

*Acts:  
A Christ-Centered, Spirit-Empowered,  
Multiethnic Church On Mission*



Sunday, February 2, 2025

*The Full Complement of Witnesses*

# "The One Who Got His Fingernails Taken"

By Todd Nettleton

The Christians in China no longer refer to him by name. He has become simply, "the one who got his fingernails taken." In this article we will call him "Ling."

Having watched and tracked his Christian activities, police and Public Security Bureau (PSB) officers raided the home of this dear Christian brother. When officers entered the home, they found ample amounts of contraband: Bibles, Christian literature, *He Lived Among Us* Gospel storybooks, Christian video discs and other materials. But what was more troubling in their eyes than the large stash of Christian materials was the evidence it provided: The materials were being produced *inside* China, not brought in from the outside.



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Ling was surrounded, but he was not afraid. The questions kept coming, the voices growing louder and more stringent, and he sat silently, refusing to provide any information that would lead the officers to his Christian co-workers.

His silence did not satisfy them; they demanded answers. He continued to refuse. They placed his hand on a table and held it down. One by one his fingernails were pulled out—all 10 of them.

Even in the agony of his physical pain, this brave brother would not deny his Father, and he would not betray his brothers and sisters. The year was 2001. He was forced to spend three years in a "re-education through labor" camp, beaten and burned with cigarettes, yet he still refused to deny his faith. Late in 2004, he was released. The "re-education" efforts had failed.

Almost immediately, Ling was back at the gospel work. One of his first projects was helping to distribute a book of testimonies of Christians persecuted for their faith, *Extreme Devotion*, written by VOM.

When the title of the book was translated, the Chinese characters brought out the truth of the stories. For the word *devotion*, the translators combined two Chinese characters: one meaning *belief* and the other meaning *offering*.

Belief is important, but devotion comes when you

believe so strongly you are willing to offer something, to sacrifice your time, your livelihood or even your fingernails. Our brothers and sisters in China are living out this extreme devotion—this extreme belief offering—each day. They are harassed, arrested, beaten, fired from their jobs, locked in labor camps and sometimes even killed for their devotion, yet they continue to offer themselves in Kingdom service.



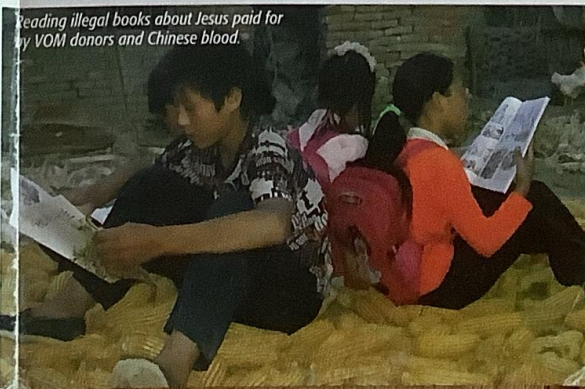
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testimonies and the knowledge reminding them they are not alone in their suffering.

We are aiding the families of those in prison. We are helping provide training and literature for pastors. We are advocating on their behalf. Some Christians in America believe it is wrong for the Chinese to disobey their government. They claim Chinese Christians should not print "illegal literature." Our nation was founded by the English who fled a nation where they had been strangled, drowned and burned at the stake for possessing a page of the Bible. The English worshipped secretly in barns and fields, pursued by a state church backed by English soldiers/police. (Read about William Tyndale and John Bunyan.)

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*Reading illegal books about Jesus paid for by VOM donors and Chinese blood.*



# Luke

1. A reliable historian
2. A good theologian



## Context Acts 1:6-7

[6] So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” [7] He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority.

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1. The Power to Witness
2. The Scope of the Witness
3. The Message of the Witness

# 1. The Power to Witness - Acts 1:8a

[8] But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

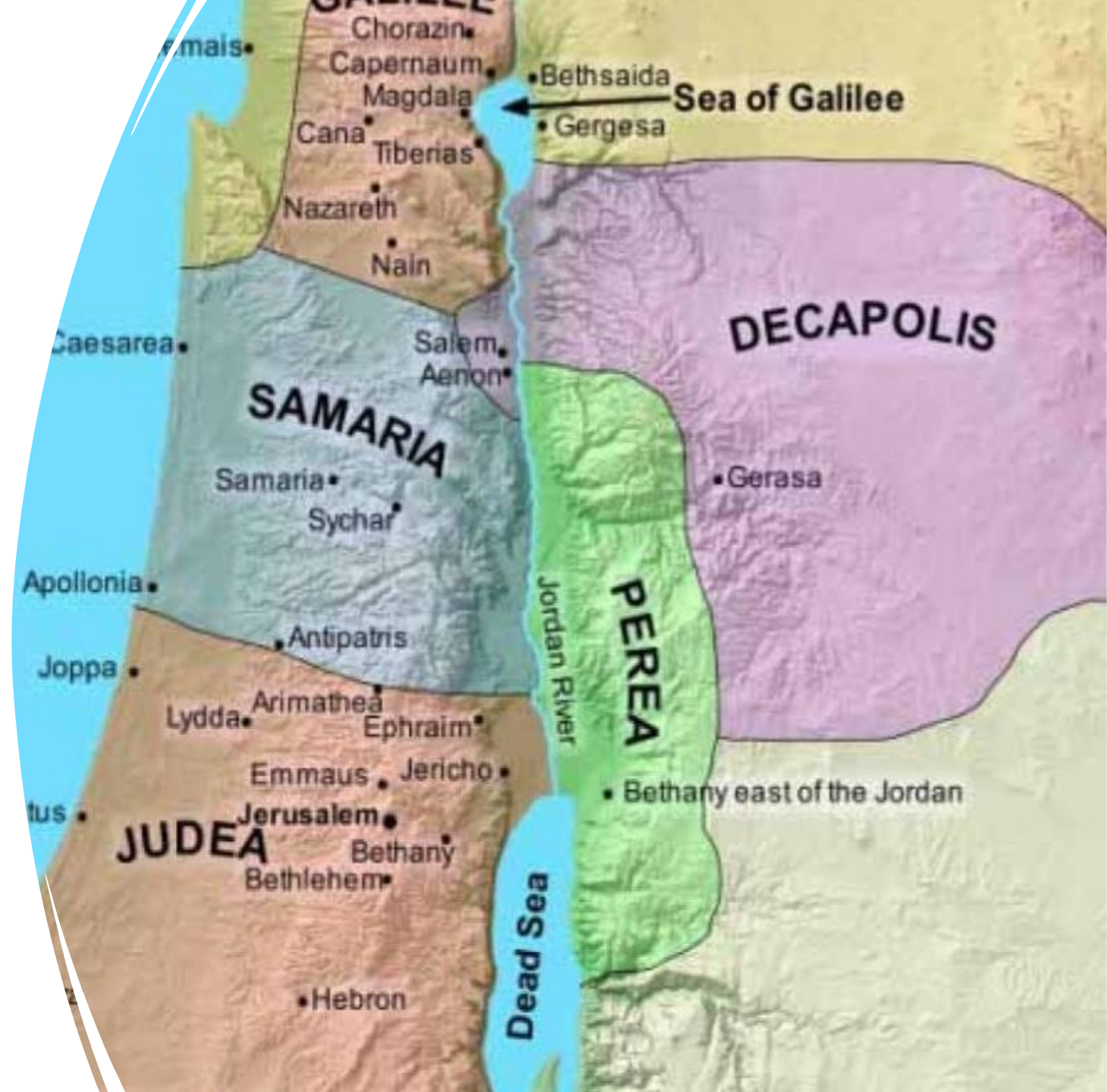
## 2. The Scope of the Witness - Acts 1:8b

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# Acts 1:8 – Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, to the ends of the earth.

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- Troy and regional area
- The USA common language and culture
- Crossing cultural, linguistic, and religious barriers in the USA
- Peoples outside USA with little or no access to the Gospel

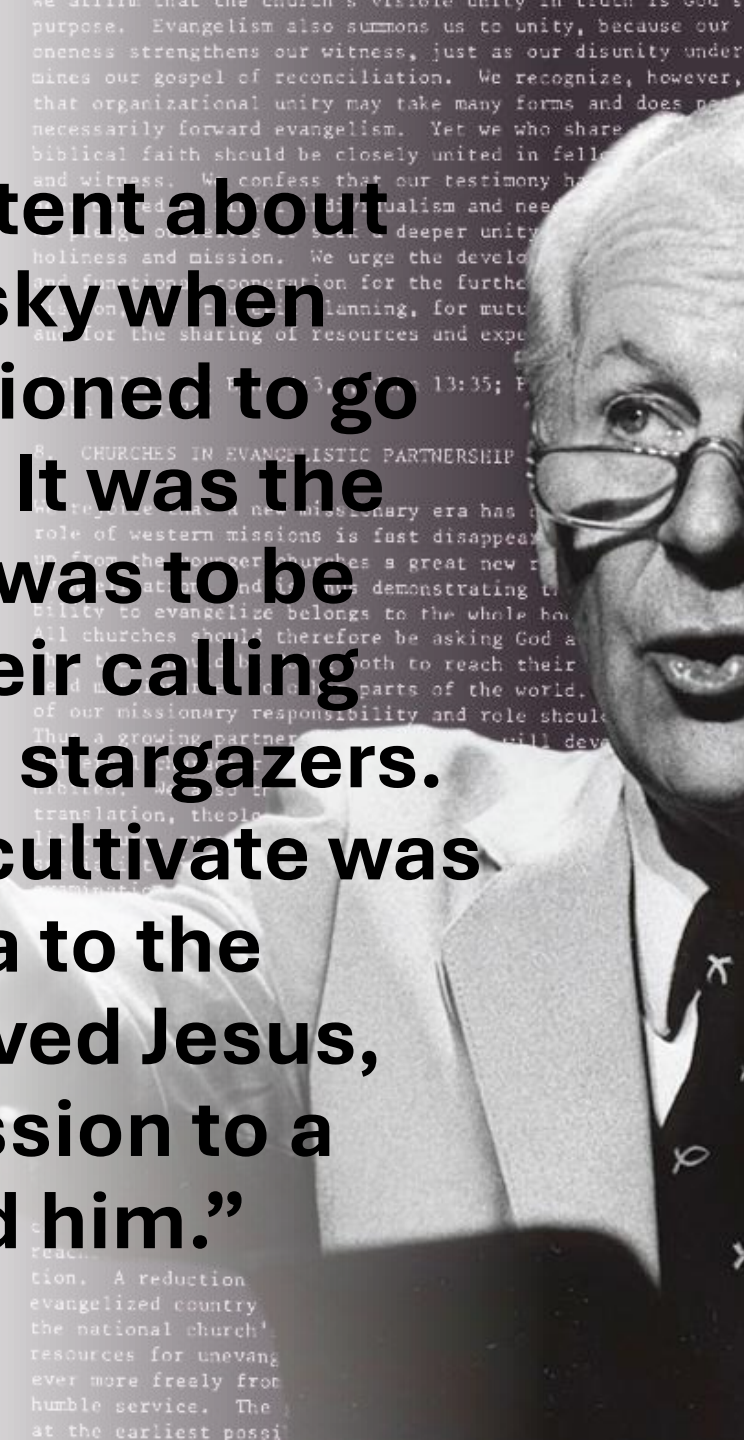




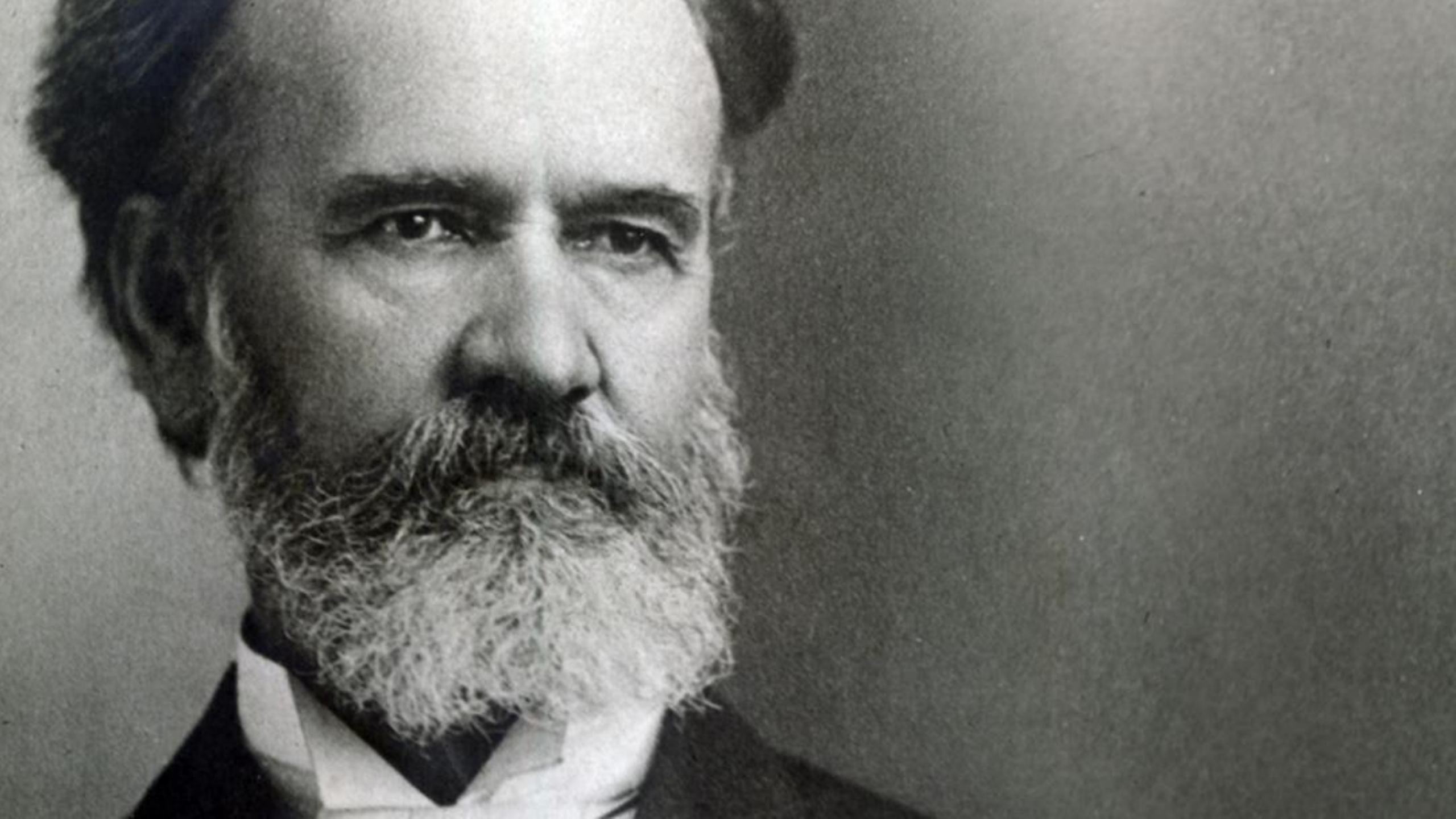
## 2. The Message of the Witness Part 1 - Acts 9-11

[9] And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. [10] And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, [11] and said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”

**“There was something fundamentally inconsistent about their gazing up into the sky when they had been commissioned to go to the ends of the earth. It was the earth not the sky which was to be their preoccupation. Their calling was to be witnesses not stargazers. The vision they were to cultivate was not upwards in nostalgia to the heaven which had received Jesus, but outwards in compassion to a lost world which needed him.”**



statistics or even dishonest in our use of them. All th  
worldly. The church must be in the world; the world mus  
be in the church.  
(Eph. 6:12; II Cor. 4:3,4; Eph. 6:11,13-18; II Cor 10:3-5  
John 2:18-26, 4:1-3; Gal. 1:6-9; II Cor. 2:17, 4:2;  
17:15)  
FREEDOM AND PERSECUTION  
God-appointed duty of every government to secu  
of peace, justice and liberty in which the  
1, serve the Lord Christ, and preach the gosp  
ference. We therefore pray for the leaders  
ons and call upon them to guarantee freedom o  
conscience, and freedom to practise and  
eligion in accordance with the will of God an  
h in The Universal Declaration of Human Right  
ness our deep concern for all who have been u  
and especially for our brethren who are suff  
timony to the Lord Jesus. We promise to pr  
ir freedom. At the same time we refuse to b  
y their fate. God helping us, we too will se  
nst injustice and to remain faithful to the go  
r the cost. We do not forget the warnings of Jes  
persecution is inevitable.  
m. 1:1-4; Acts 4:19, 5:29; Col. 3:24; Heb. 13:1-3;  
4:18; Gal. 5:11, 6:12; Matt. 5:10-12; John 15:18-2  
POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT  
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## 2. The Message of the Witness Part 2 - Acts 12-26

[12] Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away.

[13] And when they had entered, they went up to the upper room, where they were staying, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot and Judas the son of James. [14]

All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers. [15] In those days Peter stood up among the brothers (the company of persons was in all about 120) and said,

## 2. The Message of the Witness Part 2 - Acts 12-26

[16] “Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus. [17] For he was numbered among us and was allotted his share in this ministry.” [18] (Now this man acquired a field with the reward of his wickedness, and falling headlong he burst open in the middle and all his bowels gushed out. [19] And it became known to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the field was called in their own language Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood.) [20] “For it is written in the Book of Psalms, “May his camp become desolate, and let there be no one to dwell in it”; and “Let another take his office.’

## 2. The Message of the Witness Part 2 - Acts 12-26

[21] So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, [22] beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us—one of these men must become with us a witness to his resurrection.” [23] And they put forward two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also called Justus, and Matthias. [24] And they prayed and said, “You, Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which one of these two you have chosen [25] to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place.” [26] And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

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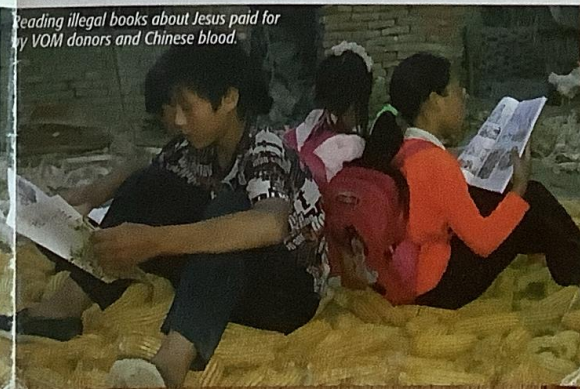
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“The Christian Church, according to Acts, is 1) a missionary church that responds obediently to Jesus’ commission, 2) acts on Jesus’ behalf in the extension of His ministry, 3) focuses its proclamation of the kingdom of God in its witness to Jesus, 4) is guided and empowered by the very same Spirit that directed and supported Jesus’ ministry, and 5) follows a program whose guidelines for outreach have been set by Jesus himself.”

