"PUT IN THE SICKLE, FOR THE HARVEST HAS COME!" MARK 4:29

Asia Harvest

JUNE 2025 NEWSLETTER #202



FUJIAN

The New Book by Paul Hattaway

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SOMETIMES WE ARE ASKED who we consider to be the greatest Chinese Christian in history. Of course, the question itself is a problem, as any "great" Christian is merely a broken individual able to reflect the greatness of Jesus, as there is nothing inherently great about any person apart from Him.

Of those Chinese whom God has used greatly to impact many people in China and around the world, some believers may suggest names like Watchman Nee (who is profiled in our new Fujian book), Wang Mingdao, who is remembered as "the father of the Chinese house church movement," or Brother Yun, whom we have personally had much to do with over the years including writing his biography *'The Heavenly Man'*.

"Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever."

(Daniel 12:3)

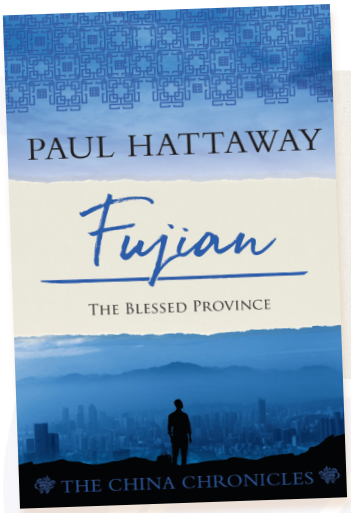
"For the eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to Him."

(2 Chronicles 16:9)

The Lord was pleased to use all those men and others like them, but in our opinion, one man stands out as uniquely gifted and used by God. Although he died at the age of just 43, the impact of John Sung was so extensive that almost a century after he paid a brief visit to some areas in Southeast Asia where he preached a few times, churches were established which remain strong in the faith to the current day!

In this and our next newsletter, we would like to share excerpts from our new Fujian book, highlighting the unconventional life of **John Sung**. In this issue we cover the early part of his life and call, and how Satan so wanted to destroy his life that God had to deliver him from a mental asylum in New York, where he had been locked up by the president of a liberal seminary who thought Sung's zeal for the Lord and the Bible was a danger to society!

In our next newsletter, we will share Part 2 of John Sung's life, as the Holy Spirit used him to bring powerful revival across Asia, which helped strengthen the Church in China to withstand the terrors of Communism that came upon them in later years.



Book 9 of The China Chronicles

FUJIAN

THE BLESSED PROVINCE

by Paul Hattaway



In this newsletter, we are pleased to announce the ninth book in our series on the mighty revival that has swept China during the past 50 years. *The China Chronicles* are proving to be a great encouragement and are enriching the lives of those who read them.

Fujian, which means "Established Blessing," is a province in southeast China with more than 40 million people. Fujian was considered an obscure region in the past, but the Gospel blazed such a pathway that by the 1920s it contained more Christians than any other province of China. Fujian came to be known as the gateway to China as millions of people boarded ships there and migrated to other parts of Asia. Most Chinese people now living in countries like Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia and the Philippines can trace their ancestry back to Fujian.

The home of key Chinese church leaders including John Sung, Watchman Nee and Leland Wang, the Church in Fujian has impacted millions of people in Southeast Asia and throughout the world.

FRONT COVER: A unique "Round House" of the Hakka ethnic group at Tulou Village in southwest Fujian.

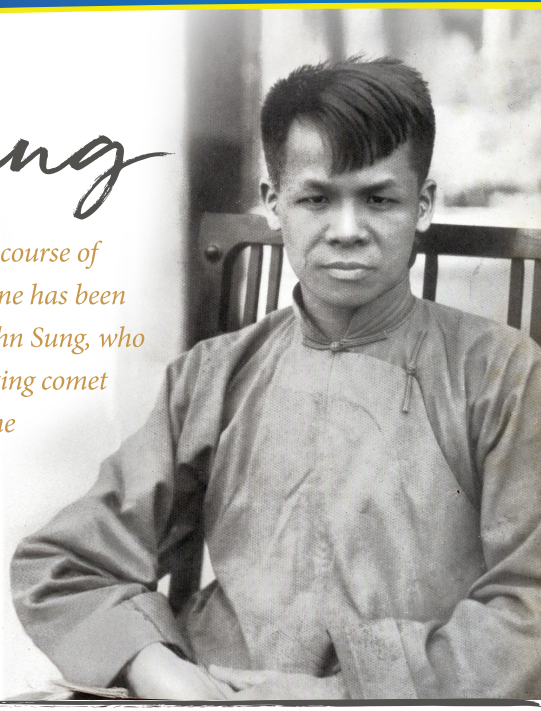
BACK COVER: Fishermen at sunset off the coast of Fujian.

The remainder of this newsletter has excerpts from FUJIAN: The Blessed Province.

To order a copy of the book, please fill out and return the enclosed form or visit *AsiaHarvest.org* for details. A Kindle/ e-book version is also available online.

Alternatively, if you send a donation to any Asia Harvest project, please indicate that you would like a complimentary copy of the book and we will gladly send you one.

John Sung



Of all the figures to emerge over the course of Chinese church history, probably none has been as enigmatic as the Fujian native John Sung, who appeared for a short time like a blazing comet before passing into the presence of the Lord at the age of just 43.

John Sung's impact on Christianity in China was so extensive that he features in many provinces in The China Chronicles series.

CHINA'S JOHN THE BAPTIST

BORN IN 1901, John Sung (whose name in Mandarin is Song Shangjie) was the sixth child of a "warm-hearted Methodist preacher." On many occasions young John accompanied his father when he visited church members, and when his father was sick or out of town, the boy sometimes preached to the believers, repeating from his sharp memory messages he had heard at church. People loved John and gave him the nickname "little preacher."

In 1909, a powerful revival in Putian impacted the Sung family's village, and eight-year-old John was deeply touched by the Spirit of God. As he heard the story of the life of Jesus, he broke down and wept. Conviction spread to the whole congregation, and soon all were on their faces before God, confessing their sins. Within a few months there were 3,000 conversions.

In addition to the good traits he inherited from his father, John also inherited his fierce temper, which was a source of consternation and confusion to Christians. Sometimes when he preached, Sung would suddenly have a burst of anger from the pulpit or verbally eviscerate an interpreter for making a mistake.

Parts of John Sung's story are so extraordinary and complex that some Christian historians have struggled to know how to view him. While God clearly used him to bring tens of

thousands of sinners to the cross, his forceful personality and dramatic methods caused many to take offense. Some who met him considered him extremely rude, for he did not tolerate fools, and he had such a single focus that anything that got in the way of fulfilling Christ's call was considered an unnecessary distraction.

Seven Years in Babylon

At the age of 18, Sung begged his father to send him to study in the United States, and he ultimately arrived with just $6 in his pocket.

After arriving in the U.S., John found work scrubbing the floor and cleaning the windows of a fabric store for 25 cents per hour, and during the school holidays he took a second job at a factory, working the night shift from 6 p.m. to 5 a.m. Sung was an extremely bright young man, and coupled with his relentless work ethic, he completed his college degree in three years, finishing among the top students in his class, even though he had started the course with a limited grasp of English.

He then received a scholarship to attend Ohio Wesleyan University, where he enthusiastically participated in Christian activities. By his fourth year in America, however, a friend lamented: "John seldom went to meetings and never attended church on Sundays. After he had studied three more years under 'American heathens', he did not believe anything that his parents had taught him." Sung later admitted: "My soul wandered in a wilderness. I could neither sleep nor eat. My faith was like a leaking, storm-driven ship without a captain or compass. My heart was filled with the deepest unhappiness."

The Breaking Point

To make ends meet, Sung undertook all his studies while working several manual jobs, including heavy work at a steel factory. This demanding job precipitated his first health crisis, which he detailed: "I hadn't worked there a full day before I got dizziness, heart palpitations, splitting headaches, and a high fever. Still, I persevered until I developed a huge hemorrhoid. The doctor said I must have surgery. I didn't have any money, so I ignored the doctor's orders to recuperate slowly. I discharged myself from the hospital early, before it had completely healed."

This was the start of major health struggles that John Sung experienced for the rest of his life. As a result, his condition worsened and became a chronic affliction known as anal fistula, which plagued him until it ultimately caused his death at an early age.

Sung relocated to Ohio State University, where he completed a master's degree in chemistry in just nine months, receiving the Science Society's medal and gold key for topping his class. Next, he studied for a doctorate between 1924 and 1926. To qualify, he had to be proficient in both French and German, so he tackled those languages and passed with flying colors. Sung received his doctorate at a lavish ceremony on March 19, 1926. He was awarded cash prizes for his achievements in physics and chemistry and was invited to join the faculty of Harvard and other prestigious universities around the world.

While he had achieved all his academic goals, Sung was now deeply unhappy in his heart and mind. Someone suggested he should study theology, so he enrolled at the Union Theological Seminary in New York City, but was disgusted to discover it was a liberal institution, where most of the professors and students did not consider the Bible to be the inspired Word of God, and foundational beliefs such as the virgin birth and the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ were openly mocked or considered mere allegories.

Sung became so depressed and disillusioned with his spiritual condition that he wrote a confidential letter to a friend, saying that he felt overwhelmed by his tormented conscience and that he sometimes despaired of life. The letter was forwarded to Dr. Henry Coffin, the president of the seminary, which set off a chain of events that almost destroyed John Sung. One evening, he attended a revival meeting where he repented of his sins and was powerfully set free. Waves of forgiveness and joy flooded Sung's soul! He threw all of his books except the Bible into the trash and focused on reading God's Word, which struck him with a freshness and vibrancy he had never experienced before.

Confined in a Mental Asylum

Unable to contain his excitement for Jesus, Sung returned to the seminary, where he exuberantly exhorted his fellow students to repent and surrender their lives to God. The next morning, he openly rebuked his liberal professors, warning that they would be thrown into hell if they didn't repent. He even told Harry Fosdick, a leading proponent of the social gospel, "You are of the devil. You made me lose my faith, and you are causing other young men to lose their faith." Sung also took direct aim at Henry Coffin, telling his classmates they had been duped into attending a "cemetery whose president is a coffin."

Reports of Sung's behavior soon reached the president's desk, and he was not amused. Coffin decided the young Chinese student had become mentally unbalanced, and a plan was

hatched to "help" him. Sung's diary recorded the events that unfolded when he returned to the seminary the next day:

> "I reached the gates, which closed behind me as soon as I had entered them, and the seminary president greeted me. He told me that I was getting overly stressed lately and gently insisted that I go to a quiet place to rest and recuperate. I thought his offer over and deemed it reasonable because a week at a tranquil setting would be an excellent opportunity to devour the Word of God. The 'quiet place' turned out to be Bloomingdale Hospital, an institution for the mentally ill."

Rarely has a man forged such a diverse reputation in two parts of the world as Dr. Henry Coffin. In America he was viewed as one of the greatest Gospel ministers of his generation, and he had been honored on the cover of *Time* magazine just a few months earlier. In the eyes of many American Christians, Coffin was a great man of God and one of the co-writers of the famous hymn *"O Come, O Come Emmanuel."*

To multitudes of Chinese Christians around the world who are familiar with John Sung's testimony, however, Coffin is remembered as a villain who promoted the "God is dead" theology of his era, and as the man who nearly destroyed the life of God's chosen vessel who brought revival to the Chinese world.

After being admitted to the mental asylum, Sung tried to convince the psychiatrists he was not insane, but they would not listen. He told them, "I am not crazy! I have just been reborn. My soul, which was in misery, is now filled with the joy of the Lord and I cannot stop praising Him!"

The hospital took full control of his life, with all correspondence censored by the doctor in charge, who wrote back to John's relatives and friends, telling them he was too ill to reply and that they should not write again. After being told that he was being evaluated for six weeks, the period concluded but his request to be discharged was refused. The seriousness of his situation dawned on Sung, and he realized he had been tricked by Henry Coffin and was now imprisoned against his will in a mental asylum.

Finally, God gave favor, and with the help of a friendly nurse, Sung managed to write a letter to the Chinese Consulate, explaining he had been locked up against his will. After visiting the asylum, the consul general said that John Sung "was no more crazy than you or I, but he had such a good case of real, old-fashioned religion, and it was so unusual there that they

thought he was crazy." He was released on August 30, 1927, on the condition that he would leave the United States and return to China.

A Watery Grave

As he made his way across the vast Pacific Ocean, John Sung had a vivid dream in which he saw himself lying in a coffin with his academic degrees and gown. In the dream the old John Sung was dead, but the new man was alive in Christ and called to preach the Gospel.

Although the world now considered Sung a success with a highly valued doctorate, God began to deal with his pride during the long voyage. He knelt in his cabin and rededicated himself to God's service, determining in his heart to place no limits on his zeal and consecration to reach his fellow Chinese.

Sung renounced all of his worldly achievements, went up to the deck as the ship neared the Fujian coast, and hurled most of his diplomas, medals, and golden doctoral keys overboard into a watery grave. The only diploma he retained was his Ph.D., which he gave to his parents as a mark of respect for the effort and expense they had borne to help his career.

John gave all his money to his father and his books and clothes to his brother. From that time forward, he donned a simple cotton gown like many Chinese peasants of the time, and he lived as a poor itinerant evangelist.

John was asked to teach chemistry at a local Methodist high school. He worked there for a year, but science was now far down the list of priorities in his life, and he took every opportunity to indulge his real passion—the salvation of souls.

Discipleship

For the next three years, John Sung traveled around Fujian preaching in small rural churches, and his ministry began to resemble that of John the Baptist. He was uncompromising in his denunciation of sin, and did not hesitate to publicly rebuke church leaders and missionaries whose lives failed to glorify Christ. He taught regularly on Heaven and Hell and the need for people to fully surrender to God and be filled with the Holy Spirit. Multitudes responded with weeping and open confession of sin. He also established an extensive discipleship program to help new converts gain a strong foundation in God's Word.

Once, when asked to summarize the main themes of his teaching, Sung replied:

"Repentance, Heaven and Hell, and the cross and blood of Christ....hating of sin and complete consecration; being filled with the Holy Spirit; and the life of faith as well as love."

John Sung's Family

In December 1927 John Sung married Yu Jinhua, who also used the English name Jean. It was an arranged marriage, having been agreed to by their parents when they were children. For the first several years their family life was a struggle, as Jean did not share the faith of her husband until she was converted five years later.



The scene was set, and God was ready to launch His servant John Sung out into the spiritual darkness of China. Extraordinary things would happen that would shake every area where he preached. Tens of thousands of supernatural healings and conversions to Jesus Christ took place against a background of constant attacks, death threats, and intense demonic opposition.

For these reasons, millions of house church believers in China today consider John Sung to be their spiritual example of how to zealously serve God with an uncompromising faith. His example set the pattern for the great revival in China of the past 50 years.

In our next newsletter we will continue our look at the life of John Sung, and how the Lord Jesus Christ used him to bring powerful revival to China and Southeast Asia, propelling hundreds of thousands of people into His kingdom.

OVER THE YEARS ASIA HARVEST HAS SUCCESSFULLY PRINTED AND DELIVERED MORE THAN 430,000 BIBLES TO HOUSE CHURCH CHRISTIANS IN FUJIAN THROUGH OUR ASIA BIBLE FUND, IN ADDITION TO SUPPORTING MANY EVANGELISTS AND PROVIDING AID TO HUNDREDS OF PERSECUTED CHURCH LEADERS AND THEIR FAMILIES.





ASIA BIBLE FUND (ABF)

CURRENT TOTAL: 20,684,874 BIBLES PRINTED IN 169 LANGUAGES

The Asia Bible Fund provides the Scriptures in numerous languages in China, Southeast Asia, the Indian subcontinent, and anywhere in Asia that God's people need His Word..

Each Bible costs just $3 to print and deliver. We also print millions of Gospel booklets for evangelism through this project.



ASIAN WORKERS' FUND (AWF)

WE CURRENTLY SUPPORT 1,805 ASIAN EVANGELISTS AMONG 1,293 UNREACHED PEOPLE GROUPS

The Asian Workers' Fund supports indigenous church-planting evangelists among unreached Asian tribes and ethnic groups.

These disciples have committed their whole lives to the Gospel but are hindered by lack of finances. To date, the evangelists we help have reportedly led 1,819,202 people to faith in Jesus Christ. You can help support these dedicated workers for $25 per month each. A prayer card and occasional updates are sent to all regular supporters of this project.

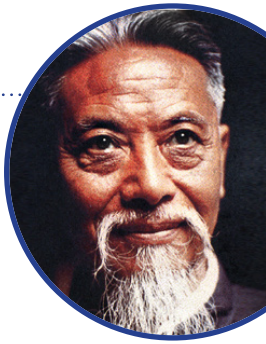


MINISTRY TRAINING FUND (MTF)

THANKS TO YOUR SUPPORT WE HAVE HELPED TRAIN AND EQUIP 68,342 ASIAN BELIEVERS TO EFFECTIVELY SERVE GOD

The Ministry Training Fund helps the Asian Church disciple and train believers to be effective ministers of the Gospel among the unreached.

Often workers live in remote places and coming together once or twice a year is the only outside fellowship and teaching they receive. We cover travel, food and other costs associated with the meetings. To train each worker costs an average of $50.



LMF LIVING MARTYRS' FUND

BECAUSE OF YOUR PARTNERSHIP WE ARE CURRENTLY SUPPORTING 784 LIVING MARTYRS

The Living Martyrs' Fund supports Christian widows and church leaders and their families throughout Asia who are unable to work because of injuries or illness caused by persecution.

They and their families face extreme poverty and hardship. Through a gift of $25 per month you can help support one of these living martyrs.



TCF THE CHILDREN'S FUND

YOUR GENEROUS SUPPORT HAS REACHED 236,793 CHILDREN THROUGHOUT ASIA SO FAR

The Children's Fund introduces children to Jesus in India, China, Vietnam, Indonesia, and a host of other Asian countries.

Activities include printing and distributing Gospel literature designed for children, funding Sunday school training classes, providing free surgeries for those with special needs, and generally lifting children out of spiritual and physical poverty. It costs an average of just $10 to help reach a child for Christ.



PRF PERSECUTION & RELIEF FUND

TRANSFORMING LIVES FROM ASHES TO BEAUTY WITH GOD'S LOVE

Over the years Asia Harvest has provided assistance to the victims of natural disasters that have struck Asia. In addition to providing aid through medicine, tents, blankets, food and water, rebuilding homes etc., the Christians we partner with take every opportunity to share the Gospel, and many people have come to know Jesus Christ.

This project also provides physical and spiritual relief to Christian lepers, communities and families throughout Asia who are in desperate need.

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