

**Revivals And Church History :: Cult Eastern Lightning by Paul Hattaway****Cult Eastern Lightning by Paul Hattaway - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2014/12/5 8:24**

A few years ago I had the privilege of speaking to house church leaders in a meeting on the outskirts of the huge city of Xian in China. As the morning passed into afternoon I noticed one young lady in her early 20s who was attending the meeting. During the meal times and breaks she hobbled around the room, painfully dragging her crippled right leg behind her. Her face was gaunt, void of the expressions of deep joy that permeated the faces of the other Christians in the meeting.

At the end of the dayâ€™s training the brother who organized the meeting asked my coworker and I if we would pray for some of the leaders. Of course we agreed, and the very first believer to come up to us was the partially-crippled young woman. Thinking she would ask for prayer for her injuries, I asked, â€œWhat happened to your leg?â€• She immediately looked down at the floor as tears welled up in her eyes.

â€œPastor,â€• she quietly explained, â€œSeveral months ago I was deceived into joining the Eastern Lightning cult. When I realized they didnâ€™t believe the Bible and werenâ€™t believers in Jesus, I tried to leave, but they wouldnâ€™t let me go. To prevent my escape they severely beat my legs with an iron bar. With the help of another Christian sister I was finally able to flee, but the Eastern Lightning have sent agents to find and murder me. My left leg is almost back to normal now, but my right leg is badly damaged and it gives me great pain.â€•

After taking a deep breath she continued, â€œPlease pray for me, not only that God would restore my leg but also my mind. The cult brainwashed and tortured me for weeks. I am still struggling to regain Godâ€™s peace in my life that I had previously. Please also pray the Lord would hide me from those who wish to take my life.â€•

For years Iâ€™d been receiving reports about the terrible influence of the Eastern Lightning Cult upon Christians in China, but now suddenly it seemed much more real to me.

The second Christian requesting prayer had a similar experience of being trapped by the Eastern Lightning, as had two or three others in our meeting that day.

Later, over a bowl of watery rice noodles, I asked the main regional house church leader how their work was going. Usually Chinaâ€™s house churches experience phenomenal growth and have hours of God-glorifying testimonies to tell. This time, the brother in charge of the groupâ€™s work in northwest China said, â€œWe are not doing well. Last year we had more than 520 churches. Now we have about 450. In the past year many of our leaders were targeted by the Eastern Lightning cult. Some were attracted by their financial inducements and joined them. Later, when they discovered what theyâ€™d joined was not Biblical, they were not permitted to leave. Dozens of our believers are missing, dozens more crippled. Some who have managed to escape the cultâ€™s clutches are in hiding, fearing for their lives. At least two of our people have been murdered. Others have simply vanished.â€•

â€œBrother Paul,â€• he continued, â€œplease tell Christians around the world to pray for us, and to pray against the powerful demonic forces behind the Eastern Lightning that threaten to decimate us. In the past many of us suffered torture and great hardship in prison at the hands of the authorities, but we survived with our faith intact. Some leaders have even told me it would be a relief if they were in prison again compared to the trial they are undergoing now at the hands of this wicked cult. The threat of the Eastern Lightning is much worse than anything the Communists can do to us.â€•

With this brotherâ€™s request still ringing in my ears, news has come from China (April 19, 2002) of the kidnapping of 33 top leaders of the China Gospel Fellowship house church network by the Eastern Lightning.

With thousands of Christians around the world deeply concerned about the plight of our Chinese brothers and sisters, yet with few people knowing anything about the Eastern Lightning, I have decided to write this paper examining the background, theology and practices of the Eastern Lightning. It is my hope that Christians around the world will fervently pray for the severe trial the Chinese house churches are going through.

â€œHave nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them.â€•

(Ephesians 5:11)

Who are the Eastern Lightning?

â€œThe satanic cult â€œEastern Lightningâ€• is one of the most evil and deceitful cults I have ever seen in China. They are positively sheep in wolvesâ€™ clothing; they attack Jesus Christ, twist and defraud the Bible, destroy families and lives, causing great hurt and destruction to Christians who have been bought by the precious blood of the Saviour! They are devils dressed as ministers of light, workers of Satan, and false prophets after the ways of Balaam. May the

Lord have mercy upon the elect that they may be able to discern, to reject all lies and the deceitful words from Satan. May our brethren be on the alert! May the deceived quickly repent and return!  
- Rev. Pang K.H., Chinese Christian Church of Saipan, 20 September, 2000.

Eastern Lightning, or Dongfang Shandian in Chinese, was founded by Zhao Weishan in Acheng City, Heilongjiang Province, in 1989. Zhao was an unhappy member of the Shouters sect. He rejected many of the Shouters' teachings and broke away with several other church members to start a new group which they called "Church of the Everlasting Fountain." Zhao began to call himself "Powerful Lord."

They grew rapidly, and somehow managed to receive substantial financial support that enabled them to set up an underground printing house, producing tens of thousands of booklets and tracts outlining their views. By 1991, when the group was declared illegal and the printing press was shut down, they already had thousands of followers.

Zhao and his leading coworkers fled from the authorities in Heilongjiang and restarted their activities in Henan Province. In 1993 Zhao changed the name of the cult to "Real God" and said he had received divine revelation on the verse "For as lightning that comes the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man." (Matthew 24:27). This is how they came to be commonly known as the "Eastern Lightning," or "Lightning from the East."

Zhao sent his main leaders, Yi Haitao, Zhang Xindong and Zhang Hongzhen, throughout Henan Province, spreading their influence among thousands. Many of the deceived who joined their group were illiterate rural house church members, who had little Bible training and so were susceptible to the group's influence. They also targeted educated university students who have an unstable grounding in the Bible.

Eastern Lightning quickly spread to neighboring Anhui, Shaanxi and Jiangsu, and then to most parts of China. Today the Eastern Lightning (EL) has grown with remarkable speed to at least 22 of China's provinces, and they are believed to number in the millions of members. A November 2001 article in Time Magazine said the EL claim just 300,000 followers across China, (1) but that number is almost certainly a deliberate underestimation, especially considering the Chinese government concedes the EL have infiltrated more than 20 provinces throughout the nation.

The EL are highly organized and secretive. Their structure is hierarchal, ranking from "the person used by the Holy Spirit" (Zhao), to provincial leaders, district leaders, section leaders, and cell group leaders. Each member is given responsibility for tasks he or she must carry out.

The Eastern Lightning are known to have a special emphasis on publishing literature. According to a speech by Bi Rongsheng, deputy director of the Shijiazhuang Public Security Bureau, the cult printed a total of 870,000 books between 1989 and 1999. (2)

Instead of trying to convert unbelievers to their group, the Eastern Lightning appears to have decided it is better to deceive existing Christians. They do not mind targeting nominal believers, but it's clear their chief goal is to attack church leaders and those with the most influence. Their methods have included financial inducement, beatings and torture, sexual seduction, and brainwashing.

In 1997, Tianfeng, the official magazine of the Three Self Patriotic Movement (China's government-sanctioned church) were so alarmed at the inroads Eastern Lightning were making among their congregations that they wrote several articles exposing the cult, warning readers how to defend themselves against it. The magazine noted, "The missionaries scurry to every part of the country, making a beeline especially for the responsible persons and preachers in other religions, those who have been preaching for many years, and when someone of a definite status has been trapped he becomes their tool and their accomplice in crime." (3)

Even the Catholic Church has seen many of their top leaders lured over to the Eastern Lightning. According to an official Chinese government report, "This cult is hastening its efforts to infiltrate underground Catholic churches so as to increase its strength by uniting with other underground powers. Tangshan Public Security authority discovered that underground Catholics in areas such as Zunhua, Fengnan and Qianan have joined hands with this cult." (4)

The founder of the Eastern Lightning, Zhao Weishan, was granted refugee status in the United States in 2000, on the ground of being persecuted for his religious beliefs. He continues to command the cult's activities inside China and around the world from his American base.

In recent years the Eastern Lightning are believed to have won over leading Communist Party figures in various localities. After indoctrinating them and being sure of their allegiance, the cult then persuades the officials to use their influence to protect cult members, and to create ways for the group to multiply. Although the Eastern Lightning are number two on Beijing's "Cult Hit List," ranking only after the Falungong, (5) efforts to crush the EL appear to have been sidetracked by local government officials around the country who have been converted to, or bought off, by the cult.

Although we have seen the EL have targeted government officials, Catholics, and Three Self Church leaders, there is no doubt the main focus for the cult is the unregistered Protestant house church churches, believed to number between 50 and 70 million adherents throughout the country.

## What the Eastern Lightning Believe

Eastern Lightning theology appears to evolve year by year, but according to respected China church expert Tony Lambert, it can be broken down into three or four main categories. This information is taken from one of the cult's own books, summarized from Tony Lambert's, "Lightning from the East a New Cult," China Insight, OMF International, March-April 1998. All quotes from the next three points are taken from Lambert's valuable essay.

### (1) The Female Messiah

The cult believes God has appeared in three different eras throughout history, using different names. The first era was the Age of the Law, when God's name was Jehovah. "He did not possess all the attributes of God, as there were some things He did not know.... When the Law of Moses was given, his work was done."

Next was the Age of Grace. Lambert notes that during this second era, the EL believe "God changed His name to Jesus. Eastern Lightning denies the deity of Christ, stating that "Jesus is a created being" and that the Trinity is "an ancient falsehood."

The Third Age is the present "Age of the Kingdom," and God has changed His name yet again, this time to "Lightning." In this Age, the cult claims there is "only judgment and punishment, without any grace." This age is superior to the others. Only those who believe in the female messiah of the Third Age can be saved. Lambert notes, "Blasphemously they assert that now that we have entered the Kingdom Age all the words spoken by Jesus are worthless."

The Eastern Lightning twists Scripture to "prove" that Jesus Christ has already returned, as a 30-year-old plain-looking Chinese woman living in Henan Province! They claim Christ already returned "as a thief in the night" in 1990, and entered the churches of China with great power. Ironically, the identity and location of the Eastern Lightning's new messiah is unknown by members of the cult. It seems this woman named Lightning is only a fictional character rather than an actual person alive in China today.

### (2) The Five Kinds of People

Eastern Lightning (EL) divides all of mankind into five categories.

The Many Elder Sons are those who come from God. They were somehow "born of God before creation." They have the same nature as God and have the power to judge, punish and curse. In the Age of the Kingdom they will judge the nations.

The Many Sons were originally sinners, but they readily accepted the female messiah when they heard about her. They are believed to have now attained ten standards, including having a pure understanding, a sensitive conscience, a willing submission, and a deep love for God. They "spend all their good" and "expend all their energy" for the female messiah.

The "People" are a category of the earth's inhabitants who heard the proclamation of the Word of God (EL style), converted, and are actively seeking to attain the ten standards.

The "Servants" are those who only believe in Jesus and resist the female messiah. "All the apostles and prophets down the ages are in this category. These people are the children of Satan.... None will receive a portion in the Kingdom. After death they will be reborn and only then will become effective servants of God." It seems all Christians who refuse to join this cult would fall under this category.

Finally, the fifth category of people the EL believes exists are The Damned. They will never believe in the female messiah, strongly oppose her teaching, and will be thrown into the lake of fire to suffer eternal damnation.

### (3) Attacks on the Bible

Like all cults, the EL refuses to accept the authority of the Bible, and attack it at every opportunity. They claim the Scriptures were dreamed up by Moses and other Old Testament writers who were not inspired by the Holy Spirit. Lambert notes, "They deride the Scripture, so beloved by Chinese believers. 'No one has the qualifications to study Scripture. No one can understand that book. All who follow the female Christ must throw aside the Bible.'"

Now that we have read about some of the beliefs of the Eastern Lightning, you may be wondering how they have managed to convince so many Chinese Christians to join them. Surely most believers in China are not so Biblically illiterate to be sucked into this obvious trap? The EL themselves discovered that the great majority of Christians would not join their movement and could easily see through their deception, so around 1996 they launched a new phase. They turned to violence to convert believers to their ways.

What's in the Eastern Lightning Handbook?

One of the books written by the EL is an "insider handbook," instructing members how to ruin a church, gather information, win the trust of leaders, convert pastors, and even how to bring an entire congregation under the influence of EL. The book is divided into three chapters. Here is a summary of direct quotes from the EL handbook:

1. Spying is making use of various connections and methods to gain access to the inner workings of churches, winning their trust and confidence, and understanding their structure and plans.
2. Do not speak in such a way as to make others suspicious of you. Be sober and normal, leaving a good impression. Let proper and orderly patterns govern your speech, sleeping, and eating. Be well mannered, dress neatly and normally....
3. You must have some basic knowledge of the Bible. Take special note on what Jesus said in the New Testament, the epistles of Paul, and passages in Revelation concerning saving grace....
4. Know some of the church's methods of training and indoctrination.
5. Do not spy out these denominations: San Zi (Three-Self Church), Catholics, Dong Zhen (Eastern Orthodox), Buddhists, Taoists, Muslims, Beiliwang (Established King Church), Hongyi Liya (New Testament Church), etc...
6. You should spy out the following: Those who believe in Jesus, pray to Jesus, who thirst for God's revelation; Real believers who truly love God, those with no serious physical disability and a sane mind.
7. How to get the most out of spying: (a) You must try our best not to let people know you are lying, even as we for the sake of our work speak not the truth. (b) During your first few times in a new church speak little and ask many questions. (c) Try to understand the situation, what they emphasize, so that your actions can fall in with theirs, and not raise objections to your presence. (d) Say what they want to hear. Be sincere in prayer, mention some moving, sad things, and ask for more blessings for their families and the church. (e) For those sheep more selfish, or those with families, observe their behavior and make use of their weak points to maintain contact. For example, oblige people if they want to take you as their mentor or confidant. (f) Some believe crying is important in churches, so you should also cry with sadness and bitterness, thus moving their hearts and winning their trust. (g) Others believe a Christian should be outwardly suffering, or persecuted. Therefore you should act with a greater degree of seriousness in order to satisfy such people. (h) Do not, at any time, preach during this spy stage. Only share some personal experiences or short testimonies, so that people have a good impression of you.
8. How to remove suspicion during spying: Many denominations do not swear oaths before God, so make sure you do not do so. When necessary, weep or kneel to pray, speak sincerely, cry as though it is from the heart and not faked.
9. Bridge building occurs after you have laid a good network of contacts. You will then be able to change people's perspectives, picking on ideas or thoughts which will easily disrupt God's work, changing them one by one. In other words, the work of bridge building is to introduce your new teachings that will spark in them "interest," "appetite," and "a heart of desire."

### Who is Behind the Eastern Lightning?

Several house church leaders over the past few years told me, without offering any evidence, that they believe the EL is funded and operated by Satanists in America. Judging from the cult's stated beliefs and plans, this sounds a very feasible possibility. The instructions we have just read from their handbook very closely mirror the stated aims of Satanists, and their efforts to destroy churches by targeting leaders are almost identical to methods employed against effective churches in the West. The EL's own admissions show that their main motive is to defame God and try to destroy His children. Their stated goals include to "disrupt God's work," and to "spy out those who thirst for God's revelation; those who truly love God." They even admit they are liars when they stated, "we for the sake of our work speak not the truth."

Whether Satanists in the West and the Eastern Lightning are directly connected or not, the one thing we do know is that they share the same father. Jesus said, "You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies." (John 8:44)

### Violence

It is no exaggeration to say that thousands of Christians across China have been physically beaten, tortured, or poisoned by the EL. Hundreds of believers are missing. Although most of those missing may have ended up changing side and joining the cult, there are dozens of known deaths caused by the brutality of the EL.

Let's read the words of a house church pastor from Shandong Province as he tells what happened when his ch

urch was targeted by the EL. (6) I know brethren from Henan, Gansu, Hebei, etc. and not a few of them have fallen victim to violence at the hands of the EL. In this phase, the cult will first try to trick the victim. They will call them as though they are a family member, invite them to pray, etc. After the victim is tricked and brought somewhere else, the EL turns violent. Nearly all of them carry a cudgel, which they use to hit the victim's vital parts, such as their four limbs and/or his head, until he becomes unconscious. Then the believer is taken to a prearranged place where the EL indoctrinate him with the teachings of the cult. If the subject refuses to accept the teachings, they will turn to more violent methods. Friends tell me of such cruel methods as cutting off an ear, breaking legs, and there was even an old sister who had her neck broken because she would not accept the teachings of the cult or their lady Jesus.

During this violent phase one of my father's colleagues was deceived into going with them, and poison was thrown at him. Another colleague of mine had his water poisoned. My aunt's neighbor was poisoned to death. These are accounts of which I personally know. The victims are always church members who are more influential.

### Sexual and Monetary Enticement

Although China is experiencing rapid economic growth, the house church believers in the countryside are among the poorest segments of China's population. They have nothing at all by the world's standards, yet they give God all they have. If you placed an offering bag in front of them, they would get into it themselves.

When I spoke with the leader of one house church network in northwest China, he told me the EL has made inroads into his team of leaders primarily through monetary enticement. This church group is only able to support their evangelists 2.5 RMB (30 U.S. cents) per meal for a sister and 1.5 RMB (18 cents) for a brother. When a leader needs to travel to minister, the church will try to cover his bus fare if they have any cash available at the time. The evangelist is always hosted in believer's homes. Practically no house church leaders receive regular income. If they are married, often their families remain home living in abject poverty. The house church believers have Jesus, and little else.

Taking advantage of the believers' financial hardship, the EL has slyly offered extraordinary sums of money to house church leaders if they will convert. Nanyang County in southwest Henan Province is one of the centers of China's revival. Elders of the Nanyang Church were offered 150,000 RMB (more than US\$ 18,000) to join the EL, plus the promise of two or three mistresses. By appealing to these two basic sinful desires of mankind, greed and lust, the faith of some has been shipwrecked.

This situation leads us to consider the financial sources of the Eastern Lightning. The huge sums mentioned above are not only offered, but actually paid, to those who convert. There has been some speculation from house church leaders, but nobody is sure where the EL gets their seemingly endless supply of money. Some of the speculation told to me includes the existence of corporations in Singapore and China itself which operate solely to fund the activities of EL. One house church pastor told me he believes the EL is funded by Satanists in America. Whatever the truth, it is clear that the poorly financed house churches cannot compete financially with the EL.

Often after kidnapping victims, the EL employs sexual temptation in a bid to destroy the reputations of their victims. The EL use sexual enticement on both men and women captives.

One house church leader in Anhui Province told about one woman who had been a convert of EL for five years: "This woman is very pretty, but she has already lost her chastity. EL has used her to lure many leaders into fornication. Two coworkers in Anhui were confined by the EL for 14 days, brainwashed and worn down, until they gave in and committed fornication with the woman. Photographs were taken of them at appropriate embarrassing moments. Their tactic was to use the photograph to blackmail the brothers to accept the teachings of the cult. If they refuse to convert, a man will appear in their churches or when they are with a group of believers, pretending that the girl in the picture is his fiancée (or cousin), and threaten to sue the pastor." (7)

Not all Christian leaders fall into sexual temptation of course, but this does not seem to stop the EL. They have been known to drug their victims, and then take video and photographs of the drugged brother with a naked EL woman. The EL then feels they own a pastor for life, even if they are unable to convert him. If he ever attempts to enter a leadership role in the church again, the EL will invariably slip into the church, and wait for an opportune time to spread rumors of the pastor's immorality, backed with photographic evidence.

### The Testimony of a House Church Sister

To inflict physical and psychological violence on Christians, the Eastern Lightning needs to entice the believers away from their home church environment. To achieve their goals, several years ago they started kidnapping church leaders. Their diabolic strategy usually involves coaxing the leader to come to another city with the promise of ministry opportunities.

Following is a condensed testimony from a house church sister in northwest China who was kidnapped by the East

ern Lightning recently. It has been adapted from a paper written by the Chinese Christian Church of Saipan (Guam), entitled "China's Cult of Satan Lightning of the East." Although even the condensed testimony is quite lengthy, it is well worth reading to gain an understanding of the incredible evil that our brothers and sisters in the faith are facing in China at the present time. How we wish this was an isolated incident, but unfortunately this sister's experience is representative of hundreds of others throughout China....

Nine months before my nightmare commenced, a man came to our house church claiming he wanted to know the true God. Of course, we could not turn him away so we told him the Gospel. He responded warmly and seemed, over the months, to grow in the grace of God and knowledge of His Word. He always asked questions that new believers should ask, was baptized, and gained our confidence. We are still shocked to find that all along this "brother" was a spy sent from the Eastern Lightning to destroy us.

In March 2000 he approached us saying, "I've just returned from Lanzhou where my brother lives. There are hundreds of people there who are in the dark. They have never heard of the way, the truth, or the light. They are as I was before God opened my eyes. I've never been trained to preach or teach, so I beg you to please go and speak to them. Bring them out of the darkness! Let them know and understand the truth and fundamentals of the Gospel."

We could not refuse such a call. We became excited, threw away all caution, and started planning our trip. After all, this was a brother who had been in our church for nine months. He had shown much humility and zeal for God's Word. As a result, many hearts were touched and four leaders (two men and two women) were sent with him. He played a role in selecting which four should go, saying, "Judging from the abilities of the four of you, the way you work, the quality of your lives and your knowledge of the Word, I believe as you work and pray together you'll be as powerful as a cannon shot! Your words will ring true, correcting the people's errors."

With much sweet talk and flattery he deceived not only us, but the whole church. It was difficult to see through his lies at the time, but looking back, it is still unbelievable that we could be so deceived all along. May the Lord forgive our stupidity and immaturity!

On the scheduled day of our departure the Lord tried to prevent us from going, but due to our inexperience we were unable to discern whether it was from the Lord or the devil. The weather on the morning of our departure was harsh, with strong winds and sandstorms. One of the four fell down the stairs and badly hurt his leg. He could hardly move. The EL spy said, "This is a hindrance from Satan. We should persevere and get on the train, for this incident is proof that a great work will be done there." When someone suggested we delay our trip by a day he protested strongly, saying, "No! We must go today. If we miss the train, we will take a car."

When we reached Lanzhou there were three people there to welcome us. Two said they were "brothers from Lanzhou," while one was "a brother from Xian." In reality they were deceivers sent by EL to trick us. The man from Xian said, "The Lord gave me a vision that there would be two female disciples coming from the northwest. He showed me they will come to revive the church in Xian."

On the other hand, the man named Paul from Lanzhou asked one of our brothers, "How many times have you been to Lanzhou?" He replied, "I've been here once before, but this is the first time I have come to serve the Lord." Paul shook his hand, saying, "Brother, this is the fourth time we have met. I have seen you three times before in visions. The Lord told me you really love Him. I have been earnestly praying you would come and teach us God's Word, and have been patiently waiting for your arrival. The Lord really knows our needs!"

With these words of flattery the cult leaders appealed to our pride.

The man from Xian then said, "The Lord has brought you here! Are there not four of you? If all four of you good preachers were to stay here in Lanzhou it would be a waste. Why don't two of you stay here, and the other two follow me back to Xian?"

All four of us objected, "We do not put much trust in visions. We'll pray about it, but our first intention was for all four of us to remain in Lanzhou." The Xian man answered, "If this is the case, I will respect your decision. Let's all pray. I believe God will not forsake His flock. I will pray God will change your hearts."

For several hours the three imposters argued among themselves, making us feel guilty for not wanting to break up and go different ways. Lies came one after another until finally we were convinced that it was rude for us not to obey the wishes of our hosts. The Xian man shouted, "Hallelujah! Thank and praise the Lord! God always remembers His sheep! We shall leave today."

This was how the EL successfully split the brethren. Later, using similar methods, the two brothers in Lanzhou and the two sisters who went to Xian were convinced to split again.

The two men in Lanzhou were subjected to horrible torture, beatings and constant round-the-clock brainwashing and sexual entrapment. Although neither brother gave in to fornication, they were given "medicine" for their painful injuries. This medicine made one brother even more ill, and he was unable to sleep. He lost his perspective and willpower. His mind was in a state of utter confusion. A woman was taken to his room, where they photographed him in his semi-conscious state with her, to be later used as "proof" of his sexual immorality.

In Xian, we were introduced to two other women, and were told they had arranged meetings for us to teach at. The

she said, "Hurry, our two congregations are ready and waiting. What should we do? It's a terrible waste to keep two good preachers together." The two women began to argue who should get us. We felt embarrassed and agreed to split up, the sister going one way and me another. We did not see or talk with each other for the next five months.

I was taken to Weinan, then to Tongguan, moving constantly. In my first meeting I was asked to teach. The congregation (all EL members) unfaithfully praised my sermon, saying things like, "Your sermon was the best we have ever heard, please come to our village to preach."

On the fourth day I was preaching when two men in the congregation made a scene. They were specially chosen by the EL to act as though they were demon possessed. They shouted, "Don't listen to her!" They rolled around on the ground, hit people, and broke things. I was totally convinced these men were truly possessed. Seeing people possessed by a demon naturally attracted the attention of the congregation. They pleaded with me to cast the demons out. When I tried to pray over them in Jesus' Name, these "possessed" people retaliated, holding me down, sitting on top of me, and beating me. The more I tried to cast out the devils the more possessed they seemed to become.

One of the men mocked me, "Why do you still pray in Jesus' Name? Don't you know Jesus' Name became useless long ago?" The congregation also mocked me, asking "Is Jesus' name really powerless? Why can't you cast out these demons?"

The cult then moved to their next phase, called "break the escape." It is their way of making sure I could not runaway. Somebody suggested that the two "demon possessed" men be sent to a mental institute for their own safety. The entire congregation was asked to donate money. They asked me, "Do you have any money on you? This will probably cost a lot, maybe tens of thousands." This was how they removed all my money, more than a thousand RMB (US\$ 120). Now I could not escape, as there was only one bus per day down from the mountainous area where I was being held, and I couldn't get on the bus without any money to pay the fare.

The next day an Eastern Lightning leading "brother" named Wang Enguang from Zhejiang Province came to the meeting. When the two "demon possessed" men saw him they immediately fled to a corner of the room, tried to hide under a table, and shouted, "The Light! It is glaring! I'm afraid!" After some coughing they became calm, and the demons were presumed to have been cast out. The congregation all said with one voice, "Hallelujah! This is the truth!"

I felt humiliated and defeated, while "preacher" Wang took center stage and explained the teachings of the Eastern Lightning. He quoted many verses from the Bible and systematically explained what they believe step by step. Then the members of the congregation took turns speaking, trying to convince me of my erroneous belief in Jesus. My heart became confused, worn down from lack of sleep and constant pressure. Every night they removed my shoes and clothing, so that I wouldn't be able to escape. In addition, there was always one person watching me as I slept. I was never allowed out of the house. If I needed to go to the toilet I was given a pail to use. Slowly they were "changing my perspective".

At one point I remembered my family and colleagues, and wanted to bring them in and tell them about the truth of the Eastern Lightning. I was fighting a losing battle.

I was also subjected to sexual temptation. At one stage two EL women slept beside me at night, one on each side, so that I couldn't even turn over. In the middle of the night they shouted out Bible verses, acting like they were having a dream or vision from God. One woman claimed she saw a scroll descend from heaven. On it was written "Ruth 3:7," the verse that tells when Ruth slept at the feet of Boaz. She said a voice from above also told her that I should do as Ruth had done; that I should obediently sleep with Wang. Praise God, the Lord was still protecting me and I was able to resist all of Wang's evil advances.

At first, I didn't contemplate escape because of the isolation of where I was being held, and because I had no money. But one day I realized all freedom had been robbed from me and I had to do something before it was too late. God helped me slip away through the hills and I begged my way onto one bus after another until I finally reached Tongguan and Xian. In the end I was able to call my brother in law who asked a friend to give me a train fare back home. When I finally saw the faces of my brethren, I wept uncontrollably.

This dear sister's pastor concludes this terrible story....

"Of the four, she was the last to escape. She had been away for about five months. When she reached home, she did not look human. She believed she was going to die, and had written two wills, one to her family and one to the church. In her will to the church she wrote "Dear fellow workers, no matter when, no matter where, coworkers must not separate." We all wept when we read her words.

She had been brainwashed so that her mind was in a state of total confusion. She couldn't pray for months. Even one month after her escape, this sister still didn't believe the incident with the two demon-possessed men had been an act, so convincing was their performance.

Many of us fasted and prayed all night for her, asking her to repeat prayers line by line, renouncing the cult and its false teachings.... Thank God, for He listened to our prayers, and this sister shined a little brighter each day.

In October 2000 two Eastern Lightning men came to our town looking for the four coworkers who had all managed to escape from their clutches. They secretly met with the sister, but she told me. She also warned me that they planned to kidnap me, and told me not to stay in my home.

We have other coworkers who've been caught by the Eastern Lightning and never came back. Some are staunchly following their erroneous doctrines. We had a female coworker named Chen who was invited to Anhui and has since changed sides and is now working for them. Another brother who initially really loved God, and was under our guidance for a long time, also changed sides. He constantly called me and asked me to come to meetings, but I refused. He was able to get a sister named Han instead. She was lost for 18 days. We found out later she had been confined in a cave in Gong County. She came back so badly beaten and bruised that she couldn't get out of bed.

How can we combat this wicked threat to the church of Jesus Christ in China? First, we must communicate better. We can never, without prayer and confirmation, promise to go somewhere for speaking engagements. When we travel we must never go alone. The worst thing that has happened because of the Eastern Lightning is that the brethren have now lost mutual trust. We do not know if one of the members of our own congregations is an EL spy, nor can we tell if pastors and leaders from other churches are still walking rightly with God or have come under the EL's influence.

### The Government's Response to Eastern Lightning

I have reached two conclusions while researching the EL in China. On one hand there is no doubt the Beijing central government have been trying to crack the EL for a number of years. One source states there are 2,000 EL practitioners presently in prison across China for their crimes. (8) The EL leadership has publicly declared that the Communist Party of China is the "Great Red Dragon," and its officials are the dragon's offspring. When the Chinese authorities heard such words they immediately considered the group a political threat, with aims to overthrow the government, and they tried to persecute the EL mercilessly.

According to an official government document, the EL's "political purpose have become increasingly overt" and it notes "some of its top-level core members are 'elites' of the June 4th students' protest movement of 1989." These educated members "are editing books and propaganda material. In their conviction to overthrow the power of the 'Great Red Dragon' they are actively...drafting work plans in order to recruit more members." (9)

As mentioned earlier, however, there seems to be a mounting body of evidence that points to many local level officials being protective, or at least sympathetic, to the EL. Some cadres and leading officials have converted to the cult, while it is likely many other officers have accepted protection money from the EL. This had led to a breakdown in Beijing's efforts to destroy the cult. Many times the Beijing authorities appear to have been frustrated by the cult's ability to evade the law, perhaps not fully realizing that the allegiance of many local officials is with the EL.

The recently published secret government documents from China's security sector records some remarkably frank admissions from a speech by Luo Gan, a member of China's Central Politburo. Talking specifically about the government's program to crush the Eastern Lightning, Luo admits, "We have not learned much about this cult organization." (10)

Zhao Shiju, Deputy-secretary of the Hebei Communist Party Committee, outlined his plan to learn more about the EL: "Manpower should be mobilized quickly to conduct investigation of the activities and spread of this cult in our province, to gather intelligence in an effort to round up the whole gang at one strike. Make sure it is kept in confidence, do your job without trumpeting." (11)

Jia Chunwang, the Minister of Public Security, emphasized "we need to work more and talk less to smash the cult quietly." (12)

These efforts seem destined to failure, however, for the very same paper notes that the EL has been able to "infiltrate into the inner circles of the Party, government, and the Three Self Patriotic Movement." (13)

The EL operates under an extremely tight blanket of security; more so, it could be said, than any of the house church networks in China. Some of the safeguards practiced by the cult include only holding gatherings that have been organized at short notice; never giving specific directions to a meeting place, but just the general area, from where the members will be brought to the meeting; posting security guards at the entrance to the village or meeting place to prevent access to all outsiders, and immediately calling the meeting leader's mobile telephone if there are any signs of police action. In this way, EL members often completely scatter before the police even arrive at the door. The EL also insists their members only use mobile phones and pagers that are registered under false names, only use public phones and never their home phones, to change their numbers frequently, to never provide lodgings for members at the same place they have stayed before; and to relocate up to several times during a single day's meetings to avoid detection from the authorities. (14) Even those EL members based in the United States use the same standards of secrecy as in China, operating clandestinely at every turn.

All of these factors have added up to a lot of government frustration at their inability to make serious inroads into th



e Eastern Lightning.

Christians, Don't Lose Heart!

As I write this paper, just days after the kidnapping of 33 house church leaders by the EL, emotions are still running high. It is always grievous and deeply painful when a part of the Body of Christ suffers. This whole situation should remind Christians of a few basic facts:

(a) We are truly combatants in a fierce war. Satan is a very real foe, determined to do whatever is necessary to destroy the Church that is purchased by the precious, spotless Blood of Jesus Christ. Unable to injure God, Satan lashes out at God's children. Many Western believers feel confused when they hear of Christians suffering such vile treatment at the hands of evil men, because of the false theology that pervades many Western churches, that if we live for God, only good things and blessings will result in our lives. Such thinking is contrary to Scripture and inconsistent with the experiences of millions of Christians down through the centuries, who lived wholeheartedly for God yet were "stoned"; they were sawn in two; they were put to death by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated the world was not worthy of them." (Hebrews 11:37-38)

(b) Christians around the world should immerse ourselves daily in the Word of God, thereby enriching our fellowship with the living God and helping protect us from deceptive doctrines. If anything, the incredibly sly tactics of the Eastern Lightning remind us that "such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light". Their end will be what their actions deserve." (2 Corinthians 11:13-15). The Bible warns us to be on guard because "in latter times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons" (1 Timothy 4:1). There is always a Satanic spiritual root behind all twisting and perverting of the Scriptures. There are numerous destructive cults around the world, being used by the devil to destroy lives and confuse minds. If you have read through this whole paper and are thankful you don't live in China alongside the Eastern Lightning, think again! EL have already opened offices and operate printing presses in New York, Toronto, and San Francisco in North America, have a rapidly growing influence in Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, and other Southeast Asian nations as they implement their worldwide vision.

(c) We need to understand that Jesus has already conquered Satan. His final defeat is completely sealed. Jesus has already "disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross." (Colossians 2:15). Although the end result of our battle is already certain, there are many trials and struggles for each Christian to conquer here and now. God has wants us to fight a good fight, and also to rest in the fact that the Lord was, is, and always will be the victor in the battle against Satan. "Do not be afraid, I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One: I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades." (Revelation 1:17-18)

(d) We should not lose heart. God knows exactly what has gone on, has seen the pain of His children in China, and will not be mocked forever. He is not only a mighty God, but the Almighty God. He is not just a King, but the King of Kings! Call on Him to show His mighty power. Pray as Moses prayed, "Rise up O Lord! May your enemies be scattered; may your foes flee before you." (Numbers 10:15)

(e) Understand if God's children are suffering today it is for a reason that one day will be completely clear. I'm reminded of past suffering in China, and the fruit it brought forth in the Chinese Church. In 1900 more than 30,000 Christians in China, including over 200 Western missionaries, were butchered during the Boxer Rebellion. Countless thousands of Christians drew great strength from these martyrs, who set a shining "example of patience in the face of suffering." (James 5:10) One young Christian man who was inspired by the martyrs of 1900 was Wang Mingdao, who was interestingly born at the very time of the carnage in 1900. One year later, in 1901, the mighty evangelist John Sung was born, and in 1903 Watchman Nee entered this world. All three learned from the example of the 30,000 Christians killed in 1900. In turn, all three great leaders of the Chinese Church suffered much for their faith. Wang Mindao, later to become known as the Father of the House Churches, was subjected to more than 20 years in prison for the Name of Jesus Christ. Watchman Nee was in prison 25 years, having his tongue cut off because he refused to stop praying and testifying. Thousands, and now millions, of Chinese believers have been inspired by these men's courageous example in the face of extreme suffering. In past 25 years have seen countless thousands of brave Gospel warriors in China. They have been beaten, humiliated, raped, slandered, maimed and killed. The result is an active Church in China now more numerous and fervent than anywhere else in the world. It came at a great price for those believers who spilled their blood on China's soil so that the light and the integrity of the Gospel would be maintained for the next generation. Now we hear horrific stories of Christians being kidnapped, brainwashed and tortured at the hands of a Satanic cult. The Church has once again been driven to its knees, throwing itself on God and God only for its sustenance. If such conditions continue and the Lord tarries, what will the size of the Church in China be in 20 or 25 years? 300 million? 400 million? Pray that on

Every day the believers from the China Gospel Fellowship who are being brutalized even as you read these words, will say with the Apostle Paul "Our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all." (2 Corinthians 4:17)

#### How Can You Pray?

As the Chinese Church goes through this fierce new struggle, they are so grateful to learn they are not standing alone. Please share some of the burdens of our Chinese brothers and sisters by praying with them, and against the evil of the Eastern Lightning. Here are some prayer points you might want to consider lifting up before our Heavenly Father:

- (a) Pray God's Name would be glorified in China, and in the house churches, that through all of this Jesus' Name would be lifted up and exalted, drawing all men to Himself.
- (b) Plead with God to protect the 33 leaders of the China Gospel Fellowship currently being held by the cult in unknown locations. Pray He will reveal their whereabouts, and help them escape from the snare of the fowler. (Psalm 91:3)
- (c) Pray against the demonic filth of the Eastern Lightning cult. Ask God to bind the dark forces that control it, and to loose its captives. Ask God to be with the Chinese leaders as He was with Jeremiah, who was able to say, "The Lord is with me like a mighty warrior; so my persecutors will stumble and not prevail. They will fail and be thoroughly disgraced; their dishonor will never be forgotten." (Jeremiah 20:11)
- (d) Ask God to comfort the families of those who have been kidnapped. Pray they will experience the near presence and love of the Lord over this time. Pray practical help such as food and money will reach them.
- (e) Pray more Bibles and teaching books would be available to house church Christians in China, and systematic training would help the Christians be stronger in the faith and not as susceptible to being deceived by cults like the Eastern Lightning.
- (f) Ask God to give wisdom to those house church leaders who have decided to work with the government to help crush the Eastern Lightning cult. Pray their zeal to help their brothers will not play in the hands of the authorities, resulting in even more persecution for the Chinese Church.
- (g) Pray the Church in China will learn and grow through this experience, and that God will use it to sharpen His people to be more effective witnesses of His death and resurrection.

#### How Can You Help?

Already many people have contacted us, asking how they can practically help the believers in China. In response to this present crisis, our ministry partners, coworkers inside China, and Asia Harvest have decided to launch a new project to help counteract the influence of the Eastern Lightning among the house churches. Last year a Chinese pastor wrote a book exposing the lies, deception and practices of the Eastern Lightning. The book includes almost 100 pages of testimonies from believers across China who have fallen prey to the cult, before God graciously allowed them to be restored.

It was already planned to publish this brother's book soon, but the present crisis had made it an immediate priority. We plan to print and distribute 200,000 of these books inside China. We believe this will make a significant positive impact, helping prevent thousands becoming victims of the Eastern Lightning. Each book costs just 5 RMB (60 U.S. cents) to print. We guarantee that 100% of money received for this project will be used directly to print and distribute these books.

We don't want to make a big issue about this project, but simply want to give an opportunity to those people who feel the Lord leading them to help be involved financially with the printing of these books. If you would like to find out more details about how to help, please click [HERE](#), or email us at [office@asiaharvest.org](mailto:office@asiaharvest.org). All donations received from U.S. supporters are tax-deductible.

#### Notes

- (1) Forney, Matthew. "Jesus is Back, and She's Chinese: A Bizarre Religious Sect is Preying on China's Rural Christian Congregations." Time Magazine, November 5, 2001.
- (2) This figure is likely to be too low. It more likely represents the number of books that the authorities know have been printed. The true number distributed may be many millions. Li & Fu, Religion and National Security in China, p.79.
- (3) Tianfeng, August 1997

- (4) Li & Fu, Religion and National Security in China, p.79
- (5) Ibid., p.76
- (6) Adapted from a paper written by the Chinese Christian Church of Saipan, China's Cult of Satan Lightning of the East. Unpublished report, Saipan, Guam, September 2000.
- (7) Ibid.
- (8) Forney, "Jesus is Back, and She's Chinese," Time Magazine, November 5, 2001.
- (9) Li & Fu, Religion and National Security in China, p.78-79
- (10) Ibid., p.75
- (11) Ibid.
- (12) Ibid.
- (13) Ibid., p.78
- (14) Ibid.

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**Re: Cult Eastern Lightning by Paul Hattaway - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2014/12/30 11:24**

Greg, this is a very hard read...

I noticed most of this was written back in 2000 or earlier. Do you know what the latest is on this cult? I understand its origins and modus operandi but does this still characterize this cult? All I have read about this cult is based on old reports. I am not doubting what is said, just wanting an update, that is all.

Sandra

**Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2014/12/30 12:34**

Sister,

The cult is still active and has been something the Chinese government has been opposing. And even working very little but with the house churches to stop and expose them. They are still doing tactics of murder even in public to put fear into people like terrorists. here is more information on their doctrine: [http://www.chinaforjesus.com/EL\\_development.htm](http://www.chinaforjesus.com/EL_development.htm)

another article: [http://www.vice.com/en\\_ca/read/the-chinese-cult-who-kidnap-christians-and-paint-snakes](http://www.vice.com/en_ca/read/the-chinese-cult-who-kidnap-christians-and-paint-snakes)

here is a current article from 2014: <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2014/06/20/is-eastern-lightning-the-scariest-domsday-sect-in-china.html>