



Asia Harvest

2004

NEWSLETTERS

(Combined)

Asia Harvest



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

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Messages from the Chinese Church (#2)

From the Front Lines

with Paul & Joy Hattaway

In much of the Western world today the prevailing culture is for people to want to put themselves forward, to show what they have done. Things that are large, loud, and grandiose tend to attract attention. This trend has unfortunately infiltrated much of the Church as well.

Jesus, however, operated by a different set of principles to those of the world. The opposite, in fact. He taught that if we want to be great in the kingdom of God then we must be the least, and the servant of all. He taught that if we are to be first, we must be last, and that His kingdom would never grow through mere human desire, but through the obedient lives of people dead to themselves and the world, but alive in Christ!

Thankfully, we have met many church leaders in Asia who understand God's principles and who care nothing for fame. They desire to be hidden in Christ, so that He will get all the glory from their lives. In some countries where persecution is strong, staying hidden from the public eye is not only desirable, but a necessity for many church leaders if they want to remain out of prison.

When Christians have no desire to share God's glory, the Lord leads them to walk in true humility and brokenness. We have seen how God uses hidden vessels more for His kingdom, and not less! We have seen how Christian leaders in places like China often receive God-given strategies to reach out to the lost because they go to the feet of Jesus as empty vessels and ask Him to do with their lives whatever He wants. There are no conditions placed, no strings attached.

One example of God giving strategies to the humble in heart can be seen in the way the Chinese church plans to work in the Muslim world. They have sent hundreds of missionaries into Islamic countries in recent years, and many hundreds more are in training right now.

In light of the growth of terrorism in recent years, many Christians are interested to see how the Muslim world might be impacted with the Gospel so that the hearts and lives of multitudes of Muslims would be conquered by the love of Jesus Christ.

When many Western Christians contemplate how to impact the vast Muslim world, they immediately think of large meetings, wide-scale literature campaigns, huge media outreach. But these methods have proven largely ineffective in reaching Muslims in the past.

The Chinese house churches, now moving forward with their "Back to Jerusa-

lem” vision to send 100,000 missionaries to the unreached Muslims, Buddhists and Hindus, believe they have received a different kind of strategy from the Lord.

In this newsletter we would like to share some of this plan, a plan birthed in the furnace of affliction that the Chinese church has gone through over the past 50 years. Their plan is not to go as an army of conquerors, but as an army of worms. They expect thousands of their workers will spill their blood and even die as they take the Gospel to these spiritually dark areas of the world, but they are willing to go because they love the Lord and desire to see all mankind worship Him. One prominent Western mission spokesman recently wrote that the Chinese willingness to die for the Gospel in these countries is “the height of irresponsibility.” Another said to one Chinese church leader who has been training these evangelists, “What right do you have to send thousands of young men and women to their death? How dare you!”

History seems to repeat itself. In the 1800s the exact same accusation was levelled against Hudson Taylor, the founder of the China Inland Mission, by “concerned clergy” in England who saw his zeal for Christ as misplaced and his plans for the salvation of China as utter foolishness. Hudson Taylor continued on regardless, and changed the face of Christianity in China forever. Should today’s Chinese Christians be blamed for wanting to follow his example?

Instead of mocking and criticizing the Chinese Church for wanting to do what we are unwilling to, let’s read their plans in the following pages, asking God to give us a discerning spirit, and a humility that comes from a desire to be hidden vessels of the King.

Season’s Greetings!

We hope and pray you and your loved ones experienced a blessed Christmas, and that 2004 will be one of close fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ and new breakthroughs as you step out and serve Him.

We want to take this opportunity to thank you for your wonderful prayer, encouragement and support throughout the past year!

In this world where everyone seems to be getting busier and many Christians are overwhelmed with needs and pressures on their time, we appreciate that the work of the Gospel in Asia has gained a special place in the hearts of many believers around the world.

Recently we were asked what prayer requests we have as a ministry. We would simply ask you to pray we would not forsake our first love and passion for Jesus, that He would be happy with our lives and that His touch would be on those activities that He leads us to do. God bless you!

Messages from the Chinese Church

PART THREE:

AN ARMY OF WORMS

The following messages come directly from three senior Chinese house church leaders (Brother Yun, Peter Xu Yongze, and Enoch Wang), whom we interviewed last year. Their strategy appears in one of the chapters of our new book, *Back to Jerusalem*.

The Back to Jerusalem mission and the fulfillment of the Great Commission face powerful adversaries. Islam holds more than a billion souls in captivity and blindness. Buddhism and Hinduism have been established for more than two thousand years.

The devil feels safe in these strongholds that have largely gone unchallenged throughout Christian history.

When faith-filled believers start taking flames of fire from God's altar into these dark regions, and those fires start spreading to others and the light increases, Satan will be furious. *"Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short"* (Revelation 12:12).

Satan will not surrender without a fierce fight! But when the devil fights against God's children he is fighting against God himself, and our Lord's weakness is much stronger than the devil's strength. Nevertheless, we expect that much blood will be spilled. One of the most powerful ways we can overcome the spiritual giants of Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism is by witnessing with our own blood and laying down our lives. For each Christian that the devil tries to kill, the light of the gospel will shine a little brighter and his hold on the people will loosen little by little.

It will not be an army of elephants that marches into nations like Saudi Arabia,



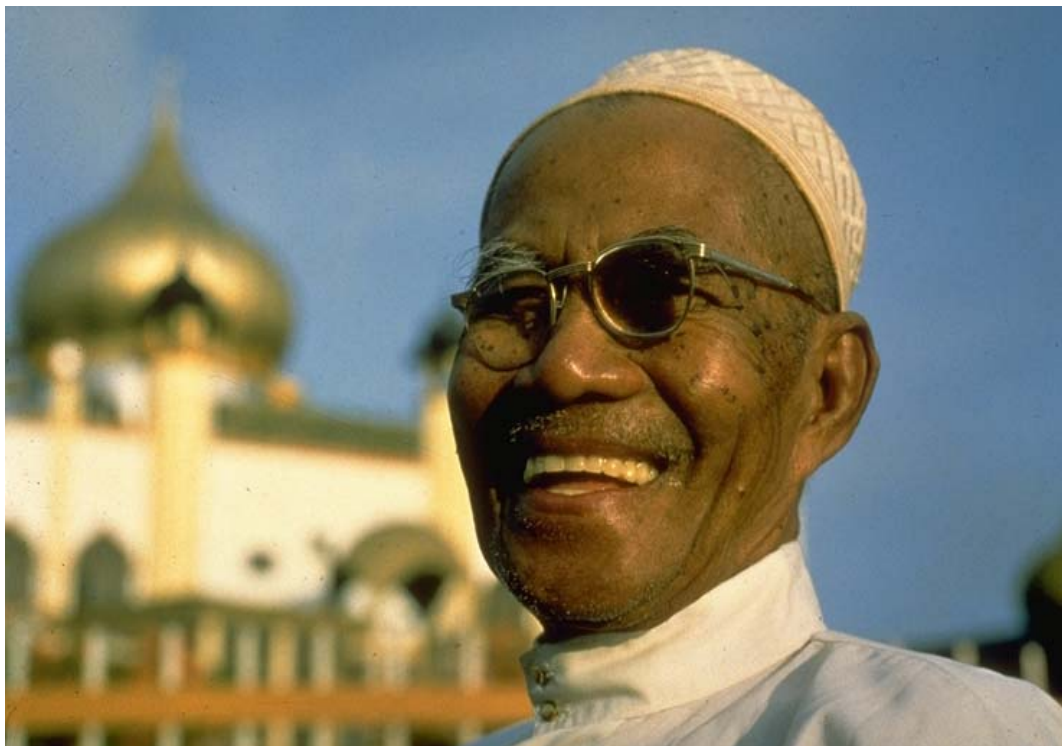
Afghanistan and Iran with the gospel, trampling down the strongholds.

Sometimes it seems as if a lot of mission effort consists of “elephant” plans – huge and grandiose strategies for overwhelming the devil’s strongholds and making him surrender his captives. But it is easy for border guards to detect an elephant entering the country! It makes a lot of noise and is impossible to hide. Elephants are easy to catch because they move slowly and are so visible. This seems to be how much mission work is conducted today. (Please understand we are talking in generalities here, for we know many of the Lord’s people from all around the world have faithfully been laboring in these difficult nations for years. God bless them!)

Instead of an army of elephants, we believe God wants to send an army of insects

and crawling creatures to cause the collapse of the house of Buddha, the house of Hinduism and the house of Mohammed.

The Chinese church is not strong in human terms. We don’t have a lot of money or any grandiose plans. But we are an army of little ants, worms and termites who know how to work underground, because that is how we have learned to work in China for decades. The word of God tells us how we should fight the spiritual fight and offers great encouragement to little creatures like us: ***“Do not be afraid, O worm Jacob, O little Israel, for I myself will help you,” declares the Lord, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel. ‘See, I will make you into a threshing sledge, new and sharp, with many teeth. You will thresh the mountains and crush them, and reduce the hills to chaff. You will winnow them, the wind will pick***



them up, and a gale will blow them away.”
(Isaiah 41:14–16)

While an elephant cannot advance into sensitive areas, little worms and ants can go anywhere. They can go into temples, mosques and even into king's palaces. ***“Four things on earth are small, yet they are extremely wise: Ants are creatures of little strength, yet they store up their food in the summer; conies are creatures of little power, yet they make their home in the crags; locusts have no king, yet they advance together in ranks; a lizard can be caught with the hand, yet it is found in king's palaces.”*** (Proverbs 30:24–28)

This is how the Chinese Christians will operate during the Back to Jerusalem mission. We will not make much noise, but will secretly and quietly do the Lord's work underground. We will be quite difficult to detect. You may not hear many victorious reports of church growth coming back from the Middle East or Southeast Asia, but be assured that our ants, worms and termites are already there, quietly working away, slowly loosening the foundations of Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism. You will not see any great or small church buildings resulting from our efforts because we are determined to do what the Lord has led us to do in China these past fifty years and establish spiritual fellowships of believers who meet in their homes. We won't build a single church building anywhere, but the Lord will be building up his church of living stones, with Jesus as the cornerstone.

Termites are very hard to detect. They do their destructive work inside the walls of

homes and underneath the floorboards. Usually, the owner of the house has no clue that his magnificent structure is being eaten away until it is too late and it collapses in a heap! The termite can do what even an elephant is unable to do.

There are many biblical examples of little creatures causing great havoc in the houses of the mighty.

The proud and arrogant Pharaoh refused to let God's people go, so to encourage him to reconsider the Lord did not send a mighty army of angels but a series of plagues including frogs, gnats and flies. Moses told Pharaoh what God would do: ***“I will plague your whole country with frogs. The Nile will teem with frogs. They will come up into your palace and your bedroom and onto your bed, into the houses of your officials and on your people, and into your ovens and kneading troughs. The frogs will go up on you and your people and all your officials.”***

(Exodus 8:2–4)

Pharaoh saw no reason to be concerned about his oppressed Israelite slaves and he showed no respect for God. But when these small creatures pestered him in his palace bedroom he took note! Sometimes it is not large initiatives that are the most effective, but the unified efforts of many small pests.

In the second chapter of the Book of Joel we have a vivid description of an army of locusts that the Lord refers to as ***“my army that I sent among you”*** (Joel 2:25). Although Joel refers to the invading Babylonian army of the time, the characteristics of that army are worth emulating. Let's look at why this army of locusts was so effective:

*“At the sight of them, nations are in anguish;
every face turns pale.
They charge like warriors; they scale walls
like soldiers.
They all march in line, not swerving from
their course.
They do not jostle each other; each marches
straight ahead.
They plunge through defences without
breaking ranks.
They rush upon the city, they run along the
wall.
They climb into the houses; like thieves they
enter through the windows . . .
The Lord thunders at the head of his army;
his forces are beyond number,
And mighty are those who obey his commands.*

(Joel 2:6–9, 11)

Ants and termites have a spirit of teamwork.

They are so small that they realize they can achieve nothing by themselves, so they work together to achieve their goals, “*they advance together in ranks.*”

By the time the leaders of these nations realize that an invading army of ants and worms has slipped into their midst, it will be too late to drive them out!

Herod was a king with little regard for God or the people of God. Like the nations of the world, he was proud, pompous and arrogant, fearing neither God nor man. He was a law unto himself, thinking his authority was final, his reign impregnable.

Surely this is how many of the Muslim, Buddhist and Hindu nations feel today! They are sure that they have the truth, and are so



Yet to hear the Gospel: Muslim Uygurs praying in Xinjiang, NW China

entrenched in their traditions that they are quick to persecute any traces of Christianity and extinguish the slightest sign of spiritual light that the Lord graciously sends their way. How foolish they are! They do not know that Jesus Christ has all power and authority in both heaven and earth! (Matthew 28:18). They think they are completely safe, not realizing that the King of Kings and Lord of Lords will destroy them all with the breath of his mouth. As the prophet Isaiah declared, ***“the government shall be on his shoulders”*** (Isaiah 9:6).

Think of what happened to Herod. One day Herod, ***“wearing his royal robes, sat down on the throne and delivered a public address to the people. They shouted, ‘This is the voice of a god, not of a man’”*** (Acts 12:21–22).

Herod must have felt that things were going great for him at that moment. He had succeeded in making a name for himself, and now the people were shouting his praises. But what Herod didn’t realize was that his authority had only been loaned to him by God, and God was about to take it away: ***“Immediately, because Herod did not give praise to God, an angel of the Lord struck him down, and he was eaten by worms and died. But the word of God continued to increase and spread”*** (Acts 12:23–24).

Herod was dead, but the word of God continued its glorious course, changing the hearts and minds of men and women, boys and girls from every nation, tribe and language. Nothing can ever defeat the advance of God’s word. As Isaiah says, ***“The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands forever”*** (Isaiah 40:8).



The psalmist makes the same point: ***“Your word, O Lord, is eternal; it stands firm in the heavens”*** (Psalm 119:89), and so does Jesus: ***“Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away”*** (Luke 21:33).

As our missionaries take the banner of the Lord into the dark nations, you will probably hear nothing of it. In fact, we are hoping that you won’t specifically know what we are doing, for if you do hear about our activities, that means the governments in those lands who seek to keep Christianity beyond their borders will also know what we are doing. It is better if they find out that Jesus has come and taken over their

house once it is too late to do anything about it!

By God's grace we will be like little worms, ants and termites, quietly but consistently working away, loosening the foundations of the houses of Buddha, Hinduism and Mohammed, until they collapse.

PART FOUR:

TEAMWORK

In the military, some soldiers undertake long-term strategic service while others are given short-term missions such as taking a piece of land or establishing a beachhead. Some are commanders, others planners and support personnel. There are many different roles, but none is more important than another. All must be diligently performed for the army to fulfil its duty. The same is true of the Back to Jerusalem movement.

There will be leaders, trainers, intercessors and facilitators. There will also be a team of pastors dedicated to taking care of the spiritual and physical needs of both long-term and short-term field workers.

Our strategy is not only to send individuals or couples somewhere to reach the lost. We will send teams of workers. This strategy is based on the pattern in the New Testament ministries of Jesus, the Apostle Paul and others. There are many advantages to having a team, especially in spiritually dark places without any Christian presence. When part of a team, workers always have others to offer them fellowship and encouragement,

and to hold them accountable. Resources, too, can be shared. We have seen over many years that sending out teams produces far greater fruitfulness than sending scattered individuals.

God wants us to work in teams, not alone. Jesus had a team, Moses had a team, David had a team, and Paul had many people work with him on teams.



The Apostle Paul's teams were a mix of people with different ethnic and occupational backgrounds. For example, his teams included:

- **Paul**, a Jewish scholar and tent maker by occupation (see Acts 18:3).
- **Priscilla & Aquila**, olive-skinned Italians (Acts 18:2).
- **Luke**, a doctor (Colossians 4:14).
- Christians from **Cyrene** (in today's Libya, Africa) (Acts 11:19–21). In those days, centuries before the spread of Islam, these Christians from Cyrene were most likely dark-skinned.
- **Aristarchus & Gaius**, from Macedonia in Asia Minor (Acts 19:29).
- **Zenas**, who was a lawyer (Titus 3:13).
- **Onesimus**, a slave (Philemon 10).

Imagine the impact of a team like this arriving in a town to preach the gospel! Brown, white and black people who loved and served each other despite their physical, cultural and linguistic differences. Unified teams of men and women from different occupational backgrounds ranging from doctors and lawyers to slaves. What a powerful witness to a divided and lost world!

History shows us that when people become isolated and inbred, they get genetic defects and grow weak. The same principle applies to the church. When we work with other people and churches, we allow ourselves to learn from their different ideas and our mutual strong points surface. God loves the exchange of ideas, because we glean from each other's strengths and the Body of Christ grows stronger as a result.

Even though God has given the specific Back to Jerusalem vision to the Chinese church, he has also brought along various non-Chinese believers to serve our vision, to advise us, provide research, train our workers in cross-cultural communication, encourage us, and work hand in hand with us.

We have had Arab Christians come to China and teach us how to more effectively reach Muslims with the gospel. Tibetan believers have come down from the Tibetan plateau to tell the house churches what mistakes we were unknowingly making in our outreach to Tibetan Buddhists. Western brothers and sisters have come and shared their vision with us. Each of these contacts has opened our minds and spirits to a larger world beyond our own.

We are open and ready to receive believers whose motives are pure and whose skills and giftings are sent by the Lord to help us to more effectively... ***“prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. . . . From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.”*** (Ephesians 4:11–13, 16).

LETTERS FROM CHINA



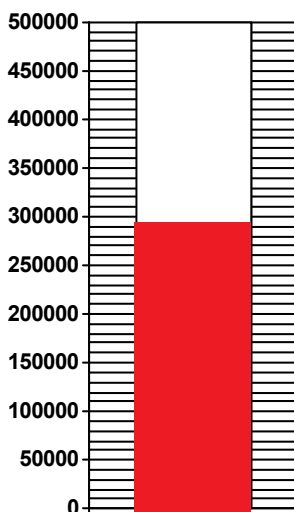
Years ago at Asia Harvest we believed God was calling us to be a link between the Church in Asia and the Church around the world. Our newsletters are one part of that link, testifying to what God is doing in China and other countries, and enabling people to pray and give as they are led by God.

One of the great joys we have at Asia Harvest is when we receive feedback from the recipients of these prayers and gifts. We would like to share some of the "Letters from China" here, to encourage you. Because of the reality of persecution in China, we have changed individual's names and locations in these letters, but the letters themselves are unchanged.

We want to thank all those who took time to pray for and give to our projects throughout 2003. All of these projects remain ongoing needs in 2004.

CHINA BIBLE PRINTING

Helping Equip China's Christians with God's Word



Current Total: 291,375
Chinese Bibles Printed
Cost: US\$2.25 per Bible

Although a limited number of Bibles are now permitted to be printed inside China, they are not enough to meet the need. Because of the tremendous growth rate of the church in China (some say 30,000 new believers each day), there is a serious lack of Bibles. Millions of Christians are still without God's Word. We are partnering with six large house church networks in China in a long-term goal to print Bibles for the church. These Bibles are distributed to all parts of China, equipping the believers and helping add fuel to the fires of revival that are burning throughout the world's largest nation. Each Bible costs just US \$2.25 to print and deliver.

Brother Liu, a house church leader in Henan Province:

"We received the 4,100 Bibles and 650 study Bibles from your contact in XXX City. Praise the Lord! In the past twelve months the Lord has graciously enabled us to reach more than 60,000 souls for Christ, and we are now praying and striving to nourish these newborn babes in Christ. Without God's Word this is impossible. The Scriptures you sent us were received like hungry children longing for good and lasting food. Please pray that we will be able to receive at least 50,000 more Bibles from the hand of the Lord, so that none of our new believers would be without a copy of God's holy Word."

Brother Zhou, a house church leader in Shanxi Province:

"This year (2003) has been a great struggle for us because of the lack of Bibles available. The quota allowed by the government for official Bibles to be printed has been slashed, so not only are there no Bibles available for our new believers, but also many mature believers have had their Bibles confiscated by the authorities in the past year. We desperately need 40,000 more Bibles before the end of the year to help us feed the flock with God's Word. Can you help?"

Brother Yang, a house church leader from Anhui Province:

"Praise the Lord for the Bible delivery we received recently (early 2003). We don't want to sound greedy and ungrateful, but could you please send us more? In the past 4 years the Eastern Lightning cult has been very active among the house churches in central and northern Shanxi. They are very sly and they gradually misuse the Scriptures to their own end, perverting the truth and leading some astray. We have found that nearly always the ones who are led astray are those new believers who don't have their own Bible yet and so their faith has not been grounded in the Lord. The devil knows this and is wasting no time attacking them. We need at least 60,000 Bibles this year just to keep pace with the growth the Lord has given us in recent years."

CHINA LIVING MARTYRS

Supporting pastors Crippled by Persecution and Torture

*Because of your prayers and support we are currently
able to support 527 living martyrs every month.*

In China today Christians are regularly beaten, tortured and even killed because they love Jesus. House church leaders have given us details of more than 1,000 Christian leaders who have been crippled as a result of torture received at the hands of the authorities. The **China Living Martyrs Fund** assists many pastors and evangelists who are now unable to work because of their injuries. They and their families face extreme poverty and hardship. You can support one or more of these living martyrs with a gift of **US \$25 per month each**. A prayer card will be sent to every regular supporter of this project, with information about a living martyr to help remind you to pray.

Letters from 'Living Martyrs'

Brother Song:

"I was in the prison for three years because of my walk with the Lord Jesus. Because of the 'welcome' (torture) I received, I am now unable to walk. I also have chronic arthritis. In the darkest days in my dungeon I prayed and asked the Lord to take my life, but he always lovingly told me that his grace was sufficient for me. I also thank God for my dear wife and children. Now that I am out of the prison I look for every opportunity to share my faith. I am an elder in the local church. Thank God for His mercy and your financial support which helps keep my family alive and strengthens our faith so we can put our whole lives into serving the Living God."

Brother Peter:

"I was the leader of our evangelism team. Since my health deteriorated in the prison I have been unable to work with my hands and we were forced to sell all our possessions to visit the doctor. My family is now so poor and we cannot even afford to buy any salt for our meals. And I cannot afford my children to attend school simply because we have no money. But my mother is a strong believer in God's promises. She prayed for abundant grace from God, and trusted God to provide all our needs. She always quoted the Psalm that God's servants and their children will not become beggars. On the second day of mother's prayer we found a fifty dollar bill hidden in our cupboard. Then I knew that God had sent someone to help us in time of need. Thank God for your support in Christ. Both my team and family are so grateful to God."

Brother Mordecai:

"I was a full-time worker and served 350 churches. I thank God for He loves me. Even when I was in prison and the prison guards broke my arm, I knew my God still cares for me. After I was released from prison I had cerebral paralysis. God still uses me to preach the gospel to many people. In my time of darkness I have received your support, praise the Lord! Without this help we would not know where to turn. Sometimes the local believers help us by giving us eggs or vegetables because they can see our need. Other times we just tell the Lord we are fasting because there is no food. Although I cannot travel freely now, I find a constant flow of brothers and sisters are now coming to our door for prayer and counsel. We are thankful that we can use your gifts not only on our own needs, but also to provide food and comfort to those ministry leaders who come to us."

Brother Bai:

"I am serving God at XXXX. Life is hard and I thank God for your prayer and support. I am so grateful for your constant help and support and I know it is God who has sent you to help us. Although I lost everything when the police raided our home, I thank God for your care and support. Even when I was in the prison I heard you were helping my wife and children, and for this I am eternally grateful. Your gifts show us the reality of God's love in action, and we are overwhelmed to realize that there are brothers and sisters in Christ praying for us and concerned for us even though we have never met."

Asia Harvest



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

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April 2004 - Newsletter #74



Annual Report

From the Front Lines

with Paul & Joy Hattaway

In this issue we would like to report to you on the various projects and activities of Asia Harvest in 2003. We are doing this to inform, educate, and be accountable to our friends around the world. The problem is that whenever an organization writes about its own work it can sound prideful. That is certainly not our intention! We realize anything good that may come about is only by the grace of God. Anyway, none of the work detailed here is “ours” - we are merely a channel of God’s blessing to the Asian Church. The projects we do are only possible firstly because of God’s leading and empowerment, and secondly because of the participation of Christians around the world who get involved with praying and giving after being prompted to do so by the Holy Spirit.

People sometimes ask us what kind of fund-raising programs we operate at Asia Harvest. The answer is we don’t! Apart from our newsletters such as the one you have in your hands, and our website, we don’t have any other



Tribal warriors from Borneo

way to make what we do known to people. In the past we travelled around churches preaching and sharing quite a lot, but even this has taken a backseat in recent years as we have spent more time in Asia and less in other parts of the world. Being a non-denominational ministry, we don't get any denominational funding, but have a number of committed individuals and fellowships who participate in what we do through prayer and their generosity.

We have found God's promises very true that when we "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness" then He adds all the rest to us, providing what is needed to do His work. Hudson Taylor once said, "God's work, done God's way, will never lack God's supply." Note he said "God's work" not "our work." Our responsibility therefore should be to find out what God is doing and see where we can be involved.

That's what we have attempted to do at Asia Harvest, sometimes successfully by the grace of God, other times from learning from mistakes! If it is truly God's work, and God is the one supplying, then we can relax and don't worry about things that are His concern. We don't need to "beg, borrow or steal", but can spend our time and energy doing what He has called us to do: serve the Church in Asia. We do thank you for your participation in this ministry, and appreciate your time and involvement. We hope you feel part of what is happening in Asia.



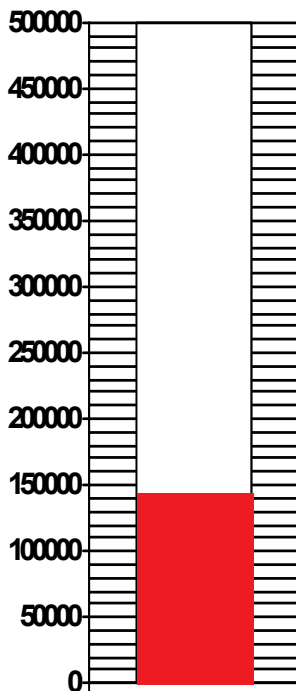
Asia Harvest Projects 2003

Due to lack of space in our newsletters, we don't usually have the opportunity to mention some of the lesser known projects we are involved with on an on-going basis, projects like the China Bible printing fund, and the Kashmiri Bible correspondence course in northern India. In this issue we will run through some of our projects and give more background information, starting with some of the lesser-known ones.

CHINA BIBLE PRINTING

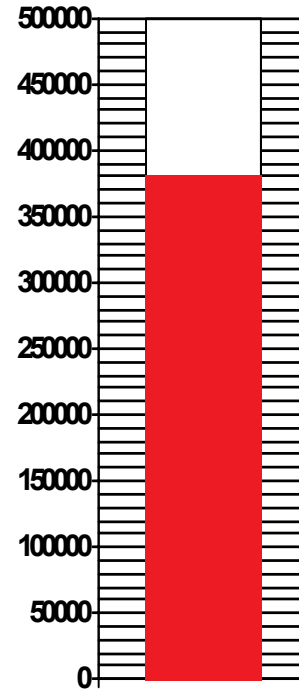
Helping Equip China's Christians with God's Word

2003 Bibles
Printed: 145,046



Although a limited number of Bibles are now permitted to be printed inside China, they are not enough to meet the need. Because of the tremendous growth rate of the church in China (some say 30,000 new believers each day), there is a serious lack of Bibles. Millions of Christians are still without God's Word. We are partnering with six large house church networks in China in a long-term goal to print Bibles for the church. These Bibles are distributed to all parts of China, equipping the believers and helping add fuel to the fires of revival that are burning throughout the world's largest nation. Each Bible costs just US \$2.25 to print and deliver.

Total Bibles since
2000: 378,107





Picture of a hand-copied Chinese Bible

There is much confusion these days about the need to print Bibles in China. Information coming out of China seems to be contradictory. We would like to explain why we help print Bibles in China for the house churches.

In the 1980s and early 1990s we were heavily involved with carrying Bibles into China from Hong Kong and other places. Those years were very rewarding and extremely important, as the Chinese house churches had little or no access to the Scriptures. We made literally hundreds of trips into China and saw God's hand on numerous occasions.

We believe that the situation changed somewhat around 1993, when the Chinese church started finding ways to print Bibles and other Christian books inside China. At first this was tentative and only small quantities were produced, but over time things developed and today they are able to print and deliver hundreds of thousands of Bibles every year, for just a fraction of what it used to cost to carry them in from another country.

"What about the Bibles the government allows to be printed?" we are often asked. It is a great blessing that the Amity Press in Nanjing is permitted to print Bibles. These are primarily available for members of government-sanctioned Three-Self Churches, although the house churches have also found creative ways to get their hands on many tens of thousands of these as well. The house churches found if they placed a large order they invariably got into trouble with the police but if smaller orders were placed there were usually no problems. Over the last few years they have placed many small orders! This has been a great blessing to many believers, but the number of Bibles they have been able to get their hands on has been woefully inadequate because of the huge increase of new believers coming to Christ all across China.

Between all the various branches of the house churches, the growth rate of new believers far surpasses the supply of Bibles. Some estimate they are growing at between 8-10 million new believers annually. That means that far from meeting the need, there are actually more Christians in China without a Bible every year.

To compound this situation, the Amity Press last year announced they were reducing the number of Bibles they print. Suddenly the house churches reported that the need for Bibles was greater because many of the avenues that had been open to them getting Bibles through official channels suddenly closed.

This is why we are helping the house churches print Bibles inside China. Every Chinese house church leader we know is in agreement that the ministry of printing Bibles internally is a vital one. If the Lord provided the resources we could easily print and distribute five to ten times the number of Bibles that we have been doing in China.

We receive incredibly thorough and detailed reports out of China, showing us where every single box of Bibles goes. In this way we know the Chinese are accountable in the way they handle this project.

Thanks to your prayers and donations we were able to print and deliver 145,046 Bibles to the house churches of China in 2003.

Kashmiri Bible Course

The four million Muslims living in the northern Indian State of Kashmir are among the most unreached and unevangelized people groups in the world. War and violence have destroyed their communities. Very few Kashmiris have ever found peace in Jesus Christ.

For about five years now we have been partnering with an Indian ministry who are reaching out to the Kashmiris. This is one of the projects we have not mentioned in our newsletters due to the high level of security needed for this work, but we do so now in general terms.

Asia Harvest has provided finances to print thousands of Bible correspondence courses in the Kashmiri language. Many Muslim men and women have written in, asking to do the Bible course. Those graduates who show a keen interest in the Gospel are invited to attend a seminar, during which ex-Muslims explain Christianity from A to Z. The results have been wonderful, with more than 95% of those who attend the seminars making firm commitments to Christ. Some have even been village leaders and influential people in Kashmiri society.

Here are some of the letters received from Kashmiri Muslims in response to studying the Bible.... ***“Respected Teacher, Please send me a copy of your course and also a Holy Bible. Your lessons are very interesting. May God forgive us of our sins committed intentionally and unintentionally! Amen.”***

“God is Great! I have read with great pleasure your books about the Christian faith. I previously thought all Christians were infidels. I have heard that you send free Christian books for study to anyone who requests. I have seen some of these at a friend’s house, and we and our friends all want to study these strange teachings and learn more about the man called Jesus.”

“Dear Sir, The book recently sent to me is really splendid and it is of great spiritual value. Please register me with your church, because I want to follow the True Lord. It is a great honor and I thank you for telling me. I want to know whether there is any institution imparting Christianity. If so, I would like to be a student.”



Every year Asia Harvest provides approximately US\$ 10,000 to fund this extremely strategic work. Every year dozens of Muslims are being saved and discipled in Christ! We also support the key ministry leaders in the Kashmir work through our Asian Worker’s fund. Please pray God’s kingdom would soon come among the Kashmiri people! We presently have no finances available to continue funding this work, so if you would like to be involved please see the yellow Response Form inside this newsletter.

Laos Evangelism

For more than ten years the small Communist country of Laos has been much on our heart. Although we don't report on it in our newsletters, we continue to be involved with the spread of the Gospel in Laos in partnership with other organizations. Every year we print thousands of Gospel tracts and booklets, as well as helping to produce thousands more evangelistic video tapes, audio cassettes, and other forms of media. God is moving in Laos and the Church there is growing steadily despite strong persecution. Thank you for your continued support of our Laos Literature & Evangelism fund!

And now to our regular major projects.....

CHINA LIVING MARTYRS

Supporting pastors Crippled by Persecution and Torture

Because of your prayers and support we were able to support 577 living martyrs every month throughout 2003. This has been a tremendous blessing to the Church in China.

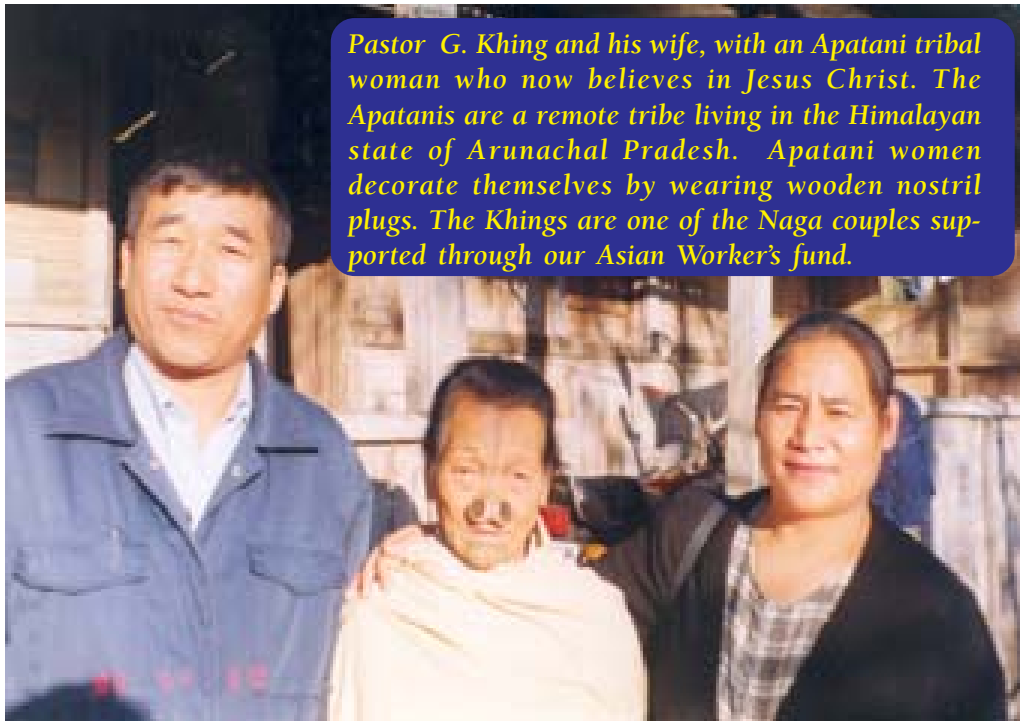


In China today Christians are regularly beaten, tortured and even killed because they love Jesus. House church leaders have given us details of more than 1,000 Christian leaders who have been crippled as a result of torture received at the hands of the authorities. The **China Living Martyrs Fund** assists many pastors and evangelists who are now unable to work because of their injuries. They and their families face extreme poverty and hardship. You can support one or more of these living martyrs with a gift of **US \$25 per month each**. A prayer card will be sent to every regular supporter of this project, with information about a living martyr to help remind you to pray.

ASIAN WORKERS FUND

Partnering with Pioneer Asian Evangelists

Because of your prayers and partnership we were able to support 205 Asian church-planting missionaries every month throughout 2003.



Pastor G. Khing and his wife, with an Apatani tribal woman who now believes in Jesus Christ. The Apatanis are a remote tribe living in the Himalayan state of Arunachal Pradesh. Apatani women decorate themselves by wearing wooden nostril plugs. The Khings are one of the Naga couples supported through our Asian Worker's fund.

Asian churches give their tithes and offerings, but the economy of many places like China, India or Nepal is so poor that here is little or nothing left for “big” expenses such as sending an evangelist or a missionary to an unreached area. In other cases the church may have enough just to send workers to the field, but is unable to support them once they are there. We are in contact with thousands of workers who need support. These servants of the Lord have given their whole lives to the Gospel.

The **Asian Workers Fund** assists workers who are doing strategic ministry in Asia. Please pray about whether you, your family, or church could help support one or more of these workers with a gift of **US \$25 per month each**. A prayer card will be sent to every supporter of this project, with information about a worker to remind you to pray.

PROJECT SMILE

Helping Children in Vietnam

Your generous gifts helped bring a smile to the faces of 524 children in Vietnam in 2003.



BEFORE SURGERY



AFTER SURGERY

This little girl was one of the 524 hare-lip and cleft-palate surgeries we were able to fund in 2003 thanks to your donations (1,492 since 1999). Her life will be changed forever.

Project Smile helps children from poor families in Vietnam who were born with cleft palate or hare-lip disabilities. The average cost to help a child is just \$ 60. This pays for the cost of the operation, the travel expenses for the child and his/her parents to come to the city where the operation takes place, and the cost of an overnight stay in the hospital. ***A gift of \$ 60 will help one child to have a better life, and an opportunity for his or her family to hear about Jesus Christ for the first time. A gift of \$ 240 will bless four children.*** Each donation of \$ 60 or more will receive a picture of the child before and after their life-changing operation, so you can continue to pray for them.

The Printed Word

In addition to printing Bibles, in 2003 we received enough funds to print 17,750 Chinese Operation China books and 14,800 Chinese anti-cult books for the house churches.



One of the greatest blessings in the past year has been to see how God has blessed the books that Paul Hattaway has written. *The Heavenly Man* continues to be one of the bestselling Christian book in many parts of the world. It was voted “Christian Book of the year” in the United Kingdom. There are now more than 300,000 copies in print in English, plus translations either completed or underway in Croatian, Korean, Hebrew, German, Norwegian, Italian, Finnish, Swedish, Danish, Arabic, Russian, Polish, Dutch, Japanese, Thai and Indonesian. It has been one of those experiences where we have to just sit back and praise God! It was agreed before the book was written that every cent of the royalties would go to the work of Chinese house churches, so this has also helped to advance the gospel where it is needed most. *Back to Jerusalem* is also doing very well. **Please pray for God’s grace and strength on Paul** as he is working on four new books at the moment (in his “spare” time)! These will all be published, God willing, in 2004:

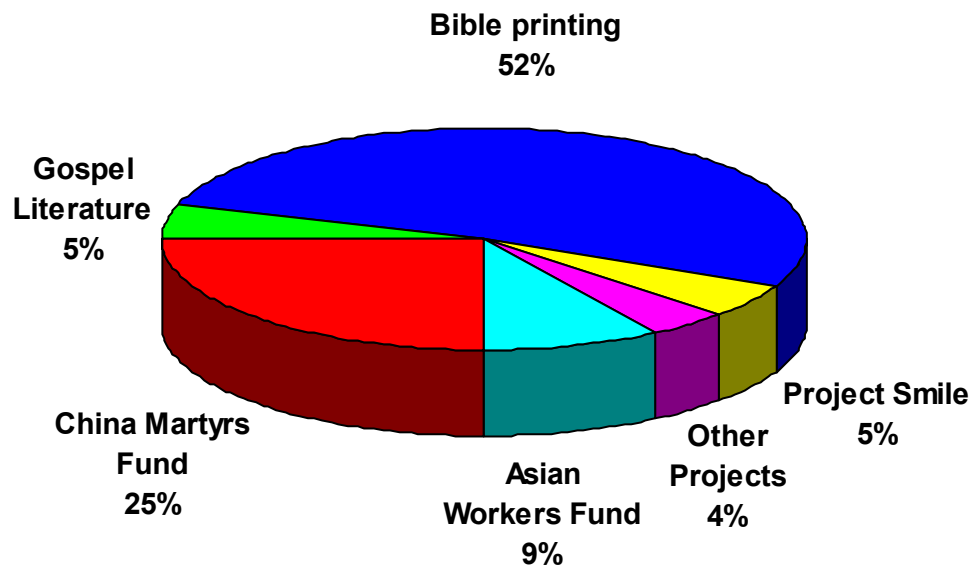
Peoples of the Buddhist World (a large pictorial book profiling every Buddhist people group in the world, similar in style to *Operation China*).

From Headhunters to Soul Winners: A Remarkable Account of Revival Among the People of Nagaland.

The Gospel of the Kingdom - an uplifting teaching book with Asia Harvest friend and board member Eivind Froen.

The Biography of Chinese housechurch leader Peter Xu Yongze - title not yet decided.

Summary of Asia Harvest Projects Supported in 2003



2003 Financial Statement

At Asia Harvest we desire to be open and accountable in the area of finances. Our financial statement for 2003 is now available upon request. Please write and ask if you would like to receive it.



From our Mailbox

I was a Jehovah's Witness for 14 years. During that time I did sixty hours preaching work a week in China Town and was committed to teaching the Bible in Chinese. One day, feeling tired and weary, I went into the Christian bookshop to buy a concordance and looking around the shop I saw a bestselling book called 'The Heavenly Man.' Seeing that it was about China I decided to buy it despite the Jehovah's Witnesses advising against buying books from Christian sources as they believe it is false teaching and that only Watchtower published books can be trusted. When I got home I started to read the book and it was like a modern-day Book of Acts.... As I read this I wept, but I was also scared because I was starting to see that this Christianity was the truth, not the Jehovah's Witnesses. I broke down under the conviction of the Holy Spirit and committed my life to the Lord Jesus Christ. I have started to go to a Chinese church, and started an Alpha course to learn more about God and His Word. Thank you for writing this story, and please pray for me.

Martin S., England

You and your people are terribly lost and have absolutely no idea as to what being a Christian means. What a lost tribe you are, yes, a tribe, not a religion. Where is your humility in Christ? xxxxheads.

"A more humble Christian" - received by email

I received your wonderful newsletters. I'm so excited about what is happening all the way over in China and other places. I am 12 years old and have been living in Fiji for 6 years now. When I grow up I want to be part of the Back to Jerusalem vision. My parents are missionaries here and they are working with the Indian people so I can understand the Hindi language. I also want to learn Chinese and Arabic. I am praying for the people and the house churches in China.

Stephanie G., Fiji

I am very thankful for what you are doing to the glory of God the Father. All the newsletters that you have sent me since last year are life to me and everyone that reads them. After reading everyone is led to prayer. Our local assembly has really benefited and people have redirected their hopes in Christ Jesus that He will save and help them. We have put some of the principles in place and God is doing great things. We are believing in God that one day He will make a way for you to come and minister in Zambia.

Aaron G., Zambia

Asia Harvest



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

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September 2004 - Newsletter #75



Hainan Island

(Part 1 - Missions History & The Three-Self Church)

From the Front Lines

with Paul & Joy Hattaway

Often when we focus on one thing we lose perspective of the overall situation. This is certainly true of mission work. It's easy to lose perspective when hearing about the revival in China. In recent years one of the main themes of our newsletters has been to give reports and testimonies of what God is doing in various parts of China. It's a blessing to write these stories down, but just by focusing on the good can cause us to forget the fact that China remains the country in the world with the highest number of lost souls, and the largest number of people who have never once heard the Name of Jesus Christ.

In this newsletter we start a two-part series on the advance of the Gospel on Hainan Island, which is located at the southern tip of China. Part One focuses on how God used the Western missionaries prior to establish His church prior to the arrival of Communism, and how he has worked among the Three-Self Church believers on the Island since. The 'Three-Self' is the official, government-registered church in China. In the next issue we will focus on the advance of the Gospel among the unregistered house churches on Hainan Island.

We will share some marvellous testimonies of faith and courage from Hainan, but as you read about the tremendous growth of the church there, be aware that only four percent of the Island's inhabitants are Christians today. Let's not forget the 96% who have yet to receive Christ's salvation and are spiritually dead in their sins and trespasses.

Whenever you read or hear of stories about the revival in China, remember that China remains an enigma because of its huge size and diversity. While there are cities like Wenzhou where you can look out of your hotel window and see dozens and dozens of church buildings within a short distance, there are other places where you can travel for days through areas without a single Christian or church.

The heart of Jesus was continually seeking the lost. He taught that he would leave 99 sheep that are safe in order to go after the one that is lost. May our heart be like our Master's – thrilled at the successes but yearning for God's glory to be made known among more and more people every day.

All of the colour pictures from Hainan Island in this newsletter are courtesy of Julian Hawken. The historical black and white images come from old missionary journals and *Bridge* magazine.



A little girl from the Kim Mun tribe, in central Hainan Island.



Hainan Island - 'Gateway to Hell' now Receiving Heaven's Blessing

Tropical Hainan Island is China's largest Island (not counting Taiwan), and is home to about eight million inhabitants.

Located at the southern tip of China, Hainan ('South Sea Island') is warm and humid almost year round, with bountiful rainfall and a verdant landscape. Between May and October the Island is lashed with several severe typhoons. Thousands of lives have been lost over the centuries among the fishing-based coastal communities. In the past few years, however, a different kind of wind has been blowing through the communities on the Island — the wind of the Holy Spirit. What was a small and

struggling church has experienced tremendous revival and growth. In the next two issues of Asia Harvest we would like to examine Christianity on Hainan, from its beginnings to the present day.

Historically, Hainan Island was viewed as a miserable, dangerous backwater of the Chinese Empire. Rumors circulated that the tribal 'savages' who dwelt on the Island had tails and commonly captured and ate their Chinese neighbors. When Li Deyu was exiled to Hainan during the Tang Dynasty (618-907) he described it as 'the gateway to hell'.

Hainan came into worldwide attention in March 2001, when an American spy-plane collided with a Chinese air-force jet and was forced to make an emergency landing on the Island, at a military airfield in Lingshui County. The incident, which cost the life of the Chinese pilot, led to a tense standoff as the Chinese held 24 American navy personnel for 11 days. The relationship between China and the United States was greatly strained for a time.

A Sudden Change of Plans

The first ever mention of Christianity on Hainan dates back to 1630 when Jesuit priests came from Macau and constructed a Catholic chapel in Fucheng town.

The first known Protestant missionary on Hainan was an eccentric Danish sea captain, Carl C. Jeremiassen, who was employed by the Qing Dynasty government to hunt down pirates and smugglers on the high seas.

Upon reaching Hainan Island in 1881, however, the 34-year-old Jeremiassen changed his occupation and began to preach the Gospel all over the Island, “distributing Bibles in one hand and dispensing medicines with the other.” In his very first year on Hainan Jeremiassen made a complete circuit of the Island, visiting numerous towns and villages.

Jeremiassen was quite a sight to the locals, who had never seen a foreigner

before. His appearance was described as “a red-bearded giant.”

Jeremiassen settled down in Fucheng, where he gathered enough funds to purchase the Wu clan’s ancestral hall on Wenzhuang Road. After cleaning and remodelling the building, he turned the hall into a church. Later, he tried to preach the Gospel in Danxian but he was strongly opposed by the local Chinese, so he moved to the town of Nada and established a Gospel hall there.

The U.S. Presbyterians

The very first missionaries sent out by the U.S. Presbyterian Mission Board after its formation were Dr. and Mrs. Charles McCandliss, who arrived on Hainan Island in 1885. They were excited at the potential they saw among the Island’s people, declaring, “the whole island is open to missionary work.”



A meeting of all the Presbyterian missionaries on Hainan Island, 1918



Young Chinese Christian women at the Presbyterian school on Hainan, 1920s

Dr. McCandliss commenced his work by caring for and treating leprosy victims near Haikou, the capital city of Hainan. Local people could not believe a Westerner would come and “stoop so low” as to give his life for the despised lepers. McCandliss helped build the Haikou Gospel Hospital (now renamed the People’s Hospital) and established the Haikou Church in Yanzao village in 1887, just two years after his arrival.

McCandliss lived on Hainan for forty years and labored sacrificially for the people of Hainan, giving a tremendous witness of faithfulness, integrity and hard work. Many of the elderly pastors who endured the persecutions of the Cultural Revolution had been disciplined by him.

Other missionary families joined the McCandliss’. Many of them were servants of God who had been broken, but not crushed, by life’s experiences. God used their

sacrificial service to establish His Church on Hainan. One such family was Frank Gilman and his wife Mary. Searching through an old missionary magazine (*Chinese Recorder*, January 1918), we found the following obituary to Mary Gilman:

“Mary Gilman was born at Perth Amboy, New Jersey, August 26, 1849. In October 1880 she was married to the Rev. Wellington J. White in New York City, and shortly after sailed for China. While in China three daughters were born. In July 1891, while on furlough, Mrs. Gilman passed through a tragic experience. While driving across the Erie Railroad tracts in Elmire, New York, the wagon in which she and her husband and their three children were riding was struck by an express train. Mr. White and the oldest daughter Lillian were instantly killed and all the other

members of the family severely injured. She had barely recovered from this nervous overstrain when in 1892 her youngest child Mary died.

As a consequence of this, Mrs. Gilman was unable to engage in any work for several years; the shock prostrated her for a time. Later, however, the buoyancy of her nature asserted itself and she was able

remembered as a faithful worker who shared with others their every burden. Not only was she faithful in her work, but Mrs. Gilman's temperament was conspicuous by its buoyancy and brightness. She was especially attractive to young people. In conversation and public appeal everyone recognized the reality of her call and her devotion to the mission cause. It was not infrequent after she had finished her addresses for audiences to ask her to continue, and always at



A group of tribal Christians in central Hainan, 1922.

to visit churches and societies and make missionary addresses....

On November 26, 1903, she was married to the Rev. Frank P. Gilman, at Amsterdam, New York, and sailed for Hainan, China.... Her work was characterized by conspicuous devotion, unwearied activities and an intensity of purpose that lead her to put herself constantly at the disposal of the people to whom she was ministering, and also the missionaries with whom she was associated. Mrs. Gilman will be

the close people would gather around her for further conversation.... Her home was open to everyone—the new missionary, the tired missionary, and the missionary who needed counsel and advice.... In the latter years much of her work was done in spite of physical and nervous troubles to which others would have yielded; but her missionary enthusiasm was irrepressible and one cannot help but rejoice that without a long invalidism she was called home in the midst of her work. It was as she would have wished.”

God Works among Three-Self Church Believers Despite Corrupt Leadership

China-watchers sometimes presume the laid-back atmosphere on Hainan Island means Christians there do not suffer much for their faith. The facts however suggest otherwise. Indeed, considering the size of the church, the level of government opposition seems to be worse than in many other provinces with much higher populations.



On Hainan, not only have the house churches come in for strong persecution instigated by the Three Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM), but even their own pastors who appeared too zealous for the Gospel came in for harsh treatment!

According to the Three-Self Church in China, there are 37,000 Christians in their churches on the whole of Hainan Island. In the mid-1990s the two largest government-controlled churches on Hainan were blessed to have two decent pastors. These men loved the Lord and endeavored to honor God's Word within the context of the government system. Because these two pastors were genuine believers, Rev. Li Xunru, the provincial Three-Self Church leader, continually gave them grief and pressurized them to submit to the Communist Party line.

Li Xunru considered the pastor of the TSPM church in Danzhou too evangelistic in his sermons. Li had him arrested literally out of the pulpit on a Sunday morning during worship. He was handcuffed and dragged away in front of the congregation. This faithful pastor was placed in prison for a long time, and was replaced by a preacher who was considered less of a threat to Li and the TSPM's objectives.

In Haikou, a Three-Self pastor named Chen was also removed during worship service and placed under house arrest for a long time. Chen wanted to send a coworker to the Chinese Mainland for theological training. The government however refused to let the worker go. Instead, the police in Haikou appointed two men to attend seminary. Neither of these men were Christians, but were simply government employees.

Despite this kind of evil interference, God continued to work among those Three-Self Church members whose hearts were committed to him.

During the excesses of the Cultural Revolution, Christians continued to meet

secretly in small groups, while all official church activities ceased for a 15-year period from 1966-81. Some believers had to hide their faith not only from the authorities but also from some of the pastors who had aligned themselves with the Three-Self Church.

In 1981, five years after Mao Zedong's death, a small group of Christians gathered in Haikou and asked to be allowed to legally worship again. In 1983 the Haikou church building at Yanzao was returned to the church and meetings were recommenced. On 31 March, 1985, three church workers were ordained by the TSPM in a ceremony witnessed by more than 400 believers.

By Christmas Day, 1987, churches everywhere throughout the Island were overflowing, mostly with elderly people who were now emerging again, their faith refined from years of harsh persecution.

Faithful Believers in Nada

Nada is the local name for what the Chinese commonly call Danzhou City. It contains about 80,000 souls, yet has just one official Three-Self church.

Yu Quanqiu, the former pastor of the TSPM church in Nada, was born into an ethnic-Hakka Christian family in 1918. On April 1, 1937, he gave his life to Jesus Christ at the age of 19. After studying theology at the Chongqing Theological Seminary in 1948, he was assigned to shepherd the flock in Nada.

The Nada Church had been established in 1914. Later, a devout local Christian named Deng Weiqing donated a large piece of land which remains the site of the Nada church to this day. A building large enough to seat 1,000 worshippers was constructed.



Pastor Yu Quanqiu in 1988.

In the mid-1950s the church was seized by the authorities and turned into government buildings. In 1958 the believers boldly constructed a small chapel right across the street from the confiscated buildings and there they continued their services under the leadership of Pastor Yu.

Yu was threatened many times by the authorities, who instructed the believers to stop their meetings, but more and more people came. As many as 1,000 people came to the Christmas services each year, crammed inside and outside the small chapel. In June 1963, the authorities could not stand the provocation any longer. They arrested Pastor Yu and imprisoned him for seven years for the sake of Jesus Christ.

In September 1980, Yu recommenced meetings in his home. Once again people came to this faithful shepherd. In December 1983, worship services were

permitted to take place in the small chapel once again.

In the Spring of 1986 the government decided to reopen the large Nada church, after 30 years of it being used as the local offices of the Bureau of Light and Water.

Pastor Yu Quankiu has been criticized by some house church Christians for his decision to register with the Three-Self Church after his release from prison. Some have even said his years of incarceration were in vain because of this choice. Pastor Yu, for his part, continued to preach the Gospel and refused to abandon the flock that God called him to shepherd so many years before.

For several years all seemed peaceful in the Nada church. Suddenly, on July 4, 1993, Pastor Yu was forcibly removed from the leadership of the church by the Hainan Island Religious Affairs Bureau.

During the Sunday morning service government officials seized the pulpit and announced to the stunned congregation that Yu and all the staff of the church had been fired. It was announced that from that point on the government officials were in charge of the day-to-day running of the church and they would appoint speakers for church meetings. Pastor Yu tried to legally fight his dismissal, but his efforts were to no avail. In the eyes of the Communist authorities and their religious arm, Pastor Yu had for too long refused to bow to their wishes about how to run the church.

This man of God who had proclaimed the Gospel uncompromisingly for so many years continued to minister from his home to the many people who came to him for advice and counsel, but he would never again stand behind the pulpit of the church he had served in for 42 years.

Sister Baowen's Tribulation

Pastor Yu's sister, Baowen, was a qualified nurse. She kept the Nada Hospital open during the War after the Japanese had placed many of the foreign medical staff under arrest.



Sister Baowen after 20 years in prison. Dr. Wang, who was miraculously healed by God, is in the background.

Baowen was falsely accused of being a spy for the West because of her contact with foreign medical doctors and nurses. She was imprisoned for 20 years.

Prison had not been a waste for Baowen. God's mercy and grace shone through the iron bars into her heart. It was during her twenty years' incarceration that Baowen met and married Liang Hanbin, who later became a faithful Bible study leader in the Nada church.

Baowen had adopted a homeless orphan

girl with a hare-lip disability. Little Lingen loved her new mother greatly. During Baowen's imprisonment Lingen was often able to slip past the prison guards unnoticed to bring food and drink to Baowen and other prisoners. Lingen grew up to be a dedicated Christian, and had three beautiful children.

Baowen did not dwell on the difficulties of the past, but looked forward to a bright future with the Lord. After her release from prison, she continued her ministry and medical work in Nada, seeing the twenty years she spent behind bars not as a punishment, but as the crowning glory of her walk with Jesus.

In the late 1980s Baowen received a written apology from the prison authorities who had taken twenty years of her life. She gladly forgave them.

The Miraculous Healing of Dr. Wang

One of the leading elders in the Nada Three-Self church was Dr. Wang. Some years ago he suffered a stroke and for eight months was unable to even sit upright. His condition deteriorated and it looked certain that he would never be able to walk again.

One day Pastor Yu Quanqiu suggested to Wang that they pray and ask the Lord to heal him.

According to *Bridge* magazine (May 1992), "Some nights later, Dr. Wang said he saw the Lord standing before him. 'Get up and walk!' Jesus said. 'Lord, I can't walk,' was his reply. 'Do you truly believe in Me?' 'I do.' Then the Lord placed his hand on Dr. Wang's shoulder and again said, 'Get up and walk.' He did and, from that night forward, was healed. Within a few months

he was able to undertake a four to five hour walking trip without any difficulty."



People Clueless of Gospel in 'Most Evangelized' Area

A few years after the Communists came to power in China in 1949, all missionaries were expelled and the Church entered into its most difficult time. Many of the believers on Hainan went 'underground' as the visible church was dismantled.

In the early 1990s the government-sanctioned Three-Self Church on Hainan Island was very weak. Although the TSPM claimed to have 20,000 believers on the Island at the time, one foreign Christian visited

every single church and stated the total combined attendance of every church would barely surpass 1,000 people.

When he visited the one area of Hainan that is widely considered to be the most evangelized part of the Island and the place with the highest concentration of Christians, he checked into a local hotel in the town and (speaking Chinese), asked the workers for the location of either one of the town's two official churches.

"What is a church?" they asked.

"A church is where Christians' worship."

"What is a Christian?"

"A Christian is a follower of Jesus," the foreigner replied.

"Who is Jesus?" asked the workers.

In the end the confused hotel workers concluded the foreigner must be looking for the Buddhist temple, located about 20 km out of the town.

This was the spiritual state of people living in the most evangelized part of Hainan Island. No wonder the Lord was making His own plans to glorify His Name in a special way among the people there.

For several years Asia Harvest has been helping the house churches on Hainan Island, through several projects including the China Bible printing fund and Asian Worker's fund, as well as other printing projects.

We appreciate your help in bringing the Gospel to this little-known place.



Please pray the Christians' lives on Hainan Island today will be Christ-like, unified, and zealous to preach the Gospel to those who have never heard.

Ask God to bring His kingdom to Hainan Island, and all of China, with great power

and authority.

In the next issue of Asia Harvest we look at the work of the house churches on Hainan Island. Just ten years ago the total number of house church believers on the island was small. Today, respected researchers living in Hainan estimate there to be at least 360,000 believers! We will look at some of the ways God has expanded his kingdom there.



From our Mailbox

Revival is breaking out in my home! Well, at least my husband and me are on-fire and that is a start! Your books "Heavenly Man" and "Back to Jerusalem" are answers to prayer!! I cried while reading both. I've prayed so long and so hard, that the Lord would please let me see men filled with the Spirit. I begged him, "Lord, you built Your church on the foundation of men filled with the spirit. Why are we having so much trouble?" We examined our motives in each painful church situation, prayed, kept seeking, cried many tears, fasted and prayed in desperation, over and over again. We've been crushed so many times by other Christians and American churches, we almost lost faith in God. After a few chapters of "Back to Jerusalem", I jolted upright — God spoke to my heart, "This is the answer to your prayer"! I don't CARE that these brothers and sisters are 10,000 miles away. Somewhere on this earth such people exist!

Joy, Arizona

I know that you are doing what you think best, but you must stop assuming that there is only one true way to worship. Religion is the concept of humans and, for that precise reason is flawed by our imperfect thinking and understanding. It is essential that whether or not we agree with the beliefs of other peoples, we must still respect them. It is the blind sureness about one's religion being the "true religion" that is the cause of so many of the problems in our world. Diversity is part of what makes the world a beautiful and wonderfully interesting place. Let people be to live in their own ways. It is not for you to judge.

Patricia, received by email

For me it is great pleasure to receive your newsletter, I'm from Bulgaria, and the story begun after my wife found your website on the internet some months ago, while she searched for information about the suffering church in Asia for our prayer bulletin. I remember the time when the post officer came to me and gave me the first newsletter from Asia Harvest. We read it in one breath, and shared the stories with our brothers and sisters, and they were so touched by these stories. My wife included some of the information in our prayer bulletin for the Christians here. Just when I thought that these wonderful magazines would not come anymore we received another issue - what a joy it was in our cell group when we read the testimony and powerful truth in your message. God touched the life of our group here. We pray for your work and projects. God bless you!

Martin, Bulgaria

Asia Harvest



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

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November 2004 - Newsletter #76



Hainan Island

(Part 2 - The House Church Revival)

From the Front Lines

with Paul & Joy Hattaway

“Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.” (Colossians 3:1-2)

We heard a story recently of a Christian pastor who had several theological degrees and awards for various achievements. He proudly displayed all his certificates and trophies on the wall of his basement, and many friends who came to his house often remarked on them.

One day a flood engulfed the area where the pastor lived, and he and his family were required to evacuate their house for a few days. When they returned they found the flood waters had swamped the basement and all his certificates, trophies and degrees had been completely destroyed.

Distraught, the pastor complained to the Lord about his great loss. The Lord replied to him, “Don’t worry, I was going to burn them up anyway!” ***“But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming.”*** (2 Peter 3:10-12)

This reminds us of the story of the great Chinese evangelist, John Sung. He studied in America and became a qualified doctor. Everyone presumed he would follow in his father’s footsteps and become a doctor back home in Fujian Province, but God had other ideas. During the long boat trip back to China, God called John Sung to preach the Gospel as an evangelist. Sung accepted the call, and before the boat docked in Shanghai, he threw all his worldly achievements overboard into the sea. John Sung went on to become one of China’s greatest ever evangelists, leading tens of thousands of people to faith in Christ.

It is good for us to be reminded that our life in this world is transient. We do not belong here, we are just passing through. It is spiritually dangerous when we live like we are going to be here forever. The Bible asks, ***“What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes.”*** (James 4:14). May our prayer be, ***“Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.”*** (Psalm 90:12).



CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Please note that the main United States contact address for Asia Harvest has changed! It is now:

**1903 60th Place
Suite M1204
Bradenton, FL 34203
USA**

Our phone number and email address remain the same. Please update your records. If you have recently sent a letter to our old Texas address, please don't worry as that mail will be forwarded to us for some time to come.

Hainan Island - The House Church Revival

In the last issue of Asia Harvest we examined the missions history and work among the Three-Self churches on Hainan Island in south China. This month we shift our focus to the house churches on the Island, and take a look at how God has brought a tremendous revival to most parts of Hainan in recent years.

Exponential Growth

Although a small house church movement existed on Hainan Island throughout the 1980s, it lacked the organization and leadership needed to impact a large number of people. Most of the house churches were small, localized fellowships with no cohesive leadership or structure.

In 1993 one Christian leader was used by God to start a training program which resulted in a rapid multiplication of house churches throughout the Island.

The whole training process began with just three house churches, totaling under 100 members. The leaders were trained in evangelism and spiritual mapping (that is, new plans and workers were directed to strategic areas where there were no existing churches), while pastors were trained to train other new shepherds.

By 1996, the number of house churches affiliated with this movement had grown

to more than 100, with a combined membership of over 16,000 Christians.

As a result of this amazing growth, by 1996 each of the 19 counties on Hainan Island contained at least two reproducing churches, and every Chinese language group and minority group except the Utsat Muslims had at least two churches from this movement in their midst also.

The timing of this training program coincided with the arrival of a number of Chinese house church evangelists from the Mainland, who had received clear calls from God to reach out to people on Hainan. The result was that within a short time there was an explosion in the number of house churches on the Island.

Practically all of the members of these churches were the result of new conversions, and not the transfer of members from existing churches.

Because of the focus on evangelism and training, growth continued to be exponential. By 1998 the number of Christians on the Island had mushroomed to more than 80,000; and by the middle of 2000 a thorough survey conducted by local leaders put the number of all Christians on the Island at 360,000!

The approximate doubling time for Christians on the Island at the time was seven months. That is, every seven months the number of believers doubled!

Some people have doubted that the house churches on Hainan have had such a large revival. The old Three-Self church figure of 37,000 Christians on the Island is still quoted by some sources. These figures ignore the fact that revival has taken place on Hainan completely independent of any of the efforts of the official church. This has led to jealousy and some

mocking from some Three-Self Church leaders, as well as an increase in persecution of house church Christians.

We have personally investigated the phenomena that has happened on Hainan Island, and are completely convinced that the claims of 360,000 Christians are accurate. In fact, we spoke with one brother who has been heavily involved with the training of workers. When we told him that some sources claim there are still just 37,000 Christians on the Island, he laughed out loud and said, "That is stupid! I have personally met at least 150,000 of them."

While we should praise God for what he has done among the house churches on Hainan in the past ten years, before we get carried away we should realize that 360,000 Christians still represents less than five percent of the Island's population.

By 1998 every part of the Island had been impacted, but the highest concentrations of believers remained in the north, south and eastern areas. The areas with the weakest influence of Christianity could be said to be Baisha, Dongfang, Ledong and Changjiang counties - all located in the western part of Hainan.

How Did the Revival Start?

What events unfolded to trigger this startling growth on Hainan Island? Some people assume an ingenious methodology must have been employed, but the truth is the training given was extremely simple, and Biblically-based.

Firstly, existing house churches on the Island were encouraged to send evangelists to those areas and people groups who had

never received a Gospel witness. Many of these churches were filled with second, third, or fourth generation believers who had lost all passion and vision for the lost. Most pastors were fully occupied with the immediate needs of their own flocks, and had no time or strategy to look beyond their own backyard. When these churches were organized to systematically go into other parts of the Island, they were empowered and motivated to do whatever it took to see Christ glorified among all people on Hainan.

Secondly, short-term overseas Chinese church planting teams greatly added direction and solid foundational teaching to the fledgling churches. These missionaries helped lay a theological foundation for the new believers, so that the great majority of converts who have been led to Christ through this movement remained faithful to the Lord.

From the start, "modeling" was used as a key to the movement. That is, instead of just preaching to the leaders and new converts, the trainers were required to teach by the example of their own lives. In this way good and wholesome attitudes, strategies, and motivations were modeled for the Hainan Island Christians to copy. In short, the trainers were required to live what they taught. If they taught people in village evangelism, they were required to have successfully done what they wanted others to do.

Some other important principles that laid the foundation of the revival included 'shared leadership' (i.e. leaders were not allowed to become dictators to their flocks, but were required to enter into mutual accountability with other leaders). In this way, each cell remained healthy because of

the input of new ideas, fresh teaching and a balanced reception of different Spiritual gifts.

Teaching patterns were required that were appropriate for poorly educated and illiterate people, so that they would not feel left behind. Pastors were required to be unpaid volunteers, and meetings were to be solely based in believers' homes. Consequently, despite their meager salaries, money was freed up to send evangelists and church planters to other parts of the Island, and to help the needs of people in the churches.

All believers were expected to be engaged in preaching the Gospel; there was no division of ordained clergy and laymen. This way, all new believers were soul winners, and the church grew quickly. In a sense, because the church on Hainan had been so small before this movement commenced, the new believers did not have a bad example to learn from. Because this training was given to new believers, they had no reason to doubt that this pattern was anything but normal for Christians.

The believers love for each other, and for non-believers, was a powerful testimony to people everywhere. Christians even shared their financial resources with people in need, something rarely seen in modern, materialistic China. This stark contrast and display of practical selflessness attracted many to the Gospel.

Whenever new churches were planted, multiple leaders were raised up from the very start. This enabled the churches to grow without excessive outside influence, and also prevented a leadership vacuum from taking place should one leader be arrested.

Quite often the new churches wrote their own original hymns and worship songs which expressed their personal faith and Christian experience. This music became a

strong encouragement and influence toward solidarity and a rallying point in difficult circumstances.

Little Wang Beaten to Death

When talking of the marvelous strategies and events that has led at least 360,000 people on Hainan Island to Christ in recent years, it is sometimes easy to forget the tremendous cost and commitment that believers made. The Gospel did not always spread easily. Often it came at great personal cost to faithful believers. Some on Hainan Island have paid for their faith with the ultimate cost – their own lives.

The following story from Hainan is one testimony of a faithful martyr.

In 1994 a small group of men traveled to a town to conduct evangelism in an unreached area primarily occupied by members of the Li minority group. The first Li church had been successfully planted in another area, but in this new place things did not go as planned.

Let's continue the story by quoting from a confidential report from a Christian worker on Hainan Island:

Old Wang winced in pain as the creaking bus bounced along the dirt road. His broken ribs were excruciating but he was better off than his coworker Cai Wen. He looked at Cai, weak from blood loss, who had his eyes closed and was cradling his broken arm.

The ten-hour trip would seem much longer but Wang wasn't eager to get home. He would have to face Little Wang's wife, Liang, and her ten-year-old son. He wondered how he would break the news to her that her husband had been killed by an angry mob of Li people the evening

before. He could still hear the accusations: "The spirits of the Mountains rule our land. You Chinese dogs have only been here five hundred years and you know nothing. You have stolen our land and now you wish to steal our gods as well. You will pay for this!"

The mob had then beaten Old Wang and his companions with sticks and farm implements. A particularly fierce young man had continued to beat Little Wang. When the crowd dispersed, Little Wang didn't move. He had paid the ultimate price. He and his family had only been believers for five months.

After Old Wang and Cai returned home and had seen a doctor they began to arrange with the other church members to help Liang with the farm and arrange for some help in providing some meat and eggs.

The following Sunday the church determined to send Old Wang and Cai Wen back to the same Li village to evangelize again. There were no churches in the entire county. Someone had to take the message of salvation to them. The church grew strangely silent when Liang requested to accompany Old Wang and Cai Wen on their return trip.

The Christians worshipped for hours that day, praying fervently for the trip and for the salvation of the Li villagers. The other house churches in the county were also notified to pray and fast for the first three days of the evangelistic effort to the village.

When the trio arrived in the Li village it was evening. They slept beside a pig pen outside the village. Whether due to discomfort or busy minds, none of them slept well that night. The next morning they went to the market. Quite soon the word spread of their return and a mob quickly formed again and a few people began to yell threats.

Old Wang felt fear sweep over him.

Suddenly Liang stepped to the front and spoke up: **"I am the widow of the man you killed less than three weeks ago. My husband is not dead, however, because God had given him eternal life. Now he is living in paradise with our God. My husband came here to tell you how you could have that same eternal life. If he were here he would forgive you for what you did. I forgive you as well. I can forgive you because God has forgiven me. If you would like to hear more about this God then meet us under the big tree outside of town this evening."** The crowd grew suddenly quiet and gradually broke up.

That day Old Wang instructed Liang as to what she should say that night. Most of the village gathered under the big tree to listen to her.

After a week and a half, a large number of the villagers decided to follow this God. Old Wang stayed behind to baptize them and to teach them how to serve God while Cai Wen accompanied Liang back home.

Two months later Old Wang returned home with two leaders and a young man from the new Li church. During the Sunday worship the two Li leaders brought their greetings and expressed their appreciation. Then the young man stood up to speak. **"I am the man who murdered Little Wang. The Lord has graciously forgiven me and I ask for your forgiveness as well. I, and our entire church, owe an eternal debt of gratitude to Little Wang and Liang for bringing us the message of life. We want to give this love offering to help support Liang and we wish to pledge monthly support of 50 Yuan. This is the least we can do to show our appreciation."**

Four months later word came from the Li church that they had planted another Li fellowship, two mountains away in the same county. When he heard this news Old Wang silently mused over the truth of the hymn that Liang had recently written:

“It is through difficulty and suffering that we must follow.

Our Lord has prepared the way, and it leads to glory.

He is glorified in our obedience, so take courage.

He will be glorified in all the earth, and we will be glorified in Him.”

When God Would Not Let His Name Be Defamed

A remarkable testimony occurred when new house church believers traveled to a Hainanese village in Lingao County, in the northern part of the island, in November 1995. The church planting team arrived in one village to preach. The local people said there was no way they would believe in the Christian God because they already worshipped the most powerful spirits.

The locals gave a stern warning to the evangelists. They said that the village shaman (witchdoctor) had, six years previously, received a vision that Christianity was the one true religion. This man was so convinced that he immediately burned all his spirit charms and other paraphernalia, even though he had not yet heard the Gospel and was not a believer.

As soon as he did this, the people said, the shaman started to have visions where he saw many demons flying at him to eat his internal organs and completely destroy him.

He was so scared that he tore his clothes off, ran around naked, and went insane. He also lost the ability to speak. The shaman would pick up stones and throw them into the air, throwing the stones at the demons that were tormenting him. He lived in a hut with a thatch roof and walls so soon his rock throwing and other antics had completely knocked away the roof of his home. His life had become pitiful. He was exposed to the elements, naked, unable to speak, and completely tormented by demons.

The shaman was only kept alive by the kindness of the local people. Every night they would place some rice and other food outside his door for him to eat.

The villagers said that the shaman's experiences were proof that their local spirits were more powerful than the Christian God, so they told the evangelists not to waste their time, for they would never believe in the Christian God. They said if the Christian God was truly able to heal and deliver this man, then they would all know that Jesus is the true and only God.

The evangelists were new believers. When they heard this story they didn't know what to do, so they returned home.

Over the coming weeks the church started to pray and fast for this village and for the shaman, asking God to glorify His Name among the villagers because His Name was being defamed.

The evangelists were taught how to cast out demons. They then returned to the village and cast the demons out of the man. Immediately he regained his speech. They clothed him and helped him rebuild the roof of his home.

After hearing the Gospel, the ex-shaman became a Christian. When they saw the

tremendous change in the man's life, almost the entire village became Christians.

The new believers then took the Gospel to the neighboring village and the vast majority of that village also believed.

As a testimony to God's power over the forces of darkness, the Christians began to meet for worship and Bible study in the home of the ex-shaman! He was not the church leader himself, but his powerful life-changing experience was the catalyst for many to come into the Kingdom of God, and for the Name of Jesus Christ to be rightfully honored among the people in that area.

"We Just Prayed!"

One of the most remarkable stories of how God is using humble, simple-hearted Christians to build His kingdom on Hainan Island was related by Carl Lawrence in his book "The Coming Influence of China."

Lawrence recounts how, in the mid-1990s, two young women came to faith in Christ in another Chinese province after hearing the Gospel via shortwave radio broadcasts.

The two new believers received Bibles and immediately wanted to serve God with all their hearts. A Hong Kong-based pastor met with the two and tried to teach them that they should remain where they were and minister to their neighbors. The girls protested, "No! The Bible you gave us says Jesus told us to go into all the world. We want to go." Finally the pastor, feeling ashamed at his own comparative lack of zeal, relented and told the girls there was a need for workers on Hainan Island.

The duo had never heard of Hainan Island before but were certain God wanted them to preach the Gospel there.

Two years later the girls returned to the Chinese mainland where the pastor met with them. He had not heard any news since their departure. The Hong Kong pastor used the meeting to introduce the girls to several visiting Western church leaders. After introductions, the girls were asked how their work had been and whether or not they had been able to start any churches.

Lawrence explains, "The women put their heads down and answered, 'Oh pastor, we have only been there two years...yea, two years. Not many. Not very many'. Their voices were apologetic. 'We have only been there a short time. The people were not very friendly, no, not very friendly. Sometimes they became very vicious. Yes, sometimes they told us they were going to drown us in the ocean. Several men threatened us. Oh my, and because we were so young, even some of the ladies did not like us. Yes, some even called us terrible names... so not many churches... no, not many'."

Finally, after being asked again by the frustrated pastor, the girls apologized that they had been only able to start 30 churches since their arrival on Hainan Island!

The pastor and his Western friends were taken aback by the news. They asked how many people attended their new churches. After again going through a process of apologies and self-effacing comments, they answered, "Two hundred and twenty." The listeners presumed that meant the girls had won a total of 220 converts in their 30 churches, but 220 was the number of members in the smallest of their churches!

"How many people do you have in the largest of your churches," the pastor

demanded to know. "Oh...not many.... Less than five thousand. Only four thousand nine hundred. Yes, less than five thousand. We have just started."

The Western visitors were so touched by the humility and zeal of the two young ladies that they began to weep. One of the visitors told the pastor to ask the two ladies how they managed to achieve such great results.

"What did we do? Why nothing. Yes, we did nothing, nothing." The amazed onlookers protested, "You did nothing? You have thirty churches – the smallest with two hundred and twenty people, the largest with almost five thousand new Christians! And you did nothing?"

The two evangelists simply said, "We just prayed.... After we prayed, the Holy Spirit would tell us exactly what to do. We would keep praying and He would tell us what to do, we would do it. Then we would pray again and he would tell us what to do again."

Note: When we first read this story of the two faithful girls, we were not sure of the story's accuracy, as it almost sounded too good to be true. We sent the story to a friend who is an expert on the church in Hainan Island. Somewhat surprisingly, our informant responded that indeed the story is true, these two young women had done great exploits and planted many churches in the face of great opposition and struggle. They primarily worked in southern Hainan Island, including several counties around Sanya City. However, our friend also added that because of a lack of follow up and discipleship, that much of the fruit had been lost to cults, and that by 1999 perhaps "only" 5,000 of the duo's converts remained true believers.

PRAY FOR THE CHURCH OF HAINAN ISLAND

- Praise God for his mighty works on Hainan Island! Pray He would continue to be glorified through the lives of the Hainan Christians.
- Ask God to protect His children from cults and heresies that seek to deceive and divide them.
- Pray Christians in your part of the world would boldly go back to the simple pattern of the New Testament, as the believers on Hainan have done.

We appreciate your prayers and support of the work of Asia Harvest. If you get a chance, please write to us. We would love to hear from you and receive your feedback.



PROJECT SMILE



Your generous gifts have so far helped bring a smile to the faces of 1,836 children in Vietnam.

Project Smile helps children from poor families in Vietnam who were born with cleft palate or hare-lip disabilities. The average cost to help a child is just \$ 60. This will help one child to have a better life, and an opportunity for his or her family to hear about Jesus Christ for the first time.

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Current Total: 444,032 Bibles printed and delivered.

We are partnering with six large house church networks in China in a long-term goal to print Bibles for the church. These Bibles are distributed to all parts of China, equipping the believers and helping add fuel to the fires of revival that are burning throughout the world's largest nation. **Each Bible costs just US \$2.25 to print and deliver.**

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Because of your prayers and support we are currently able to support 650 living martyrs.

The **China Living Martyrs Fund** assists many pastors and evangelists who are now unable to work because of their injuries. They and their families face extreme poverty and hardship. You can support one or more of these living martyrs with a gift of **US \$25 per month each**. A prayer card will be sent to every regular supporter.

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