Pearls & Rubies

National Magazine of FarmHouse Fraternity
SPRING, 1965

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SPRING 1965 / NUMBER 2 / 60th YEAR / FARMHOUSE FRATERNITY

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2	Chapter
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14-15	Illinois Celebrates 50 Years
20	Mississippi Founders Day
19	Seath Named ASDA Man of the Year
4-9	The Way A Strange Wind Blows

COVER: Dean Schowengerdt, KAN, agricultural missionary crosses a shallow stream on the way to his work in Taejon, Korea . . . "a land of strange wind."

SEND: Change of address; Undeliverable copies; News and photos; Subscriptions $2.00 per year to non-members . . .

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The Way A Strange Wind Blows

Korea, a country divided by war, extends an arm to the sea, reaching almost as far as Japan, separated only by the Korea Strait. To the west is the Yellow Sea and to the east the Sea of Japan.... South Korea's northern boundary is just north of Seoul, its capitol.

About half-way between Seoul and the Korea Strait and somewhat to the west lies Taejon in the Province of Chungchong Nam-Do and within rural Taejon is the Union Christian Service Center. It was to this place that Dean, KAN46, and Marjorie Schowengerdt were assigned by the Board of Missions of the Methodist Church in 1950.

The Schowengerdt's journey was delayed while Dean completed the M.S. degree in agricultural economics in 1951 at Kansas State University—War further delayed their departure until October 1952.

The farm land of the Union Christian Service Center at that time included 15 acres of dry land in patches in the valley and on the hillsides, another 15 acres of rice land in paddy fields—about a sixth of an acre each in terraces reaching up the valleys, and around 90 acres of barren low granite hills. Not an ideal spot for a demonstration farm—but typical of the average land from which Koreans must carve out an existence.

Three-fourths of the population of Korea is engaged in farming and more than half of these people farm fewer than two acres.

The Center, which receives major support from the Methodist Church, two branches of the Presbyterian Church, the United Church of Canada and the Salvation Army, also supports a well-baby clinic, a rehabilitation center, a tuberculosis rest camp and a home for beggar boys.

Poverty is a stark reality in most lands where the agricultural missionary works. One of the principal concerns of all missionaries is to meet the physical as well as the spiritual needs of persons whom they serve.

Dean's first work for the Center was not farm connected but rather was work with amputees. In 1952 Korea had an estimated 20,000 civilian amputees and Church World Service asked him to spend the two months before sailing to Korea at the Institute for the Crippled and Disabled in New York City for technical training. Knowing that it would take four years to learn to make a prostheses did not deter Dean, who, despite the prediction, made in two months what he modestly called "a legpiece" for a man in the Bowery. He took sample legs and arms with him to Korea and worked with another American on the project.

The vocational rehabilitation center is always filled with around 100 amputees from children to grandfathers. When they finish their training others replace them. The program continues unabated though war casualties have given way to accidents, frostbite, disease and land mine casualties.

Wife Marjorie became involved with the Baby Fold of the Center. In Korean orphanages nine of every ten babies died, so the Korean government asked the Center to care for some of the abandoned infants. Infants at the Center now number 30. Under Marjorie's direction the older children, who have grown from

(cont'd page 6)

In addition to farming the agricultural missionary needs to be creative in the improvement of tools and have skills in masonry, carpentry and mechanics.

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skin and bones to plump, alert children, total 60. Children not adopted by the time they are three years old are sent to Korean orphanages to make room for more malnourished babies. The staff of the Baby Fold has now grown to twelve.

The tuberculosis rest camp at the Center has twenty-two beds. As soon as a patient is cured or can become an out-patient he leaves to make way for another. Dean says, "Estimates of the number of tubercular persons in Korea range from 5 to 20 percent."

The Salvation Army sponsors a home for beggar boys at the Center —boys who are orphaned and roam the country becoming gangs of hoodlums—boys who resent discipline. In the Home they get hot meals and a place to sleep, and those who are eager to learn are given help to get an education. There are about thirty-five boys from kindergarten through primary school who are served by this Home.

Dean writes of his work, "Rural churches wanted us to do something practical for the villages. People can't have a church or anything else above subsistence level, they pointed out, unless farming methods are changed. So, for two years we went out as a mobile rural enlightenment unit to hold week-long institutes in selected villages of each county.

"Then the church wanted leaders to follow up this work. So we picked progressive young farmers from each church district and trained them in a summer-long institute at the Center farm to serve as volunteer agricultural extension agents. We train 25 such men each year.

"During the winter, the Center staff holds short institutes in these villages. More than 2,000 have attended them. Later we set up rural life institutes for the women.

"Underlying all the Center's work, of course, is the desire to show Koreans that Christianity has a deep concern for human welfare. The villagers know that we are Christians and soon ask us what Christians believe. After one institute in a now Christian village 100 persons started going to the nearest church. Where there is no church, villagers usually ask for a tent in which to launch one.

"People next said, 'If only we had books to read, we could learn by ourselves.' So the Center started a *Farmer's Life* magazine, which now sells about 8,000 copies a month.

" 'We need livestock, but can't get good quality stock,' they said. And we imported goats, heifers, chicken and duck eggs, bees and rabbits and distributed them to capable breeders. One day a villager commented, 'One thing we have lots of is mountain land, but we don't know what to do with it.' Since then the Center has demonstrated that acacia trees can be grown as bushes in open cuts and when harvested each year make a lot of fuel and hay, two much needed items.

"Soybeans, too, are now being grown successfully on mountain land, with use of fused phosphate. Villagers wanted to start orchards; so the Center began growing seedlings to sell them at cost. . . . We encouraged Farmer Kim to plant early potatoes in his rice field; now he gets two crops instead of one. And Student Lee was the first in his village to grow watermelons."

Dean as the treasurer of the Center and the vice director of the

(cont'd. page 8)

Inspecting the products in the market is one way of determining shortages and surpluses, needs for quality, disease, or insect control. It is also a place to get acquainted with people and to teach and preach the gospel.

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Christian Rural Life Institute spends most of his time now in office work and administration. The administrative end of his job involves working with a staff of about ten persons in conducting a seven and a half months' Christian Rural Institute for the training of village leaders in agricultural methods.

Two Rural Life Training Institutes for women, each lasting for two and one half months are also held each year. In addition to this, Dean works with follow-up activities of village leaders and rural conferences during the winter, manages a farm producing the full round of livestock, field and horticultural crops, publishes a farmer's magazine and supervises the operation of a cannery.

In 1952 the Center had two old farm buildings and was beginning to construct several others. During the past twelve years, 38 new buildings have been added. Fifteen are for the amputee department, including a weaving shop, a machine and metal workshop with power equipment and a badly needed warehouse. Present equipment permits the Center to extend its services to the vocational training of some of the older boys from a nearby orphanage.

Dean Schowengerdt believes that the success of the Institute is attributable to its three-loves motto —Love of God, Love of Rural Life, Love of Work. Asked why he chose a church career as an agricultural missionary, he said, "I find three specific, if not unique, blessings in my work. One of working with people of another culture. I am always learning something new. Sometimes we learn together, East and West;

Part of Dean Schowengerdt's job is teaching farmers how to take care of their livestock. The goats were originally imported from the States through the help of Church World Service and Heifer's Project, Inc.

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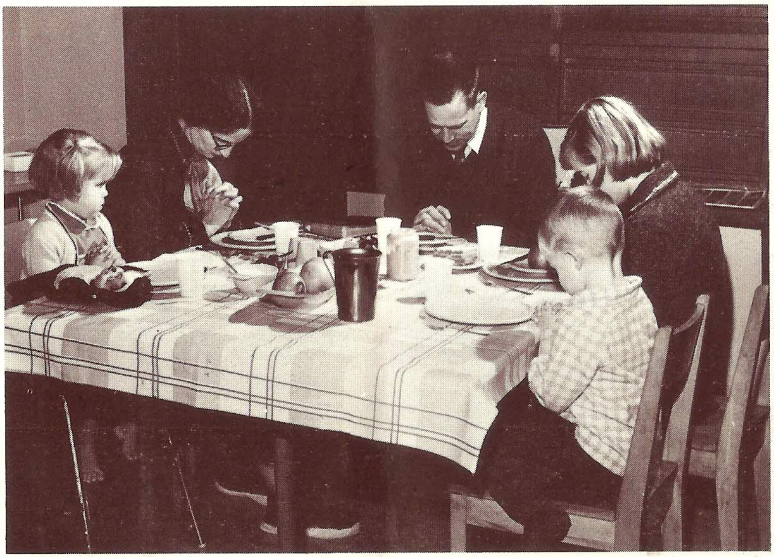
and as a result do something which neither of us had expected to do before. Sometimes my part is to make it possible for a Korean leader to do what he had always planned and hoped to do. The result is a real experience of Christian brotherhood crossing all boundaries.

"A second blessing is the variety of work. From the necessities of my home to the needs apparent in my duties, I am called from behind the desk to behind the pulpit and to all kinds of mechanical, construction and field work. I may be meeting the governor, doctoring a cow and digging a ditch all in one day. The result being opportunity to witness to Christ in all walks and areas of life.

"A third blessing is the knowledge that God wills to use efforts to relieve poverty, hunger, and related suffering even though these endeavors may not be successful or permanent, more specifically, that in such efforts I may be used to make Christ known in the hearts of individuals."

Some measure of the success of his work in Korea is expressed in this letter from the Governor of Chungchong Nam-Do Province to Dean:

"You have come a great distance from your home into this land of strange wind and soil and different customs. Here you have faced bravely the risks and maximum hardships involved in a strenuous struggle for the sake of promoting Agricultural Extension work throughout this land. We, the citizens of this land, and especially the rural people of Chungchong Nam-Do, commend forever your Holy fighting spirit which has proved its indestructibility to us. For your meritorious service the 2,000,000 *people of this Province offer to you our most profound gratitude.*

Piung Ki-Min
Governor, Chungchong
Nam-Do Province

Dean and Marjorie Schowengerdt pause with three of their four children for a period of worship. The work of the agricultural missionary, as with all missionaries, must be rooted in the practice of Christian faith and love, else the final objective will be lost.