

Fires of Holy Ghost Revival Burning in China

I recently was invited to speak in an official “Three-Self Patriotic Church” in Wuchang, which is in Wuhan in central China. Wuhan, the capital of Hubei, is actually made up of three cities (Wuchang, Hankou and Hanyang), and is the most populous city in Central China with a population of about 9.8 million. There are several hundred official churches registered with the Religious Affairs Bureau and without a doubt several thousand **house churches**.

The pastor, Rev. Xu, then spoke to me about the situation with **Christianity in China**. He said, “In the West you are now putting emphasis on the cell church, or house church movement and many think the only way to reach China is through support of the **house church movement**. But after studying Christianity in China for many decades, I have come to the conclusion that China will be reached not only through house churches, but through large open churches **preaching the gospel**.”

I asked Rev. Xu, “Why do you say that?” He pointed to a large modern building of more than 40 floors, which you see everywhere in Chinese cities, and he said, “In this building there is probably one or several house churches. But other than the people who attend these house churches, who knows about their existence? How many sinners will they be able to reach and bring to Christ say over the period of 10 years? Perhaps it will be a few hundred or a few thousand.

“But look at my church. Every Sunday we have over 6,000 come to our meetings, many for the first time. They see a church building and attend out of curiosity, an interest in religion or at the invitation of a member. We have choirs, instrumental music, good preaching, Sunday Schools, youth ministry, divine healing meetings, prayer meetings, Bible Seminary and so on.

Every month we reach countless thousands of people. Thus the key to reaching China is through ministry originating in large Spirit-filled open churches.”

I immediately thought of a conference for the “Simple Church” I attended in Dallas several years ago. I was asked to speak on the **house church** in China. They had all read a book named *Pagan Christianity*. The book basically states that because almost everything we know in Christianity has pagan origins, we thus should leave the “institutional church” and only meet in our homes in small groups in which anyone who desires can share (1 Cor. 14:26). All other things in Christianity are wrong: church building, clergy, choirs, **Bible Schools**, Sunday Schools, worship teams, youth groups, tithing, communion services, baptismal services, pulpit preaching, etc.

It would seem the authors have something against the “church” as we know it today. But I can totally agree with one of the basic premises of the book, which is, “the church is not a building we go to or have meetings in, but the church is people, the Body of Christ.” Having said that, in at least the Asian context, the church building is extremely useful and even vital to the development and growth of the “church, the body of Christ.”

Our Hong Kong church, Revival Christian Church, is a converted movie theater of 15,000 square feet. Almost every part of the building is being used every day by our congregation and other groups. Every month literally thousands will be ministered to in this building.

For decades we have experienced mighty **revival in China**, but it was mostly in the rural house churches. This has resulted in close to a hundred-fold increase in Chinese believers in the past 60 years. Now this revival is sweeping many large official churches often referred to as Three-Self churches. Also many congregations now meet in non-official but registered church buildings. These are basically house church

fellowships that due to a recent relaxation in policy have been able to build their own church buildings.

During the first 25 years of China's open door policy (starting in 1978) few house church leaders, believers and overseas Christian workers or missionaries wanted anything to do with the Three-Self churches. They called them the "harlot church" and Christians attending these churches were considered to be compromisers and the preachers as betrayers of Christ. After I attended some of these at the invitation of the pastor to preach and teach on the **Holy Spirit** and **revival**, I was told by one leading house church leader a few years ago, "You cannot even be saved if you set your foot in a Three-Self Church."

This same leader was lamenting that his house church was in decline, young people were no longer praying or preaching as they did in the Cultural Revolution and the first two decades of the open door policy, and they were longing for the "old time religion" and the return of the past glories. However, he failed to see that many official churches that were in every part of that area (Wenzhou, Zhejiang Province), were packed with young people who were **baptized in the Holy Spirit, praying in tongues and prophesying**, and every service was lively with instruments, dancing and **New Testament style worship**. These churches were exploding with growth, conducting Sunday Schools, youth ministry, divine healing taking place in every meeting and **powerful Biblical preaching** by Spirit-filled ministers. It is truly time of revival, and at the present rate of church growth within in 30 years we will probably see the numbers of Christians increase from 20 to 30 percent of the population. It now stands about 9 percent.

While RCMi still focuses on ministering to house church groups in providing Bibles, Christian teaching materials and conducting training sessions both in mainland China and Hong Kong, we increasingly have open doors to the official churches. We still continue to conduct Bible Schools where we

train workers. However we now have open doors to train in open churches.

Since I gave the leadership of our local Hong Kong church and local ministry to Samuel and Sharon Lau (*note: the son-in-law & daughter of Pastor Dennis, now co-senior pastors of Revival Christian Church, Kwai Fong*) in 2003, I have been dedicating the vast majority of my time to ministry in mainland China. While we have heard no policy statement from official religious organizations, there seems to have been a marked change in policy during the past year or so.

Evangelical and Spirit-filled leaders are taking over official churches, and have liberty to preach whatever they want. Many of these churches are developing worship teams, Sunday Schools, youth groups and are actually very active in **evangelism** and **church planting**. I have had the opportunity to preach and share in many of these official churches.

At the same time, many **house church fellowships**, through contacts with various government officials, have applied to and been given permission to build large church buildings, some more than 12 floors high. One floor will be a large meeting hall that can accommodate a congregation of up to 1,000, and they will have multiple meetings on the weekends. Other floors will be used for a Bible College, dormitories for students, offices and canteen. I am often invited to minister and without exception the preaching will focus on being **baptized in the Holy Spirit**, revival, biblical worship and praise, and missions. Also many will give their lives to Christ and become Christians after we speak.

We still greatly need teams to visit Hong Kong to help us to take in and distribute desperately needed Bibles and Christian books to China. This is because some of the Study Bibles and teaching books (such as Shepherd's Staff) are not available for sale in China. However, with offerings given for Bibles we can through our contacts in the official churches purchase

large amounts of Bibles. The Christians always appreciate this for they are officially printed by Amity and The Chinese Christian Council, and possession of them will never result in any problem.

I also appeal for overseas workers to come to HK to work with our ministry, learn the Chinese language and eventually go to China to serve the Lord. While China has no such thing as a missionary visa, countless thousands of missionaries are already in China doing various ministries. But we need tens of thousands more if we are to bring in this last harvest. We are living in the time of opening doors, not closing doors.

Dennis Balcome is the founder of Revival Chinese Ministries International and a sought-after speaker around the world. He speaks fluent Cantonese and Mandarin. He is currently involved in ministering to the Chinese as well as non-Chinese throughout Asia. [Click here to visit his website.](#)