

Bertha Smith – Awakening China to the Gospel

Bertha Smith was born on Nov. 16, 1888, on a farm outside Cowpens, South Carolina. She was one of five children of John and Frances Smith.

A disciplined, precocious child, she had a dynamic conversion experience and came to Jesus Christ during a Baptist revival meeting in 1905.

While in college in 1910, Bertha realized that God wanted her to become a missionary. Then in 1917, she received her formal appointment to China from the Southern Baptist's International Mission Board (formerly Foreign Mission Board).

After a year of language study in Peking (now Beijing), "Miss Bertha," as she was affectionately called, went to her first assignment in Laichowfu, in Shantung province. She developed a burden for the Chinese Christians to whom she ministered and the millions of Chinese people who had not yet come to faith in Christ.

Apathy pervaded the churches in Shantung, but a time of political upheaval caused the missionaries there to retreat to the seaport city of Chefoo, where an unforgettable event took place.

During a prayer meeting there were dramatic healings, reconciliations and salvations. But Bertha disciplined the group for their half-hearted commitment toward the people they had been sent to help.

The revived missionaries returned to their respective stations as different people with a different message. Now they were ready to minister in power. And they did.

The great Shantung Revival began in 1927 and continued until the Japanese invasion in 1936. The awakening deepened and spread to other areas.

There was deep conviction among Chinese Christian leaders and missionaries alike. Physical healings were verified, and thousands found Christ.

Bertha had a fruitful ministry in China until she returned to America in 1942. Seven years later she made her way to the Island of Formosa (Taiwan) where the revival continued.

At age 70 Bertha retired to America and wrote a best-selling book that told the story of the great Chinese revival. For nearly 30 years, she traveled across the world sharing one message: God revives His people. She was called home to her reward on June 12, 1988, just five months before her 100th birthday.

The late **Lewis Drummond** was a former professor of Evangelism and Church Growth at Beeson Divinity School in Birmingham, Alabama. He and his wife, Betty, authored of several titles, including *The Spiritual Woman* (Kregel Publications). Adapted from *Women of Awakenings* by Lewis and Betty Drummond, copyright © 1997. Published by Kregel Publications. Used by permission.