

Spying for God

My first experience with what I call “Holy Ghost espionage” occurred in 1993, when I sneaked into a communist country for a firsthand look at how evangelical churches there were thriving in spite of intense persecution. After I managed to “lose” my government-appointed escort, I was able to freely interview local Christians about what it’s like to practice their faith in a place where pastors are harassed or thrown in jail for leading church services.

Perhaps you didn’t know that spying plays a role in what we do at Charisma. Last year we published an in-depth report written by a brave Christian journalist who visited two North African countries that are completely closed to missionary activity. She learned that although believers are jailed and tortured in North Africa, the Holy Spirit is orchestrating a plan to spread the gospel there. Our report indicated that the most intimidating human efforts to stop God aren’t working.

A few months ago we sent another fearless reporter to the most remote part of China to write this month’s cover story (page 52). Elisabeth Farrell (that’s not her real name, by the way), dyed her hair before making her trek into a region near the Kazakhstan border.

She and her team of intercessors, posing as tourists, logged many miles as they prayed on-site in Chinese villages. They were preparing the way for the gospel to penetrate a place where less than percent of the population is Christian—and where the Bible is not available in the local language.

In case you are wondering: Yes, spying for God is biblical.

Moses sent a dozen of his best men to conduct a stealth mission prior to invading Canaan. They were supposed to walk through the land and claim it for God. But most of Moses' spies returned from their journey with fear in their hearts rather than faith. They told their commander: "'We can't attack those people; they are stronger than we are'" (Num. 13:31, NIV).

Only two of the spies, Joshua and Caleb, saw the giants of Canaan through eyes of faith. Rather than making excuses, or focusing on the obstacles they faced, the heroes of this story told Moses: "'We should go up and take possession of the land'" (v. 13:30).

My hope is that there are some Calebs and Joshuas out there who—after they read our report on China—will be inspired to tackle some 21st century giants. If you are game for that challenge, here is your assignment: Copy the special prayer calendar we've prepared on page 66 and join us as we pray for the more than 400 Chinese ethnic groups that have never heard about Christ's salvation.

You may never disguise yourself as a tourist and sneak into a Muslim or communist country to conduct a covert prayer journey. But all of us can invade China with our prayers during the month of October. Imagine what could happen if thousands of Charisma readers bombarded heaven and asked God for a dramatic spiritual breakthrough in the world's most populous nation.

Let's not be like the 10 timid spies, who preferred the false security of the wilderness over the uncomfortable risks of conquest. God wants to invade China with His love. Let's go in and take possession.