This is a complete transcript of the oral history interview with **Otto Schoerner (CN 55, T2)** for the Billy Graham Center Archives. No spoken words which were recorded are omitted. In a very few cases, the transcribers could not understand what was said, in which case "[unclear]" was inserted. Also, grunts and verbal hesitations such as "ah" or "um" are usually omitted. Readers of this transcript should remember that this is a transcript of spoken English, which follows a different rhythm and even rule than written English.

. . . Three dots indicate an interruption or break in the train of thought within the sentence of the speaker.

. . . . Four dots indicate what the transcriber believes to be the end of an incomplete sentence.

( ) Word in parentheses are asides made by the speaker.

[ ] Words in brackets are comments made by the transcriber.

Chinese place names are spelled in the old or new transliteration form according to how the speaker pronounced them. Thus "Peking" is used instead of "Beijing" because that is how Schoerner pronounced it.

This transcript was created by Elisabeth Brown, Paul Ericksen, and Robert Shuster and was completed in February 1991.

Please note: This oral history interview expresses the personal memories and opinions of the interviewee and does not necessarily represent the views or policies of the Billy Graham Center Archives or Wheaton College.

Collection 55, Tape T2. Oral history interview with Otto Schoerner by Robert Shuster on January 31, 1979.

SHUSTER: This is an interview recorded for the Missionary Sources Collection of the [excessive background noise from tape recorder]...Graham Center. The interviewer is Robert Shuster, and the interviewee, Mr. Otto Schoerner. This interview took place on January 31st, 1979, at Mr. Schoerner's home in Evergreen Park, 9550 Homan Avenue, at 10:30. Mr. Schoerner, I have a few questions left over from our last interview. In going over it, [pauses] I see that you left Shanghai just shortly after the Battle of Shanghai, when the Japanese had come into the city. Do you have any impressions from that event?

SCHOERNER: Well, the first arrival at Shanghai, way back in 1931, was before the Battle of Shanghai. It was actually before the problem with Japan. And I don't quite recall the exact date of the Battle of Shanghai that you refer to.

SHUSTER: It was in '31, I think, just shortly....

SCHOERNER: Well, there...yeah, there were some skirmishes of...of a variety of kinds. But [pauses] we just dropped into them. But it's so long ago I don't recall any details.

SHUSTER: So you didn't have....?

MRS. SCHOERNER: [in background] It was while we were in language...it was while we were in language school, the Battle of Shanghai.

SHUSTER: I see.

MRS. SCHOERNER: And they did do quite a lot of damage [unclear].

SHUSTER: That was Mrs. Schoerner.

SCHOERNER: Yes. See we both came to China in '31, and then immediately left Shanghai for language school up river. And then there were skirmishes and problems between China and Japan in those earlier days, and there never was a fully declared war. So some of these particular expressions are not too familiar with me, as I look back now.

SHUSTER: So you did not....did you have any contact with the Chinese or Japanese armies at that time?

SCHOERNER: At that time I did not. It was not until actually after Pearl Harbor or shortly before Pearl Harbor that we had definite contacts with them in certain stations where we served the Lord. You see, that...that war, or that problem between China and Japan, extended all the way from '31, as you recall, all the way to '41 when finally Pearl Harbor came and all of the world got involved in the problems of that war.

SHUSTER: You...I think also mentioned on tape that you...I think you met Owen Lattimore...

SCHOERNER: Yes.

SHUSTER: ...in Mongolia.

SCHOERNER: When, in 1932 after a period of language study, all of the missionaries were appointed to various areas, there were five or six of us young men who were specifically interested in Muslim work (or Moslem work, as we often call it) in northwest China. And it meant that there were six young men that were asked and appointed to go to Chinese Turkestan, and because of the difficulties of travel we [pauses]...the mission....the China Inland Mission at that time, bought two motor trucks, and we traveled across Inner Mongolia. And there, to our surprise, at a small station there, as we stopped one night, Mr. and Mrs. Lattimore, Mr. and Mrs. Owen Lattimore were also staying. And he had traveled across the Gobi Desert into Turkestan and could hardly believe that we would dare to take a group of young men and an older missionary with a Mongol guide across that desert. He was very much fascinated with that idea.

SHUSTER: What was he doing in Mongolia?

SCHOERNER: Well, he...he was working with the peoples up there. He was a diplomat, he was interested in a variety of things. I don't know exactly what he was doing at that time, but he was meeting with some of the leaders of that area. This was Inner Mongolia, not what is today the Soviet part of Outer Mongolia. But it was on our way, but.... I wish I had time to tell you that one time as we traveled from Vancouver to Seattle on our furlough, my wife and I had been asked to [pauses] stop at a small place, and...at a missionary meeting. And as we went on the train that night, there were some missionaries there from Madagascar, and we had interesting talks together. And a gentleman walked up the stairs, (we didn't recognize him), but as soon as we got onto the train, and the train moved on, this gentleman came over to me and...and...and used I think a few words of Chinese. And lo and behold, it was Owen Lattimore! He was going from that part down to Seattle, and we recalled the days that we met in the Gobi Desert there [laughs] in Inner Mongolia. And this must have been...oh, this was '32 when I met him first; the second time this must have been somewhere eight or ten years later, I can't quite recall the dates. But it was very interesting how paths cross, and he was very much involved at that time with a...with certain [pauses] government [pauses] committees and all that where with Asia, Mongolia, China and the United States government.

SHUSTER: When you reached Shingyang...

SCHOERNER: Sin-kiang [pronounced Sinjiang, now Xinjiang Uygur Zizhiqu Autonomous Region], we call it.

SHUSTER: Sin-kiang. Did you personally witness much of the Moslem revolt?

SCHOERNER: Yes, we...we arrived there in...in November. We had a long journey; we arrived there. And it had been only a short while after that when the Moslem revolt broke out. Because there are so many Moslems in Turkestan, as it is called, these were Chinese Moslems who were

trying to take over the government, and then besieged this city. They had traveled from northwest China into Turkestan, trying to take over that regime. And we were locked up in the city, and it was then that we got involved in the aftermath of that rebellion.

SHUSTER: After the rebellion was put down?

SCHOERNER: Yes, the government had a measure of control, even though the government troops were not able to handle it. But the government made use of what we call White Russians. They were non-Soviet Russians that had fled into Turkestan, and they commandeered them...and as soldiers, and with their help and their ability (these were more trained men), they subdued the rebels and they fled. But the aftermath was there were so many wounded people. They had no hospital there, no hospital of any kind. And one of the six young men in our particular team was a doctor, and he was asked to try to do something for these wounded people. And, of course, he could not do it alone; he had no trained nurses, so all of us young men were involved in trying to help [pauses] take care of wounds, wounded soldiers, and...and doing all kinds of surgical operations under very difficult conditions: no real operating theater, but using an old schoolhouse as a temporary hospital.

SHUSTER: During your six years in Sinjiang...

SCHOERNER: That's right, Sin-ji-ang, Sinjiang.

SHUSTER: ...jiang, what were generally the common medical problems?

SCHOERNER: Well, as you recall from reading the book that...that you referred to regarding Dr. [Theodore] Fischbacher's life, there...there were...there was no real hospital until the government had some sort of a...a...a hospital that was...there were some Russian helpers there and s...and doctors that did some medical work of a kind. We had to take care of our own medical needs, really, and thank God we [laughs] didn't really have need of a doctor, which we would have liked to have, especially in our contacts with the people. We were working partially among Chinese, among Moslem people, and to have a little medical knowledge and...it is so helpful.

SHUSTER: What were their common complaints? Were there any particular diseases that were prevalent?

SCHOERNER: Well, my medical knowledge isn't that large, but it seemed like it was similar to our problems in this country. They...we...they claimed that we knew a little bit more how to take care of...of surgical parts, meaning by that, what the Chinese call it, inner medicine, outer medicine. We could...we could take care of sores and wounds. We had antiseptics of a kind. We had just a little training. I did a little bit of dentistry, pulling out teeth and so on. But we gave simple medicines because they asked us, like aspirins or...or whatever limited amounts we had of...of [pauses] or...very ordinary medicines in those days. See this was way back in the early 30's, in the days before penicillin, and the sulfa drugs just came out even later than that. But it gave us a contact with the people, trying to show Christian love and...and affection to people that we wanted to help. Many times they claimed we...when we claimed we...when we [emphasizes “we”] claimed we couldn't help them, we didn't have enough knowledge, we didn't have enough medicines, they

thought it was our unwillingness, and they started offering to pay us and so on, something which, of course, we didn't do at that time. We were not really fully medically equipped and trained.

SHUSTER: You were basically treating first aid?

SCHOERNER: It's more or less of that kind. First aid we...we did whenever we could, and it was much appreciated because they felt that their local medicines were not really antiseptic enough to help -- clean...cleansing wounds and taking out bullets and do on, things of the kind that we had to do during the rebellion.

SHUSTER: You...your relations with the local government were good?

SCHOERNER: At first they were very good. There...there was a very small community of foreign nationals in that city of Ti-hua [now Urumqi] in those early days, and the government was very favorable and friendly. But it did not take very long until there was a strong Russian influence, and we could actually see these Russian advisors coming into the cities. It was an old-fashioned area; they used the old-fashioned Russian droshkies with horse-drawn...on sleighs; it was a...it was a cold and snowy country right there near the borders of Siberia. And we saw many of these Russian advisors coming in and out. They had a large Russian consulate. And the local Chinese government, which was not too friendly with its own national government down in Nanking or (that was before Peking [was the capital of China])...and Nanking...so the gover...the local government up there was very friendly with Russia, and, of course, had allowed them to come in to...in many ways to control the trade and other things that was going on up there.

SHUSTER: I see. What were you impressions...remembrances of George Hunter, then,...

SCHOERNER: Well, Mr. Hunter...

SHUSTER: ...who brought you to...?

SCHOERNER: ...Mr. Hunter was an amazing man, and I admire him for his courage. An old Scotsman that had...that had left his home country. I think he had only one furlough in all his years of service. When we met him in 1931, he had come all the way down over the Siberian Railway, coming down to Shanghai to take up some young missionary workers with him. He was a hard worker. He was not a [pauses] man trained in the schools, and yet he learned Russian, he learned some of the languages: the Kazak and the Turki language. He did some translation work. And it was amazing what he did, even trying to mimeograph Gospels because it took so long to get his manuscripts down. Even then later on the British and Foreign Bible Society helped him to publish and print some of these Gospels and, I think, the book of Genesis and a few of the...of the Old and the New Testament books, so that he would have material to give to the people. There was, for instance, a Mongol Bible up there that had many years before been translated in Russia by some scholars. And they were able to get hold, through the Bible Society, of some of these Scripture portions. And Mr. Hunter was a man that was always ready to...to chat with people on the road in personal work and...and to give out the Scriptures. He was an amazing man, riding long distances. He would go away on a journey, and we wouldn't know for months where he had gone until he'd come back again. And then....

SHUSTER: What did he look like physically?

SCHOERNER: Well, he looked...he...he...he was amazing. He was a tall...very tall, hardy, sturdy-looking type of person, lived what some have called an austere life. His...his home...you would hardly believe it, how he lacked any of the comforts of...of a home. And he lived just as simply as one could. I recall (this is something for humor when you think of it)...those...that first year when (oh, it was maybe not quite a year)...when those six of us lived there (one left later on, there were five of us for a while). Every day we had mutton soup. Good mutton, it was good mutton. It was very difficult to get other foods. And we ate rice. And for dessert he had rice and raisins and lots of milk. And we ate that for...almost day in day out, every day. Chinese bread that could be toasted, and so on. It was a simple life, a rugged life. And it was only later on when some of us younger men liked to introduce new ideas. We enjoyed real Chinese food. And he never troubled terribly much to have that in his home, but he had it in travel. But Mr. Hunter was an amazing person. I admire him for his courage and his austerity. And I believe someday in heaven we'll see many persons whom he dealt with individually, who came to know the Lord, even though no one has [microphone bumped] any figures, you know, to show it. But his...his companion who...who had joined him before the six of us went up there, Mr. [Percy Cunningham] Mather, was a...was a Mongol student, and he was very much interested in reaching Mongols, a large group of the people that lived in Turkestan. He was another man who lived a very simple austere life, and again giving.... If you read his life story *The Making of a Pioneer*, you'll see just how...how these men were really sold out for the Lord and willing to endure all kinds of hardships, and isolation from family and the rest of the world. Both of them bachelors, but fully dedicated to the Lord. They were human, they had their...they had their faults, as we as young people could see and so on, but we admired them.

SHUSTER: In the biography you loaned me of George Hunter I noticed it mentioned that Perry Mather was at first opposed to bringing more men out to the field.

SCHOERNER: Yes.

SHUSTER: Why was that?

SCHOERNER: Well, you see, we were so isolated. The transportation in those days...if you would travel the ordinary way by Chinese horse cart, our nearest mission...mission station was fifty-four stages. That's the way the Chinese would travel. Or, if you go across Inner Mongolia, they...they considered it at least a sixty-day camel journey. And sometimes when Mr. Hunter was waiting for his supplies through the Bible Society, for Gospels and...and other Bible portions, it would take a camel caravan a year to bring things up. It...it was...communication was so difficult. And Mr. Mather felt if young men come up there and ultimately would want to marry and bring women up into that part (and, by the way, the China Inland Mission faced that possibility), Mr. Maither just thought that was asking [pauses] too much of young women to go into that isolated part of the world, so...so isolated. And...and in those days the communication and even the mails took so long to...to reach even our nearest fellow missionary. You see this was over forty years ago and things were....there was no air mail in those days [laughs].

SHUSTER: Now your own work in Singyang...Sin-ki-ang...

SCHOERNER: Yeah, Sinkiang.

SHUSTER: ...kiang.

SCHOERNER: Like a J. Pronounce it like a J.

SHUSTER: Sinkiang.

SCHOERNER: Sinkiang.

SHUSTER: ...was with the caravans. Is that correct?

SCHOERNER: Well, to some extent, yes. In the early days, of course, language study occupied much of our time. And since in Turkestan the winters are so severe, we could not travel. But in the summer we would travel among the smaller Chinese communities. You see, it was desert country. And it was...the...the little towns were usually a stage away. A day's journey usually up in that part of the world was roughly thirty miles and sometimes it was only twenty or twenty-five. And these were little...like little oases in that northern part of Sinkiang. And so we would in the summer travel f the hills where....

SHUSTER: Who were you invited by?

SCHOERNER: By the nomads themselves. They saw that we could do a little bit of medical work, and they say, "We have a sick person up there. We'll send someone down there. [We] want you to go up and see if you can help that person." Sometimes, of course, we could only treat the symptoms since we're not that skilled, but sometimes we were able to help, com...bring comfort and...and do some...bring some help. But it the hills where....

SHUSTER: Who were you invited by?

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were then two and two, you see. We were sent out into...the doctor had died, one of out young men left...went back to Shanghai...to Tientsin to be married, and there were two of us, two teams left. Two went west; we went east to the city called Kucheng [Kuchengtze].

SHUSTER: How successful would you say your evangelizing was?

SCHOERNER: Well, in...in our travels, of course, we...we were not...never sure how many were really won to Christ. But in the little town of Kucheng there was a little church established, a very small group of believers, mostly men with whom...whom we sought to teach and help, and there may have been before we left a dozen or so. But we are grateful to God that this work continued, because even after we left and years later when we heard of another missionary traveling through that area with a man from the Bible Society, that little church still continued. And when Chinese Christians emigrated into Turkestan later on, it was very wonderful to know that some of that work still continued.

SHUSTER: How large was the church in the entire province?

SCHOERNER: That I really could not say. Because I only [pauses] served in two towns. I know there were some scattered believers on the eastern...on the western part of Turkestan, which bordered on Russian Turkestan and Siberia. There were Russian Christians there among these White Russians that had emigrated and really some of them fled from Russian Siberia into Turkestan. And as you go further south in Turkestan, really in Kashgar on the Indian border, there was a church there, a small church among them, the Moslems who had...Turki Moslems. Some of them had become Christians. They had worked there for many years. But it's very very difficult to say just how many believers there were. But we are grateful to have learned later on (this again is a long story) in the city of Ti-hua [Urumqi], the main city, work had been established which grew when some Chinese Christians went from China, feeling a similar call as we did earlier on. And they went up there and ministered to those scattered believers and had a church there, of which we knew just a little and heard by word of mouth or through letters.

SHUSTER: What was a typical working day for you like in...?

SCHOERNER: In those...

SHUSTER: What would you do in the day?

SCHOERNER: In those earlier days, of course, as I said, we had to do much language study. And a little later on as we developed and...and we had six Chinese language exams to pass before...before we completed our official language study. So that took a good bit of our time. And then we would go out and do personal work often with tracts in the little town...in the...in the small town, and we would also work with the believers as we could. And we would prepare messages which, of course, for me at least, took quite a lot of time to do it in Chinese, to speak on Sundays. We had meetings on Sundays with a small group of believers. And then we had to...we had two or three horses, we had animals to look after. We had to think of the daily life, which was much more complicated in that part of the world. You...you couldn't go in the store and buy [pauses] breakfast food; you had to buy the grain and had to see that it was cleaned and washed and have it toasted,

had to get it ground. You were much more involved, in those days at least, in that part of the world, with everyday life that, just to keep alive, you see. And then [pauses] we did reading, we did study for...we needed some exercise, we did a little horseback riding. In those early years, that was part of the experience, of course. Later on, things were changed in other parts of China.

SHUSTER: Well, before we go on to some more general questions, I'd just like to outline again the...your years in China and where they were spent. Now in '31 you came to China...

SCHOERNER: Yes.

SHUSTER: ...and spent in language school.

SCHOERNER: The first six to eight months in language school at a city called Anking.

SHUSTER: And then '32 to '36...

SCHOERNER: To '38.

SHUSTER: '38, I'm sorry.

SCHOERNER: To '38. Those years....it took us, you see, two months...two to three months to get up into Turkestan. Then we were earlier involved in medical work, helping Dr. Fischbacher until he passed away. And then it took time for us to go to a new center and to begin a work there. That lasted until '38.

SHUSTER: Then in '38 you traveled...first you traveled to...down to India, and then over to...

SCHOERNER: Right.

SHUSTER: ...Shanghai...

SCHOERNER: Right.

SHUSTER: ...to be married.

SCHOERNER: Right. That was...

SHUSTER: And then you were on furlough?

SCHOERNER: Yes, we...we went to Shang...that was again...took a long time with journey. [It] took us six months because we had to travel overland by Chinese cart a whole thousand miles, and another four or five hundred miles on horseback. So all of those things took so much time, you see. And then on my first furlough...it was from early 1939 to 1940. And then being married we went back, and we were asked to help out.... This was just about a year before Pearl Harbor, but the Japanese were then already occupying eastern China. And we were asked to go to a city to help out, where it was difficult for British missionaries to stay (there was greater friction between

Brit...British missionarie...Britain...British subjects and the Chinese at the time). And so we helped out during that first summer.

SHUSTER: What city was that?

SCHOERNER: It was in the city called Linmingguan [phonetic approximation], and it was north and west of Peking...slightly north and west of Peking. And that was only for a summer period, ministering there. There was an established church. There had been some lady missionaries there, and I don't recall details there, but we worked together with Chinese leaders, and...and so on.

SHUSTER: And then you traveled up to Borden [Memorial Hospital of Kansu Province]?

SCHOERNER: Not yet. Not yet. We were sent down into central China. We were first asked...it was...it was then that...that our American government was warning us that there might be war. And the China Inland Mission then had some young lady missionaries in the city of Tsingdao on the east coast, where they were studying the language. And we were to help. We were sent to (since we knew the language by then and had some ability to work with...with Chinese officials)...we were sent to a border town where missionaries coming from the occupied...Japanese occupied territory into free China. And we helped people where there was no railroad. They...they went to the railhead, (and where we were was a railhead). We were trying to help them rent boats to get across the swollen Yellow River, which had just been....the Chinese had broken [banging noise in background] all the dikes, and there was a large flooded area, and that was sort of a barrier for the Japanese to go into central China. So for a month or two....

SHUSTER: This was in '41?

SCHOERNER: This was probably '41 to '42. I don't have the exact dates in mind, but....

MRS. SCHOERNER: [In background] It was '40.

SCHOERNER: Well, my wife says it was '40. She has these things clear. Well, anyhow, during that...that winter season we helped, I cannot recall, quite a few of our missionaries as well as these younger workers to get into free China. You see, Pearl Harbor began in '41 [December 7, 1941], (so that I should have recalled that), and so we then were the last to follow. We followed over into free China, and it was the Chinese New Year of...of the early '41 by that time, and we came into south...southern Honan Province.

SHUSTER: And how's that spelled?

SCHOERNER: That's spelled H-O-N-A-N. “Ho” means the river and “Nan” means south. We were south of the Yellow River, north of the Yangtze, in between. And there we worked with the church for a number of years. Our first boy was born there in the city of Hwangchuan. And we worked with an established Chinese church where I gained very fine experience, which I did not have in a pioneer type of work. We worked with Chinese elders and traveled with them by foot. I learned how to walk twenty, thirty miles a day out into these outstations to preach the whole series of meetings to teach believers together with a Chinese elder. And it was a wonderful experience as

I look back for that [pauses]...oh, I cannot recall, maybe two years or several...almost longer than that, working in southern...in southern China. And then...

SHUSTER: That was Hwang...?

SCHOERNER: ...Pearl Harbor began.

SHUSTER: ...Hwang...

SCHOERNER: Hwang-chuan. Hwangchuan.

SHUSTER: How is that spelled?

SCHOERNER: H-W-A-N-G, Hwang. And Chuan means...is C-H-U-A-N, chuan. Hwangchuan. I'd forgotten for the moment what that meant, but "Chuan" is a river, "Hwang" is yellow. But this was a...a...an area...it was really quite close to where the Japanese were, but it was these flooded areas that kept the Japanese away, and they were not interested at that time to....they...it...Pearl Harbor be...began, you see.

SHUSTER: So that's where you were when...?

SCHOERNER: We were there when Pearl Harbor came.

SHUSTER: How did you hear about ...

SCHOERNER: Well, we...

SHUSTER: ...Pearl Harbor?

SCHOERNER: ...we were still able to get mail through. And then, of course, once Pearl Harbor began, Shanghai was closed to us because that was Japanese-oc...occupied. And it took quite some time for mail to be established to come in via India up to Chungking, and our mail came in from the western areas. And there were still some places where they were still able to get across, but once Pearl Harbor began we were completely cut off from the coast. And our own mission by then had already moved to Chungking. The Chinese government had moved to Chungking, you see, and that's where that long trek took place when many Chinese educators, schools, whole colleges and universities moved to western China. And there our ministry was with the local church, preaching,...

SHUSTER: So...

SCHOERNER: ...teaching Bible,...

SHUSTER: ...in...in '42 you moved to Chungking?

SCHOERNER: No, we never moved to Chungking, but this was still Hwangchuan...still

Hwangchuan. And it was not until....during the war years, if you'll recall, Japan was beginning, when the US was beginning...beginning to build up their navy, and they even were planning to bomb Japan from western China. That's...and the early planes did fly from western China, I think, rather than from Guam (they did later on). But that began to effect [pauses] the problem with Japan. Japan had, of course, taken Hong Kong, Manila, Singapore, all of that southeast Asian coast. They were beginning to get harassed (I think it was the U.S. submarines, shipping). And so they wanted to open up a railroad line, which had always been in existence, from Peking through Hankow all the way down to Canton. That would give them a long overland journey to...to...to send troops and materials and war materials and so on. So we were on the eastern side of that railway, and we were warned: the Japanese are going to open that railway and going to cut off all of that area (we were in somewhat of a pocket). And that was when we began to move up to northwest China. It was a long story again, how we had to leave whatever we couldn't carry or...or bring with us, and then begin the long trek up into northwest China.

SHUSTER: Is that when you went to Borden Hospital?

SCHOERNER: It...it was then, in...in the later 40's (it must have been in '45 or so; I...I haven't got he figures straight), but it was then that we were asked to go up into northwest China.

SHUSTER: And where was... see now, you were in Hang...

SCHOERNER: Hwangchuan.

SHUSTER: What province is that in? Is that the name of the province?

SCHOERNER: That's the province of Honan.

SHUSTER: Honan.

SCHOERNER: If you want to locate it in your thinking, if you know a little bit of the map of China, [sound of paper (map?) rustling] it's north of the city of Hankow. Hankow is right there in...in central China, and we were...we were north of these....this.... See, here's the city of Hong Kong, and it was...the railroad went from really...(Canton is close to Hong Kong) and the railroad cut from...right from north from Peking straight through. We were east [sound of paper rustling] and we had to go west. That's how those things happened at that time.

SHUSTER: And what province was Borden Hospital in?

SCHOERNER: That was called Kansu--K-A-N-S-U. That's spelled like a G; it's a soft unaspirated Gansu. And that journey was a long one because we had to go overland where there was no railway for I don't recall how many miles, five hundred miles perhaps it was. And my wife and I had a little cart; we had two children at that time. And we...we bicycled over mountains [laughs]] and over certain parts of central China in that day when we were young and strong [laughs], and the Lord wonderfully undertook for us. But there was always the fear in the mind of many people, and even in...in our own, that the Japanese would push westward where there was a railr...railroad...from that north-south railroad. There was also an east-west railroad. And they

thought they were going to push westward. And we came to the railhead, the end of the railred...railroad at Xian, where the...where the Scandinavian Alliance Mission was at work, which is now called TEAM, The Evangelical Alliance. And we stayed with them for a few days. And then by truck, three or four days on a truck, (that was the only bus...the only bus that they had in those days), we went all the way up with our children to the city of Lanchow, which is in Kansu.

SHUSTER: In Lanchow.

SCHOERNER: In Lanchow. L-A-N-C-H-O-W, and.... The trouble is with the...the names of these cities, the maps use the...the name of the county, really, and the...in the local dialect they speak of a Lanchow, but on the map sometimes you see Kaolan, which is the whole county really, surrounding it, and they call the name of the city that way also. We did not at first go into Borden Memorial [Hospital], but I did local secretarial work (I had some business experience), and handled the accounts of our missionaries for the whole province, tried to help them [pauses] find local currency, tried to sell checks on Shanghai and supply our local missionaries in the province of Kansu with...with local currency. And then later on, maybe less than a year later, my wife and I went over to Borden Memorial Hospital, where I worked and...and had also a business position until the Communists finally came [pauses] in the year 1949.

SHUSTER: So you were in Lanchow from '45 to '47 on furlough?

SCHOERNER: Yes. After a year of furlough we came back in '48 (and by the way it's that year '47/'48 that I spent at Wheaton). And then we were back in China roughly a year and a half when the Communists finally took all over...took China over and slowly we saw them going across the country taking even Chungking. By that time the Chungking government had moved to Taiwan, and they.... We thought and many people thought, "Oh, they'll never try to go northwestward." The Muslims...the Moslems were rather fierce, and they thought they would never try to fight the Communists. But the Moslems gave in; they did not want to fight. And so roughly in the...well, in the year 1949, I think it was in the late summer, they came and took Lanchow, and we...we were under the Communists then for a year and a half.

SHUSTER: So you left finally in 1951.

SCHOERNER: In 1951, yes, when it became apparent that we...they...they told us that we had religious liberty, but they had the liberty to oppose us and so on, and they made it so difficult. The presence of foreigners in that part of the world to them was unacceptable. They just told the people we were...we were spies, and they tried to undermine the work. They tried to make it difficult for us even to have fellowship and worship with them, so that in the end we didn't even go to the services, because it was an embarrass-ment to the Chinese Christians, who were so quickly accused of collaborating with foreign nationals who were nothing but spies.

SHUSTER: Was there a strong church in...

SCHOERNER: There was quite a...

SHUSTER: ...Lanchow?

SCHOERNER: ...quite a good-sized church with a very nice building in the city of Lanchow. [It] had been established for quite a number of years; they had their own pastor; they handled all of their own ministries, and we preached only when we were asked to participate. Of course, I was [high pitched squeak] largely involved in the hospital. We had services daily, worship or chapel services for our own nurses and staff, so we had...we were separated by the Yellow River. We were on one part of the river, while...while the mission station actually was in the city. But it was...then became apparent, and many missionaries from other societies had already...already evacuated, and quite a few of our own missionaries were leaving. And they made it very difficult and got me into a difficult position, tried to accuse me of...of opposing their ideas and so on. I was by that time the hospital superintendent. And then our mission felt that it was time for us to leave. We had through those years tried very hard to find capable Chinese doctors and Chinese nurses and...and pharmacists and so on to take over the ministry of the hospital, but it was very difficult under conditions like that. Some of them feared for their own position and their own lives.

SHUSTER: What was a typical day like at...as when you were working in the hospital at [unclear]?

SCHOERNER: At the hospital...yeah, well, at the hospital, for me, at least, it was a little bit more routine because [pauses].... Of course, a hospital is open twenty-four hours a day, but every morning at a given time, 8:00 or 8:30, I was at my office. I had to do the purchasing, naturally with the help of...of Chinese...capable Chinese business managers. I had to do the purchasing of food supplies on the market and had to see whatever medicines were available on the local market. There were some that had been brought in from...via India. And then also keep in touch with mission headquarters to see whatever could be brought in. But as things continued, it became more and more difficult because shipments just could not be brought in any more, except for a period of time through the west coast. And then when the Communists came in, they controlled everything, and even our mail [pauses] couldn't get through. Very little...very little mail came in; they...they just held it, especially second class mail, newspapers and magazines. Letters were allowed through, but everything was heavily censored. So we were restricted and constantly under surveillance. Yet the ministry of the hospital continued, but we realized and we knew [pauses] that...that perhaps we...this would not last forever as we had hoped. We thought we would stay on: the China Inland Mission. Many other missions decided right from the start to evacuate. They said, "It's impossible to work under Communist, atheistic regime." We felt that we would not desert our Chinese fellow believers, but then we realized we were becoming an embarrassment to them. And that ultimately led to the decision of the China Inland Mission to completely evacuate all of its workers.

SHUSTER: So most of your day then was spent in purchasing and in administration?

SCHOERNER: Yeah, in the hospital. And then also this: I was as...(I'm not a medical person)...I was asked to take over this...this superintendentship, because every day we would have Communists come in asking questions. And every one of us had to give our life histories, and they were so carefully investigating all of what we'd ever done to see if there was anything in our lives that they might accuse us of, saying, "Well, you've always been anti-Communist, and we don't want you here." Some of our missionaries were pushed out. There were some actually that were put in prison for various reasons. It was so easy to be accused. Some of our doctors were accused

when a...when a...when a patient died, and sometimes the...the patient was brought in almost at the point of death, and the doctors couldn't help any more. So every little problems became something big, and it meant that we were involved in many things of that nature. But we tried as much as possible to keep up with our daily devotional period with the...with our nurses. We had daily chapel, and whatever opportunities there still were of personal work or evangelism in the hospital itself.

SHUSTER: During...in all the places you were stationed at in China, what do you think were some of the typical reactions of Chinese when they heard the gospel?

SCHOERNER: Well, you...you found all kinds of reactions. We found...we found often at times real interest. Among the more educated there was often an...an anti-foreign feeling that was.... But it is just as it is in this country: some respond, some don't, some have been seeking for long periods of time. I recall at one time when...when one man who had read a Chinese book written I think by a...by a Chinese Christian. He was interested in...in knowing a little bit more: "What you mean by...by communion with God." To them there was sort of a mysterious thing, you see, as a Buddhist or as a Taoist. But he wanted to find out what Christianity had to offer. And of course, it was always interesting to us to...to...to explain the Gospel as it was. But it took long periods of time of...of teaching, preaching, explaining and allowing the Spirit of God really to touch lives. But there was, as far as we know, a church...probably a professing church of a million Christians in China when the missionaries had to pull out, but that's only a estimate. But it's very difficult to say. Of course, we...we had church services, and visitors would come in, and one would feel that there was already a beginning interest, an opportunity to witness. And in the hospital, many people came there for medical reasons, and it gave us an opportunity to show that there were spiritual issues that we thought of rather than only physical things. So in those earlier days, it was very encouraging. But during the time between the Communists coming into...into China and after the...well, after I...I would say perhaps in the early 40's...there was a...a real interest among students in...in...in Christian things. The Inter-Varsity [Fellowship] was doing a very fine work in the universities. Afterwards...so for instance, in the days when China was moving westward and fleeing from the Co...the Japanese domination, it looked so hopeful for the future of China because it was a real interest being developed among young people. Yet each area has it...had its differences. Some areas there was a greater response. In the Muslim area there was a smaller response. Where we were, [pauses] we had lepers in...as part of our hospital ministry, and as in so many parts of the world, many of these lepers became Christians; even Moslems were among them. And that was always encouraging. And many of them realized that if they'd never had...had leprosy probably they would have never taken a...much of an interest in the Gospel. So we saw all kinds. Never a real revival in any of the areas that we were, but there had been periods of revival in China at other times.

SHUSTER: How did you go about presenting the gospel to a Chinese audience which had never heard it before? Where did you start?

SCHOERNER: In many cases, especially when we knew that we were talking with [pauses]...with people who had never heard the Gospel, we...we...we would present God as the Creator of the universe. The...the name for God (actually it was the name that they gave to a heathen god, but it somehow or other was the supreme being, Shangti, that the Chinese thought of

him as...they looked at him as a human being in their...their descriptions, you know, their idols and so on. And we would try to point out that...that...that God, Shangti, was more than just what they presented that was linked with their idolatry. He's the God that made heaven and earth. He was the Creator of all things. And then that it was through that that we pointed out, and I'd say, "Well, actually, that men were sinners, and that God sent His Son to...to redeem man from sin." So we had to usually begin with...with the bare facts of their existence, that God had made man, which they admitted even though they had different [pauses] expressions and different viewpoints. But it began in that way, usually, our preaching. We also often [pauses] would use moral teaching. We would use posters. We...there were many Chinese posters that would try to express the Gospel. We would...if you.... I don't recall if you ever have seen things of that nature, but like two mountains and there was a chasm in between: this was heaven and this was hell, and this was earth and this was heaven. How could you bridge that gap? So some of these posters would have a...a cross in between there that the...the vertical...the horizontal beam of the cross was like the bridge from...from heaven to earth. We would use visual aids, and of course, these were often rather crude, but it was something that they could understand: man in the depth of his sin, how could he [pauses] come to know God? How could he rid himself of evil? And so on. And we had to be careful, of course, and we learned that only over the years, the Chinese word for sin often means "my sickness" or...or "my problem," "my difficulty." It isn't really as we would think it of...as we know sin in the New Testament. We often had to go step by step. And it was only when they became Christians that we could really teach them what righteousness is according to the Scriptures, and holiness and so on. And we had to just start from the very bottom, so to speak, in order to bring the Gospel to them. Of course, with Moslems it was a little different. They believed in the Old Testament, many of the Old Testament characters like Abraham, Moses, and...and so on. They were some of their prophets. Even Jesus, as they called, "Irsa" [sp?], they would say in...in the Chinese Mohammedan. He was one of their prophets, and it would give us and opportunity to show that he was more than a man. They were the most difficult to reach because, of course, they were already indoctrinated with some of these ideas that Islam presents.

SHUSTER: What would you say would be their...your primary difficulties in reaching people with the Gospel or helping the church to grow in China?

SCHOERNER: Well, I feel that, and I think every...every missionary group would say the same thing, you really want to know, first of all, the language so that you....and you want to know what the words are that you're using so that you can really give them the message as it is. And you have to understand their culture. You have to understand when you say a given word, how does he interpret that? I mean, if I say, for instance, "tsui," (that's the word for sin), he just thinks, "Oh well, it's all my problems, my...my sickness," and he does not real...relate it as we know what sin in the Word of God teaches." So I have to know what he understands when I use a given word, and then try to help him to show him what the Bible says. And, of course, when you come down to it, it takes the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit, to really help a person like that to understand, because [pauses] you...you have to face his complete different background. When...at least in my own experience, when you come there first, you don't always realize that. You think, "Oh, he ought to know what I'm saying." But he interprets what you say by his whole background and his knowledge, you see. And it takes a...a period of time, of teaching and...and so on.

SHUSTER: Did the fact that you were a foreigner...was that an advantage or disadvantage?

SCHOERNER: It was usually a disadvantage. It certainly was, [pauses] because in the eyes of many [pauses] it was only a foreign religion. And in the eyes of others, if you went into the rural areas, they'd never seen a foreigner. And one of the funny things about us, we were always called the "gao bei tze," that's "the big nose." The Chinese features, of course, they have a...their...their noses are much much lower. But we were the "gao bei tze." And that was a nickname in some ways, and it could al...almost be a curse, you see. All of those things, you see.... They would look at you, you think, at least, very intently. And he was only studying your face, and he probably wasn't even hearing what you were saying. And it comes down to this again and again: that when you deal with spiritual things, you really have to trust that God, the Holy Spirit, will use what you say in your limited language to touch his heart. Otherwise [pauses] it's more than just trying to persuade him to accept another philosophy of life. And, of course, [pauses] in presenting the Gospel, there...there're just so many ways of beginning, you know, often. Many people.... I recall, for instance, when we traveled in the rural areas. Some of them had a prodigal son, you know, that the son had run away, and the parents were disturbed and worried. And you know it was interesting to talk about the Prodigal Son [Jesus' parable in Luke 15:11-32] and how the father welcomed him back again. And it would...it seemed so true to life. And often that was a beginning point to speak to the hearts of people. Or we would go out there and...and use the parables of Christ, the parable of the sower [Matthew 13:1-23]. Why, the farmer knew immediately what you were talking about. And again and again it just made us realize the beauty of the New Testament and Old Testament as well, but the teachings of Christ, how...how He spoke right down to earth to these people. The fishermen knew about fishing and the farmer knew about [pauses] grain and fruit. And all of the illustrations that...(in the parables)...that the Lord used, the family, the prodigal son, the older brother, how that was so applicable to everyday life. You had to, of course, in some measure...(our posters often illustrated that)...had to put Chinese faces on the people that we showed. But the message was always the truth. We had, for example, one...one [pauses]...one poster, and it showed a man with a...with a ragged dirty robe, and he was throwing it off. And...and on the other side you saw him with a beautiful Chinese garment. And...and there were written on him little circles the nine...the nine-fold fruit of the Holy Spirit: love, joy, peace. And I recall quite with...vividly a...a Buddhist priest standing there, and he said something about, "Oh, you know, we preach the same thing. We talk about you ought to love one another and you'll have peace in your heart." And one of our Chinese Christians said, "Yes, but how many of you have it? How many of you can really live this kind of life? It takes more than the human strength. It takes divine strength. It takes the power of God for you to live this kind of a life." And this shaggy [pauses]...you know, perhaps a [pauses] torn and dirty robe...this priest, that he had to admit that, "Yes, we...we may have this as an ideal, but we can't achieve to [pauses]...to this ideal living. We need something beyond our own strength." And it gave an opportunity to preach something of the power of God in a life.

SHUSTER: How much contact did you have with Buddhism?

SCHOERNER: Well, in...in China you don't have to go very far till you find a Buddhist temple or Taoist temple. And we did not always have contact with the leaders, but every Chinese is either Buddhist or Taoist and has a little bit of Confucianism. Buddhism is...is actually, when you analyze it, doesn't speak much of...of spiritual being. It...it's almost like a philosophy of attaining to Nirvana, you know, a...an ideal life free from all worry and...and sin and all that. And Confucianism is almost more of a...of a national philosophy of life. It doesn't speak of God at all. Taoism brings in spirits. So the Chinese often mix all of them, you know, and [pauses] you have to

be quite a student of it [pauses] to fully be able to dissect it, you know, and analyze it in...in the lives of the people.

SHUSTER: Would you say, then, that Buddhism and Confucianism tend to...tended to make the Chinese more materialistic as opposed to....?

SCHOERNER: It could, yes. It...it...it made them sort of philosophical. It made them also [pauses]...what shall I say? the...the feeling of...of a good life, you see, the...the importance of living the...the...the "chun tzu" as the...as the Confucian call it; he was the gentleman. He would do certain things. As you so often read what Confucius said, you know, he had...he had certain ideas that the...that "the gentleman doesn't do this, but he acts like that, and how he's courteous and...and...and so on." But it was only a philosophy of life and living and had very little spiritual values. Occasionally, of course, individuals, in their interpretation, would mix these things up. But as you study these religions, they're not, strictly speaking, a religion.

SHUSTER: Was the Nationalist government, at the various levels in which you contacted it, helpful or indifferent or...?

SCHOERNER: Well, as long as there was a friendly relationship between our governments, there was usually a...a measure of tolerance. But during those early days, you see, even in the Nationalist government, such leaders...the earliest leaders like Sun, Sun Yat-sen...Sun Yat-sen. He was trained in Moscow. Many of these men were very materialistic. They were non-Christian, really. And so while they did not necessarily hinder the work, yet much of their philosophy was linked with everyday life. For example, in those early days in the schools the children were always at certain ceremonies to bow to the image...to the picture of Sun Yat-sen. And to many Christians, or most Christians, that became like idolatry, and they resisted it, and that caused friction between the Nationalist government and Christians, especially when they made a strong point of it. They said, "We don't want our children to bow to an image. It's just too much like idolatry." They tried to interpret: "No, that's not idolatry. It's just showing respect." But the Christians didn't always take that. And that caused friction at times with the Nationalist government, especially in its earlier days.

SHUSTER: What were your general impressions of...of National...Nationalist Christians that you came in contact with?

SCHOERNER: Well, I...I can only say what [pauses]...what you might say is hearsay and the results of it. When we came back on our first furlough, many friends, Christians and others, would always say, "Oh, look at Chiang Kai-shek. He's corrupt. His government is corrupt," and so on. And they did not believe his...his faith in Christ, forgetting that you may have even a good man in the White House here, but that doesn't mean the whole Congress and everybody, all the government leaders are going to follow him in it. And that was the same, of course, in China. One single man could not control everything. And naturally they criticized the government that way. But I have over these years seen that our government is just as corrupt. And as you read and hear news these days, things that go on even at high places, and the...I...I feel it's calling the...the kettle black, or the kettle calling the pot black. And while much of it is true, I realize that...that there were failures in the Nationalist government, we so often in our country, at least when we...we talk, we

immediately idealized everything, and felt that the whole country should...should be like Chiang, at least profess to be, that China should be a Christian country. But that just wasn't so. The Christians were really just in a minority. But I believe Chiang and his wife were genuine Christians, even though they may not have been what we would call today "Evangelicals" or "Fundamentalists" in...in our terminology. Yet I think they believed in prayer, and they set a wer...very wonderful example in living and so on, even later on when they went to Taiwan. But every government has its problems and its...and its defects, and especially in its military operations. We...we...we saw that the Nationalist government really failed. And [pauses] they, of course, were defeated by the Communists, who really had much more of a purpose and an idealism in their communism and felt that they were fighting for a purpose, and couldn't...and the Nationalists couldn't withstand it.

SHUSTER: What do you think were the causes of the Nationalist defeat from just what you saw in your own experience?

SCHOERNER: Our own experience, [pauses] in...in the little bit that we saw in our areas, they would for instance, draft young people to be soldiers, and they wouldn't pay them adequately. And they would defect as quickly as they could if they were not interested. And, of course, in...in those days already, like it is in many countries, there were...Communists had infiltrated with their books, books on Marx and Lenin and Engel[s] were among the students. And there were many Communist students already in those early days. And I think many were drafted into the army who didn't want to be soldiers. Whereas in the Communist army there were many who had much more of an idealism. And they fought much better. Whereas the Co...the Nationalist government just did not have as well trained army. They did have some, but it didn't extend out into the various provinces, and China, of course, is a great country and not.... It's not so easy to communicate; there're not many railroads in those days, and they get back and forth, you know to...to bind things together. And Chiang just didn't have the...the [pauses] ability to...to fight the Communists.

SHUSTER: To go back to the period of the Japanese war for a minute, did you have any contact with Japanese military?

SCHOERNER: Yes, we were...when we were sent for that summer period to the city of Linmingguan [phonetic approximation]. That was occupied by the Japanese army, and naturally they controlled all the railroads. It was very difficult to travel. You had to get their permits in coming and going. And what irritated foreign nationals, when you...when you saw one of these Japanese guards, you...you...if you would go into any official building with a Japanese guard, you always had to bow to him. Or you went from....they were posted at the...at the these old Chinese cities with their walls, at each gate you had to bow to the...to them. Every Chinese had to do it too, and if the Chinese wouldn't do it, they would beat them. And we just...they said, "Well, this bowing means that you...that you respect the Emperor," which, of course, was like their god in...in Tokyo. [Intermittent unidentified noise in background] It was...it was during the war years, of course. Later on he...he disclaimed any deity, you recall, when [head of American occupation forces, General Douglas] McArthur came to Japan. But we had that contact with them, and it was always a measure of irritation to have to...to bow to them and to be dominated by them. I th...I suppose many of us foreign nationals in an Oriental country were somew...somewhat spoiled, you know. We felt that we should always get easy service and response when we asked something,

and...and many of these were soldiers in a foreign country, had to defend themselves. They were often haughty, and like soldiers often are when they're away from home. And that was sort of irritating. We...we had that little measure of contact with them for a period of time.

SHUSTER: So you didn't really develop any personal contacts beyond just passing them...

SCHOERNER: No.

SHUSTER: ...on the streets?

SCHOERNER: And then [pauses] during our early times, after our boy was born (that was our youngest boy), he was still very small, we...we were in the city of Hwangchuan, and we heard early in the morning that the Japanese troops were coming into Hwangchuan. They...they would often come in and overrun a certain area to disperse Chinese troops or guerrillas, whoever were in the area, and then they would retreat; they didn't mean to occupy. But we didn't know. And at...a few hours notice, we had to pack a few things. And...and my wife was pregnant at the time. We had to find a Chinese cart, I took my bicycle, and our little boy [James A. Schoerner], and we had to flee from the Japanese. That was after Pearl Harbor. Because if we had been caught by them, we would have just been sent off somewhere to concentration camp, and that was quite an experience. My wife's parents [Albert and Mabel Dodd] and her own sister [Ester Mae Clark]...no, her own brother-in-law [Percy Clark?] had been in concentration camps. You know, they took years for them to be repatriated. So that would have been unpleasant, so we just fled. And they came into our...into our station there. I was able alone...(my wife never was able to go back)...I was able to go back, and they had stolen our wedding presents, things that you felt were unimportant, even...even photographs and things like that. And then we went into another city [Lanchow]. We were allocated to go to another city to serve in a Bible school at that time. But so that was one of our experiences, and they came close enough, and we didn't want to get any closer.

SHUSTER: So they...the Japanese army did not seem to be very favorable? Or was the Japanese favor...

SCHOERNER: It wa...

SHUSTER: ...able to mission [unclear]...?

SCHOERNER: Well, at that time it had nothing to do.... We could have been business people. We would...[crashing sound in background]...we would have been in the same...in the same position because we were the enemy then, you see. America was at war with Japan. And often they feel caught. Sometimes soldiers were very drastic, you see. There were...people sometimes could easily be killed, you know. And they didn't [pauses]...they didn't bother, you see. [intermittent background noise] We were too far...we would have been...would have been...been taken...would have taken quite a bit of time for them to...to deliver us and to take us to one of the concentration camps from city to city. And it...it would have been an...an awful experience, you see. And they wouldn't have treated us with gloves on, either, you see.

SHUSTER: Have...how large was Borden Hospital? How large was the staff there?

SCHOERNER: Oh, that's another thing I cannot recall, at...at that time, how many missionaries we had. We had, I think, four...as many as four doctors sometimes. We had [pauses] four or five nurses, and then most of the others...well, at least sixty-seven, you know, on the staff. We had Chinese nurses, we had a leprosarium, people that wor...worked with the leprosarium as well. I think they considered it a hundred bed hospital, roughly speaking. We...it was in northwest China, where tho...in those earlier days was a...was a [laughs] a [pauses].... [Rustling of photograph] This is the staff of the hospital. This is a picture my wife just brought to show the hospital staff at that time before...that was before the Communists came into that part of the world. But this includes our...

SHUSTER: [Unclear].

SCHOERNER: ...Chinese staff. This is inside in one of the...in the hospital compound.

SHUSTER: Can I copy this?

SCHOERNER: Yes, you may. Gladly. It...it shows something of.... You see, there was always coming and going, naturally, as it would be. We had...we had one...there was one, a lady, for a time. I think, there had two ladies hospitals...lady doctors, and three or four male doctors. And...and then different conditions arose, and there was coming and going, especially during war years. Some left even earlier before the Communists came in. There was at that time already...the Lutheran mission had a plane, what they called the Luther plane...the Lutheran plane. And they would take missionaries out to Hong Kong during times of emergency. But we stayed on [unclear] toward the end.

SHUSTER: What [pauses] seemed to be the appeal of Communism in the areas that you were in?

SCHOERNER: Well, from the standpoint of Chinese, there were many people to whom it did not appeal. But there were also....

SHUSTER: What kind of people did it appeal to?

SCHOERNER: Well, to the young people, to students, you see. And then we felt.... Here's one example. We had a man, I think, who did carpentry work. And he used to think, oh, he could hardly wait till the Communists came. He would be able to get some land. That was the idea that was presented to them. Many places la...there were land owners, [who] owned large pieces of land, and it was farmed, [pauses] similar as they call it in the...oh, what was the?...feudal system, you see. Large landlords with people farming the land for them, and he would get [unidentified banging noise in background] every year so much percentage of the grain that was reaped. And there were many places in China like that. There were not many small farms, yet there were. But the idea was that when the Communists came, every person would get a parcel of land which he could call his own, and he could farm it or he could [loud crashing noise in background] grow vegetables on it or do anything of that nature. And they were looking forward to something of that nature, see. And, as...as you well know, and as...as history wi...does corroborate, that the Communists, when they came in, they just killed thousands of landowners. And I feel that often they were wrongly accused. I realize that there were faults. But they were often wrongly accused of...of stealing and of [pauses] oppressing those...those renters underneath them and never allowing them [pauses] to

really [pauses]...to get the land for themselves or to...to be able to...to obtain more wealth for themselves. They were constantly held in check. And so when the Communists came, they tried to do away, and they did away with this system of landlordism. The landlords were either killed or accused or falsely accused in...often in public meetings. And then it took quite some time until they divided the land. Some of it was already divided before we left. (We were a year and a half under Communism.) And we heard, and of course many of these things are hearsay, and I think much of it is truth, that some of these people who began to possess their own land, thought this was wonderful, found out that before long they were taxed so heavily. You see, the Communist government needed money, and so, of course, they taxed all of these people. You...you till your land, [pauses] and [pauses] the taxes that they want...wanted from [microphone bumped] them often [unidentified background noise] exceeded the amount that the land could produce. And since we have left China, of course, they established the idea of the communes. They said that you'd never own land individually; it belongs to the country. That was always a...you know, "This belongs to the country." Some high-up Communists that we would see would drive round some of the motor cars that they had obtained: "Oh, it isn't mine." (But he had the privilege [laughs] of using it.) "It belongs to the country." Or they would say, "It belongs to the people." It was...they call themselves the "People's Democratic Republic [emphasizes "People"]," "Min guo." And so these people thought that they were gaining, when...whereas in many cases they were really...the taxes were so heavy that they could hardly make their land productive enough to pay the taxes. And, of course, in the cities there were many who did not own land. But there were Chinese, who even though they had a business on the street, had a little piece of land that belonged to the family, and if times were hard in the business, you always could rely on a little bit of...of his land, whatever it had produced through the year, even though business was poor. So, many Chinese perhaps responded to it, thought it did something for them. The young people responded to them, and [pauses] felt that, of course, like in every Communist country, somebody does get benefit. And if you toe the line, if you are among those who fully submit and fully root for the government and work for it, you get rewards. But as we see it, and as we as foreign internationals now look back, Americans, Britishers, we...we judge the Communist system by...by th...its results, you see. And so that's the only way I can look at it now. But we would hear a few Chinese that...that would dare to speak out, and hear little bits. They...they were not too happy with it.

SHUSTER: Were there moves to...by the Chinese Communist government to nationalize or to regulate the church?

SCHOERNER: Oh, yes. And some of that began before we left. They had a...they had a committee of...of so-called Christian leaders. And alas, they chose men who had been known to us as liberals, linked with the World Council of Churches, people of that nature. One man...one man, alas, was not that, but he...he...he gave in to them: Marcus Cheng. I think he had even studied at Wheaton for a...for a period of a time.

SHUSTER: How is that spelled?

SCHOERNER: Marcus, Marcus Cheng. C-H-E-N-G. M-A-R-C-U-S. Marcus Cheng. He became one of the leaders on this committee. And the idea was to control it; they wanted to be able to control it. They did not like th idea of indi...individual churches. Much of this developed after we left, you see. It took periods of time...a long periods of time to...to...to develop a policy. But since

the Christian Church was of some size all over China, they developed the idea of...of what they called a Manifesto [the Christian Manifesto approved by the National Christian Council in December 1950]. I...I do not recall details of it, but the idea behind it was this: that they wanted each church and its leaders to sign this manifesto that.... And they had what they called this...the Three-Self Principle. Each church must be self-governing: no more missionary running behind it. It must be self-supporting: no more money from abroad. And it must be self-governing. Self-support, self-governing...(have I got all three of them?)[also self-governing]. The Three Selfs, they called it. But they...there was to be no more foreign influence fr...no matter from whom from abroad. They would have to have their own leaders to...to guide it. And then they would have to be controlled by this group. And they had to then obey all the new laws that were being promulgated. And...and then, of course, as things developed, they had to become anti-foreign, especially anti-American. The Korean War had already broken out before we left, and I was challenged at one time by a group of Communists who came into the hospital: what I thought of this man [US President Harry S.] Truman and this man...(they always had derogative..."Truman dog," or, or...you know, had some derogative term behind it, and Truman...and McArthur, of course [ongoing unidentified clattering sound]. He was at...at...at that time the hero in the Pacific.) And...and what do we think of our own countries, and what do I think of it. And they tried to put us on the spot, you see, to declare ourselves. And we had to be very cautious, that we don't know all the policies of our own government. And we...and I would tell to them, I'd say, "You know, we don't even get our papers any more. You're not [laughs] allowing our mail to come through. I don't know all the details." They'd say, "Well, don't you read the Chinese papers?" Well, we could read it somewhat; it was always so much more complicated, but it was their own biased view. But anyhow, those were some of the things that developed. And the churches got involved with that, you see.

SHUSTER: And, when you came back to the United States, what...what struck you about the American impression of China, the American understanding or lack of understanding of China?

SCHOERNER: Well, you see, it distressed us, of course. This is the way, in those earlier days, they treated the Nationalist government. We had men like.... (Who was the man that came, was from our State Department? He was almost a whole year in China.)

SHUSTER: George Marshall?

MRS. SCHOERNER: [In background] Marshall.

SCHOERNER: Marshall was.... Was...was it Marshall? Yeah, Marshall. And there was also a general...

SHUSTER: General [Joseph] Stillwell?

SCHOERNER: Rader...Raderman. No. Lederman, Wederman [Albert Wedermeyer?]. We met one of them. [High pitched sound in background] But they were trying to [pauses]...to work hard to...to bring the Nationalists and the Communists together, and they just could not. See, the Communists wanted complete surrender of the other group. And they worked so hard, and they couldn't...they couldn't do it. We met some Americans who, of course, were struck with the rugged

way the Communists, like Mao and his group that were up in the semi-desert area of Shensi Province.... They...they called them "agrarian reformers," meaning by that that they were trying to do away with the old feudal system, with the old landlords, and they were bringing new ideas. [Unidentified pounding noise in background] You see, they saw certain liberal, of course, interests even in America. During the 30's while we were in China, Roosevelt began to [pauses]...began to [pauses] recognize Soviet Russia, which we had held off for many years. And there were people [coughs] who were interested in what was happening in China. And they...they were not sympathetic to what Taiwan was doing, Chiang Kai-shek, because he was working against the system. And it was only after some years that our country suddenly realized and changed, face-around, began to accept Taiwan and ...give money to Taiwan [sound of closing door in background] to develop their industries and their business, and sent our fleet, (was it our Sixth Fleet?), there to protect Taiwan from being...from being attacked. And all of those things, we would just see and not understand completely the politics behind it, but there's...there has been power politics all through those last few decades. We were against Japan; then we were for Japan. We were against Russia; we were for Russia. We were for Taiwan, and now we let down Taiwan and we're accepting Communist China again. And it's just a matter of politics and business and...and so on, as you well know. And, of course, the missionary work is affected by that. We were in Taiwan in 1972 for a visit when...when [pauses] it was...I think President Nixon was in power then, when they began to...to [pauses] say that they were beginning to work with the Communist government. And the Taiwanese already feared then what is happening today, you see, in being let down. And it was a terrible disappointment, because of...of [pauses] that particular [pauses] attitude that we had, this government.

SHUSTER: What about the average American you came in contact with when you came back to the States? How did they seem to view...

SCHOERNER: Well...

SHUSTER: ...the culture?

SCHOERNER: ...there were many people who did not have any strong opinions. But the thing that we would hear again and again is that..."Is Chiang a real Christian? Is [pauses]...is the Nationalistic government...?" Well, they would see the corrupt side, which...of which there was that, of course, and they would not see the better side, as we tried to see. We tried to see both sides. But [pauses] to me as I became...I became then an employee of Moody Bible Institute and discussing some of these things. And I was terribly distressed at one time, when...when one of the men who was a staff member said, "Oh, just think of all this [pauses] hundred years of missionary work in China. It's all [unidentified banging noise in background] gone down the drain." And I stood up against that and said, "You don't know. And from my own experience.... There was a Bible School in the city of Lanchow where our hospital was, and they had a gifted Bible teacher, you see." I said, "That man, if he could speak English, could stand on any of our platforms and open the Scriptures and be considered a gifted Bible teacher." China has [unidentified banging noise in background] some wonderful, gifted men. And that is the product of missionary work. It has not gone down the drain, [pauses] as...as it was said among some people, you see. We...we think so much of missions and missionary work as our own [ongoing rattle of dishes in background]. It's the Lord's work; the Lord has His people there. And...and it is true. It must be

ultimately. It was always our...our ideal that we were putting up a structure only. We were the framework, and they were filling in the...the real...the real life of a church. We were only a part of it. We hoped that whenever we left there was something going to be...going to remain. If every missionary would come out of many a mission field today, or had to leave, if the work of God doesn't continue there, naturally our work was in vain. But...I was head of a Bible school and training young men and women; I was in the hospital where we trained young men and young women to...to do medical work and do Christian work as part of their medical work. And we believe that God has His witnesses there, and we know [emphasizes "know"]. He does from things that we have heard even now, through these days of Communism. Alas, I realize, too, it's...it's tested what was real and that what was not real, because that which was not real, of course, couldn't stand the test of Communism, and it would not in [pauses]...in our own country. What would happen to America if we had a Communist government as China had? Where would we as Christians stand? How true would we be to the [continuing rattle of dishes in background] faith that we profess? These are things often...it's easy for us to stand on the sideline and criticize missionary work and missions. I...things trouble me. "Aw, there was too much paternalism." Well, maybe there was to some measure, but look at the paternalism in some churches today. The pastor is the father; he does everything. And...and we...we, naturally as missionaries, pattern the work that we do on the field...so often we pattern it according to our experience that we had at home. But during later years...and...and one of the things that I admire about the China Inland Mission was impressing on us that God is building His church there. And this is what we want. We want Chinese believers to take over the leadership, as we tried more and more. We wanted Chinese medical men to...to lead in the work [pauses], and so on. The...the work must continue after I leave. But we have the tendency to feel that everything is gone if the missionary's gone. He's only a part of the work, you see.

SHUSTER: One...one last question. Would you like to summarize your career since leaving China?

SCHOERNER: Well, at first most missionaries feel, you know, that we're like a fish out of water. We...we've had to leave the work that we've given our years to. But I've come to realize that I'm a missionary no matter where I am, whether it's in China, and I'm called of God to serve Him and to witness Him [pauses] even at home. And the thing that I want to impress, and I've done it with friends that I have at Moody in the Missions Department, to realize that missions is [pounds table] not the foreign missionary alone. It's God's Church [continuing rattle of dishes in background] in these countries, where we hope to establish a work. As Paul traveled he founded Timothy, he founded Titus and Tychicus and all of these men that worked with him, and that's what we sought to do. I know we haven't been very perfect with it, but that work continues to go on, even under great difficulties today. But we hope with new changes in China, maybe the door will open up again. Maybe the Lord will send back Chinese Christians, and there are many of them, capable Chinese leaders, taught men in America, in Southeast Asia, in all of these countries, Singapore, Philippine Islands. And we hope they'll go back and minister to their own people, even some from Taiwan. I know though all that looks so impossible, but it's not impossible with God.

SHUSTER: Well, thank you.

END OF TAPE