



Asia Harvest

2003

NEWSLETTERS

(Combined)

Asia Harvest



Swing the Sickle for the Harvest is Ripe! (Joel 3:13)

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Every Christian in these pictures was martyred for the Gospel in China over the past century, including Liu Haitao (center), murdered for his faith in Henan, Oct. 16, 2000.

Persecution in China & The China Living Martyrs project

From the Front Lines

with Paul & Joy Hattaway

"If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first... Remember the words I spoke to you: 'No servant is greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they shall persecute you also." (John 15:18, 20)

As we have ministered in various countries over the years people often ask us, "Why are Christians persecuted in China?" There are several things to say in reply, not the least is the fact that Satan is a real enemy, and God has promised Christians that they will face persecution and death while they are in this world.

But let me start by making a statement that may shock and surprise you.... **There is absolutely NO persecution for Christian FAITH in China today.** People have the freedom to believe in God if they choose, and as long as they keep it to themselves, and confine their activities to within the four walls of a government-sanctioned 'Three Self' Church, they will not experience any persecution for their faith. The government always says people have freedom to believe in any religion in China today, and in a sense that is true.

HOWEVER, there is a tremendous level of persecution for Christian DISCIPLESHIP in China today! Millions of people have been so deeply changed by the power of Jesus that there is no way they can remain silent and keep their faith to themselves. They have drunk so deeply at the well of God's grace that they must tell others where to find water to quench their thirst, and China is a desperately thirsty land. Like Jeremiah, and like the lepers in the time of Elisha, they cannot keep this good news to themselves: *"His word is in my heart like a fire, a fire shut up in my bones; I am weary of holding it in; indeed, I cannot." (Jeremiah 20:9).* *"The men who had leprosy...said to each other, 'We're not doing right. This is a day of good news and we are keeping it to ourselves. If we wait until daylight, punishment will overtake us.'" (2 Kings 7:8-9).*

When Chinese believers refuse to sit in the church pews and keep their faith to themselves, they immediately become law-breakers and persecution begins. Millions of house church Christians in China today face daily harassment, fines, beatings, and imprisonment. The leaders are especially targeted. Yet Christians around the world need to realize that this is the path the house church believers have **CHOSEN**. Every morning when they wake up they have a question to ask themselves. Should they choose to be just a believer today, or should they be a disciple? The option to ease back and take it easy is always there if they want. They will not face opposition from the authorities and they will be left alone to worship God in peace if they register with the government. But every day millions of men and women, boys and girls wake up and decide they want to be a disciple of Jesus, and to obey His commands regardless of the risks in-

volved or the hardships they will face. Therefore, **persecution in China is a choice**. Because so many make this choice to be Jesus' disciples, China has been experiencing a tremendous revival for about 30 years.

Despite some misleading information coming from some organizations in America, house church believers have found the past 18 months to be a particularly testing time. Many have said the present persecution is the worst for 20 years. More than 1,000 house church pastors are in prison as you read this, and are suffering torture and humiliations at the hands of wicked men. The Chinese government continues to see genuine Christianity as a threat to their existence, this despite the fact that Christians are the best law-abiding and most hard working citizens in the country, and wherever there is a significant concentration of Christians the crime rate is the lowest.

There is an interesting story from the ancient Chinese book entitled *Han Feizi*, which tells the story of a man named Bian He who lived about 500 years before Christ....

Bian He found a large stone which was actually an unpolished piece of jade. He presented it to the emperor. The emperor saw nothing but a large stone, thought he was being tricked, and ordered Bian He's left foot to be chopped off. Bian He later sent the same present to the next emperor, who also saw only a stone and ordered his right foot to be chopped off. When a third emperor came to the throne, Bian He held his jade in his arms outside the emperor's palace and wept three days and three nights. The emperor sent someone to investigate, then ordered the stone to be polished. Only then did they discover a beautiful jade inside it.

One day China (and many other nations) will see that the Christians they torture, believing them to be ignorant lumps of worthless stone, were actually the polished jewels sent by God to bring salvation to their communities.

In Western nations we Christians often love to quote God's promises to us. Several years ago someone gave us a 'Bible Promise Handbook' listing hundreds of 'positive' promises from God's Word to do with health, peace, joy and prosperity for the believer. In China the persecuted believers also lay hold of God's promises from His Word, but the verses they quote are often ones we avoid at all costs in the West, such as, ***"I am sending you out like sheep among wolves."*** (Matthew 10:16), ***"Everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted."*** (2 Timothy 3:12), ***"Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because he who has suffered in his body is done with sin."*** (1 Peter 4:1), and ***"I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death."*** (Philippians 3:10)

Fifty years of hardship and suffering for the sake of Gospel has prepared the Chinese church to be the refined (yet far from perfect) vessel that it is today, with millions of believers willing to lay down their lives for Jesus, and thousands of people being won into the Kingdom of God every single day.

You could imagine how strange it is to Chinese house church leaders when foreign believers try to teach them that God only intends good and comfortable lives for His children! This does not match either the Scriptures or their own daily experiences. It is extremely dangerous when believers have such a one-sided view of God's promises. The result is immature, weak Christians who easily fall prey to Satan. Jesus taught about such a shallow follower. ***"But since he has no root, he lasts only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the Word, he quickly falls away."*** (Matthew 13:21). Many teachers in the West have removed the teaching of the believers' cross from the Bible, but the Word of God has not changed and those who follow Jesus Christ will surely come across hardship, suffering and trials before too long. In the West our faith may be tested in a different way than in China, but it will be tested.

What then is the attitude of China's Christians towards suffering? They have learned that suffering and persecution is not merely something to be endured, but **it is PART OF THE GOOD NEWS**. Through many difficult experiences they have learned to embrace suffering as a friend. With such an attitude it is no wonder the Church in China has grown despite half a century of strong opposition and brutal suppression from the government. We have had the privilege to know some of the outstanding leaders of the house churches in China but NOT ONE has ever asked for prayer that the persecution of Christians would stop. The Chinese believers NEVER pray against their government or against the nation's leaders, but rather they pray God would be glorified and they would be found faithful to the Lord in whatever circumstances they find themselves; whether in prison or free, beaten or safe; fleeing from the authorities, or resting at home.

In this newsletter we are doing something a little different than usual. We are focusing on a theme that we believe may be beneficial for your spiritual walk while at the same time educating and informing about the Kingdom of God in Asia. To do so we will be using several excerpts from a new book, a biography of Chinese house church leader Brother Yun, who has been given the nickname 'The heavenly man' by Christians inside China.

Finally, in this newsletter we will introduce our 'China Living Martyrs' project. Even though it has been in operation for approximately 18 months this will be the first time we have taken the opportunity to actually explain how this project came about, how it operates, and what it achieves. God bless you!

We apologize that due to an extremely hectic schedule over the last several months, we have been unable to produce a newsletter since October. This was the first time we have failed to send a newsletter before Christmas, so we want to now take the opportunity to thank you for your prayers, encouragement and support throughout 2002. We hope you and your families experienced a restful and Christ-centered Christmas and New Year period, and we pray for the Lord's touch to be on your lives in a fresh way during 2003.



THE HEAVENLY MAN

the remarkable true
story of Chinese
Christian Brother Yun

WITH PAUL HATTAWAY

Excerpts from

The Heavenly Man - The Remarkable True Story of Chinese Christian Brother Yun

Brother Yun is known throughout China as “the Heavenly Man.” This nickname stemmed from an incident in 1984 when he refused to tell his real name to the authorities. Divulging his true identity would have endangered local Christians. In reply to the threats and beatings of the Public Security Bureau to reveal his name and home address, Yun shouted, “I am a heavenly man! My home is in heaven!” The local believers, who were still gathered in a nearby house, heard his shouting and knew he was warning them of danger. They all fled and avoided arrest. As a mark of respect for his courage and love for the Body of Christ, house church believers in China have called Yun “the Heavenly Man” to this day. The following are excerpts from his recently-released book. In these excerpts he talks about suffering. Yun is well qualified to speak on this subject, having been arrested more than 30 times in China for his faith, beaten and tortured on numerous occasions, and having served four lengthy prison sentences because of his love for the Lord Jesus. His understanding of why Christians suffer for the Gospel may surprise and bless you.

There are many ways the Lord may lead a Christian during his or her life, but I’m convinced that the path of every believer will sooner or later include suffering. The Lord gives us these trials to keep us humble and dependant on Him for our sustenance.

The Bible says in 1 Peter 4:1, *“Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because he who has suffered in his body is done away with sin.”* I believe when suffering and pain increases, sinning decreases. I’ve certainly not yet reached the point of being ‘done away with sin.’ I still complain to the Lord when I suffer.

How we mature as a Christian largely depends on the attitude we have when we’re faced with suffering.

Some try to avoid it or imagine it doesn’t exist, but that will only make the situation worse. Others try to endure it grimly, hoping for relief. This is better, but falls short of the full victory God wants to give each of His children.

The Lord wants us to embrace suffering as a friend. We need a deep realization that when we’re persecuted for Jesus’ sake it is an act of God’s blessing to us. This might sound impossible, but it is attainable with God’s help. That is why Jesus said, *“Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven.”* Matthew 5:11-12

We can grow to such a place in Christ where we laugh and rejoice when people slander us, because we know we are not of this world, but our security is in heaven. The more we are persecuted for His sake, the more reward we will receive in heaven.

After my arrest in 1997, I was taken to a court hearing where the judge said, "Yun, I'm sick of you. For many years you've opposed our government and turned our society upside down. You've escaped from custody on numerous occasions. Tell me Yun, if you have the opportunity to escape again, will you take it?"

I thought about it and answered truthfully, "Judge, that is a good question. I don't want to lie to you. If I have an opportunity, I will try to escape. I'm called to preach the Good News all over China, and I must do all I can to obey the call God has placed on my life."

The judge, court officials and guards were all furious at my answer. The judge snarled, "How dare you, you delinquent! I'm going to break your legs permanently so you will never escape again!"

I was taken to an interrogation room where several guards forced me to the floor and made me sit with my legs apart. I begged them not to beat me, but one sinister-looking man hardened his heart and pulled out his baton. To ensure I would never be able to escape, he struck my legs between my knees and feet repeatedly. They destroyed my legs until I could stand the pain no more. I lay on the ground

screaming like a wounded animal. Excruciating pain surged through my body and mind. All I could do was try to focus my thoughts on the Lord Jesus and His suffering on the Cross.

I thought I was surely going to die but the Lord sustained me because he was not finished with me. My legs below my knees turned completely black and there was no feeling in them at all. My entire body ached and was bruised from head to toe.

When my torturers carried me back to my cell, however, I wanted to defiantly show them that they could never break my spirit, so I laughed and told them, "I want to thank you for the wonderful massage you gave me today. I feel much better. Thank you!"

Sometimes Western visitors come to China and ask the house church leaders what seminary they attended. We reply, jokingly yet with underlying seriousness, that we have been trained in the Holy Spirit Personal Devotion Bible School (prison) for many years. Sometimes our Western friends don't understand what we mean. They ask, "What materials do you use in this school?" We reply "Our only materials are the foot chains that bind us, and the leather whips that bruise us."

In this prison seminary, we have learned many valuable lessons about the Lord that we could never have learned from a book. We've come to know God in a deeper way. We know His goodness and His loving faithfulness to us.

Christians who are in prison for the sake of the Lord are not the ones who are suffering. When people hear my testimony they often say, "You must have had a terrible time when you were in prison." I respond, "What are you talking about? I was with Jesus and had overwhelming joy and peace in His intimate presence."

The people who really suffer are those who never experience God's presence. The way to have God's presence is by walking through

hardship and suffering – the way of the cross. You may not be beaten or imprisoned for your faith, but I am convinced each Christian will still have a cross to bear in his or her life. In the West it may be ridicule, slander, or rejection. When you're faced with such trials, the key is not to run from them or fight them, but to embrace them as friends. When you do this you'll not fail to experience God's presence and help.

When a child of God suffers you need to understand it is only because the Lord has allowed it. He has not forgotten you! The devil cannot snatch you away! Jesus made this beautiful promise to His children, "*My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand.*" John 10:27-29

The first time I went to prison I struggled, wondering why God had allowed it. Slowly I began to understand He had a deeper purpose for me than just working for Him. He wanted to know me, and I to know Him, deeply and intimately. He knew the best way to get my attention for a while was to give me rest behind bars.

There is always a purpose why God allows His children to go to prison. Perhaps it's so they

can witness to the other prisoners, or perhaps God wants to develop deeper character in their lives.

When God first took me out of China I thought my days of persecution were over. I was wrong! Since arriving in the West the opposition has not ceased, it just became different. In the summer of 2000 I was invited to speak at a series of meetings in Canada. On the very first day of the trip a Christian journalist in California sent an email to thousands of people around the world viciously attacking me, my family, and my mandate to represent the house churches of China. The article said I was a Judas who betrays other Christian leaders in China and causes division and damage to the Body of Christ.

When I heard these words my heart was pierced with grief. Ever since the Lord revealed Himself to me in 1974 I had, by the grace of God, never betrayed any other believer in China. I'd spent many years being tortured in prison for the very reason that I refused to be a Judas to the Body of Christ.

Within 24-hours, various house church leaders sent faxes out of China, stating that these accusations were completely groundless, and confirming that I am an elder and their authorized representative.

In the days after this attack I struggled with this new form of persecution. In China I had been used to beatings, torture with electronic batons, and all kinds of humiliations.

I couldn't understand how someone who had never met me could write such a nasty article. I complained to my Christian friends, "Why don't these people call us and read the documents? I don't understand! Why don't they find the truth out for themselves? It's right here for them to see!"

My translator told me, "Brother Yun, these people don't want to know the truth. In China, Christians are persecuted with beatings and imprisonment. In the West, Christians are persecuted by the words of other Christians."

This new kind of spiritual persecution was no easier than physical persecution in China, just different. I forgave the writer of the article from the bottom of my heart and we continued our trip.

When people malign you, rejoice and be glad. When they curse you, bless them in return. When you walk through a painful experience, embrace it and you will be free! When you learn these lessons, there is nothing left that the world can do to you.

God is my witness that through all the tortures and beatings I've received I have never hated my persecutors. Never. I saw them as God's instruments of blessing and the vessels He chose to purify me and make me more like Jesus. If you embrace suffering like a gift from God, you will no longer fear what man can do to you, and the world can do nothing to a Christian who has no fear of man.

The Heavenly Man - The Remarkable True Story of Chinese Christian Brother Yun

The Heavenly Man is the intensely dramatic story of how God took a young, half-starved boy from a poor village in Henan Province and used him mightily to preach the Gospel despite horrific opposition. Brother Yun is one of China's house church leaders, a man who despite his relative youth has suffered prolonged torture and imprisonment for his faith. He has been arrested more than 30 times for his Christian testimony, and has endured four lengthy prison sentences. His account challenges any complacency about the situation in China, where brutal religious persecution is still a daily reality for millions. Instead of focusing on the many miracles and experiences of suffering, however, Yun prefers to emphasize the character and beauty of Jesus. This astonishing book will form a watershed in your spiritual life.

We at Asia Harvest could spend many more years writing newsletters about the church in China, offering glimpses of the situation and faith of the believers there, but all our efforts combined would be a pale relection of the dynamic truth and deep spiritual impact contained in this newly-released book. If you are a follower of Jesus, we are convinced this book will change your life and assist you on your spiritual journey.

Dr. Mark Stibbe, author of *Thinking Clearly about Revival*, says, "The Heavenly Man' is an inspirational and heroic story of a radical Christian in the house churches of China. This book is like reading a modern-day version of the Book of Acts. Prepare to be deeply encouraged as well as rudely awakened. An absolute must for the sleeping churches of the West."

Peter Xu Yongze, one of the most respected leaders of China's Church for more than 30 years, says, "Through nearly thirty years of testing, Brother Yun has seen the grace of the Lord overflowing as a blessing to many. He is one of God's chosen leaders to this generation, a great fighter and faithful worker. Many signs, wonders and miracles have followed his ministry, attesting that he is an apostle of the faith. I testify that every story in this book is true. I have personally witnessed many of the events described in these pages, and recommend it as a true testimony of the great things God has done in China's church."

Dr. Rob Frost, evangelist and broadcaster, says, "The story of Brother Yun's persecution and imprisonment is heart-rending. It's a profound challenge to each of us to take up the cross and follow Jesus. I found it deeply moving."

One pastor from Sweden who obtained an early copy of the book wrote to say, "The Lord has used this book to change my life and ministry. I read every word with tears in my eyes." One Christian brother in Pennsylvania sent an email in which he said, "What a tremendous encouragement! The book was startling and life-changing. I'd like to order a case of them, if possible." Another wrote, "I started reading it just before bedtime but found I could not put it down until I finished at 5 a.m. It challenged me deeply and moved me to my knees in praise and adoration of our Lord Jesus. Glory to God!"

How to Order

If you are interested in getting a copy of "The Heavenly Man" the cost is US\$ 13 plus postage and handling (\$ 5). There are three ways to order:

1. **You can order by sending a check or money order for US\$ 18** to the Asia Harvest head office in Thailand, or the Asia Harvest United States office.
2. You can order safely and easily with a credit card over our website: **www.asiaharvest.org**
3. If you make a donation to any Asia Harvest project over the next few months, and would like a copy of the book, please ask and we will send you one for free.

Many people who read the book then decide to order larger quantities to bless their family, friends, or church members. Significant discounts are available for bulk orders at the rates below....

- 10 books: US\$ 9.50 each plus shipping
- 20 books: US\$ 9 each plus shipping
- 40 books: US\$ 8 each plus shipping
- 100+ books: US\$ 7 each plus shipping

Finally, we believe this book is so important for the spiritual lives of Christians everywhere that if you genuinely cannot afford to buy a copy, please write to us and we will send you a copy for free. This only applies to people on our newsletter list, and only one book per family.

The China Living Martyrs fund

“A Christian martyr is one who chooses to suffer death rather than to deny Christ, or His work.... Someone who sacrifices something very important to further the Kingdom of God.... who endures great suffering for Christian witness.” The Voice of the Martyrs

About 18 months ago we started listing a new project in our newsletters: ‘The China Living Martyrs fund.’ Because of other important needs and lack of space, we haven’t been able to give any details about this project until now.

In January 2000 we met for several days with the top leaders of six house church movements in China. During that meeting the leaders were asked, “What is your most important need and your heaviest burden? Is there any specific need we could try to help with, something that would enable you to minister more freely and effectively?”

We were somewhat surprised when they replied their deepest burden was their inability to help those pastors and evangelists in their churches who have been persecuted to the point that they are now unable to work. Many are crippled by beatings, others picked up serious illnesses because of filthy conditions in prison, some have lost their minds due to the vileness of their tor-

tures.

The house church leaders explained that they try their best to financially help these ‘living martyrs,’ but the rural believers are so poor themselves that even though they give all their worldly possessions to the work of the Lord, these injured pastors and evangelists who have given so much to the Gospel often struggle to survive.

The Chinese leaders were asked to make a list of all workers who are now unable to work for a living because of persecution. They were asked for names, ages, and a brief testimony of each worker. A few months later they gave a list of 1,050 crippled and sick workers who need support! Here are just a few examples:

‘Peter’, 38, Anhui Province.
He has five people in his family. Four months after he was released from prison his wife died of a brain tumor. He spent all his money on medical help for his wife, but in vain. Now he lives alone with his 3 children. His eldest daughter serves our Lord and the rest of the children are still in school.

Brother Liu, dead, Anhui Province.
When he spent 3 years in prison for the Gospel he was badly beaten around the head and developed a brain tumor. The prison authorities

refused to give him medical treatment. Six months after his release he was promoted to glory by the Lord. His wife and two children are in desperate financial need and are struggling to survive.

Brother 'Philip', 44, Anhui.

He spent 3 years in a prison labor-camp, during which time he was severely tortured. His right finger and thumb were broken and left foot was rendered useless until today. Now he continues to serve our Lord faithfully but his family of six has a medical debt of about 30,000 Yuan (about \$3,600) and they live in great difficulty. Any assistance would be a great balm.

Brother Wong, 50, Heilongjiang.

Spent 3 years in prison for the Lord and was released last year. During his imprisonment both his arms were broken, and he became deaf and partially deaf because of a lack of nutrition. He continues to serve our Lord in Heilongjiang Province.

After reading through more than 1,000 such testimonies our eyes were filled with tears and we were deeply burdened to try to help with this important need. Even though this is the first time we have given details of this project in our newsletter, several organizations and many individuals have already started supporting the project! However, there are still more

than 400 pastors and evangelists not receiving any support at all. We committed to give US\$25 per worker per month. This may not seem like a great amount, but it is a tremendous help for a rural pastor with no income at all. Many of these men have wives and children to provide for.

If you would like to help this project, please fill out the yellow Response form inside this newsletter. In return, we will send you a receipt and a prayer card with some details of the worker you are helping and a brief testimony. If you prefer, you can make monthly credit card donations to this or any of our other projects over our website.

Because of the risk of further harm to these precious Christians, we do not send any specific information that could get them into trouble, or any pictures. The recipients themselves do not know where the money comes from. We give anonymously through the church leaders, who are then responsible to distribute the support among their workers. They are simply told the help comes from "God and His people."

The house church leaders have expressed what a tremendous help this project has been. Not only does it bless the injured pastors and their families, but it also frees up what little finances the churches have to use for evangelism and other needs.

Asia Harvest



Swing the Sickle for the Harvest is Ripe! (Joel 3:13)

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Heilongjiang -

The Ice is Beginning to Thaw!

From the Front Lines

with Paul & Joy Hattaway

In this issue of the Asia Harvest newsletter we examine the state of the Church in Heilongjiang Province, in the extreme northeast of China, bordering Russian Siberia. The name 'Heilongjiang' is made up of three Chinese words: Hei (Black) Long (Dragon) and Jiang (River). In the past the province was combined with today's Liaoning and Jilin provinces to form Manchuria, which was occupied by the Japanese before and during the Second World War.

With a population today of 45 million people, it is not one of China's largest provinces, and remains one of the least known parts of the country. The first time I went to Heilongjiang it was mid-winter, and the temperature was minus 26 degrees Celcius. Coming from tropical Thailand, that was a shock to the system!

Despite the freezing temperatures, God has started doing a great work in this corner of China! The icy hearts of people have begun to melt as the love of God works its way through the province in tremendous revival power. Startling church growth has been experienced. It is also extremely pleasing to discover that after the Heilongjiang Church experienced revival, they took God's Word to other parts of China. Just one city in Heilongjiang, the city of Daqing, has become an "engine room for revival." The house churches there have sent many teams of evangelists into neighboring Inner Mongolia and other provinces, meeting with tremendous success wherever they have gone.

The believers we have met in Heilongjiang seem to be very fervent for the Lord. This is not an emotional or "hyped-up" fervency, but one that naturally results from their being deeply touched and inwardly changed by Jesus. We have recorded dozens of testimonies from the house churches in Heilongjiang, only a few of which we will be able to include in our newsletters because of lack of space. We'd like to share a brief one here, told to us by a house church leader in Harbin City a few years ago:

When our workers go out to preach the Gospel they have no money and have to ask God to provide their daily bread, often quite literally. But these workers have hearts of fire for the Lord, and a deep passion for the salvation of all who don't know Jesus Christ.

On one occasion during the winter of 1987, in Yabuli in southern Heilongjiang, two sisters knelt down in the snow and prayed so intensely that the heat from their bodies melted the snow around them. Hours passed by as they continued to cry out to the Lord for the salvation of the people in that region.

After one such earnest time of intercession for the churches, both of these sisters found that their knees had frozen and they were unable to walk. Their prayer burden had been so great that they didn't notice the pain in their legs and knees as they prayed.

It took some months for the two sisters to recover the use of their knees again, but they were completely healed.

The majority of this newsletter consists of an interview with Sister Mei, who has worked as an evangelist in Heilongjiang for many years, and has been an eyewitness to the revival that is still under way there.

We once again ask you to pray for the Church in China, not only for revival to continue to all parts of their country, but that the Chinese Church will fulfill their vision to take the Gospel outside their borders into the unreached Muslim, Buddhist and Hindu nations.

We at Asia Harvest have been helping the Chinese house churches in Heilongjiang for several years through projects such as Bible printing, Asian Worker's Fund, and the China Living Martyrs Fund.

We realize that without the prayers, encouragement and support of caring Christians our efforts would be in vain. We don't get many opportunities to speak in churches outside Asia very much, as we believe God wants us to focus on ministering here in Asia and He will provide whatever we need to do His will. Therefore our newsletters are the main way we communicate our vision to Christians around the world, and so we greatly appreciate you taking the time to read them. We thank God for your partnership. **"The share of the man who stayed with the supplies is to be the same as that of him who went down to the battle. All will share alike."** (1 Samuel 30:24)



A man stokes a fire to keep the congregation warm during a winter church meeting in Heilongjiang.

Cover photo: Every winter in Harbin, the capital of China's Heilongjiang Province, hundreds of thousands of tourists flock to see the remarkable 'Ice Festival' where a whole theme park is built out of ice. The building you see in this picture is carved out of massive blocks of ice. This photo is courtesy of the International Mission Board. The IMB kindly also allowed the use of the picture of the house church meeting on this page, and the one on p.9.



Heilongjiang - a Hub of Revival

Heilongjiang ("Black Dragon River") Province is located in the extreme northeast of China. Home to more than 45 million people, Heilongjiang borders Siberia and is China's coldest Province, with temperatures plummeting to minus 30 degrees in the winter.

Despite the cold, in recent years the Holy Spirit has burned in the hearts of many people in Heilongjiang, bringing a powerful revival among the house churches.

In this issue we interview Sister Mei, who works with a network of more than 5,000 house churches in northeast China. She outlines how the church in Heilongjiang has grown, its future vision, and the challenges facing the church because of the rapid growth.

Sister Mei, please tell us a little about the background of Christianity in Heilongjiang.

The first Protestant missionaries arrived in Heilongjiang in the late 1800s, but while they

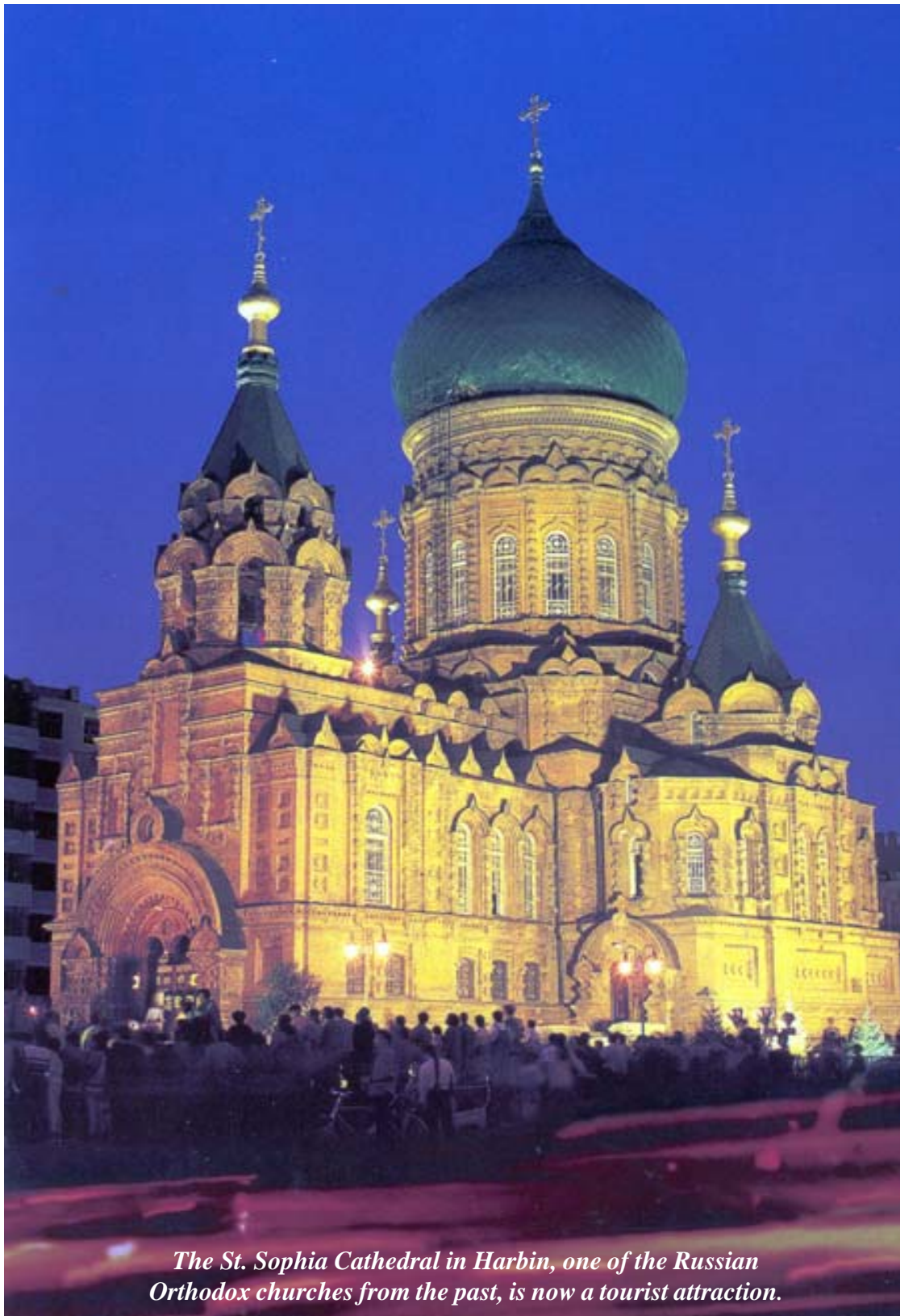
faithfully sowed God's Word, they saw little fruit in their lifetime. The church continued to grow slowly until 1949.

Because of the large number of Russian refugees who lived in Heilongjiang at the time, many Orthodox churches were built, most of which still stand today.

Despite this Christian history, until ten or twelve years ago most people in Heilongjiang had little exposure to the Gospel and the church was quite weak. But in a short time, the Lord has done great things!

What was your personal involvement in the work in Heilongjiang Province?

In the early 1990s there was serious persecution against my family and the police were hunting for me. I was advised to leave our province for a time until the heat had subsided. I moved to Daqing City in Heilongjiang. This was a time of many tears for me, because I had to leave our young daughter with a friend. I cried many tears on the train. People asked what the problem was, and I told them I had left my daughter but I was praying to God to comfort me.



The St. Sophia Cathedral in Harbin, one of the Russian Orthodox churches from the past, is now a tourist attraction.

The Lord gave me this verse from Psalm 10:14: *“But you, O God, do see trouble and grief; you consider it and take it in hand. The victim commits himself to you; you are the helper of the fatherless.”* This verse gave me great peace that God would take care of my daughter until I saw her again.

You have been working in Daqing now for a number of years. How is the church there?

Daqing has a population of 1.6 million people. In the early 1990s there were very few believers in the city. In fact, our church in 1990 contained just 80 people. We started to train 30 young people to serve the Lord. In 1991 we had already grown to 200 people, but what God was about to do in Daqing was only just beginning!

Our brothers and sisters had such a great joy of the Lord in their lives, and they witnessed everywhere they went. Some of them worked in a local factory. It was a very demanding and tiring job, but whenever the workers had their short 15-minute break the believers would spend it worshipping the Lord together in song and dance. The other factory workers were amazed at the joy and strength they had and many were attracted to the Gospel because of their witness.

Today there are more than 2,500 house churches and at least 200,000 believers in Daqing city! The Lord has been good to us.

God has used Daqing as a huge springboard for the Gospel to many places in the northeast of China. Hundreds of churches have been planted in Jilin, Liaoning, Inner Mongolia and other parts of China as a result of outreach from the believers in Daqing.

It seems miracles are regular occurrences in the ministry of the house churches in Heilongjiang. Can you tell us one or two tes-

timonies of when the Lord moved in miraculous power?

I can tell you one that comes to mind. During one meeting in Daqing we had just finished praying and we all felt the strong presence of the Lord in that place. There was a woman present whose stomach protruded with a large tumor. It hung down so far that she had to have a truss fitted to hold it in place. It was the first time this woman had been able to attend our meeting. The preacher told us that if we were able to believe the Lord, nothing would be impossible. This woman believed in Jesus and immediately the tumor simply disappeared and her stomach reduced to normal size while we watched! She threw the truss away because she had no more need for it!

You need to understand that even though the Lord performs miracles in our midst we do not seek miracles or glorify the experiences. We have learned to be careful to give all glory to God. The Bible says we are not to follow miracles, but that signs and wonders will follow us when we go out and preach the Gospel. This should be a natural occurrence when a Christian preaches the Good News, according to the Scriptures.

If you don't see any miracles the question should be asked, how much preaching of the Gospel do you do? I don't mean preaching and teaching inside church meetings, I mean proclaiming the Good News to sinners who have never believed in Jesus. When this happens we have seen the Holy Spirit never fails to confirm His Word with signs and wonders, because the miracles testify to the truth of Jesus Christ and glorify God the Father. Miracles take place when the Kingdom of Light clashes head on with the Kingdom of darkness.

God never intended miracles to be for Christians to enjoy inside their church buildings. They are not for Christians' entertainment and pleasure! Miracles are to help release bound and oppressed people, and to point sinners towards the Cross and the victory Jesus won for all those who will believe in Him.

Can you tell us about your training and discipleship methods?

For about three years the house churches were busy developing disciples in Daqing. Our idea was that we should train first-generation Christians to reach second-generation people, with the hope that the third-generation would be strong and ready to take the Gospel all over China. But even the brand new believers were going out for the Lord and seeing great miracles happen in their ministries!

In 1995-96 we launched what later came

to be called the 'Gospel Month.' During the time between Christmas and the Chinese Lunar New Year, a special emphasis is placed on evangelism. Every believer is encouraged and trained to win at least three of their relatives and friends to the Lord; while every leader is required to win a minimum of five people to the Lord during that time. This plan was not only implemented by our group in northeast China, but by all 20 regions across China that are part of our church network. Of course many zealous believers led far more than just three people to faith in the Lord.

Everyone got involved! Young and old were out sharing the Gospel; old ladies, young students, farmers, factory workers – all were busy winning souls during that time.

There is one particularly marvelous testimony from this time that I would like to share with you. There were three 80-year-old sisters who lived in one large apartment



complex in the city. They took the responsibility to preach the Gospel to the whole building. In the complex were six different stairwells; each containing six floors. They therefore set out to evangelize the people on all 36 floors of the building! They prayed as they went and shared the Gospel with the occupants of every single apartment in the building. Many people refused to believe and told the old sisters to go away, but there were others who believed.

One evening they arrived at the lower levels of the building, where all the retired people lived. These apartments were full of 70 and 80-year-olds. One of the old sisters slipped, fell down the stairs and completely twisted her ankle. She was screaming and in incredible pain. Her foot was sticking out of her leg at the wrong angle. One of the other old ladies had strong faith. She said, "If we pray, God will take care of this!" The three ladies prayed to the Lord and said, "In the Name of Jesus, turn around!" Her foot immediately turned straight! The old sisters continued on their way and the one who had been injured felt no more pain at all! This was the kind of miracle that occurred all over the place.

During that first 'Gospel month' only about 1,300 people came to the Lord in our city. We were a little disappointed with the results because in other places many more people came to Jesus.

In Qing'an County there were 12 particular meeting places that participated in the 'Gospel Month' in 1995. They took the Gospel to the 18 different districts within Qing'an County. The workers packed their bags with whatever they could easily carry and spread out all over the county. They were willing to do whatever they needed in order to share the Gospel – even if that meant they would

go hungry and have to sleep outside in the snow. During that month, in the one county alone, they started 236 churches!

The following year these new believers took their turn to share the Gospel. The whole of Qing'an was saturated with "Jesus fever." During the Gospel Month of 1996 the house churches in each of the 18 districts of Qing'an formed into two teams for each district – therefore 36 evangelism teams were created. Because everyone in Qing'an had already heard the Gospel, they looked for further fields to evangelize.

Two teams traveled on the train to Inner Mongolia. In the years since then, the work in Inner Mongolia has grown tremendously. One of the leaders was hung upside down from a tree and beaten to death by the Public Security Bureau a few years ago, but all this did was make the Christians bolder and more willing to serve God with all their hearts. In fact I would say that in all of China the revival fire of God is burning more hotly in Inner Mongolia at the moment than anywhere else. This is especially true in eastern Inner Mongolia, while central and western part of that vast region are still yet to experience the salvation power of God to a similar extent.

Other teams went to other counties in Heilongjiang who had not yet received such a witness of the Gospel. Other teams went to the northern part of Jilin Province, and many other such places.

The Lord was truly with us and confirmed his Word with countless signs and wonders. Today there are more than 800 different house churches that have been planted because of the brothers and sisters from Qing'an.

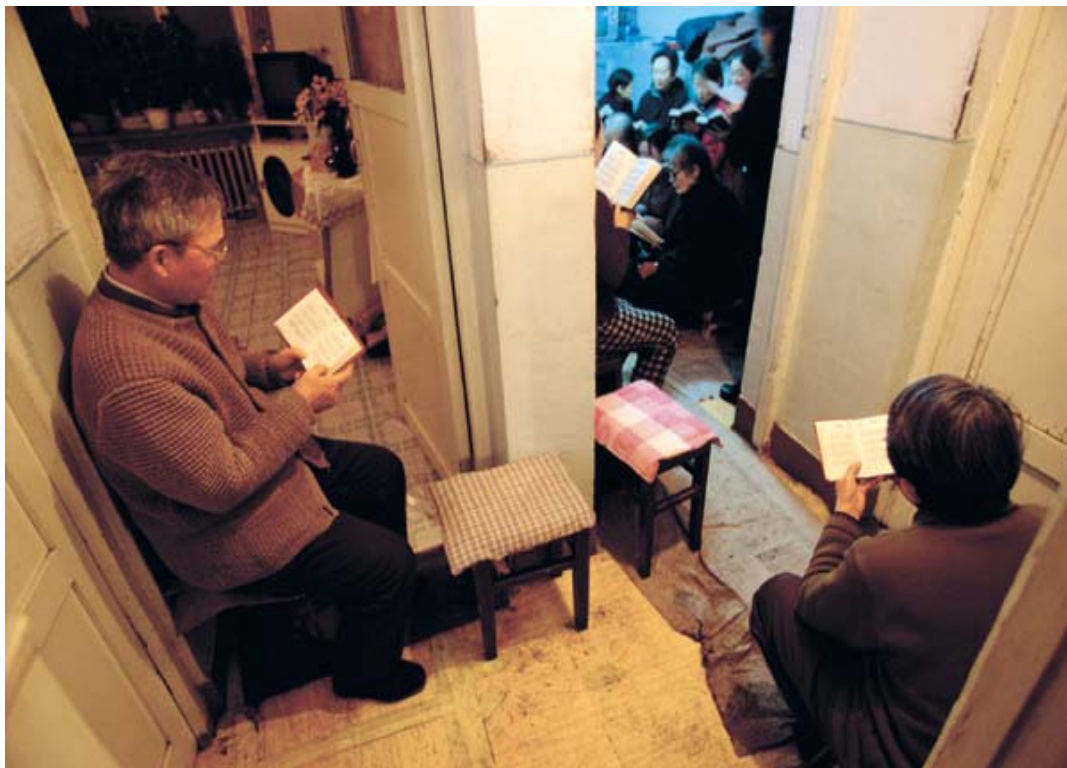
Is the Gospel evenly spread throughout Heilongjiang or are some areas much stronger than others?

The fastest growth has happened in Daqing. The earliest work occurred in places like Qiqihar and Jiamusi. In those places where the work started earliest the church is the most conservative and quiet today. The believers are overly cautious and not very aggressive in spreading the Gospel.

Our work is concentrated in western

Sometimes when many people get converted quickly, their spiritual foundation is shallow and they never mature into being fully committed disciples of Jesus. Especially in the revival of 1992-93, many people had only a surface understanding of the Gospel. Their knowledge of truth and of God's power to help them live holy and victorious lives was minimal.

One of the problems we have is that there are some strong Christian areas in



Heilongjiang. The work has spread with great sacrifice. Some evangelists have walked 20 miles through the snow in minus 30-degree winter weather just to attend meetings in places like Jiamusi near the Russian border.

What are the major problems and challenges facing the house churches in Heilongjiang?

Heilongjiang while believers in other areas seem to be bound with legalism and conservatism. It has been difficult trying to get these legalistic believers mobilized to go and reach those unreached places with the Gospel. They seem to be bound with immobilizing conservatism, more interested in obeying rules than in rescuing drowning souls.

Have the house churches in Heilongjiang encountered much persecution from the authorities?

No! There have been isolated incidents of persecution, but overall believers have faced nothing of the kind of attacks that occur in provinces like Henan, Anhui and Zhejiang further south, where house church believers are customarily beaten, fined, imprisoned, tortured, and even killed.

Why do you think this is?

We are not sure why, but we just accept it as a blessing from the Lord. The whole north-east area seems to encounter little persecution compared to other parts of China.

The Daqing Christians are very bold. So bold that on some occasions the authorities have changed their mind about persecuting us! Once, in a big worship meeting in Daqing that was attended by more than 2,000 people, the police suddenly showed up with the intention of arresting me and the other leaders. The police said, "What do you think you are doing?" We boldly replied, "What are we doing? Look at all these people. Crippled people came to the meeting but now they are walking and jumping; God has healed them! Sowhy are you criticizing us? What's your problem?"

They didn't know what to say or do, so they just left us alone!

Some Christians think the church only grows during times of persecution, but here the church seems to have grown without the pressure of persecution. What do you think?

It doesn't matter if there is persecution or not. What matters is that the Spirit of God is truly moving, that He is doing His work.

Everything is the work of the Everything

is the work of the Holy Spirit. The revival in Heilongjiang has been a fresh wave of God moving among people who had previously never had the chance to hear the Gospel. God has moved new believers so that they immediately share their faith with unbelievers. In this way the revival has burned rapidly.

How many Christians are there in Heilongjiang today?

In the past few years some brothers have conducted thorough research to ascertain the extent of the Church in Heilongjiang. They have traveled to every city and county in the province, and various house church networks have shared their figures so that we can get a good overall picture. Between all the different house church networks we count a minimum of 1.6 million and a maximum of 2.5 million house church believers in Heilongjiang.

The churches are growing so fast that these numbers are sure to change quickly. Just ten years ago there were no more than a few hundred thousand house church Christians in the whole province. In addition, the government-approved Three-Self Movement claims to have 600,000 members in Heilongjiang. Including a small number of Catholics etc., that would mean a total of approximately 2.5 to 3 million people who profess Christ.

However, when you consider there are more than 45 million people in Heilongjiang, you can see we have a lot more work to do! Instead of overly rejoicing for the three million Christians, we prefer to focus on reaching out to the 42 million inhabitants of Heilongjiang who are going to hell.



What prayer requests do the Heilongjiang house churches have? How would you like Christians around the world to pray for you?

1. Pray God's work will continue to be pure and strong among us. In all areas pray God's Spirit would continue to operate in our hearts and worldly temptations would not distract us.
2. Pray the Christians in Heilongjiang would understand the teaching of the Word of God more deeply. Pray we would have true unity between us. Pray our evangelists and coworkers would be strong in the truth, so that God's glory would be among us as we walk in the truth of Jesus' life and way.
3. Pray the pastors and shepherds will have the love and knowledge of God deep within them, otherwise what will they have to feed the sheep? Pray the fire and passion of God will continue to be stirred up within us, with love and desire and passion for Him.

Our leaders have not had a problem with mishandling finances or sexual immorality or such sins, but we have grown so quickly that I am afraid those who have not allowed the Word of God to take deep root in their hearts will be vulnerable to such temptations in the future.

Finally, we want the whole world to understand that the revival in Heilongjiang has been the work of Almighty God, NOT the work of people. Heilongjiang means 'Black Dragon River,' but the dragon is being defeated and the light of Jesus Christ is shining like a beacon all over the province! Praise the Lord!

In the next issue of Asia Harvest we will complete our look at the house churches of Heilongjiang, with interviews and testimonies from other house church leaders.



From our Mailbox

Dear Asia Harvest,

We are sending you this little gift instead of paying for my wife's parents' gravestone to be preserved for another ten years. We thought, as they are in heaven, they would rather it went to the "living martyrs" in China. Sincerely in Jesus,

Tony S., Ireland

Thanks for sending me recent copies of Asia Harvest. The information in them is very interesting and challenging. Since 1999 I have been praying specifically for China. Someone gave me a large map of China which I've put right beside my bed, so now I'm praying daily for the 31 provinces of China. Be assured that I, a brother in Christ and an intercessor, am lifting up the work of Asia Harvest each day before the throne of God.

Eferemo R., Fiji

Are you people insane? Why should Tibetan Buddhists want or need to be converted to some decadent western religion that lost all truth and meaning centuries ago when the bible was rewritten and lost the truth? Christianity is dead. Please leave the world alone and stop messing up peoples' lives. Perhaps you could go do some proselytizing in the USA where you may be needed.

June Seow, received by email

Let me just take a minute and tell you about how much we appreciate being part of the Asia Harvest team. You and your organization have blessed us greatly by serving the body of Christ in the core functions of evangelism, compassion and stewardship. Your publications are both convicting and inspiring. We are humbled and challenged by our brother's and sisters in China and you are the means by which we are connected. This summer we had the privilege to host a Chinese exchange student for a home stay program. These students are in desperate need of the gospel. It was exciting as our boys could really "relate" due to the fact that they understand both some of the obvious and subtle things regarding China from your newsletters. Thanks again for being a laborer in the harvest.

Rick R., Oregon, USA

Asia Harvest News and Updates

You may remember last year 34 leaders of the China Gospel Fellowship were kidnapped by members of a cult called the Eastern Lightning. We sent out urgent prayer requests and wrote an 18 page article on the devious teachings and wicked practices of the Eastern Lightning. Looking back, we have to say the fact that all of the leaders were safely released by the cult was nothing short of a great miracle. God certainly answered the prayers of millions of Christians around the world, and at the same time many were warned about the dangers of this cult and how to avoid it. At the request of house church leaders we launched a fund to raise prayer and finances for a book one Chinese Christian had already written before this kidnapping, to help believers in China avoid the Eastern Lightning. Since that time Asia Harvest has received enough finances to print 31,124 books. Other ministries have joined us in this project so that the number of books in the hands of the Chinese believers is many thousands more than just what was given through Asia Harvest. This is an on-going need so if you would like to give to this project, it would be much appreciated. It is one of the projects listed on the yellow Response form in this newsletter.

Many people have asked us how the house church leaders are now, after their kidnapping ordeal. The latest news we have received is that one lady who was kidnapped has converted to the cult, and has even moved away to join them. This lady was not one of the church leaders, but a normal believer who happened to be visiting one of the meetings where the kidnapping took place. Please pray for her. After their release the other leaders all returned to their home churches and in a very short time reported they had recovered and were continuing their ministries. This was good news but as most of them were kidnapped, brainwashed, drugged and indoctrinated day and night for one to two months duration, we had the feeling that it might take some time for the evil fruit of these attacks to work its way out of their system, after the initial euphoria of their release wore off. This has proved to be the case, and recently many of the leaders have found themselves struggling emotionally, spiritually and mentally from the filthy attacks of last year. These leaders are all fully committed to Jesus Christ and trusting Him to heal them and help them fully recover in every area. Please lift them up in prayer.

You may have noticed that some of the donation amounts for Asia Harvest projects have increased slightly. This is due to increased costs. For example, the cost for each Project Smile gift has been increased to \$60, after being at \$50 for more than three years, while the cost of our China Bible fund has also increased from \$ 2.00 to \$ 2.25 per Bible. This price includes both the printing and distribution costs, and we don't envisage needing to increase this project for years to come.

Asia Harvest



Swing the Sickle for the Harvest is Ripe! (Joel 3:13)

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Heilongjiang -

Revival in Northeast China (PART TWO)

From the Front Lines

with Paul & Joy Hattaway

In the past few months news of the deadly SARS virus has made headlines around the world. Many people have written to us, asking how we are doing here in Asia and whether or not it has affected our work. We are thankful for your concerns.

In response, we would like to give the perspective of the SARS virus from the Chinese house church. We have found they always have a fresh and “Kingdom view” of things. The house churches have continued to meet together, and are not bound by fear at all. After decades of living in a country where the government is out to destroy them, they have learned much about the complete sovereignty of God, as they have seen Him work through every situation that arises.

The believers say they have been asking God’s protection from SARS and praying Psalm 91:

*He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High
will rest in the shadow of the Almighty
I will say of the Lord,
“He is my refuge, and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.”*

*Surely he will save you from the fowler’s snare
and from the deadly pestilence....*

*You will not fear the terror of night,
nor the arrow that flies by day,
nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness,
nor the plague that destroys at midday...*

The Chinese Church says there are actually two epidemics raging in China today...

EPIDEMIC #1: Many Christians believe the whole SARS epidemic is a judgment from God on China. The place where the epidemic started was the city of Foshan in Guangdong Province. Foshan happens to be one of the most famous Buddhist strongholds in southern China. In fact, the name means Fo (“Buddha”) and Shan (“Mountain”). Every year hundreds of thousands of people, from inside China and from places like Taiwan and Hong Kong, travel there to worship Buddha and visit ancient temples and monasteries. Secondly, the church leaders say that the new Chinese leader, Hu Jintao, is sympathetic to Buddhism. He served as the top Communist leader in Tibet from 1988 to 1992, and soon after his rise to national leadership he used his

influence to start rebuilding ancient Buddhist sites in Anhui Province.

EPIDEMIC #2: The Chinese Church is more focused on another kind of epidemic that has been sweeping China for much longer than SARS. Several years ago the government, frustrated by their inability to stop the growth of Christianity, issued a document in which they described the problem as *jidujiao-re*, or “Christianity fever.” This second kind of epidemic has continued to spread at an alarming rate. It does not distinguish between poor and rich, rural families or urban, educated or uneducated. All people are susceptible to infection by this highly contagious fever. The more the authorities try to clamp down on it and confine those identified as the main spreaders of the fever, the more it multiplies. Scientists have said that SARS has spread through ‘super carriers’ - people so infectious that they have spread the virus to hundreds of others before they were identified. God is looking for Christians everywhere to be ‘super carriers’ of the Gospel, people who are willing to go anywhere and spread the Good News to thousands. There are plenty of Christian ‘super carriers’ in China!

Chinese church leaders report the SARS virus has made people much more open to the Gospel than ever before. Tens of thousands of people are being born-again in China every day since SARS broke out. The house churches have already produced Gospel literature to help point fearful people to the Great Physician. Please pray God would be glorified at the present time in China, and many millions will peace and salvation through Jesus Christ.

This month we conclude our look at the Church in Heilongjiang Province in northeast China, with more excerpts from interviews with Chinese house church leaders who have experienced the powerful revival in this part of China in the last ten years. We at Asia Harvest continue to act as a link between the Church in Asia and the Church around the world. For several years now we have been blessed to help fuel the revival in Heilongjiang by printing thousands of Bibles and teaching books, supporting dozens of fruitful evangelists in the area, and being involved in several other projects that have helped the Church grow there.

We are very conscious that all help we are able to give is not our own, but comes from Christians all around the world like you! It is our privilege and joy just to be able to hand it on and see the tremendous growth that results.

These days we know that most Christians have tremendous pressures on their time and finances. For this reason we are really thankful for all those who feel led by the Lord to participate in this ministry, whether it be through prayer, participation, or financial giving. We appreciate that you take the time to read these newsletters, and we hope hearing about what God is doing in China today is a blessing to you and an encouragement to believe that if God can do it in China then he can do it right in your life and your community as well!



Chinese women burning incense and praying to Buddha. It is for millions like these that house church Christians are willing to die so that they might hear the Gospel.

Heilongjiang - a Hub of Revival

PART TWO

In our April newsletter we looked at the Church in northeast China's Heilongjiang Province, home to 45 million people. Heilongjiang is the coldest part of China, but God has been warming the hearts of people there sending a revival that has swept through the house churches over the past decade, with church leaders estimating there to be between 2.5 to three million believers in the province today. In this issue of Asia Harvest we conclude our look at the church in Heilongjiang, with testimonies told to us by pastors and church leaders. We start with an interview of Sister Wei, a 55-year old woman whose remarkable testimony has been verified by many others. You may find parts of her story difficult to believe, but her testimony is just one of thousands of similar stories of how God is changing lives throughout China today.

Sister Wei, a Radically Changed Life

Before I became a Christian my husband was a factory worker and I worked for the government in the northern part of Heilongjiang. My job was to find those families who had two or more babies, and to report them to the authorities. These families were fined, and on many occasions the extra child was taken away and killed, or else the pregnant mother was forced to have an abortion. Because of my job, my hands

were covered with guilt and the blood of hundreds of murdered babies.

In the year of 1984 I was struck with numerous serious diseases, one after the other, including cancer. For almost the entire year I was confined to bed, unable to work and in great pain. The doctors could never figure out what my problems were. Throughout the year they diagnosed 22 different diseases afflicting me!

My illnesses worsened and the doctor told my family to prepare for my death. One night as I lay in my bed I had a vivid dream. In my dream I saw the cross that used to be worn by my aunt, who was a Catholic believer.

We were told she was ignorant and believed in foolish superstition, so for many years I had not thought about her again. On this night, however, remembering the cross she used to wear had a strange appeal to me in my sin-bound and sick state. I knew that there was a power in the Cross that could help me from my despair.

I realized later that there is great power in the cross of Jesus Christ – not the physical crosses worn by people around their necks, but the power of Jesus actual death on the cross and His resurrection from the dead!

That night as I lay on my deathbed I heard a voice clearly saying to me, "You will be salt to the world. You will be light to the world. You will be a witness to the Lord."

The next morning I called my Aunt and asked her about the cross. She responded, "It is only the cross of Jesus that can save you!" I cried and cried for hours as I poured out my heart and soul before the Lord and repented for all my wicked acts. Through His Name I was healed from all my sickness!

A friend took me to a house church meeting where I learned more about God's

Word and enjoyed rich fellowship with many other brothers and sisters who had been snatched from hell's doorstep like myself.

After becoming a Christian I quit my government job and took a job working in a local factory. Every night after work the Holy Spirit kept me awake and told me to read His Word. I stayed up reading God's precious Word, which was life and nourishment to my bones. The hours of darkness seemed so short as the Holy Spirit saturated me with His love, peace and knowledge.

Oh, the sweetness of Jesus Christ!

Time would pass quickly until I noticed the sun coming up for the new day. Even though I would then need to prepare for the day's work in the factory, I found I was not tired at all, even though I hadn't managed to sleep all night. The Word of God invigorated my body and spirit!

Every evening after work I led meetings in our village. My life therefore became an exciting cycle of work in the daytime, leading meetings in the evenings, and reading God's Word in the nighttime.

Every night I would try to memorize 15 chapters from the Bible.

You might find this difficult to believe, as naturally-speaking it is impossible, but before the Lord I testify that for a period of about five years I didn't sleep at all, not even once! Yet I rarely felt tired because the Lord was giving me inner peace and rest that nourished my body as well as my spirit.

During these five years God allowed me to memorize large sections of the Bible, so that I was able to preach and testify directly from God's Word. This was amazing to my relatives and neighbors because they knew that I had only received two year's formal

education. Before being touched by the Lord I could not read very well at all.

When I became a full-time evangelist I wasn't worried about being arrested. Numerous times I stood and preached the Gospel on the bus to the other passengers. The Holy Spirit always moved with great power and conviction so that many, or all, of the other passengers would break down in tears, confess their sins and commit their



lives to Jesus Christ. Sometimes the bus driver would even pull his bus off to the side of the road while I prayed with the passengers to receive the Lord.

On one occasion God moved so powerfully in people's hearts that they wanted to be baptized immediately, even the bus driver and ticket collector! There was no water at that place however, so I didn't know what to do. The passengers all took out their bottles of drinking water and offered them to me to use to baptize people!

I even visited the head Public Security office where I asked the chief of police for permission to visit the three women's prisons in the area so I could preach the Gospel. Permission was granted because I

had led the chief to faith in Christ a few months earlier.

After singing songs and preaching many of the prisoners believed upon the Lord for salvation. All I could do was pray for them and encourage them with God's Word. I wasn't allowed to interact closely with them. One day I asked the new believers to put their heads through the prison bars as far as they were able. I then poured water on their heads and baptized them! By God's grace I was able to lead 180 women prisoners to Jesus, as well as some of the prison guards!

On another occasion I felt led by the Lord to visit the three top leaders of the Religious Affairs Bureau. I rebuked them because of the persecution they were bringing to the house churches throughout the province. I told them that Saul had also been persecuting Christians in the Bible, but when Jesus stopped Saul on the Road to Damascus Jesus didn't ask him why he had been persecuting the Christians, but told Saul that he had been persecuting Him. In the same way, I showed these religious leaders that if they continued to persecute and beat the house church believers, they were actually persecuting Jesus, and He would extract vengeance in due time.

Two of the three leaders showed sorrow for their actions. The other man, however, was very stubborn and strongly opposed me and promised he would continue to persecute the house churches. A short time later that officer's son had a car accident and died. The man took it as a sign of judgement from God and repented.

During one meeting there was a 36-year old sister who could not speak. She had been deaf and dumb since birth. We prayed for her and the Lord healed her wonderfully, so that she began to talk for the first time. Once

she was healed she could suddenly read and write more than 300 words! This was truly a sign and wonder from God that many unbelievers heard about.

Another woman in my church had been insane for 27 years. She was crazy and always said dirty and disgusting things to people. I went to her and cast the demon out of her in the Name of Jesus. After praying for her something strange and unexpected happened. This woman could not speak at all for one year! Her mouth had been so dirty that perhaps the Lord decided to give it a rest! After one year the Lord fully restored her and she could talk again. This sister came to have such a humble and sweet spirit, and is now a servant of Jesus.

By God's grace in a few years He enabled me to introduce many thousands of people to the Lord. Even among the factory workers I used to work with, more than 100 came to believe in Jesus and met together for worship and Bible study in the factory.

Later on I joined up with evangelists who came from Henan Province. These precious brothers and sisters were wonderful testimonies of God's grace and held back nothing from the Lord's service. Together, the Henan and Heilongjiang believers have seen the start of a great harvest in Heilongjiang. When I was a little girl there were almost no Chinese Christians in Heilongjiang but now there are thousands and thousands of churches spread throughout every part of the province.

I believe countless millions of people here will believe in Jesus soon!

Praise be to the Lord of Lords!"

The Salvation of a Communist Party Leader

In one part of Heilongjiang province there lives a man in his fifties who was a well-known Communist Party leader. Due to his unhealthy stressful life-style, drinking and smoking, he suffered a stroke and was paralyzed.

His unloving wife, who viewed herself as a leading socialite, was embarrassed by her disabled husband and immediately divorced him. He was retired, but the local government allowed him to keep his driver and vehicle, and a personal doctor.

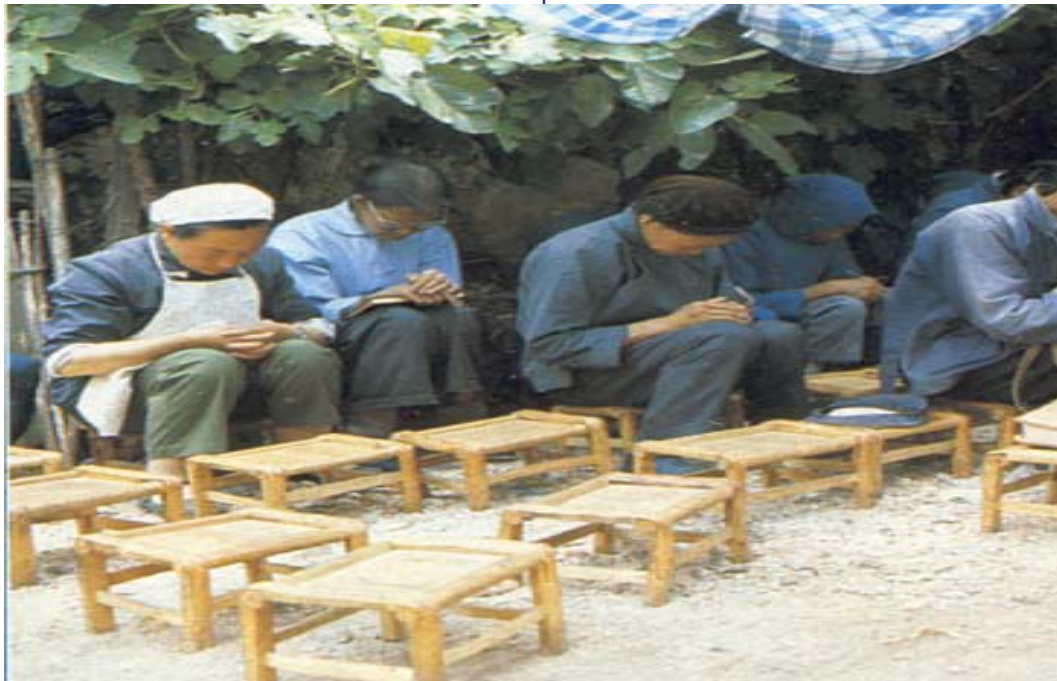
In his desperation the man told his driver, "I have heard that those illegal Christians pray and anything can happen. Please take me to them."

A few weeks later the leader was told that a group of house church believers would be meeting in a forest outside the city that

night. He told his driver to get ready and they headed up into the mountains. After about an hour they stopped alongside a forest. The driver hesitated because he thought his boss was planning to commit suicide in his desperate state.

The paralyzed man instructed his driver to pull off the road as he wanted to go into the forest. The driver had to carry him in through the trees. They walked for a few miles until suddenly through the darkness he heard noise of Christians singing and praying.

It was so dark that none of the Christians could see the men arrive in the forest clearing. The driver stood at a distant and observed, while the paralyzed leader sat on the ground. He told his driver to return to the car and wait for him. In his heart the Communist leader knew that he was a sinful man and that it had come time to confront his Maker face to face. He asked forgiveness



for his sins and humbly asked God to receive him into his family.

When one of the believers said, "Let us stand up," a great miracle took place. Immediately the Communist Party Secretary stood up without thinking about it and realized he was completely healed!

He shouted and jumped around for three hours in complete joy. Finally the driver came back to see what had happened and was amazed to see his boss was completely healed. The driver also accepted the Lord.

To this day, the former government leader continues to love and serve Jesus, and is known by his sweet and humble spirit. He is a leading testimony in the Heilongjiang churches of the change Jesus can bring into any person's life.

Blessed are the Peacemakers

One of the leaders of the house church in Yi'an County is Brother Wu.

Before he experienced salvation from the Lord, Wu was renown as a smart man who always topped his class at school, and was invariably elected as the class chairman. He had a knack of always getting involved with quarrels between people, skillfully showing them the solution to problems. He also had a reputation as the dirtiest mouth in the whole county. He could always out-argue people, using his ability with words to cover over his own sins and shame. Nobody could beat him in an argument or dispute.

Brother Wu's wife came to faith in Christ first. She lovingly shared the Gospel by word and deed with her husband, but he, being a Communist Party member at the time, strongly opposed her and beat her.

During this difficult time for Wu's wife, the church was constantly praying the Lord would make a way for her husband to be humbled and saved.

The opportunity for his involvement with house church believers came when he heard of a disagreement between two brothers. Unable to help himself, he got involved in the dispute, freely giving advice to both parties. His own worldly wisdom and pride in his own ability had become his god.

When he first went to a house church meeting, the conviction of the Holy Spirit came upon Brother Wu in a powerful manner. He clearly saw his own desperate state, and repented by humbling himself under God's mighty hand.

Over time, the Lord started to use Brother Wu's zeal to be a peacemaker in a way that brought glory to God. He mediated between believers with problems, giving sound Scriptural advice and counsel.

God also has greatly worked through Brother Wu's unique personality and gifts to help the local churches avoid the many cults that are present in the area. There are more than 100 house churches in the county who were corrected and taught how to avoid heretical extreme teaching by Brother Wu.

His salvation shocked many people in the community, as Wu was considered the least likely person to ever believe the Gospel. Because he was already well known, his ministry for the Lord came under close inspection, which landed him a time in prison where he suffered for Jesus.

Brother Wu is a living example of how God can use to renew a person who submits his or her life to Him, and still use the gifts and unique personality that God has made each one of us to be.

Miracles in Heilongjiang

Many miracles and signs and wonders have accompanied the preaching of the Gospel in Heilongjiang. Healings and deliverance of demons is quite commonplace among the ministry of the house churches.

In China the believers have a very different opinion on miracles than most Christians in the West. In China they never look for miracles, or seek after the supernatural. They simply preach the Gospel, and find that miracles and signs and wonders follow the preaching of the Word, as Jesus said would happen.

To those believers in the West who rarely see any miracles, or don't believe they are for today, the Chinese church have a simple answer: You must not be preaching the Good News to the lost! They say, "Miracles are not for inside the church, they are to serve as confirmation of the message to unbelievers who hear about Jesus. When you preach that Jesus is alive, and then the Holy Spirit proves it by doing a miracle, unbelievers will put their trust in God. If you see no miracles in your church and life, realize it is because first you must proclaim the Good News to people living in darkness, and the Lord will confirm your message with miracles. Get out of your comfortable pews and go and reach out to the lost!"

In Qing'an ('Celebrate Peace') County on one occasion in 1992 hundreds of onlookers witnessed the Lord completely heal a man who had been crippled and unable to walk for 15 years. During the same meeting several people who were possessed with evil spirits were completely set free.

When God does these powerful miracles in full public view the people are immediately attracted to the Gospel and the

message finds a receptive audience. We do not need to rely on arguing or trying to convince people of the truths of the Gospel, because they have already seen the reality of Christ's victory over demons and sickness with their own eyes.

And when people first come to Jesus because of an encounter with his power, the results are almost always long-lasting. This is why the Apostle Paul wrote, *"My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on man's wisdom, but on God's power."* (1 Corinthians 2:4)



An Entire Village Surrenders to Christ

As the revival fires of the Gospel began to sweep across Heilongjiang Province in the 1990s, in many places whole villages of people believed the Gospel and submitted their lives to Jesus Christ.

Let's hear the words of one bold evangelist as he explains how the Lord glorified Himself in one village in Lalin County (in the extreme south of the province) in 1997....

"I was sent by the Lord to Xiaoshan Village and after hearing the Gospel almost every household believed and put their trust in God. They smashed their idols and ancestral altars and became new creations in Christ. Five families refused to believe however, despite the prayers and earnest pleadings of their fellow villagers.

After holding some more evangelistic meetings four of the five families also believed in Christ, leaving just one family holding out against the Word of Life. The whole village prayed earnestly for that family's salvation, as the new Christians believed God wanted to be honored among the entire village, and to have one family of unbelievers would simply not be good enough!

Finally the one family realized that if everyone else in his village was a believer and experiencing God's protection, then their family was vulnerable to attack from the devil! They also committed his life to the Lord and his family followed him into the family of faith.

To this day every family in the village continues to serve God. They actively share their faith with neighboring unreached people and are known as an honest people who are blessed by the Lord. It is because of the clear

testimony of changed lives in villages such as Xiaoshan and in hundreds more like it throughout the province that the Gospel has spread so rapidly in Heilongjiang."

An Elderly 'Uncle' Persists and Overcomes Hostility

When evangelists go out from the house churches in Heilongjiang they are supported with tremendous prayer backing from the numerous old 'aunties' who have such simple and sweet spirits. These old women live for prayer and worship. They often prostrate themselves on the floor during prayer meetings, with hot tears streaming down their cheeks, they intercede for the lost and wrestle in the spirit on behalf of those who are venturing out with the Good News.

With that background, an elderly 'uncle', known as Uncle Liu, went to preach the Gospel in an unreached village near Acheng City, 41 km (25 miles) southeast of Harbin, with a warm heart. When he knocked on one door, asking to share the Gospel with the inhabitants of the house, the people angrily drove him out of the village.

Undeterred, Uncle Liu withdrew to a quiet place and earnestly prayed for the family who had rejected him. He then went back to the same house. The second time, the family threw water on him, drenching him to the bone, and with furious words and threats they again drove him from the area.

Uncle Liu didn't give up however, and again he prayed for this family, believing it is not the Lord's will for anyone to perish, but for all, including this one family, to come to faith in Christ.



For the third time he visited the family and told them they must repent and believe in God's Son. This time the family members got large sticks and violently beat Uncle Liu. They swore at him and cursed him for his stubbornness, and again drove him from the village, this time soaked in blood and suffering from wounds to his body.

This old brother however would not be deterred. After recovering from his blows for seven days, he went back again. This time the owner of the house did not oppose him. Amazed that he would come back again, the father of the family agreed they should all sit down and listen to what the old man had to tell them.

As Uncle Liu preached the Gospel to the whole extended family, great conviction seized their hearts. Every single family member received the Lord into their lives.

Here at Asia Harvest we simply see our ministry is to **serve** the Chinese Church, not to get in the way of what God is doing, and not to control or lead anything, but simply to **come alongside** the house church leaders to encourage them and help them to be more effective if possible.

All of the projects we operate have sprung from this desire to serve. The Bible printing project, anti-cult book, Asian Worker's fund, Living martyr's fund, etc. are all projects that the Chinese churches themselves indicated would be a blessing to their work.

By your partnership through praying, encouraging, or giving, we are able to simply pass on the blessing and help in some small way. We appreciate you and thank you for taking the time to read this newsletter. We hope you were blessed and encouraged by it.

Asia Harvest



Swing the Sickle for the Harvest is Ripe! (Joel 3:13)

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Messages from the Chinese Church (Part 1)

From the Front Lines

with Paul & Joy Hattaway

During the 15 years since we first arrived on the mission field in Asia we have increasingly felt that a large part of what God has called us to do is to be a link between the Church in Asia (especially the persecuted church) and the Church around the world.

This newsletter is part of that process of being a link between East and West. One end of the chain, many thousands of people in Asia are impacted and blessed by Christians around the world praying for them and giving so that evangelists can be supported, Bibles printed, imprisoned pastor's families helped, etc. On the other end of the chain, many people over the years have told us that as they have read about the advance of the Gospel in Asia and prayed more for the Asian church, and as they have helped come to Asia on short-term teams or support certain projects, that God has blessed their own lives and churches back home. The blessing therefore strengthens believers both in Asia, and around the world. This is a principle of Scripture. ***"The share of the man who stayed with the supplies is to be the same as that of him who went down to the battle. All will share alike."*** 1 Samuel 30:24

We have been privileged to be in the middle of this blessing, prayerfully creating structures to pass it on with maximum efficiency. Sometimes it has been difficult because of the spiritual distance between the church in revival in Asia and some believers in the West, who often seem to be disillusioned in their faith, cynical, tired and passionless. Some years ago we decided our job was not to try to justify what the Lord is doing in Asia. If people want to believe it or not, it is between them and God. Our role is simply to report accurately and truthfully. For some people, if they fail to see God moving in their own lives and communities, then it makes sense that God must not be moving anywhere! If people where they live show no interest in the Gospel, then they reason that testimonies of thousands of people coming to Christ in Asia must surely be false! They have adjusted their theology to suit their experiences, instead of interpreting their experiences according to the unchangeable Word of God.

For the next few Asia Harvest newsletters, we are taking a new, more direct approach. In the past few years we have conducted many hours of interviews in China with house church leaders. They are leaders of millions of believers, and firsthand witnesses of some of the most remarkable moves of God in history. They have also experienced years of brutal persecution for their faith in Jesus.

The Chinese church is far from being perfect, but they have witnessed God move like the early church did in the Book of Acts, and the lessons they learned are well

worth listening to.

In this newsletter we begin Part One of "Messages from the Chinese Church." These messages form part of a new book entitled *Back to Jerusalem*, which we had the privilege to write at the request of several Chinese house church leaders. *Back to Jerusalem* contains the missionary vision of the Chinese church today, and discusses what they plan to do in order for the giant strongholds of Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism to give up their billions of captives. On page 13 we have information about how you can order the *Back to Jerusalem* book. We believe it is absolutely essential reading for any Christian who wants to know what God will do in these end times.

The three Chinese church leaders who shared in these interviews are Brother Yun, Peter Xu Yongze, and Enoch Wang. They are each recognized as among the key figures in the ministry of the house churches in China. Between them, these three men have spent more than 40 years in prison because of their faith. We hope you are blessed by their message, and challenged to live a life worthy of the high calling you have received.

IMPORTANT NOTICE -

PLEASE UPDATE YOUR RECORDS

We have decided to make our U.S. address the main contact address for Asia Harvest. This means we are phasing out the use of our Post office box number in Thailand. As it is, more than 70% of all our mail has been coming through our U.S. address anyway, so by consolidating to one central contact point we believe we will be able to reply to letters and requests faster and provide a better service to our friends and supporters. Please update your records. We will continue to keep our Thailand post office box active for some time, so if you have recently written to it please don't worry, but from now on we will not be listing it in our literature and so will gradually phase it out. The main Asia Harvest address is now therefore:

**Asia Harvest
P.O.Box 901
Palestine, TX 75802
U.S.A.**

For those who live in various countries around the world, please either write to the above address, or if you prefer, to the Asia Harvest address nearest to you. Thank you.

Messages from the Chinese Church

PART ONE:

DISCIPLES, OR JUST BELIEVERS?

“Anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.... Any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple.” Luke 14:27.33

***“From that time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him.”
John 6:66***

Why are there still so many needy countries and areas of spiritual darkness in the world today? Why is there still a need for the Chinese church to send missionaries after twenty centuries of Christianity?

The problem lies in the kind of Christianity practised by the majority of believers today. For countless millions of people, following Jesus is little more than a cultural experience. Joining a church means little more than joining a social club where they can meet new people and exchange pleasantries about inconsequential matters.

If the Bible is read at all, it is from a sense of duty rather than as part of a relationship with its real, vibrant and life-changing author.

Jesus is viewed as a historical figure who died on the cross, and as a future figure who will one day come again, but few Christians really, genuinely, walk with Jesus today, sharing their dreams, fears and concerns with him as a lover, friend and Lord.

Millions of churches around the world, including inside China, are bound by legalism. Obeying man-made rules has become more important than taking the hand of Jesus and walking with him in the cool of the evening. The Christian life has become an endurance test, and all traces of life and joy have long since evaporated!

Brothers and sisters, don't be deceived, such a bound church is nothing less than a work of Satan, and such a collection of believers will never be able to save any souls for the kingdom of God. It is absolutely impossible for a legalistic believer to lead a single person to Jesus Christ. They may occasionally lead someone else to obey the same rules they do, but they will never lead a thirsty soul to the well of eternal life. How can a person show a lost soul the way to someone they themselves cannot recognize?

One thing is certain: the two billion Muslims, Buddhists and Hindus we are targeting in the Back to Jerusalem vision will never be reached by passionless Christians. They will only respond when they are confronted by the truth of God's Word as revealed in the lives of true

disciples of Jesus who have given up all they have to follow him.

There are more than enough Christian “believers” in the world today. God wants more disciples!

God wants men and women, boys and girls who are willing to take the fire and love of God to millions of people who will be infected with spiritual life!

Only disciples of Jesus can ever hope to impact the nations for God.

Prior to the 1950s, most Christians in China were also mere ‘believers’ in Christ, and when the heat of affliction came on, many fell away from the faith. Many others, however, got serious about God and decided to follow him whatever the cost. They were gradually transformed into disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. Today most Christians in China’s house churches are disciples.

True disciples are usually people that few understand. They are viewed as potentially unstable fanatics. Often the same governments that tolerate the existence of mere believers will stop at no ends to completely eradicate any disciples within their borders.

Mere ‘believers’ try to follow God, but their prayers and commitment are clouded by indecisiveness. Their prayers go like this: “Oh Lord, I am so weak. Please send your power. I am weighed down with sin. Please come and relieve me.” If they ever hear the King’s call to go somewhere and do something for the sake of his kingdom, they feel they need extra encouragement before they can safely step out: “First let me check with my wife, my pastor, my boss and my mother-in-law to see if it’s OK with them.”

A believer always seeks assurances that nothing will go wrong if they step out for Jesus. Only when they are convinced that the coast is clear and no harm will befall them are they willing to take their first step!

Disciples have a different attitude. In China many disciples beg God to give them just a little of his dynamite power. They pray, “Oh God, if you will lend me just a little spiritual dynamite, I promise I will take it to the darkest area I can find, place it there, and pray you will send your fire from heaven to explode it.”

God always does.

This is how the Gospel has spread so quickly in China.

There are literally thousands of testimonies we could share with you about disciples in the Chinese church whom God has used in a mighty way. For now, let us share just three testimonies that display different aspects of the life of a true disciple of Jesus.

The Obedience of Sister Chang

“The reason I wrote to you was to see if you would stand the test and be obedient in everything.” 2 Corinthians 2:9

When God spoke to Sister Chang, a house church leader from Henan, he told her to do something that made no earthly sense at all. He told her to go and preach the gospel on the steps outside the local police station. Such an action may lead to arrest even in Western nations, and in Communist China it is a sure way to invite

severe punishment. But the more Sister Chang prayed about it, the more clearly the inner voice of God continued to tell her to do it. Finally, she saw no option but to obey God.

Standing on the top step outside the police station, she boldly proclaimed the gospel to astonished onlookers. Within a few minutes several officers dragged her inside and placed her under arrest. To the human eye her obedience looked foolish, but God can see things that we can't.

Sister Chang was sentenced without a trial and sent to the local women's prison, where she was placed alongside thousands of spiritually lost souls. She boldly and lovingly proclaimed the gospel to her fellow prisoners. The light of the gospel spread like wildfire. Within just three months, 800 women believed in Jesus! The entire atmosphere of the prison changed, and new sounds of praise and worship were heard echoing down the prison hallways and in the courtyard.

The prison director was greatly impressed at the change in the atmosphere and was able to trace it to the preaching of Sister Chang. He brought her into his office and said, "You have made my job easy! There is no more fighting between the prisoners and the women have become gentle and obedient. We need more people like you working here. From today, we have decided to let you go free. We want to give you a full-time job here in the prison, and we will pay you 3,000 Yuan per month" (about US\$ 375, a fortune in rural Henan). He continued, "We will also give you a car and your own driver, and will find you comfortable housing."

Sister Chang briefly considered the offer, and then replied, "Twenty years ago I became a disciple of Jesus Christ and he has been wonderful to me. I don't believe your offer of a car, driver and salary is in line with what Jesus wants to do with my life, and I belong to him. All I want to do is preach the good news."

Despite her rejection of his offer, the director released her from prison that day, and she continued her ministry for the Lord.

It always pays to do what the Lord tells us to do. Don't argue, don't fight it, and don't try to work out all the details with your mind. Just do it. That is one mark of a true disciple of Jesus Christ.

Sister Yuen of Shanghai

"If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters - yes, even his own life - he cannot be my disciple." Luke 14:26

Sister Yuen came from one of the wealthiest families in Shanghai. In 1967 she was arrested and sent to prison. At the time she was a widow with two young children, a son aged eleven and a daughter aged nine.

After Sister Yuen has been a year in prison her mother – who had been taking care of the children – died. The authorities decided to have "compassion" on her so she could go home and take care of her children. They told her that all she had to do was produce a written confession of her "crimes" and they would free her. They said, "This past year your conduct has been excellent, so now we plan to reward you."

The officials arranged for her small children to be brought to the prison gates for a visit. Yuen was ordered to pack her bags as if she was going home. As soon as she caught a glimpse of her precious children, her heart was torn and tears of love welled up in her eyes.

Then the guards asked her, "What do you want, your Jesus or your children? If you want Jesus you will remain in this prison. If you want your children, you can go home. Surely your God would want you to be kind to your own flesh and blood?" Sister Yuen's son and daughter called out "Mummy, we miss you! Please come home!"

A prison guard gave Sister Yuen a pencil and a piece of paper and asked her to write down her confession. She wrote in large characters, "Jesus can never be replaced. Even my own children cannot replace Jesus."

She chose to stay in prison.

The warden shouted, "Listen, you kids! Your mother has rejected you! She doesn't love you!"

She remained in prison for twenty-three more years.

When she was finally released, her son was 34 years old and worked in a government job in Tibet. Sister Yuen had not seen him even once in all those years. He had been taken by the state and raised in atheistic schools, so he had no belief in God and had been told his own mother had forsaken him. Many Christians had visited him and shared the gospel with him, but he always responded by saying, "Your Jesus took my mother away from me, why should I believe in him?"

Upon her release Sister Yuen went to Tibet to find her son. He rejected her, screaming that he had no mother, and pushed her from his home. She has never seen him again. It is not easy being a disciple.

The world can do nothing to someone who has no fear of other people.

It has rightly been stated, "If you haven't discovered something you are willing to die for, then you haven't yet found anything worth living for."

Have you found something worth dying for yet?



MESSAGE TWO: SLEEPING CHURCH, AWAKE!

“He who gathers crops in summer is a wise son, but he who sleeps during harvest is a disgraceful son.” Proverbs 10:5

“A sluggard does not plough in season; so at harvest time he looks but finds nothing.” Proverbs 20:4

The world is lost! The Bible declares all of mankind to be spiritually dead, and a dead corpse cannot help but stink! The people of the world are drowning in an ocean of sin and wickedness. If they don't hear the gospel in their lifetime, then they are destined for an eternity of punishment in hell. The only way they will hear that Jesus had made a way for them to escape this dreadful destiny is if we tell them! Many Christians somehow think it is someone else's responsibility to tell the lost about Jesus. We make up numerous excuses to try to justify our inactivity and ease our consciences, but the Lord knows the truth.

“Rescue those being led away to death; hold back those staggering towards slaughter. If you say, ‘But we knew nothing about this,’ does not he who weighs the heart perceive it? Does not he who guards your life know it? Will he not repay each person according to what he has done?” Proverbs 24:11-12

The time is short, and it will not do for Christians to continue to play games while millions of people around us are perishing and going to hell.

To be a Christian and have only a lukewarm, passionless heart for Christ and the souls of lost men and women is a terrible indictment. Millions of people die without knowing Jesus because the Christians they came into contact with couldn't be bothered to be ***“prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have” 1 Peter 3:15***

Jesus even suggests that people suffering eternal torment in hell have more passion for evangelism than many Christians! He told a parable about a rich man and Lazarus. The rich man, suffering in agony in the flames of hell, called out across a great chasm to Abraham, ***“I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my father's house, for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment” Luke 16:27***

If people in hell strongly desire to reach the lost, shouldn't we who are called by the Name of the Lord be even more committed to this task?

God cannot use a person who wants a safe and comfortable Christian life. If your only aim in life is to get yourself to heaven, then you are not likely to take many other people with you. Many Christians have somehow become deceived into spiritual selfishness, gorging themselves on the latest Christian teaching, books, seminars, music and fads. When we spend all our time edifying ourselves and not seeking to win the souls of lost humanity, we are in deep trouble! Ironically, the more we feed our souls without serving God's purposes in the earth, the more our souls get sick of the food

and bloated with information. This is why the Scripture says, ***“He who is full loathes honey; but to the hungry even what is bitter tastes great”*** Proverbs 27:7

The Dead Sea in Israel serves as an excellent example of what can happen to a believer, a church, or even a whole nation that is self-absorbed. The Dead Sea is aptly named, as it is full of salt and contains few living creatures. Yet a closer inspection reveals that it has 153 sources of fresh water flowing into it. Numerous rivers (including the famous Jordan), streams and creeks flow into the Dead Sea, carrying fish and other aquatic life.

Yet once the fresh water reaches the Dead Sea the fish die and the water starts to stink. Why do the fish and other forms of life die? Simply because the Dead Sea has no outlet. It is constantly taking in but never giving out. The water stagnates and salts up. Life turns to death, freshness to salty sludge.

Christian, beware! You must have an outlet for your faith or your spiritual life will stagnate and begin to stink! Pastor, be warned. You will be held responsible before God not only for what you feed his sheep, but for what form of outreach you lead them into. Are new souls being birthed in your church on a regular basis? If not, you are stagnating. You must find an effective outlet for your faith, not only to expand God's kingdom among the lost but also to focus the vision of the believers and bring life to your congregation.

When Christians are regularly engaged in genuine outreach, they will be giving out and not only taking in, so they will need more spiritual nourishment in order to replace what they gave away. There will be a

spiritual flow, in and out, and the cobwebs and spiritual disease that can easily riddle believers' lives will be washed away. When people are focused on the needs of others, there is little opportunity for them to sit around complaining, gossiping and slandering each other. Instead of criticizing your sermons, people will start to obey God's word and will themselves become a living sermon to the world. The Bible will stop being a book of knowledge and will become a book of life.

The same holds true for prayer. It, too, needs to be outward focused. It is a spiritual principle that people who only pray for themselves and their own personal needs will never change. But when they intercede on behalf of other people, God will change their hearts as they pray. The best way for a selfish person to be delivered from self-obsession is to start praying for and meeting the needs of others.

The church in China is not focused on evangelism merely because it is an activity of the church. Evangelism is for the glory of God. It is the reason we exist on this earth; it is our main act of worship. Worship is far more than just the singing of songs. Worship occurs every time a believer does something that brings honor and glory to Jesus.

If God's only goal was to get people into heaven, then he would take us there as soon as we first believed in him. However, he chooses to leave us in this world so that our lives and words can witness for Jesus Christ to all of humanity. When we witness, not as works but because we love Jesus and want to see his name glorified, our spiritual

lives will be strong, as will our love of God's word. No hardship or persecution will dampen our hunger for the Lord, for ***"to the hungry even what is bitter tastes great."***

Fulfillment comes when we serve God through serving the needs of mankind. This is the explanation of the Apostle Paul's words to Philemon: ***"I pray that you may be active in sharing your faith, so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ" Philemon 6***

Have you ever wondered why some churches have a problem with lukewarm, backslidden Christians? We have found that backsliding is mostly due to a lack of witnessing for the Lord. Pastors often think people backslide because they cannot hold onto certain theological truths, but the problem is usually disobedience, not theology. The longer a person disobeys God, the colder their heart grows. The gospel is a gospel of action, not a gospel of self-preservation. The pursuit of doctrinal purity in and of itself only results in legalistic bondage if you have no intention of also obeying God's command to proclaim the gospel throughout the earth.

Christians, if you have truly been saved, don't be ashamed to get busy for the Lord! There are multitudes of souls perishing all around you. If you don't go and reach them, who will? ***"How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?" Romans 10:14***

Don't be discouraged when the devil sends people along who try to stop you or persuade you to wait until you are "more mature". If we wait until we are perfect before

we serve God, we will be waiting until Jesus returns.

A good church leader is someone who spends lots of time with the Lord and receives direction from the word of God to guide the church. The leaders should be the ones who cast the vision before the people, calling them to join in the work of the Lord. The leader needs to be full of love and mercy, but also strong and confident, for ***"if the trumpet does not sound a clear call, who will get ready for battle?" 1 Corinthians 14:8***

All through the Scriptures – whether we study the life of Moses, David, Jeremiah, John the Baptist, Peter or Paul – God's leaders were people who sounded a clear trumpet call. The people respected the hand of God on their lives and willingly followed the vision set before them.

Pastor, your primary responsibility is to give spiritual direction and leadership to the flock God has entrusted to your care. In China we believe the shepherd should be out in front of the flock, leading them through dangerous places. The willing sheep follow behind.

Too many times, however, the shepherd of a church is not leading from the front but is at the back of the flock, trying to encourage the weakest and most nervous sheep to inch their way forward. This kind of leadership will never achieve anything! You will spend all your time in counselling sessions and dealing with the problems in your congregation! The devil will continually invent more problems just to keep you tied up and away from leading your church into the real battlefield, which is the war for the souls of mankind.

Denominational pride is one of the easiest ways the devil can deceive us. Often our denomination or church thinks it is doing well compared to others. We sit in our boats and closely watch others as they drift further and further from the shore of God's truth. "It's terrible how they have drifted into error," we say, not noticing that we, too, have slowly drifted away from the shore while our attention has been focused on our pitiful neighbors.

Whole churches and denominations have drifted into dangerous territory without any realization of it. The answer to staying rooted in the Lord is to stop comparing ourselves with others and compare ourselves with the Lord Jesus instead. When we compare ourselves with others, we usually feel pretty good about ourselves. When we compare ourselves with Jesus, we see we are wretched and naked and we throw ourselves at the feet of the Lord, asking for mercy. This is how God intended us to live, in daily reliance on him for our existence. ***"If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. Each one should test his own actions...without comparing himself to somebody else" Galatians 6:3-4***

Christians all around the world use Revelation 3:20 as an invitation to salvation, ***"Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me."*** But closer examination of this passage reveals that Jesus wasn't knocking at the door of unbelievers' hearts when he said those words. He was knocking at the door of the backslidden church at Laodicea! Jesus was standing outside the door of the church,

knocking and asking to be let in! What a sad indictment that Jesus is an unwelcome guest in many churches today. Many continue to operate in their lifeless religiosity, ***"having a form of godliness, but denying its power" 2 Timothy 3:5***

Wake up! Repent! Let God come into your lives and into your churches. He loves all people and as long as you have breath in you it's not too late for him to use you for his glory.

A spiritually dull church or believer is a poor witness for the living, resurrected Jesus.

A church is meant to be a training centre and command hub for war, not a social club for pleasantries and hypocrisy, where people give lip service to Christ while refusing to obey his commands.

It's time to wake up!

What should you and your church do if you have been sleeping and neglecting God's work? The answer is clearly found in the words of Jesus to the lukewarm church: ***"Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your deeds complete in the sight of my God. Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard, obey it, and repent. But if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what time I will come to you"***

Revelation 3:2-3

In the next issue of Asia Harvest we will hear what the Chinese house church leaders have to say about evangelism. They offer encouragement for believers everywhere, and a teaching from the Gospels that brings a very different understanding and clarity than most Christians have been taught.



From our Mailbox

I so enjoy the Asia Harvest newsletters. My husband is a retired minister and a semi-invalid. He is no longer able to read, but I read your little booklets cover to cover to him. I have not sent any money over the years and so have expected the last copy of your newsletter to be the last one we receive, but as I find each new one in our mailbox I am so grateful. We have no money to send, but many prayers. Thank you for keeping us on your mailing list.

Esther H., New York, USA

David B. is a friend of ours. He was a mass murderer but now he is a new creation in Jesus! There is nothing impossible with God! He received Christ 15 years ago in prison and he is truly born again. We have friends who get silent when we say he is born again but our reply is always, "do you believe the Gospel or not?" David is quite an intercessor and has a burden for many nations. He is the Chaplain's clerk and the congregation he attends prays for China as a corporate body. He would be so thrilled to receive your newsletter; he would cherish it. No doubt he would share the prayer needs with the congregation as well. We already receive the newsletter but I like to keep my copy if possible. If you cannot send him the newsletter please let me know and I will send him mine.

Lars L., Canada

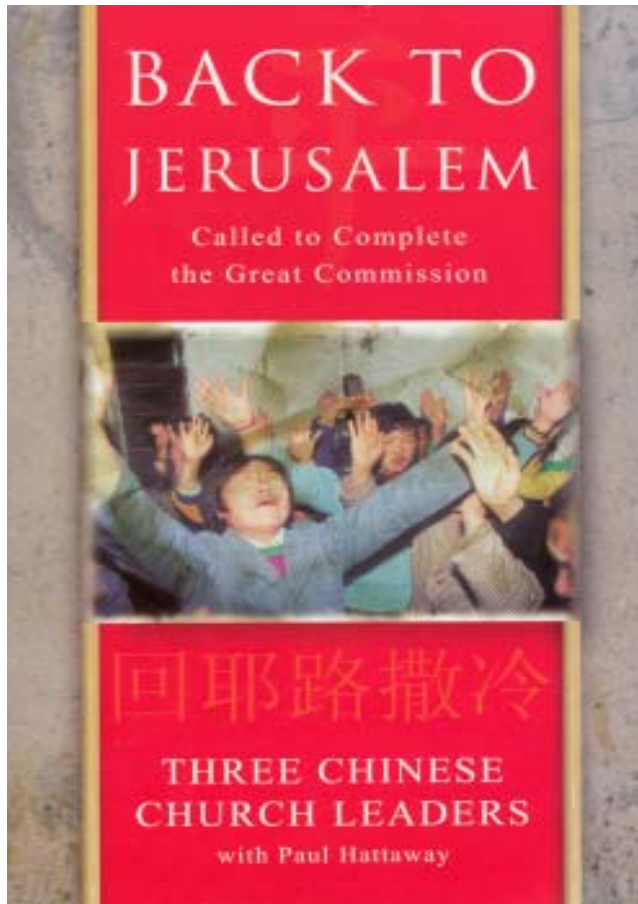
I don't care to communicate with anyone who has such views on religion as you do. I doubt if anything will cure you of your religious bigotry. If someone wants to worship an idol, good for them. As long as they are not pounding it into my brain and leave me to worship however I please. If you believe that your god is powerful and jealous, good for you. There is no god. In essence, whatever happens to you, good or bad, it is up entirely to you. I am not going to tell you which religion is right or wrong. If you want to believe in voodoo, then that is fine with me, but don't go around saying that other religions are no good or wrong, and there is only one true religion.

received by email

We are excited to include money for the sponsorship of two children in your Project Smile. The children in our playgroup worked very hard cleaning their toys and equipment to raise enough pocket money to sponsor these children. This was very special for the children because they have seen the progress of my son who was born with a unilateral cleft lip and palate and had his first operation for his lip repair which amazed all the children. They are very excited to know that they are helping other children who don't have the same access to medical assistance.

A Playgroup in Australia

Back to Jerusalem



We would like to announce the release of a new book, *Back to Jerusalem*. This book was produced at the request of Chinese house church leaders, who desired to tell the world about the great vision God has given them to win the world for Christ. This vision is not new, but dates back to the 1930s and has been renewed among the present generation of Chinese Christians. The three Chinese leaders who shared about this vision to send 100,000 missionaries into the heart of the Muslim, Buddhist and Hindu world, Brothers Yun, Xu Yongze, and Enoch Wang have spent a combined total of more than 40 years in prison for their faith. If you are interested in what God is doing in these last days, this book is a must! We were privileged to be asked to

write this book for them, and believe it is the most important book we have written.

Patrick Johnstone, the well-known mission statesman and author of *Operation World*, had this to say about *Back to Jerusalem*: "Who could ever have believed that after 50 years of Communism and terrible persecution, the Church in China could grow so mightily that China might become one of the foremost missionary-sending countries in the 21st century? This remarkable little book shows something of the conception and birthing of this vision in our day. This records the beginnings - what will the end be? May it be to the praise and glory of the Lord Jesus Christ!"

***Back to Jerusalem* costs US\$ 11, plus \$ 6 postage to anywhere in the world. Please send a \$ 17 check (made payable to "Asia Harvest"), money order or cash to our USA address, and your book(s) will be dispatched as soon as possible. Alternatively you can purchase the book by credit card or check over our website: www.asiaharvest.org**