



East Gates

Seeing Beyond the Impossible™

INTERNATIONAL

January - February 2017

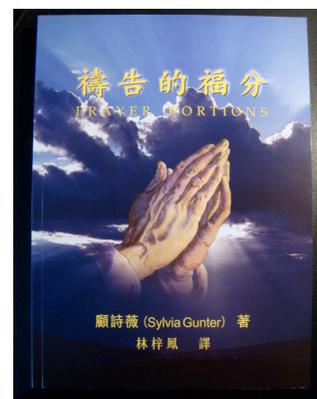
Dear East Gates partner,

We're now fully into 2017 after having experienced a quite eventful 2016. Instead of speeding headlong into 2017 and getting involved in the busy-ness of ministry, we took time to pause and reflect on what the Lord would have us focus on in terms of the biblical times we live in. Here are some of the insights we were given.

GOD COMMANDS US TO "WATCH AND PRAY."

Gospel writers Matthew, Mark and Luke use the expression "watch and pray" in different ways but in every instance "watch" has the connotation of a person who is vigilant in being fully awake, like a special ops soldier standing guard in his watch tower. The Greek term for "prayer" ties in with urgency, fervency and worship. In other words, he or she is in constant communication with God's throne room or the Kingdom's grand central control station.

Chinese Christians who are fully aware of the times we live in continue to build 24/7 prayer towers throughout Hong Kong and China. A Chinese sister that we partner with and support just came back from Hong Kong and China. She said given the mounting anti-Semitism in the Western world, she taught many Houses of Prayer how to "Pray for Israel" and to make it a weekly if not daily practice. More Chinese are ordering our Chinese translation of Sylvia Gunter's *Prayer Portions* which teaches one how to go deep into speaking forth the Names of God, repentance, spiritual warfare, intercession for one's family, nation and more. Jesus Christ watched and prayed throughout His life. That is how He was able to make Satan impotent in the Judean wilderness. That is how He was able to stay awake in the Garden of Gethsemane when others slept. That is how He was able to endure the Cross for the joy that was set before Him. If Jesus needed to watch and pray, how much more do we as we prepare for His soon coming return!



Prayer Portions
by Sylvia Gunter

DO NOT BE SURPRISED...

There is a vitriolic saying by those who desire the destruction of the Jews and Christians in the world today, "First the Sabbath keepers. Next the Sunday keepers." An anxious and fearful believer once approached a couple of rabbis with worried faces saying, "Look at the world. It's fraying at the seams and falling apart!" The rabbis calmly replied, "And why should it be otherwise?"

In the West, we read, "Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation....If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and God

rests on you” (I Peter 4:12-14). For most of us, this passage, like others of the same nature, are just words on a page. For thousands of our Chinese brothers and sisters, they are visceral and real. As we bring them the theological context of Scripture, they teach us the theology of tolerance and suffering. In the rural House church communities, many leaders feel they are behind in their walk with the Lord compared to Western believers. We share with them, on the contrary. In many respects, they’re far more like the New Testament church in their physical makeup and spiritual dynamic.



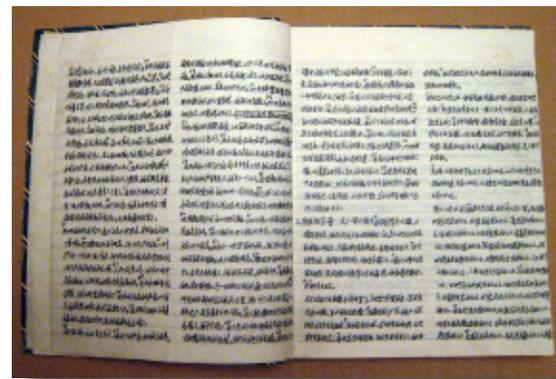
As in the New Testament times, you wouldn't know a rural House church if you passed it by. That is good. They're not as big a target.



Acts 2:44-45 applies -- “...all those who had believed were together and had all things in common; and they began selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need.”



One of our instructors, Michael Tsang, teaches at a humble House church. Believers are so grateful for any Bible teaching they can receive.



House church believers can sit for hours taking copious notes. They need quality training because they get biblical ideas from so many different sources.

It has come to our attention that China's *Policies of Religious Affairs* is now being revised. Of major note are changes made to Chapter 3 -- *Religious Schools* and Chapter 6 -- *Religious Activities*. Compared to the version that came out in 2005, rules in these two areas will be far more strict. SK Choy, Vice-President of the Alliance Bible Seminary in Hong Kong stated that religious schools have always been the cradle whereby church leaders have been disciplined but with the revised policies, unregistered religious schools will be strictly monitored and/or shut down. The Chinese government will investigate more thoroughly the religious initiatives of the five recognized religions (Buddhism, Taoism, Islam, Catholicism and Protestantism) so they can establish parameters that determine prosecution, punishment and banishment. SK Choy believes that the rules will apply to registered churches as well but the goal is to eventually strangle the unregistered churches out of existence. We shall see.

SK Choy inspires fellow Chinese Christians to remember Daniel 6:7-10. All the high officials of the Chaldean kingdom moved King Darius to establish a statute and sign a document whereby anyone who gave their allegiance to any god or man besides the king would be cast into the lion's den. What was Daniel's response? **“He entered his house (now in his roof chamber he had windows open to Jerusalem); and he continued kneeling on his knees three times a day, praying and giving thanks before his God, as he had been doing previously”** (verse 10). **God heard. God will hear our prayers on behalf of China too!**

As we have just come out of celebrating Christ's birthday, it's important to note that for the first 30 years of His life, He lived in relative obscurity. Obviously, those first three decades were clearly not uneventful for He was in continual conversation with His Father, in the synagogues, respectful and observant of His parents' Jewish traditions based on Torah, thereby growing in favor with God and humanity day by day. He was continually **watching** and **praying**. When "show and tell" time came, He now had the spiritual foundation that enabled Him to make Satan impotent in the Wilderness, stay focussed despite all His naysayers and intense persecution, endure the Cross and reveal through His resurrection how we were never meant to die!

At East Gates, our work, now going on 30 years, has been the same. We continue to work transparently in China, stay focused, develop genuine relationships and build upon the Rock. Today, providing Chinese seekers and believers with God's Word and providing proper discipleship training continue to be our priorities. The following example is why.

One day we saw a Chinese sister reading a book entitled, *The Emotionally Healthy Leader -- How transforming your inner life will deeply transform your church, team and the world* by Peter Scazzero. She said she wanted to give it to her pastor to read and said that all pastors should read this book. In Chapter 3, an



The true state of a church oftentimes reflects the spiritual state of the pastor.

account is given about Sister Li, an exhausted, seminary-trained pastor who oversees a congregation of 5000. She preaches six times on Sunday and has not had a vacation in seven years. Her husband lives five hours away where he is a full-time seminary instructor. They see each other once every two weeks. Their two teenage sons attend school in the US and they see them once or twice a year. Pastor Li feels guilty but says she doesn't have time to raise them given all her responsibilities. This kind of pastor family dynamic is so common in China. Pastor Li said her situation isn't even that bad. She then gives account of a pastor's wife and son who attend her church. Her husband pastors in another city that is 20 hours away by train. Once a year, he comes home for a day

on Chinese New Year and then returns quickly because there is so much "to do." On one occasion, before boarding the train, his young son ran after him crying out, "Please stay here, Daddy!" The father kicked his son and said, "Devil, get thee behind me." With a seemingly helpless expression, Pastor Li stated that what people don't understand is, "...it is wrong if we don't sacrifice everything for the gospel."

When we work with "burned out" Chinese pastors and lay trainers, we inform them that God desires us to be a "living sacrifice," not a dead one. We ask them to go back into the Word and re-evaluate Ephesians 5:21-33 and Ephesians 6:1-4. That is also the gospel. We offer them seminars and workshops on *When Two Become One*. Our family and marriage instructors whom we partner with, George and Linda Kuo, provide them materials they've translated or written. We address family of origin issues which take much prayer, counseling and time to resolve. From their youth, Chinese are not taught critical thinking or how to be self-evaluative. We teach them how to overcome the "fear of man" with the "fear and respect of the Lord." Jesus is not concerned about how many degrees or "alphabets" are behind their name or how many believers are in their church. Based on the way they were raised or taught about God, it's hard for them to have a deep and abiding relationship with Him. It seems like it's all about performance. **Please keep the Chinese pastors and their families in your prayers.**



Oneness in Marriage ~ 50 Questions and Answers by George and Linda Kuo

As you've seen, there is much to **watch** and **pray** for when it comes to China and our Chinese brothers and sisters. In this globalized world, we are all interconnected. As the world seems to fill with more anger, violence and intolerance, it's very easy for our love to wax cold and to develop compassion fatigue. It's easy to be distracted, consumed, and preoccupied with the frenetic politics, socio-economics and geo-politics of our times and forget what is on the forefront of God's mind, getting the Bride of Christ ready (Rev.19:7-9). We are doing just that. In closing, we share an Inner Mongolian church project you've just helped us with.

The Ai Ji Bei church was in dire need of refurbishing their meeting place so the majority of their elderly members could meet in a safer environment. We contributed 15,000 RMB (\$2180) which enabled them to significantly improve on their existing structure. They had big dreams and were overwhelmed when East Gates co-workers and volunteers from the community came to assist them in laying out all the bricks for a large plaza where they could host and feature ministry performances. We pray they will continue to be a growing Light and witness in their region.



Old Ai Ji Bei Church



Renovated Ai Ji Bei Church with a "Thank You" message. Translation below.

Thank you God! Thank you East Gates and every single co-worker who has supported our church through donations. I hope God will remember your giving. Bless every co-worker and their family and children. Amen!

~ The brothers and sisters of the Ai Jia Bei church.



At present, there are around 80 members but the church is growing. Adjoining the main meeting sanctuary is a prayer room.

As we **watch** and **pray** together for the Body of Christ in China, we hope your 2017 will be spiritually fruitful in every way. Let us also pray for the future House of God as seen fulfilled in Isaiah 2:1-3.

"In the last day the mountain of the Lord's temple will be established as the highest of the mountains; it will be exalted above the hills, and all nations will stream to it. Many peoples will come and say, 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the temple of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths.' The law will go out from Zion, the word of the Lord from Jerusalem..." (Isaiah 2:1-3)

 Christina

Ned and Christina Graham

