

# Asia Harvest



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

P.O.Box 901 - Palestine - Texas 75802 - U.S.A.

Tel: (877) 868-5025

Fax: (877) 868-5025

Email: [office@asiaharvest.org](mailto:office@asiaharvest.org)

Website: [www.asiaharvest.org](http://www.asiaharvest.org)

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## Messages from the Chinese Church (#2)

# ***From the Front Lines***

with Paul & Joy Hattaway

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **Season’s Greetings!**

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

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

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

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

# Messages from the Chinese Church

## PART THREE:

### AN ARMY OF WORMS

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

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

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

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

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

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



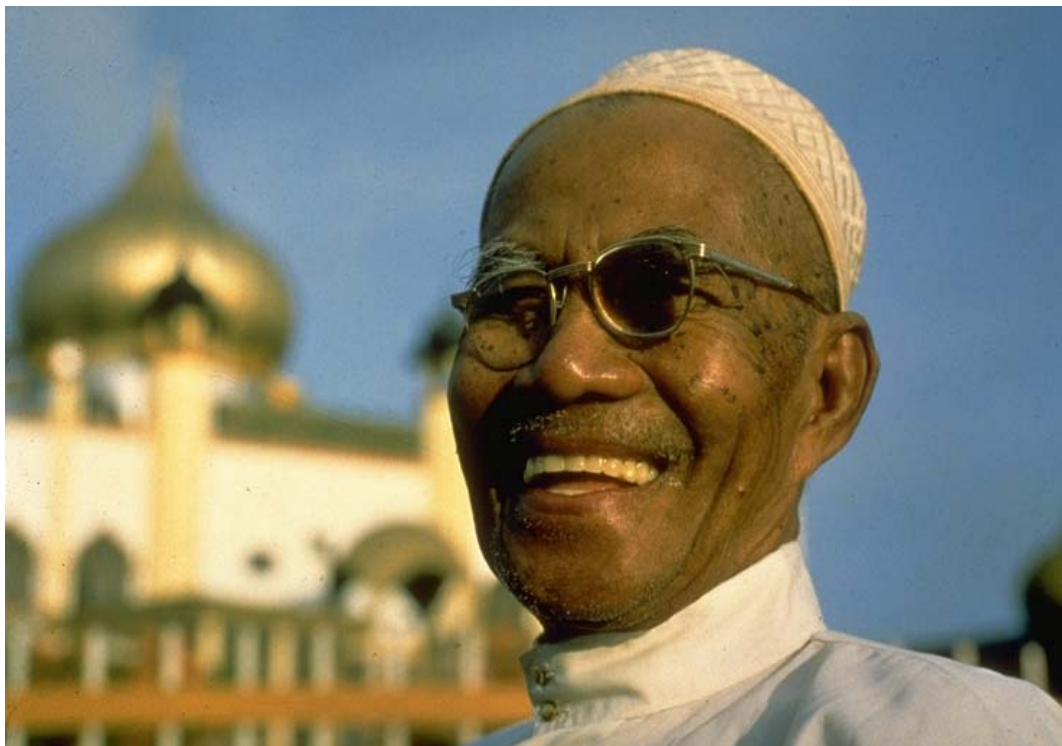
Afghanistan and Iran with the gospel, trampling down the strongholds.

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

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

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

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





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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(Exodus 8:2–4)

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

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

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

(Joel 2:6–9, 11)

Ants and termites have a spirit of teamwork.

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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



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

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



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

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

## **PART FOUR:**

### **TEAMWORK**

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## LETTERS FROM CHINA



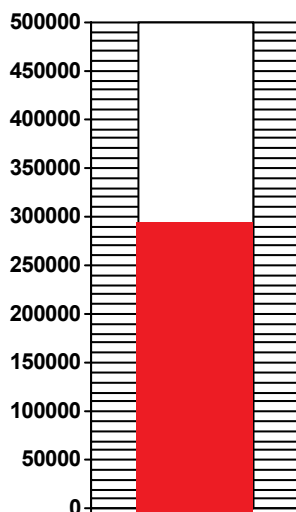
Years ago at Asia Harvest we believed God was calling us to be a link between the Church in Asia and the Church around the world. Our newsletters are one part of that link, testifying to what God is doing in China and other countries, and enabling people to pray and give as they are led by God.

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

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

## CHINA BIBLE PRINTING

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



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

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

***Brother Liu, a house church leader in Henan Province:***

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

***Brother Zhou, a house church leader in Shanxi Province:***

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

***Brother Yang, a house church leader from Anhui Province:***

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

## CHINA LIVING MARTYRS

*Supporting pastors Crippled by Persecution and Torture*

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

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

## Letters from 'Living Martyrs'

### **Brother Song:**

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

### **Brother Peter:**

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

### **Brother Mordecai:**

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

### **Brother Bai:**

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