

General Topics :: Back to Jerusalem by brother Paul

Back to Jerusalem by brother Paul - posted by revival9 (), on: 2004/6/28 15:49

Back To Jerusalem -- Three Chinese House Church Leaders Share Their Vision to Complete the Great Commission. Written by Brother Yun, Peter Xu Yongze, and Enoch Wang, with Paul Hattaway translating. It is FAR more than its title explains!

God has done a true miracle in China that we Western Christians may be unaware of. I will quote from the book:

...Over the past 5 decades something remarkable has started to take place throughout the length and breadth of China: the emergence of a viable New Testament Christianity. Few secular sources report the unfolding of this dramatic event, which has the potential to change the entire social and moral structure of the nation...

...China has been experiencing a revival of Christianity in recent decades... I had read reports of mass conversions, secret baptisms, and brutal persecution... during , each testified about what God was doing in their midst and reported on the growth their churches were experiencing... as accurately as possible... The combined total membership of the house church networks present at the meeting came to 58 million people... Net growth is reported between 12.5 % and 17.5 % per year.

How has this happened, in a land where all missionaries were thrown out in 1949? Where very few bibles existed for decades? Where every known preacher or pastor has been imprisoned at some point?

The answers are mind-blowing! What God has taught our Chinese brothers and sisters will make every Western Christian stop and take stock of his own Christian experience. It will force us to re-evaluate what we are doing in our churches. The testimony of their faith, bought with their own blood, cannot be ignored!

...The growth of the church is spectacular and unparalleled in Christian history... There were only about 700,000 Protestants and 3-4 million Catholics in China at the time the Communists took power in 1949... David Adeney was one former missionary astounded by what he found when China's iron doors... opened again in the late 1970's, after 3 decades of silence.... Reports began filtering out that a great miracle had taken place! ...Amazing testimonies were received of how pastors were released after 20 years or more of imprisonment, and went home wondering whether they could find anyone who remembered their name. When they reached home, they found that not only had people been praying for them all those years, but their church fellowships had grown 3, 5, or 10 times as large as before their imprisonment!

Mr. Hattaway quotes from David Adeney's book "China: The Church's Long March", where Adeney describes the strengths the Chinese house churches had developed during their years of hardship:

1. *The house churches are indigenous. They have cast off the trappings of the West and have developed their own forms of ministry. The dynamics flow from their freedom from institutional and traditional bondage.*
2. *The house churches are rooted in family units. They have become part of the Chinese social structure. The believing community is built up of little clusters of Christian families.*
3. *The house churches are stripped of nonessentials. Much that we associate with Christianity is not found in Chinese house churches today. Thus they are extremely flexible...*
4. *The house churches emphasize the lordship of Christ. Because Jesus is the head of his body, the church must place obedience to him above every other loyalty; it cannot accept control by any outside organization. The word of God is obeyed and every attempt to force unscriptural practices on the church is resisted.*
5. *The house churches have confidence in the sovereignty of God. When there was no hope from a human point of view, Christians in China saw God revealing his power and overruling in the history of their day.*
6. *The house churches love the word of God. They appreciate the value of the Scriptures and have sacrificed in order to obtain copies of the Bible. Their knowledge of the Lord has deepened as they have memorized and copied the word of God.*

f God.

7. *The house churches are praying churches. With no human support and surrounded by those seeking to destroy them, Christians were cast on God, and in simple faith expected God to hear their cry. Prayer was not only communion with God but also a way to share in the spiritual conflict.*

8. *The house churches are caring and sharing churches. A house church is a caring community in which Christians show love for one another and for their fellow countrymen. Such love creates a tremendous force for spontaneous evangelism.*

9. *The house churches depend on lay leadership. Because so many Chinese pastors were put into prison or labor camps, the house churches have had to depend on lay leaders. The leadership consists of people from various walks of life who spend much time going from church to church teaching and building up the faith of others.*

10. *The house churches have been purified by suffering. The church in China has learned firsthand that suffering is part of God's purpose in building his church. Suffering in the church has worked to purify it. Nominal Christianity could not have survived the tests of the Cultural Revolution. Because those who joined the church were aware that it was likely to mean suffering, their motivation was a genuine desire to know Jesus Christ.*

11. *The house churches are zealous in evangelism. No public preaching was allowed. People came to know Christ through the humble service of believers and through intimate contact between friends and family members. The main method of witness in China today is the personal lifestyle and behavior of Christians, accompanied by their proclamation of the gospel, often at great personal risk.*

The rest of the book explains the history of God's call to specific groups of Christians, to take the gospel from their country and evangelise the remaining countries of Asia, all the way 'back to Jerusalem'. It's a call that God first began to give the Chinese church in the early 1900's. Already the first 10,000 missionaries are being trained in special centers (often caves or hidden rooms). The missionary training includes lessons in:

- how to jump out second-story windows while handcuffed (in case their arrest was not ordained by God, but a trick of the enemy to stop them!)
- how to witness to their Islamic captors while on their way to their own executions
- how to suffer and die for the sake of spreading the gospel.

They are not afraid, for all of them have spent time in Chinese jails and labor camps. They know what it costs and they are willing to give their lives to see the gospel infiltrate "the House of Hindu, the House of Buddha, and the House of Mohammad." They will work "like bugs", like termites eroding the foundations of these enormous false religions, who hold untold millions in their devilish grasp.

The final 2 chapters are written expressly to us in the Western world -- words the house church leaders would say to us personally if we could talk to them. Humbling and convicting words, offered with such love! I accept the rebuke and wisdom these men are sharing with us, from the depths of their own experiences and sufferings! We in the west are truly the blind beggars of the Laodicean church!

Brothers and sisters, dare we even compare ourselves to people like this, of whom the world is not worthy. I am ashamed to see my own Christian life, in light of theirs. May God forgive me and change me.

Paul Hattaway: www.asiaharvest.org

Back to Jerusalem Movement: www.backtojerusalem.com

P.S.: The Back to Jerusalem Movement recently sent out, via email, its first-ever newsletter of any kind. They have the most amazingly simple, yet comprehensive, Statement of Faith I've ever seen. It is worth examining what these house church leaders have come up with, knowing it was hammered out with years of prayer, tears, persecution, and humility. This Statement of Faith is currently uniting over 100 million Chinese Christians!! They have no denominations --- all of them have been thrown out. They have something so much better -- real, vital, functioning Christianity that is attested to by signs and wonders. Over 80% of Chinese Christians have personally witnessed a verifiable miracle, which led to their conversion.