

COOL CONNECTION

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November, 2012

CHINESE CHRISTIAN WAS TORTURED FOR HELPING OTHER BELIEVERS

By John Evans
Oct 25, 2012

DALLAS (BP) – Shi Weihan dangled from a wall inside a Chinese prison, handcuffed to a hook. His interrogators doused him with frigid water and tormented him with electric shocks.

They pried for information: How many Christian books did he give out? What are the names and phone numbers of the pastors he gave them to?

"During that time, the outside world did not know what was happening to me."

Weihan would not remain anonymous for long. His imprisonment under the Chinese government's religious crackdown – reported extensively by

Baptist Press – would carry him into national publications and be chronicled in detail by the religious freedom monitor ChinaAid.

But Weihan's journey into the ranks of the persecuted faithful began decades ago with no faith at all.

"Growing up in a communist country, I didn't believe in God in that time," Weihan said over the course of several interviews with Baptist Press in October. "I thought it was like a story, not true."

In 1990, a Chinese man named Joshua – the matchmaker who brought Weihan and his wife Zhang Jing together – gave a Bible

to each of them.

"He told me, 'This book is very good. You take it home to look at it,'" Weihan recounted. "Because he was a new believer, he didn't know how to preach Gospel, but he told me, 'It's good. You need a Bible. You need the Gospel.'"

Five years later, at a Christmas party hosted by Joshua, Weihan and his wife placed their faith in Jesus and were baptized the following year.

Over the next decade, Weihan founded a house church called Antioch Victory Church and started the Holy Spirit Trading Co., a Christian publishing house. His company worked to

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Special points of interest:

- Winter Bible Conference is coming in January. Dates 26th-27th. Order books in December
- Good news from Baptist Press page 1, 4, and 5.
- Choir preparing for Christmas and you are needed. Pg. 2

TRUNK-ER-TREAT A SCREAMING SUCCESS!!!!

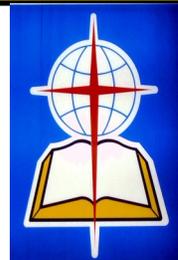
The Youth of our church, with your help, were able to bag up and prepare bags of candy for the children of Coolidge. Over 200 bags, plus a lot of loose candy was distributed to the families of Coolidge. On each bag, our Youth wrote a gospel message. Also handed out

was our Quarterly Tri-fold that gives upcoming events for the next three months and invites families to come and worship the Lord with us.

Strange sights and sounds were heard throughout the night. There was a screeching voice that was

heard.....anybody know where that came from?

This is a great outreach and our church was well represented by our Youth and adults, sharing the love of Jesus by providing safe candy for the children of Coolidge.



PASTOR'S CORNER

A famous hymn asks the question; "How can I say thanks, for the things you have done for me?" The first time I heard Andre Crouch sing that song, I was at the Annual Christmas Party of California Baptist University called the Yule. This was a formal party and I was in my tux. We were up in the mountains at a lodge overlooking Lake Arrowhead, and it was crisp outside with a light dusting of snow all around. As Andre took the stage, he said he had a new song he wanted to share with us. As he so beautifully sang, tears began to well up in my eyes because I felt so thankful for what God was doing in my life. In the last few months God had allowed me to help lead hundreds of people to the Lord in the great revival that had broken out on our campus and surrounding city. We had gone to the University of California at Riverside, and there in the Commons area where free speech is permitted, had led many students to Christ. It was an out-pouring of the Holy Spirit that

continues to this day to have a profound impact on my life. It is why I am praying this November that we, as a church, could experience a true revival like I saw during those great days of 1972.

How does a church prepare for revival? We understand how to conduct a traditional revival where a guest speaker and guest music leader come in for a series of meetings. But I am not talking about a man-made revival. I am



seeking a God sent Holy Spirit led Blood of Christ revival where the Spirit of God breaks out for us in our community and we would see

hundreds coming to Christ in Coolidge. That is the kind of revival for which I am praying.

This month, on Sunday mornings, I am going to be asking the hard questions

about us as a church. What do we, as a church, need to re-focus about what we believe and what we are doing in order that the door would be open for when the Spirit of God descends on our church? What do we need to let go of and what do we need to start?

Many times a pastor who preaches on these things causes some to be upset. Please understand my heart here. I am not saying what we are doing is wrong. All I am saying is that it is wise, as a church and as individuals to go through a season of examination to make sure we are practicing our faith in accordance with the Word of God.

How can I say thanks? I look to the Lord and say thank you best by the way I choose to be obedient to His commands. Let us, as a church and as individuals during this time of Thanksgiving, examine ourselves and see if God wants to change anything about us.

With a heart of Thanksgiving for you,
Pastor Chuck

WHY DO WE SING?

WHY DO WE SING?

"We Praise Thee, O God" "Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow" "Praise Him, Praise Him" "Let All the World in Every Corner Sing" "Sing Praise to God Who Reigns Above" "Praise the Lord" "O, For a Thousand Tongues to Sing" "I Will Sing of My Redeemer" "We've a Story to Tell" "I Will Sing the Wonderful Story" "He Keeps Me Singing"

This is why we sing. Come and join us

in the choir as we prepare for the Christmas season. Let us join together

"Let us join together to lift our voices in praise and remembrance of the birth of our Savior"

to lift our voices in praise and remembrance of the birth of our Savior. Also,

we have opportunities for you to share a special or to join with one or two others to share. There is also the gathering for gospel singing each fourth Sunday evening. Be sure to attend these events.



PRAYER MINISTRY SCHEDULES FIRST MONTHLY PRAYER

The Prayer Ministry is starting a new ministry of prayer for our church. Each month on a Thursday night, we will have an in home Prayer Cottage. The primary purpose is to have a special time of prayer as a church family. This first cottage is scheduled for November 8th at 6:00 PM at the Compton's home on Bell St.

We have been very busy lately with a lot of prayer requests coming over the

prayer chain. We have seen so many beautiful answers to prayer. Thank you to everyone who helps with this important endeavor of our church.

There is room for more Prayer Team members. Contact Treon and let her know that you want to be a part of the team.



We have two Prayer Chain teams. One uses the telephone and one the internet. Either way we have a place for you to connect and be a part of one of the most thrilling and exciting ministries in our church. God is greatly in the business of answering our prayers, and you can be a part of seeing God move in mighty ways..

TeamKid Planning “shopping spree”

The children are excited about the Christmas play which they will present on Wednesday, December 5. Parts have been assigned, and everyone is practicing the music.

A “shopping spree” is planned for our December 12 meeting of Team Kids. Instead of money, the children will use the points they have earned during the year by memorizing Bible verses, participation, bringing a friend, etc. The Christmas Store will be set up in the back foyer where the children will shop for items to give their parents for Christmas. Several people have made donations of items for the store, but we could use more. **If you have some things you think we might be able to use, please bring to the church soon,** and give them to Deborah, Michelle, Melanie, or Jo Lynn. Thank you for your help.

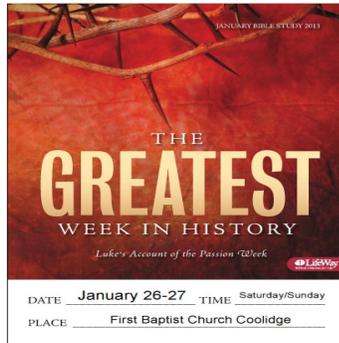
WINTER BIBLE CONFERENCE/ DISCIPLESHIP OPPORTUNITIES

We look forward to the January Bible Study focusing on the “Passion Week” according to Luke. This will cover the last week of Jesus life leading up to his death on the cross. This activity is scheduled for Saturday, January 25 and Sunday, January 26. Mark your calendars now for this study.

Also, if there is a book of the Bible, or a theme, or a special topic that you would like to study, let me or Pastor Chuck know. We could organize these for short studies on specific evenings, or on Saturdays, or, whenever would serve the most people interested. We grow in our faith and spiritual growth when we are in the Word. And, we are most

effective in these studies when we do them together; so, let’s “get to growing!”

Johnnie Mc Clinton,
Minister of Education



LADIES BIBLE STUDY

The Ladies Bible Study offers opportunities for growing in God’s Word, as well as some very sweet fellowship. At present, we are discussing Joyce Meyer’s book, *Managing Your Emotions*, and *Not Letting Your Emotions Manage You*. We meet every Monday from 4:30 – 5:30 p.m. and then once a month, we have a “ladies night out” where we have fellowshiped with one another over dinner, a movie, or a trip out of town.

On November 18th, at 6:00 p.m., we would like to host a church-wide Thanksgiving Dinner. We have had fun planning this event, and hope everyone will come and join us. There will be a

sign-up sheet in the foyer for you to add your name and the number of people in your family that will be eating. We will be passing out fall-colored strips of paper for you to write why you are thankful. These strips will be made into chains and will be used to decorate our tables. Take as many strips as you would like, and return them to the basket in the foyer marked “Thanksgiving” by November 17th.



Operation Christmas Child Report

Operation Christmas Child workers anticipate reaching a milestone this year-sharing the love of Jesus Christ with over 100 million children since the start of the project in 1993. They ask us to pray for God to direct each shoe box gift into the hands of just the right child so that each one will experience His unconditional love and provision. Pray that God will use Operation Christmas Child to bring joy to boys and girls who are facing poverty, sickness, or war. Pray that the boxes will open doors for children to hear the Good News in parts of the world that are typically closed to proclaiming the Gospel. Pray for the children who enroll in The Greatest Journey follow-up discipleship program. Pray that they will come to faith in Jesus and tell their friends and family about the Savior.

Please bring your boxes to the church no later than Sunday, November 11. Don’t forget to include \$7.00 for the cost of shipping and the materials for the child to go through The Greatest Journey discipleship program. The children also love getting a short letter or card in their boxes. Just tell them a little about yourself and that you will pray for them. Please call Jo Lynn if you have any questions.

Books for Winter Bible Conference will go on sale in December. Cost- \$7.00



Menu

Chicken and dressing - Gravy - Mashed potatoes - Sweet Potato Casserole - Green beans - Cranberry Sauce - Rolls - Pecan Pie - Apple Pie - Pumpkin Pie - Buttermilk Pie - Tea - Coffee - Water

News from Baptist Press

(Continued from page 1)

translate Christian books into Chinese and also sold Christian literature with government permission.

But the lack of Christian books and Bibles among many Christians spurred Weihan to give them away to believers across China – without government authorization.

"In America, you can go to a bookstore and find many Christian books, and you can buy a Bible from Walmart," he said. "But in China, you can't find a Bible in a typical bookstore or market. It's not legal."

Giving away the books was risky; a Chinese Christian was sentenced to two years in prison for merely receiving three unauthorized Christian books.

"But our people need the teaching from God," Weihan said. "They need God's Word."

In the early morning hours of Nov. 28, 2007, about 30 police officers swarmed Weihan's home and hauled him away, also raiding the Holy Spirit Trading Co.

The police tortured Weihan as they demanded to know how many books he gave out, the identities of pastors and where he preached the Gospel.

"In that time, I prayed to God, 'I didn't do anything wrong. I'm trying to preach the Gospel. I don't want to do something wrong to my government,'" Weihan recalled.

Police also arrested his wife in front of their daughters, Grace and Lilly. Zhang was released after questioning, but police also took Weihan's younger brother and his wife into custody. Weihan said the police tortured his brother so severely that they caused kidney damage.

Weihan was charged with illegal printing and distribution of Christian literature, but by this time his case had garnered international attention. News of his arrest landed in USA Today, placing an unwelcome spotlight on China as it tried to convince the world ahead of the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing

that it protects religious freedom.

Weihan was released on bail in January 2008 after authorities said there wasn't enough evidence to proceed with the charges, but three policemen kept tabs on him 24 hours a day.

"When we went to my father's home to have dinner, people followed us," Weihan said. "When we went to a friend's home, they followed us too. When we went to the market, they followed us – everywhere."

On March 19, 2008, authorities arrested Weihan once again, charging him with being a "dangerous religious element." Allowed very little communication with his family or attorney, he was forced to sign a confession that he printed and distributed illegal publications. Prison officials initially denied Weihan medication for his diabetes, which Open Doors News (formerly Compass Direct News) said caused severe weight loss that rendered him "unrecognizable."

On June 10, 2009, Weihan was sentenced to three years in prison and fined \$22,000 for illegal business practices. He said his attorney was under house arrest and could not attend the court session.

The sentence included time served since his first arrest, meaning he would have to spend the next year and a half in prison.

"I was not surprised that I was arrested and put in jail, because in Bible times, Jesus was tortured," Weihan said through his daughter Lilly's translation.

During his time in prison, he shared cells with as many as 30 other people, some of them murderers.

"The people in there have no hope," he said. "They are just waiting to die."

Weihan gave them the hope of Jesus, preaching the Gospel to his cellmates and baptizing everyone who believed.

"I told them that Jesus can give them new life," he said.

He also preached to the guards, some of whom turned to Jesus in faith. When Weihan asked for a Bible, a guard gave him one that had been confiscated from a prisoner, and Weihan started a

Bible study in his cell.

"China isn't like America," he said through Lilly. "You can't do prison ministry. Somebody has to actually become a prisoner to preach to them."

Weihan was not the only one who suffered during his imprisonment. His wife was deprived of her husband and his children of their father. His daughters, Lilly and Grace, were told their father was a criminal, that they would never see him again.

Lilly, now 16, recalls how her family began receiving cards and letters from all over the world encouraging them, reminding them that their father was suffering for being faithful to Jesus Christ. One card, written in Chinese characters, simply said, "Your dad is our hero."

"I really would like to thank," Lilly said. "God used them to encourage us and to show us His love."

On Feb. 9, 2011, Weihan was released from prison. Seeing no future for his family in China, where the government continued to spy on him, they were permitted to exit the country and have taken up residence in Dallas, Texas, where Weihan (who now goes by the name "John Stone") and Zhang (who goes by "Sarah") are studying on scholarship at Christ for the Nations Institute.

Weihan asks for prayer that God will use his family to bless others, and that he and his wife will learn English well.

"It is hard to learn another language now, but we still have to do it," he said through Lilly.

Burdened by the countless people in China who have never heard the Gospel, Weihan hopes more Christians will come and preach Christ in his country.

"Please keep praying for my country," he said through Lilly. "Pray for China."

John Evans is a writer in Houston. Get Baptist Press headlines and breaking news on Twitter (@BaptistPress), Facebook (Facebook.com/BaptistPress) and in your email (baptistpress.com/SubscribeBP.asp).

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CP ends year 3% Above Budget; Downturn May Be Reversing

By Staff Oct 1, 2012

NASHVILLE (BP) – The Cooperative Program ended its fiscal year 3 percent over budget and at 99.41 percent of last year's contributions.

Church giving hopefully has dipped as low as it will from the U.S. economic downturn and may be ready to stabilize or climb, Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee President Frank Page said.

"Those who research these things tell us that church giving usually lags one to two years behind the general economy," Page said. "God's people are not immune from the hardships associated with this life. Our Lord reminded us, 'He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust' (Matthew 5:45). It should come as no surprise, then, that church giving has been deeply affected by the nation's four-year recession.

"With that in mind, the Executive Committee sought to achieve a balance between faith and realism when it set this past year's budget," Page said.

The SBC received \$191,678,994.28 in CP gifts during the fiscal year Oct. 1, 2011-Sept. 30, 2012, or \$199,650.88 less than the \$191,878,645.16 received during the last fiscal year. This year's giving is \$5,678,994.28 above the budget goal of \$186,000,000.

"We finished 3 percent ahead of our budgeted goal and only slightly under last year's CP total. This is hallelujah territory! To God be the glory," Page said.

"Based on our approved CP allocation budget goal, IMB will receive 51 percent of the \$5.6 million overage, providing additional resources for reaching the nations with the Gospel. Our other ministry entities will receive their allocated portions of the overage as well, with the overage portion coming to the EC falling to only 2.4 percent."

The CP is a channel of giving, begun in 1925, through which a local church can contribute to the various ministries of its state convention and the missions and ministries of the SBC through a single contribution. Monies include receipts from individuals, churches, state conventions and fellowships for distribution according to the 2011-12 Cooperative Program Allocation Budget.

The budget outlook comes at a time when the SBC is aiming to bolster the Cooperative Program in local churches. For the past two years, Page has challenged Southern Baptist churches to increase their CP contributions by 1 percentage point of their budgets. The "1% Challenge," Page said, would generate an additional \$100 million for Kingdom work.

SBC President Fred Luter Jr. is featured in a series of video messages addressed to state conventions, encouraging support of the 1% Challenge.

"Imagine if we take on the 1% Challenge that's given to us by Dr. Frank Page, that each of our churches would give an additional 1 percent – \$100 million, imagine that," Luter has said. "One percent would equal over \$100 million to do the work that we've been challenged to do through the Great Commission by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

In designated giving, the fiscal year's total of \$190,744,940.28 is 0.59 percent below the previous year's \$191,878,065.75.

The convention-adopted budget is distributed as follows: 50.2 percent to international missions through the International Mission Board, 22.79 percent to North American missions

through the North American Mission Board, 22.16 percent to theological education, 3.2 percent to the SBC operating budget and 1.65 percent to the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission. Because the convention exceeded its annual budget goal of \$186 million, IMB's share goes to 51 percent of the overage in Cooperative Program Allocation Budget receipts. Other ministry entities of the SBC receive their adopted percentage amounts while the SBC operating budget's portion is reduced to 2.4 percent.

Compiled by Diana Chandler, Baptist Press' staff writer. Get Baptist Press headlines and breaking news on Twitter (@BaptistPress), Facebook (Facebook.com/BaptistPress) and in your email (baptistpress.com/SubscribeBP.asp).

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COOPERATIVE PROGRAM
Love In Action

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He Came, We Go!!

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First Baptist Church, Coolidge exists to connect people authentically in faith with the Lord Jesus Christ. His free offer of God's mercy, love, forgiveness, and restoration helps guide all we plan and do. The members of First Baptist Church, Coolidge are the ministers of our church and we serve the Lord in gratitude for all He has done, is doing, and will eternally do on our behalf.

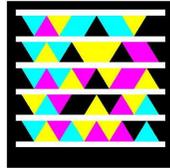
We invite you to consider the offer of God's forgiveness and love, and come learn more about God with us.



Web Page



Student Page



Facebook



November 2012

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

First Baptist Church, Coolidge Theme for November: "Teach Me True Revival O Lord!"				1	2	3
4 Time Change Sunday Normal Services	5 Ladies Bible Study 4:30 PM - Church	6	7 Regular Wed. Services	8 Prayer Cottage @ Compton's	9	10 Ladies Fellowship 9AM at Hullums
11 Operation Christmas Child Last Day to Collect	12 No Ladies Bible Study	13	14 Regular Wed. Services	15	16	17 Ladies Fellowship 9AM at Fellowship Hall
18 Normal Morning services 6PM Thanksgiving Dinner F. Hall	19 No Ladies Bible Study	20	21 No Wednesday Services	22 Thanksgiving	23	24
25 Normal AM Deacons 5:30 Annual Business Conference 6:PM	26 Ladies Bible Study 4:30PM-Church	27 Newsletter Articles Due	28 Regular Wed. Services	29	30	