

Missionary Tackles Chinese Road With Flivver and Comes to Grief

Paul R. Reynolds, Who Represents Winnetka Church in Orient, Tells of Motoring Joys in Land of Pigtails and Bad Cafes

Editor's Note: This is the first of a series of letters written from China by Paul R. Reynolds. Mr. Reynolds needs no introduction to readers of WINNETKA TALK. He is a product of a Chicago university and is now foreign missionary for the Winnetka Congregational church in the land of Confucius. Mr. Reynolds is master of a facile pen and his epistles are both interesting and instructive.

Chung Yang Hsein,
March 2, 1924.

Dear folks: Here we are off for the swing around the circuit of our outstanding churches. There are about a hundred of them now scattered all over northern Shensi in most of the strategic centers. Out from nearly every one of them there are numbers of preaching places and the beginnings of work. We go on mules, sitting high above our bedding and boxes on the pack saddles. At each place we hold a meeting, Mr. Pye preaches, we baptize the new Christians, usually we hold communion. Then the local pastor in charge talks about his problems and difficulties. The church members come in to talk things over. Then on we go to another place. Some days are very long. Yesterday we were on the trail for thirteen hours. One comes in stiff and sore after such a grind. But here, I am getting side-tracked! Later on I must write you about all this. Today I want to tell about our vacation trip to Sianfu.

You probably know that, altho officially China is on the solar calendar, actually the people at large still hold to the lunar one. So their New Year's comes somewhere along in February. And this New Year's is the great festival of the Chinese year. Just before New Year's all accounts are due and must be paid; everybody is figuring up the year's business. It is a very hard time for lots of folks for, although you can live all the rest of the year on credit, at this time bills must be paid. Then comes New Year's Day and all the shops and schools are closed and everybody dons their best clothes and goes calling. Then for about five or six weeks nobody does any work. Shops are closed. Factories shut down. Even the postal service stops work for a few days. You see the Chinese have no Sunday and so they sort of take them all at once at New Year's. Since all the schools and other work closes up at the compound, the missionaries take a vacation.

Visit Ancient City

This year a party of us went for a trip to Sianfu in Shensi, one of the oldest of the capital cities of China. It is terribly old, very conservative, has been visited by few foreigners, was the impregnable city to which the old Empress Dowager fled in Boxer days, and has more of historic interest than any other place in China.

There were six of us. First, Mr. Hummel, a history hound who can look at a pile of old broken bricks and tell you the color of robe the Empress wore in the year one million B. C. He can get more kick out of a piece of tile from an ancient tomb than I get out of a 12-inning 1 to 1 tie between Cleveland and the White Sox. Hummel goes to Peking this fall to be history professor for the Union Language school. Then Len Sweet, boys' secretary of the Pekin "Y", son of Gov. Sweet, of Colorado, and a heck of a good scout on a jaunt like this. He knows the words for all the good food you can get in China and since we were living on Chinese food only, Len was a popular guy. He could lead us into a street restaurant, coo a few words at the cook and get rice and chicken and bamboo sprouts, whereas the best any of the rest of us could persuade out of the proprietor would be dough strings—probably cold at that. You would think with such a command of "food" language Len would be fairly rotund, but instead he is skinny as ever.

We had one other celeb—Frank Hutchins, whose dad is prexy at Berea college down in Old Kentucky, and picks the "mountain-ears" out of their stills and trains 'em to be preachers and college professors and bank presidents and so on. Frank is a good scout and knows a lot about the insides of a Ford. He made that onery little old sway backed, broken arched Fenchow Funny Ford actually run the 740 odd li down to the end of the motor road. That is the farthest that car has run (inside of a running period for a year) since the Red Cross ran it over terrace and river bank and left it at Fenchow as an ancient relic a few years ago. We wanted to run it clear to Sianfu but were afraid the governor would put it in the provincial museum with the rest of the B. C. stuff, so we left it at the end of the road and took to carts.

Buys Strange Relic

Oh yes, the rest of our party! There was Sam Wilson, just from Oberlin and a curio bug. All he needed was to see the sign of a curio shop and he was lost for the day. He bought the top of a carved pillar of a bridge that dated away back before the memory of man. The only reason he didn't buy

the rest of the bridge was because nobody could find it. He bought a whole bus full of stuff. I think they will arrest him for running opposition to the Field museum.

Yep! And there was Larry Krause, of Carleton, English teacher at Fenchow. He is a good scout, too, and can persuade more music out of a piano than was ever meant by the inventor. More of Larry anon, when we arrive in "Sweden." That, with "yours truly," the Ford and the driver made up the party. The Chinese name for a driver is K'ai Che Ti. Literally that means, "the guy who opens the cart." Well, by hooky, that is what he had to do. And it always had to be "opened" and a dose of castor oil or baling wire or something administered just when we were on the coldest, bleakest, most uninhabited spot in China.

We started blithely on our way one Wednesday morning—six of us, driver, "Lizzie," and all of our bedding. We buzzed along for 360 li that day and hit Hung Tung at sunset. There is a mission station there so we drove up and "accepted" their invitation to stay all night. They served us up a good big supper and along about 9:30 we began to feel like bed. Then the old boy in charge says: "Why, you aren't going yet, are you?"

"Why, yes," countered Mr. Hummel. "We've been out in the wind all day and it's almost ten o'clock."

"What!!!" says friend Mish. "Why I have only eight o'clock."

There you are. Horrors of missionary life in the interior!!! His watch nearly two hours slow and he didn't know it. After that all the rest of the trip when we tried to set a time for anything, somebody would pipe up: "Whose time you going on? Ours or _____s?"

Travel Over Unique Road

Next day our troubles began. We had very naively supposed that on a motor road which had daily bus service from Taiyuanfu, the provincial capital, we could buy gasoline. But we could not. The bus stations had none. The oil stores had none. Nobody had any. We still had enough to run for a while, so we shut our eyes and kicked off. Next we hit Pingyangfu, which is the oldest seat of established government in China. It was here that the famous Yao and Shen, China's first two emperors, held

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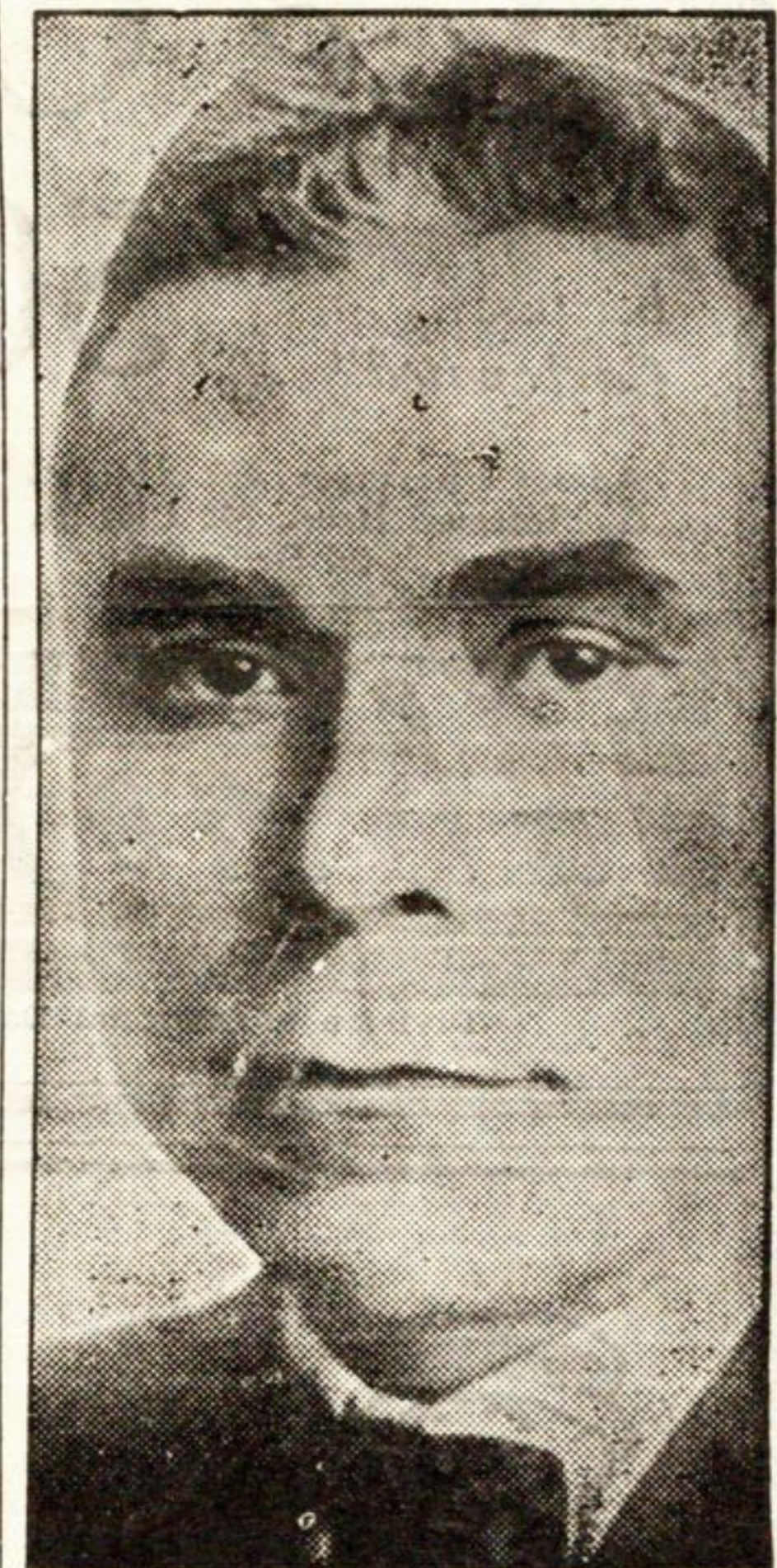
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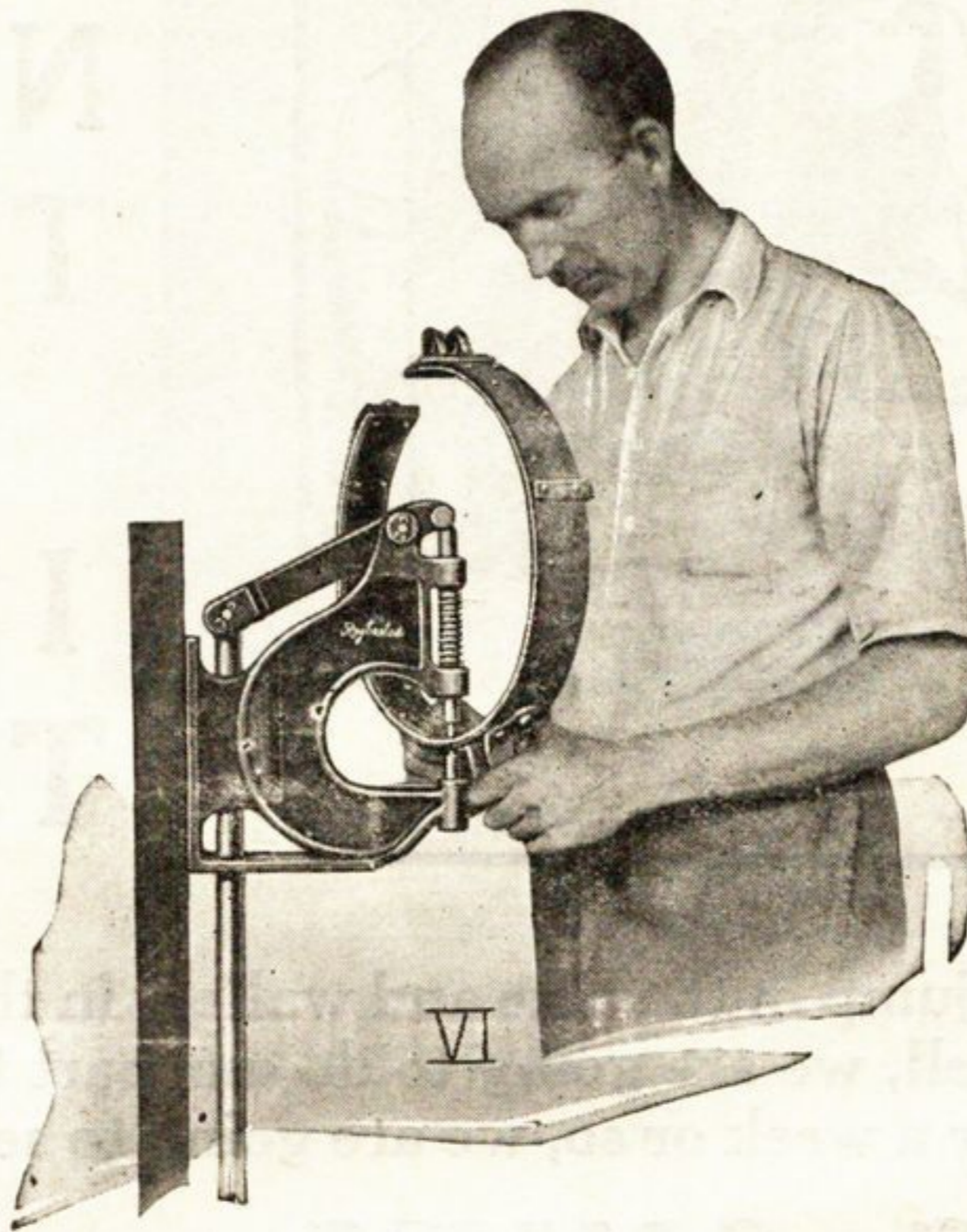
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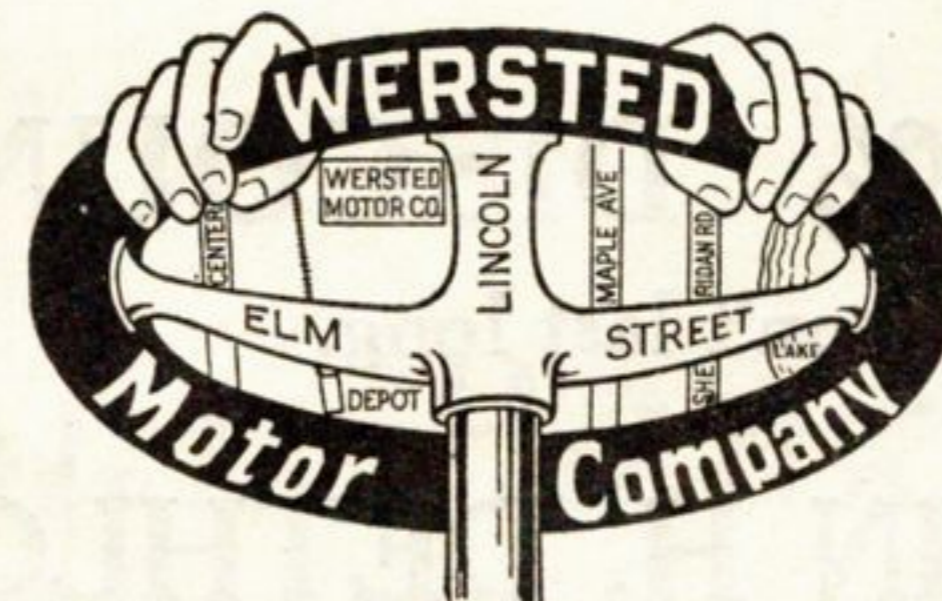
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