



Asia Harvest

2006

NEWSLETTERS

(Combined)

Asia Harvest



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

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February 2006 - Newsletter #82



2005/06 Annual Report

A Year of Opportunity and Partnership

Asia Harvest Report 2005-06

by Paul & Joy Hattaway

"The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Now the body is not made up of one part but of many.... God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body."

(1 Corinthians 12:12-14, 18-19)

We pray you and your family enjoyed a blessed and peaceful start to 2006! In this issue we would like to present a brief summary report of the various projects Asia Harvest was involved with in 2005. If there are three words to sum up the year for us it would be challenge, opportunity, and partnership. 2005 started with a tremendous challenge. The Tsunami had just taken place, wiping out hundreds of thousands of lives and displacing millions throughout Asia.

When it comes to effective partnership in God's work the partner we need the most is the Lord Jesus Christ! Without His power and enablement everything we do would be in vain anyway. On the human level, we at Asia Harvest felt we were too small to make any significant difference in the Tsunami relief effort by ourselves, but by partnering with several other Christian organizations including our Malaysian representatives STAMP and our UK representatives AsiaLink, we have been able to play a role in helping tens of thousands of people in Indonesia, Thailand, Sri Lanka, India and the Maldives. Many individuals and churches also participated with financial giving, including a North American mission which specializes in giving aid during natural disasters. Those we work with are all dedicated Christians who share the gospel while helping those in need.

More strategic opportunities came in other projects we operate, such as our China Bible printing fund, the Asian Worker's fund, China Living Martyrs fund, Project Smile in Vietnam, and our new China Children's Project, which helps train and equip Sunday School teachers in China. In October another terrible natural disaster took place when a huge earthquake struck in Kashmir along the India-Pakistan border. Again, through the grace of God and the power of partnership, we were able to assist Christian friends who have been doing an effective work in Kashmir for many years.

All of these are initiatives that require us to partner with various other Christian groups in Asia and around the world. It is a wonderful blessing to see the Body of Christ operate in such a way. As the Apostle Paul said, "God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be?" By realizing that none of us can achieve much by ourselves, we can draw on the strengths and gifts of others. Much more can be accomplished this way.

King David understood the dynamics of successful partnerships. He knew that no one role was any more important than another. All had to work together to get the job done. In 1 Samuel we read that when David's men went in pursuit of the Amalekites, "some stayed behind, for two hundred men were too exhausted to cross the ravine. But David and four hundred men continued the pursuit" (1 Sam. 30:9). After the Amalekites were defeated, some of David's men complained about the 200 who had not been on the 'front lines' of the battle. They didn't want those men to be allowed to keep some of the plunder. David, however, said: "No, my brothers, you must not do that with what the LORD has given us. He has protected us and handed over to us the forces that came against us. Who will listen to what you say? The share of the man who stayed with the supplies is to be the same as that of him who went down to the battle. All will share alike" (1 Sam. 30:23-24).

We want to thank all of you who participated in the advance of the kingdom of God throughout Asia in the past year, whether through Asia Harvest or another organization. Our vision since we started working in Asia in 1988 has been simply to serve as a link between the Asian Church and Christians around the world, so that the Gospel may spread, changing lives throughout Asia where two-thirds of the world's population lives.

From the start our policy has been not to engage in any fundraising schemes at all, but to leave it up to God to supply our needs. The only outlet we have for notifying people of what we do is this newsletter and our website. In 2005 we experienced an increase in finances received for projects of 142% from 2004. Almost half of all income received was designated for the Tsunami relief efforts.

We are acutely aware that without God's guiding hand, and the Spirit-led participation of His people, nothing of eternal worth would be accomplished. Our prayer is that God would be glorified, for He alone is worthy!

We genuinely feel that all those who participate in the work of spreading the Gospel throughout Asia are equal partners in the harvest. The help we receive comes in so many different significant ways; not only in financial giving but in letters of encouragement, prayer and intercession, and hands-on involvement. Thank you and God bless you.

Tsunami Relief

The new year in 2005 commenced with much prayer and discussion as to how we could effectively help the Tsunami relief efforts in Asia.

Stage One was launched to help the victims of the Tsunami initially survive the tragedy. The emergency assistance included food, water, tents, blankets, cooking utensils and medicine. Thousands of people were helped.

Stage Two helped people get back up on their feet. A large boat was purchased to transport up to 50 tons of supplies and medical and building staff around the Aceh coastline to villages that were unreachable by road.

Stage Three, which is presently underway, is a longterm goal to rebuild lives and communities in the affected areas. Hundreds of simple houses have been constructed, such as the ones in the picture below.



In total, since the Tsunami struck on December 26, 2004, we thank God that we have received a total of US\$1,072,928 for Tsunami relief efforts. Every cent of this has been sent on to the neediest areas. We did not use any part of it for administration or any other expenses.

Our concern from the beginning was not only for the physical welfare of the tsunami victims, but also for their spiritual welfare. Many of the places where the tsunami struck were strongholds of Islam and Buddhism that had few or no Christians. Our prayer is firstly to see people helped in their desperate need, and secondly that in the near future many thousands of tsunami survivors would receive Christ because of the loving witness of those who helped them.

Kashmir Earthquake

In early October a huge earthquake struck Kashmir - one of the most unreached and needy places in the world. Approximately 100,000 people were buried alive and hundreds of thousands more faced a hopeless future with no homes, jobs or schools. In an instant everything in their lives were gone. For the last eight years we had been working with an Indian ministry that takes the Gospel into Kashmir. After the earthquake we immediately contacted them and together launched a plan to help the Kashmiri people. Food, water, tents and medicine were taken into the mountains by our coworkers. The picture below shows a van used to travel into remote areas and distribute this aid to the needy people.

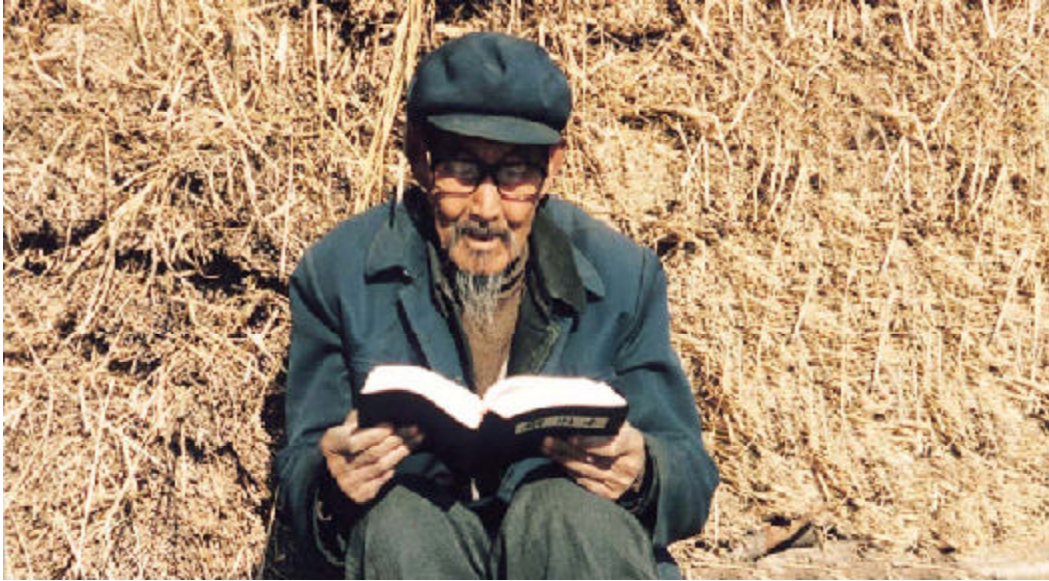
Thanks to your prayers and generosity, we have received more than US\$ 70,000 in our Kashmir Earthquake fund. At the moment the harsh winter has set in, with temperatures plummeting to well below freezing. Plans are underway now for long-term help such as rebuilding homes.

Please pray that this needy Muslim area, where people have lived for countless centuries with no knowledge of Jesus Christ, would open up through this disaster and bring forth a strong and growing Kashmiri church.

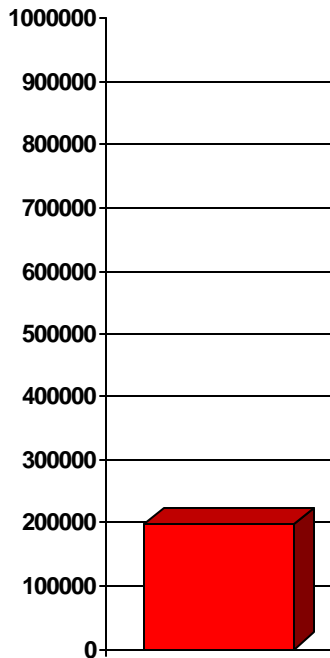


CHINA BIBLE PRINTING

Helping Equip China's Christians with God's Word



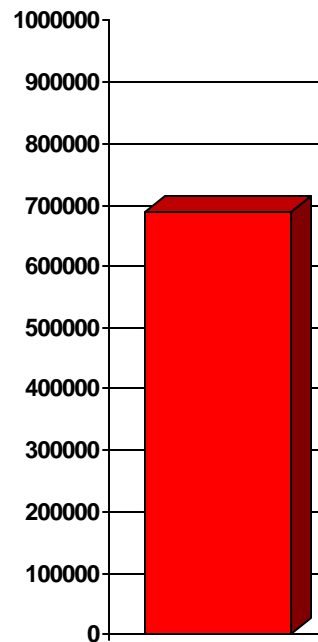
**2005 Bibles
Printed: 196,190**



Although a limited number of Bibles are now allowed to be printed inside China, there remains a serious lack of Bibles because of the tremendous growth rate of the church in China. Millions of Christians are still without God's Word. We are partnering with 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: 688,476**



CHINA LIVING MARTYRS

Supporting pastors Disabled by Persecution and Torture

Because of your prayers and support we were able to support 985 living martyrs every month throughout 2005. This has been a tremendous blessing to the Church in China.

In China today Christians are regularly beaten, tortured and some have even died because they love Jesus. House church leaders have given us details of more than 1,000 Christian leaders who have been disabled or faced with longterm illness or injury as a result of torture. The China Living Martyrs Fund assists many pastors and evangelists who are now unable to work because of persecution. They and their families face extreme poverty and hardship. The support is given through house church leaders of various groups in China. You can support one or more of these living martyrs with a gift of \$25 per month each. A prayer card is sent to every regular supporter of this project, with information about a living martyr to remind you to pray.

CHINA CHILDREN'S PROJECT

Equipping House Churches to Reach China's Children

Although we only launched this project recently, by the end of 2005 sufficient funds had been received for the Chinese house churches to train and equip 1,001 Sunday School teachers. Each teacher is expected to train an average of 100 children.



ASIAN WORKERS FUND

Partnering with Pioneer Asian Evangelists

Because of your prayers and partnership we were able to support an average of 419 Asian church-planting missionaries every month throughout 2005.

Out of the various Asian evangelists we support in countries like China, India, Nepal, Myanmar (Burma), Thailand and Bhutan, one of the groups that is doing the most strategic ministry are those from Nagaland, a state in northeast India where the majority of inhabitants are Christians. These evangelists, most of them young, are reaching into other less fortunate states in India and surrounding nations, and are seeing God's kingdom established among tribes and people groups that previously had no knowledge of the Gospel.

Some of the best fruit has taken place in the remote Himalayan state of Arunachal Pradesh, where many of the Asian workers fund evangelists have gone. The following table shows the number of Christians at eight locations where Asian Worker's fund evangelists are working:

Location	New Believers	Total Believers	Fellowships
Tawang	45	45	3
Seppa	43	43	1
Tali	72	250	4
Bomdila	28	200	4
Tirap	35	180	3
Kaying	33	250	5
Yachuli	180	180	4
Anini	32	32	2
Totals	468	1,180	26

The advance of the kingdom of God has not gone unnoticed by the devil. At Kaying, where 60 families now follow the Lord, a key leader of the Donyi Polo (Sun-Moon worship) religion believed in Christ after he experienced a supernatural healing. His whole family also believed. As a result the angry village chief burned down the Christians' meeting place.

Through your prayers and generous gifts, we were able to support many new evangelists in 2005. This work is constantly expanding and new workers are being recruited. You can support one or more of these workers with a gift of US\$25 per month each. A laminated prayer card is sent to every supporter of this project.

PROJECT SMILE

Helping Children in Vietnam

Your generous gifts helped bring a smile to the faces of 1,062 children in Vietnam in 2005 (3,447 since 1999).



You are probably aware that Project Smile helps children from poor families in Vietnam who were born with cleft palate or harelip disabilities. What you may not know is that we are now also helping children with various forms of cancer, burns, club-feet, and other such conditions. We received the following testimony from our coworkers in Vietnam about a girl named Huong:

Huong had been taken to the cancer hospital as a last resort. Her parents had sold all they had, their bicycle, their cooking pots, everything to try and have their daughter treated.

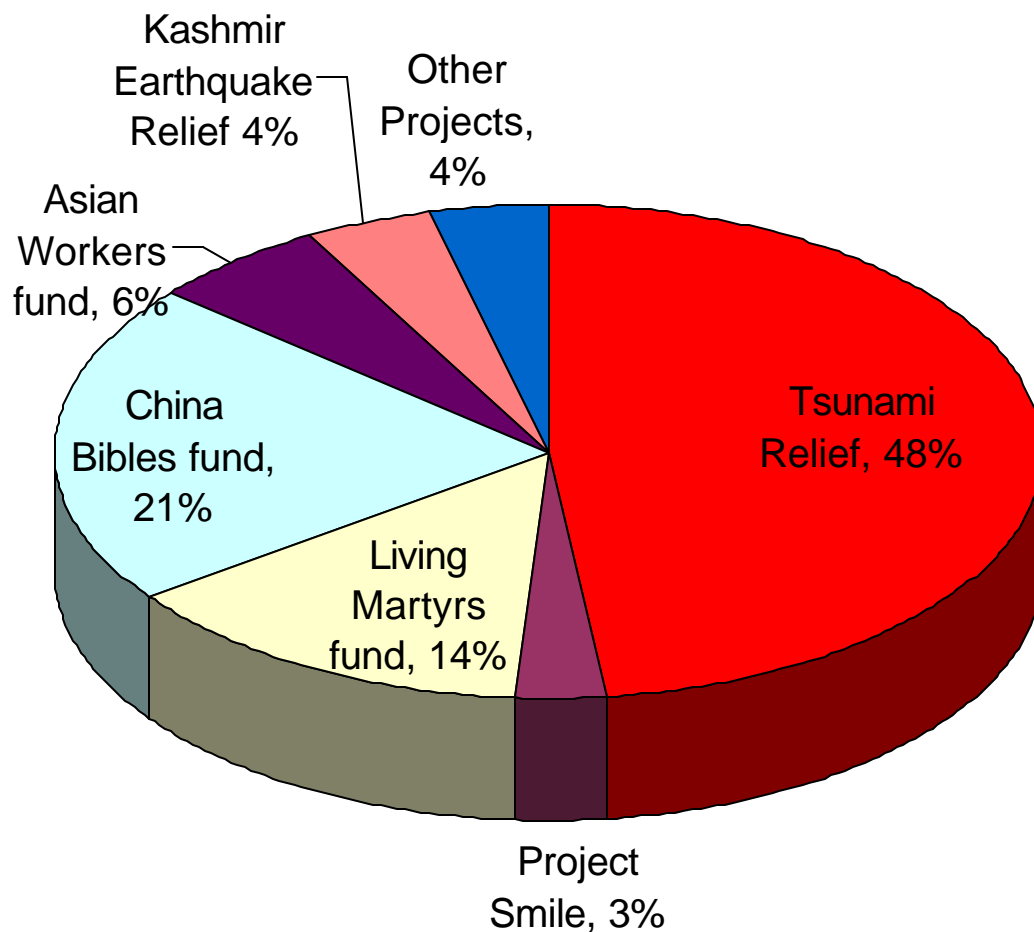
After spending what little they had at a provincial hospital they were bluntly told, "Your daughter has cancer, you must take her to Saigon, it is her only hope."

They had managed to borrow the bus fare, only to find that the hospital in Saigon could not take charity cases, for it was struggling even to pay it's own staff. Yet God was making a way, for that morning we

happened to visit the cancer hospital and saw Huong's parents clutching their precious daughter as they wept in desperation, for their poverty had crushed their hopes of saving Huong's life. We quickly made arrangements with the hospital's director, and little Huong was admitted for treatment. Their tears of sadness turned to tears of joy as they heard the news that God loved their daughter, and had sent us to provide the treatment. But the question remained: What happens to the children who come the days we do not visit the hospital? The answer was simple, they were sent home to die.

God in His great mercy made the way for us to establish an emergency fund for children just like Huong. Now, when a desperately poor family arrives and is unable to pay for treatment the hospital calls our representative, who goes straight to the hospital to investigate and release the funds for each needy case. The fund means there will be far fewer tears shed by desperate parents whose hope of treatment for their child has been dashed. It means less pain, less suffering, and the blessing of life with the glory given to God. We were able to establish this fund because of the compassion of our partners. Thank you for being a channel of God's compassion.

Summary of Asia Harvest Projects Supported in 2005



2006 Financial Statement

At Asia Harvest we desire to be open and accountable in the area of finances. Our financial statement for 2005 is now available upon request. Please write and ask if you would like to receive it.



From our Mailbox

"My family read about the house churches in China. It blessed us so much and filled us with joy. Are there believers such as these right here in our country? Believers who really do see the power of God in their lives? Believers who truly see healings, signs and wonders and hear from the Holy Ghost themselves? Believers who really know Jesus?"

Diane F., USA

"I find your mission very misleading, narrow-minded, and in some ways downright ignorant and offensive. People in Asian countries do not necessarily need YOUR faith, what they need and deserve is the right to choose their own. Why don't you try spreading democracy and freedom of expression instead of pushing your ideologies on the impoverished and malnourished citizens of the world? If you love the people of Asia, then you need to love them for who they are and what they believe. Pushing a specific religion on them is the last thing they need. You're not doing them any favors by trying to colonize their minds with western doctrines. Take a minute to think, and then go find yourself a real job. Jesus was a rebel, so take example from him and try thinking for yourself."

Philip B., Notre Dame University, USA

"Greetings from Mindanao, Philippines. I have been receiving your newsletter since May 2003. The stories and accounts of how God has been working in the lives of people in China have encouraged me to share the Gospel in this part of Mindanao where we Christians coexist with Muslims. Inspired by your newsletter, I and two of my friends wrote an article to encourage believers here. I would like to know if I can send a donation to support one of your projects? I cannot afford the least amount specified in the response form. I am just a young woman struggling to balance school and work but I have it on my heart to support God's work in Asia. I could give about 300 pesos (US\$6 per year), each December, if that is OK with you."

A sister in Christ, Philippines

"The latest issue of the Asia Harvest newsletter arrived yesterday. As with each issue received, I read it through in one sitting – praising God for his work in this land generally hostile to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Clearly God is doing many miraculous things through his beloved children to open the way for many others to come to faith. Thank you for your ministry enabling people to persevere in their faith under the most difficult circumstances. Jesus equips, you help. Please take this small offering for the work in Asia. May the Lord multiply it."

Margery N., Pennsylvania, USA

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April 2006 - Newsletter #83



Auguste Chapdelaine
- CHINA MARTYR -

From the Frontlines

with Paul & Joy Hattaway

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

In recent years, and especially since the 9/11 terrorist attacks in America, it seems that many Christians in Western nations have become more inward-focused. This may be a natural tendency for people to do when under attack, but it can have tragic consequences for the kingdom of God.

Instead of focusing on our own needs, our own church, or even our own country, we need to maintain the vision that God wants all His children to have - a world-wide vision. Jesus encouraged us to "open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest" (John 4:35). When our eyes are focused on ourselves and our own needs, we will not be able to see the harvest.

In many of our newsletters we write testimonies of tremendous miracles and outbreaks of revival that are occurring in Asia. This can sometimes give an unbalanced perception that all of Asia is experiencing showers of God's blessing, when that is certainly not the case at all. Still today dozens of countries in Asia remain less than 1% Christian. That means, tragically, that 99 out of every 100 people in those nations remain desperately lost in their sin and heading for eternity in hell. We have personally travelled through remote areas of Asia, such as in Tibet, where for weeks we have not seen a single sign of Christianity or met any individual who has ever heard the Name of Jesus before. Total darkness abounds.

Jesus Christ has not returned to the earth because the work of His kingdom is not yet complete. There are many that He still longs to come into his sheepfold, that they might have life and give glory to the Father. God loves the lost more than we can comprehend. The Scriptures tell us "He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9).

Instead of just focusing on the 1% that are safe, the heart of Jesus was always for the 99% that are not. In fact, even if these figures are reversed and 99 are saved, His

Cover Picture: A sketch showing Auguste Chapdelaine being tortured just prior to his martyrdom in 1856.

heart would still be to seek and save the one that was lost! Jesus taught, "Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Does he not leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.' I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent" (Luke 15:4-7).

Let's not just sing about the harvest field, let's win it for Jesus!

Jesus instructed his servants to "occupy until I come" (Luke 19:13, KJV). This doesn't mean sit around and do nothing, but to be busy following Christ's commands and doing all we can to see the Father glorified in all the earth.

It must look strange in heaven that so many millions of Christians are sitting on their backsides waiting for Jesus to come again, while there are more than two billion people in the world perishing without having heard that He has come the first time!

Many Christians today are addicted to hearing all the teaching they can about Bible prophecy, as one teacher after another promotes conflicting predictions about what they believe will happen in the last days before Jesus returns for His bride. These teachers advocate various political theories on Israel, Iraq, the Middle East, America.... Strangely, however, they almost always seem to miss the one key indicator that Jesus said would happen just prior to His Second Coming.

In Matthew 24, the disciples came to Jesus secretly on the Mount of Olives and asked him, "when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?" (v.3). Jesus gave a long description of the things that would take place before the end of the age, including the appearance of many false Christs, wars and rumors of wars, earthquakes, famines, and a widespread persecution of Christians in which many would be put to death.

Yet these were still not the final thing that will happen before He returns. All these things are merely "the beginning of birth pains" (v.8). So what was the final indication Jesus told us would have to take place before His Coming? Read carefully.... "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come" (v.14).

There are countless millions of people in Asia and other parts of the world today who have never received a "testimony" of the gospel of the kingdom. They live and die, and go before the judgment seat of Christ dressed in filthy rags. The heart of God grieves over the condition of the lost, but He also grieves over the condition of a backslidden Church that cares more about its own image and needs than for the salvation of a lost world. May we be faithful to obey God's command to preach the Gospel to all of mankind!

CHINA MARTYRS: Auguste Chapdelaine - 1856

The following article is taken from Paul Hattaway's upcoming book, *China's Christian Martyrs*, which will profile hundreds of inspirational testimonies of those who have died for Jesus Christ in China.



This year marks 150 years since the martyrdom of a little-known French missionary, Auguste Chapdelaine, in a remote part of China. He was put to death along with five Chinese believers, including Bai Xiaomin and Cao Guiying. While researching and writing these testimonies I found myself greatly inspired and would like to share them with you in the hope they will also encourage you.

Auguste Chapdelaine was born in 1814, the youngest of nine children. From an early age he felt called to serve Christ, but his parents opposed him, saying they needed him to work on the family farm instead. He obeyed his parents' wishes until two of his brothers suddenly died. These incidents forced Chapdelaine to urgently reconsider his life's vocation, and his parents finally approved.

As Chapdelaine matured as a follower of Christ he became the pastor of a local church, and later a strong desire arose in his heart to serve God in China. After a lengthy struggle with church leaders who thought it was more necessary for him to stay at home, Chapdelaine was finally sent out as a missionary with the Paris Foreign Missionary Society in 1852, and was assigned to join a small mission already working in the southern Chinese province of Guangxi.

Just three days into his journey Chapdelaine was robbed of all his belongings by thieves on the West River and was forced to turn back. When he finally reached Guangxi, one of the other missionaries welcomed him and later wrote,

"When Chapdelaine came in sight of his

promised land, he threw himself on his knees to thank God for having brought him to the place of his inheritance, and offering himself to Him once more, he consecrated his whole power and life to labor in the glorious work which was entrusted to him. The fruits he produced soon corresponded to his zeal. After two years' work he could reckon about two hundred converts."

In 1856 the French missionary was ministering in Xilin, a small town in western Guangxi which was home to approximately 300 Christians, most of whom were members of the Miao ethnic minority group. They had already encountered much persecution from the authorities, who considered them traitors for following "the foreign religion."

Two soldiers were ordered to arrest Chapdelaine on February 24, 1856. Afraid that the Christians would defend their leader, the soldiers gathered together a mob of about 100 ruffians "armed with long pikes and large knives, besides other weapons." Eyewitnesses later testified that the day before the arrest, "There appeared in the air a cross of light, surrounded by a brilliant crown, which seemed to hang over the village and was visible alike to pagan and Christian. The pagans considered it unfavorable, but the Christians, on the contrary saw in it new evidence that the crown was only to be reached by means of the cross, and therefore with redoubled prayers prepared themselves for every trial to which it might please God to subject them."

Local believers had heard about the approaching soldiers and encouraged Chapdelaine to escape. He replied, "If I

leave, you will suffer for it. To save you from greater harm, I must stay with you."

After much fervent insistence by the local Christians, Chapdelaine agreed to take refuge in the home of a respected citizen, Luo Gongye. Despite this man's pleadings, his guest was arrested on February 26, along with five Chinese believers. Chapdelaine was falsely accused of stirring up the people to rebel against the government. There was a widespread Hui Muslim uprising taking place across many parts of China at the time, and part of the reason behind the missionary's arrest was that the authorities could not tell the difference between Christians and Muslims.

Chapdelaine was bound and taken to appear before the magistrate. He was told to renounce his faith, to which he replied, "My religion is the true religion and I cannot betray it. I have done no evil, but only persuaded people to do good and win eternal life in heaven."

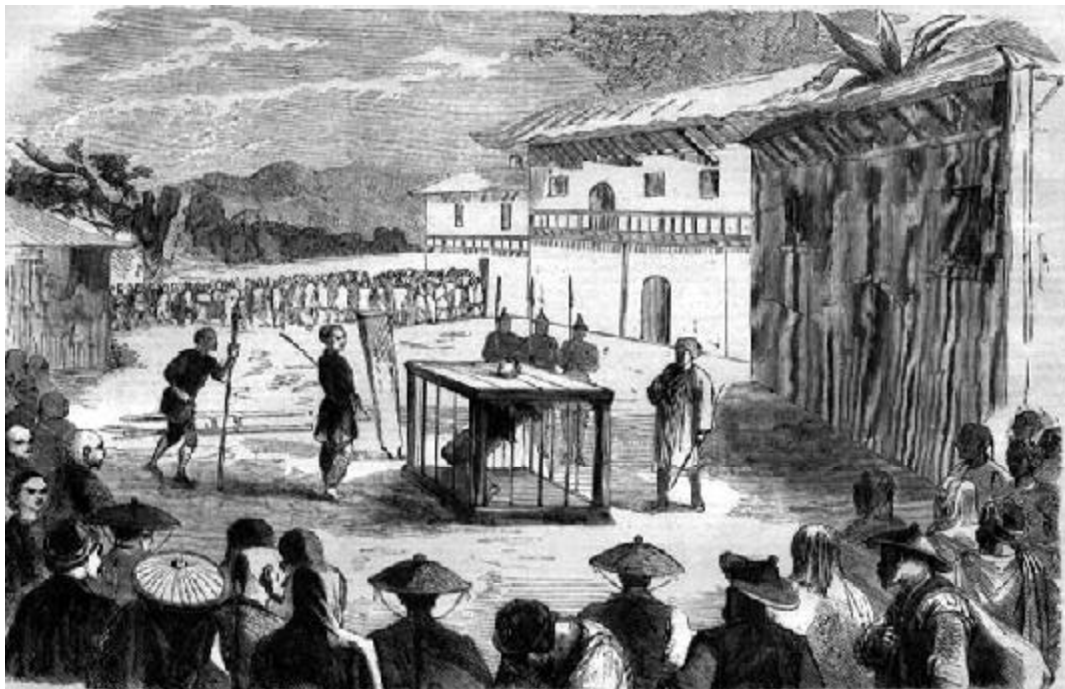
The magistrate was unimpressed and locked Chapdelaine in a cangue—a cage for prisoners in which they are suspended by the head and hands through holes in the top and sides, causing severe pain and discomfort. Before being secured inside the torture-device, Chapdelaine was severely flogged and tormented with knives. The magistrate also ordered him "to receive a hundred blows on the cheeks with a cruel thong of leather. One stroke was enough to draw blood, so that a hundred, administered with all the force that fanaticism and revenge could inspire, must have entirely broken the jaws, knocked out the teeth of the glorious martyr. Being thus rendered incapable of speaking and an-

swering, he received three hundred blows on the back with a cane."

The faithful missionary tried to imitate his Lord and Savior by enduring his punishment in silence. The torturer believed Chapdelaine's silence and apparent lack of pain was due to magic and ordered a dog to be sacrificed and the blood poured over the

one moment he was unable to stir and he was walking with ease the next. Chapdelaine answered with a smile: 'It is the good God who protects and blesses me.'"

Attributing Chapdelaine's miraculous recovery to magic powers, the magistrate secured the priest's bloodied and torn body



A sketch of Chapdelaine being tortured inside a cangue before a crowd of onlookers.

captive in an attempt to break whatever spell the missionary had conjured up. By the end of the torture Chapdelaine was almost dead, and he was dragged back to the prison cell. One account from the time testifies that,

"It was impossible for him to walk a step. But by the merciful goodness of God, he was shortly afterwards able to rise and walk, as if he was in perfect health. The officers who witnessed this new miracle came up to enquire how it was that at

inside the cangue for further punishment. He died during the night of February 29, 1856.

Seeing that he was dead, the authorities decided to behead him anyway as a warning to the people not to follow the Christian religion. The head was hung in a tree near the city as a public spectacle. Even then the demonic insults did not stop, as "boys and passers by knocked it down with stones, so that it was seen rolling about in

the dust and mud, until it was devoured by the unclean animals, who fought for the fragments of it."

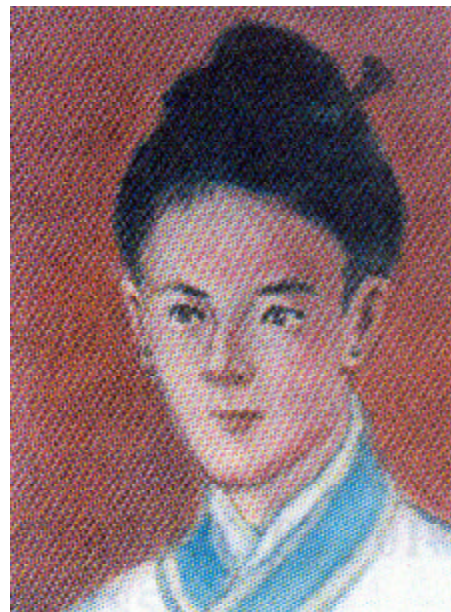
A shocked Europe was aghast at the news of Chapdelaine's cruel murder. Various newspapers and magazines gave much column space to the details of his martyrdom. At the time, before camera had been invented, his story was made more famous by the publication of two sketches by A. J. Woolmer, depicting the torture Chapdelaine had endured prior to his death.

The impact of Auguste Chapdelaine's life and death could still be felt almost 150 years after his death! As recently as the year 2000, the Communist government issued a statement demonizing the memories of many of China's Christian martyrs and distorting many facts to try to make the martyrs as perverse as their own hearts. Of Chapdelaine they said, "He collaborated with corrupt local officials, raped women and was notorious in those areas.... It was also known that he cohabited with an attractive widow by the name of Cao, and induced other pretty women to join the church so that he could fool around with them." The slanderous accusations were even more vile. The Chinese authorities never released a single document to support their dirty claims. Much evidence exists that shows Chapdelaine was a man of God, humble and self-sacrificial in his dealings with his fellow men.

Chapdelaine no longer cares. He is safe in the arms of Jesus Christ, who has promised his children, "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, be-

cause great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you" (Matt. 5:11-12).

Cao Guiying



Five Chinese believers were arrested with Chapdelaine and later executed. Among them was a 33-year-old woman named Cao Guiying.

Cao was born in 1821 in the village of Wujiazhai, Guizhou Province. She came from a strong Christian family that had migrated into the area generations before in search of a better life.

When Cao's parents died she went to the town of Xingyi where a kind old Christian woman allowed her to stay in her home. Cao was encouraged her to learn as much as she could about Christianity at a local

church. She learned the tenets of the faith quickly, and found her heart warmed to the prospect of a relationship with Christ.

In 1839, when she was aged just 18, Cao married a local farmer. The man's family never accepted the young lady as part of their own. Frequently she was left nothing to eat and was treated as an outsider. Just two years after the marriage Cao found herself a widow when her husband suddenly died. She got small jobs around the town in order to survive, and all the time she hungered for more knowledge of God in order to cultivate her own spiritual life. After the French missionary Chapdelaine heard about her, he asked her to consider moving to Guangxi Province where there was a growing church full of women who needed help and teaching. In the winter of 1852 she journeyed south to the town of Bajiazhai in Xilin County, where she helped the 30 to 40 tribal families living there. Cao Guiying taught the women how to cook and other simple chores, and she humbled herself to serve the families by engaging in menial tasks such as baby-sitting and cleaning house. Cao was dearly loved by all who came into contact with her. One of the missionaries said that Cao was,

"Endowed with a virtue which was superior to every trial, gentle, modest, and always satisfied either with good or evil fortune, she thought of nothing but of winning souls to God, and directing them in the way of salvation. Thus did she prepare herself by the discharge of the duties of her state, for fighting the battle of the Lord with heroic faith."

In 1856 Cao Guiying was in Yaoshan, a small village near Xilin, when she was ar-

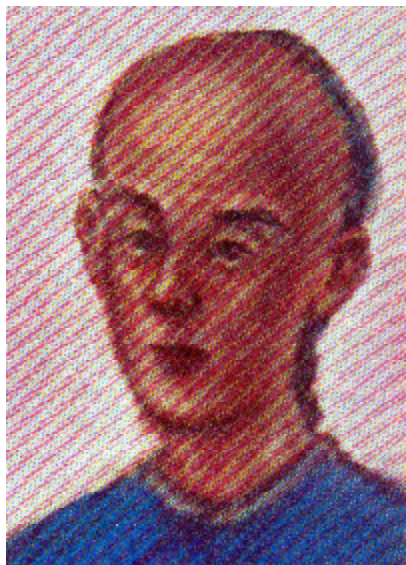
rested along with 14 other believers. A mob of one hundred ruffians "dispersed itself over the village, broke into all the houses, plundering and robbing everything without mercy. Oxen, goats, poultry, and bales of cotton, with which the country abounds, all became the prey of these devastators, who only left the Christians a little maize and rice, that they might not die of hunger."

The arrested Christians were taken to a local temple where they were tortured and interrogated. All the local believers were soon released, but Cao was kept in a filthy prison cell all alone. The local magistrate summoned Cao before him and attempted to manipulate her with his questions. The corrupt man slanderously insinuated that she had immoral relations with Auguste Chapdelaine, which she vehemently refuted.

"Her faith was not to be conquered, for, neither the promises, the threats, nor the curses which the brutal mandarin heaped upon her, nor the sight of the punishments which he barbarously brought before her, were able to weaken even for a moment her resolution to dedicate herself entirely to God, and to remain faithful to Him to the last moment of her life."

According to a reliable account, on February 27, 1856, the magistrate had Cao Guiying "locked in a cage so small that she could only stand up, but her spirit never failed. She prayed repeatedly, 'God have mercy on me; Jesus, save me!' Then, on March 4, she cried out with a loud voice: 'God help me!'

Bai Xiaomin



Bai Xiaomin came from an extremely poor family, a situation exacerbated when both his parents died when Bai was still a young boy. He was forced to hire himself out as a laborer in order to get food to survive.

In 1851 Bai moved to Yaoshan village in Xilin County, Guangxi. The local people liked Bai and considered him a sincere and good-hearted person. A short time later Bai married. The next year a little daughter was born to Bai and his wife.

In the year of 1854 the French missionary Auguste Chapdelaine visited Guangxi and started preaching the Gospel. Bai was strangely drawn both to the foreigner and his strange teachings. He followed him around for weeks, listening intently to every word and observing that the words matched the quality of the Frenchman's life. Bai gradually became convinced of the truth of the gospel and

decided to follow Christ.

Just ten days after his baptism, on February 24, 1856, a mob of one hundred armed men descended on Yaoshan village to capture Chapdelaine. Bai managed to escape, but while in hiding he decided to return to the village to see how he could help. He agreed to lodge a protest with the local magistrate. Others expressed concern for his safety, but the brave new Christian assured them, "Why, what are you afraid of? If it is necessary for us to die, let us have no fear in offering our lives for the glory of God." At the court, instead of hearing their petition, the magistrate had Bai beaten and chained. When the judge threatened to cut off his head if he refused to abandon his faith, Bai Xiaomin boldly replied,

"You can cut off my head, and not only mine, but also those of my wife and children; but to renounce my religion, the religion of the Lord of heaven—to give up offering my humble prayers and adorations to Him, oh no! I will never be guilty of such treachery! Cut off my head if you will, but I will never be an apostate."

This response infuriated the magistrate, who ordered that Bai be severely flogged and tortured. One account states, "Several times he passed out under the torture but he persevered in his faith. When physical force failed, the magistrate sentenced him to death. On his way to execution, Bai Xiaomin met his mother-in-law and bade her farewell. The place where he was beheaded was just outside the southern gate of the town. His remains were left in the wilderness there to be eaten by wild animals."

CHINA CHILDREN'S PROJECT UPDATE

Current Total: 1,139 Sunday School Teachers Trained and Equipped.



Thank you for the generous response to this strategic project to reach China's children for Christ. Each teacher, on average, is expected to train 100 children and establish them in the Word of God. Those attending the training have their travel costs covered, and a set of materials given to

them for free. These materials include a children's Bible, teacher's manual, 18 teaching books with visual aids, 15 hours of VCD (video cassette disc) teaching, and 6 CDs of 'Children's Heavenly Songs'. The total cost of \$47 per set includes printing and production, and training expenses. We recently received the following testimonies from coworkers involved with the China Children's Project:

"For the three days we had Bible teaching starting from the creation. There were 70 children and teenagers present. Some of them were already Christians, but most of them were not. When the teachers taught about the cross of Jesus and led them to pray, most of them wanted to be saved. They prayed in tears: 'Jesus you died for my sins, please forgive me.' Jesus touched their hearts and many of them want to serve the Lord when they grow up. We baptized 24 of them."

"There was a twelve year old boy who had a wound on his leg which became more and more painful. It was diagnosed as cancer and he needed to stay in the hospital. Daily he became worse and was so unhappy that he even stopped talking. One day a Sunday School teacher came and talked with him about Jesus. She gave him a Wonderful Story Book and asked him to read it carefully every day. The boy took it and read it again and again. He also prayed the salvation prayer printed on the last page. His mother saw a difference. Even though her son was in severe pain he was peaceful and his face was shining. He told his mother, 'I don't feel pain anymore, because when Jesus was on the cross for my sins, his pain was much worse.' Finally the day came when he went to the place where he could see Jesus face to face and suffer no more pain or tears. On the day of the funeral, his mother said, 'I want to put this Wonderful Story Book with him. It was so dear to him and made him happy. I thank Jesus.'"

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Blind Chang
- CHINA MARTYR -

From the Frontlines

with Paul & Joy Hattaway

The following story is used, with permission, from "A Box of Delights," by John & Mark Stibbe, published by Monarch Books, 2001.

Now it came to pass that a group existed who called themselves fishermen. There were many fish in the waters all around. Week after week, month after month, and year after year, the fishermen met in meetings and talked about their call to fish, the abundance of fish and how they might go about fishing.

Year after year they carefully defined what fishing means, defended fishing as an occupation, declared that fishing is always to be a primary task of fishermen, in fact, that there should be a Decade of Fishing!

Continually they searched for new and better methods of fishing. Further they said, "The fishing industry exists by fishing as fire exists by burning." They loved slogans such as 'Fishing is the task of every fisherman,' and 'Every fisherman is a fisher.' They sponsored costly nationwide and worldwide congresses to discuss fishing issues such as the new fishing equipment, fish calls, and whether any new bait had been discovered.

Many who felt the call to be fishermen responded. They were commissioned and sent to fish. They engaged in all kinds of occupations. They built power plants to pump water for fish and tractors to plow new waterways. They made all kinds of equipment to travel here and there to look at fish hatcheries. Some also said that they wanted to be part of the fishing party, but they felt called to furnish fishing equipment. Others felt their job was to relate to the fish in a good way so the fish would know the difference between good and bad fishermen. Others felt that simply letting the fish know they were nice, land-loving neighbors and how loving and kind they were was enough.

These fishermen built large beautiful buildings called 'Fishing Headquarters'. The plea was that everyone should be a fisherman and every fisherman should fish. One thing they didn't do, however.... They didn't fish!

After one stirring meeting on 'The necessity of fishing,' one young man left the meeting and went fishing. The next day he reported that he had caught two fish. He was honored for his excellent catch and scheduled to visit all the big meetings possible to tell how he did it. So he left his fishing in order to have time to tell

other fishermen about the experience. He was also placed on the Fishermen's General Board as a person having considerable experience.

Now it's true that many of the fishermen sacrificed and put up with all kinds of difficulties. Some lived near the water and bore the smell of dead fish every day. They received the ridicule of some who made fun of their fishermen's clubs and the fact that they claimed to be fishermen yet never fished. They wondered about those who felt it was of little use to attend the weekly meetings to talk about fishing. After all, were they not following the Master who said, "Follow me and I will make you fishers of men"?

"Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe.... For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength. Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him" 1 Corinthians 1:20-21, 25-29.

The Lord has constantly impressed the above verses on us as we have served Him in China and other parts of Asia over the years. Many of the finest Christian men and women we know do not come from highly-educated backgrounds, and are certainly not "wise by human standards." What they do have, however, are hearts fully devoted to the Lord Jesus Christ and eager to obey whatever He tells them to do. On the other hand we find many Western churches and organizations that place a strong emphasis on education, secular degrees, charismatic personalities, and human achievement. If these are all we possess then we are indeed poor in spirit and in no condition to become a useful worker in God's kingdom!

In this newsletter we look at the life and death of Blind Chang, a man who was a womanizer, gambler, gangster and alcoholic before he found Jesus Christ. Though blind, God used him in a remarkable way. We hope you enjoy his story and may we never fall into the trap of thinking God's kingdom advances through mere human effort! "It's not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord Almighty" (Zechariah 4:6).

Blind Chang was an effective fisherman for God's kingdom, but only because he realized he was nothing in himself, and relied fully on Jesus' strength. This, dear friends, is the secret of successful fishing!

CHINA MARTYR: Blind Chang - 1900

The following article is taken from Paul Hattaway's upcoming book, *China's Christian Martyrs*, which will profile hundreds of inspirational testimonies of those who have died for Jesus Christ in China.

One of the greatest trophies of God's saving grace is found in the extraordinary life and death of Chang Shen, who came to be loved and known simply as 'Blind Chang.'

In April 1886 the missionaries in north-east China were feeling discouraged at their lack of progress when a 36-year-old "poor ragged blind man" found his way to the gate of the Mission Hospital at Shenyang, the capital of Liaoning Province. When he arrived at the gate his appearance was described as "destitute and desolate, with scarcely any clothes left upon him, and in the last stages of dysentery." The beds were all full, but so great was the compassion awakened in his behalf, that the native evangelist gave up his own couch, that Chang might be provided for. He received the best care and nursing, and before long his health was restored.

The hearts of the hospital staff melted when they heard his story. Chang had walked almost 120 miles (194 km) to visit them. Along the way the blind man had been attacked and robbed of all his money and warm clothing. The missionaries allowed Chang to stay at the mission for free. While he was there he attended the chapel services and heard the gospel for the first time. Immediately and without reservation he gave his life to the Lord Jesus Christ.

One missionary said at the time, "Never

had we a patient who received the Gospel with such joy, and the rapidity with which he grasped the leading truths of Christianity was remarkable."

Another missionary, Rev. Inglis, later described Blind Chang as "A remarkable man, with a soft voice and mellow beyond any Chinese I have ever met. He speaks with great rapidity, his words seeming to flow from his lips like the ceaseless murmur of a brook."

Before embracing Christ as Lord and Savior, Chang had belonged to a notorious Buddhist sect known as the Vegetarians, due to their abstinence from eating meat. This zealous sect had caused much trouble in China, and was not afraid to use violence to achieve their goals. In 1895 the Vegetarians were behind the massacre of 11 foreign missionaries at Gutian in Fujian Province.

After staying in the mission a month, Chang decided to return to his remote home village, and asked to be baptized before he left Shenyang. The missionaries, however, refused to baptize him as they wanted to test the sincerity of his faith over time. Chang was well-known throughout the whole region as a drunkard, womanizer, and gambler. One account describes him as "an inveterate gambler, and a man of such immoral life

as to be a byword, and that in a land where such lives are not uncommon. He made his living by acting as a sort of official and using his self-assumed power to prey upon the people who feared him. His only child, a daughter, he turned out of doors, to be forced into beggary and a life of shame. Not long after he drove his wife from home. Seventeen days after the wife had gone he became totally blind."

Locals even called Chang "Wu so pu wei te," meaning "One without a particle of good in him." When he was struck blind his neighbors said it was the judgement of the gods for all his evil-doing.

Chang was upset at the missionaries' unwillingness to baptize him, but he decided he must return home anyway. He explained, "None of my people have ever heard even the Name of Jesus, or of His offer of the gift of eternal life; do you think that I can keep that to myself any longer? I do wish for baptism, but I cannot delay my return." When Blind Chang first reached his home village and started proclaiming the Gospel the people laughed at him. They mocked his new profession of faith, saying, "It is all very well for him to reform, for he cannot gamble without his eyes."

Despite this opposition Blind Chang remained steadfast in his commitment. Initially without a church or any other Christian fellowship, God stepped in and provided direct comfort. On one occasion "he dreamed he saw the Savior coming toward him in glowing white. He had a book in His hand, and a crown was upon his brow. As He handed him the book he smiled down upon him."

As the weeks and months rolled by it became obvious to the villagers that a dra-

matic transformation had taken place in Chang's heart, and his character had been radically changed. In the summer months people often sat under a large spreading elm tree near the village to enjoy the shade on a hot day. Chang sat under the tree every day, as it afforded him the best opportunity to interact with people and share the Gospel. The elm tree, along with the house beside it, was later purchased by the mission and became the site of the first church and school in that area.

In October 1886 the missionary James Webster visited Chang's home to check on him and see if he had remained true to the faith. Instead of finding one poor blind man to baptize, "there were quite a company of believers and inquirers; and the visible church in that neighborhood was founded by the baptism of nine. There have been great advances since then, and the church in Blind Chang's village and the villages round, now numbers two hundred." Webster learned that Chang had "gone forth in his daily occupation, itinerating from village to village, unhindered by the muddy swamps, rugged hills, and crooked paths, which even to those who has sight proved so wearisome and difficult, to tell the people about his Savior and Lord. Public opinion was divided, some blessing and some cursing, but still he kept on in his blessed work, living for God and walking in His fellowship, praying in faith for help from above, and singing the one hymn that he had learned in the hospital:

Jesus love me, He who died
Heaven's gate to open wide;
He will wash away my sin,
Let His little child come in.

Jesus loves me, He will stay,
Close beside me all the way;
If I love Him when I die,
He will take me home on high.

After baptizing Chang and the eight other new converts, Webster was overjoyed and wrote, "I have seldom had more satisfaction with baptism candidates than with these men. I have never witnessed a more interesting scene, nor joined in a more solemn and joyful sacramental service. The nine men were headed by their blind guide, who had to be led by the hand to receive the sacred rite. Professing to come to Christ and to believe in Him, and to venture their all in thus believing, they declared their

intention to forsake the idolatry of their fathers, casting it forth root and branch; expressing their desire through grace to turn from evil and serve the Living God; and all this with a warmth of purpose impossible to describe."

Blind Chang proved to be an evangelist without parallel. Everywhere he went he testified to the power of a changed life through Christ, and such was the notoriety of his past life that nobody could question that his testimony was true. As a young man Chang had been able to see, but while he was swindling people of their money as a fortune-teller he lost his sight. After his visit, Webster wrote the following report, "One thing of which I am well



Today there is a thriving house church movement in northeast China, full of passionate Christians following in the footsteps of Blind Chang and many others who laid their lives down for the Gospel.

assured, is this: Blind Chang, with little knowledge, but with a heart thrilled to the core with the truth which he knew, had in these months done more work and better work for the Kingdom of Heaven than half-a-dozen foreign missionaries could have done in as many years. And this is one of many proofs that China must be evangelized by the Chinese."

Some time later Chang was led to visit a valley about 100 miles (162 km) east of his home village. There 30 people believed the message and were saved. In many ways Blind Chang's methods were a forerunner of the house church evangelists in China today. He received no salary, but the new believers supported him. He lived in each house in turn, and when he needed new clothes the Christian women made them for him.

With the use of a staff, Chang made his way around dozens of villages. His preaching was always with great power and authority. The spectacle of a blind man giving his testimony and exhorting people to repent and believe in Christ never failed to attract a crowd.

After a while the missionaries told Chang about a school for the blind that was operating in Beijing. Amazed by news that he could learn to read God's Word by braille, Chang set off for the nation's capital, where he received a warm welcome from missionary W.H. Murray. Within three months Chang had mastered the art of reading and writing. Murray wanted him to stay longer, but Chang was anxious to return home and share the blessings he had received. He recommenced his daily preaching, reading the Word of God to crowds of his countrymen, who were surprised to see a blind man read with his finger tips.

Within a few years the blind evangelist had memorized the whole New Testament, the Psalms, and several other Old Testament books. It was said of Blind Chang: "Missionaries followed after him, baptizing converts and organizing churches." By 1892 Chang had led more than 300 people to the Cross, and more than 500 by 1895. He became their pastor, instructing them in the Word of God. Many of those converted through Chang's preaching were the worst of society, among them bandits, opium addicts, and prostitutes.

Chang had a stubborn streak, which could on one hand be a character flaw, but on the other hand proved to be an asset for God's kingdom. On one occasion, burdened by the state of his sister's unsaved soul, he went to her house, sat down, and went thirty days without food, stating that "no food will cross my lips until you become a believer." And a believer she did become, afraid that if she didn't she would be responsible for her brother's death by starvation!

The summer of 1900 rolled around, and the dreadful Boxer Rebellion broke throughout northern China. More than 30,000 Christians were slaughtered in a few months. When the trouble started Chang was away visiting the Christians at a village called Deshengguo. The believers there knew Blind Chang would be a prime target for the Boxers, so they hid him in a cave, hoping the threat would soon pass. At the same time a group of Boxers arrived in another village where Chang had established a church. They rounded up about 50 Christians for execution, when a local man told them, "You are fools to kill all these. For every one you kill, ten will spring up while that man Chang lives. Kill

him and you will crush the foreign religion."

The Boxers promised to spare the lives of their 50 captives if they could capture Chang. When no one offered to disclose Chang's whereabouts the Boxers prepared to massacre the believers when one man slipped away and alerted Chang what was happening. When the man arrived and told his story to Chang, the blind evangelist listened silently, and then a sober look came upon his face. Without any doubt as to what he should do, Chang stood to his feet and declared, "I will gladly die for them. Take me to them for it is better that it be so."

The duo travelled along the stony paths towards Chaoyang, praying the Boxers would not lose patience and slaughter the captive believers before they arrived. The blazing summer sun beat down on them, but Chang continued towards his destination, knowing he would be killed once he arrived. When they reached the town on July 19, Blind Chang was immediately seized and bound. Three days later he was taken to the temple of the god of war. Blind Chang had glorified Christ through his life, and now he was called to glorify Him through death. The Boxers shouted at Chang, accusing him of following the foreigners and helping bring their poison into the minds of Chinese people everywhere. Chang replied, "I do not follow a foreigner. I am a loyal subject of the Chinese Emperor." The Boxers angrily responded, "But you worship Jesus, the God of the English." Chang calmly yet firmly explained his position in the following account recorded between the blind disciple and the Boxers,

"I worship Jesus, the Savior of the whole world. I refuse to deny Him. If you kill my body, today my soul will be with Him in Paradise."



A sketch of the stone monument erected in honor of Blind Chang.

"Unless you renounce Jesus and burn incense to Buddha, you must die."

"I am quite willing to die," answered Blind Chang. "I do not believe in Buddha."

"Kneel down then," commanded the Boxer judge.

While the executioner's blunt sword was making three cuts at his neck, Chang kept on praying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

Then a strange thing happened. When Blind Chang's head rolled on the ground the Boxers suddenly threw their weapons to the ground and fled in terror! "We have killed a good man," they cried. They ran away struck in their conscience, and the fifty Christians escaped unhurt.

The Boxers later refused to let the local Christians bury Chang's body. They had heard a rumor that he would rise from the dead, so they brought oil and forced the believers to incinerate the remains.

Due to the loving sacrifice of 50-year-old Blind Chang, the lives of the fifty Christians were spared. After his death many people who had heard his message now understood what Christ had suffered on the Cross. Also after his death the full scale of daily hardship Chang had endured became known. A teenage boy, who had served as the evangelist's guide on several journeys, recounted how Chang had often met with bitter persecution, especially when going to a new region. He said, "Children were encouraged to pelt him with clods of mud or bricks, curses were hurled after him as the people drove him from their doors. Worst of all the dogs were set upon him; great mongrel, half-starved Chinese dogs. What such attacks must have meant to one blind and unable to defend their onslaughts who can describe! Yet none of these things moved him, nor did he count his life dear to him, for again he would return to the same places hoping to share his wonderful soul-saving, life-giving message, until public opinion turned in his favor and victory came. He had just one message. He preached Jesus to the people for he knew nothing but Christ and Him crucified."

After the Boxer Rebellion ended the Government of Manchuria realized they had al-

lowed the murder of a unique and holy man of God to occur. They erected a stone monument in honor of the courageous evangelist, whose sight had now been fully restored in the presence of Jesus Christ.



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August 2006 - Newsletter #85



Sheep Among Wolves

- The Church in Xinjiang (Part One) -

From the Frontlines

with Paul Hattaway

"The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said: 'The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever.'" (Revelation 11:15)

There seems to be certain key moments in a person's life when the stark reality of a situation becomes clear; a moment when time seems to stand still and the memory of where we were and what we were doing is seared into our minds. One such moment for me happened last year. I was on a ministry trip to the Middle East, and thanks to the kind generosity of some friends, Joy and our two sons were able to come with me.

While we were in Egypt we had a spare afternoon so we decided to spend a few hours doing what foreigners are expected to do. We rented camels and rode around the Pyramids. We arrived after closing time, however, and were not going to be allowed through a gate to the pyramid area when a Muslim man argued with the guards and allowed us in. It was a kind of surreal experience in more ways than one. Because of the lateness in the day we were the only people at this extraordinary place, and if you have ever ridden a camel you will know that it is quite an experience in itself!

The sun was setting and a cool breeze was blowing in from the Sahara Desert as we made our way back towards the camel stables. It was during the month of Ramadan - when Muslims the world over fast every day until sunset. As we neared the end of our journey we could see the outskirts of the massive sprawling city of Cairo, home to approximately 20 million people. All of a sudden as the sun went down a loud cacophony of noise swarmed all around us. The loudspeakers of thousands of mosques across the city all started in unison, calling Muslims to prayer and announcing that the fasting for the day had come to an end and people could now eat and drink.

In that poignant moment I was struck with an awful awareness of the lostness of

Cover picture: Devout Muslims praying to Allah on the streets outside a mosque in Kashgar, Xinjiang. Photo courtesy of Frontiers.

the Muslim world, with over a billion people blinded by their religion and self-righteous legalism, heading to hell with little or no knowledge of Jesus, the only hope for their eternal salvation. For some minutes the novelty of looking at the Pyramids vanished and a tremendous burden for the lost Muslim world enveloped me. Oh, how God loves the Muslims! He longs to give them a changed heart, washed in the Blood of His Son. He longs to be a loving shepherd to the millions of families, little Muslim boys and girls, who are trapped in hopeless darkness. The One who said he would leave 99 sheep that are safe to rescue one that is lost so loves the Muslims that He gave his life, that whoever would believe in Him would not perish, but have eternal life!

Since Islamic terrorism sprung to prominence in the West several years ago I sense that many Christians have a kind of hopeless attitude towards Muslims. Many figure they are impossible to reach, while some even view them as evil and not deserving of God's grace.

This, of course, is just the point. None of us deserve God's grace. The only thing you and me deserve is hell.

I want to encourage you not to give up on the Muslim world, because Jesus hasn't! In fact, great things are happening in unexpected ways throughout the Middle East, North Africa, and Asia. The gospel is going forward and tens of thousands of Muslims are being exposed to the life of Christ every day. In every single Muslim country the church is growing - not in huge numbers, yet slowly and surely. God is being glorified, and the nations of this world are becoming the nations of the Lord! (Rev. 11:15). There will surely be worshippers from every single tribe, language, nation and people around the throne of the Lamb of God (Rev 5:7-9), including from the thousands of Muslim ethnic groups!

In this issue we present the first part of the little-known story of how a strong and impressive Church emerged in the midst of fanatical Muslims in Xinjiang, the north-west province of China dominated by a dozen Islamic people groups. These testimonies record both the best and worst of human nature, telling of how a beautiful flower was planted and watered by the Lord, only to be crushed by wicked men.

If God was able to reach Muslims in China in the most dire and anti-Christian atmosphere imaginable, then be encouraged! God is able to reach them everywhere, and He is able to reach into your own community, and your own needy heart. The Lord Jesus is still busy winning the lost to His Father, and seeing people's hearts renewed and made pure. This is surely Good News for us all!

CHINA MARTYRS: Sheep Among Wolves - The Church in Xinjiang (Part One)

Xinjiang (which means 'new domain' in Chinese) is a huge, remote region in northwest China. It is home to a host of different peoples, including more than 15 million Muslims belonging to ethnic groups such as the Uygur, Kazak, Tajik, Uzbek, Kirgiz and Hui. It may surprise you to know that China, with



approximately 25-30 million Muslims, has the ninth highest Islamic population of any country in the world, with about the same number as Iraq, Afghanistan, and Saudi Arabia. These days few of Xinjiang's Muslims have ever heard the Gospel, and their spiritual condition is as barren as the huge Taklimakan Desert that dominates the region. There is not even one visible church among the Uygurs or any of the other Muslim groups. This has not always been the case, however. Few people are aware that a marvelous work of God occurred in Xinjiang in the early decades of the 20th century, before it came to an abrupt and violent end in 1933. This is the little-known story of the Church in Xinjiang.

The vast desert expanses of northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region is much more historically, culturally, and linguistically akin to nearby Central Asian nations than to China.

The city of Yarkant (known as Shache in Chinese) has a population of around 700,000 people today, 95% of whom are Muslims. Located in western Xinjiang, Yarkant has also been a hotbed of fanatical Islamists for centuries. The first Christian

to experience the wrath of Yarkant's Muslims was Portuguese Catholic priest Benedict de Goës, who reached Yarkant in November 1603 after an exhausting 13-month trek from the Indian city of Agra. Goës was soon hauled before the local religious leaders, who tried to force him to denounce Christianity and embrace Islam. Goës gave a firm and clear rebuttal. The Yarkant leaders "could not understand how an intelligent man could

profess any religion but their own. Elsewhere Goës was treated less civilly, several times barely escaping with his life from the swords of fanatics determined to make him invoke the name of Mohammed."¹

On one occasion Benedict de Goës was affronted by a furious Muslim who burst into the house where he was staying. The man placed "his sword against his breast, and threatened to plunge it in, if he did not instantly render homage to the prophet Mohammed. The courageous missionary calmly looked at him, gently put aside the sword, and said, 'Go, I know not who Mohammed is.'"²

One of the greatest mission figures of the 19th century is a name few Christians in the English-speaking world are familiar with. Nils Fredrik Höijer travelled through Russia, the Middle East, and Central Asia in the 1870s and 1880s, preaching the gospel in spite of tremendous opposition and difficulties.³ Through Höijer's tremendous courage and persistence the Swedish Missionary Society was founded in 1878. Dozens of pioneer missionaries were sent out over the following decades.

Wherever the Swedes went they seemed to encounter great success. In 1892 they established a work at the strategic city of Kashgar in western Xinjiang. For the first two years the mission had just one worker—Mehmed Shukri, the son of a Muslim *mullah* (religious teacher) from Erzerum, Turkey. Shukri, who changed his name to Aveteranian after his conversion to Christ, proved to be a highly effective evangelist. In 1894 four Swedish missionaries joined him, and a mission base was established. Just one year later they started



Nils Frederik Höijer – the great Swedish missionary pioneer.

a satellite work at Yarkant, about 140 miles (227 km) southeast of Kashgar. From the very beginning the Swedish mission faced great opposition. Local Muslims "were infuriated that there was a Christian presence in their sacred territory, and they refused to allow the missionaries to rent any residence. For an extended period they had to live in a garden area, and even then several riots occurred. Finally, the Muslims, together with the Chinese authorities, incited a riot at Easter in 1899."⁴

The Swedes overcame incessant opposition, and succeeded where no other Protestant mission had done before.

Dozens of Muslims gave their lives to Jesus Christ. Trouble was never far away for the missionaries. One missionary and his converts were beaten and dragged through the streets of Yarkant. The Swedes remained at their post, and gradually won over many of the local people with their godly lives and sacrificial service. By 1926 more than 28,000 people had received treatment at the various Christian medical centres established throughout the region. The missionaries provided food during famines, clothed the poor, ran orphanages, and established ten schools. The Bible was translated into Uygur, and the missionaries printed and distributed copious amounts of Christian literature, boldly handing some of it to *mullahs* and other Islamic

clerics. One report says that "During the years between 1919 and 1939 the adult communicant members of the Christian church of the country grew to number over 200, almost every one a convert from Islam; and if their children be included the Christian community had about 500 members."⁵

In April 1933 an armed Muslim faction from Khotan took control of Kashgar, Yarkant, and the other towns south of the Taklimakan Desert. Hundreds of Chinese were massacred in the assault, while their wives and daughters were captured and used as sex-slaves or forcibly married off to the deviant attackers, who gained control over most of Xinjiang and proclaimed the Turkish-Islamic Republic



Christians outside the church at Kashgar in the early 1930s. All of the believers were converts from Islam, and most were slaughtered by Muslims in 1933. There has been no visible church among the Muslims in Xinjiang to this day.



Chinese evangelists crossing the Taklimakan Desert in the 1940s.

of Eastern Turkestan. One of their first objectives was to get rid of the Christians at Kashgar, Yarkant, and the other places the gospel had taken hold.⁶

On April 27th the Khotan leader, Abdullah Khan, ordered the Swedish missionary Nyström to appear before him. Nyström was in charge of the mission's medical dispensary, which had helped thousands of people in Yarkant and surrounding districts. Nyström went to see Abdullah with his colleagues Arell and Hermansson. After being forced to wait a long time at the governor's mansion,

"The Emir himself came into the room, holding a handkerchief to his nose (to filter the air contaminated by Christian breath). He began to ask such questions as 'You intended no doubt to use these poisons [medicine] to harm me and my followers?' Then he yelled, 'It is my duty, according to our law, to put you to death because by

your preaching you have destroyed the faith of some of us! Out with you—bind them.'"⁷

After Nyström was bound, the cowardly Abdullah Khan personally struck the defenseless missionary. A group of soldiers armed with rifles, swords, and clubs, told the three missionaries to prepare for instant death. Abdullah Khan raised his sword and was about to start the slaughter when an aide sprang forward and begged for the missionaries' lives. They narrowly escaped, and were soon expelled from Xinjiang and returned to Sweden via Russia. Three other missionaries were allowed to remain in Xinjiang for a short time, before they were expelled across the Karokoram Pass into Pakistan.

After dealing with the missionaries, the cruel tyrant focused his energies on the local Christians, demonstrating a particular hatred toward all those who had converted from a Muslim background. The male

Christians were beaten and thrown into prison at Yarkant and Kashgar. Some were beheaded, while others perished from the terrible tortures. The female Christians (including girls as young as 11) were forced to become wives of Muslim men. One of the girls later said, "We were called unbelievers, dogs, birds of ill-omen, scum, swine, a shame to our people and accursed. They said, 'You must realize that this is being done to save you from damnation. Now say that you will leave your rebellious ways and come back to the faith which was yours in the cradle and which you should never have left.'"⁸

None of the Christian girls denounced their faith. **At least 100 Christian men** suffered martyrdom for their stand for Jesus Christ. Numbered among those who paid the ultimate price for their faith were:

Hassan Akhond, who was 20-years-old. A Muslim who was later released from prison and told how Hassan's soothing voice had often calmed the nerves of the prisoners at night as he sang hymns to Jesus. One night they heard him "faintly singing, 'Loved with Everlasting Love,' in Uyghur. The next two nights [Hassan's] chain dragged, but after that was silence and they concluded he had died of starvation."⁹

Almost all of the Christians imprisoned at Kashgar died or were put to death. The martyrs included **Khelil Akhond**, **Liu Losi** the principal of the Chinese school, and many others. The Christians were herded into groups and then crammed into small, unventilated cells not large enough for each man to even sit down, "so that they all spent day and night on end on a half-standing, half-crouching position. The few who survived said they got aches and swelling in

their knees and then in the upper part of the calves of the legs and in the thighs. Later mortification usually set in and death followed. These unheated cells were bitterly cold, especially for prisoners who had not been allowed to take with them more clothes than those they stood up in when arrested. A number had been sent to prison only half clad. Some of them were put to unmentionable tortures. Consequently, apart from those who were executed, someone died almost every night, and sometimes four or five corpses were taken out of the cells in the morning. After several years' imprisonment, when all the leading Christians were dead, the half dozen survivors were admonished with threats and released."¹⁰

The Church had suffered a horrific blow in Xinjiang. After the persecutions of the 1930s the few surviving ex-Muslim Christians faced the horrors of World War II, followed by more than half a century of Communist rule. To the present day there has never been such a wide-scale turning of Muslims to Christ in Xinjiang as there was when the Swedish Missionary Society was ministering there.

In the next issue we will look at the individual testimonies of several bold Xinjiang Christians who laid down their lives for Jesus in Xinjiang.

*This article is included in Paul Hattaway's upcoming book, **China's Christian Martyrs**, which will contain more than 500 inspirational testimonies of those who died for Jesus Christ in China.*

Asian Worker's Fund - Helping the Gospel in Xinjiang



A Tajik woman from the border area between Xinjiang and Pakistan.

Among the many Asian evangelists and church planters we are blessed to be able to support financially through the Asian Worker's Fund are a whole team of more than ten Chinese and Uyghur Christians who are reaching out to most of the Muslim groups living in Xinjiang. Facing tremendous opposition, these brave believers have forged ahead for several years, seeing ever-increasing numbers of Muslims come to faith in Jesus Christ. If you would like to give to the Asian worker's fund please consider filling out the yellow response form enclosed with this newsletter.

Please pray the Xinjiang team would be empowered to reach many Muslims for Jesus.

Pray thousands of Muslims in Xinjiang would soon hear and believe the Gospel.

Ask God to glorify His Name throughout every community in Xinjiang.

Notes

¹ Vincent Cronin, *The Wise Man from the West*, 246.

² Abbe Huc, *Christianity in China, Tartary, and Thibet*, 195.

³ An excellent English-language book about H ijer's life and ministry is Ann-Charlotte Fritzson, *Passion for the Impossible—the Life of the Pioneer Nils Fredrik H ijer*.

⁴ Ralph Covell, *The Liberating Gospel in China*, 169.

⁵ R. O. Wingate, *The Steep Ascent: The Story of the Christian Church in Turkestan*, 10.

⁶ See Andrew D. W. Forbes, *Warlords and Muslims in Chinese Central Asia: A Political History of Republican Sinkiang 1911-1949*.

⁷ Wingate, *The Steep Ascent*, 16.

⁸ Wingate, *The Steep Ascent*, 19.

⁹ Wingate, *The Steep Ascent*, 24.

¹⁰ Wingate, *The Steep Ascent*, 24-25.

God Wonderfully Intervenes!

Here at Asia Harvest it has always been our desire to act as a link between the Church in Asia and believers around the world. We marvel at the way many people we have yet to meet in person have been moved by the Holy Spirit to pray and participate in the work. One such couple are Earl and Judy, who live in Tennessee. They have been specifically praying for and supporting the Asian Worker's Fund team working in Tirap in the remote northeast India state of Arunachal Pradesh. Recently Earl emailed us, saying: *"An odd thing happened to my wife, around the Resurrection season. As she got up to do a prayer vigil in the middle of the night, TIRAP came intensely into her mind. So she prayed for the workers and the work there. It was brought to her attention for a couple of days afterwards, but not quite so intensely. Do you have any word of what might have been happening there?"*

We immediately contacted the team leader of the work in Tirap and were told: ***"This is really true because a Hindu gang tried to kill one of our team members! They smashed his motor car, but the Lord intervened and the gang leader did not kill him. About two weeks later the gang leader returned and ask for forgiveness and decided to follow Jesus! He even paid him so he could repair his vehicle. The entire family of the gang leader came to Jesus and our workers have baptized them. Please let Earl and Judy know that their prayers have really worked!"***

After hearing this news, Earl and Judy excitedly wrote, *"It is unbelievably encouraging to our hearts! And, it came at just the time we badly needed it, too. We rejoiced for hours and the oppression that had been hounding us was put to flight, I can assure you! The hearty report caused us to increase the tempo of our prayers for those dear front-line missionaries. They are surely doing the work we have never done. May The Lord bless them... and you, too, Asia Harvest, for how would we have known who or what to pray for, if not for your labor of love in His Camp? We are encouraging our local brethren to PRAY WITHOUT CEASING. The spiritual battles are needing to be fought so as to give these front-line missionaries prayer support. If we cannot go, we can still join with them in this manner."*

CHINA CHILDREN'S PROJECT

Current Total: 1,508 Sunday School Teachers Trained and Equipped.

Thank you for the generous response to this strategic project to reach China's children for Christ. Each teacher, on average, is expected to teach 100 children and establish them in the Word of God. Teachers attending the training have their travel costs covered, and a set of materials given to them for free. These materials include a children's Bible, teacher's manual, 18 teaching books with visual aids, 15 hours of VCD (video cassette disc) teaching, and six CDs of 'Children's Heavenly Songs'. **The total cost of \$47 per set** includes printing and production, and training expenses.

CHINA BIBLE PRINTING



Current Total: 877,903 Bibles printed and delivered.

We are partnering with house churches in China in a long-term goal to print Bibles for Christians. These Bibles are distributed free of charge to all parts of China, equipping the believers and helping add fuel to the fires of revival that are burning brightly. Each full Bible costs just US\$2.25 to print and deliver.

CHINA LIVING MARTYRS FUND



Because of your prayers and support we are currently able to support 1,190 living martyrs.

The **China Living Martyrs Fund** assists pastors and evangelists who are now unable to work because of their injuries. They and their families face extreme poverty and hardship. You can help 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.

ASIAN WORKERS' FUND



We are currently able to support 286 Asian missionaries.

The **Asian Workers' Fund** assists church-planting evangelists who are involved in strategic ministry in Asia. These servants of the Lord have committed their whole lives to the Gospel. Please pray about whether you or your church could help in the support of one or more of these workers with a gift of **US\$25 per month each**. A prayer card will be sent to every regular supporter.

PROJECT SMILE



Your generous gifts have so far helped bring a smile to the faces of 4,056 children in Vietnam.

Project Smile helps children from poor families in Vietnam who were born with disabilities such as cleft palates, harelips and club feet, as well as others who need operations for burns, cancerous growths and other conditions. The cost of helping a child varies depending on the kind of surgery required, but each gift received of **\$60 will help a child** have a better life. A laminated prayer card of a child helped through Project Smile will be sent to all donors.



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

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October 2006 - Newsletter #86



Sheep Among Wolves

- The Church in Xinjiang (Part Two) -

A Biblical View of Persecution (Part 1)

by Glenn Penner

For several issues now we have focused on Christian martyrs in China. Many people have written to express their appreciation for these testimonies, but others have struggled to understand the reasons behind persecution. Many believers have been falsely taught that following Jesus only brings blessings and happiness. Glenn Penner of The Voice of the Martyrs has kindly written an essay 'A Biblical View of Persecution' which will appear in the front of Paul Hattaway's coming book, 'China's Christian Martyrs'. Glenn has kindly allowed us to publish his essay in our newsletters, commencing with this issue. We hope you will read his words carefully and prayerfully, as they will help you to gain a deeper understanding of why Christians experience persecution.

When seeking to understand the scriptural teaching of persecution, it is important to understand, first of all, that the New Testament is not overly concerned to answer the question of suffering in general (i.e., suffering due to living in a fallen world). This is assumed. Rather, most of the passages dealing with suffering in the New Testament have to do with suffering because of *righteousness*. As I have studied many of the classic books on suffering, it is noticeable that this is hardly ever stressed. This is to be expected, I suppose, since Christians in the West have little or no experience with persecution per se.

Because the biblical texts on persecution cannot readily be applied to a setting where there is little or no persecution, the tendency seems to be for preachers to misapply these passages to situations of general physical, psychological, and spiritual suffering. This misapplication has subsequently been turned around upon the text itself. Hence, the application influences the interpretation, resulting in the typical Bible student in the West never even suspecting that the texts that deal with pain and suffering might be dealing with suffering for righteousness' sake rather than suffering because of sin.

There is a clear scriptural link between persecution and discipleship. There can be no discipleship without persecution; to follow Christ is to join Him in a cross-carrying journey of reconciling the world to the Father. That this journey is set in

the context of conflict, self-sacrifice, and suffering is alluded to as early as Genesis 3:15 when the Lord affirms that Satan's judgment, accomplished through human instrumentality, will bring deliverance to the offspring of the woman, but it will take place in a process of bruising and pain. The deliverance will come through the crushing of the serpent's head, but in the process the heel that crushes him will be bruised. This truth is illustrated in the very next chapter when the first murder takes place following an act of worship, as Cain's sacrifice is rejected by God while his brother's is accepted. In jealousy (a common reason given in scripture for persecution), Cain kills his brother. It is obvious that the New Testament views Abel's murder as much more than the result of sibling rivalry or a family squabble that got out of control. Jesus clearly saw Abel's death as an act of martyrdom (Matthew 23:35), as does the apostle John (1 John 3:12). John explains that Abel's death was because Cain's acts were evil and Abel's were righteous. Abel's death is clearly set in a context of martyrdom, a result of the conflict between the world and those who belong to God (1 John 3:13).

Persecution is hardly an exclusively New Testament phenomenon. Numerous passages refer to the suffering inflicted on the people of God throughout the historical narratives. It is likely that the psalms of lamentation address the issue of the suffering of God's people more clearly than any other portion of Scripture (including the New Testament). The thrust of Job is about how the man of God suffers not because of sin but because of righteousness and the call to trust God in the face of such a paradox. This train of thought is amplified by the call of the prophets to look ahead to the Day of the Lord, believing that history is under the control of an Almighty God who, from the foundation of the world, has set His plans in motion of reconciling the world to Himself.

All of this comes into focus with the coming of Jesus Christ, the revelation of the triune God. Through Christ, we see, among other things, that sacrificial love is in the very nature of who God is. To suffer and die to accomplish His purposes was not to be unexpected; He could not be God and do anything but. Weakness, suffering and sacrifice are God's *modus operandi*. This is how God accomplishes His work: not through strength or compulsion but through love and invitation. In the process, the Servant of God suffers and dies, as do those who follow Him. This is to be expected; this is God's way of reconciling the world to Himself. A cross-centered gospel requires cross-carrying messengers. When Jesus declared, *"If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me"* (Matthew 16:24), we need to take His words much more literally than we are accustomed to doing.

....Continued in our next issue.

CHINA MARTYRS: Sheep Among Wolves - The Church in Xinjiang (Part Two)

We continue our look at the history of the Church in Xinjiang, China's barren northwest region dominated by Muslims. In our last newsletter we examined how Swedish missionaries established the Gospel in Xinjiang in 1892, seeing a church emerge until brutal persecution in the 1930s brought the work to an end.



Ali Akhond

Ali Akhond grew up a dedicated Muslim. He faced Mecca and prayed at the five prescribed times each day, and was careful to obey the teaching of the Qu'ran. One day Ali rode his horse into the market at Kashgar, in China's northwest region of Xinjiang. While there he overheard an old man in a dusty gray cloak telling a group of students that he would never die. Ali thought the man, a Swedish missionary, was crazy, but he was strangely drawn to his claim that he would never die, and thought about it often.

Some time later Ali obtained work at Kashgar, leaving his wife back on the farm with his elderly father. Ali intended to use his time in the city to hear lectures on Islam, but instead he came into contact with the Swedish Mission. He often went to listen to their singing and preaching.

One night a missionary stood up and read the words of Jesus from the Bible, "I tell you the truth, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death" (John 8:51). Ali remembered the time he had heard the old man say the same thing at the market, and he decided to find out what the Christians meant by this saying. He accepted some gospel literature and took it home to read, but a friend threw it into the fire, warning Ali that if he read it he would become an infidel. He returned to the mission and was given the same book, but this time another friend ripped it up before Ali had a chance to read it.

Undeterred, Ali Akhond secured yet more Christian literature and over the coming months closely observed the lives of the missionaries and their converts. What he saw impressed him. Whereas many marriages among the Uygur people ended in divorce or discontent, the missionaries



Ali Akhond (left) and a Christian at Kashgar.

seemed to have genuine love and trust in their families. All of the Christians seemed to have an inner calm and joy that he longed for, and which Islam was unable to provide. A few years passed, and by this time Ali had taken a second wife. He struggled to support both wives in this polygamous arrangement. The missionaries later recalled how one day,

“it began to occur to Ali Akhond that the Swedes’ successful married life, their unselfishness, truthfulness and honesty might be due to obeying the teaching of Christ; so he began to try to follow that teaching himself. About a year later he realized he now knew for certain that Christ was alive and that Christ was God.

He saw the terrible thing that faced him. He would be cut off by his own people. But even so he decided that in common honesty he must throw in his lot with the despised Nazarene. He parted from his secondary wife, making provision for her and undertaking to support their little son who stayed with his mother. Then he asked to be prepared for baptism.”

After his public baptism, everybody in Kashgar knew that Ali Akhond had turned his back on Islam and embraced the ‘religion of the Crusaders’. Ali returned to his first wife, and after a few years she also repented and became a new creation in Christ. The transformation in Ali’s life was startling, and he could not keep the message to himself. In the mid-1920s he was appointed as a full-time evangelist by the church in Kashgar, and he led many Muslims to faith in Jesus Christ. These advances came at great cost for the gifted preacher. He was constantly harassed and threatened by his fellow countrymen, who considered him an infidel. According to one report, whenever Ali preached in a church service,

“there were always many more Muslims than Christians present, and when he preached on the Story of the Prodigal Son, he could make everyone see the handsome young boy in a striped silk coat, white turban and crimson leather boots riding away from his father’s house on a fine stallion. At Christmas there were often congregations of two or three hundred for the early morning service.”

When the persecution started in 1933 there was nowhere to hide for the Christians, and certainly not for someone with such a high public profile as Ali Akhond. The missionaries were eventually expelled from Xinjiang, and most of the new believers were murdered.

Ali Akhond was one of those who gained a martyr's crown at Kashgar. He had found God after seeking for him with all his heart, finally discovered the true meaning of what the missionaries had taught years before. He had kept the words of Jesus, and as a result never experienced spiritual death.

Habil and Hava

Habil and his sister Hava lived next door to a school run by the Swedish missionaries in Yarkant. Their father, Tokht Akhond, was a carpenter by trade. When Habil (Abel in English) was ten-years-old and Hava (Eva) was four, their mother suddenly died.



Habil and Hava at Yarkant in 1932.

This sad event threw the family into turmoil. The father went into huge debt to a Chinese opium smuggler.

Two years later, in 1926, more heartache was added to the children when their father died. That same night the opium smuggler came to take Habil and his sister into slavery as payment for their father's debts. The children ran to the school and begged the missionaries to save them.

The Swedes did not have the kind of money owed to the creditor, but they devised a plan to protect and keep Habil and Hava. Habil had attended classes at the mission school for a number of years, but his father had not been able to pay the fees. The missionaries used this as a way to claim the children. They lodged a legal petition claiming the mission was owed a sum of money for unpaid fees. In return, they had accepted guardianship of Habil and his sister, and considered the debt paid in full. Because of his shady dealings, the opium smuggler did not dare contest the claim in court. The children were spared.

Gradually the grief-stricken children grew to love the Swedish missionaries. Habil enjoyed playing soccer, and proved better at the sport than other boys much older and larger than himself. He also enjoyed bird-watching. Little Hava came to love Gerda Andersson, who was in charge of the Girls' Home.

In 1931 a great evangelist named Yusuf Ryekhan came to live in Yarkant and revival broke out among the Muslim population. Several of the young men connected to the mission put their faith in Christ and were baptized. Habil was one of them. In a Muslim society baptism is the point of no return for someone interested in Christianity. Habil knew it

would cost him his friends, reputation and possibly his life, but he did not care. All he wanted to do was follow Jesus. The missionaries were greatly impressed by Habil's zeal and hunger for God, and at the end of 1932 he was invited to become the assistant principal of the mission school at Kashgar, even though he had only just turned 19.

Yarkant was overrun by the Khotan rebels on 11 April, 1933. Just before the road between Kashgar and Yarkant was cut off, Habil returned to Yarkant so he could take care of his sister. Hava was then 13, and many young girls and women were being raped and carried off by the rebels. The Swedish missionaries were rounded up and eventually expelled from Xinjiang, and the rebels turned their attention on those ex-Muslims who had deserted Islam.

Sensing the storm that was about to break, Habil drew a cross on a mud wall, and asked a Christian boy named Mehmen Niaz, "Do you see that?"

"Yes," the boy replied.

Then Habil drew a crown. "And do you see that? You see the cross comes first and then the crown."

That afternoon Habil and the other Christian boys prayed together, asking God to strengthen them for the ordeal ahead. Habil wept and prayed for courage to be faithful to his Savior in life and death, like Stephen. Suddenly while they were singing a hymn, a shout went up to run. Soldiers surrounded the building and only one boy managed to escape. The Christians were roped together and taken to the governor's house, where Abdullah Khan had taken residence. Abdullah stuck Habil over the head and yelled, "Shoot them all!" At the same time the wicked man signalled to a soldier that Habil should be separated from the others and untied.

Habil knelt down and looked up to heaven with a peaceful look on his face. Then he looked across at his friends as if to bid them good-bye. The order was given, 'Fire!' Habil fell to the ground and Abdullah shouted, "Finish him off with your sword."

The soldiers began to thrash the prisoners until two of the boys called out, "Shoot us, too, and put us out of our pain." When he had wreaked his anger on them, Abdullah had the Christians bound and sent to prison, and ordered that Habil's body be thrown out for the dogs to eat. After it had remained untouched for three days, some Muslims buried it.



Habil at the age of 12.

About a week later, Abdullah Khan ordered the 13-year-old Hava to come to the governor's mansion. The believers prayed for her, afraid the wicked man planned to vent his lust on the pretty young girl's body. Just after sunrise the next morning Hava returned to the school and sank down on the floor. After wiping the tears from her eyes, she bravely recounted what had happened the previous night. The evil man locked the door and told Hava, "Now, you shall be mine!" Hava begged to be killed, so she could join her brother in heaven. Abdullah Khan was surprised to hear that the young girl was the sister of the man he had shot dead. Somehow this plea managed to touch even Abdullah's hard heart, and he allowed her to go free as long as he was provided another Christian girl in her place. That dreadful experience fell to a young lady named Buve Khan, who became Abdullah Khan's wife.

Hava and the other Christian girls were forcibly married off to Muslim men. The man Hava was forced to wed suffered from syphilis and she soon contracted the disease and also fell pregnant. The baby died at birth. Gerda Andersson was still in Yarkant at the time, and she heard what had happened to the beloved girl. The Swedish missionary sent a cart to Hava's house and collected her at the point of death, nursing her day and night until she recovered.

Having suffered the deaths of her mother, father, brother and newborn baby, young Hava's heart was crushed by the evil she had endured. Through the love and tears of the other Christians who survived, Hava continued to walk with the Lord, but several years later she died from the strain of the ordeal. She had not yet turned twenty.



Introducing a New Project: **The Southeast Asia Bible Fund**



For the last several years we have focused our efforts on printing Bibles inside China for the house church Christians. We are thankful to God for the tremendous response, and the total number of Bibles printed and delivered is now approaching 900,000.

There are great needs for Bibles in other parts of Asia. The Communist nations of Laos and Vietnam contain more than 250 different tribes, dozens of which had full Bibles or New Testaments translated into their languages prior to the establishment of Communism in 1975. Since then, these believers have been deprived of Scriptures in their

languages because their governments oppose the spread of Christianity and Bible printing is illegal. A slightly different situation exists in the country of Myanmar (formerly known as Burma), which is ruled by a brutal military dictatorship. There the need for the Word of God in a variety of languages also remains critical. In some cases, missionaries labored for years translating the Word of God for a tribe, only to have their work cut short by the change of government.

Through coworkers in Southeast Asia, we are now relaunching this important and needy project, which we have called the **Southeast Asia Bible Fund**. Our aim is to print the Scriptures in a number of different languages as the need arises. In the past, Asia Harvest has been involved with printing and delivering **31,550 Bibles or New Testaments into 17 different Southeast Asian languages**, namely Burmese, Lao, Hmong Daw, Bana, Khun, Mnong, Vietnamese, Khmu, Raglai, Co, Akha, Chinese, Koho, Wa, Tai Dam, Bru, and Sgaw Karen.

The structure of this project needs to be a little different from the China Bible fund, as the cost of each Bible will vary from one language to the next, but the average cost will be \$2.70 per Bible. We plan to provide information about the

various people groups and languages that will be assisted through the project in our future newsletters. This will enable you to join in prayer for the successful implementation of each of them.

Please pray for the Southeast Asia Bible Fund, and for the many people groups who are perishing without God's Word. If you would like to help print Bibles in Southeast Asia, please fill out our Response Form and send it into us with your gift. All donors are sent a receipt, while in America all donations to Asia Harvest are tax-deductible.



Tribal Christians in Asia carrying boxes of Bibles back to their villages.

CHINA CHILDREN'S PROJECT

Current Total: 1,576 Children's Bible Teachers Trained and Equipped.



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ASIAN WORKERS' FUND



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The **Asian Workers' Fund** assists church-planting evangelists who are involved in strategic ministry in Asia. These servants of the Lord have committed their whole lives to the Gospel. Please pray about whether you or your church could help in the support of these dedicated workers. A prayer card will be sent to all regular monthly donors.

PROJECT SMILE



Your generous gifts have so far helped bring a smile to the faces of 4,089 children in Vietnam.

Project Smile helps children from poor families in Vietnam who were born with disabilities such as cleft palates, harelips and club feet, as well as others who need operations for burns, cancerous growths and other conditions. The cost of helping a child varies depending on the kind of surgery required, but each gift received of **\$60 will help a child** have a better life. A laminated prayer card of a child helped through Project Smile will be sent to all donors.



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Asia Harvest



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December 2006 - Newsletter #87



Saved for His Glory

- A Testimony from the Himalayas -

A Biblical View of Persecution (Part 2)

by Glenn Penner

For several issues now we have focused on Christian martyrs in China. Many people have written to express their appreciation for these testimonies, but others have struggled to understand the reasons behind persecution. Many believers have been falsely taught that following Jesus only brings blessings and happiness. Glenn Penner of The Voice of the Martyrs has kindly written an essay 'A Biblical View of Persecution' which will appear in the front of Paul Hattaway's coming book, 'China's Christian Martyrs'. We hope you will read his words carefully and prayerfully, as they will help you gain a deeper understanding of why Christians are persecuted.

The demand of Jesus on His followers is to tread the path of martyrdom. He was about to send His disciples out as sheep among wolves and He had told them that they would likely die in the process of carrying out their ministry. In order to build His Church (Matthew 16:18), His death was necessary, as He points out in verse 21. This is the foundation. Without Christ's death there is no redeemed community. But just as Christ's cross was needed to establish His Church, our crosses are needed to build His Church. Both are needed. There is no better way to put it than to follow the lead of the Romanian church leader Josef Ton who coined the phrase: "Christ's cross was for propitiation. Our cross is for propagation." To be called to follow Christ was to receive a call to suffer (e.g. Acts 9:16; 14:22; 1 Thessalonians 3:3; 1 Peter 2:21; 3:9, 17).

It was this understanding that sacrifice, suffering, and even death were the normal cost of discipleship that fueled the evangelistic efforts of the first century Church. They did not expect to experience all of the blessings of heaven in this world. They knew that by their faithfulness, even unto death, they were storing up rewards in heaven. Contrary to our belief that it is a blessing not to be persecuted, they knew that it was the persecuted who are blessed (Matthew 10-12). Rather than following our example of thanking God for the privilege of not suffering for Him, they thanked God for the honor of suffering for His sake (Acts 5:41). They knew that in order to bring life to others, they must die; to see others experience peace with God, they would

have to suffer the violence of the world; to bring the love of God to a dying world, they would have to face the hatred of those whom they were seeking to reach. It is in this context that they described spiritual warfare; not freedom over bad habits or psychological problems, but the brutal reality of witnessing to the faithfulness of God in the face of suffering, sacrifice and death. It was only in this context that the purposes of God would be accomplished.

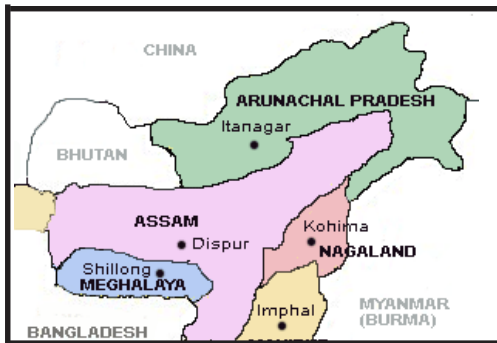
This is also the reality of persecution today. We continue the task of taking the gospel to the end of the earth, knowing that He goes with us and that we do not suffer alone. In all of our afflictions, He is afflicted and just as Jesus demanded of Saul of Tarsus, so He asks of today's persecutors, "Why do you persecute Me?" The knowledge that nothing can separate us from Christ's love (Romans 8:35), that the Spirit prays for us when we can only groan in agony (Romans 8:26-27) and gives us His words in the face of our accusers (Matthew 10:19.20) provides the help that the disciples of Jesus require to remain faithful witnesses. God has provided all that is necessary for the disciple to stand firm. Yes, there may be fear, but by God's grace it need not control us. Yes, there may be terrible suffering, but suffering is not the worst thing that can happen to the child of God; disobedience to the Father is.

As you read the testimonies of these courageous brothers and sisters in the pages that follow, it is worthwhile to reflect on the words of Peter: "*For it is commendable if a man bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because he is conscious of God*" (1 Peter 2:19). In these words, Peter defines grace as suffering due to one's faithfulness to God. As we read the accounts of those who have suffered for the sake of Christ, we might be justified in saying that from the world's perspective, those who endure persecution are heroic, but from God's perspective they are recipients of grace. Peter stresses that enduring suffering is evidence that God is at work in one's life. There is no glory for the sufferer. No hero worship. No merit for those who are able to endure hardship, no boasting of one's achievements. It is evidence of God's grace. It is all a work of God, from beginning to end. When people can suffer horrible persecution and endure, it is evidence that God has been at work. Is it any wonder that near the end of this epistle, written especially to instruct persecuted believers to stand firm in their faith, the apostle writes, "*And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast*" (1 Peter 5:10).

Cover picture: Young novice monks at a Buddhist temple in Arunachal Pradesh, India. Few people in this remote part of Asia have ever heard the Gospel.

Saved for His Glory - A Testimony from the Himalayas

Earlier this year we had the privilege of traveling to Nagaland, in northeast India, where we helped train about 30 Asian missionaries preparing to take the Gospel to remote unreached tribes and people groups throughout the Himalayan region. These workers, and many others, are supported through our Asian Workers' Fund. We had a wonderful time of fellowship, and thanked God when the workers shared their testimonies. One of these that touched us deeply was that of a tiny man named Dolo Sono, whom God has used to plant more than 60 churches throughout the remote state of Arunachal Pradesh, which borders Tibet. This is his testimony:



"Praise the Lord!

My name is Dolo Sono. I grew up in an area where nobody had ever heard of Jesus Christ, not even once in our lives. My fathers worshipped the spirits for countless centuries, and they encouraged me to follow them and become a priest of the Donyi-Polo (Sun-moon) religion. We didn't know who the Creator was, so my tribe had no option but to worship His creation. We considered the sun and the moon our

father and mother, giving sustenance and light to us.

My son developed a blood disease. He suffered terrible pain as his condition worsened over time. My wife and I could hardly stand to see the pain he was in. I called on the spirits to help, but he only grew worse. I visited other priests and asked them to pray for my son, but the more they prayed, the worse he became. Then, like a dagger through my heart, my precious son died.

I was grief-stricken, and wept uncontrollably as I stared at my little boy's lifeless body.

I didn't realize it at the time, but a Christian lived in a nearby village. When news spread that the Donyi-Polo priest's son had died, the Christian came to my house and asked if he could

pray for my son, who had been dead for four hours already. I didn't see any harm in letting the follower of Jesus pray for him. He started to pray, and a short time later my boy suddenly came back to life! He sat up and was fine.

We later found that he was also completely healed from the blood disease that had caused him so much suffering!

As you might imagine, when news of this great miracle circulated, everyone was amazed and rushed to our home to see my son for themselves.

I didn't know anything about Jesus, but from that moment I knew that He alone was the true God, and I decided I would serve Him for the rest of my life.

The first thing I did was search for other Christians. I thought they must be really special and powerful people, because they followed the true and all-powerful God who has the power to bring the dead back to life and change people's hearts on the inside. After searching far and wide, I was shocked to discover that there was just one church in my entire region, with only eleven people in it.

The eleven Christians were weak and persecuted. They met in a small, run-down building. I found this really sad. My own temple where I had served as a priest was beautifully decorated by comparison. I could scarcely believe that the followers of Jesus were so crushed and timid even though they possessed the Truth. My forefathers had followed



Dolo Sono

Satan for centuries without any light from God. Those who followed lies were much larger in number than those who followed the Truth. This was wrong, and I decided to do something about it. From that day onwards I determined to help God's Church grow.

From the day God raised my son from the dead, I started telling people about Jesus. This was the least I could do. I thought everyone would be excited to hear about Jesus, but I soon found that it made people angry. My own parents and family threatened to disown me if



Waiting to hear the Gospel... A heavily-tattooed man from the Wancho tribe in Arunachal Pradesh.

I continued to follow Jesus. I told them I must follow Him, because He is real and he raised my son from the dead!

I started preaching everywhere I could, walking from village to village and encouraging people to abandon the false worship of our forefathers and to stop bowing down to the sun and moon. I didn't know anything about the Bible, but I boldly testified to what had happened, and that Jesus alone was true and powerful.

A short time later someone told me there were many Christians in Nagaland, a state south of Arunachal Pradesh. This news excited me, so I caught a bus there and met with many true believers in the Lord. Almost the whole of Nagaland was Christian, and I was greatly encouraged. I returned home with more Bible knowledge, and could better explain the gospel to people.

The tribes of Arunachal Pradesh have worshipped spirits and demons since the beginning of time. The only other religion that people respect is Buddhism, which came from Tibet many centuries ago. As I continued to preach about Jesus, I experienced many attacks and problems. People thought my conversion to Christianity had brought great disgrace on my ancestors, especially because I had been a priest.

I was beaten on many occasions, and attacked with swords and spears, but God preserved my life, and there were always a few people interested in listening to my message.

Jesus helped me so much in those early years. Once I visited some villages for the first time and found that God had prepared the people by giving them dreams in advance of my arrival. Because of this, the people were kind to me and listened to the Good News I had come to share.

I believed everything the Bible said. I read that Jesus told his disciples to only take one coat with them when they went

out to preach, so I only wore one shirt until it was filthy and covered with lice.

The years went by and I was so glad that many more people in my tribe and other tribes started to follow Jesus too. In many places I saw people healed by the Lord and delivered from demons. Hundreds of people believed in God. In each place where people decided to follow Jesus, we organized small house groups for them to meet together in.

A strange thing happened right at the time when God was moving so powerfully and saving many people. Other Christian leaders started to attack me and tried to stop me preaching. They said I was not qualified to preach, because I had never been to a seminary. I told them it was a shame I didn't fit into their mould, but that there was no way I could stop preaching because Jesus was in my heart and He must come out!

This only seemed to make these religious people angrier and they even travelled around different villages, telling lies about me and warning people not to listen to me. People in many places turned against me and refused to welcome me.

God encouraged me from the Bible, as I read how many of His children in other times had experienced similar opposition from those who claim to be His followers. Jesus was always attacked by the Pharisees, and I realized that there were many people like Pharisees operating in Arunachal Pradesh.

I wept many times because of the lies being spread and the great opposition. I became depressed. Then one night I had a dream where I heard a voice saying, "Dolo Sono, I have called you to preach. Get up and preach!"

I replied, "But no churches want me any more. The religious people have told the unbelievers not to listen to me. What is the point?"

I then heard the Lord say, "God opposes the proud and gives grace to the humble."



A woman from the Nocte tribe in Arunachal Pradesh. The Nocte are one of about 60 tribes in this little-known part of Asia.

After this dream I knew that I could no longer bow to the threats and intimidation. I read in the Bible that if God is with me, who can be against me? I obeyed the Lord and started preaching again, and God helped me and opened many doors and opportunities. In many villages, people who had worshipped the sun and moon were saved and Jesus entered their hearts.

For years now I have been travelling all over Arunachal Pradesh. People know me as the former Donyi-Polo priest who found the true Way. By the power and grace of the Living God we now have more than 60 fellowships, and

more people are meeting Jesus all the time.

Please pray for our state, and the 60 tribes who live in it. Please pray that everyone in Arunachal Pradesh would soon love Jesus.

Thank you and God bless you!"

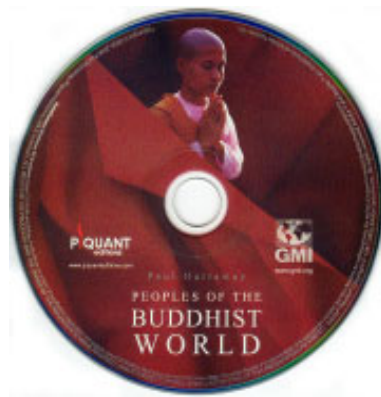
Dolo Sono and his family continue to preach the Gospel and establish churches throughout Arunachal Pradesh. They receive financial support through our Asian Workers' Fund.

Last year our coworkers in Arunachal Pradesh saw 468 people come to Christ, and established 26 churches. If you would like to help with the Asian Worker's fund, please send in the yellow "Response form" in this newsletter. Alternatively, you can easily and safely make a donation to this or any of our projects over our website.

Naga Christians perform traditional dances and songs of thanksgiving to God for the harvest, when we visited Nagaland, northeast India, earlier this year.



New Resource from our Bookstore

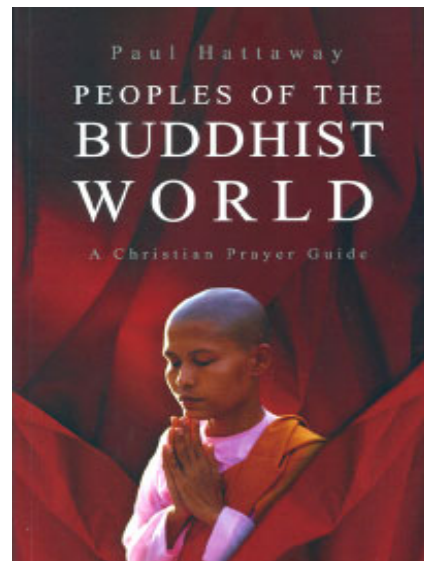


We would like to announce the release of a beautiful and important new resource: the **Peoples of the Buddhist World CD-ROM by Paul Hattaway**. This is a unique resource - the first ever attempt to profile all the Buddhist people groups in the world. They are presented with passion and skill, giving the reader God's heart for the 700 million Buddhist people who have largely been neglected and forgotten by Christians around the world.

The CD-ROM contains more than 450 beautiful, full-color photos, and profiles of 238 Buddhist people groups from countries like China, Japan, India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan, Thailand and Laos; 12 articles on ministry to Buddhists, and hypertext cross-reference indexes of names, languages and countries. Text, graphs, maps and photos may be copied and pasted for presentations.

The CD-ROM is compatible with both Windows and Mac. It is also able to be installed to your hard drive. **The Peoples of the Buddhist World CD-ROM costs US\$ 18** (or £ 12 in the UK, C\$20 Canada, A\$25 Australia, NZ\$25 New Zealand, S\$26 Singapore, RM 68 Malaysia). **These prices include postage.**

You can order the CD-ROM either by credit card from our secure bookstore at our website: **www.asiaharvest.org**, or by sending a check/cheque or money order to one of our offices. Note, the **book** 'Peoples of the Buddhist World' is also available.



SOUTHEAST ASIA BIBLE FUND

Current Total: 31,917 Bibles Printed in 17 different Languages



The Communist nations of Laos and Vietnam contain more than 250 different tribes, dozens of which had full Bibles or New Testaments translated into their languages prior to the arrival of Communism in 1975. In some cases, missionaries labored for years translating the Word of God for a tribe, only to have their work cut short by the change of government. Since then, these believers have been deprived of Bibles by the authorities. **Each Bible costs an average of \$2.70 to print and deliver.**

SEASON'S GREETINGS FROM ASIA HARVEST



As this is our sixth and final newsletter for 2006 we want to thank all our readers for their prayers, encouragement and support throughout the year. We pray the risen Christ will truly be part of the Christmas and New Year period for you and your family. In 2007 we hope, with God's help, to continue serving the Church in Asia and we invite you to partner with us to help see this happen. God bless you!

CHINA CHILDREN'S PROJECT

Current Total: 1,851 Children's Bible Teachers Trained and Equipped.



Thank you for the generous response to this strategic project to reach China's children for Christ. Each teacher, on average, is expected to teach 100 children and establish them in the Word of God. Teachers attending the training have their travel costs covered, and a set of materials given to them for free. These materials include a children's Bible, teacher's manual, 18 teaching books with visual aids, 15 hours of VCD (video cassette disc) teaching, and six CDs of 'Children's Heavenly Songs'. **The total cost of \$47 per set** includes printing and production, and training expenses.

CHINA BIBLE PRINTING



Current Total: 925,142 Bibles printed and delivered.

We are partnering with house churches in China in a long-term goal to print Bibles for Christians. These Bibles are distributed free of charge to all parts of China, equipping the believers and helping add fuel to the fires of revival that are burning brightly. Each full Bible costs just \$2.25 to print and deliver.

CHINA LIVING MARTYRS FUND



Because of your prayers and support we are currently able to support 1,130 living martyrs.

The **China Living Martyrs Fund** assists pastors and evangelists who are now unable to work because of their injuries. They and their families face extreme poverty and hardship. Through an occasional or monthly gift you can help support one or more of these living martyrs. A prayer card will be sent to every regular supporter.

ASIAN WORKERS' FUND



We are currently able to support 291 Asian missionaries.

The **Asian Workers' Fund** assists church-planting evangelists who are involved in strategic ministry in Asia. These servants of the Lord have committed their whole lives to the Gospel. Please pray about whether you or your church could help in the support of these dedicated workers. A prayer card will be sent to all regular monthly donors.

PROJECT SMILE



Your generous gifts have so far helped bring a smile to the faces of 4,159 children in Vietnam.

Project Smile helps children from poor families in Vietnam who were born with disabilities such as cleft palates, cleft lips and club feet, as well as others who need operations for burns, cancerous growths and other conditions. The cost of helping a child varies depending on the kind of surgery required, but each gift received of **\$60 will help a child** have a better life. A laminated prayer card of a child helped through Project Smile will be sent to all donors.



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