]

15. Not Happy to Be Married.

A sore trial now awaited John—his wedding! From a Chinese point of view, the marriage which had been arranged for him by his parents could not be delayed any longer. The parents of the bride-to-be had waited long enough, and it was high time the girl was married and transferred to her husband's home! John accepted the inevitable, but with no joyful anticipation. He did not know the girl, and did not even know whether or not she was a true Christian. But the day arrived. The ceremony was performed. The numerous friends and relatives gathered to share in the festivities and to offer their congratulations. And, very reluctantly, John entered upon the responsibilities of a married man.

Three days later he was in the home of the Rev. and Mrs. Frances . Jones, Methodist missionaries in Hingwa and John's former high school teachers. Mrs. Jones asked another young man if he were married too. When the reply was "No!" John was heard to groan, "I wish *I* were not."

This was not a propitious beginning to married life, but in fact Mrs. Sung became John's faithful companion through all their eighteen years of life together. There were three daughters and two sons born to them. John was rarely able to be at home for long, but he wrote frequent letters to the family, sending money and showing real concern for their welfare. [pages 46-47]

16. Prayer and Intense Earnestness.

The secret of the success of the young evangelist was twofold: his devotion to prayer and his intense earnestness. The team spent much time together between the meetings in earnest pleading with God on behalf of cold churches and Christians revived. Many who had hitherto been merely formal church members were born again and become living witnesses for Christ. [page 49]

17. Investigated the General Conditions of Chinese Church Life.

Back in Fukien again, John was joined by a missionary and a Chinese friend and together they went round the churches leading meetings and investigating the general conditions of the church life. John was saddened by seeing so many theological college graduates who were failing to exercise an effective ministry in the churches for which they had a spiritual responsibility. He saw only too clearly that a mere intellectual training with the Spirit's grace and power produced only unspiritual hirelings who were unable to conserve the fruits of revival, to build up Christians on the Word of God or to establish a strong church life. [page 50]

18. Remember the Glory of the Resurrection

Easter, 1930, came around. John Sung had been back in China for two and a half years. All this time he had been engaged in constant travel and had worked very hard indeed. He now had two children, a girl and a baby boy. As a volunteer worker, he had been receiving no regular salary, and it had been difficult to make ends meet. He and Ms. Sung had to think twice before making the smallest expenditure of money. It was little wonder that sometimes the Tempter suggested to John's mind the thought that all this time he could have been earning a handsome salary from the Government. Why, then, in serving the Lord, was his reward so meager? This temptation assailed him afresh one day in Passion Week. But as he thought of His Lord going all the way to the Cross, he seemed to hear Him say, "Cannot you obey Me to the full? Cannot you surrender your all to Me? I know all about your cares. Remember that after the shame and pain of the

Cross there comes the glory of the Resurrection! Be patient a while longer and all will be well!” [pages 52-53]

19. Left Quickly after Death of First Son.

But his testing time was not yet over. Very soon after Sung’s own recovery, Mrs. Sung and the baby of only three months, Exodus, both became very ill. The baby died after a short illness and the sorrowing parents sought comfort in the story of Moses, who was cast adrift on the water three months after birth and the assurance that their little son Exodus had “gone out” of the world to be with Christ.

Three days after the funeral, John Sung left home. God had at last given the word: “Arise, my son! The time has come! Leave your country and go to the place whither I will lead you!”

“Without further delay”, John writes, “I said farewell to my wife who was still on a bed of sickness and to my family and took a ship to Shanghai. I dared not look back to see my ailing, sorrowing wife but steeled myself to follow Christ in the way of the Cross.” [page 54]

20. Attacked Unfaithful Preachers of the Gospel.

John Sung was never one to seek popularity, and he soon earned for himself notoriety for his slashing attacks on preachers who were not faithful to their responsibility to preach the Gospel and to men and women to Christ. [page 55]

21. Without a Calling, the Christian Ministry Just a Profession.

He saw the situation in China only too clearly. The weakness of the system by which foreign missionaries educated, trained and appointed men as employees of missionary societies was everywhere apparent. To men without a clear call of God to the ministry and even without a personal and saving experience of Christ, the Christian ministry was merely a profession, a means of employment. The effect on the Chinese Church as a whole of having leaders of this type was disastrous. And John Sung realized how little could be done so long as unconverted or unspiritual men were in control. Revival among the rank and file might be nullified by pastors and preachers opposed to revival. Hence his devastating attacks on church officials and mission schoolteachers wherever he went. [page 55]

22. Denounced Sin Where It Was Found.

As John Sung entered a wider sphere of ministry as Evangelist-at-large of the Hinghwa Conference, he was fully aware of his call to be a John the Baptist and to denounce sin wherever it might be found; nor did he shrink from his difficult task. He believed that

God had given him just fifteen years in which to fulfil his ministry, and never once on those fifteen years did he spare himself or turn aside from his commission. [page 56]

23. China Needed the Gospel of Grace.

He returned to Peking with a deepened awareness of his call to awaken sleeping and lukewarm churches. Never before had he been so convinced that China's supreme need was nothing but the simple gospel of the grace of God. Other things might have their place, but this need was paramount. [page 58]

24. In Sympathy with Bethel Mission.

One place that John wanted to visit especially was the Bethel Mission. Dr. Mary Stone and Miss Jenny Hughes, the leaders of this work, had already heard from the Rev. Andrew Gih reports of Dr. Sung's work in Fukien, and recognized in him one who was in complete sympathy with the Bethel vision for the evangelization of China. [page 59]

25. Bethel Worldwide Evangelistic Bands.

Andrew Gih heard the call to form the Bethel Worldwide Evangelistic Band. This and other Bands had for five years been travelling far and wide with their message of revival for the churches and salvation for the multitudes still outside the Church. [page 59]

26. Salvation of Sinners Only Thing that Matters.

The Lord Jesus said of Himself: 'The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.' Alas many Christian workers spend their time talking about 'movements'; one new movement follows another and when all has been said and done men's hearts remain unmoved and souls remain unsaved. They forget that the Lord came to save sinners. The salvation of sinners is the only thing that matters!" [page 60]

27. Dealing with Sin's Power in Men's Lives.

"Lord, what about me? Do I really want to see revival? Oh, reveal Thy power! Use us! We are looking to Thee!"

In answer to this prayer, God showed John that if the light of eternity was to shine into hearts, it was for him to draw aside the curtains of sin in the human heart before any victory could come to the Christian Church. What a memorable night it was—March 5th, 1931! He had at last received the direction he had so long sought. No longer was he merely to expound the "mysteries" of God's Word, but he was to deal with sin's power over men's lives. That same night God gave to him clear messages based on the stories of the Gadarene demoniac and the Prodigal Son, and a message on hypocrisy—messages which were to be repeated again and again with undiminishing effectiveness in bringing people to repentance. [page 61]

28. Dr. Sung's Messages for China.

One of the missionaries wrote in the summer of 1931: "We are having a Bible revival in Nanchang and Kiukiang ...Dr. Sung can take any Bible passage you suggest and make it live as I have heard almost no man do. He still spends hours daily in the Book, and that is the secret of his success." John Sung himself was confirmed even more clearly in his own mind that his was to be a message to the churches of China which would expose sin and declare God's remedy for it in the Cross. He felt commissioned to emphasize the uselessness of an empty religious profession without an experience of new life in Christ through the new birth. [page 64]

29. Three Secrets of Revival.

"The experience here has taught me the three secrets of revival: 1) A thorough confession of sin. 2) Prayer for the fullness of the Holy Spirit. 3) Public witness for Christ. I had previously read John Wesley's biography and how, every time he preached, people were convicted and came to Christ. I had often longed for the same experience. Now I had begun to witness something like it. May the Spirit of Truth lead me on to greater things for the glory of God and the salvation of men!" [page 64]

30. Suffering from Pride.

The doctor advised six months' rest on account of his heart, but John felt that this trouble had a spiritual origin. What he was really suffering from was pride! While at Nanking Miss Ella Leveritt of the Methodist Episcopal in Changchow, a city near the silk manufacturing town of Wusih, had invited him there. Thinking that the city was only a small place, John had declined the invitation. The Bethel Band, he now discovered, went anywhere, whether the place was small or big and the people few or many. So John decided that there were things he could learn from them and that they had a contribution which would make up for his own deficiencies. The Bethel Band had hastily returned from Shantung for the funeral of "Mother" Stone who was translated on April 25. They now accepted the invitation which he had refused, so he decided to go along with them to Changchow. Though he only preached once a day, his heart suddenly pained him again one day as he was preaching. But he carried on. If this was to be his last sermon on earth, he would give himself to it, he would discharge his debt to the lost, he would seek God's glory alone! "Praise to our wonder-working God", he says. "He had mercy on my physical weakness and healed me even as I was preaching with my usual vigour. Henceforth I will live only for the One who saves me and heals all my diseases." [page 66]

31. Carrying a Load of Sin.

"Dear brethren and sisters, why don't you see that when sin goes out the living waters flow in? Don't go on carrying your load of sin to the stagnant waters of the well. The

blessing of God is not in seeking satisfaction in tongues and dreams, but in becoming an empty, clean channel through which the water of the Spirit can flow out to the dry and thirsty hearts around, causing them to become fruitful too. Thus 'give up' is the secret of 'get'. A love-inspired witness is the true way to seek and to maintain the fullness of the Spirit." [page 67]

32. The Chinese Need Jesus Christ

But not everyone was in sympathy. One of the missionaries in this city told Dr. Sung that he did not believe in the Second Coming of Christ, that the Old Testament was unreliable and that he objected to talk about the Blood of Christ and the Holy Spirit. Not knowing Dr. Sung's history, he asked him one day what his opinion was about science and religion. Dr. Sung's reply was: "Science is good, but it cannot save people from their sins!" And when the missionary suggested that the highest type of Christian was represented by men like Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick and Mahatma Ghandi, Dr. Sung's response was: "China does not need the teaching of Fosdick or Ghandi. The teaching of Confucius is better far than theirs. What the Chinese need is Jesus Christ and the Cross. People talk about Fosdick, but what do they know about him? I have studied under him and I rejected his teachings utterly and finally." At the service which followed, Dr. Sung preached Calvary, and over 100 stayed to pray and to pledge themselves to take up the Cross and to follow Christ. What better illustration of his thesis than this could there have been! [page 69]

33. The Need of Nation-wide Revival in China.

With the crowds who came from all over Shanghai to attend, there were over 1,200 people crowded into the Bethel Church. Dr. Sung had been asked to draw up a tentative programme. The key word was "Revival". The speakers were to be the Rev. Andrew Gih, Dr. John Sung and the Rev. L. C. Ting. The topics at the sessions throughout the day were Prayer Revival, Song Revival, Bible Revival, Service Revival and Testimony Revival. At the Bible Revival Session, Dr. Sung spoke on "A Bunch of Keys to the Word". Then under the title of "Service Revival" he expounded the Book of Acts.

The emphasis throughout the entire conference was on the need for a nation-wide evangelism in China. Every speaker urged that China must be evangelized quickly. There was no time to waste. To this end, everyone present was challenged to get right with God, seek deliverance from sin and claim the power of the Holy Spirit to do great things in the Name of Christ. [pages 70-71]

34. Prayer for the Work of Evangelical Bands.

As a result of the Summer Conference, the Bethel Band had agreed to emphasize in all their campaigns four important features of a healthy church life: the Watch-tower or prayer meeting; Evangelistic Bands, composed of new converts and others; Bible

classes for effective follow-up work; and the institution of family worship in the home. The influence of Dr. Sung's experience in Fukien and Central China is plain. A "Watch-tower" was set up in a room at Bethel where every day from early morning until late at night someone was always at prayer for the work of the several Evangelistic Bands. [page 73]

35. As Long as the Lord Is with Me.

"I could all my life safely place myself in the keeping of a loving, almighty, unchangeable Lord who never makes a mistake. I had but to walk in His ways and He would bear the full responsibility of caring for me. Even if this took me through the valley of the shadow of death, there would be nothing to fear; so long as the Lord was with me." [page 74]

36. The Chinese Church to Be Self-supporting

One of things that saddened Dr. Sung was that the missionaries had used the threat of the withdrawal of funds to the church if they did not withdraw their invitation to the Bethel Band. This led Dr. Sung to write in his journal: "Beloved fellow workers and fellow Christians! Why do you still depend on the financial support of foreigners? You should look to the Lord of all things and realize that the time has come for the church to be self-propagating, self-governing, and self-supporting—truly independent!" [page 77]

37. Trusting More in Prayer and God's Word.

"Thank God, the name of the next place we came to means 'listen to the Will of Heaven'! Several great evangelists have been there. They helped create a spiritual appetite. On our part our previous experience taught us to trust more in prayer and living upon the Word of the Lord, for one day we prayed together eight or ten times, something we had never done before. Here we found the key to revival. After the shame of the Cross there was the glory of the Resurrection and for this reason we have had about 1000 sound conversions and 279 beautiful testimonies have been handed to me. Now Bands have been organized among the converts. This is the great revival I have ever seen in my life. Praise His Holy Name! . . ." [pages 78-79]

38. Repentance of Sin.

Missionaries, pastors and church workers, some of whom had not spoken to one another for months, met at the communion rail and asked forgiveness of one another. There was a great putting right of wrongs, an unreserved consecration of many young lives, hundreds of conversions and hundreds more seeking the infilling of the Holy Spirit. The people crowded to the front of the church after every appeal to pray and to

receive personal help. The last of the meetings in the great church were packed and the people would hardly let the young evangelists go. [page 81]

39. Living with the Demings.

The Band moved over from the Chinese Y.M.C.A., where they had been staying, to the Demings' home. Dr. Sung and Philip Lee were given the sitting-room and the other three occupied Dr. Deming's study. Mrs. Deming delighted to attend to the personal needs of the Band; laundry, sewing, mending and the like. A young out-of-work tailor was employed to help the men and he was surprised and deeply impressed to observe that the Band rose at 4:30 every morning for prayer and Bible study. [page 81]

40. Working until Exhaustion.

Dr. Sung daily went over his message with Frank Ling, his interpreter, however often he may have preached a similar sermon before. By the time the evening meeting was over John was so completely exhausted that he would fling himself on the bed to rest. As Mrs. Deming used to see the weary form lying there the Scripture came to her mind: "This is my body which is broken for you." John Sung was already living up to the limit of his strength and, like his Lord, pouring out his life for God and His hungering children. He was never long free from pain from the old wound left by the operation on his back in America and the pain always returned when he was overtired or upset. But like Paul, he regarded this as his "torn in the flesh" and was able to glory in his own weakness. "Were it not for this", he once wrote, "it would have been impossible to restrain my proud disposition." But after a rest John used to kneel up at the dining room table, under a good light, and in fine, beautiful Chinese characters write up his journal. Wherever he went, this was an essential part of his daily routine. [page 81-82]

41. "The Chicken Preacher".

John was not an easy guest to entertain and lacked all the social graces. Among other things, **he invariably ordered chicken prepared in the Chinese fashion in rich chicken soup at least once a day. This earned him the nickname of "the chicken preacher"**! But Mr. Ling explains: "If you ever attended his meetings and seen how he preaches, often three times a day and as long as two hours at a time, exerting every ounce of his physical and nervous energy from beginning to end, you could not blame him for asking for chicken soup to sustain him. Without special nourishment, he could never have kept up his strenuous work." [page 82]

42. Aware of the Work of the Enemy in Divisions.

The two sections of the Band met again at Harbin for a few devotional meetings. Time was getting short, and it was evident that they would have to divide forces again if they were to respond to the invitations which were reaching them. But there seems to have

been some disagreement about their plans and to settle the matter they drew lots. As a result Andrew Gih went to Chaoyangchen while John Sung remained in Harbin for a day or two and then was to go to Changchun and Kirin. It was clear that the Enemy of souls was doing his best to hinder the work of the Holy Spirit by introducing differences of opinion among the five members of the Band. But they were aware of these attacks and no serious dissension was permitted to arise. [page 85]

43. God Provided What Sung Needed.

The weather was by this time getting very cold and John had insufficient warm clothing. So he “laid hold” of God’s promises and asked for a skin-lined gown such as is worn in the north in the winter. Within a very short time, one of the Christians gave him the very thing he asked for! [page 86]

44. In Spite of Combat, Bible School Continued.

The programme of the Worldwide Evangelistic Band included a Short Term Bible School in February. This now seemed to be out of the question. But eight delegates from Manchuria had already arrived and Dr. Sung was determined that they should not be disappointed. With fighting continuing all around, he and the other members of the Band held daily classes and took the students through **twenty-three books of the Bible!** Some of those attending were recent converts and they returned to commence work for God in their own homes. [page 91]

45. Long, Frequent Preaching.

Dr. Sung preached that first night after a bright musical introduction. In this British colony, English was well understood, so he **preached in English** while Philip Lee interpreted into Cantonese. For two hours the burning words poured out—preacher and interpreter speaking in rapid succession. Thereafter three services were held daily, none of them less than two hours in duration, and the meetings went on for six days. [page 92]

46. Christian Leaders Trace Their Ministry to Dr. Sung.

There were many outstanding conversions and a number of the leading men in the Hong Kong and Kowloon churches trace their spiritual awakening and conversion to the ministry of Dr. Sung. One whose life was deeply influenced by him is an independent evangelist who has repeatedly visited every part of Hong Kong and Kowloon preaching the Gospel—including all the refugee and squatters huts—and he has led many to the Lord. [page 92]

47. Asking for Forgiveness of a Mother's Prayer.

One praying mother had an atheist son who had been to America three times in the course of his education. This man hated his mother for praying for him and had even contemplated murdering her. When he was invited to the meetings by a friend he consented to go, "just to see that madman Sung jumping around the platform"! But he came under deep conviction of sin and knelt where he was to make his confession to God. Then he went over to the side of the church, where the women, in Chinese tradition, were segregated, and sought out his mother. With a trembling voice he asked her forgiveness and she sobbed aloud as she praised God for answering her prayers of long years. [page 93]

48. Without Christ, One Can Do Nothing.

The night before leaving Wuchow, John Sung found himself singing in his sleep, "Without Me, without Me, without Me ye can do nothing. Cast forth, cast forth, cast forth as a branch and burned. Without Me ye can do nothing." He awoke weeping. Strangely enough, the Chinese character for Wu of Wuchow suggests a Cross and a Self. And in this John saw a warning that unless he daily yielded the old Self to the Cross, he too would be cast forth as a branch and be burned. A single theme was constantly in his mind at this time: "Though I have (this, that and the other) and have not love, I am nothing." [page 94]

49. Baptized Before Baptizing Others.

The Band now returned to Canton for meetings in the Baptist Church, led by Andrew Gih, who later went on to Swatow. The rest of the Band returned to Hong Kong on April 26th for a second enthusiastic campaign, which continued until May 1st. On that day a very large crowd attended the Peniel Mission Church for a baptismal service, in which Dr. Sung had invited to take part.

"But I have never been baptized by immersion myself!" he objected. Then he added that if Mr. Reiton would baptize him first, he would baptize the others. So the Rev. A. K. Reiton first immersed Dr. Sung, and then Dr. Sung in turn baptized twenty-one women and twelve men. Did such an event have any precedent? [page 95]

50. A New Spirit in the Church.

The favourite chorus was "The Blood shall never lose its power". The Rev. W. B. Cole wrote of great victories won and an entirely new spirit introduced into the church, the Bible School and church high schools. People who had long been estranged from each other became reconciled and there was a revived spirit of witness and prayer. [page 96]

51. Follow Up on Converts Is Crucial.

Since the last Conference in July, 1931, when Dr. Sung had made his first appearance, the Worldwide Evangelistic Band had travelled a total of 54,823 miles, holding 1,199 meetings! They had preached to over 400,000 people in thirteen provinces and over 18,000 decisions had been registered! They had ministered to churches connected with thirteen missionary societies, and had left behind them an organization to ensure the proper “follow up” of all the converts. [page 97]

52. Revival Was of Healthy Character.

The Bethel Band went wherever they were welcomed, but avoided all extremes. And the revival which so often accompanied their work was of a healthy character. Their teaching was a corrective to the errors of the “Jesus Family”, the “Spiritual Gifts Society”, the “True Jesus Church” and other enthusiastic but scripturally ignorant groups of Christians. Dr. Paul Abbott, Chairman of the Shantung Mission of the American Presbyterian Mission, had had good opportunity to assess the work of the Bethel Band in North China and he made these observations in the 1932 *China Christian Year Book*: “their work impresses one as sane and constructive with emotion released in laughter and song, under control and with no excesses or results to undo or live down. Their follow-up work with correspondence, prayer lists and printed material is skillfully carried on as part of their service to the churches. [page 100]

53. Confession and Restitution.

As Dr. Sung preached, the Holy Spirit convicted of sin and righteousness and judgement. One night the Peking Chief of Police attended and the next night brought his whole family. All were clearly converted. The man himself confessed to the sin of murder, having secured the death of a man in order to get his money. He had also obtained the lovely house in which he was living by illegal manipulation. Confession and restitution were followed by the joy of sins forgiven and the whole family started out a new life in Christ. [page 101]

54. Leaving Liberal Seminary.

Ten of the seminary students went to see Dr. Sung one day to tell him that they had lost their faith since entering seminary. When Dr. Sung advised them to leave if this was the case, the principal went post-haste to see Dr. Sung, who told him quite bluntly: “If the students lose their faith in Christ while in your seminary, you ought to feel that something is wrong!” Dr. Sung took an unflinching, unfaltering stand in this centre of liberal Christianity in China in denouncing all unfaithfulness to the Word of God. Neither fear of man nor respect of persons were allowed to deter him. [pages 102-103]

55. Sinners in Large Numbers.

Some of the leaders at Bethel were inclined to be critical of John for keeping to the big cities while others went to the smaller and more out-of-the-way places. To this his answer was: "What attracted me about the big cities was not the comfort to be found there, but sinners in large numbers. The cross we all had to bear was different in each case. Living conditions might be more rigorous in country towns, but in the big city campaigns the strain on one's physical and nervous strength was greater, the work itself harder, and the opposition greater. The sowing of the seed had to be watered by sweat and tears. There was no question of my choosing the more comfortable pathway!"

When the rest of the Band returned, the whole group reached an understanding that they would not again divide up or allow differences of opinion to weaken their strength. In planning their future campaigns, they would seek a closer cooperation and the clear leading of God! [page 106]

56. Revival of Missionary Children in China Inland Mission School.

Chefoo, the lovely land-locked harbor and summer resort, was the next town to be visited. An unusual feature of the Band's work there was a blessing which came to the China Inland Mission school for British and American children, mostly the children of missionaries. Many of them wrote letters to Andrew Gih after his visit to tell him how they accepted Christ or given their lives wholly to Him. [page 107]

57. Repentance and Salvation in Shantung.

Dr. Paul Abbott reported of the work of the Bethel Band in Shantung:

"Bloodthirsty bandits, rapacious officials, overbearing soldiers, anarchistic students, dishonest servants, polygamists, sedate scholars, business-men, rickshaw coolies, beggars, men and women, young and old, city-dwellers and country folks, were moved to confess and forsake sin and to make reparation and restitution." An impressive list indeed! [page 107]

58. Even Missionaries Touched by Sung's Work.

What a sinner needs, John emphasized, is not the gift of tongues or any other such gift, but the gift of salvation. To seek the gifts without first dealing with sin is a dangerous thing, which all too often leads to the deceptions of the Devil! Some twenty missionaries from the surrounding cities attended these meetings and were themselves deeply moved. They went back to their work with a new zeal and a new faith in the power of the Word of God. [page 109]

59. Lack of Leadership in Education.

The church at Pingyao was the result of the faithful preaching of workers connected with the China Inland Mission. Although there was no modernism in the China Inland Mission field, Dr. Sung attributed the noticeable lack of leadership to the absence of any extensive educational work in the area. This was the sphere of the labors of Pastor His Sheng-mo, to whose labors many of the churches owed their origin. The churches were small in numbers compared with the Honan and Shantung churches and they were certainly far behind in education and culture compared with many which the Band had visited. These were mountain people and despite all their intellectual handicaps they were honest, sincere believers and were to stand as firm as any Christians in China in the years of war and trial that lay ahead. They also gave a larger place to the time-honored courtesies of the Chinese than these semi-Westernized young men from the coast, and consequently they found it hard to reconcile the manifest zeal of the preachers with what appeared to them as their uncouth and unspiritual behavior. **No doubt this detracted from the effect of their message.** [pages 109-110]

60. The Holy Spirit's Unity.

Only the Spirit's fire can do away with the differences which divide Christians, melt their hearts and unite them in true harmony and fellowship. [page 111]

61. Friction in the Band.

There was some friction, however, among the three Band members and this partially crippled their witness. John Sung was very sad at heart over the situation, but set himself to learn the lessons which spiritual defeat could teach. [page 113]

62. Great Number of Conversions.

By the end of the year (1933) the Band had visited thirty-three cities in six months and had held 866 meetings at which over 14,000 people had made profession of salvation or of dedication of life to God's service; 729 preaching bands had been formed and nearly 3,000 young people had volunteered for whole-time service during this same period. [page 114]

63. Reviving Power from God Himself.

In Hengyang the three churches combined to arrange the special meetings. The following is the account of the campaign written by the Rev. J. R. Wilson of the Church Missionary Society immediately after the meetings:

"Have you ever longed to meet a personality full of the glory of the Gospel who could present the message with a zeal and enthusiasm equal to his theme, a Pauline

personality? ... The Chinese can be painfully matter-of-fact, and their services are often dull and unemotional ... Ever since coming to China twenty years ago, I have longed for someone to come and do what I cannot do-that is, to live and speak the glory of the Gospel. Then suddenly a living flame of Gospel zeal leapt upon us..."

There had been some disappointment when the churches in Hengyang learned that Andrew Gih would not be coming as leader of the Bethel Band after all because Dr. Sung, upon whom the burden of preaching would now fall, was reported to be a sensationalist and some feared that the mission would prove a failure. But Mr. Wilson's report continues:

"Dr. Sung brought us a great gale of reviving power from God Himself... The Chinese confessed readily that this was no other than the boundless energy of the Spirit of God. For a whole week, twice a day, for two or more hours at each meeting, he poured out a living stream of searching Bible teaching, agonized prayer and ecstatic praise, all intensified by vivid acting, scathing sarcasm and exuberant humor. His physical antics were astonishing. He leapt about the platform, he dashed off point after point on the blackboard, he made lessons stand out vividly with lightning sketches in chalk, he acted humorously, grotesquely even, to make a story live, he prayed with a fervor that seemed to pour out life itself and then, as a climax, when his message had been delivered, he would be transported with joy and glory for a full half-hour, while he carried us along on wave after wave of devotion and praise. It was a revelation! It was marvelously inspiring! The exceeding weight of glory found expression in a fellow human being, and it could not be denied.

"What was there in him to bring us lasting good? First he made Scripture live. Who can forget his rendering of Ezekiel 37? He held two dry bones in his hands. In mock show, he struck them one against the other like two dead church members engaged in a quarrel. "Can dead bones hear the Word of the Lord?" he shouted. 'Praise God, they can't. There's hope for a dead church when the true Word of God is preached. Secondly, backsliders were searched as by a consuming fire. The man who fell among thieves was presented as a type of the church member who has been robbed by the Devil of faith, prayer, Scripture and left half-dead. Why does the Devil leave him half-dead and not finish him off? Because churches full of robbed and half-dead Christians will help the Devil's cause more than anything else. Live Christians must do the work of rescuing and restoring to the half-dead their treasures of faith, prayer and Scripture. Thirdly he led us to enthusiastic determination to follow Christ to the uttermost. We had a great morning when he led us up the Hill of the Beatitudes. Step by step each Beatitude was taken to represent steps in our Lord's life; from the Incarnation to Calvary... At each step as we climbed higher and higher came the ringing call, 'Forward march!' and a stirring chorus. And so we struggled on to the summit 'persecuted for righteousness sake!' Suddenly we were startled by the Cross being planted on the final blackboard

peak. Could we follow all the way to Calvary?... 'Oh, Jesus, make us all willing to follow Thee all the way!'"

These words were written with the effects of the campaign vividly fresh in the memory. But twenty years later Mr. Wilson recollects those days in these words: "Such was the power of the presentation of the messages, that many of them are still vivid in my memory. Even the choruses are there in my mind all complete, indelible! . . . Another outstanding memory was the afternoon when Dr. Sung invited anyone who wished to unburden their hearts to meet him privately. At the special request of my three Chinese colleagues, I went with them. After hearing their stories, very sad in places, and recording names and details in an enormous notebook, Dr. Sung gave the rest of the time to prayer. With tears streaming down his face, he agonized in prayer for us that we might be victorious over sin by the power of the Cross of Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit." [pages 117-119]

64. Separation from Bethel Mission.

From Hengyang, where God was doing great things, John, with a heavy heart, wrote letters to his friends in all the church he visited announcing the end of his association with Bethel. Henceforth he would be working independently. But he had no plans. The future was blank. He did not even know where he was to find a place for his family. His journal records: "I cried to the Lord for strength to go on reaching the Gospel with all my might without any anxieties for other things." John, with his constant companion and faithful and expert interpreter, Frank Ling, returned to Shanghai, where he took his farewell from Bethel feeling like Abraham as he went out knowing whither he went.

So ended an uneasy association with the Bethel Mission. Undoubtedly after the three years of lonely and uphill toil in his own province, John Sung had seen the full fruition of his gifts and powers in this close fellowship for three years with Andrew Gih and his other colleagues. He had learned much from Andrew Gih. Even his theology had needed some straightening out at some points! The two men had been a powerful combination and their parting was as sad as the parting of Paul and Barnabas, and its effect just as incalculable. [pages 119-120]

65. An Independent Evangelist.

But his boundless energy and his very success had placed stresses and strains both on the other members of the Band and on Sung himself. In particular, he could no longer tolerate being even partially under the direction of a foreigner ... and a woman too! From now on John Sung was to be a free and independent evangelist. [page 120]

66. Reached Many Provinces in Northern China.

Everywhere, the visits of the Bethel Band had left a tremendous keenness for Bible study and a generally quickened life in the churches. It would indeed be hard to name a single province of north China where Dr. Sung and the Bethel Band had not left behind them a glorious record of spiritual blessing and lives cleansed and renewed and set on fire to serve God. [page 121]

67. People Waited Long for Dr. Sung's Meetings.

And labor hard he did. His reputation continued to spread rapidly and everywhere he went the crowds thronged to hear him—the homespun doctor of philosophy with his eccentric ways and unpredictable methods. People usually arrived two or three hours before the meetings were due to begin in order to be sure of seats. Then they sat on after one meeting until the time for the next to be sure to be present.

The meetings always began with singing, Sung himself sometimes conducting the singing with a white handkerchief. The audience would be asked to clap their hands to the time. Unison prayer followed. Then after a prayer by the preacher in a few sentences the sermon began. As John walked to the rostrum, he always had with him the precious book in which he had collected his daily jottings, though he seldom referred to it while preaching. [page 122]

68. Decorations Used as Illustration.

Sermons were illustrated in a variety of ways. Grotesque blackboard drawings and scribbled sermon outlines were commonplace. Sometimes members of the audience or of the Band were called on to the platform to help him act out an illustration. A missionary was once ordered to stand with his arms outstretched while Sung preached on being crucified with Christ! Men were frequently tied up with rope and then released to illustrate the power of sin and deliverance Christ can give. In one mission station the missionary had beautifully decorated the platform with all her palms, ferns and pots of geraniums. Dr. Sung was emphasizing the uselessness of half-measures in dealing with sin when he noticed the plants. “No use just pruning sin and cutting it down a little! You must pull it up by the roots!” And, suiting the action to the word, he set to work to pull up the plants one by one, strewing them about the floor. There were no floral decorations the next day. [page 122-123]

69. The Great “Ice-breaker”.

Legends about Dr. Sung multiplied and people never lacked for conversation when groups of Christians got together to discuss the great “ice-breaker”, as he came to known. [page 123]

70. Spending Personal Time with Meeting Attendees.

At the end of every service, the preacher would always give an opportunity for anyone seeking repentance or some other grace to come to the front for prayer. Tears flowed freely as spiritual conflicts were fought and won, sins confessed, apologies made and restitution promised. Sung himself, certainly during the years when he shared the work with his colleagues in the Bethel Band, gave of his time and strength between meetings to personal interviews, and there were numerous remarkable instances of divine blessing on his personal ministry: individuals were brought into the light and many a broken home reunited. John always recorded the names and addresses of such people and added them to his long prayer list. His extraordinary mind was able to memorize thousands of such names.

Not only were Chinese deeply affected, but many missionaries experience spiritual refreshing too. Some even attributed their real conversion to his ministry. [page 123-124]

71. Followed God's Direction.

Several churches were competing to get Dr. Sung to be their pastor, so he began to pray: "Lord, if you want me still to be an itinerant evangelist, please open the door for campaigns in five provinces and send me \$800 for my expenses within the next month!" As soon as news of Dr. Sung's new situation got abroad through the pages of *Evangelism*, *Morning Star*, and other publications, invitations poured in. They came from the five provinces of Kiangsu, Chekiang, Anhwei, Hopeh, and Shantung. And registered letters reached him from Changsha, Paoting, Peking, Shihkiachwang, Paotow, Saratsi, and other cities, with money gifts ranging from \$20 to \$50, some of them from anonymous donors and others from people he did not know. The total exceeded the sum he had asked for! He was completely reassured. "I offered myself again to serve my faithful, unchanging Lord. Come wind, come weather, through cloud and sunshine, if God is with me, I ask for nothing else." [page 124]

72. Struggled with His Inabilities.

Later John returned to Hangchow for a two weeks' convention at two churches. But this time he met with a mixed reception and was provoked to concentrate his fire on those leaders who withheld their support. He was conscious of his inability to handle such situations with the power and patience needed. "Though I have a love of souls, but cannot sympathize with the weakness of others; and if my zeal is so hot as to scorch others, but if I cannot in love bind up their wounds, what wonder is it those that are hurt accuse me of being a persecutor of the church! So I count not myself to have apprehended that for which I have been apprehended of Christ Jesus." [page 127]

73. Meetings Well Prepared for by Prayer.

From Foochow, Dr. Sung travelled south to Amoy, where several series of meetings had been arranged by the Five-Year Movement Committee of the Synod of the South Fukien church in Hweian, Chuanchow, Changchow and Amoy. The meetings were well prepared for by prayer and there was an atmosphere of expectancy. Dr. Sung spent a week in each place from October 13th to November 13th, speaking three times a day wherever he went, the meetings seldom lasting less than three hours. [page 128]

74. Overdoing Denunciation of Christian Leaders.

There was room for some criticism that Dr. Sung overdid the denunciation of Christian leaders, built up his preaching band organization around his own appointed leaders without reference to his committee thus encouraging any separatist tendencies there might be, and so stirred up the non-rational emotions of the young people that many of them, against the advice of friends and relations, followed their hero round to other centres instead of returning to school. Yet the over-all picture was one of abundantly answered prayer and a deep work of the Spirit of God. [page 130]

75. Interpreters Became Evangelists Imitating Dr. Sung.

Already weary in body after successive strenuous campaigns and with a voice hoarse through constant use, Dr. Sung drove himself to carry on. Dr. Giedt comments: "Dr. Sung's preaching was, on the whole, wholesome and constructive; not sensational, but dramatic. His sermons were not so much in the nature of topical development as of a running comment on longer passages of Scripture with apt illustrations and applications, frequently acted out dramatically ... He wore out several interpreters, using about three during the week. The interpreters had to follow suit in every gesture he made and even in acting out scenes. As a result, he always left a few disciples wherever he went. Afterwards they went out as free-lance evangelists to preach on their own, imitating Dr. Sung's every pose, especially that of putting one foot forward, with the heel resting on the floor and the sole of the shoe showing forward!" [page 131]

76. Repentance and Healing.

Dr. Sung usually had one meeting in every campaign at which he would give an address on healing and the necessity for a sincere repentance before inviting the sick to come forward. It was always made plain that it was only as people accepted Christ as Saviour from sin that they could expect to be healed. Patients had to hand in a record of their names and addresses and the nature of their disease on cards provided. [page 133]

77. Opportunities for Evangelism.

Dr. Sung was fully aware of the dangers of this work—of credulity and even of superstition. But as far as he was concerned these meetings were primarily an

opportunity for evangelism. It was of first importance that the soul be saved, but if God should see fit to heal the body too, then all the glory was given to Him. And there were many who were either healed or considerably relieved of suffering. [page 134]

78. Great Evangelism Opportunities.

What happened at Golden Well could be duplicated over and over again. There were many substantiated claims for healing and the benefits were lasting. Others obtained no help at all and some claims were subsequently shown to be unjustified. But as far as Dr. Sung was concerned, the meetings arranged to pray for the sick were valuable evangelistic opportunities and many found Christ who had come only to seek healing. [page 137]

79. Preaching in the Philippines.

Dr. Sung made seven different missionary journeys to Formosa, the Philippines, and the “Nanyang”, and everywhere the same signs followed the preaching of the Word and determined the future character of the Chinese churches of the areas.

The first invitation from outside Dr. Sung’s own country came from the Philippines in 1935. The blessing which had everywhere followed Dr. Sung’s ministry had been reported in Christian magazines or in letters from relatives who had been converted or brought into a deeper experience of Christ in the great campaigns in Foochow, Amoy, Swatow, or Canton. Three Churches in Manila—the Episcopal, the United Evangelical and the Christian Assembly Churches—united in extending an invitation to Dr. Sung to conduct meetings from June 6th to 14th. He travelled to Manila after another great campaign in Peking in April.

Crowds gathered from all over Luzon and from other islands to attend the meetings. About 800 people filled every seat and blocked the aisles and stairways of the Chinese United Evangelical Church, Pastor Silas Wang of the United Church who took a prominent part in the meetings said: “Dr. Sung had one line of teaching: sin, repentance, the new birth, holiness.” As usual his denunciations of sin were fearless—the sins of professing Christians especially so. [page 142]

80. Dr. Sung Touched the Philippines.

A missionary, writing in 1954, reports: “So many of the true Christians in the Philippines are the direct result of John Sung’s ministry.” [page 143]

81. Preaching Through Long Sections of Scripture.

As a Bible teacher, John Sung would have horrified the great Bible teachers of our time. His exegesis was untenable. His ideas were often fanciful in the extreme—as, for instance, his theory that Heaven must be in the northern firmament because the stars

are fewest there! And that Hell was in the center of the earth, where there is fire! And yet he was able to hold his audiences and give them familiarity with the contents of Scripture. His own studies in the sanatorium in America had given him a grasp of the wide sweep of revealed truth, and he loved to take his audiences through long sections of the Bible, suggesting a key thought for the understanding of each chapter. [page 145]

82. A Great Bible Student.

But John himself was full of the Bible. He read nothing else except the daily paper. Since his experience in America he had been a man of one book only. Hours a day used to be spent on his knees with his open Bible and the notebook in which he wrote down the truths that were revealed to him, only a small part of which he ever shared with others. His mind was completely saturated with the Word of God, and so, even if his Bible Teaching was completely original few men can have been so successful in infecting others with his own deep love for the Book.

Frank Ling recalls that “his way of dividing the Word of God was very peculiar. He never preached from just one text, but expounded the Scriptures paragraph by paragraph or chapter by chapter. This was not a new way of preaching. Others have attempted it before, but how dry it was to listen to! Yet you never got dry in Dr. Sung’s meetings! People loved to study the Word of God after his meetings. So, wherever he went, the Bible Societies were soon sold out of their stocks and had to wire urgently to the central depots for fresh supplies!” [pages 145-146]

83. Defending the Truth.

Though Dr. Sung was no theologian, he never hesitated to enter into controversy in defense of what he saw to be the truth. He held his convictions with great tenacity. So, whether it was Dr. Oliver on eschatology, Dr. Eddy on the liberal interpretation of the Christian message or Mr. Watchman Nee on the doctrines of the Church, Dr. Sung entered the arena with assurance. [page 146]

84. Fruitful Ministry in Singapore.

In August [1935], Dr. Sung traveled to Singapore on the first of seven visits. The churches of the colony, so intimately connected with the churches of Fukien and Kwangtung, had heard a great deal about their compatriot. A tremendous welcome was prepared for him. It was at this great crossroads of the world that Dr. Sung was to make as deep and lasting impression as anywhere. **Many are the Christians there today who look back to the visits of John Sung as the time of their first real Christian experience.**

The first campaign began on August 30th and lasted until September 12th. There had been sound preparation by the local church union committee and the meetings were

held in the Telok Ayer Methodist Church. Dr. Sung preached forty times in fourteen days and Singapore have never seen or head the like before. The Chinese Christians were deeply stirred and outsiders crowded to hear the unusual preacher. Over 1300 people signed decision cards on profession of faith, and halfway through the campaign, on September 7th, 111 evangelistic teams consisting of three persons or more were organized, with a total membership of 503. Over eighty young people dedicated their lives to whole time service for God. [page 146]

85. Too Many Sheep without a Shepherd.

By October 18th he [Dr. Sung] was back in Singapore, this time for a convention for Christians lasting a week. Twenty-one new preaching bands were added to the existing total and the fires of revival were further stirred up. And so ended the first triumphant visit to “Nanyang”. **Over 5,000 people had professed conversion.** So great were the crowds to see him off on the boat that the P. & O. Steamship authorities could not follow their usual practice of allowing the friends of passengers on board at will. Instead, they were asked to form a queue, and filed on to the ship up one gangway in a long stream, shook hands with John Sung on the deck and left by the second gangway. Over 1,000 people said goodbye to him in this way. He was deeply moved to see so many sheep, as it were, without a shepherd, and it was on this voyage that he determined to hold a second Bible Institute, probably in Amoy. [pages 147-148]

86. A Baby Left in Dr. Sung’s Charge.

After the ship had sailed, he discovered to his surprise and embarrassment an extra package in his cabin; a baby, duly wrapped up and labelled from an anonymous donor! The Bethel orphanage in Shanghai took charge of the little foundling. [page 148]

87. Strict with Interpreters and Translation.

The listeners were utterly absorbed with what they heard. Mr. Shih had the sensation of interpreting for a man possessed with an extraordinary power from the Holy Spirit, a power which seemed to fill the building and brought people out to the front in their crowds to confess sin and get right with God.

During the second series of meetings, Mr. Shih twice had the experience of being ordered off the platform by Dr. Sung for hesitation in translation or for modifying some of the more extreme castigations of certain political groups then active in Shanghai. Other interpreters had had similar experiences. [pages 149-150]

88. A Preacher of the Pure Gospel of Grace.

Tenghsien was the centre of much Christian educational work. No building in the city was deemed large enough to hold the crowds which were expected to attend. So the church leaders erected a mat shed on a vacant lot, large enough to seat 1,000 people.

Dr. Martin Hopkins described the meetings in these words: “Seminary and high school students and Christians from far and near filled the shed three times daily for eight days. Dr. Sung is a preacher of the pure gospel of grace and his style is somewhat like Billy Sunday’s. There were 500 professions of faith and re-consecration. Much stress was laid on personal evangelism and at the close of the meetings 130 evangelistic bands were organized chiefly among the students of the seminary and Bible students. [page 150]

89. Many Evangelists and Leaders from Dr. Sung’s Ministry.

Mr. Gordon Dunn, Superintendent of the China Inland Mission work in this province, wrote in 1953: “I have talked to many men who are now outstanding evangelists and leaders in Christian work who were restored to fellowship and brought to the place of dedication of their lives wholly to the Lord’s service through the ministry of Dr. Sung.” [page 153]

90. Concerned over Those Growing Cold in Their Love of Christ.

The time was drawing near for the Second Bible Institute, which was so much on Dr. Sung’s heart. This Institute had been widely advertised to take place in Amoy from July 10th to August 9th. During his return visits to places in north and south China which had earlier experienced revival, Dr. Sung had been saddened to find some whom God had revived earlier again growing cold in their love for Christ. He was greatly concerned, too, at the spread of heresy and erroneous Scriptural interpretations, and he longed to see Christians better established in the Scriptures. One thousand and six hundred delegates from all parts of China and some of the overseas settlements of Chinese converged on Amoy. They come from Harbin, Peking, Chefoo, Nanking, Shanghai, Hankow, Foochow, Formosa, Singapore, Penang, the Malay States and the Philippines, speaking a variety of dialects but one in Christ, to hear the man to whom most of them owed their spiritual life. They were accommodated in six schools and held meetings in Trinity Church. Each delegation gave a report during the conference on the progress of the Evangelistic Band organization. [pages 153-154]

91. Every Session Pure Bible Study.

At the opening meeting, delegates from each place went in groups on to the platform and sang a chorus of their own choice. The pianist was Miss Esther Hsieh (Mrs. Peter Chung) who subsequently became Dr. Sung’s interpreter and assistant. Dr. Sung’s first address was an exposition of I Tim. 1:3-30 under the following headings: (1) Distinguish truth from error (verses 3, 4); (2) pursue love (verse 5); (3) and humility (verses 6-II); (4) give glory to God (verse 17); (5) fight the good fight (verses 12-18); (6) keep a good conscience (verses 19-20). This was a fair sample of Dr. Sung’s method of handling Scripture.

The next day, the regular time-table of two long sessions a day began-7.30 to 11 a.m. and 7 to 10.30 p.m. The time was the middle of a southern summer, with high temperatures and great humidity. But, beginning at the first chapter of Genesis, Dr. Sung took his audience right through the entire Bible, chapter by chapter, until he reached the last chapter of Revelation. These were no evangelistic talks, nor were they revival messages. Each and every session was pure Bible study, interspersed with numerous references to his own personal experience as a Christian, all the time emphasizing the need for holiness and consecration of life. Has any other Bible teacher ever attempted anything comparable? Surely this was a phenomenal effort for one man in a month! All the addresses were taken down verbatim and published in book form the same year. The volume was published again in Formosa in 1952, and contains 554 pages. [page 154]

92. Many Bible Books Studied.

Returning to Singapore, Dr. Sung conducted a ten-day Bible Study Conference from December 11th to 20th. He took Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Joshua and Daniel in the Old Testament and expounded the spiritual significance in the Tabernacle and the Offerings. In the New Testament the books studied were Luke's Gospel, Romans and Jude. [page 157]

93. A Very Dramatic Teacher.

Dr. Sung led the singing himself and a chorus for the day frequently punctuated each address, a practice which had it hard to doze for long! The sermons were his old favorites: the Lost Sheep, the Sermon on the Mount, the Rich Man and Lazarus and the Corinthian Hymn of Love—all of them dramatically illustrated with an energy amazing for so slight a frame. One day, preaching on Saul and the Amalekites, he stripped off the simple, white long gown which he always wore, rolled it up, and stuffed it inside his shirt, letting the audience know that the bulge was unconfessed sin! As confession of one sin after another was made, the gown was pulled out bit by bit until every sin was confessed. Then the whole gown was torn out with a shout of “Hallelujah!” And the great crowd rose to sing “O come to my heart, Lord Jesus, there is room in my heart for Thee!” [page 160]

94. Impatient with Pretension.

Those who were meeting the great evangelist for the first time were struck by his simplicity in dress and absence of any desire to make a good platform appearance. He was even inclined to be careless in this respect. There was no outward indication that here was a scholar and a preacher. He was impatient with anything in the way of pretension in his own conduct. Small talk he abhorred. His apparent lack of graciousness would have been offensive had his preaching not demonstrated his

unusual spiritual power. Between meetings he could never relax. The burden of his ministry rested heavily on him and he remained at a high pitch of tension all the time. [page 162]

95. An Enemy of Compromise with the Flesh.

John Sung would tolerate no hypocrisy, no pride, and was a bitter enemy of any compromise with the “flesh”. No one could escape coming under condemnation. Those who yield to the Spirit made progress but those who resisted became hardened. [page 163]

96. Imitators of Dr. Sung.

For a time there were many would-be imitators of Dr. Sung’s methods and even his mannerisms, but they soon found that they lacked his power without which the manner was useless. [page 163]

97. Others Also Labouring for Christ with Great Self-sacrifice.

The South-west, however, was not ready for revival and the campaigns there were not so successful as elsewhere, but Dr. Sung was made aware that there were others besides himself who were laboring for God with great self-sacrifice: Chinese and missionaries. This seems to have had the effect of producing a **greater humility of spirit**. Friends in Shanghai remarked on his return there:

“He’s much more humble now! He even talks about becoming a country preacher himself!”

Once chatting with a friend, he is reported to have said:

“There are many people better than I! For exposition of the Scriptures, I am not equal to Watchman Nee! As a preacher, I am not up to Wang Ming-tao! As a writer, I cannot compare to Marcus Cheng! As a musician, I am far short of Timothy Dzao! I have not the patience of Alfred Chow! As a public figure, I do not have the social graces of Andrew Gih! There is only one thing in which I excel them all: that is I serving God with every ounce of my strength!” All these men were raised up for this generation as witnesses.

98. A Quiet Humble Attitude.

Mr. Newman Shih also found John greatly changed. Calling on him soon after his return to Shanghai in August 1938, he was greatly touched by his quiet, humble attitude.

“I no longer care to rebuke people from the pulpit,” John told him. “I prefer now to preach on subjects which edify and bring comfort to people. You see, the times have changed ...” [page 164]

99. A Messenger Sent from God.

So evidently full of power by the Spirit was John Sung that the idiosyncrasies, the impatience, the apparent lack of graciousness and the uncompromising denunciation of evil-doers had been unable to detract from the great affection in which he was held by thousands to whom he had been a voice crying in the wilderness, a messenger sent from God. His name became a household word wherever Chinese was spoken, and is still a “sweet memory to multiplies thousands”. One who was born again in one of his meetings in China fifteen years ago and is now serving the Lord in the Philippines was asked to tell something about Dr. Sung.

Her voice softened and her eyes lit up as she said, in tones of deep affection “Ai-ya! Sung Por-sir!” (“Ah me! Dr. Sung!”). And deep in the heart of Chinese Christians everywhere is a grateful memory of the Chinese John the Baptist raised up to call the Chinese Church to repentance. [pages 164-165]

100. A Slowly Dying Man.

But the great preacher’s health was giving cause for increasing anxiety. The earthen vessel had begun to show signs of wear. Dr. Sung’s medical history might have justified a lesser man in treating himself as an invalid. There had been **his recurring tuberculosis of the hip and a heart none too strong**; more recently symptoms of more disease had occurred. Yet he had never spared himself. Campaign had followed campaign in quick succession and everywhere John had preached three if not four times a day and given further time to personal interviews. Even acute pain could not stop him fulfilling a preaching engagement. While in Penang on this last visit, he had once been carried on to the platform on a camp-cot, from which he preached through his interpreter. Already he seemed to know that he was a slowly dying man and he always said that he hoped to die on the platform. [page 167]

101. Irritableness Attributed to Pain and Weakness.

If there is a temptation to condemn what seems to be such un-Christian conduct, we should at least remember that the pain and weakness which had dogged Dr. Sung’s steps most of his life was increasingly and certainly account in part for the irritableness which made him so hard to live with. [page 168]

102. His Message Was the Simple Gospel.

“...he [Dr. Sung] talked least, preached more and prayed most.” His message was the simple gospel of sin and forgiveness preached with convicted power. People wept and cried out under deep conviction of sin and many were converted. [page 168]

103. Be Careful of Money and Women and Follow Where God Leads.

His [Dr. Sung’s] host at Bogor, the scene of his next campaign, asked him on one occasion what was the secret of his success as an evangelist. His answer was frank but revealing, and one which suggests the downfall of many who once promised well: “Be careful about money. Be careful about women. And be careful to follow where God leads; when the Lord calls He will open the door. [page 176]

104. Great Ministry in Surabaya.

Throughout the campaigns the proposed ten-day training school in Surabaya from September 19th to 29th had been announced and the members of the preaching bands had been urged to attend. When Dr. Sung arrived he found an enormous bamboo mat shed to seat 4000 persons already erected in a centrally situated location near the large mosque. Loudspeakers had been installed. The co-operation of every Christian church had been enlisted, and the organizing committee was under the chairmanship of a Christian factory-owner. Two thousand “volunteers” from all the cities of Java visited by Dr. Sung attended meetings every morning and evening. The subject was the Gospel of Mark, and the purpose was the instruction of those were pledged to continue to spread the Good News throughout Java by means of the 500 newly organized evangelistic bands. The meetings every night were evangelistic and attracted the entire Chinese population of the city. It became the fashion to go and hear Dr. Sung. The meetings were given considerable publicity in the local Press. It was reported that the public opinion of the Chinese world was turned in favor of Christianity. There were many conversions, especially among the young people. Nightly over 5000 people of many races and languages crowded the tent to overflowing to listen to the simple message of Christ and Him crucified. The messages were not just about the Bible, but expositions of the Bible itself. In the teaching classes, Dr. Sung would go through chapter after chapter, verse by verse. He expounded the doctrines of sanctification, of being crucified with Christ, all the time emphasizing the urgent necessity of dealing honestly with all sin. [pages 177-178]

105. Churches in Java Alive Long After Dr. Sung’s Death.

Java had had her day of opportunity, and Miss Baarbé, writing ten years later in 1949, and after years of enemy occupation, could report: “We dare say that the Chinese churches in Java are still alive today only through the blessing of revival brought by Dr. Sung. Dr. Sung had not planned that his ministry should reach only the Chinese

churches, but this was virtually the case. The fact that Dr. Sung was himself a Chinese and that the invitation originally came from the Chinese community accounts for this. Malay Christians attended many of the meetings, but there seems to have been little impact on the Malay churches as a whole, although there were conversions both in east and west Java. [page 179]

106. Javanese Churches Owed Dr. Sung Much.

... on September 30th he [Dr. Sung] boarded a ship at the Surabaya docks. Hundreds of Christians were on the quay to see him off. The joy expressed in the singing of hymn after hymn as the vessel pulled out was mingled with sorrow at saying “Farewell” to the man to whom the churches of Java owed so much. [page 180]

107. In Great Pain.

In John’s last meeting in Surabaya, he had to preach in a kneeling position to lessen the pain in his hip. On his return to Shanghai early in 1940 the pain became more continuous and Miss Kao Suchen, who often used to visit him, remembers how he frequently groaned in pain. On a Sunday morning he used to gather some close friends around him in his home and preach to them, chiefly about the Lord’s work. After preaching for an hour or more he would pray. So long as he was preaching or praying he was unconscious of pain, but as soon as he stopped the pain returned. **He told people that this was the Lord’s discipline for his bad temper;** and indeed it was noticeable how his disposition seemed to change at this time. Instead of being apparently morose and uncommunicative, he used to hold a normal conversation with people. And he observed more closely some of the proverbial Chinese courtesies. [page 183]

108. A Strict Daily Routine.

The daily routine was unchanged: **eleven chapters of the Bible read daily and much time given to earnest exhausting prayer.** His diary still took up much of his time. Often he wrote it himself, but there were times when his strength was not enough and he got his brother to do the writing. And when he found his brother too slow a writer, he invited one of the students at the China Bible Seminary to write for him. She was an Amoy girl and wrote fast and used to go over to take dictation from Dr. Sung daily. [page 184]

109. Hospitalized for Cancer and Tuberculosis.

In Peking, it was confirmed that he was suffering from cancer as well as tuberculosis. A first operation was performed on December 14th and a second on January 28, 1941. Six months in the P.U.M.C. followed. Another patient in the hospital was the son of Mr. and Mrs. J. Glittenberg of the China Inland Mission, who had brought the boy up from

South China for surgical treatment. One day Mr. Wang Ming-tao, the pastor of the Christian Tabernacle, was visiting both patients, and introduced Mr. and Mrs. Glittenberg to Dr. Sung. After that many chats were held in the sun-parlor of the hospital during Dr. Sung's convalescence from his operation. Dr. Sung spoke frankly of his own stubbornness an ill-humour and expressed his belief that it was for this that the Lord was discipling him. Familiar with the many stories of this strange personality, Mr. Glittenberg was surprised to find one so chastened and meek. [pages 184-185]

110. Health and Productivity Returned.

On July 18th Dr. Sung received the news that his only living son Joshua had died in Shanghai. This seemed a cruel blow at such a time, but John knew His Lord too well to be offended in His ways. He found abundant comfort in the Scriptures and renewed his spirit as well as his strength amid the quietness of the surrounding hills and the changing beauty of the seasons.

Mrs. Sung and the three girls joined Dr. Sung in the Western Hills on August 26th and they set up a new home there. As health slowly returned, John resumed a measure of work. Daily Bible Classes and meetings were conducted in the home. He continued to pray and to study the Bible with the old intensity. He wrote fifteen new hymns and nineteen open letters to Church and Evangelistic League leaders in China and in the "Nanyang", urging them to pray for revival. [page 185]

111. Love for God's Word.

Mrs. Sung bears witness to the passionate love her husband had for the Word of God, and she suggests that there is little wonder that the light he received from the Lord was different from that which others received, in view of the intense study of the Bible, while in the hospital in America. [page 186]

112. Dr. Sung's Death.

On the morning of August 16th, 1944, John felt worse. He told his wife that God had shown him that he was going to die. That night he fell into a coma, but the next day rallied enough to sing verses of three hymns: "There's a land that is fairer than day", "in the Cross, in the Cross be my glory ever" and "Jesus is all the world to me". As the day wore on the dying man seemed to pass from intense pain into a great joy and peace. Close friends, such as Mr. Wang Ming-tao, as well as a doctor and a Christian nurse, were present. Mrs. Sung had prayed that her husband should not die at night. About midnight, his last words to his wife were: "Don't be afraid! The Lord Jesus is at the door. What is there to fear?"

It was daybreak when, at 7:07 a.m. on August 18th, at the age of forty-two, John Sung fell asleep. The circle of relatives and friends were quietly praying around the bed. [page 188-189]

113. Called to Rebuke the Sins of the Church and Society.

Mr. Wang Ming-tao quite naturally assumed responsibility for the funeral arrangements. At five o'clock on the same day, a service was held in the house and then the body was lovingly placed in a casket of "fragrant wood". Mr. Wang spoke briefly and appropriately on the words in Revelation 14:13: "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors, and their works do follow them."

The internment took place on August 22nd. Representatives from many churches were present and a coach-load of friends came from Tientsin to attend. There were delegates from Chefoo, Swatow, Amoy, and Foochow. Some 300 persons were present together. Mr. Wang Ming-tao preached on Jeremiah 1:4-19. He emphasized that John Sung had been called, like Jeremiah, to rebuke the sins of the Church and of society, to be as an "iron pillar", fearing no man and faithful unto death. A great man had passed from their midst. Leaders of various evangelistic bands which he inspired carried the coffin and hymns were sung all the way to the grave which had been prepared in the quiet tree-shaded meadow where John loved to go for solitude in prayer. [page 189]

114. Passionate Love for God's Word.

John Sung was a man of the Word. He loved it passionately. He knew the Bible as few know it. He read little else and he continued so to read right up to the end. His own preaching was essentially expository and Biblical. His fiercest denunciations were for those who departed from loyalty to God's Word. [page 192]

115. Gave All to God.

First and foremost, a man utterly abandoned to God. Gifts, attainments, honors, prospects, wealth—all counted loss and consumed in one irrevocable sacrifice. His was an unqualified consecration of his all to God. Nothing was kept back. The sacrifice, moreover, was bound with cords to the altar for the full duration of his life. There was never a moment of regret. No lowering of standards. No compromise with self. Just a daily denial of self. His was no easy ministry. But he had a Spirit-given ability to give himself wholeheartedly to it. He was wedded to the Cross. He gloried in the Cross. Not for him a comfortable, tailor-made career—a post suited to his training and attainments. He recklessly forsook all to follow His Lord. With all his superficial faults and idiosyncrasies, he was a man after God's own heart. [pages 192-193]