

WHEATON COLLEGE
WHEATON, ILLINOIS

May 21, 1948

My little Darling,

This is Friday evening at Wheaton. It has been a very busy week. But the week also has been interesting and I have enjoyed every minute of it. Before we started corresponding again I don't believe I really lived. My studies and life in general seemed to have little purpose for me. I was active about school and the city, having quite a few dates. Yet, I felt that something was missing! Many of the girls definitely attracted me; but I couldn't feel about them the same way I feel about you. I tried to fool myself into thinking that I really didn't care about you. But when you expressed your love again, my whole outlook on life changed. I began to enjoy my studies more than ever before. I began to live for something - for somebody. You know, Sweetheart, as I look over the past months I cannot help but think that all hell has tried to keep us apart. And you know that the devil has many of his followers walking about us every day. Every person who is not born again is a servant of Satan. Truly, our wonderful Lord must have something mighty fine planned for us if the forces of evil are so intent on defeating the Lord's purpose for our lives.

I am going to say some things that are very strange (at least they will seem so for you) and I am going to tell you something that will be hard to believe. The things I am about to say involve some of the people we knew in Tsingtao - some people you respected very much. It is a long story that I shall try to relate.

First of all, do you know the real reason we started the Youth for Christ meetings? You know, there were a large number of religious services in Tsingtao. Why do you suppose we didn't just try to assist the chaplains with their work? Doris, my darling, there was only one reason for our beginning Youth for Christ. This reason was the mere fact that the chaplains were not preaching the Word of God. You know how the Bible condemns them that give stones to those that ask bread. That is just what the chaplains were doing. When the men were asking for

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the Bread of Life, the chaplains were giving them stones. Because of this I had very little respect for most of the chaplains in the service. I praise God that there were a few exceptions. But they were few and far between. Actually, Doris, I don't believe many of the chaplains I knew were even Christians. And they were to be the shepherds of the flock! I can remember just before going into combat. A group of us Marines went to a Sunday morning chapel service on Guam. Many of the men were about to die in combat. Just think of the tremendous responsibility the chaplain had that morning. What do you think he used as a text? Doris, he actually didn't even quote from the Bible. He used a line from a popular song and used for a text the words, "You can be better off than you are, You can be swinging on a star." His whole sermon was based on the idea that we could pick ourselves up by our moral boot straps and lift ourselves to a higher plain. The men wanted to know how they could obtain eternal life and the chaplain gave them stones when they were dying for bread. And the chaplains in China were no better.

As soon as I arrived in China, I longed to give the men the Gospel. The chaplains told the men what they should do, but didn't tell them how to obtain the power to do it. True, the chaplains were very polite and likable men. They say the devil himself comes clothed as an angel of light. The chaplains preached, "Do as I say and not as I do." Some of the worst drunks in the Marines were the chaplains. Most of the chaplains didn't even believe the Bible was the Word of God and most of them didn't even believe that Jesus was the Son of God. Isn't that terrible, but it is true. I have talked with the chaplains by the hour. Many of the chaplains I liked as men; but they didn't preach the Gospel. Listen, would you believe that I knew of not one chaplain in Tsingtao when we started Youth for Christ who preached the word of God and lived a consistent Christian life? I can tell you about any one of them. I knew them all. It was because of this that the Lord laid it on my heart to start services where the Gospel was preached. I suppose you noticed that we only used missionaries for our speakers. This was because they alone preached the Word of God.

What did you think of our first Youth for Christ meeting in the Christ Church? I thought

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that it was alright, didn't you? Did you know that after that meeting the chaplains were going to force us to discontinue our meetings? The head chaplain was Mayberry. One day Chaplain Sammel called me into his office and told me what a poor job we did in that first rally. He told me that Chaplain Mayberry was going to force us to stop. Earl and I prayed much about it. I praise the Lord that He let us continue our meetings. Anyway, Chaplain Mayberry called Earl and me into his office. By this time he had cooled down considerably. Instead of forbidding us to continue our meetings, he only told us we could not use the Christ Church. He said that there was a lack of fuel. But according to Chaplain Sammel, this was not the real reason. I can remember saying to Earl that Saint Paul was put in the brig for his testimony, so who are we to stay out. We were going to continue our meetings even if it meant being tossed into the brig. I am sure that Chaplain Mayberry didn't expect us to find space in another church. As you know, the Baptist welcomed us with open arms.

The chaplains did their best to hinder the meetings. First, they tried to dominate the rallies. When we would not let them run the works, they tried to hinder everything in other ways. The thing they didn't like was our evangelistic message. We believed the Bible was the Word of God and most of them didn't believe this. I can remember how often Chaplain Sammel would call me into his office to tell us we were running things wrongly. I always thanked him for his suggestions and always brought them before the Youth for Christ business meetings.

I believe the chaplains were a little jealous of us also. You see, we actually had more to our meetings than they had to the largest of their chapel services. And we had many converts; whereas they had none or few. When they found that they couldn't run Youth for Christ, they tried all they could to hinder Earl and me. Because I was the founder of the rallies and the leader, I received most of the trouble. You can hardly imagine some of the things they did or tried to do. At every opportunity they tried to harm me in some way. Few people realized this fact. And I never said anything. I was willing

to take all they said and did as long as they didn't prevent me from continuing the meetings. In fact, I found satisfaction in the honor of suffering for our Lord. The Lord was blessing us and souls were being saved. That was the most important thing. During all this time I tried to cooperate with the chaplains and create as little hard feelings as possible. But sometimes I was hurt very deeply.

Chaplain Sammel was one of the main offenders. Often he accused me of things I was not at all guilty of. This is hard to believe of a preacher, isn't it? I guess that he and Van got along rather well. This can be understood, though. Chaplain Sammel liked to use tobacco and drank a good bit of beer. I don't believe any Christian should do this, and much less a preacher should do it. At the time Van was a nominal Christian himself. I neither smoked or drank. Of course the chaplain felt rather guilty. I know he didn't approve of drinking, yet he did it himself. Of course I never mentioned it to him. Van was a chain smoker and was very new in the faith. Consequently Van couldn't see the Chaplain's wrongs. And the chaplain liked Van because Van was very much like him. The Lord used me in straightening Van out on many things and finally convincing him to attend Bethel rather than a school of chaplain Sammel's choice. This, of course, didn't make the chaplain like me any more.

I could never understand Chaplain Sherley. I could not ^{help} but like him; but I could not admire him. He was very mannerly and had a fine personality. But, sad to say, he didn't believe in the deity of Christ or the inspiration of the Bible. I was sorry that you had so much to do with him because he was a bad influence. I heard him say once that he was trying to change your thinking and that soon he would have you going to dances with the rest of the girls. He was thinking of when you returned to the states. I am sure he meant well and didn't know what he was doing. In fact, though I liked Chaplain Sherley as an individual, I am convinced that he was not a Christian himself. He didn't believe in Christ, so how could he be a Christian? He liked you a lot and I like him for his good sense in liking you. But I cannot help but wonder of what a great influence he could have been if he was a man of God.

Doris, the only two chaplains I believe were

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preaching the Word of God were the two out at the air base. One was Chaplain Wilkenson and I cannot remember the name of the other. They were two fine men of God.

Sweetheart, I could go on and tell you many, many things that caused us to be disappointed with the Marine Chaplains, but time does not permit. I don't believe it is good to criticize people too much. But I wanted you to know the situation that existed. We, in Youth for Christ, saw the Gospel was not being preached and we did our best to tell the men about the redemption the Lord has provided. Most of the chaplains were not men of God. Because I was leader of Youth for Christ, they tried all in their power to persecute me. This was only natural. Among other things, they tried their best to separate you and me. This they almost succeeded in doing. In trying to do this, they were very clever. Remember that the chaplains were very intelligent men, having a good education. It would have been very difficult for the average observer to see how they worked. Some day, perhaps I can tell you more about it. You can't image how glad I am that their aims are being defeated and the Lord's will is being done. I am equally glad that I didn't do as the chaplains wanted me to do; but rather followed the Lord's leading. When the Lord was on earth he suffered at the hands of the religious men. If we are His servants, surely we will have to suffer as well. Perhaps if we don't suffer, it is a good sign that we are not being an effective witness for Him.

Well, enough about the unpleasant. Maybe you would like to hear a little about Wheaton. Each year the juniors and the seniors at Wheaton give each ^{OTHER} a bit of trouble. After the seniors have their comprehensive exams, they go to some resort for a weekend to have what they call a "sneak." Today the seniors were to leave for their sneak. But it so happened that last night the juniors found all their luggage and carried it away. The seniors didn't know what to do. The juniors insisted that the president of the senior class get up after chapel and declare that the junior class was a better class than their own class. This the seniors would not do. So finally the dean had to force the juniors to return the missing property. Also last night the juniors

took one of the seniors and dumped him into the Wheaton lagoon. To top it all off, he was only wearing his pajamas. Then they threw a blanket around him and made him walk five blocks to where he lives. This sort of thing goes on around here all the time. There is always something doing.

Sweetheart, you know that I want you here in the States with me. Yet, I do realize that there are many problems involved. First of all, we must get to see each other. Nothing can be decided before this happens. And I can see now how impossible it will be for you to neglect your training in Stockholm to come to the States. As I see it now, it is important for you to finish your training in nursing. Of course, you know more about this than I do. But, Sweetheart, it is my sincerest hope that you can transfer your credits to a hospital in this country. If this possible and if we see each other and decide we are still in love, do you think it will be possible for you to come to America and become my own? It will be up to me to find such a hospital first - a hospital that will accept married students. And even before you come to the States, we must first see each other. Darling, let's not worry about our meeting again. The problem in reality is not ~~owns~~, but the Lord's. It is for us only to have patience and faith in Him.

I received word from the Swedish-American Lines and they said "no soap." It seems that they only hire from the other side; at least that is what they said. I have yet to hear from the American lines. Yet, let's not be discouraged. For the Lord will work things out in His own good time. And when the time comes, everything will happen so fast and marvelously that it will make our heads swim. Sweetheart, just pray and trust and wait.

I was reading a little about the history of China yesterday. In so doing I started to get "home-sick." I love the Chinese people and China in general. I hope that the Lord will some day send us back there. There is nothing I want more in life than to proclaim the grace of God, and that to the Chinese people.

Well, it approaches my bed time and I have to take a shower yet. How would you like to wash my back (wow!)? Anyway, until my next letter, "I'll be seeing you."

Remember, Darling, this day and every day, keep looking up.

So, for tonight, X X X, and a big hug!

Sincerely, your

Bernie

Phil. 1:29