

## NONE BUT GOD

The Testimony of the late Dr. H. Mel Rutter, from WWII to a life of missionary service.

**"...he being dead yet speaketh."** Hebrews 11:4

### Part 3: BIRD'S NEST SOUP

It was nearing midnight, when our torpedo boat landed on a small island somewhere near the China coast. We had a rough trip, but we knew we were nearing our principal objective, the mainland of Japan. Victory was near at hand in the Philippine Campaign. Rumors filled the air that our next move would be Okinawa. We neared the land of the rising sun, but what a surprise was ours when the sun finally arose over the horizon. I could not believe my eyes. I had never seen such a panorama of human suffering in all my life. The island was literally teeming with starving Chinese. The tortures of war were engraved on their faces, and hunger was evident from their emaciated bodies. When the Japanese had devastated the coastal area with aerial bombing, the Chinese fled before them. Some retreated to the mountains of the interior, but most of them fled in their sampans and junks to the coastal islands nearby. This little island was already so overpopulated it was bursting at the seams.

The shrunken, emaciated, skeleton-like bodies of the people were noticeably marked by scars on their bony hands. Upon inquiry, we found these had been caused by infuriated rats they had killed with their bare hands. The famine, that had been caused by the overpopulating of the little island, had made everyone a hunter of anything edible. The food was so scarce and firewood so hard to find that they just killed rats with their hands and ate them raw.

One particular day will be indelibly stamped in my memory. Our reconnaissance took us through the center of the main village; there were two streets that crossed in the center of town. When we came to the intersection, I saw an enormous black pot, carboned by much use, with a roaring fire beneath. A man was stirring the sticky looking stew with a long stick. The menu was bird's nest soup. I do not mean the Chinese delicacy by this name, but literally bird's soup, since it was only water filled with bird's nests. The old men were sent out to scavenge every nook and corner for bird's nest, nests of all shapes, sizes, and materials. Some contained baby birds (some dead and some alive) and eggs, and all contained feathers and drippings from the birds. I am sure I do not have to stir your imagination to tell you that, as the man moved the stick back and forth through that sticky, gummy stew, it smelled horrible. They were lined up for blocks, waiting for their portion for the day. There were many old men and women, boys and girls, young women and crippled young men, all ages and sizes having one thing in common; they were starving to death.

They were thin, emaciated, poorly clad, very hungry, and their bones were barely held together by their yellow skin. Their tired deep-set eyes peered out of haggard faces, sunken by fear; fear of death and fear of life. There was no trace of joy, mirth, or happiness on any face, as they stood in line holding their little cups; their hope for strength.

I shall never forget the drama which my soul experienced, as I walked down that long, twisted, muddy street. The line of hunger seemed to have no end; yet many neared the starvation point and bodies already lay in the streets, some dead and some dying. As I looked on this tragic scene, I felt I could stand it no more. I wanted to look the other way, but the Holy Spirit would not let me. He kept saying, "Look at them, Mel. Look very close. This is a vivid picture of what the sinner looks like before a Holy God; dying, helpless, doomed, twisted, emaciate, without strength and without hope!" It seemed as though my heart would burst with grief, as I reviewed a dying people amid what looked like helpless circumstances. I was listening to their chatter, not understanding the Chinese language, when all of a sudden I heard beautiful singing. I was now nearing the end of the line and could see several small children with their cups clutched tightly in their bony little hands; tired weary, hungry, without enough clothing, made orphans by the ravages of war; but their faces were different. Even in the throes of death, their little eyes, had a sparkle. They were singing "Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so." I had never heard such beautiful singing; it was truly Heavenly music. I feel sure that God leaned over the balcony of Heaven and smiled His approval. No food, no clothing, no home, no mommy, no daddy, no money, no strength, but they were filled; filled with the love of God!

Tears streamed down my face unabated. Heavenly joy filled and refilled my soul. My heart pounded furiously in my breast. The Holy Spirit had His bit and auger of love out again and drilled deeply into my soul, as He whispered, "Mel, back somewhere were some real missionaries, really born again, really called of God, really burdened of God

for lost souls and here are some of their products." These Chinese boys and girls were so in love with Jesus that even in the face of death, with nothing of this life to compensate, they could make music together in their souls and sing as though they were being directed by the Heavenly Choir Director. All of the sadness and death around me took on a different look; my heart was now aglow. And God was impressing me by His Holy Spirit! God was working! God was molding! It was NONE BUT GOD!

When you know Him as personal Savior you can face the world with a song in your heart, even as those precious little children, no matter what the surrounding circumstances. Trust Him today!

Semper Fidelis

*Chaplain Ron*



**Above:** Dr. H. Mel Rutter, President Emeritus, and International Representative

**Below:** When Dr. Mel Rutter and Dr. Bill McCorkle came to visit us while pastoring a military church at Chicksands Air Force Base, we put them up at this cottage in Surrey, where Dwight D. Eisenhower planned the D-Day invasion.

