



East Gates

INTERNATIONAL

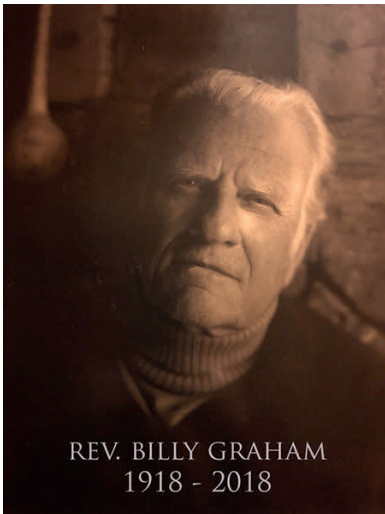
Seeing Beyond the Impossible™

March - April 2018

*D*ear East Gates partners,

We're living in the season of renewal and resurrection! For countless Chinese, however, they still have no awareness of what this truly means. For the top 1% that are wealthy (earn more than US\$100,000/year), they go about their daily lives--eating, drinking and living as if there will always be a tomorrow. For the rest, life is just survival. They're too pragmatic to think about life after death.

When we share with Chinese that they were never meant to die, it evokes interesting responses. One Ph.D student said, "That's not scientific!" Another said, "I guess that makes some sense since there's a reason why I wish I could be immortal. Where does that come from?" One rural peasant said, "Given my life, I wouldn't want to live forever."



For 'Dad,' after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep...

ACTS 13:36

*O*n the early morning of February 21, 2018, at the age of 99, my dad, the late Billy Graham passed away. Since the age of 17, when he dedicated his life to Christ after listening to Dr. Mordecai Ham preach God's Word at a meeting in Charlotte, NC, he knew his ultimate destiny was eternal life. Being mortal and imperfect like everyone else, in time he discovered how ALIVE His God truly was and what His sacrificial death meant for him and all humanity. He knew his calling was to share this profound reality with the rest of the world.

Today, it's hard for seekers and believers to grasp what the sacrificial death of someone in place of another truly means, especially when they're living at a time when there is no sanctity to life. Human trafficking is a 150 billion dollar business, 25 million are trapped in human slavery¹ and there are 125,000 abortions everyday around the globe.² So from a moral perspective, child sacrifice to appease the gods during the time of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob seems banal in comparison. The fact a God would sacrifice His life for you to have eternal life? Impossible! Yet this is the message of Passover and Easter and the message my dad proclaimed around the world for three generations.

¹ <https://www.humanrightsfirst.org/resource/human-trafficking-numbers>

² <http://www.worldometers.info/abortions/>

FOR GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD THAT HE GAVE HIS ONE AND ONLY SON, THAT
WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM SHALL NOT PERISH BUT HAVE ETERNAL LIFE.

~ JOHN 3:16 ~

*F*or all of you who have heard my dad's sermons, John 3:16 was his keynote scripture. Most Christians have it memorized intellectually but how does it truly translate in their lives? It's not a revelation that can be understood overnight, let alone for people who don't know Christ. In this regard, a good testimony comes to mind regarding my dad's relationship with my father-in-law, Professor Benjamin C. Kuo.

I remember the day when both Ben and Margaret were invited to come up the mountain in Montreat, NC, to meet mom and dad. Dad asked me, "So what I should talk about with Ben? I understand he was an electrical engineer at the University of Illinois and that he was born in China." I replied, "Talk with Ben about anything Dad." He responded, "Does he believe in Jesus Christ?" I said, "No. Not yet. From what Christina shared with me, he didn't have the best experience with Christians, especially ones in China, Taiwan or the US in his earlier years so..." Dad got pensive for a bit and then replied, "Well, I'll just love on him."



Ben and Dad, 2001

That afternoon, Dad and Ben talked for hours out on the back porch. Dad learned a lot about China and encouraged Ben to write his autobiography. He even told him that a movie should be made on his life. Ben said, "Oh no Billy, many Chinese have had similar experiences growing up in the war." Dad replied, "Not like yours. I'm going to keep reminding you to write your memoirs until you do!"

A few months later, 9/11 occurred. Christina was visiting her parents in Illinois at the time. She told me her dad didn't go to bed on the early morning of September 15th. He had missed watching the National Prayer Service the day before but heard Dad had given a message at the National Cathedral, so he wanted to hear his response to the tragedy. Ben stayed up until 4:00 am to watch the re-televised event.

Afterwards, Christina shared, "You know what my dad said after he watched the National Prayer Service? He said, 'I like Billy. He wasn't wearing all those religious robes like a lot of the other preachers who were invited to speak at the podium. He was just wearing a formal suit like everyone else. And when it came to answering the question of why could something as evil like 9/11 happen, he gave an honest answer. He said, 'I do not know.' I like that. He didn't try and pontificate on a question really no one can answer. He just explained God's nature. Mommy and I lived through many 9/11s when we were younger.'"

Christina's mom, Margaret, was a Christian from a very young age. Margaret's mother (Christina's grandmother) had an orphanage and remembers saving many orphans during the Chinese-Japanese war. Margaret recounts how over the years she would pray for Ben and that God would heal him from the many wounds of the past. She knew it would take time. She remembers how he would say once in a while, "Margaret, pray for Professor Liu" and she would respond, "God hears from me all the time. Why don't you give him a call. If you do, He'll pick up right away because you're like the prodigal son and God responded quickly for him."

Near the end of Ben's life (1930-2012), Christina remembers distinctly the day he gave his life to the Lord.

For seven years, Ben had been battling with Multiple Myeloma, a rare blood cancer and it was the last day of his chemo treatment at the hospital. Christina was in the room alone with him and he was sharing with her about his China years with tears in his eyes. He told her about the Buddhist goddess of mercy, Guan yin, whom most Chinese are taught to believe in at a very early age. Out of the blue, however, with the little energy he had left, he stated, “But I don’t believe in her. I know who my God is and He has forgiven me of my sins and saved me.” Christina couldn’t believe her ears. She told her mom and she was elated. The next day, Ben was sitting up in his medical bed at home and saying how he wanted to pray for his friend at Stanford. That afternoon, he called his estranged younger sister to make amends. He came to peace about death but just didn’t want to leave the family. Ben went to be with the Lord on June 12, 2012. Ben was an exceptional father-in-law and human being.

For the millions of Chinese and other ethnicities around the world that have gone through what you and I will never go through, they don’t want to be judged. They want to be loved. They don’t want a canned answer. They want honesty and candor. And they don’t want religion. They want faith. When they start to experience all those things, *then* John 3:16 will start to have meaning.

When my dad went to China for the first time on April 22, 1988 to visit mom’s homeland, he not only wanted to bring them John 3:16 but he also wanted to sit at their feet and learn from them. Of course, he had the opportunity to engage with government officials at the highest echelons in Beijing but most importantly, he wanted to fellowship and learn from China’s greatest resource—the common people.

When it came to learning more about China’s growing Christian population, he wanted to meet not only pastors and believers from the government-sanctioned Open churches but most of all from the House churches. In fact, after having arrived in Shanghai, one of his first requests was to meet the well-known House church leader Wang Ming-dao. East Gates’ present Project Director, Brother Zhang was a caregiver for Wang Ming-dao and his wife at the time. Although it was 30 years ago, he remembers Billy and Ruth’s visit as if it were yesterday. We share his testimony.



Mom and dad pay a visit to Wang Ming-dao.
[CW from left]: Billy Graham, Wang Ming-dao, Phillip Teng (translator)
Brother Zhang, Wang Ming-dao’s wife, Ruth Graham.

“The group traveling with Rev. and Mrs. Billy Graham arrived in Shanghai on April 22, 1988. Rev. Billy Graham would be preaching at the largest church in Shanghai, the Methodist Mu-en Church on Sunday, April 24, 1988. Before this major event, however, Rev. Graham wished to meet Wang Ming-dao and have it be one of his first official activities in Shanghai.

On the morning of April 23, 1988, the home of Wang Ming-dao was quiet as usual. The doctor of physiotherapy, Sister Lin, was performing massage and acupressure on Mrs. Wang. Around 10:00 am, someone knocked on the front door. I opened the door and saw Rev. and Mrs. Billy Graham and their four co-workers standing outside. I invited them to come into the living room.

Rev. and Mrs. Billy Graham's schedule was relatively tight. As a result, their visit was brief; but after a nice conversation and before leaving the house, Rev. and Mrs. Billy Graham suggested that everyone quote a Bible scripture to encourage one another. Given my poor English, I could not understand all the scriptures recited but I do remember the scripture Wang Ming-dao quoted. He shared Revelation 2:10 with everyone and it made a deep impression on me.

“Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.” *Revelation 2:10*

Although our meeting was short, I have never forgotten it. Today, Rev. and Mrs. Billy Graham and their co-workers are all resting in the Lord's arms but each one has shown me what it means to be 'faithful until death.'” ~ Brother Zhang

When it came to China, mom and dad showed us what it meant to love beyond labels and religious boundaries. To this day, however, there still seems to be a clear demarcation between the Open and House churches. Oftentimes, believers from one group will not worship or fellowship with the other. It's a complicated issue but like denominations in the West that seem to divide versus unify, the same can be said in China. Mom and dad always saw beyond those nomenclatures and viewed themselves and each Chinese as a sinner saved by God's grace. East Gates' perspective is the same.

Over the past 25 years, the Lord has used East Gates to distribute over 4.5 million Bibles legally to Open AND House church believers. Our ministry was given its name, East Gates, by a few well-known House church pastors. We train in all venues because for us, every Chinese, despite their church affiliation is God's child.

When we're asked, "How many Chinese Christians are there in China?" Our immediate answer is, "How many Christians are there in the US?" The response is, "Hmm. That's a good question." We then point them to II Timothy 2:19-21.

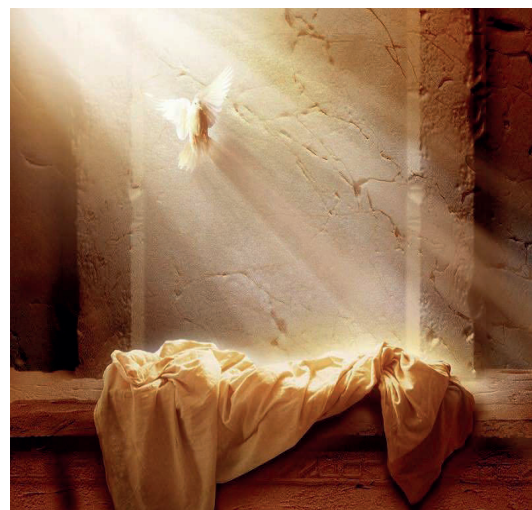
"Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: 'The Lord knows those who are His,' and, 'Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.' But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor. Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work."

May we always be about God's ministry of reconciliation instead of condemnation (II Corinthians 5:11-21). East Gates has always and will continue to walk this path when serving our brothers and sisters in China.

 Christina

Ned and Christina Graham

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THAT THEY MAY ALL BE ONE;
EVEN AS YOU, FATHER, ARE IN
ME AND I IN YOU, THAT THEY
ALSO MAY BE IN US, SO THAT
THE WORLD MAY BELIEVE
THAT YOU SENT ME.

~ JOHN 17:21 ~