

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

Asia Harvest

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NEWSLETTER #210



WANG MINGDAO

China's Son of Iron

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“A good name is better than fine perfume, and the day of death better than the day of birth.”—Ecclesiastes 7:1

Precious in the Sight of the Lord

IS THE DEATH OF HIS FAITHFUL SERVANTS—PS 116:15

***I** T IS WITH A MIXTURE of sadness and thankfulness that I inform you my beloved wife of 32 years, Joy, died and is now in the presence of the Lord Jesus.*

Joy died in April at the age of 55, after a few years of illness, which was a shock as she had always been a healthy and vibrant person.

When she was just 4 years old, Joy begged the pastor of her church to baptize her, because she wanted to show her love for Jesus. At first, people thought she was too young to properly understand what it meant, but after displaying a clear understanding of the faith, she was duly baptized into Christ.

For the rest of her life, she never wavered in her commitment to God and His kingdom.

Since we first met on the mission field in China in 1991, Joy was my best friend and a wonderful help in every step of the development of Asia Harvest. We experienced many difficult times, with attacks on us that shook her sensitive soul, but she always emerged stronger in the Lord.

One of my enduring memories of Joy will always be of her reading her little red pocket Bible at every opportunity. Providing God's

Word to believers in Asia became a passion, and she led many teams to various countries with suitcases full of precious Scriptures.

Over many years, her wisdom, discernment, and uncompromising integrity played a crucial role in the ministry, although she shunned the spotlight and was happiest when serving in low-key roles behind the scenes.

As her health deteriorated and even swallowing became difficult, her body was literally being consumed from within. After much faith-filled prayer for healing, it became clear that her time on this earth was ending. The Lord Jesus wanted her with Him.

A few weeks before the end, I asked Joy if she was afraid. "Absolutely not!" she responded immediately. Her faith was solid to the end, and she was ready to depart for glory.

My two sons and I miss her terribly, but I am determined to continue serving the Living God and the Church in Asia, for as long as the King wants me to serve Him. There is much work to do!

I rejoice when I think of the welcome Joy received in paradise, both from the Lord who said, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into your rest," and also from the many thousands of redeemed Asians who are in Heaven today because Joy Hattaway didn't waste her life, but she invested it for the kingdom of God and was a dedicated servant to the Church in Asia.

—PAUL

FRONT COVER: Wang Mingdao and Liu—reunited after many years.

BACK COVER: Tens of millions of people in China today are committed Christians because of the examples of men like Wang Mingdao.



In our recent newsletter we announced the release of Paul's new book, "Beijing: China's Seat of Power," and we shared Part 1 of the life of Wang Mingdao, who is considered "The Patriarch of China's House Churches" by millions of believers.

We concluded with the story of how Wang had made a confession during a moment of weakness, only to rip up the paper and swallow it as an act of repentance.

Wang Mingdao

CHINA'S SON OF IRON

part 2

The Lowest Point

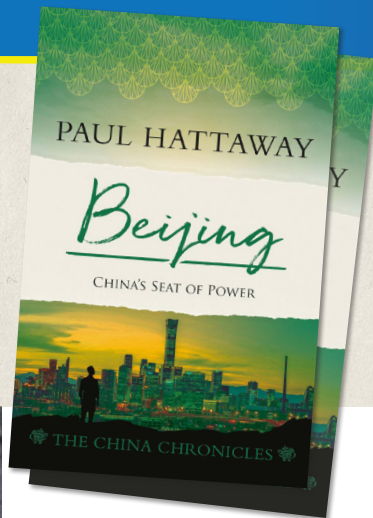
IN 1957, THE GOVERNMENT'S patience finally ran out. Wang continued to refuse to join the Communist-approved *Three-Self Church*, and both he and Jingwen were rearrested and sentenced to decades in prison.

The veteran missionary Leslie Lyall, wrote:

"Wang Mingdao was the chief thorn in the side of the Three-Self Movement because he represented all that they opposed, and he became the main target of their attacks. If they could break him, then the back of all resistance in the Chinese Church would be broken. Through Wang's notable stand, he became a symbol of courageous resistance to the Communist tyranny and its pathetic puppets."

Wang and Jingwen were placed in the men's and women's prisons respectively, and





*In this issue we share the remainder of Wang Mingdao's remarkable story. His given name, **Mingdao**, means "**The way**."*

His example of defiant faith under severe persecution became a template for millions of Chinese Christians to follow in the decades of hardship that followed.

<< To order the book, visit AsiaHarvest.org or request a complimentary copy when you donate to any of our projects

although he was given permission to write to his wife, she was not allowed to read the letters. This was not told to Wang, who continued to write to her for years.

The prisons were located near each other, and over the years, Jingwen caught glimpses of her husband from afar. He was never able to see her, however, as his eyesight and general health had deteriorated. In 1963, after six years of incarceration, Wang's health reached rock bottom. Coughing blood, he was taken to the prison infirmary, where he wished he would die.

At his lowest point, the now 63-year-old pastor was touched by God's grace. The Holy Spirit illuminated Scriptures that he had memorized, and for the first time in years, he felt hopeful again. He sensed that God had not forgotten him, and that an overarching purpose existed for the years of suffering he was enduring.

As his health improved, Wang took a pen and paper and began to write a record of his arrest and imprisonment. The process helped him realize that he was not behind bars for being a criminal, but for faithfully preaching the Gospel.

After extending Wang's sentence to life in prison, the authorities decided to move him to a labor camp. Because he refused to agree that he was a criminal, he also refused to submit to the punishment and would not perform hard labor.

Infuriated by his insolence, the government put Wang in solitary confinement for four months, and in 1968 he was transferred to a coal mine, where he spent the next five years.

During this time, rumours circulated that Wang had died in prison. He had not



died, however, although he was regularly beaten and kept in handcuffs for months at a time. He was often tortured until he fell unconscious on the floor, only to be revived with cold water and beaten again. By the early 1970s, the authorities recognized that Wang was too stubborn to change, and his handcuffs were removed.

Jingwen, meanwhile, was released from prison in 1973 and moved to Shanghai to live with her son. Wang was permitted to write to her, but they hardly knew what to say after so many years apart. Wang was certain that his life would end behind bars, and he hoped his faith would endure until the end, when he would be taken to be with Jesus Christ forever.

A New Beginning!

In January 1979, Wang's son Tianduo was instructed to collect his 79-year-old father from prison. The People's Republic had decided to show "compassion" by releasing him early from his life sentence.

Despite being toothless and nearly blind and deaf, Wang recognized his son but didn't understand why he had come. When he was told that he was free to go, Wang refused to budge and declared:

"I cannot leave here until my affairs have been properly settled. I am not a criminal and have been held for over 20 years solely because of my faith.

I require three things from the government: first, an admission that my arrest was in error; second, that my sentence was unjustified; and third, an apology for 20 years of wrongful imprisonment. Then I will leave!"

The next day, Wang was summoned to the warden's office and told he must return to Shanghai with his son. A release form announcing the commutation of his crimes was placed in front of him to sign, but he refused to sign any document that described him as a criminal.

Both the prison warden and Wang's son had run into Wang Mingdao's iron will. He would not bend. The prisoner was returned to his cell, and Tianduo felt he had no option but to return to Shanghai without his father and report the astonishing events to his mother.

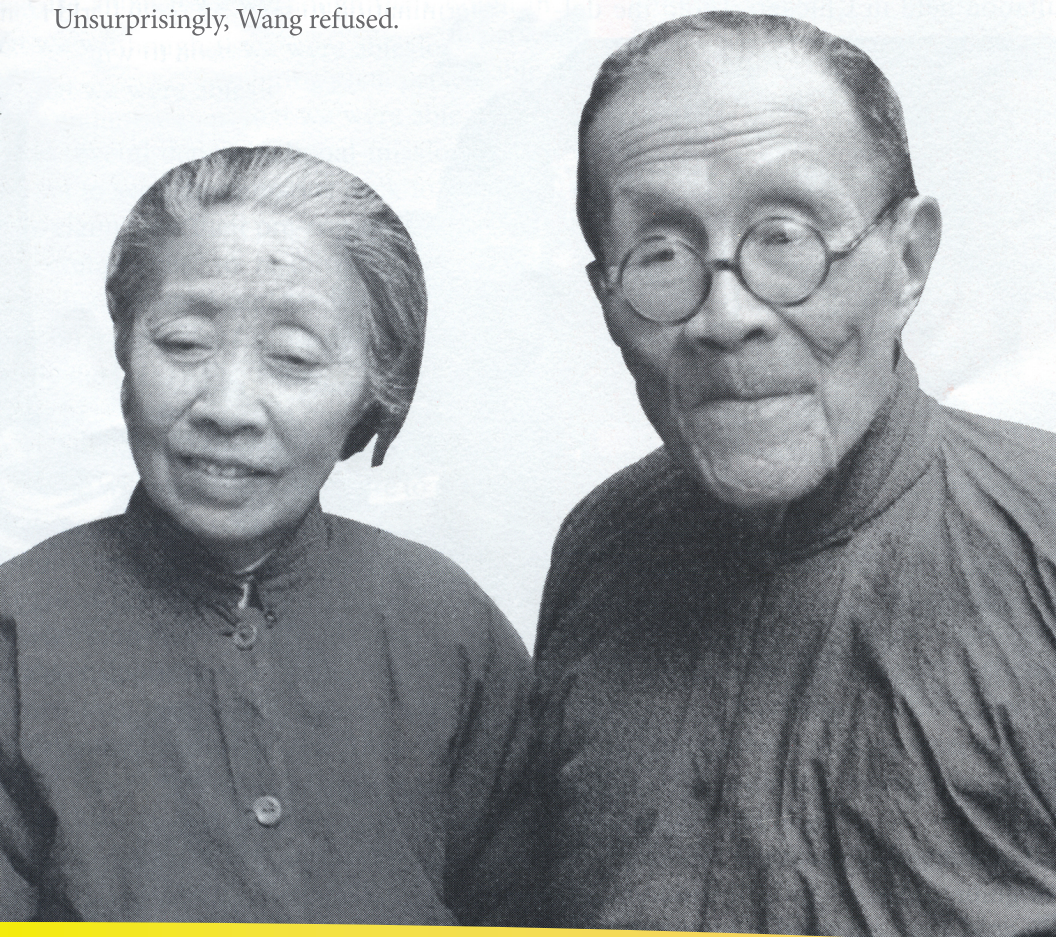
Later, the warden tricked Wang by sending him to a temporary facility that was about to be closed. An old friend collected Wang and took him to Shanghai.

Wang Mingdao was released without signing any document that described him as a criminal.

News of Wang's release soon spread throughout China and the world, and many Chinese and foreign Christians began to visit Wang and Liu in their tiny apartment. The most famous visitor was Billy Graham, who said he had traveled to China for two purposes: to see his wife's birthplace, and to visit Wang Mingdao.

The number of visitors caused embarrassment to the government, and in 1985 they demanded a list of all the visitors' names and details of their discussions.

Unsurprisingly, Wang refused.





He said if they wished to arrest and imprison him, he could not stop them, but they would still get no information from him. The authorities gave up and left him alone.

Finally, God granted Wang and Liu a period of rest, and they were able to live out their days together in Shanghai, passing on their wisdom to a new generation of believers who thirsted for godly guidance as powerful revival spread throughout China.

Legacy

Wang Mingdao died peacefully at his home in Shanghai on July 28, 1991, aged 91.

His life had spanned nine tumultuous decades of Chinese history, during which he had experienced the collapse of imperialistic rule, wars, the arrival of Communism, times of revival as the leader of Beijing's largest church, over 20 years in prison, and 35 years when his voice was silenced by the petrified government, who were never able to fathom Wang's inner strength and uncompromising faith.

Liu Jingwen followed her husband into the presence of God nine months later, in April 1992.

The might of the Chinese government had spent decades trying to break Wang Mingdao's iron spirit. He had been through many dark times when his flesh and mind were weak, but he remained unconquered.

It could be said that Wang had broken the Chinese Communist Party with his unshakable faith in God. Multitudes of Christians have since followed his example by refusing to submit to the *Three-Self Church*, and in the years since the ascent of Communist rule, the number of Christians in China has risen from less than one million to approximately 100 million today.

Today, Wang is respected by multitudes of believers as one of the greatest Chinese Christians in history. His resistance, persecution, suffering, and perseverance have come to symbolize the faith of tens of millions who now worship outside state-approved churches. 

LEFT: Wang and Liu near the end of their journey.



ASIA BIBLE FUND ABF

CURRENT TOTAL: 21,171,087 BIBLES PRINTED IN 193 LANGUAGES

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

Each Bible costs just \$3 to print and deliver. We also print millions of Gospel booklets for evangelism through this project.



ASIAN WORKERS' FUND AWF

WE CURRENTLY SUPPORT 1,633 ASIAN EVANGELISTS AMONG 1,270 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 2,045,941 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.



MINISTRY TRAINING FUND MTF

THANKS TO YOUR SUPPORT WE HAVE HELPED TRAIN AND EQUIP 95,295 ASIAN BELIEVERS TO EFFECTIVELY SERVE GOD

The Ministry Training Fund helps the Asian Church disciple and train believers to be effective ministers of the Gospel among the unreached.

Often workers live in remote places and coming together once or twice a year is the only outside fellowship and teaching they receive. We cover travel, food and other costs associated with the meetings. To train each worker costs an average of \$50.

LMF

LIVING MARTYRS' FUND

**BECAUSE OF YOUR PARTNERSHIP WE ARE
CURRENTLY SUPPORTING 1,146 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.



TCF

THE CHILDREN'S FUND

**YOUR GENEROUS SUPPORT HAS REACHED 258,577 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.



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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