

# Asia Harvest



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

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## Fire and Blood

- A Strategic Project for the Church in China

# ***From the Front Lines***

with Paul & Joy Hattaway

*“On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, ‘If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.’ By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive.”*  
(John 7:37-39)

In the books of 1 and 2 Kings we find many great stories of how God worked at that time in history. They are among our favorite books in the Bible, and we have been reading them as a family every evening before our sons go to bed. In the above verse, Jesus announced that streams of living water would flow from within those people who believe in Him. What a great promise! Throughout Asia we have seen this in action, as God continues to save many people in various nations. In some cases whole tribes have come to the Lord as the living water has flowed and brought life to multitudes.

God has long been turning contaminated water into living water. Before Elijah was taken to heaven in a whirlwind, Elisha asked for a double portion of his spirit. The very first miracle performed by Elisha occurred after the men of Jericho said to him, **“Look, our lord, this town is well situated, as you can see, but the water is bad and the land unproductive”** (2 Kings 2:19).

Is this an accurate description of your own life, or that of your church? Has the water also become bad and the land unproductive? If so, don't lose hope because we serve a God who can intervene and transform your life. Elisha instructed the men to bring a bowl with some salt in it. He threw the salt into the town's spring and declared, **“This is what the Lord says: ‘I have healed this water. Never again will it cause death or make the land unproductive.’ And the water has remained wholesome to this day, according to the word Elisha had spoken”** (2 Kings 2:21-22).

When Jesus Christ changes you, not only will streams of living water flow from within, but that fresh presence of God in your life will result in the surrounding land becoming productive. Everywhere Jesus goes, streams of living water flow into the lives of people who obey His Word. Wherever He is, the dead become alive and barren deserts become fruitful again.

This is how the kingdom of God has been advancing throughout Asia in recent decades. Countries like China, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos and Nepal have experienced tremendous growth as the Gospel has been proclaimed powerfully in grace and truth. God has generally not used the famous or highly-educated to accomplish this great work, but rather He has chosen the humble farmers and fishermen, just like Jesus did two millennia ago.

Can we ask something personal? Do you have streams of living water flowing from your life? Do you experience the joy of the Lord, or has your spiritual life become dry and dusty, based on human intellect and empty rituals? Before you will ever see other people experiencing God's living water, you will need to be immersed in it yourself.

If you have never experienced God's living water inside of you then I encourage you to fall to your knees and cry out to God. Ask Him to change your life, and dedicate the rest of your days to serving Him and His purposes rather than your own. The same Heavenly Father who loves you so much that He pursued you until you became one of His children, also desires to have an intimate and life-giving relationship with you.



If you do know God, but it has been years since you felt the fresh presence of the Lord Jesus Christ in your life, then you too should fall to your knees and seek Him. Remember both the warning and promise that Jesus gave the church in Ephesus:

***"Remember the***

***height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place.... To him who overcomes, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God"*** (Revelation 2:5, 7).



## Fire and Blood - Introducing a Strategic Project for the Church in China



*“Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise; his greatness no one can fathom. One generation will commend your works to another; they will tell of your mighty acts. ... They will tell of the power of your awesome works, and I will proclaim your great deeds. ... They will tell of the glory of your kingdom and speak of your might, so that all men may know of your mighty acts and the glorious splendour of your kingdom”*

(Psalm 145:3-4, 6, 11-12).

Ever since I first started to serve as a missionary in Asia in the 1980s, I (Paul) have been fascinated by the Church in China, and have endeavoured to learn all I can about them, and also from them.

One expert has stated that the current revival in China is the longest lasting and numerically largest revival in the history of Christianity. When the Chinese church started to reemerge in the mid-1970s after decades of brutal persecution, there was

estimated to be only between five and ten million Christians in the entire country.

Late last year a Chinese official named Ye Xiaowen, who is the Director of China's State Administration for Religious Affairs, claimed in a closed-door meeting that the total number of Christians in China is now close to 130 million! Although this is the first time an official in China has stated such a large figure, the fact is that even he is just guessing at the true size of the revival that has burned so brightly for the last 30 years.

Yet little more than a century ago China was considered one of the most difficult mission fields in the world. The great Welsh missionary Griffith John once declared: "The good news is moving but very slowly. The people are as hard as steel. They are eaten up both soul and body by the world, and do not seem to feel that there can be reality in anything beyond sense. To them our doctrine is foolishness, our talk jargon. We discuss and beat them in argument. We reason them into silence and shame; but the whole effort falls upon them like showers upon a sandy desert."

Does this sound familiar to you and how people are in your part of the world? If so, don't give up, because what God has done in China He can also do in your nation.

When it is all said and done, no person in China will be able to take credit for the amazing miracle that has occurred there. It will be clear that this great accomplishment is the handiwork of none other than the Lord Jesus Christ himself. We will do well just to stand in awe and declare: ***"The Lord has done this, and it is marvellous in our eyes. This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it."*** (Psalm 118:23-24)

Over the years I have come to realize that even though most Christians around the world know that God has been doing a mighty work in China, few people know much about how this has occurred. This is a shame, and in many ways the reasons for the revival in China have remained a mystery to Christians around the world.

I have to say that out of all the books I have written, I feel the presence and pleasure of the Holy Spirit the most whenever I am writing about the Chinese Church. It is a tremendous privilege to record some of what the Lord has done in the world's most populous nation.

In January 2000 I was blessed to attend a meeting of senior Chinese house church leaders for several days. During that time they told me of a need among the believers in China. Because of the speed and scope of the revival, few Christians in China understand how God has established His kingdom among them, both historically and today.

Most house church believers have little idea of the events that led to the current situation. In many locations the majority of Christians have come to faith in the last 10 years, and are unaware that Christianity in China has a history dating back to 635 AD, nor do they know much about the many men and women who have laid down their lives so that the flame of the Gospel would continue to burn brightly.

When I heard this back in 2000, I believe the Lord called me to commence a project that would glorify God and result in a blessing to many Christians both in China and around the world. Out of this, the vision to produce a series of books was birthed.



“Fire and Blood” is an ambitious project to document the advance of Christianity in China from the earliest beginnings to the present day.

My intention is not just to present a dry account of historical events. There are plenty of such books already available. Rather, **my desire was to present inspirational testimonies that bring alive the marvelous story of how God has caused the Gospel to take root and flourish.**

The title indicates the main themes of these books. **FIRE** refers to the fire of God, which has sent the revival and brought life and blessing to so many areas of China.

**BLOOD** is a reminder of the persecution and purging that believers in China have experienced for the sake of the Gospel over many centuries.

Revival has not come about by accident. The Church in China has endured centuries

of fire and blood, which moistened the ground for the present time of harvest.

It is hoped that most or all of the 30 books will be translated and distributed to believers throughout China. Obviously, before this happens I need to write the books in English, so Christians around the world will also have a chance to learn about God’s mighty works in China. **The first volume, China’s Book of Martyrs, is now available! (See the enclosed paper in this newsletter for details, or go to our website: [www.asiaharvest.org](http://www.asiaharvest.org) to order).**

In preparation for this series of books I have spent years researching Christianity in China, meticulously gathering information and pictures, and I have read more than 1,500 books—and thousands more articles and publications relating to the Chinese Church. I feel that with God’s



*House church Christians meeting in a cave in northern China*

help I have turned over every stone I know about in order to obtain as clear a picture as possible about His workings in China.

If you have ever visited my office you will have noticed boxes of photocopied papers, clippings, and typed transcripts of interviews, all arranged province-by-province.

‘Fire & Blood’ will examine and document every creed of Christianity to have taken root in China—all those who call on the name of Jesus Christ will be included and their stories told. In total, it is expected to comprise more than 30 volumes. The aim is to release two volumes per year, focusing on the Church in each province of China.

I consider it a great honor to write these books, especially as I have been entrusted, in the hundreds of hours of interviews I have conducted inside China, with many testimonies that have never been published before.

The series will be illustrated with more than 3,000 photographs, from images of Christian frescos painted more than a thousand years ago to contemporary pictures of the church. Of course, I will take every care that no specific information is published that might endanger Christians in China today.

At the back of each book from Volume 2 onwards there will be a detailed statistical analysis providing estimates of the number of Christians living in each city and county within each province.

This is the first ever comprehensive investigation of the number of believers in China—in each of its more than 2,400 cities and counties—drawing on more than two thousand sources.

Such a huge undertaking as the ‘Fire and Blood’ series has only been possible with the cooperation and assistance of numerous organizations and individuals.

Many Chinese believers have lovingly assisted in this endeavour. I recall an elderly house-church evangelist named Brother Fu who, with a young man on either side to help him walk, made his way up the stairs to my hotel room in Henan Province because he so wanted to be interviewed for this series. Although he had spent many years in prison for the sake of the gospel, this saint desperately wanted to testify to God’s great works so that believers around the world could be inspired and encouraged to live a life more fully dedicated to Christ.

It is hoped that these books will glorify God, bless those who read them, and challenge believers in China and around the world to a deeper and more radical walk with Jesus Christ.



## The 'Fire & Blood' Series

At this time, the following volumes are projected for the Fire & Blood series of books, which chart the history of the Christian church in China. We envisage publishing two volumes per year in the following order:

- 1 China's Book of Martyrs
- 2 Henan
- 3 Shaanxi
- 4 Beijing and Tianjin
- 5 Guangxi and Hainan Island
- 6 Tibet
- 7 Qinghai
- 8 Hunan
- 9 Anhui
- 10 Shanghai
- 11 Jiangsu
- 12 Sichuan and Chongqing
- 13 Guizhou
- 14 Yunnan
- 15 Shanxi
- 16 Liaoning
- 17 Heilongjiang and Jilin
- 18 Hebei
- 19 Shandong
- 20 Zhejiang
- 21 Gansu
- 22 Xinjiang
- 23 Inner Mongolia and Ningxia
- 24 Jiangxi
- 25 Hubei
- 26 Fujian
- 27 Guangdong
- 28 Christianity on the Roof of the World: the Gospel among Tibetan Peoples
- 29 Christianity among China's Minorities
- 30 The Three-Self Church in China
- 31 The Catholic Church in China
- 32 China's House Churches

## Please pray....

As you may have realized, a long-term project like the Fire & Blood series is impossible to complete without God's intervention and sustaining power.

We would be honored if you would please pray for the following:

**1** *Pray that God would be glorified and His kingdom extended through the Fire and Blood project.*

**2** *Please uphold the Hattaway family in prayer. Pray they may have good health, strength, and the joy of the Lord to sustain them throughout the years as the Fire and Blood series unfolds.*

**3** *Ask God to make hundreds of thousands of these books available to Christians in China, so that they will be strengthened and give glory to God for the great things He has done in their land. Pray the Lord would provide the necessary funds to make this happen.*

**4** *Pray for God's blessing on our publisher, Piquant, who have committed to publish the entire series of books, and on Authentic, who will help distribute them in North America.*

**5** *Ask God to put these books into the hands of every person He wants to read them.*



## ***Ministry Updates***

### **One Million Bibles for China!**

On May 25th, a family from the US state of Oregon made a donation, via our website, to our China Bible fund. This gift helped us pass the milestone of being able to print and distribute one million Bibles for the Christians in China, since we launched this project six years ago! We thank the Lord Jesus Christ for His grace and provision, and also want to thank everyone who has given to the China Bible fund over the years, and for all those who have prayed that all believers in China might have the Word of God. This project continues, as the need for more Bibles remains strong due to the large numbers of new believers. We plan to write a whole newsletter on the need for Chinese Bibles soon.

### **Strong Response to the Vietnam Bible Project**

At the same time, we want to thank everyone for their generous response to our last newsletter about the need for Bibles in Vietnam. Thanks to your gifts we now have enough funds to print more than 23,000 Bibles this year. The first three tribal languages being printed are Bru, Bahnar, and Stieng. A total of 15,000 Bibles will be produced. Later in the year our contacts in Vietnam will focus on providing the Word of God in several more tribal languages.



### **A Good Friend Dies**

If you are on our email list, you will have received a message about the passing of a good friend of Asia Harvest. Doug Sutphen, better known as Brother David, went to be with the Lord on May 8, at a hospital near his home in North Bend, Washington. Doug is best remembered for leading the audacious "Project Pearl" in 1981, when he and 19 other Christians safely delivered one million Bibles to thousands of Christians waiting on a beach in southern China. Many Chinese church leaders today say that Project Pearl was a pivotal moment in their history. The Church had only started to re-

emerge after decades of brutal oppression, and the desperate need of believers everywhere was for Bibles. A quarter of a century later reports are still being received of the tremendous impact those Bibles had on whole communities. Doug was a man of great faith and encouragement, and he will be missed. He passed away at the age of 70, after a long battle with illness. Please pray for his widow, Meiling.