

Chinese Leaders Plan to Send 100,000 Missionaries Into 10/40 Window

The Back to Jerusalem movement seeks to take the gospel from China to Israel, to the world's most unreached people

After a combined 40 years in prison for preaching the gospel, three Chinese house church leaders are reviving an 80-year-old vision to take the gospel from China to Jerusalem—a region that comprises 90 percent of the world's unreached people.

Peter Xu Yongze, Enoch Wang and “Brother Yun,” whose dramatic testimony of torture and imprisonment is recounted in the book *The Heavenly Man*, are spearheading the effort known as the Back to Jerusalem movement. The campaign seeks to mobilize 100,000 Chinese missionaries who would die to evangelize the estimated 2 billion people in the area known as the 10/40 Window.

The vision was first articulated by China's Jesus Church in the 1920s, and was implemented in 1949, the same year the Communist Party took over China. Most of those missionaries were imprisoned and died before being freed.

Yongze, Wang and Yun explain their strategy in *Back to Jerusalem: Called to Complete the Great Commission*, written with Paul Hattaway, who has authored several books about the church in China.

The initial 36 workers were sent out in 2000. Hattaway said that number has climbed to about 1,000 today. “The number of Chinese missionaries is growing every week, and many hundreds

more are being trained inside China right now," he said.

The 10/40 Window, which includes much of Africa, the Middle East and Asia, is home to the three largest spiritual strongholds in the world today—Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism.

"The Chinese missionaries will face opposition in these regions," said Luis Bush, who heads the World Inquiry, a ministry that assesses missions activity inside the 10/40 Window. "But they believe the persecution they have already endured was like a training ground for this difficult mission that left them equipped to take the gospel through these territories. That is a very deep conviction."

Patrick Johnstone, editor of Operation World, a prayer compendium on the various nations of the world, said the missionaries could face an excessive amount of persecution "if their zeal is not tempered by wisdom and a deep understanding of the cultures that they seek to reach."

Hattaway said Chinese missionaries are receiving language, cross-cultural and religious training, and plan to work closely with local believers in each nation they visit. He added that 100,000—a tithe of what house church leaders estimated to be 1 million full-time Christian workers in China—is the minimum number of missionaries organizers plan to send out.

Journalist David Aikman, who has written extensively about China's Christians, said the Back to Jerusalem movement has gained strength in the last decade. "There is no part of China that I have visited in which house churches are active where ordinary Christians are not aware of the movement and in most

cases, eager to support it," he said.

Bush believes now is a good time to revive this vision, noting that China recently joined the World Trade Organization, which significantly opened communication with the outside world. He also points to the country's anticipation of the Olympics in Beijing in 2008, which is spurring a more world-friendly attitude.

Johnstone said publishing a book on the Back to Jerusalem movement may be premature, but he noted that the Bible encourages evangelism nonetheless.

"This type of movement will take time and years of language learning, and there will be a steep learning curve with many mistakes," Johnstone said. "There needs to be an effective network of support and pastoral oversight with adequate accountability, which is not yet there."

Still, the Chinese house church leaders have pledged to do whatever it takes to fulfill the Back to Jerusalem vision. "The leaders are concentrated on getting the job done in the power of the Lord," Hattaway said. "The details of how this happens they are leaving up to the Lord."

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