

Asia Harvest



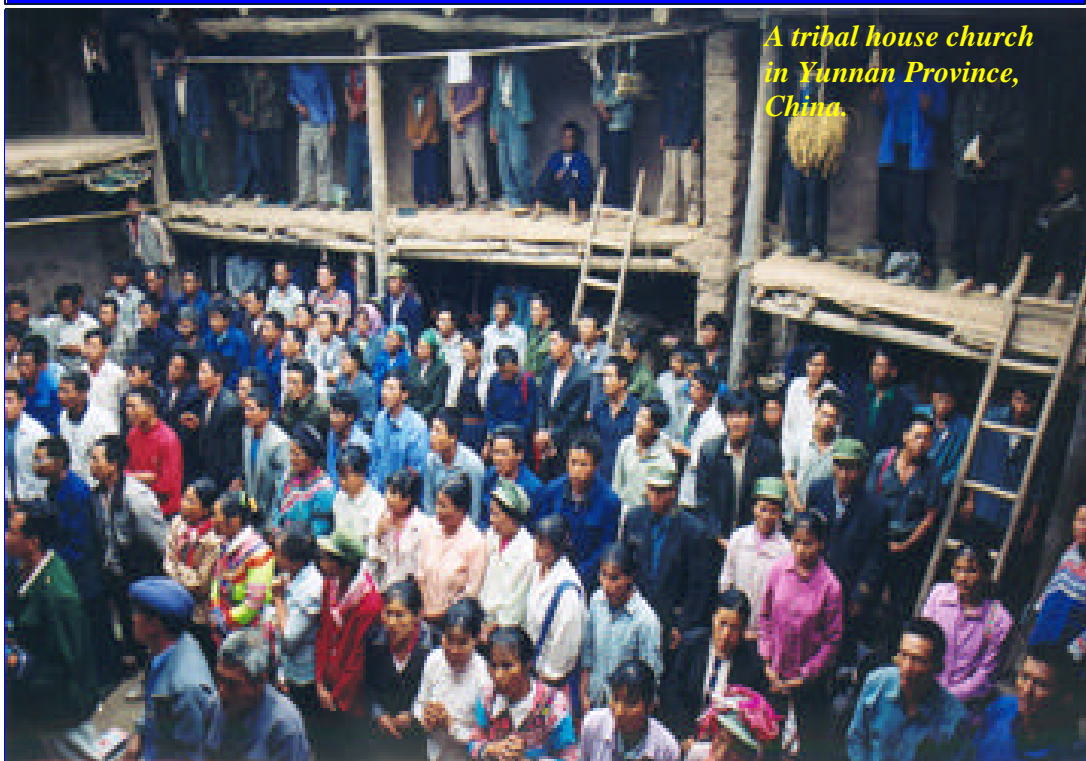
Swing the Sickle for the Harvest is Ripe! (Joel 3:13)

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*A tribal house church
in Yunnan Province,
China.*

The Baoding Massacre

- CHINA MARTYRS

Who Will be the First?

by Bruce Heyworth

Bruce Heyworth is the administrator of Asia Harvest. He recently travelled to northeast India where he spent time training and fellowshiping with many of the church planters we support through the Asian Workers Fund. These dedicated young men and women work among dozens of unreached people groups scattered throughout the Himalayan mountains. Bruce wrote the following report after his trip.

"Who will be the first?" She asked it with tears in her eyes. The wife of the director of an Asian mission agency addressed the annual conference of their workers. "I lie awake at night and wonder which of you will be the first to die."

She wasn't being melodramatic. She was simply stating a distinct possibility. Some of those who heard her would shortly be returning to resume their evangelism and church planting ministries. Most would be in areas remote from civilization, lacking in all but the barest essentials of amenities, and devoid of any Christian fellowship outside the members of their own small team. Several couples would not have the opportunity of any companionship with other believers as they would be living by themselves. A few would have the privilege of fellowship with the new believers in the small church or churches they had established. All would be in places of risk from disease, dangerous travel, and hostility from those opposed to any Christian activity.

Others of those who listened to her were part of a group of 26 new workers. They had committed their lives to the Lord's service and were now commencing three months orientation and training with the mission. Most were in their early twenties. At the end of this time they would be assigned to work with one of the present teams.

What makes these stories special is not so much who they are or where they are from, but what they are doing. During the conference a brief reporting time was held. Had you been there, this is some of what you would have heard:

"We live in a restricted area and need permission to stay. A few years ago some Norwegian missionaries started some schools, but when found out were expelled. Some other missionaries also tried to start, but were expelled in 1996. We are the third group to try to bring the gospel to this area."

"The Toto people we work among are very poor and uneducated. They do not invite other people into their houses. We have to stand outside and talk, even when it is raining!"

"It is so cold where we are we have to flush the toilet with hot water. It freezes immediately after."

"The nearest phone is two days walk away."

"From November to June there is a lot of snow. Often the road is closed and it is difficult to get food in. Once we lived on one potato each every day for a week."

"We work near the China border. There is no electricity in our village. We fast three days a month and every Sunday after 12 noon. There are over 100 baptized believes in our churches. We are working in five villages."

"On 4th October [2004] our church was dedicated. The same day 32 families came to the Lord."

"Officially we are not allowed to preach. But we can talk one-to-one."

"When we arrived there were six Christian families. Now there are 56 families and two churches have been established."

"The first time we preached four families were converted. Now there are 27 Christian families and a church has been started."

"We live in a very dangerous place. The Nishing people are still very violent."

"In spite of the difficulties and the persecution God is working and people are being saved."

And so we could go on. These extraordinarily committed ordinary people are experiencing the hand of God on their ministries in many places. Others are struggling to catch the glimmer of any breakthrough. The former are able to rejoice in the wonders of spiritual rebirth and the establishment of churches. Their colleagues long for the day when they too will see the fruit of their labors that they so earnestly yearn for.

There remains an untold number of people in these regions yet unreached with the gospel. Countless thousands have yet to hear for the first time of Jesus' love for them. The small number who have become Christians struggle with the demands of discipleship. Intense social pressures, widespread illiteracy, lack of education and a scarcity of resources make what we take for granted in the discipleship of new believers an extremely difficult and frequently discouraging task for them.

We at Asia Harvest are committed to doing what we can to ensure that these workers are supported sufficiently to remain in the frontier areas where we cannot go. Thanks to your prayers and generosity we are able to support more than 200 Asian church planters. Through our Asian Workers Fund we, and you, can share in their toil. We invite you to prayerfully consider helping in this great work.



SEASON'S GREETINGS FROM ASIA HARVEST

As this is our fifth and final newsletter for 2005 we want to thank all our readers for their prayers, encouragement and support throughout the year. We pray the Risen Christ will truly be part the Christmas and New Year period for you and your family. In 2006 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!

CHINA MARTYRS: The Baoding Massacre - 1900

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.

Rev. Isaac Pierson of the American Congregational Church started a mission at Baoding (formerly spelt Paoting) in Hebei Province in 1873. For the first few years Pierson met with great opposition from local officials and the people, who resented his presence in their city. The first convert came to Christ five years later, in 1878.

By the late 1890s more than a dozen foreign missionaries lived in the city. The

main church was led by Meng Zhangzhun (the son of the first Chinese Protestant in Baoding) and numbered approximately 120 believers, while the entire district under the administration of the Baoding Church had "a total church membership of about six hundred, besides children and inquirers."¹

By late 1899 the Christians of Baoding knew a perilous change had come over their city. An anti-foreign

s e c r e t organization known as the Boxers had grown in influence throughout the countryside. They resented the foreign control of different parts of China at the time, and were determined to drive all 'big nose devils' from their soil once and for



Christian women who were living in the Presbyterian mission at Baoding, 1900. All or most of these women were killed by the Boxers.

all. Missionaries were especially hated, while their Chinese converts were also attacked and hated as 'running dogs of the imperialists.'

Missionary May Simcox wrote a letter home on the last day of 1899: "South of us, there is an uprising among a class called 'Boxers.' They have decided to exterminate all foreigners and all who believe in foreign doctrines, and are persecuting Christians very dreadfully,—killing, destroying property and plundering. No foreigners have yet been hurt, but native preachers have been killed and great numbers are suffering now for want of food and clothing. They are coming Northward, and are now within seven miles of us. They organise in great numbers, but we have not much fear, for we think the officials would protect us here.... Remember us always in your prayers. Love to all your family from us all."²

Simcox's husband Frank wrote a letter to his home church, dated March 29, 1900, in which he said: "The Church in Shandong and Southern Hebei (this province) has become a Martyr Church, and we rejoice to know she had proved that she is able to suffer for the Lord. Hundreds of homes have been destroyed, and all have held fast. When the history of the Martyr Church of China is written, it will be a beautiful record of suffering for His Name!"³

On May 24 he added, "Many of the Catholics have renounced the faith rather than face death, but our people are all standing firm.... Our Christians say they will remain faithful even unto death; but oh, what a trial they are passing through!

The Church in China has already become a Martyr Church, and hers is a beautiful history of suffering.... Dark and troublous times are ahead of us, but we trust in the Heavenly Father's love, that all is for the best."⁴

In June the Boxers destroyed the rail line between Baoding and Beijing. They also destroyed the telegraph system and key bridges, and placed guards on the roads and rivers surrounding the city, effectively cutting Baoding off from the rest of China. On June 28 Pastor Meng Zhangzhun became the first Christian to be killed by the Boxers in Baoding.

The missionaries and more than a dozen Chinese believers belonging to the Presbyterian mission were killed on June 30 in the northern section of the city. A group of more than twenty Boxers and a mob of local troublemakers descended upon the Christians. They gained entry to the mission compound by setting fire to a pile of cornstalks they had placed against the doors, burning them down.

Approximately twenty Christians were slaughtered, many of them burned to death. One Chinese Christian "who tried to kill himself by jumping into the cistern was taken there-from, removed to the city and tortured during the night in an effort to secure evidence against the missionaries.... This man was afterwards put to death."⁵

Missionaries and Chinese believers associated with the China Inland Mission and the American Board (Congregational Church) were massacred on July 1 on a spot outside the south wall of the city. That day eleven foreign missionaries and four children were killed in the city, in

addition to around thirty Chinese Christians. The dead included a Brother Zhang and his wife who were key workers at the Christian hospital in the city. The Zhangs were close friends of missionary Mary Morrill. They were instructed to flee for their lives by the missionaries, "but during the night their sense of loyalty to those who had led him to the truth and their conviction of duty triumphed over fear and they returned and



Pastor Meng Zhangzhun - the first Christian killed by the Boxers in Baoding.

were faithful unto death."⁶

The Boxers found Mrs. Zhang, "carried her to a village not far away, and there many hands rained sword-blows upon the defenceless body as it lay by the roadside, until it was literally minced. No one dared to bury the poor remains, and when, long

months after, her sons searched for the body, they found only a skull."⁷

When a pit was later uncovered at the Congregational Church compound they discovered the grisly sight of three missionaries and nine Chinese believers: "Seven were children of the Meng brothers and of their sister, one a student from Shanxi, and the ninth, Meng's sister herself."⁸ The world was not worthy of them.

When another Christian man named Zhang heard that Pastor Meng had been murdered by the Boxers, his thoughts immediately went to some of the newer members of the faith whom he feared might be tempted to denounce Christ under pressure. He decided to visit their homes and encourage them, but one after the other he found the homes deserted—the inhabitants having fled for their lives. He returned to his own home, knowing the Boxers would soon come to kill him. Unafraid, he wrote the words 'I am a member of the Jesus Church' on a piece of paper and posted it on his door. A few days later, as he was sitting down to eat, a cry went up, 'The Boxers are coming!' Zhang said, "'They must wait until I have asked for the blessing'...and as he sat with his head bowed in prayer the Boxers rushed in and cut him down."⁹

Many were the tales of horror from Baoding. Imagine the grief one young Presbyterian man named Wang Jiude must have felt when he was told: "Your grandfather, mother, two sisters, two brothers and their wives, and four nieces have all been killed. We do not know whither your father and oldest brother have fled."¹⁰

In all, more than fifty Protestant believers died in Baoding and surrounding areas where they had fled.

On March 23 and 24, 1901, memorial services were held to commemorate the lives of the Baoding martyrs. On a banner bearing the insignia of cross and crown, with the motto 'Joyfully bearing the bitter cross,' were written the names of the slain, Over the martyrs' names was written the inscription Ling Shuang zai Tian—'Their spirits are happy in heaven.'

The Boxers' desire that Christianity would be forever wiped from China's soil were not fulfilled. Today there are approximately 12,000 Protestant Christians in Baoding City, in addition to at least 65,000 Catholics.



Lonely graves mark the slaughter of the Baoding missionaries.

NOTES

¹ W. P. Bentley, *Illustrious Chinese Christians: Biographical Sketches* (Cincinnati: The Standard Publishing Company, 1906), 123-125.

² Isaac C. Ketler, *The Tragedy of Paotingfu: An Authentic Story of the Lives, Services, and Sacrifices of the Presbyterian, Congregational and China Inland Missionaries who Suffered Martyrdom at Paotingfu, China, June 30 and July 1, 1900* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1902), 314.

³ Ketler, *The Tragedy of Paotingfu*, 348.

⁴ Ketler, *The Tragedy of Paotingfu*, 355-356.

⁵ Ketler, *The Tragedy of Paotingfu*, 380.

⁶ Ketler, *The Tragedy of Paotingfu*, 371.

⁷ Luella Miner, *China's Book of Martyrs: A Record of Heroic Martyrdoms and Marvelous Deliverances of Chinese Christians During the Summer of 1900* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1903), 372.

⁸ Ketler, *The Tragedy of Paotingfu*, 386-387.

⁹ Miner, *China's Book of Martyrs*, 180.

¹⁰ Miner, *China's Book of Martyrs*, 389-390.

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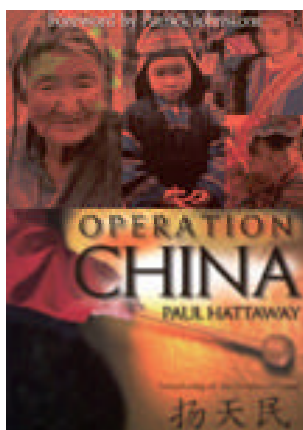
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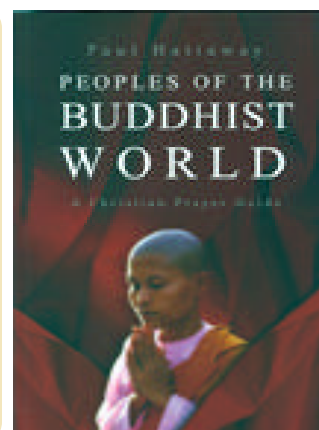
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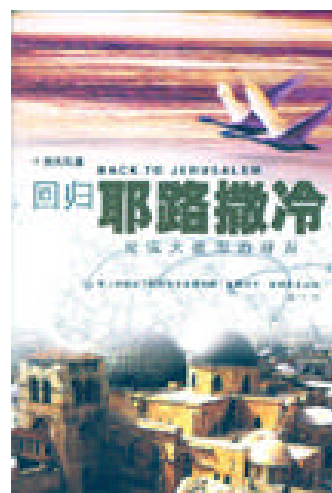
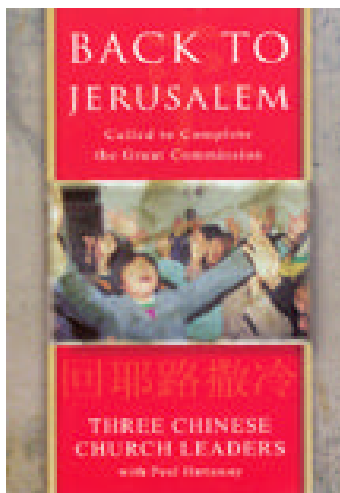
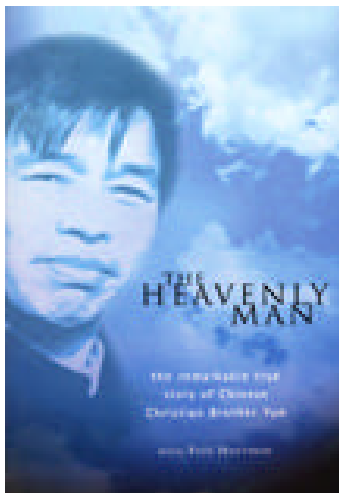
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PROJECT UPDATES

EARTHQUAKE EMERGENCY FUND



On the morning of October 9 a massive earthquake struck the mountainous area between Kashmir (India and Pakistan) and parts of Afghanistan. The damage and destruction caused is huge, with the number of dead presently over 100,000. For many years Asia Harvest has partnered with a mission working in Kashmir. Together we launched a plan to help the victims of the quake, with food, blankets, medicine, etc. being provided. Thanks to the generosity of many Christians, we have received more than \$30,000 which has

been utilized in Kashmir already. In the longer term help is needed to assist people in the rebuilding of their lives. If you would like to help with this need, please send a note "Earthquake Fund" along with your gift

CHINA CHILDREN'S PROJECT

Current Total: 137 Sunday School Teachers Trained and Equipped.

Even though we only announced our new China Children's Project in our last newsletter, we have been greatly encouraged by the generous response and have so far received funds to train and equip 137 Chinese Sunday School teachers. Each teacher, on average, is expected to train 100 children and establish them in the Word of God.

Each person attending the training has their travel costs covered, and a set of materials is given to them for free. This set of materials includes a Children's Bible, Teacher's Manual, 18 Teaching books with visual aids, 15 hours of VCD (video cassette disc) teaching, 6 CDs of 'Children's Heavenly Songs'. The total cost of \$47 per set includes printing and production, storage and transportation, and training expenses.

