

China According to Patty, Part III

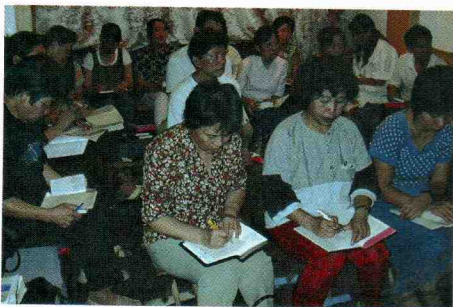


Chinese laundry

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the extremely wealthy have clothes dryers – but even they live in what we would call apartments. I did not see even one stand-alone, single-family home anywhere.

Compared to America where we buy in bulk and enjoy large homes with large rooms on large pieces of land, in the part of China I visited, everything is small. Cars and taxis are narrow, kitchen cabinets are tiny, bathrooms are small with no tubs or shower stalls (the shower just sprays onto the floor), bread comes in packages of six slices, and Bibles are not much bigger than my hand. However, the hearts of the Chinese believers are absolutely on fire for God, and they are eagerly sharing the Gospel with their families, friends, and even strangers whom God brings across their paths. They sit for *hours* to hear Bible teaching and its practical applications; then within days, they share their new knowledge with someone else.



Believers studying the Bible

Our friends there shame me with their total commitment to Jesus – their willingness to give everything, do anything, and go anywhere, with no thought of their own comfort or convenience – just to bring one more person into the kingdom of God. And they do it all in a society where the freedoms we take for granted (praising God with loud voices and instruments, not worrying about who saw a guest enter our home, allowing more than thirty people to attend a church service) are only dreams.

For eleven days, I fumbled with Chinese phrases, huffed and puffed up lots of stairs, and slept quite soundly on a mattress that could only be described as a well-padded board. I ate many things I couldn't identify and one very tiny octopus that I could. [True confession: Despite that scripture about eating what is set before you, I politely but firmly refused the giant slugs that spent one fancy dinner squirming around on a serving plate in front of me.] I learned to slurp my soup (no spoon needed), squeeze the bathroom floor after my shower, use a public squatty potty, and take my shoes off when entering a home. I spent eleven days with a family who has no oven, no carpet, no dishwasher, no closets, no central heat and air, and no car. Their five-room "house" is a mansion to their peers.

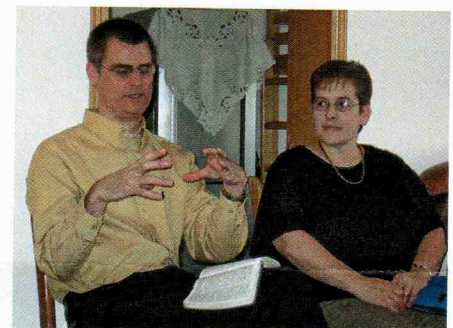
I watched thirty people pile into this house for a baptism. They covered their wood floors with plastic and towels, inflated a four foot by six foot swimming pool in

the living room, filled it with water, and baptized 15 new believers (including a married couple in their *eighties*). Then, in just over an hour, they drained the pool by bucket brigade into in the kitchen sink, cleaned up all the mess, dried the pool and hid it in a small box, and returned the living room to its normal lovely state.



Living room baptism

Aside from the damp-haired folks leaving discreetly every few minutes in twos and threes, no one would ever guess that a baptism had occurred there. That was only one example – there were many - of how Chinese believers are working quickly and quietly "under the radar" to do God's business "while it is day." I stood amazed.



Scott and Patty teaching together at Cornerstone East

I'm still amazed. I went to the other side of the world and I was truly impacted. I laughed and cried and agonized and rejoiced with people who are really just like me, but who live in a place that is as indescribably different from Walnut Shade as it could possibly be. I'm really glad I went, I'm really glad to be home, and for the first time in my life, I'm really good with chopsticks. ☺