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Letter from Fr. Leonard Amrhein to Catherine Amrhein, Al, and Tom.

Fr. Leonard Amrhein C.P.

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Huki - Aug. 10, 1947.

Dear Mom - Al - Tom and everybody at home,

I guess I'm getting lax in my letter writing habits. I'm afraid to say I'll try to be more regular in the future. I said that so often, that it just doesn't make sense anymore. My intention is good - write home at least once a month. But sometimes the "months" have eight weeks in them.

Anyhow the package containing the seeds, pump, volley ball, ping pong set, twiddle - something set - lets see. Was that all? I forget. Well that package arrived in July. In very good condition. I figured the seeds were too late for this year. But we'll get an early start next year. And sorry Tom - but I didn't ~~lose~~ the value for the volley ball as you predicted. And thanks a whole lot and more for everything. You're swell for sending the lot.

And Tom, I heard you don't like house-keeping. Well, you had better dust up - or down - the attic. Put something soft on the pool table. 'Cause I'm coming home soon and I'll be expecting to sleep up there a couple nights - or days. Don't know when. Nothing definite. Some say this year. Some say the early part of next year. I'm third on the list. Fr. Caspar is first. He is in charge of building the new hospital in Ywanling. When that's finished, he'll go home. Then comes Fr. William and then myself. We'll probably go together. Maybe all three of us will go together. But remember. There is nothing

definite. And we'll know it before anybody else. So don't believe any rumour you hear.

I had a nice trip a couple weeks ago. Frs. Kieran and Germain went home. They went to Chang Sha in our jeep. I went along with them to bring the jeep back. It is an all day drive one way. I stayed in Chang Sha one day. I felt like a hick - being in a big city after little Kuki. I managed to take the hair out of my ears before we got into Chang Sha. So no one noticed my sadness except myself.

From Chang Sha these two priests went to Hong Kong by train. That is the way the Fathers are coming in and going out now. Only they don't go by jeep. Most of the time it is by public bus or by truck. This means two days up or down.

Fr. Germain is from St. Joseph's Parish. He said he would drop in and say hello to you. His last name is Heilman. Maybe you know him. He lives on Penn Ave.

I opened a new mission at Kuan Chuang last Sunday. It is about three miles from here. It is on the bus road and a pretty busy little town. I think someday it might be a pretty busy big town. So if we get started now we'll be right in the middle of things when it grows up. I hired a little room to keep my stuff in. And the owner said I could use an open room between two stores for Mass on Sundays. This room opens on the street. So I have quite a large "church". Most of the congregation stand out on the street or crowd around the entrance. Every week I must set up an altar

and carry out the kneelers - we have only ~~four~~ stools and about twelve kneelers - from the back room. Then after Mass, everything gets carried to the back room again.

The owner had a lot of superstitious sayings pasted all over the place. I asked him if I could take them down. He agreed to all except one big one over the altar. Since he was letting me use this room free of charge, I thought it better not to insist. He took a bed-sheet over the one he doesn't want to take down. He said if we take that one down, something would happen to his business. If something happens now, I guess he'll blame it on me for saying Mass. But if he does, I'm going to tell him the reason is he wouldn't let me take that other one down.

Before I opened the place, I sent out invitations to all the christians over there and all the big shots in town. It seems everybody came but those who were invited. We had a nice crowd of pagans at Mass. It was raining very heavily the last couple days. So I guess they didn't expect me today. I fooled them and went anyway. One christian showed up. But again the pagans crowded the place. One kid stood at the Epistle side of the altar holding a cat. The cat furnished the music all during Mass. The first day I said Mass there, someone borrowed my sun glasses. Hope he can use them. Although I would just as soon he would have wanted

till the summer was over. The summer sun here is pretty tough on our eyes. The Chinese can take it. They don't seem to mind it.

I say two Masses every Sunday now. First in Huki, then in Kuan Chuang.

Someone said the protestants want to open a mission over these two. I'm glad we got the jump on them. I hope we can get established before they do. Kuan Chuang has more promise of a future than Huki. Huki will never amount to much, in spite of its gold mines.

Well I haven't even asked how everybody is at home. I hope all are well. I'm sure you are or you would have let me know. Frs. Alogjins and Linus gave us very good reports about everybody when they came. And now three more Fathers are on their way. I'm anxiously awaiting their arrival to hear more good reports.

Well so long everybody. Hope my next letter (?) will have some definite news about my departure. I let you know as soon as I get the word. - If it doesn't come too soon before the actual actual day of departure.

Keep praying for me and Huki. I remember all of you every day in my Mass. God bless all of you and keep you. As ever
Leonard.



"AIR-MAIL"

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