

# Asia Harvest



**'Put in the Sickle, for the Harvest has Come!' (Mark 4:29)**

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## **'Chocolate Soldiers'**

**A Challenge from a Chinese Christian Leader**

# From the Frontlines

with Wayne Graham\*

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***“Some faced jeers and flogging, while still others were chained and put in prison. They were stoned; they were sawed in two; they were put to death by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated—the world was not worthy of them” (Hebrews 11:36-38).***

As part of my calling, I get to meet with many Christians in my home country, the United States, and throughout Asia. In the past year or so, I have seen that countless Christians who love the Lord Jesus Christ have a growing sense that something big is about to happen - that a flood of evil is on the verge of being released upon society. This feeling is especially true with Christians in America, as political and economic developments are poised to change our nation as never before.

Though in America we are blessed with the freedom to vote for those in government, our brothers and sisters in China have not had this privilege. Recently China “celebrated” the 60th anniversary of Communist rule. In all that time there has not been a single election. I am concerned that as Christians we have put too much emphasis on electing the right officials to bring about social transformation. In China, Christians are crying out to God in prayer to change their nation and at the same time they are preaching the Gospel throughout the entire country and beyond. Nothing changes a nation like individual hearts transformed by the power of God.

Today in China you will find Christians in business, government, education, arts, entertainment and media. They are bringing the life and principles of God’s Kingdom to a nation that is searching for truth and a foundation to sustain a growing economy with over 1.3 billion citizens.

I would like to encourage all true followers of the Lord: Don’t worry, and don’t be afraid! Like our brothers and sisters in China, let us be bold and preach the Word of God in our nation while praying for God to heal our land. The Bible clearly states that there will be a day when darkness is allowed to flourish. Jesus said, ***“For it will come upon all those who live on the face of the whole earth”*** (Luke 21:35). But in the preceding verse he told the disciples, ***“Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you unexpectedly like a trap”*** (Luke 21:34).

In the early 1950s the Church in China faced many of the same pressures that Western Christians fear are coming now. There were many dark years of persecution, but that was not the end of the story. All “rights” the law of China provided for free worship were taken away, but that was not the end of the story. Every church building was closed down and pastors were removed from their positions. Thousands were imprisoned, and many died. But that, too, was not the end of the story.

In the early years of persecution, many Chinese believers gave up their faith and denied Christ in the face of pressure. Some historians say as many as 70% of the 750,000 church-goers at the time denounced the Lord. As China slammed its doors shut, the rest of the world was sure there would be no Christians left at all, if and when China ever opened again.

In the late 1970s the doors to China did begin to open, and Christians who traveled there were amazed to discover that not only had the Church survived, in many places it had multiplied. Yes, there is much to celebrate after 60 years of Communist rule. A strong and vibrant Church has emerged, and most researchers agree there are around 100 million Christians in China today! God has done a mighty miracle in the world's most populated nation, and the number of His children has grown from less than a million to 100 million. To God be the glory!

God's people in China chose to be bold and courageous, and not to melt with fear when the heat came upon their lives. They have played a major role in transforming their nation, and continue to do so, one life at a time. The work in China has been the hand of God, and not the hand of man. The end of the story of God's plan for China is still being written, but it is glorious!

If you believe difficult times are about to come upon your nation, do not cower and do not hide your light. This is not the time to build a bomb shelter while you wait for the Lord to return! Be strong and courageous, and realize it will be a great opportunity to reach out for Jesus and see a harvest of souls, just like what has happened in China. He is in total control, and we can be ***“confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus”*** (Philippians 1:6).

### CHRISTMAS BLESSINGS FROM ASIA HARVEST



As this is our final newsletter for 2009, we want to thank you for your prayers, encouragement and support throughout the year. We pray the risen Jesus Christ will truly be part of the Christmas and New Year period for you and your family. In 2010 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!

# CHOCOLATE SOLDIERS

*In keeping with the theme of this newsletter, we want to encourage you as a Christian to stand firm for God, and to be bold and courageous even if the world unravels around you.*

*The following article is adapted from 'Living Water' - a book by Chinese church leader Brother Yun. It is a glimpse into the kind of teaching and lifestyles that many house church believers in China hold to. We pray it will encourage and challenge you, as it does us.*

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***"A chocolate Christian dissolves in water and melts at the smell of fire. Living their lives in a glass dish or in a cardboard box, each clad in his soft clothing, a little frilled white paper to preserve his dear little constitution.... God never was a chocolate manufacturer and never will be. God's men are always heroes. In Scripture you can trace their giant foot-tracks down the sands of time."*** — C. T. Studd, former England cricketer, and missionary to China and Africa.

All throughout the Scriptures we read about how God used people to accomplish His purposes on the earth. We read countless accounts of God transforming normal people into warriors for His kingdom. Often the Bible mentions such people in passing, such as, "All these were descendants of Asher—heads of families, choice men, brave warriors and outstanding leaders...men ready for battle" (1 Chronicles 7:40).

Strangely, in some churches today Jesus Christ is portrayed as an oversensitive, weak man. While Jesus is symbolized as a lamb, we should not forget that He is also symbolized as a lion! The Jesus who gently played with little children and gathered them to his lap also made a whip and caused a riot in the temple courts.

Jesus is tough, manly, noble, and the personification of courage. He is a warrior of the highest rank, the Commander in Chief of the Lord's armies, the One with fire in his eyes and a double-edged sword in his hand.

Millions of Christian women around the world are lamenting the absence of strong and godly Christian men in the Church. Jesus is too.

God wants more warriors in His Church. He is looking for people who are serious about Him, who are strong in character and integrity, and who are disciplined like a soldier. Did you know that "*the eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him*" (2 Chronicles 16:9).

In China I have known many courageous men and women of God. They have been so overwhelmed by the love of God, that they have no hesitation in dedicating the rest of their lives to do whatever it takes, and whatever it costs, to see as many people as possible know Jesus.

Caleb was one man who had a warrior spirit in him. He was not just a physical warrior, but all of his battles were also fought in the spiritual realm as he had to

deal with numerous situations requiring the Lord's wisdom and guidance. The spirit of a warrior is not dimmed by age or time. Even near the end of his life, Caleb declared, *"Here I am today, eighty-five years old! I am still as strong today as the day Moses sent me out; I'm just as vigorous to go out to battle now as I was then"* (Joshua 14:10-11).

Often preachers talk about how God wants to "raise up an army," but in many parts of the Bible we see that God was first and foremost interested in raising up an individual, and from that individual came great deliverance for God's people. We can see this in His dealings with Moses, Noah, David, Elijah, Jeremiah, Paul, and so on.

Quantity is never as important to God as quality. He doesn't need an army of people to accomplish His purposes. Just a few obedient servants with the anointing of the Holy Spirit on their lives can bring about great things for the kingdom of God.

In the Book of Judges we find a wonderful story of how God routed the Midianites with quality, rather than with quantity. God had told Gideon to strike down the Midianites (see Judges 6:16). A large army mobilized to fight against the enemy forces, but God surprised Gideon by announcing, *"You have too many men for me to deliver Midian into their hands. In order that Israel may not boast against me that her own strength has saved her, announce now to the people, 'Anyone who trembles with fear may turn back and leave Mount Gilead'"* (Judges 7:2-3).

Twenty-two thousand soldiers turned back that day.

Be careful not to miss the reason why God wanted to shrink this army to a smaller size. He was concerned that Israel might boast

that their own strength had saved them once the victory was completed. Our God has declared, *"I am the Lord; that is my name! I will not give my glory to another"* (Isaiah 42:8).

Gideon's original army of 32,000 men had decreased by more than two-thirds, but God was not finished. By observing whether the men knelt down and drank water from the spring of Harod with their hands, or lapped it up like dogs, God refined the number of eligible soldiers down to a paltry 300!

To the natural mind this situation was hopeless. How could 300 men defeat the entire Midianite army that was boldly arrayed against it? To God, however, this represented no problem at all, for *"Nothing can hinder the Lord from saving, whether by many or by few"* (1 Samuel 14:6).

If we could just catch a glimpse of His power and greatness we would never be the same again! When the Lord is involved, He *"will grant that the enemies who rise up against you will be defeated before you. They will come at you from one direction but flee from you in seven"* (Deuteronomy 28:7). Moses asked, *"How could one man chase a thousand, or two put ten thousand to flight, unless their Rock had sold them, unless the Lord had given them up? For their rock is not like our Rock, as even our enemies concede"* (Deuteronomy 32:30-31).

Child of God, do you have a glimpse of how great Jesus is in your life? Do not be afraid of the devil, for He is merely like a dog on a leash. God allows the devil to attack us from time to time to keep us sharp, but he can never destroy us, for *"the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world"* (1 John 4:4). The Lord





Jesus said of his followers, *"I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. I and the Father are one"* (John 10:28-30).

God is calling for disciples who are steadfast warriors of the Gospel. They may not look like warriors on the outside, but that is not what matters. What matters is what can be found on the inside, for *"The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart"* (1 Samuel 16:6-7).

There are many Christians today who look like warriors for the Lord on the outside, but in reality they are chocolate soldiers, about whom the Bible says, *"If you falter in times of trouble, how small is your strength!"* (Proverbs 24:10).

A chocolate soldier outwardly looks the same as a real soldier until the heat comes on him. All of a sudden he starts to feel uneasy, fear takes control, and he melts

into a pile. A chocolate soldier looks strong while conditions are favorable, but when he is placed under pressure he collapses because he is empty inside. Jesus talked about a man who received the seed of the Word of God with joy, *"But since he has no root, he lasts only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, he quickly falls away"* (Matthew 13:21).

The reality is that we are all chocolate soldiers until Jesus starts to build a solid foundation in our life. One of the key components to developing godly character and resolve in our life is persecution. Paul wrote, *"We also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope"* (Romans 5:3-4), and *"Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be men of courage; be strong"* (1 Corinthians 16:13).

The Lord Jesus taught His disciples the benefits of "standing firm" in the face of opposition: *"All men will hate you because of me, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved"* (Matthew 10:22); and *"By standing firm you will gain life"* (Luke 21:19). We are exhorted to *"Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart"* (Hebrews 12:3).

If you want to be a warrior for Jesus Christ, you will first need to submit to God and allow Him to build character, perseverance, endurance, patience, hope

and courage into your life. These attributes are given to those who desire to serve the Lord, *“so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work”* (2 Timothy 3:17).

The Lord Jesus wants to develop a holy stubbornness inside of you—one that refuses to buckle to Satan or compromise with the world. He wants to train you up as a true soldier for the Gospel, and not a chocolate soldier who melts with fear when placed under pressure. Stand up right now and call on the Lord Jesus to change you from being a chocolate soldier to one who will *“Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus”* (2 Timothy 2:3).

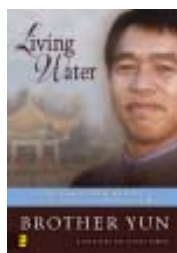
As you begin to serve God wholeheartedly as a soldier of Jesus Christ, you will need living water to flow and refresh you and your colleagues in battle. The Bible contains a powerful story of how God sent water to save the combined armies of Judah and Israel as they went to fight against the Moabites. To reach the battle, the armies marched through the Desert of Edom. The harsh conditions took a toll, and *“After a roundabout march of seven days, the army had no more water for themselves or for the animals with them”* (2 Kings 3:9).

The parched Israelites stopped in a valley and sent messengers to ask Elisha what they should do. Elisha replied, *“This is what the Lord says: You will see neither wind nor rain, yet this valley will be filled with water; and you, your cattle and your other animals will drink. This is an easy thing in the eyes of the Lord; he will also hand Moab over to you”* (2 Kings 3:17-18).

Even if you find yourself in a spiritual desert, and hear death knocking at your door, God is able to send a flow of His

living water to you. There is nowhere on earth that God cannot reach you. Even though the armies were stuck in the middle of a barren desert, *“The next morning, about the time for offering the sacrifice, there it was—water flowing from the direction of Edom! And the land was filled with water”* (2 Kings 3:20).

This was not a small trickle of water that God sent to help His warriors. It seems it was more like a large lake, because the next morning the Moabites saw the reflection of the rising sun in the water from a distance, and thought it was a huge pool of blood. They raced down to collect the plunder only to be routed by the Israelites. As you enter the battle against Satan and his forces, God’s living water will give you the edge you need to rout the enemy. Stand firm, and don’t become like a chocolate soldier. There will be times during the battle when you will desperately need God’s intervention. You should stop and seek the Lord, and He will provide living water to refresh and invigorate you.



‘Chocolate Soldiers’ is chapter 19 of the book **LIVING WATER** by Brother Yun. If you have not yet read this life-changing book, you can order it for \$17 (including postage) from us, or if you send a donation of any amount to any Asia Harvest project, please note that you would like a copy of *Living Water* and we will send you one. *Living Water* is also available as an audio book.



## From our Mailbox

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"A great move of God is taking place here in prison because of your books! We have 21 people here who have read *The Heavenly Man*, and many have read all the books you sent us. They have changed lives. Our group has decided to send support to help you print 50 Bibles for the Christians in China, and we also want to support two evangelists for the next year. I'm sure you understand how much of a sacrifice this is for the brothers here. As inmates we can only earn between 10 cents and 80 cents an hour for the labor we do. With that money we have to buy things like shoes, clothes, snacks, and \$2 for electricity. May the Lord lead and guide you in all that you do. May His wings shadow you from the enemy."

**From a prisoner, Arizona**

"I want to be a missionary when I grow up. Soon I am going to Mexico with my mom. We will go up in the mountains to preach. I have been praying for you. I sent you 5 dollars. I like you. You're doing good!"

**Lydia (age 8), Alaska**

"I need to share something profoundly joyful—and you will understand why. In 1991, we taught English at a university that was specifically designed to propagate Communism to ethnic minorities in China. We were the first Christians ever hired there. The student we were closest to often told us about her home village, near a lake, and the tribes who live there. We tried to visit, but were denied permission. Through the years, we've prayed often and fervently for them. This morning, we got your newsletter in the mail. We cried when we read that today there is a house church in every village around that remote lake! I never expected to see the answer in my lifetime...yet, not only did the Lord answer, but through you He found a way to let us know about it. We were in China 10 years before our first convert."

**Diane**

"I heard of Asia Harvest through my grand-daughter. You had written her a personal letter in response to a five dollar donation she had saved up to send you. It really impressed me that you would take care of a five dollar donation that came from a little girl's heart by responding back her in the way you did. She has shared newsletters you have sent to her with me. I know she prays over what you send. Thank you so much for what you do."

**Peggy, Arkansas**



## **“Christian Elephants” Attack Persecutors in India**



In 2008, a severe persecution of Christians broke out in the Indian state of Orissa. The end result saw more than 500 Christians murdered, and thousands of others injured and homeless after their houses were reduced to ashes. As a result, Asia Harvest responded and helped the persecuted believers, including building homes for many families. Recently, a strange and dramatic event took place in Orissa, which has many people talking and wondering.

In recent months, herds of wild elephants have stormed villages that are home to some of the worst persecutors. In one village where in August a year ago the Christians had to run for their lives while their homes were being destroyed by rioters, a herd of elephants emerged from the surrounding jungle, the Restoration India Mission

reported, “Exactly one year later, at the same time of the day, the persecutors had to run for their lives, from nothing less than a herd of wild elephants! These elephants first attacked a rock crusher machine owned by a key leader of the persecution movement. They then went on to destroy his house and farm. Gaining momentum, they rampaged through other non-Christian homes, demolishing gardens and singling out the homes of persecutors, leaving Christian homes untouched. People ran to the police station to report the disastrous news. In one case, a police jeep that attempted to drive away the herd was attacked and the occupants barely escaped. Truly, God is the avenger of the helpless. These strange attacks have spread, and according to a newspaper report the elephants have already destroyed more than 700 houses in 30 villages, and killed five people.



Nobody in this area has seen or even imagined the unique appearance of a herd of wild elephants such as this. The elephants are not ordinary elephants; they appear to be on a mission. Typically, smaller elephants enter a village first, appearing to survey the community. They then rejoin the herd, and larger elephants soon follow and get the job done. “Just what is their job?” you might ask. We think that it might have something to do with avenging the blood of martyrs. In fact, the fear of God has fallen on the local people, who have labeled these elephants, ‘Christian elephants.’”

## CHINA BIBLE PRINTING



*Current Total: 2,644,870 Bibles printed and delivered.*

We are partnering with house churches in China in a long-term goal to print Bibles for Christians. We receive countless requests from house church leaders throughout the country, requesting God's Word for their congregations. 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 \$1.80 to print and deliver.**

## ASIAN WORKERS' FUND

*Thanks to your gifts we are currently able to support 432 Asian evangelists working among 104 unreached tribes and ethnic groups.*



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 but are hindered by lack of finances. We only support evangelists/missionaries and not pastors, as we believe pastors should be supported by the flocks they shepherd. Please pray about whether you or your church could help support these dedicated workers, at **\$25 per month** each. A prayer card is sent to all regular donors.

## SOUTHEAST ASIA BIBLE FUND



*Current Total: 149,295 Bibles Printed in 28 languages*

The Communist nations of Laos and Vietnam are home to 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. Since then, these believers have been deprived of Bibles by the authorities. We are also providing God's Word to tribes in Myanmar (Burma) and other Southeast and South Asian nations as the need arises. **Each Bible costs \$2.70 to print and deliver.**

## CHINA LIVING MARTYRS' FUND

*Because of your partnership we are supporting 706 living martyrs.*



"A martyr is 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." (The Voice of the Martyrs)

The **China Living Martyrs Fund** assists pastors and evangelists who are unable to work because of injuries or illness caused by persecution. They and their families face extreme poverty and hardship. Through a gift of **\$35 per month** you can help support one of these living martyrs. A prayer card is sent to every regular supporter of this project.

## PROJECT SMILE



*Your generous gifts have so far helped bring a smile to the faces of 7,915 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** helps a child have a better life. A laminated prayer card of a child helped through Project Smile is sent to all donors.

## ASIA DISASTER RELIEF FUND



*Transforming lives from ashes to beauty with God's love.*

Over the years Asia Harvest has provided relief assistance to the victims of natural disasters such as the earthquake in China and cyclone in Myanmar (Burma); the Tsunami, and a host of other disasters in India, Afghanistan, Vietnam, and elsewhere. In addition to providing aid through medicine, tents, blankets, food and water, rebuilding homes etc., the Christians we partner with take every opportunity to share the Gospel, and thousands of people have come to know Jesus Christ. This long-term fund helps us respond immediately whenever a disaster strikes.



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