

Day One

THE RESURRECTION OF THE CHURCH

The Lord has done this and it is marvelous in our eyes.
(MARK 12:11)

AS RECENTLY AS 1979 all churches in China were shut—some turned into factories or storerooms, others left derelict. Madame Mao had vowed to destroy Christianity so thoroughly that it would survive only in museums. In 1949 the Protestant community numbered less than one million. The persecutions of the 1950s and the catastrophe of the Cultural Revolution (1966-76) had apparently eroded the church still further. But in those dark years God did a beautiful work. His faithful servants cried to him in prayer in the midst of their suffering. Then, as the Maoist dream of an atheistic utopia turned into a nightmare enveloping the entire country, more and more people were deeply moved by the love of the despised Christians and turned in their despair to the living Christ.

One pastor said, "We thought things could only get worse. But in 1976 Mao died and a month later Madame Mao and the infamous 'Gang of Four' were arrested. God intervened! Now the churches are open again and are full to overflowing. It's a miracle!"

A quarter-century has passed, and today there are about 50,000 churches and meeting points legally open all over China as well as countless house churches. The number of registered, adult Protestants is approaching 20 million. Nearly every day a new church opens.

1

PRAISE God for his sovereign power made manifest in the recent history of China and the Chinese church.

PRAISE him for the faithful, costly witness of faithful Chinese believers. Some were martyred; others survived to witness a new spring for the church in China and to get involved in evangelism, pastoring and rebuilding.

MEDITATE on the depths of the riches of the grace of God towards the Chinese people.



2

Day Two

PRAISE God for the fervor and sacrifice of the Chinese church.

PRAY:

For busy pastors, elders and helpers overwhelmed by the thousands of enquirers and new converts.

For Christians who are under surveillance or face other pressures within the State-registered church.

For a relaxation of restrictions on evangelism outside church buildings and on Sunday school work.

REGISTERED CHURCHES

“On this rock I shall build my church, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it.” (MATTHEW 16:18)

THE CHINA CHRISTIAN COUNCIL and the Three Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM) are the two organizations, under the control of the Communist Party, which supervise the registered Protestant church. At the grassroots, this church is vigorously evangelical. Thousands flock to Sunday worship and attend weekday Bible studies, prayer meetings, youth meetings, choir practice etc. Every year tens of thousands of new converts are baptized—usually at mass baptisms taking place at Easter and Christmas. Churches are often so crowded that people must stand or sit in the courtyard outside, or attend overflow meetings in other rooms, following the service on closed-circuit TV.

However, there is a shortage of trained pastors. On average, one pastor has to minister to over 10,000 Christians! Because of the persecutions of the 1950s and 60s, pastors tend to be either elderly or very young. This is a church of great diversity. In Shanghai and Beijing, well-educated, relatively wealthy congregations—often including many students and young people—meet in huge cathedrals. In remote rural meeting points, illiterate old women and peasant farmers gather in dire poverty, yet with great fervor. They often walk for miles to worship God with other believers.

