

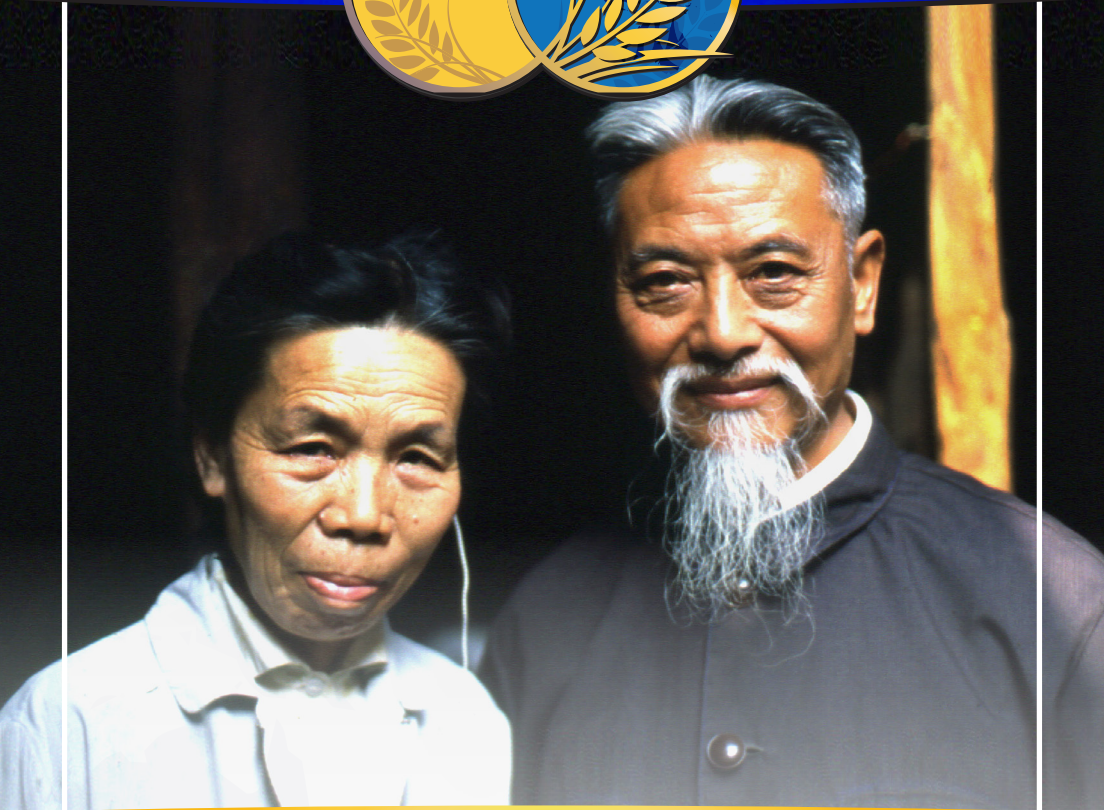
"PUT IN THE SICKLE, FOR THE HARVEST HAS COME!" MARK 4:29

Asia Harvest

DECEMBER 2022



NEWSLETTER #185



A VOICE FROM CHINA

Interview with a Senior House Church Leader

ASIAHARVEST.ORG • OFFICE@ASIAHARVEST.ORG

From the Frontlines

IF YOU ARE LIKE us and those we interact with, the last few years have presented many challenges, as society crumbles under the weight of its own sin and problems. The pandemic, war, and inflation have placed stress on the world system, and many cracks have appeared.

In Psalm 11, King David asked what the righteous can do when the very foundations of life and society are being destroyed. The answer is to cherish the Lord Jesus Christ with all our mind, soul, and strength, and to serve Him wholeheartedly.

In Asia, the last few years have been brutal for many of the Christians we are privileged to serve. The disciples of Christ have clung to Him, however, and the Lord is bringing them through the storms.

If you have been reading our newsletters for some time, you will know that in 2016 we began to sound an alarm that something very large and sinister was brewing in China. Some people mocked us, but by the following year house church leaders were telling us that the persecution in their areas was the most severe since the Cultural Revolution 40 years earlier.

*“When the foundations
are being destroyed,
what can the righteous do?”
The Lord is in His holy temple;
the Lord is on His heavenly throne.
He observes everyone on earth;
His eyes examine them.”*

(Psalm 11:3-4)

In 2017, tens of thousands of foreign Christians began to be systematically expelled from China, as President Xi Jinping introduced new laws designed to control and ultimately

*“The time is short.
From now on those who
have wives should live as
if they do not; those who
mourn, as if they did not;
those who are happy, as if
they were not; those who
buy something, as if it were
not theirs to keep; those
who use the things of the
world, as if not
engrossed in them.
For this world in its present
form is passing away.”*

(1 Corinthians 7:29-31)

Although foreign missionaries have not been allowed in China for generations, hundreds of thousands of foreign Christians have been serving there in various capacities, including as teachers, students, researchers, and businessmen. They have been salt and light to the Chinese people, and many have played key roles in serving the Chinese Church as they evangelize and disciple their country.

eliminate Christianity. In one short period of a few weeks, thousands of families were expelled from China, causing massive heartache and pain.

Airports in places like Hong Kong and Thailand were filled with bewildered families who had been given 48 hours to pack up their possessions and leave China.

We know some who had worked legally in China for decades, running businesses and employing locals. They had never been accused of breaking any laws, and were greatly loved and respected by the Chinese people.

In some cases, families owned apartments and vehicles in China and their children had just started a new school term. China was their home and the land they loved and planned to stay for the rest of their lives. Some friends of ours were even handcuffed and taken to the nearest airport and placed on the first flight out of China. They were not permitted to lock up their homes, withdraw the savings from their bank accounts, or say goodbye to their friends. They were placed on blacklists and are now unable to enter China. Many have struggled to come to grips with how their ministries and God-given call were abruptly shut down.

The removal of foreign believers from China has been so thorough that we scarcely know of a single foreign Christian still there, and those we talk to in other ministries have had the same experience. Many mission organizations have been totally devastated.

If you have read any of our *China Chronicles* books, you will know that China has followed the same pattern several times in history. In the early 1950s, for example, all foreign missionaries were forcibly expelled from China. The Communists wanted to remove them first before launching a massive persecution of Chinese Christians.

By cutting off their foreign connections, the authorities knew that any voices of protest would be silenced, and the rest of the world wouldn't learn of their dark deeds.

(Continued...)

INTRODUCING DAVID JOSEPH AS OUR NEW U.S. DIRECTOR

Asia Harvest is glad to announce that recently we appointed David Joseph to the position of U.S. director.

Please pray for him and his family, who come into the role after almost two decades serving the Lord on the frontlines in Asia.

David brings many God-given skills into the role, and we are excited to see how the Lord uses them for His glory.

In the future, David will be contributing to our newsletters, and will be available to share about our work in churches, home meetings and with individuals.

The same has happened in China in recent years, as “president for life” Xi tries to create his atheistic Marxist utopia. As with his predecessor Mao Zedong, there is no room for competing ideologies in Xi’s plans — especially Christianity, which is loathed by those who demand complete allegiance to their own kingdom.

At *Asia Harvest*, we love nothing more than to share testimonies from the Chinese Church to encourage God’s people around the world. Stories of revival, faith, courage and extraordinary church growth have been the main subjects of our newsletters and books since the 1980s.

For the last five years, however, news from The Church in China has slowed to a tiny trickle. Many Chinese church leaders have turned off their phones and computers and have adopted a low profile. Most churches that used to have hundreds or thousands of members have purposely broken up into tiny cells of three or four believers, who meet secretly for prayer and fellowship. History is once again repeating itself in China.

Please don’t be discouraged by the developments in China! After Mao tried to obliterate the children of God during a quarter century of brutal persecution, the

Living God declared, “Enough!” Jiang Qing, the fourth wife of Chairman Mao, once arrogantly told a group of foreign diplomats: “Christianity has been consigned to the history section of the museum.”

Unbeknown to her, the Holy Spirit had breathed life into God’s children, and over the years the number of Christians in China skyrocketed from less than one million when the Communist Party took power in 1949 to well over 100 million today.

Hallelujah! All glory to the Living God!

The years have rolled on, and now another strongman has emerged with plans to destroy God’s people in China. **Let us pray for Xi Jinping, that God may have mercy on him.**

But should he continue with his plans, do not be depressed for Christians in China, for it will not be the first time that God uses the wrath of men to accomplish His purposes.

Although there has already been intense suffering, the people of God are once again being purified in the furnace of affliction, and they will one day emerge from this trial with a more intimate walk with the Lord, and ready to bring in an even greater harvest of souls than they have in the past!





A Voice from China

In the remainder of this newsletter, we have a special treat to share with you

ALTHOUGH MOST NEWS to emerge from the Church in China for the past five years have tended to be grim accounts of persecution and oppression, a few months ago we were able to safely interview a key house church leader at an undisclosed location, and to get the latest news from him about what is going on in China today.

This pastor, whom we will call Brother Hui (not his real name), has been greatly used by God for many years, and is the leader of a network of house churches in eastern China that has experienced many miracles and explosive revival.

Today his network numbers several million believers. Brother Hui is not widely known outside China, and he has kept a low profile during his years of ministry. Any details that may reveal his identity or that of his church have been removed from the original transcript.

We hope you enjoy our interview with Brother Hui. We wish we could do many more interviews like this with other church leaders in China, but friends, the situation there has become so dire that we hope you appreciate how unique this opportunity is. This is likely to be the final detailed Christian interview from China for a number of years, whether by *Asia Harvest* or any other Christian organization.

Please pray for Brother Hui and all Christians in China during this time of darkness.

If your faith has been shaken during the last few years as the world seems to crumble around you, we hope you will be encouraged not to give up, but to use the opportunity to press more into the Lord Jesus Christ and His Word, for He has promised:

“Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.” James 4:8

(Continued...)



Asia Harvest (AH): Brother Hui, thank you for taking the time to share with us and our readers around the world. Many believers are keen to know what has been happening in China and how the Body of Christ is doing.

Brother Hui: I appreciate the opportunity to share with you, and the believers in our churches send their love and greetings to all who belong to Jesus Christ! Several years ago things started

to dramatically change in China, and we have had to seek God and adjust to the challenging environment. Because of the present situation, many Christians have been hosting small fellowships in their homes. This has been a time when the churches have had to rely on local leaders, not foreigners or recorded sermons. It has been a time of personal study in the Word, and a season for seeking God afresh with all our hearts.

AH: What are some of the ways that preaching the Gospel has become more difficult in China?

Brother Hui: For a few years now the government has been able to track people's movement through a phone app that is required for all travel, whether by airplane, train, bus or any other method. When we purchase a ticket or enter a station, the app reveals our identity. If we are on a government blacklist, as many pastors are, travel is blocked.

Furthermore, those preachers who are able to travel find their movements are restricted and traced. The authorities have a record of everywhere they go and every person they visit. This and other challenges have forced us to become more cautious in how we minister, but we continue to share the Gospel and disciple believers. We will never stop serving the Lord!

AH: This level of control through modern technology almost sounds like China is living in a time similar to that described in Revelation with the mark of the beast. Are believers scared?

Brother Hui: Although I expect things will become even more difficult, we are not afraid. Jesus promised we would be hated by all nations because of Him, and so it is a great honor to suffer because of our affiliation with the true King. Even our ability to buy food or function

in any way may soon be blocked, but God is in complete control. He died for us, and we are His precious inheritance. No matter what men may do to us, the Lord taught us to trust and not fear. He said:

“Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground outside your Father’s care. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So don’t be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.” (Matthew 10:28-31)

AH: We heard that during severe Covid lockdowns (which still continue in many places), believers were not allowed to meet together. What have you done to compensate for the lack of fellowship?

Brother Hui: Our church had many Bible study groups that began to meet on WeChat (the main Chinese social media app) and by Zoom during the lockdowns. The meetings only lasted three weeks, however, as the police came and arrested our leaders. Some were even dragged away while they were teaching God’s Word, with all the church members witnessing the arrest live on their phones.

The authorities also used people’s devices to identify and track many who participated in the online meetings. We have learned our lesson. We will not be holding online meetings that way again in the future.

AH: Are there any specific ways we should pray for the house churches in China today?

Brother Hui: Yes, it seems that all Christians are being systematically identified, and if they have any dependency on the government they can face difficulties. For example, many elderly Christians in our fellowships have been told to deny Christ.

When they refuse, the government takes away their pension and free medical care. Despite this hardship, they will never admit that the government is their provider. That role belongs only to the Lord Jesus Christ!

AH: With things now so difficult and controlled, has the number of Christians been shrinking?

Brother Hui: Despite all the new challenges and troubles, the number of believers in our

churches has continued to grow! Our Lord told us not to hide the light of the Gospel, but to put it on a lampstand so everyone can see. We will continue to share Jesus for as long as we can, with as many people as possible.

We have been distributing thousands of Gospel tracts, and most people are more receptive to the claims of Christ than before. Their confidence in this world and in the Communist Party has been deeply shaken by the pandemic and the economic woes that are destroying our country. I am especially burdened for the youth of China. They really need Christ, and millions have committed suicide since the pandemic started, as they lost all hope to live.



AH: China is a large country. From people you have spoken with, is the severe persecution more targeted in some areas than in others?

Brother Hui: In the past several years, the cities in our province have seen the strongest response to the Gospel, with thousands of new believers, while rural areas have experienced the most severe persecution. Things are particularly bad in the border areas of China, where most of the ethnic minority groups live.

AH: Can you share about the current need for Bibles in your churches?


Brother Hui: It seems the government is determined to completely choke off the supply of Bibles. Our main concern is for the many new converts. They must have God's Word, or they will not be grounded in the faith.

In the past, young people could access the Scriptures through apps and websites, but most have been shut down in the last few years.

Physical Bibles are becoming increasingly rare, and a famine of the Word of God is coming upon us. Thank you for all you do to provide the Word of God to us!

AH: Do you have any other special prayer requests for the Church in China that you would like to share with us?

Brother Hui: Please pray for the youth of China. Young people today are more independent than in the past. They do not have a strong family network or community to rely on and to help them deal with modern challenges of life. In the past, a son was expected to follow in his father's footsteps. If your family were farmers, you would be a farmer. If they were cooks, you would be a cook. Today, however, farmers and cooks expect their children to be bankers, lawyers, or doctors. The expectations are unrealistically high, and the pressure is overwhelming. When things go wrong, vulnerable people are prone to break.

To see the big picture of what is happening in China today, a person must understand that **this is a fierce fight for control over the Church of Jesus Christ.** Satan and the world demand we bow down to them, but the true sheep of the Lord refuse to bow to anyone but Jesus. It is the same battle the patriarchs and prophets had in the Bible, and it will continue throughout China until the glorious moment when **we will all hear a loud trumpet blast, and the rightful owner of the Church returns to rule and reign forever!** 

CHINA BIBLE FUND

FOR MORE THAN three decades, *Asia Harvest* has been providing Bibles to the house church believers in China through our China Bible Fund.

In the early years we hosted teams that hand-carried bags of Bibles across China's borders, but this later changed into secretly printing millions of Bibles directly inside the country.

Despite many extreme difficulties in recent years, we are thankful to report that the project continues! For \$3 each, the house churches we partner with are still printing full Chinese Bibles, which are provided free of charge to the multitudes of new believers who are coming to the Lord each year.

This is a wonderful opportunity for us to bless the Church in China with God's Word while the door remains open for us to do so.

If you would like to help with this great need, please fill out the yellow response form in this newsletter and send it back along with your gift.

Alternatively, one-time or monthly donations to the *China Bible Fund* can be made via our secure website:



CHINA BIBLE FUND CBF

17,563,543 CHINESE BIBLES PRINTED AND DISTRIBUTED SO FAR

We are partnering with house churches in China in a long-term project to provide Bibles for Christians. We receive countless requests for God's Word from church leaders throughout the country.

These Bibles are distributed free of charge, equipping the Body of Christ, and helping add fuel to the revival in China.

Each full Chinese Bible costs just \$3.00 to print and deliver.



THE CHILDREN'S FUND TCF

**YOUR GENEROUS SUPPORT HAS REACHED
196,772 CHILDREN THROUGHOUT ASIA SO FAR**

The Children's Fund introduces children to Jesus in India, China, Vietnam, Indonesia, and a host of other Asian countries.

Activities include printing and distributing Gospel literature designed for children, funding Sunday school training classes, providing free surgeries for those with special needs, and generally lifting children out of spiritual and physical poverty.

It costs an average of just \$10 to help reach a child for Christ.



ASIA BIBLE FUND ABF

1,599,374 BIBLES PRINTED SO FAR IN 146 LANGUAGES

The Asia Bible Fund provides the Scriptures in numerous languages in Southeast Asia, the Indian subcontinent, and anywhere in Asia that God's people need His Word.

Each Bible costs an average of \$2.70 to print and deliver. We also print millions of Gospel booklets for evangelism through this project.



A MARTYR has been defined as “a Christian who chooses to suffer death rather than deny Christ or His work. One who sacrifices something very important to further the Kingdom of God and endures great suffering for Christian witness.”

LMF

LIVING MARTYRS' FUND

BECAUSE OF YOUR PARTNERSHIP WE ARE SUPPORTING 2,096 LIVING MARTYRS

The Living Martyrs' Fund supports Christian widows and church leaders and their families throughout Asia who are unable to work because of injuries or illness caused by persecution.

They and their families face extreme poverty and hardship. Through a gift of \$25 per month you can help support one of these living martyrs.



AWF

ASIAN WORKERS' FUND

WE CURRENTLY SUPPORT 1,604 ASIAN EVANGELISTS AMONG 1,234 UNREACHED PEOPLE GROUPS

The Asian Workers' Fund supports indigenous church-planting evangelists among unreached Asian tribes and ethnic groups. These disciples have committed their whole lives to the Gospel but are hindered by lack of finances. To date, the evangelists we help have reportedly led 1,002,606 people to faith in Jesus Christ. You can help support these dedicated workers for \$25 per month each.

A prayer card and occasional updates are sent to all regular supporters of this project.



PRF

PERSECUTION & RELIEF FUND

TRANSFORMING LIVES FROM ASHES TO BEAUTY WITH GOD'S LOVE

Over the years Asia Harvest has provided assistance to the victims of natural disasters that have struck Asia. In addition to providing aid through medicine, tents, blankets, food and water, rebuilding homes etc., the Christians we partner with take every opportunity to share the Gospel, and many people have come to know Jesus Christ.

This project also provides physical and spiritual relief to Christian lepers, communities and families throughout Asia who are in desperate need.





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