

Asia Harvest



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

1903 60th Place, Suite M1204 - Bradenton, FL 34203 - USA

Tel: (877) 868-5025 Fax: (877) 868-5025

Email: office@asiaharvest.org Website: www.asiaharvest.org

July 2005 - Newsletter #79



A Christian funeral service in rural China

Bill Wallace - CHINA MARTYR
& PROJECT UPDATES

From the Front Lines

with Paul & Joy Hattaway

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight." (Psalm 3:5-6)

We are often asked what the differences are between Christians in China and in the Western world. The first thing to note before attempting to answer this question is to clarify that the Chinese Church is far from perfect. They have their own problems and weaknesses that are not usually mentioned in books or magazine articles about what God is doing there. But one thing that the Chinese Church has plenty of is zeal and commitment for the Lord. While to explain the reasons for this would require an entire book, we believe one of the main factors is a daily, complete reliance on the Lord.

Any genuine Christian understands that salvation comes only by faith in Christ and his grace, and that there is absolutely nothing we can do to contribute to our salvation (Ephesians 2:8-9). Somehow, though, if we are not careful we can fall into the trap of thinking that after we are saved our Christian walk becomes our responsibility and is something we have to achieve in our own power and strength. Such thinking can only breed frustration, legalism, and a lack of joy in our lives. The Christian life becomes a hard, joyless slog. The Apostle Paul specifically warned believers against trying to live the Christian life in their own strength. Writing to the Galatians, he said, "You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you?.... Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort?" (Galatians 3:1,3). Later, Paul instructed them, "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery." (Galatians 5:1).

House church believers in China, generally speaking, have learned that they cannot walk the Christian life in their own strength, so they don't even try! Perhaps their poverty and the continual threat of persecution has helped them gain this perspective. The result is they are the most joyful Christians we have seen anywhere in the world. When we stop striving in our own strength, God's Spirit can come and take over like He has in China.

CHINA MARTYR: Bill Wallace

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



B i l l
Wallace has gone down in history as one of the greatest martyrs of America's largest Protestant denomination — the Southern

Baptists. Few would have believed it when he was born in Knoxville, Tennessee, in 1908. The son of a doctor, Wallace paid more attention to fixing cars until the age of 17, when he heard God's call to become a medical missionary while working on a car in his father's garage. The teenager answered "Yes" to God, and recorded his commitment on the inside cover of his Bible.

After graduating from college and medical training in 1935, Wallace was appointed to join the Baptist-run Stout Memorial Hospital in Wuzhou, located in the southern Chinese province of Guangxi. His appointment came exactly

ten years after receiving his calling to missionary work. His colleagues in Wuzhou, who for years had been praying God would send a surgeon to their midst, were immediately impressed by the fervency and godliness of the young man. Wallace rebuffed all marriage prospects. One girl who had hoped for his affection finally gave up, saying, "Marriage to Bill would be bigamy. He's married to his work."

For more than fifteen years Bill Wallace remained in Wuzhou, doing good to others and sharing the aroma of Christ everywhere he went. No sacrifice was too great for him to make, as his fellow missionary-doctor Robert Beddoe wrote of one incident during World War II:

"At the time of the second severe bombing of the hospital, there was a desperately sick patient on the top floor. He could not possibly be moved without almost certain death. Wallace stayed by the bed, comforting and reassuring the patient. A bomb hit not more than 50 feet from the bed, tearing a gaping hole in the concrete roof. In the providence of God neither the patient nor Wallace was injured. One of the staff, who was four floors below at the time, told me he was lifted several inches by the concussion."¹

The Catholic missionaries working in Wuzhou became close friends of Wallace. They could not fail to be impressed by the godliness and selflessness of his life. One wrote:

"Dr. Wallace was famed for his surgery and medical work, but most of all for his kindness and devotion to the sick and poor. His whole life was medicine and charity.... [He] would be called a strange fellow by the hustlers, bustlers and seekers of wealth who people the world today. They would call him stupid and impractical, for when people asked him the charge for services he would usually answer, 'Forget about it.' His canceling of charges drove the treasurer's staff to despair, for he was all charity; a sort of mystic walking on clouds and looking for the stars."²

Seemingly nothing could move Wallace from his calling in Christ. Once, when mobs of bandits raided Wuzhou the other missionaries fled, but Bill Wallace remain behind and continued treating the sick. An American ship arrived in Wuzhou to rescue the missionary. Wallace kindly refused to board. When an officer came ashore to warn Wallace that his safety could not be guaranteed unless he boarded the ship immediately, the intrepid doctor replied, "Tell your captain that he was not responsible for my coming here in the first place and he does not need to be responsible for my staying here."

On one occasion when heavy Japanese bombing raids threatened to destroy the city, Wallace transferred his staff, patients and equipment onto a barge. Whenever air raid sirens sounded, he instructed the

tugboat captain to pull the floating hospital under the shelter of one of the many large caves located along the river bank.

As Christmas of 1950 approached, Wallace remembered the wonderful experiences he had as a young man back in Tennessee, the excitement of opening presents, and the enticing aromas of the Christmas feast lovingly prepared by his mother. Now he was in Wuzhou in faraway China, attending to the needs of the sick and dying. He was often so busy in the work that he didn't have time to listen to what others were whispering, that the Communists would not tolerate the Christian hospital in the midst of their newly won territory, and that impending disaster was in the air. The People's Republic of China had declared war on the United States in wake of the Korean War, and the Americans were intensely hated. It seems that everybody knew that Bill Wallace was in great peril, except the man himself. Perhaps he believed he had won some favor from the Communists as a result of treating many of their wounded soldiers during the war against Japan.

On the night of December 18, Wallace was so exhausted after a full day's work at the hospital that he slumped into bed after a snack of six slices of buttered bread and a glass of milk. At three o'clock the next morning a mob of a dozen young Communist soldiers arrived at the gates of the Stout Memorial Hospital, intent on arresting Wallace, whom they called "President Truman's chief spy in Wuzhou." The soldiers forced Wallace

into the main part of hospital, where the Chinese staff had gathered. The officer in charge shouted, "We know this is a den of spies. The People's Republic is aware that some of you are counter-revolutionaries. This will not be tolerated... You have been found out; you will no longer be able to carry on your clandestine activities."³

The staff looked on aghast, and Wallace spoke up in a measured tone, "We are what we seem to be. We are doctors and nurses and hospital staff engaged in healing the suffering and sick in the name of Jesus Christ. We are here for no other reason."

Unimpressed, the soldiers started a search of Wallace's room, emerging a few minutes later with a brown package containing a small pistol, which they claimed to have found under the missionary's bed. "That is not my gun. I do not own a gun, and I do not know where that one came from," Wallace protested.

For weeks Wallace was left alone in his prison cell as the Communists gathered "evidence" that he was a spy. Neither the American Consulate nor the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board could do anything to help him, and permission to visit the prisoner was denied. The hospital staff, directionless without their leader, came to the prison and tried to secure his release. Wallace told them, "Go on and take care of the hospital. I am ready to give my life if necessary." Bill Wallace was able to share the gospel with a prison guard and two or three peasants who had gathered outside his cell window to hear him.



One night a few weeks after his arrest a public meeting was called at the Wuzhou Town Hall where charges of espionage were leveled at the missionary.

"They asked for those who had any accusation against Dr. Wallace to come forward with their charges. None came. When the planted Communist denouncers began to yell vindictive statements against the doctor, they were surprised that the crowd — despite their training — did not join them. No one was deceived. The doctor was being railroaded and everyone knew it."⁴

A fellow missionary later gave an insight into the reason the Communists hated Bill Wallace so intensely:

"The Communists were smarting under the popularity Dr. Wallace enjoyed. Their

propaganda got nowhere in ruining him. He was running the most modern and best equipped hospital in South China, and the city of Wuzhou was still his domain of loyal admirers. The Communists were jealous of both these assets and planned new measures to crush him. Yet these shameless fellows had been using the hospital and demanding the services of Dr. Wallace for most of a year. In their life of contradictions and savagery, they saw nothing indecent in using a man for all he was worth and at the same time hating him and trying to destroy him."⁵

The Communists presented a paper with Wallace's name, age, length of service in China, and other facts. He signed it, only to discover later that a sentence was added into a blank space on the statement saying he was a spy sent to China by the U.S. Government. This "confession" was all the shameful Communists could use against him.

The whole atmosphere suddenly changed in the prison. Wallace was subjected to long and grueling brainwashing sessions, with his hands tied painfully behind his back. Bill Wallace was a sensitive and gentle man, and the nonstop filthy accusations and intense degradation wore his mind and emotions down. Catholic missionaries who were in the same prison, but who were later released, said that Wallace was "shaken and strained" by the interrogations. One of them managed to ask Wallace how he was holding out. He grinned weakly, and said, "All right. Trusting in the Lord."

Only those who have been subjected to a Communist brainwashing can fully understand the ordeal that Bill Wallace went through. The accusations and methods of application come from a spiritual intensity

born of Satan. Bill Wallace's biographer explained:

"The battle was not whether he could out-argue his accusers. He was not even equipped to begin. It was not a battle of physical endurance, though that soon became involved. It was a battle for sanity. From his cell in the night, Bill sometimes cried out in agony after the battle was over.... Delirium, crying, and blank periods came, but he fought on — clinging to his faith."⁶

The aim of the psychological torture seems to have been to break Wallace down so that he would make a full "confession" of his "crimes." On the night of February 10, 1951, the guards came to his cell and tried to break him down further by jabbing the missionary with long poles until he fell unconscious. This final attack was the 'straw that broke the camel's back.' "Quietly, his soul slipped from his torn body and his exhausted mind and went to be with the One he had so faithfully and unstintedly served. Bill Wallace was dead to the world, but alive forever with God."⁷ He was 43 years old.

The next morning the guards raced to the cell of the two Catholic missionaries, claiming Bill Wallace had hanged himself during the night. The Catholics saw his lifeless body suspended by strips of a sheet that had been strung from a beam in the cell. The guards tried to get the missionaries to sign a statement that Wallace had committed suicide, but they refused to. It was clear to them that the façade was a staged show. The prison notified the hospital staff to come and take the doctor's corpse. A nurse who carefully

examined the body said, "The facial characteristics of hanging were missing — bulging eyes, discolored face, swollen tongue. Instead, the upper torso was horribly bruised. The Communists had tried to cover up one botch with another."⁸

The body was taken to the Believers Cemetery overlooking the West River. Communist soldiers watched as Wallace was laid to rest in an unmarked grave. The local Christians refused to allow the man of God to be dishonoured in such a way, however, and funds were raised to secretly erect a monument over the grave with the simple inscription:

Dr. William L. Wallace
"For Me to Live is Christ."

After news of Wallace's death reached America numerous tributes were paid to the martyred doctor. One of his colleagues said he used to "advise anyone looking for Wallace to seek out the sickest patient; Wallace would be there." A Chinese doctor who had studied under Wallace said, "He was a master in surgery, we shall never see his equal again." M. Theron Rankin, the head

of the Southern Baptist Board at the time, wrote:

"The irrefutable quality of Dr. Wallace's love made it imperative that the Communists get rid of him. His life refuted everything the Communists said. They have tried to get rid of the witness of Bill's life. But that is precisely where they will fail. Bill Wallace's witness of God's love in Christ has been made immortal."⁹

Everley Hayes, a missionary nurse who had worked with Wallace for years, said:

"Many think of martyrs as those long-faced people. But I knew a Dr. Wallace who was very much interested in everything around him. He was a martyr not because he died in service but because he so identified with the Chinese that they considered him one of them. And they loved him."¹⁰

Perhaps Jesse Fletcher summed up Bill Wallace's life the best: "The Chinese had heard sermons before, but in Bill Wallace they began to see one, and that made the difference."

NOTES

¹ International Mission Board, *Headline News* (Vol.1, No.97, February 22, 2001).

² Mark Tennien, *No Secret is Safe: Behind the Bamboo Curtain* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Young, 1952), 234.

³ Jesse C. Fletcher, *Bill Wallace of China* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1996), 202.

⁴ Fletcher, *Bill Wallace of China*, 204.

⁵ Tennien, *No Secret is Safe*, 236.

⁶ Fletcher, *Bill Wallace of China*, 206.

⁷ Fletcher, *Bill Wallace of China*, 206-207.

⁸ Fletcher, *Bill Wallace of China*, 208.

⁹ Ione Gray, "Greater Love Hath No Man," *The Baptist Messenger* (No.22, March 1951), 5.

¹⁰ IMB, *Headline News* (February 22, 2001).

Project Updates

VIETNAM: PROJECT SMILE EXPANDED



For several years now we have presented Project Smile to our readers and many people have responded. As a result 2,692 Vietnamese children have received surgery for cleft palate and harelip disabilities. Their lives have been changed and many have heard the gospel for the first time.

Now, after consultation with our Vietnam partners, we are expanding this project to include other medical needs of children in Vietnam. These will include the correction of children born with club feet (see pictures below), cancer victims (left) surgeries for burns, and similar conditions.

The cost of helping each child will vary according to a number of factors, such as the nature of the surgery and its degree of difficulty, the location of the child, and so on. A burn victim, for example, could cost more than \$200 to treat, while other kinds of operations will be considerably less. What we intend to do is keep the unit amount for Project Smile the same as it is now - \$ 60. For surgeries that cost more, two or more gifts will be combined to cover the total cost. Of course, donors may give more than \$60, or less, should they so wish. Each gift will be receipted by us and will help a child have a better life. A laminated prayer card of one of the children who has been helped will be sent to all donors.



NGUYET'S NEW HOPE

We received the following testimony from our co-workers in Vietnam, about a little girl named Nguyet who had suffered horrible burns over her face and much of her body. There are many like Nguyet, but in the name of Jesus we are able to provide a measure of hope and joy in their lives.

Eight-year-old Nguyet's eyes were the saddest I have ever seen. Her face and body horribly burnt from the kerosene lamp that overturned and set the hut on fire some five years before. She sat quietly, one of hundreds of children who crowded the hospital for our free surgery program. The sadness in her eyes penetrated my heart. Only she knew the pain she had endured. Only she knew the struggle of coping with the massive burn scars that fused her limbs, made a stump out of her foot that had all but one of the toes burnt off, had ruined her face and made her the object of stares.

I tried to communicate, a smile, a soft touch, but the eyes remained dead. Finally I prayed "Lord, help me to reach and comfort this child."

It was then I simply felt to kneel down in front of her and softly say, "Will you be my friend?" She closed her eyes for a moment, and opened them again as a smile slowly spread across her face.

Nguyet became my friend.

Each day we visited the hospital she would be waiting, and despite the pain that accompanies such plastic surgery her smile did not fade. The surgery we were able to provide has freed up fused limbs, given her an improved appearance, and replaced despair with hope. Nguyet's parents were desperately poor. They have nothing to offer other than their tears of appreciation.

