



East Gates

Seeing Beyond the Impossible™

INTERNATIONAL

March - April 2017

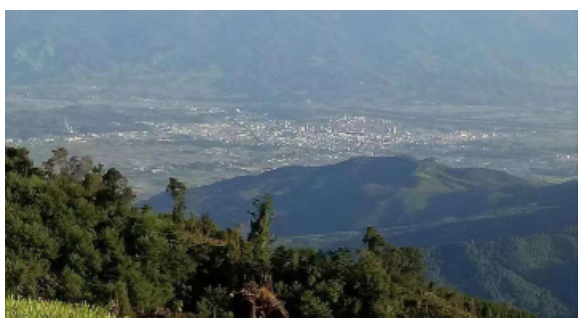
*D*ear East Gates partner,

We're now in the midst of Resurrection Season. Have you ever thought about what life would be like if your destiny was six feet under -- forever? This is what millions of Chinese contend with in their soul but they block it out of their minds because as most of them will tell you, "Life is about survival. We don't have the luxury of contemplating what the meaning of life is all about."

A few months ago, we were listening to a young Chinese believer share her testimony at a church near Seattle.

It was powerful. She said when she was in China, she searched incessantly for answers as to why she was born, if there was life after death and true freedom. She asked her Buddhist friends and they shrugged their shoulders. She asked her secular classmates and they said, "Just enjoy life and don't worry about such things." Her passion to be free finally brought her to the U.S. but the initial road was rocky. She attempted suicide a few times but finally found the only One who could raise her from the dead. Yeshua HaMashiach -- Jesus, the Messiah. She said with tears in her eyes, "I had to learn the hard way that America can't give me freedom. Western education and a good job can't give me the new release on life I truly desire. Only Jesus Christ, my Savior can! So while I am here, I want to do everything I can to learn about the Bible and Jesus so I can teach others about the Truth, the Way and the Life. Then I will go back to China and teach them about the secret hope that lies within them and where to find it!"

This Chinese sister reveals how God hears our cries and our innermost hopes and desires; ones that we can't even articulate. That's why the Lord's work through East Gates in China is so rewarding. There are millions secretly yearning to know why they were born and what their ultimate destiny will be. We're showing them the way. The Yingjiang churches in Yunnan Province are a great example. It's a region known for its many minority tribes and natural beauty.



The Yingjiang County church area in Yunnan Province.



A few of the many talented Lisu tribe believers.

We were introduced to the Yingjiang church through a long time close friend, Rev. Bao. His heart to reach, teach and disciple in regions others have not gone before were the same as ours. As a result, we started working together on this noble venture.



Yingjiang County (red outlined area) is located on the western border of Myanmar or Burma. It's a very mountainous and seismically active area.



Despite the economically depressed area in which these believers live, God has given them a big vision. They know that if they seek the Kingdom of God first and His righteousness, everything else will come (Matthew 6:33). Slowly, it has. They've built the Teachers' Housing Units and now they're finishing the Training Center. Funds have been limited but classes still continue. The Chinese don't need perfect conditions in which to study and learn.



Pastoral leaders in the Yingjiang County area gather for a meal and church meeting.



Students at an early morning prayer meeting. At present, they have 11 teachers and 90 students.



This room will be their future library. When resources become available, bookshelves will follow. In anticipation of what is to come, East Gates has already sent Bibles and Christian materials (right). The faculty and students don't feel they're a genuine training center until the library is complete.



We hope and pray that in time this training center can be another spiritual outpost that understands the biblical importance of Israel in the context of the nations. We will see prayer boards go up like this one which says, "The Whole World Keep Watch."



Staff and students work together to chop the necessary wood to cook their food. The blue building in the background is the kitchen.



In China's countryside, the word for "church" is not a noun but a verb. It functions like a small community where everyone has a purpose and a calling.



As the number of Yingjiang believers grow, their training center will become more important to the spiritual vitality of the church and community. They will need additional pastoral leaders, lay trainers and co-workers to mentor and shepherd the flock. They will need gifted counselors who can answer questions for their youth who are seeking true life in a rapidly changing and hopeless world.

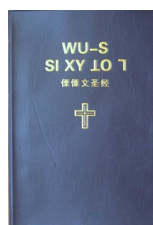
PLEASE KEEP THE
YINGJIANG COUNTY
CHURCHES IN YOUR
PRAYERS.



A procession of Lisu tribe believers come to the Christmas gathering. The sign says, they are the church that speaks the Lisu dialect. East Gates provides Bibles to Lisu believers in their language (right).



Baptism



Every year, churches in Yingjiang County have a major Christmas celebration. Thousands participate in the festivities.



As you've seen in this newsletter, God is calling a great multitude into His family from every tribe, tongue and nation and we have the great privilege of being a part of that work. As we write, however, increasing persecution continues in China. We will not mention names, but we've been given disturbing news that key pastors have been severely punished in Zhejiang, Henan, Guangdong and Guizhou provinces. In many cases it was due to resistance in removing the Cross from their church or not adhering to China's revised religious policies that came out last year. What is the ideology behind these religious policies?

On April 22-23, 2016, China's President, Xi Jinping presided over their Second National Conference on Religion in Beijing. Xinhua News (April 23, 2016) reported on the event. President Xi's views on religion in China can be summarized from the following article excerpts.

- * "Religious groups...must adhere to the leadership of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and support the socialist system and socialism with Chinese characteristics."
- * Religious groups should "merge religious doctrines with Chinese culture, abide by Chinese laws and regulations, and devote themselves to China's reform and opening up drive and socialist modernization in order to contribute to the realization of the Chinese dream of national rejuvenation."
- * "We (CPC) should guide and educate the religious circle and their followers with the socialist core values, and guide the religious people and ideas of unity, progress, peace and tolerance..."
- * "The government's regulation of religious affairs must be in line with laws and the legitimate rights of religious people must be protected."
- * "We (CPC) must resolutely guard against overseas infiltrations via religious means and prevent ideological infringement by extremists...authorities should also focus on religious issues on the Internet and disseminate the Party's religious policies and theories online."
- * Authorities must offer necessary support to the work of religious groups, and build a leadership that is politically trustworthy, democratic in conduct and efficient in their daily work.
- * In particular, CPC members must act as "unyielding Marxist atheists, consolidate their faith, and bear in mind the Party's tenets. They must not seek their own values and beliefs from religions."
- * Efforts should also be made to help teenagers form a scientific outlook of the world, and guide them to believe in science, study science and promote science.

Now that you have a better perspective of the "atmosphere" in which our Chinese brothers and sisters live and breathe on a daily basis, let us please keep them in our fervent prayers as they also intercede for us.

These Spring Holy Days of Passover and Easter bring us into special remembrance that the blood of Yeshua HaMashiach, Jesus the Messiah, was not shed in vain. Because we were never meant to die, He sacrificed Himself for all of humanity's sins and through the resurrection power of God the Father, He is ALIVE! Because He lives and reigns in full sovereignty over heaven and earth, through and by His Spirit, we have eternal life as well! That is why "God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work" (II Corinthians 9:8).

 Christina

Ned and Christina Graham



And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. "You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth."

Revelation 5:9-10