

8270 Denver Street  
Ventura, CA 93004  
April 1, 1983

LEFT SAN DIEGO THE DAY

~~PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT DIED~~

Dear Oscar,

It was thirty-eight years ago today that I boarded a troop ship and left the port of San Diego, California, to sail for Guam, than landed on Okinawa on my birthday, May 27th, where I saw combat with the sixth Marine Division, then briefly back to Guam, and finally sailed to Tsingtao, China. I remained in China less than a year, but during that time I developed a lasting respect for the Chinese people, their culture, and their country. As you know, our home here in Ventura is filled with Chinese furniture and art. And, at least once a week we go to one of the many Chinese restaurants in town for Chinese food (Mandarin preferred). Most servicemen returned home with souvenirs, and I was the no exception. I was able to acquire the best China had to offer: a lovely Swedish bride.

My heart still is in China, although I know the day of foreign interference there is over. I personally think the Chinese are wise in their policy of controlling their foreign contacts. I am completely confident that they can do a far better job in running their own affairs than would be done with foreign intervention. Apparently the Chinese policy is one of accepting from the West what is good and what is applicable to their society, and rejecting Western ideas and ideals that are unacceptable. What complaint can anyone have with such a practical policy? We, in the West, want to offer assistance to our Chinese friends (considering China itself a friend), but we must accept China's prerogative of accepting what it wants and rejecting what it does not want. And where China does accept our assistance, it must be in the spirit of equals working together, brother to brother. China, too, has many things to offer the West. I am not only speaking of material items, but concepts from their rich cultural heritage.

I have heard reports that China is poor and, depending on how one looks at it, I suppose this is true. I have heard that China lacks medical expertise, and I suppose that it true too. I have heard that China is lacking in various technical skills, and apparently that is true also. But I do see many positive things in China. China is unified. There are not bandit armies overrunning the populous. All China is eating (and that is no little accomplishment for a billion people). I can remember a China that was starving and I can remember fine, respectable Chinese taking food out of the U.S. marine garbage cans. I understand China has an organized program of medical care, though not yet adequate to meet the needs of the people. But they do have medical care! When I entered China over thirty-seven years ago, most Chinese were just left to die. And who is to say that medicine in the West is so great? Sweden has had a brain-drain because it has not been able to hold its medical personnel. In the United States medical care is becoming too expensive for anyone but the very rich unless one is fortunate to have medical insurance (which is very expensive). But, most of all, the Chinese can now hold their heads high; they are respected by the world and, best of all, they have self-respect. This fact is not only true on mainland China, but among the Chinese the world-around. Say what we may choose to comment on the Chinese revolution and the things we have considered unacceptable about  
(over)

it, China is in a better position today than it has been in hundreds of years. Besides, let's face it, it has been the Chinese people themselves who are the ones who have faced extremely difficult times. Yet, they have come through it; and done quite well at that, considering the fact they number a billion people.

I think friendly relations will increase as time passes. But we must be patient with each-other. And when China says, "No," we must accept their right to make their own decisions. We must respect China's laws even as we expect them to respect ours. I am speaking specifically of the smuggling of a million Bibles into South China. No matter how noble the intentions of those people were, they were breaking Chinese law. The United States would not stand for such a thing if China were to smuggle things into the States. I have spoken to many American Christians about that incident, and most thing it was a wrong thing to do (both pastors and laymen). As Christians, we above all people, should respect and keep the law. It is incidents like that that will cause distrust and suspicion between peoples and nations.

I am interested in becoming involved in something in relation to China. My thinking goes something like this: China is interested in obtaining technical expertise and technical books. My contacts and training relate to theological materials. Technical books include theological materials. Much in the area of theological materials is not worth bothering with. I would like to work through the official Chinese government to mail to Chinese pastors and theologians materials, but only materials they would request. It is understood that, due to the difference in our currency, they could not pay for this materials. But possibly I could approach churches to pick up the cost of this project. All this must be done legally, otherwise it would not be Christian in its methodology. As I understand the situation in China, I do not think the Chinese government is opposed to Christian technical materials. Christianity and the Bible teaches the support of the government powers that exist, and changes should be made by legal means. This is not to say that Christians always do the right things; they are human and subject to all the human frailties. But perhaps you will have opportunity to expose this idea of mine to some officials and pastors in China. I could obtain lists from publishers of books that are available, and they could choose what they want. But I believe we would have to have some sort of clearance from the Chinese government.

A few personal things. Please convey my greetings to Rev. Stephan Wang and other Chinese I know in Tsingtao. Tell Stephen I have phoned Mrs. Cherry Chang and we expect to attend her church this Sunday evening. Mrs. Chang's husband, now deceased, founded the Chinese Mandarin Baptist Church in Los Angeles. As for your books, some are on their way to Sweden, but it is doubtful they will arrive before you leave. But they will help you to write your reports about China for the Gothenberg newspaper and church periodicals (after you return to Sweden). Other books are ordered and will be mailed as soon as they arrive.

Many thanks; your book just arrived: "China, A Visual Adventure." Have not had a chance to do more than flip through its pages very briefly. We wish you a pleasant trip; our prayers go with you. Please express our good will to the Chinese people where ever you go.

Sincerely yours,

*Bud '1*  
Bernard Holmquist