Preface

There is only one house that will stand in the coming storm, and only one people who will not be swept away in a flood of last-day deception. There is only one temple that God will fill with His indescribable glory, and only one lighthouse that will forever shine as a pure testimony of God’s saving grace. There is only one kingdom that can never be shaken, and only one ark that will be spared in the sudden outpouring of God’s righteous judgment. There is only one Bride for the Bridegroom; there is only one, called to the marriage supper of the Lamb.

This one and only is the beloved Church of the Lord Jesus Christ. She is the apple of His eye. This is His body and this is His Bride. This is what Christ has promised to build: “I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.”

The book you are now reading is a clarion call to return to the Lordship of Jesus Christ and to join Him in building the Church He started on the day of Pentecost when He sent the promise of His Holy Spirit. The time of pressure and persecution that is coming worldwide will be such that it will demand the unity of the true body of Christ. For in the Gospel of Matthew it is declared by our Lord: “Then
they will deliver you up to oppression, and will kill you. You will be hated by all of the nations for My Name’s sake.”¹¹ This truth of persecution is Biblical and repeated often in the Scriptures.¹²

In 2 Timothy it says: “Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.”¹³ Western Christianity as an example, more often than not, finds Christians living so much like the fallen world around them¹⁴ that there is no need to persecute them. It is estimated that only 3-5% of Christians witness in North America. The salt has lost its flavor.¹⁵

Many anonymous contributors to this volume believe that persecution is coming to many countries that have had little or none in its history. One editor had a sense of impending sudden persecution upon North America while watching a video of the 2004 tsunami that hit Indonesia: “The video showed the Tsunami spreading to different regions, hitting the shores of heavily populated areas. What struck me was the complacency of the people in the different areas, even the amusement of it all. At one beach they see a white crescent on the distant horizon spreading across the entire large bay. People watch mesmerized as this white crescent comes nearer and nearer. When the wave swallows up two ships in the bay some of the watchers realize the magnitude of the event that is about to strike but for most it is too late. In another shoreline people smile and laugh in amusement as the entire bay is emptied of water and ships are beached.
It begins as a spectacle that is full of fun and amusement as people take pictures. As the water came back in they considered it something fun to watch. When the wave struck that shoreline, many were caught unawares; their running was in vain and multitudes were screaming as they were swallowed in the waves and dragged back out to sea, never to return. As I watched the video a great sobriety came over me—not just over the deaths of so many people—of what is about to come upon the Christians of the world, with some of us not being aware of the times we are living in. Many of us do not believe this could be the end of time. Just as the tsunami came without warning, so will the end times persecution come upon many Christians unawares."

Another Editor of this volume relates his belief of coming certain persecution: "Many Christians, if they stand strong for the Lord Jesus will be beheaded for their witness. Some have been beheaded already in Middle Eastern countries and in past persecutions. If we think of nations where beheadings take place today we realize that they are Muslim nations. We should love Muslim people because the Bible exhorts us to love our enemies. However, we must not accept their faith. God says to love all sinners but we need not love their sin. The Muslim faith is built on Muhammad the prophet, and Allah who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as the Son of God and as the Messiah. God opened up heaven and spoke to us by way of a voice to give us a sign to show us who His Son is that we might believe only in Him. In the Gospel of Matthew it
states: ‘As soon as Jesus was baptized, He went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on Him. And a voice from heaven said, ‘This is My Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased.’’

God’s ways are not man’s ways. God is doing a new thing across the world. Traditional models of Church are older wineskins that are bursting as God is pouring out new wine in the movement of His Holy Spirit. House Church planting movements are occurring all over the world it is estimated there are millions of new house Churches started in just the last 30-40 years. Countries such as China where Christianity was being extinguished are now experiencing such a great revival that some estimate the Church currently to be at over 100 million believers. Hallelujah!

The Scriptures declare that the “Good News of the Kingdom will be preached in the whole world for a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come.” This preaching and spreading of the Gospel will be done not by the ingenuity of men, but by the working of the Spirit of God. God is raising many servant leaders to shepherd His Church in these end times. Yet, most will not be men of renown or of prestige. God is raising up many obscure godly servants—who share the Spirit of the True Shepherd—to call for the gathering of His body in our day.
In the world there is fear, anxiety and turmoil yet God always has a plan that is full of hope and His love. Peace that passes understanding\textsuperscript{21} will mark the body of Christ in the last days. Nothing the enemy is doing in the world will be able to stop God’s work of adopting many into the kingdom of light.\textsuperscript{22} Hundreds of millions have never still heard the Name of Jesus Christ, they can only be reached as we submit to God’s end time plan. Billions are deceived by the world’s religions that give them no true peace or everlasting life. The day is coming soon when no man can work.\textsuperscript{23} We must enter into the Lord’s work while there still is time.

With over 30,000 registered denominations worldwide, the true members of the body of Christ are scattered abroad and divided into many different groups, in many cases over nonessential doctrines. We are in need of unified\textsuperscript{24} fellowships of brothers and sisters to meet under Christ’s Lordship. There is a need for brothers and sisters to come together to meet under Christ’s Headship and to obey Christ’s call to discipleship and evangelization of the world.\textsuperscript{25} The name the Lord gave us for this burden is \textit{Gospel Fellowships}. You are free to use that term to associate what God is doing in your area in response to this book. We have included in the \textit{Appendix} of this volume a statement of faith adopted by some of the largest Chinese house Churches. We believe this
statement of faith will provide a means of greater unity in the body of Christ world-wide.

Jesus Christ is coming back for a unified Church. A holy Church. An uncompromising Church. A Church that is full of love for each other and for the lost world. May we begin to be an expression of such a Church for the Lamb that was slain. He deserves the reward of His sufferings.

May God Himself unify the people of God by His Spirit for encouragement and strengthening in these last days. May God stir up the burning hearts of disciples who love Jesus Christ more than their own lives! May the Lord bring them together as one so that the fire burns hotter and the light shines even brighter! The whole earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of The Lord, even as the waters cover the sea! May we be found ready when He suddenly returns for His Bride!

Father, we desire to see Your Son glorified and lifted up in our midst. We are everyday humbled to be children of Yours and to be a part of Your body, the Church. We are tired of seeing what men can do in Your Name, and our heart is to see You do a fresh work of Your Spirit to allow many more to become disciples of Jesus Christ. Please Lord, breathe upon Your servants, give us renewed commitment to carry the cross and follow You in the narrow way that leads to life. May we be full of Your love by the Holy Spirit for others and look for a wonderful end times expansion of Your kingdom into the entire
world. We ask that You would do these things and much more for the glory of Your holy Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.