

# Asia Harvest



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

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July 2002 - Newsletter #67



## Henan Province

Ripe for Harvest (PART THREE)

# *From the Front Lines*

with Paul & Joy Hattaway

*“And now, brothers, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity.” 2 Corinthians 8:1-2*

**“What kind of church is the Chinese house church?”**

I was asked this question once by a Western Christian who had never been to China. As he continued, it became apparent what he really wanted to know was what kind of denomination the Chinese house churches are. Are they an evangelical church? Baptists? Charismatics?

I thought about his question for a few minutes before answering, “The house churches in China are a Biblical kind of church.”

That answer didn't satisfy him, but it is the most honest answer I knew to give.

Note I didn't say “a perfect church” but rather “a Biblical church.” The Chinese Church has plenty of problems, temptations, trials and weaknesses. It contains those who have various theological views, those who fall into sin, and those who cause division, just like the New Testament church.

But the Chinese house churches are also like the early Church in that the vast majority of believers are fully committed to Christ, willing to die for Him and willing to live every moment for His glory. They have endured through decades of suffering, imprisonment, hardship and torture and have been faithful to Jesus. From the midst of the fire of testing they have come forth as refined vessels, preaching the Gospel at every opportunity and seeing God move in great power. Denominational tags mean little, the focus is on a living relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ and making him known.

In the West some Christians believe the day of miracles ended when the last Apostle died, or when the last book of the Bible was completed. In China the house church believers look upon such views as ridiculous and tragic. They see God perform miracles regularly, yet take no credit themselves, realizing it is all the work of God. They always acknowledge the greatest miracle of all to be a heart changed from darkness to light by Jesus' blood. If you are a Christian who thinks miracles are not for today, you would not enjoy visiting a Chinese house church, nor will you enjoy reading this newsletter!

In our March issue we started our look at the church in Henan Province, China. We read about the early missionaries who labored faithfully in Henan without seeing much fruit. We wrote about some of the Christians who endured horrendous opposition for many years in order to keep the light of the Gospel burning in Henan. In this issue we look at how the Church in Henan started to grow, with the help of numerous miracles and signs and wonders that pointed people to the Cross of Jesus. These testimonies have been told to us directly by house church leaders over the past few years. They were witnessed and attested to by many people.



## Update on the Kidnapped Church Leaders

Our May newsletter was a special issue asking for your prayers on behalf of 33 house church leaders with the China Gospel Fellowship who were kidnapped by the Eastern Lightning cult in April.

Praise God! Now all of the leaders have been released and are back home with their families and churches. They have all gone through terrible physical, mental and spiritual torment and will take some time before they are restored and able to lead the church again. The cult used drugs to weaken and control the minds of the believers. Please continue to pray fervently for the China Gospel Fellowship, that they will grow closer to the Lord through this ordeal, and their work will continue to expand and touch millions of souls for Jesus Christ throughout China.

The CGF plan to release a statement soon, but they have already expressed their deep gratitude for all the people around the world who prayed for them.

We have also had a very encouraging response to our project to print books for the Chinese house churches that outline the doctrines, methods and tricks of the Eastern Lightning cult. We believe this book, which was being written by Chinese believers even before the kidnapping took place, will help thousands of Chinese believers avoid the demonic deception this awful cult has been able to spread across China.

## Henan - Ripe for Harvest

We ended our March newsletter talking about how the Gospel was preserved in China's Henan Province through many years of dark trials and tribulations. Brother Xu Yongze is respected for being the first Christian to dare to preach the Gospel publicly, when he boldly started sharing at meetings in 1968, in the midst of the Cultural Revolution.

Thousands of Christians in Henan were killed during the 1950s, '60s and '70s. Many leaders were brutally murdered in front of crowds of people, while others were simply hauled off and never heard of again.

In the early 1980s there was hope in China that a new, more relaxed time had arrived when believers could worship together with more freedom. These hopes were dashed in 1983 when the government launched an "anti spiritual pollution" campaign and a new season of brutal persecution was underway. Now we continue our look at the Church in Henan Province, and recount some of the many testimonies we have been told by China's Christians.

### Judge Astounded by Courageous Christians' Love

During the year of intense persecution in 1983, an elderly Christian widow named Chen Meiyong, along with her son and daughter-in-law, lived in central Henan Province. The old woman often prayed in Jesus' Name for sick people, and many recovered.

One day a very sick man was brought to their home. He was already knocking at death's door, but the family couldn't turn down the opportunity to minister God's Word to the man and pray for his recovery.

The man couldn't sit upright, so he was carried into the house and laid upon a bed. Just a few minutes later, right in the middle of their prayers, the man died!

spread far and wide, and hundreds of people packed out the courtroom. Some came eager to see the Christians punished, others came out of curiosity, while many believers came to pray for their brethren. Since their arrest the three had been held in separate cells and had no opportunity to communicate with each other. Chen Meiyang appeared first before the judge. Instead of pleading for



In China if someone dies while under your care, you are held responsible. When the dead man's non-Christian family heard what had happened they lodged a complaint with the police. The mother, daughter, and son-in-law were all arrested and charged with murder! According to the law, someone would need to be put to death to atone for the death of the man.

The day finally came for the three Christians to appear in court in Pingdingshan City. News of the trial had

clemency, she amazed everyone by confidently proclaiming, "Judge, I am the one you should hold guilty for the man's death. He came to my house and he died while I was praying for him. I am fully responsible and deserve to die. Please let my son and his wife go free - they have done nothing wrong. I am old and have lived a full life; they are young and have much to offer our nation. Please let them go free!"

The judge and the entire courtroom were shocked. Usually those who faced the death

penalty cried and screamed their innocence. That day, the old Christian widow had calmly and boldly asked for the punishment to fall on her! In her heart she wanted the two younger believers to be spared, as they had more years left in this world to preach the Gospel. She had no fear of death, knowing it was merely a graduation into the presence of her loving Lord who had purchased her with His own Blood.

The judge called for Chen's son to be brought into the courtroom. Instead of defending himself, he boldly declared, "Judge, I am the one to blame for this man's death. I am the man of the house and should be considered fully responsible for what happened. My mother is just an old lady who couldn't harm anyone, and my wife wasn't involved. Please let them live. I am the one you must punish!"

Likewise when the daughter-in-law appeared she too took responsibility for the man's death and pleaded with the judge to let the other two go free.

An argument started in the courtroom between the three accused Christians, as they tried to convince each other to let them take the punishment.

The judge didn't know what to do. All three had asked to die without even having a trial! Nobody had ever heard of such a thing before. News of what happened spread all across Henan Province. It was a tremendous testimony of Christian love and courage.

As a result of all three of them accepting the blame, the judge decided to sentence none of them to death. He said, "I don't believe any of you is the true murderer." He sentenced the trio to eight, seven and six years in prison respectively.

Undeterred, each of them saw their time in prison as an opportunity to minister for the Lord, and they led dozens of prisoners to faith in Christ.

Today they are reunited as a family, and continue to pour their lives out for the Lord, preaching the Gospel, encouraging the believers, and praying for the sick.

## Satan Vents His Fury

In Henan the spiritual battle intensified during the 1980s. As thousands of people became Christians, Satan vented his fury on the believers, doing his best to destroy their faith through persecution and deception.

At one stage, house church leaders in Henan estimated that 40% of all prisoners serving terms in labor camps throughout the province were there because of their faith in Christ. The brutal suppression of the Body of Christ continues to this day. According to Freedom House, approximately 300 house church believers were arrested and incarcerated in Luoyang City prison between July 1996 and June 1997.

On May 25, 1996, a 36-year-old Christian woman, Zhang Xiuju, was dragged out of her home in the middle of the night by Public Security Bureau officers in Xihua County, Henan Province.

After being beaten throughout the night, Zhang died the next day on May 26. On the 27<sup>th</sup>, the authorities returned her body to her parents' home, and gave them ¥ 5,000 (about US\$ 600) compensation.

The Public Security office in Zhang's hometown claim she died while jumping out of a police car while in custody.

Local house church believers dismissed the claim, pointing out that the scars and rope marks around her wrists were consistent with

torture techniques commonly employed by the police when they detain house church believers.

### Going the Extra Mile

The house churches in Henan never pray for a change of government, but rather they pray God would save the souls of the lost in China!

In fact, many Chinese Christians pray persecution will continue in China, because they are afraid if life becomes easy and their faith does not cost as much, the church will get lazy and fall asleep.

They pray their attitude will be one that embraces suffering as a gift from the Lord. With that attitude, they are willing to go the extra mile, and there is nothing evil men or the world can do to them.

Brother Shui lived in Fangcheng County

in southern Henan Province. During the Cultural Revolution, Christians were often forced to parade in public wearing large “dunce” hats, made of heavy bamboo. The people came out to mock and abuse the “criminals” who wore them.

When the time came for Brother Shui to be paraded in public, the police were unable to find a spare dunce hat for him, so they made him walk without one. This deeply upset him, because he wanted to bear the reproach of the Lord.

Each prisoner’s crimes were written on their hat. For Christians they often wrote, “This person believes in Jesus.” This was meant to be a humiliation, but many believers wore the hat as a badge of honor for their Lord. It was a witness to unbelievers, who could clearly see the peace and joy on the faces of the Christians compared to the other criminals.



Brother Shui cried out, “O Lord, why did you forget me?” On the second day a dunce hat was found for Brother Shui, which made him so happy. His face shone with joy and tears welled up in his eyes as he paraded through the streets, now he was considered worthy to fully suffer for the Name of the Lord.

After the ceremony Brother Shui asked the police if he could keep the dunce hat and take it home when he was released from the prison, as a reminder of his “crimes.” The police found this request very strange, but they consented! When he returned to his farm, his neighbors were amazed to see Shui tending his cows and sheep while wearing the dunce hat! For him it was a treasured souvenir of when the Lord allowed him to suffer for the Name of Jesus.

His neighbors thought he had lost his mind, and that he was a shameless man. They despised him. But Brother Shui was a man who loved Jesus with all his heart.

The government was infuriated when they saw Brother Shui embracing what was meant to be his humiliation. They realized they could do nothing to make him change his ways or renounce his Lord.

The world can do nothing to a Christian who has no fear of man.

Brother Shui wholeheartedly served the Lord for the rest of his life until he went to be with Jesus last year, leaving a testimony of courage and faith to many believers.

In 1966, in Nanzhao County (Henan Province), in a small town called Yunyang, one brother also had the experience of wearing a ‘dunce hat’ and being paraded through the streets for the Gospel. This brother was blind and couldn’t see a thing. Everyone knew he had been totally blind for many years.

The people came out and beat him on the back and on the front, smearing dirt and rotten things on him, and riled against him. Two

guards were placed on either side of him in order to lead him forward.

Suddenly this brother began to shout, “Please don’t guide me anymore! I can see! I can see!” God had miraculously opened his eyes right in the midst of his persecution!

This brother is still alive today in Nanzhao, and can still see!

## God’s Wrath Leads Many to Repentance

The persecutors of the church in Henan have done unmentionable things to the believers, but they haven’t always had things their own way.

Some government officials who ordered a crackdown on the church were suddenly struck with cancer, while the family members of some persecutors began to die in accidents. The officials knew they were being judged for their actions against God’s people.

There was one well-known official whose actions against believers had been particularly brutal. He showed no mercy or remorse, and treated Christians like animals undeserving of compassion.

The one person this official loved dearly was his young daughter. She was the apple of his eye. One day he returned home to find that daughter had suddenly become insane.

For weeks she was unable to respond normally to her parents or anyone else. Leading doctors and psychiatrists were brought in to treat her, all to no avail. The official’s daughter could only say one sentence during this time. Constantly, day and night, she declared, “You should stop persecuting the Christians! You should stop persecuting the Christians!”

Finally, realizing God’s wrath had fallen on him, the official decided he wouldn’t

persecute God's people any more. On the same day he repented his daughter was fully restored to sanity.

## Man Dies For Mocking God

In 1995 three female evangelists traveled to Xinye County in southern Henan. Just one week later 1,100 people had repented at their preaching, and numerous people were healed of sickness.

During one meeting, an unbeliever came up and cursed the sisters at the top of his voice with vile and disgusting remarks. The women tried to ignore his filthy display.

After the meeting concluded, a group of unbelievers came up and asked how the three could continue without retaliating, and how they even appeared to have compassion in their eyes for the vile man.

They responded, "We leave this man in the hands of God." At the exact time they said these words, the blasphemous man fell to the ground and died. This caused the fear of God to fall on the people who had witnessed this judgment, and many more people repented and accepted the Lord.

## Unusual Signs and Wonders Lead Many to Christ

Miracles and powerful signs and wonders are a common occurrence among the house churches in Henan. Healings, deliverances of demons, and other miracles often testify to non-Christians throughout the province of God's power and reality. We have even documented several clear testimonies of dead people being raised back to life. The Henan house church leaders are always careful not

to focus on the miracles themselves, however, but prefer to focus on the Miracle Maker, Jesus Christ.

Here are just a few stories we have been told by church leaders in Henan Province....

## Frozen by the Lord

The official Three-Self church in 1997 conservatively estimated 160,000 Christians living in Henan's Zhoukou Prefecture, although house church sources say there are probably in excess of a million believers in the prefecture. Much of the growth in Zhoukou has been due to signs and wonders, and unusual events drawing unbelievers to Christ.

In 1995, five local ruffians came to disrupt a Gospel meeting. These five were renown thugs, feared by all the people in the area. They shouted obscenities and challenged everything the preacher said. They then started to savagely kick and beat him with a stick.

The relatively newly-saved preacher prayed 'Lord, you have to answer my prayer now, or I'm going home.' The moment he prayed, 'In Jesus Name, I bind you' – all of these five men immediately knelt down on the ground and placed their hands behind their backs as though they had just been bound by a tight rope.

Soon, five of the man's relatives came and tried unsuccessfully to lift them up. The young preacher said, "God has bound them, and even if you come with a crane you won't be able to move them."

All of this was witnessed by hundreds of people. The fear of God fell on them and they shouted, "Please let them be free! Please let them be free!"



The preacher ignored the men, and continued sharing the Gospel, carefully explaining the way of the Cross to the captivated audience. When he finished, he said, ‘Get up in Jesus Name!’ The men immediately stood up and were free.

The bound men later reported that while bound they were unable to move any of their body parts, yet their hearing and minds remained unaffected. God graciously allowed them to hear every word the preacher spoke!

More than 100 people, including these five men, repented and were saved because of this sign and wonder.

### God’s Video Screen

When some house church preachers visited one district, a strange occurrence happened. While they spoke, the crowd was able to see images of what the preachers were

speaking about at the time. Witnesses said it was as though a slide projector or video was playing in midair, even though the evangelists were employing no such device.

When they spoke about the crucifixion, everyone present – believers and unbelievers alike – saw a gripping image of Jesus hanging on the Cross with His Blood flowing down. When they said, “Jesus was born in a manger” they saw a picture of a manger in front of them. This continued for more than four hours, and was witnessed by more than 1,000 people. Almost everybody repented and dedicated their lives to follow Jesus Christ. They said, “God is real and lives among you. What can we do except thank Him and believe in Him?”

### Tongue-Tied Officer

During the Cultural Revolution, in Henan, there was a police officer who

severely persecuted the believers. He spoke vile and threatening words against God's people and was always busy making plans for more arrests.

One day this man stuck his tongue out and was unable to put it back into his mouth! He visited many doctors but nobody knew how to help him. One doctor told him he should seek a Christian for prayer. He visited the home of one of the Christian leaders he had persecuted. The family was afraid to see him.

When the Christians saw his tongue was sticking out and he was unable to say anything intelligible, their fear of this man was changed to pity. The believers realized this man wanted them to pray for him, but they knew if he was healed he would go straight back to persecuting them. Therefore they told him, "There is no way we will pray for your physical healing unless you give your heart to Jesus

Christ and believe in Him! And after you receive Christ, you need to agree that you will come to our meetings regularly, and learn to love and serve God with all your heart."

The officer was commanded to kneel down and repent. Immediately God healed his tongue. This man became a believer and stopped persecuting the believers.

This incident was the start of a great revival in that village, when many families came to know Jesus.

This man is still a Christian today.

## School-Children Have to Praise Jesus

The revival in Henan Province has affected the lives of millions of people.

Xixia County is located in southern Henan Province. In Hongqiao Village, the Gospel had been preached there with great power. Revival



affected the entire area as people lived under the awesome reality of God's presence every day. Relationships were restored, stolen goods given back to their owners, and everywhere meetings took place as people hungered to learn more of God's Word.

Even the students in the government school couldn't help but sing Gospel songs during class time. There was no way to contain the childrens' infectious joy. The atheist teachers were amazed, for when the students in one class started to sing, the students in the next classroom also spontaneously joined in worshipping the lover of their souls, Jesus Christ.

Because the teachers and school administrators couldn't contain the children's desire to worship, the Public Security Bureau were brought in. Over 300 of the Christians in Hongqiao Village were arrested. The entire

population of the village is just a little over 1,000 people!

The three hundred who were blessed to suffer for the Lord became even stronger Christians, and they all committed themselves to full time ministry! Now practically every soul in Hongqiao village has been saved.

*In our next newsletter we will continue our look at the remarkable Church in Henan Province.*





## From our Mailbox

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Thank you so very, very much for the excellent article you wrote on the Eastern Lightning cult and their evil work. It moved me so and I am praying for all of you. The Lord gave me this verse "If they drink any deadly thing it will by no means hurt them." Mark 16:18. I felt this was for the whole church, strengthening them to expect that this kidnapping will not stop the work of God in China. The Chinese church is so powerful and so committed and sacrificial, that I believe they really threaten the enemy, especially since the China Gospel Fellowship has a focus on reaching the unreached minorities. Often when God is going to work, things become more difficult for the people of God, but God will still prevail! I know this is a terrible time for our dear brothers and sisters! It is a time to walk in the light. Our only protection in these circumstances is to humble ourselves completely in the sight of the Lord and allow Him to be the one who vindicates and restores and lifts us up. I believe the Lord is allowing his people to go through these horrors so that they can have wisdom and empathy to lead many people out and into freedom. He allowed His own dear people to be enslaved in Egypt, and then instructed them to welcome the stranger and the refugee and the alien, because they knew what it felt like. Above all, please remind one another of the Apostle Paul's words in Phillipians 1:27-30. Remind them to be "in nothing terrified by your adversaries, which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that from God." "For to you it has been granted, for the sake of Christ, not only to believe in Him but to also suffer for His sake." God will utterly prevail, and all of us will see Him humiliate those who try to stand against Him!

*Meg, Arizona, U.S.A.*

I am a student of Chinese language and culture. You Christians are ridiculous! Who do you think you are? What gave you the idea that people in China need your Christ? I grew up Catholic and I respect the Christian god, but I also respect any gods, as long as there is good in his/her teachings. Why can't you do that as well and leave people alone?

*Steffi S. - received by email*

I am 17 years old and studying in a computer technology course. I always pray through everything you send me in your newsletter. I am thankful to the Lord Jesus Christ for giving me a chance to be part of your mission. I am very blessed reading your newsletters. When I first read them I prayed, "Lord, I want to be yours forever. Please make me a faithful child of yours." May God always give you strength and courage to continue reaching the unreached for His glory and honor.

*Cleofe D., Philippines*

## ASIAN WORKERS FUND

*Partnering with Pioneer Asian Evangelists*

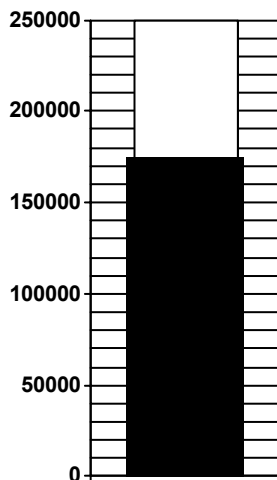
*Because of your prayers and partnership we are currently able to support 148 Asian evangelists for a 12-month period.*

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

The **Asian Workers Fund** assists workers who are doing strategic ministry in Asia. Please pray about whether you, your family, or church could help support one or more of these workers with a gift of **US \$25 per month each**. **100% of your gifts go directly to the workers in need.** A prayer card will be sent to every supporter of this project, with information about a worker to help you remember to pray.

## CHINA BIBLE PRINTING

*Helping Equip China's Christians with God's Word*



**Current Total: 172,174  
Chinese Bibles Printed  
Cost: US\$2.00 per Bible**

Although a limited number of Bibles are now permitted to be printed inside China, they are not enough to meet the need. Because of the tremendous growth rate of the church in China (some say 30,000 new believers each day), there is a serious lack of Bibles. Millions of Christians are still without God's Word. We are partnering with six large house church networks in China in a long-term goal to print Bibles for the church. These Bibles are distributed to all parts of China, equipping the believers and helping add fuel to the fires of revival that are burning throughout the world's largest nation. **100% of your gifts go directly to printing Bibles. Each Bible costs just US \$2.00 to print and deliver.**

## OPERATION CHINA

*Printing 200,000 books for the Chinese Church*



**GOAL: 200,000 books for the Chinese  
house churches**  
**CURRENT TOTAL: 84,406**  
**COST: \$1.20 per book**

We have had a great response to our project to print 200,000 Chinese-language copies of our book on China's minority groups for the house church networks of China. The books will help mobilize hundreds of Chinese believers to reach all 490 tribes and people groups in China. Costing just US \$1.20 for a 500-page book, we have so far received enough finances to print more than 84,400 books. Thank you and please continue to pray that God would provide the full amount needed.

## CHINA LIVING MARTYRS

*Supporting pastors crippled by persecution and torture*

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

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

(Voice of the Martyrs)

In China today Christians are regularly beaten, tortured and even killed because they love Jesus. House church leaders have given us details of more than 1,000 Christian leaders who have been crippled as a result of torture received at the hands of the authorities. The **China Living Martyrs Fund** assists many pastors and evangelists who are now unable to work because of their injuries. They and their families face extreme poverty and hardship. You can support one or more of these living martyrs with a gift of **US \$25 per month each. 100% of your gifts go directly to this project.** A prayer card will be sent to every regular supporter of this project, with information about a living martyr to help remind you to pray.

