

# Hearts of Love

*Tom & Debbie Tillman "to touch the world for Jesus Christ"*

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*Hearts of Love is a non-profit ministry, dedicated to spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ whenever and wherever we find open doors. Our first priority is to glorify God and lead whomever possible to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Please pray for us faithfully. We need your prayer, and we appreciate it more than we could ever say. Please consider us an extension of your ministry in this world, and support us with your prayer as such.*

***May God richly  
bless you!***

*Tom & Debbie*

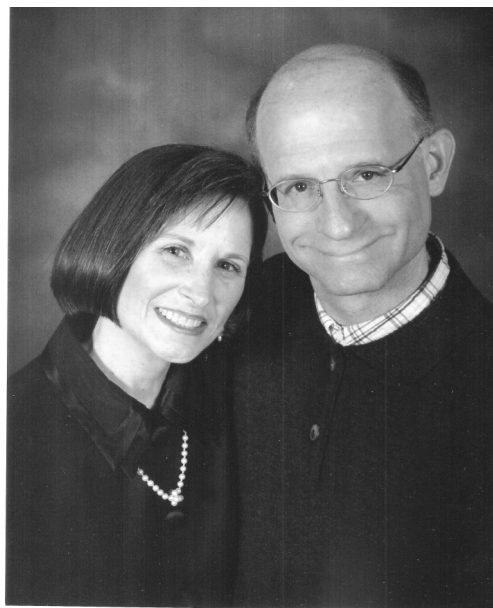
## ***Safely Home***

**W**e made it home, well... not really home... we won't truly be home until that glorious day, very soon, when the Lord Jesus Christ returns for us, in the clouds, and calls us up to Himself as we meet Him in the air; we will see Him as He is and we will be like Him. We will be changed in an instant, in the twinkling of an eye. He will take us back to the special place that He has prepared for us and then we will finally be home. But until then, we all want to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which we've been called, knowing that we will soon stand before Him and give account of what we have done while in these mortal bodies He gave us to use.

One of the ways we have sought to glorify Him is in trying to be faithful to what He has called us to do through the taking of Bibles into China for the hidden, persecuted Church in that very dark and deceived nation.

This trip to Hong Kong and China was a little more 'interesting' than usual. We've been going to Hong Kong to carry Bibles into China for 25 years; this was our fourteenth trip. Usually we stay in Hong Kong for two to three weeks and daily cross the border into Red China, each carrying a load of 20-40 Bibles, depending on the size and type of Bible we carry on any particular day.

Before we went this time, we knew from reading various news sights that security and surveillance is becoming increasingly tight in China where CCTV cameras are everywhere... hundreds of millions of them; facial recognition surveillance is being perfected in China which will later be spread around the world in preparation for the



*He has committed to  
us the word of  
Reconciliation.  
Therefore, we are  
Ambassadors for Christ.  
2 Corinthians 5:19,20*

coming of Antichrist and his required 'Mark of the Beast' without which no one will be able to buy, sell or conduct any kind of social or commercial intercourse whatsoever. For that kind of complete control to be possible, security and universal surveillance will be indispensable.

In addition to highly intrusive surveillance, Chinese citizens are also being offered monetary rewards of up to \$1500 to report and betray their neighbors whom they see being involved in any 'underground' Christian activity so it is very important that we don't draw any attention to any Christians inside China, that we don't meet with underground groups or even make contact with them; we never know when we are being followed either by a person or by cameras while inside China.

Our first two crossings into China this time, with Bibles, were successful but they were also different than ever before in that, each time we crossed into China, we were finger printed and our faces were carefully recorded onto facial recognition software. Those

procedures were new since our last trip 18 months ago.

The third time in, we were instructed to arrive at the border at an undesirable time of day; there was almost no one else crossing. Usually there are hundreds or even thousands crossing with us, and we are more easily able to melt into the crowd and escape detection by busy and overworked police; we have never before arrived at the border to find it so devoid of people as it was this particular time.

The immigration guard who was checking passports was immediately suspicious when she saw that we had crossed the border two days before but had spent less than an hour inside China. She called over another guard who escorted Debbie somewhere down into the bowels of the bureaucracy; I was concerned because I didn't now where they were taking her; I was completely out of control of the entire situation. All I could do is pray for her and for myself but I soon found out where she had been taken. Usually when going through Chinese Customs, we try to

separate into different lines at the border so as not to draw any attention to each other in case there is a problem. This time there was only one line open for 'foreigners' and we were the only ones in the line. As soon as I was standing before the same guard, she quickly called over another guard who escorted me to the same place Debbie was being held; we were very grateful to be together.

The one who seemed to be really in charge of things, dressed in 'civilian' clothing, perhaps an undercover guy, told us to empty everything out, even Debbie's purse and my vest, both of which also had Bibles, of course. After they were certain they had all our contraband, (and they did!), several of them photographed everything and us; there were about a dozen guards of differing ranks involved in this *seemingly significant* bust.

The reason this Bible confiscation may have seemed to them like such a noteworthy 'capture' is that the ministry we have worked with in Hong Kong for 25 years is now about the only one trying to get Bibles into China using 'couriers' like us, and apparently we are among the last people coming to work with them as Bible couriers before surveillance is so tight that it becomes impossible.

God's Peace enveloped us as they kept us for three hours, not allowing us to have any water or to go to the bathroom. They confiscated our phones for over an hour; they doubtless scanned them and our contacts and photos, and we don't know if they planted some kind of surveillance program or tracking software in them. We were most concerned that they might cancel our ten-year Chinese Visas. (We were thinking of buying new phones anyway as ours are pretty old now.)

While they were keeping guard over us, we softly sang worship songs (not exactly like Paul and Silas in the Philippian jail but it sort of seemed like it at the time) and we prayed for the

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guards who *appeared* to be thwarting God's will. I say they only 'seemed' to be thwarting God's will because God's will cannot be thwarted; He is always in complete control and His will is always being accomplished. Those confiscated Bibles are **His Word**, the destination of which was somewhere that He had planned but which was different than we or the Hong Kong ministry had planned. He said that His Word would always go forth and accomplish the purpose for which He had sent it, that it would never return to Him 'void.' God is busy placing those 50 or so Bibles into places which they never would have gone without His stepping in and changing our plans for us.

One of the unplanned places to which one of those Bibles was destined was, we hope, into the pocket of the guard who had the most interaction with us; his name is Ho. He is the one who spoke English far better than we could ever speak Chinese. He was stern and even gruff but he was never mean or cruel. We told him that he should really read this book, that his eternity depended on it. We offered one of them to him but of course, with all the cameras and other guards watching, he had to refuse but the Bibles were small enough that he could have later 'released' one of them into his pocket.

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He chastened us and told us we must not do this again saying, 'our' Bibles are illegal. 'Freedom of religion' obviously is not true in China as evidenced by the fact that countless Christians, pastors and otherwise, are routinely arrested, imprisoned and even martyred for their faith.

When they were finished intimidating us, as well as finishing with our phones and with photographing us and all our belongings, Ho told us that we would be released and asked whether we wanted to go on into China or would rather return to Hong Kong. We both said, 'Hong Kong, please.' (Whew!!)

He led us back through gates and hallways, took us back to the long, 200 yard 'no man's land' that everyone crosses when entering or leaving China and finally instructed us to go backward, against the foot traffic, the wrong way, back to where we would find Hong Kong border guards who were much friendlier. We said, 'Thank you and goodbye,' and then he said, 'God bless you.' We were very

surprised to hear that! He may have been just repeating something he had heard or maybe Ho is already a secret Christian and he was just then letting us know that. Either way, we continue to pray for him by name and we expect to see him one day soon, in Heaven.

After that 'incident,' we did make another crossing into China to 'test the waters.' Since we didn't have any problem going or coming that last time, we feel confident that we will be able to return next Spring to try again if, that is, God so leads us. It very well may be that after another year, the wall of security in and out of the country might be so perfected that what we have done for 25 years will no longer even be possible... we shall see.

Thank you for your prayer; it is the most valuable thing you could ever do for us. Pray for Ho's salvation and his family as well as the other ten guards who held us.

The Word of God is not imprisoned.  
2Tim 2:9

***You can touch the World for Jesus Christ... Please partner with us in these last days.***  
***The Harvest is Great, but the laborers are few.*** Matt 9:38

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