

Asia Harvest



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

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China Update

A Message from the Church in China

An Update from China

In this newsletter we would like to give a brief summary of what is presently happening in the Chinese Church. The situation is fluid and changing daily, but our contacts in China have shared the following update, followed by a special message from 2 Corinthians chapter 4, which seems particularly relevant and will hopefully greatly encourage you in your own walk with God.

First, an update on some of the recent developments in China:

* **Thousands of churches continue to be closed down**, and many pastors and evangelists have been arrested. This is true both of city churches and rural fellowships. The persecution is nationwide, and is the result of the implementation of new anti-religion laws introduced in 2017 and 2018.

* Many large city churches have tried to protect their brothers and sisters in the countryside by providing resources, finances and teaching so their faith will be strengthened and better able to withstand the storm. Although the most severe persecution first affected the cities, **it has now spread even to small towns and villages**. The majority of Chinese Christians remain poor farmers and factory workers.

* **Many house church leaders have gone missing**. Large numbers have been arrested, while others have gone into hiding. Invasive technology, however, means it is now very difficult to remain anonymous in China. Some leaders have decided they should simply continue to serve God openly, and they are ready to face whatever consequences their actions may bring.

* Even many government-registered **Three-Self churches are undergoing a fiery trial**. Video cameras with facial-recognition technology have been placed behind pulpits, facing the congregation, and on the walls above church entrances. Scripture posters have been forcibly removed from the walls of many churches and replaced with portraits of President Xi or the national flag.

* **All children's ministry has been banned**. This has always been a particularly sensitive topic for the Communist authorities in China. Children are being encouraged to tell on their classmates if they are involved in any religious activity.

* All over the country various **local initiatives have been launched** in an attempt to stop the growth of Christianity. For example, in the city of Guangzhou the authorities announced they will pay 10,000 Yuan (about US\$1,500) to citizens who disclose the names of any missionaries (foreign or Chinese) who work in their city.

* In Henan , which is the province with the largest number of Christians in China, the authorities have issued a paper entitled, “Christianity’s Enormous Harm on China’s Security.” Such reports show how insecure the government is as they seek to consolidate their hold on power. In reality, **Christians in China are the most peaceable, hard-working and obedient members of society.**

* **There is a massive shortage of Bibles right now.** The churches are facing a famine of God’s Word as printing slows down, and in many places appears to have come to a halt. Bibles are becoming increasingly rare, and many websites and apps that enabled believers to access the Scriptures have been blocked by the government. Asia Harvest is one of a few organizations still able to provide Bibles to China’s house church Christians.

Please pray for this urgent need. Without the nourishment of God’s Word, the Body of Christ in China will wither.



Cover Picture: Did you notice anything different about the photo on the cover of this newsletter? It was taken earlier this year, and shows a group of Christians from the Early Rain Covenant Church in Chengdu, China. The photo shows faithful believers meeting in a public park after their services were shut down and their leaders taken away. Starting last December, more than 100 members of this fellowship have been arrested, with many being tortured in prison.

If you look closely, you will see that many have packed bags next to them as they worship the Lord. They brought their clothes and personal items to the open-air meeting in case they were arrested and taken to prison. Across China right now thousands of churches are going through similar intense hardship.

A Message from the Church in China

(from 2 Corinthians 4)

“Therefore, since through God’s mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart. Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the Word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to everyone’s conscience in the sight of God.” (2 Cor. 4:1-2).

The first thing that we Christians in China would like the global Body of Christ to know is that we have not lost heart. Although we are experiencing a severe trial and some people have given up the faith, we are thankful for the hardship, because God is pruning His Church. It is vital that all believers know that it’s not Satan or any government that prunes God’s Church. The Master Gardener is our loving and wise Heavenly Father!

The reason the Lord prunes is to make the vine even more fruitful, for He said: *“I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful”* (John 15:1-2). Therefore we do not lose heart, for we know our lives are completely in the hands of our all-powerful Lord and Savior. At the moment, He is getting rid of some unfruitful branches among His people in China, so that His Church will be refined and more holy as we march forward in spiritual warfare.

We look forward to the time when we will be more fruitful for the kingdom of God. In the meantime, we will not stop proclaiming the Gospel, and we are willing to lay down our lives if necessary so that all of China will hear about Jesus Christ.

“And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus’ sake” (2 Cor. 4:3-5).

While our lives are firmly in God’s hands, we also recognize that the source of attacks on the Church is the devil. Mankind has been locked in a fierce battle with Satan ever since God declared: *“I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel”* (Genesis 3:15). The word “enmity” means much more than a separation. This was the commencement of a full-on war to death, as the devil seeks to destroy mankind, especially those people who reflect the character and goodness of God.

“But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed” (2 Cor. 4:7-9).

We praise the Lord that He sets limits on what man can do to us. Although millions of believers throughout China are now without a church building to go to and countless home meetings have also been closed down, our faith is strong. The truth of God’s Word and the indwelling sweet presence of the Holy Spirit can never be taken from us. We are not afraid, for the Lord Jesus told us, ***“Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell”*** (Matthew 10:28).

“We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body” (2 Cor. 4:10).

Hallelujah! Already we are seeing the benefits of this time of purging in China. In many places, instead of being decimated, churches are experiencing growth! The hardship has caused Christians to become more serious about our faith, and the gospel is being boldly proclaimed, resulting in even more people pressing into the kingdom of God.

“Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal” (2 Cor. 4:16-18).

Finally, brothers and sisters around the world, we want to thank God for you, for we are all members of the same family. Thank you for praying for the Church in China! Although your struggles may be different from ours right now, we know that the Lord is passionate for His people, and He will never abandon us. God’s purpose in suffering is always to humble us, so that we will rely not on our own futile strength, but on the power of His might. We want to conclude by reminding all Christians of this exhortation:

“Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings” (1 Peter 5:6-9).



ASIAN WORKERS' FUND



We currently support 1,407 Asian evangelists among 1,058 unreached people groups.

The **Asian Workers' Fund** supports indigenous church-planting evangelists among unreached Asian tribes and ethnic groups. These disciples have committed their whole lives to the Gospel but are hindered by lack of finances. To date, the evangelists we help have led **363,294 people to faith in Jesus Christ**. You can help support these dedicated workers for **\$25 per month** each. A prayer card and occasional updates are sent to all regular donors of this project.

CHINA BIBLE FUND



Current Total: 11,868,036 Chinese Bibles printed and distributed.

We are partnering with house churches in China in a long-term project to provide Bibles for Christians. We receive countless requests for God's Word from church leaders throughout the country. These Bibles are distributed free of charge, equipping the Body of Christ and helping add fuel to the revival in China.

Each full Chinese Bible costs just \$1.80 to print and deliver.

ASIAN BIBLE FUND



Current Total: 952,503 Bibles printed in 102 languages.

The **Asian Bible Fund** provides the Scriptures in numerous languages in **Southeast Asia, the Indian subcontinent**, and anywhere in Asia that God's people are crying out for His Word.

Each Bible costs an average of \$2.70 to print and deliver. We also print millions of Gospel booklets for evangelism through this project.

LIVING MARTYRS' FUND

Because of your partnership we are supporting 342 living martyrs.



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."

The **Living Martyrs' Fund** supports church leaders and widows in China, Vietnam and elsewhere who are unable to work because of injuries or illness caused by persecution. A gift of **\$35 per month** you can help support one of these living martyrs. A prayer card is sent to every supporter of this project.

BLESS THE CHILDREN FUND



Your generous support has so far impacted 150,786 children for Jesus throughout Asia.

The **Bless the Children Fund** introduces children to Jesus Christ in India, China, Vietnam, Indonesia, and a host of other countries. Activities include printing and distributing children's Gospel literature, providing free surgeries for those with special needs, and generally lifting children out of spiritual and physical poverty. The results of this project have been staggering. It costs an average of just **\$10 to impact a child for Christ**.

PERSECUTION & RELIEF FUND



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

This project provides assistance to the victims of natural disasters in Asia, by providing medicine, tents, blankets, food and water, rebuilding homes etc. The Asian Christians we partner with take every opportunity to share the Gospel, and multitudes of people have come to know the Lord Jesus. This project also provides physical and spiritual relief to Christian communities and families that have been affected by persecution.



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