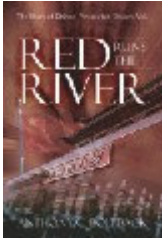
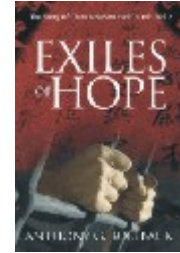


The Story of China's Persecuted Church **Red Runs The River (Vol. 1) and Exiles of Hope (Vol. 2)**



[Read the Forward of Red Runs the River by](#)

Dr. Thomas H. Stebbins,
Former Executive Director
International Evangelism Explosion
Fort Lauderdale, Florida



The amazing, true events that are taking place in China are woven into this story, and cause you to sense that The Book of Acts is not just a first century account of the workings of the Holy Spirit. You will see God at work today in the lives of characters like Anching and Meiling and several pastors who are real people known to the author from his 24 years in China and Hong Kong.

Through the horrors of war and intense and almost unbelievable persecution for their faith in Christ, the characters in this novel display enduring perseverance and courage. The underlying truth of each episode makes this book much more than mere fiction. It is the gripping story of real people who would not recant their faith despite the most traumatizing conditions.

These are unforgettable, authentic, historical novels; revealing the horrific intensity of the persecution suffered by Christians in China since 1949. Based on personal experience and first-hand knowledge, the author weaves an intriguing story of two committed young people who will not give up their faith in Christ even though it cost them dearly. Imprisoned, tortured, cruelly beaten for their faith, they cling to the promises of God during some of the darkest hours in China's history. At the time they are torn apart by the war, Anching makes a promise that he will find Meiling again even if it takes the rest of his life. Follow both of them through years of struggle, unbelievable suffering for the cause of Christ, and an intense determination against all odds to find each other again.

Red Runs The River

[Pricing and Ordering Information](#)

[Forward by Dr. Tom Stebbins](#)

[Introduction by AG Bollback](#)

[Interview with Jeremy Reynolds of ASSIST News Service and the author, AG Bollback.](#)

Exiles Of Hope

Now Available!!

[Pricing and Ordering Information](#)

Introduction by AG Bollback

[Review By Michael Ireland Chief Correspondent, ASSIST News Service](#)

Chapter One: SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Copyrighted by Anthony G Bollback

The dark, ominous clouds of civil war drifted over Central China at the close of World War II as the Communist army of Mao Zedong relentlessly crept south. Fear clutched at the hearts of young and old alike as they anxiously watched the fierce struggle for the mind of the nation.

A sense of helplessness enveloped them, as it seemed one Chinese army was as bad as the other. The soldiers of Chiang Kai-shek, commander of the Nationalist army, were often cruel and heartless, and frequently confiscated the last ounce of rice the people had. On the other hand, the Chinese Communist army promised conditions would be different once they gained control. Everyone's rice bowl would be full, and that sounded good to desperate people. Still, disturbing and persistent reports drifting south, carried on the lips of fleeing refugees, told a story of unbearable hardships and even death to those who opposed Mao's troops.

Puyang is a quiet little suburb of Wuchang, one of the three major cities in the great industrial triangle of Wuhan. It lies on the south side of the mighty Yangtze River while Hankou and Hangyang are on the north side. Life moved at a leisure pace in Puyang, as it had for centuries, and most people believed it would never change. Under the able supervision of Mr. Woo, a Columbia University graduate, his high school offered students the best education available in the region.

Sitting in his office, he thought, *If only the times were more peaceful and this ugly war was far away. Perhaps Puyang would remain peaceful and I would live long enough to see my children marry, and have many grandsons.* Suddenly, his thoughts were interrupted by raucous shouting in the street. Hurrying to the window, he looked out on a scene that sent shivers up his spine. A large group of angry students from the nearby university were parading past the school, banners waving, shouting anti-government slogans.

Several weeks passed without further incident, but then one day, as school was being dismissed, a crowd of noisy students suddenly appeared, rushing toward the school. Principal Woo's daughter, Meiling and her friends, were just leaving the school grounds when the crowd burst on the scene. Surprised by the suddenness of the demonstrators, she and her friends backed away, but not before she spied the brother of one of her friends in the group of shouting students. "There's your brother," she said. "He's leading the group in a Mao chant."

Her friend looked shocked, and then slowly replied, "I didn't know he was involved in the student uprising." She said in surprise, "But he has been acting strange lately and he always is talking politics."

As the girls attempted to hide behind other students, the brother caught sight of them. Pointing his finger at them, he shouted, "There she is. Meiling, the daughter of the principal of this school who is a lackey of the government."

Everyone riveted their eyes on Meiling and her friends as they vainly tried to hide. It was as if a knife had sliced through the crowd as they quickly separated from the girls. There they stood, exposed and embarrassed, and trembling with apprehension. The brother harangued the crowd about the rich principal who was oppressing the masses and leading them astray with his old-fashioned philosophies of education and life.

The crowd surged toward the girls as they stood exposed and forsaken. Too late. There was nowhere to turn. The brother rushed toward his sister, shouting,

"Go home and do your kitchen work. Leave this enemy of our state or I will punish you severely."

In the melee that followed, Meiling's books were knocked from her hands and scattered under the trampling feet of the college ruffians. Anching, a senior high school student from one of the poorest homes in the community, watched with dismay as the crowd roughed up Meiling who now wept openly as she stood, humiliated and afraid. For almost a year since he had been admitted to this private school on a scholarship, he had observed this beautiful girl with the flashing eyes and the swinging braids of shiny black hair. She was an outstanding athlete and captain of the volleyball team. Whenever opportunity arose, he lingered near the court to catch a glimpse of her as she played with so much enthusiasm and skill, always leading the team with magnificent plays that made them winners on most occasions. Although they were not in the same social class, he treasured every moment when he glimpsed her passing in the halls or on the playing field. No question about it. He was attracted to this lovely girl, but he moved in different circles. There was a great gulf between them. She was from the elite of the town, poised, and beautiful, but unaware that he even existed. He hated the poverty that relegated him to the lowest of society in the small town. Always, he would slip away with a keen sense of loss and shame burning in his heart

Burning with anger over Meiling's humiliation, he wanted to rush forward and beat back the bullies who dared to hurt this girl. Although he was as strong as an ox, he was greatly outnumbered. He could only stand and watch in the shadows. As the crowd of students retreated, he moved forward, compelled by an inward anger that caused him to forget his low standing in life. He bent over and retrieved the torn and dirtied remnants of Meiling's books. Every eye seemed to be on him as he hesitantly approached her. He hardly dared to look her in the eye, but summoning every ounce of courage, he simply said, "I am truly sorry those ruffians frightened you and ruined your books." His eyes met hers for one brief moment as she shakily thanked him for his kindness.

He retreated as quickly as he had acted, his heart beating wildly. She had spoken to him! Even though she only said, "Oh, thank you very much. You are so kind," he would always remember the tenderness of her voice and the lovely eyes that smiled through her tears. Life had taken a sudden and unexpected turn, and he was happy.

* * * * *

Anching was never anxious to enter the halls of the school where so many shunned him and frequently poked fun at his cheap clothes, but today was different. Yesterday, the girl he admired so much had spoken to him. Never in his wildest imagination did he believe she would ever speak to him again. He was talking with a small group of other boys from the working class when he had the uncanny sensation that every eye in the group was fixed on something behind him. Turning slowly, he looked right into the eyes of Meiling. He felt the tingle of blood rush to his face at this unexpected encounter. She reached out and touched

his sleeve as he turned, and said, "Anching, thank you so much for your kindness to me yesterday. I will never forget how courageously you acted and what a gentleman you were!"

Speechless, he simply nodded and gulped, as she quickly moved on her way through the crowd of students. Noticing the rising color in his face, his friends slapped him on the back in mock praise. "Hero!" one said with a hearty chuckle. "Now don't let this go to your head," another chimed in. "You're still Wen Anching, one of the poor guys of this school." "Yeah, and don't forget us now that the principal's daughter comes up and speaks to you," chided another. Everyone was enjoying Anching's embarrassment to the fullest.

"Ah, come on you guys," Anching replied softly, "I just did the right thing by picking up her books."

Fortunately for Anching, the bell rang and everyone drifted off to their classes. There were no more encounters with the beautiful Meiling, but the memory of the touch of her hand on his sleeve could not be erased from his mind. How he longed to feel that touch again. His life had been full of misery and poverty. His father, a hard working factory worker at the big plastics factory in town, had little time to be a real father. Long twelve-hour shifts seven days a week warped his life and separated him from everything beautiful and socially uplifting. He provided as well as he could for his large family, but life was rugged and tough, and every member of the family understood the sting of poverty and social ostracism. His mother was a good woman, but bowed down with years of struggling to make ends meet, of raising a large family on a pittance, and of being shoved around by those above her socially. They were a poor family. No one disputed that.

The fall festival was a great time for Puyang, when rich and poor alike sought some relief from the rigors of daily life. It was the occasion when the local gods from the temple were paraded through the streets to the beat of drums and shouts of people. It was also the time to feast on some delicacies sold by the local vendors at their little stands. Many drowned their sorrows in a drunken stupor that left them sick and more destitute than ever. Yet, year after year, they came and celebrated the harvest festival and thanked the gods for whatever harvest they enjoyed.

Several schools located in the surrounding villages near Puyang sent their best students to participate in the speech contest Principal Woo organized each year. His school always took the lead and often walked away with the prizes. This year, Anching was encouraged by his teacher to write a speech that would exalt the characteristics of courage and bravery in the face of insurmountable obstacles. Being an outstanding student, he hoped against all odds that he would be selected to represent the school.

But there was one obstacle in his way—Luping, son of the rich factory owner. He also wrote an essay, knowing full well that as usual he would be selected as the school's representative, based entirely on his rank as the son of the

most powerful industrialist in town. It didn't take long for the confrontation between the rich man's son and the peasant boy to become a huge issue for the faculty. Although Anching was new in the school, he was by far the better student and his essay proved it. However, most of the teachers advised that it was better to play it safe and select Luping. After all, his father made a sizable annual contribution to the school, and all the teachers profited by higher salaries. Anching might have the better essay, but he was from one of the poorest families and he was in the school only because of the largess of the industrialist.

Principal Woo, himself a man of character, urged that the person who wrote the best essay be chosen. It did not require any modern means of communication for the upheaval to reach the ears of Luping's father. Nor did it take very long for him to make an unscheduled visit to Principal Woo's office. Stomping haughtily into the office, he demanded an explanation. How could the son of a poor factory worker who had no social standing in the community be considered before his son? How could Principal Woo allow such humiliation to the one who made the largest contribution to the school each year? He pressed his point home relentlessly, and ended with a threat. Either his son would be chosen or he would immediately withdraw his support. In fact, he backed it up by flipping a check on the desk for 10,000 yuan! "Take it, or leave it," he said with venom in his voice. "It is my son and the 10,000 yuan or the factory worker's son and no check, now or in the future!" He stormed out of the office, flinging open the door with a bang and striding arrogantly out of the building to his waiting car.

Stunned by the confrontation, Principal Woo sat silently at his desk, head bowed, in deep thought. It had always been a foregone conclusion that Luping would represent the school, and because he was a good speaker, he frequently brought home the prize. This year was different. Anching had clearly prepared the better speech, and by rights, should be selected. But even Principal Woo understood the politics of Puyang and the generous contributions Mr. Pang made each year. He recognized that his teachers were also willing to look the other way since it meant more in their pockets.

Principal Woo's conscience pulled him in one direction, but the practicality of the situation drove him back in the other direction. Sighing deeply, he picked up the check on his desk, rose slowly, and walked to the school treasurer. "Deposit this to our account," and then he walked away with bowed head and heavy heart.

Anching heard of the decision shortly before school was dismissed. Shattered by the news, he quickly left the building by a back door to avoid meeting Luping standing in a prominent place, smiling his smug smile of victory.

* * * * *

Walking swiftly, Anching quickly made his way to a secluded spot along the river where he often retreated to be alone to ponder his many problems. Reaching his favorite spot under a big dragon spruce tree, he flopped down on a rock and buried his face in his hands. Alone, he could weep. The hot tears coursed

down his cheeks. *How unfair life is*, his heart screamed. *What a curse to be poor*, he wailed inwardly.

Suddenly, he sensed he was not alone. Lifting his head, he instinctively turned in the direction of the slight rustling sound behind him. Shocked, he quickly brushed the tears from his eyes as he stared into the face of Meiling.

"Forgive me for following you," she said quietly. "I couldn't help it. You were dealt a horrible blow of injustice and I am very angry with my father for what he has done to you. I watched you leave the school by the back door," she said with quavering voice. "Forgive me for following you to this beautiful spot."

Recovering his composure, Anching quickly rose to his feet, his school cap gripped tightly in his hand. No one of her rank ever spoke to him like this! The pounding of his heart was like the pounding of the temple drum. He feared she would hear it and run away. A thousand thoughts flashed through his mind as he gazed into her tear-filled eyes. *She is crying*, he realized, *but why?* A long black braid from either side drooped over her shoulders, framing her face. The picture was indelibly impressed on his memory. Years from now, he would think back to this magic moment and long to look into those eyes again. He was certain he had never seen a more beautiful sight, and he fumbled for the right words to express the whirling thoughts in his mind.

After what seemed like eternity, he bowed slightly and said, "Oh, please, you don't need to apologize. I hurried to this favorite spot to be alone, to ponder the events of today."

"May I sit here with you a little while?" she asked tentatively. "I know your heart must be bursting with sadness and disappointment."

"Oh, please sit here," he said with an embarrassed motion of his hand to the rock he had been sitting on. "It is not an elegant place to speak with a lady," he continued, gaining more confidence and composure, "but it is a beautiful, quiet spot where I find healing and comfort."

She brushed the tears from her eyes as she said, "Anching, I think you are the bravest man I have ever met."

He turned and gazed steadily into her eyes as he relished every word she spoke. "I do not deserve such praise, Meiling," he said sincerely. "I am only the son of a poor factory worker..."

As he took a breath to continue, he was shocked as she vehemently interrupted him saying, "You're not just the son of a poor factory worker! You are the son of a hard-working man who is honest, who puts his life in danger every day in that factory to provide for his family. He is proud of you, and so am I!"

The color rose in his face as he dropped his gaze and stared at the ground.

"Thank you," he mumbled. "My clothes are not as good as many of the students in our school, and I live in a very lowly house near the factory. Many times I feel that I don't belong here at all. I'm from a different world," he stammered.

"You have nothing to be ashamed of. You have an exceptional mind; not like that dim-witted Luping who bullies everyone around because his father is rich and owns the factory. All my friends know he is not half the student you are!" she said firmly as she flashed her beautiful smile.

Anching stood gazing into her eyes as he slowly said, "No one has ever made me feel like this before. You have treated me as an equal. Why do you speak like this?"

Meiling moved over and motioned for him to sit beside her, "Please sit here, and I will tell you why."

Meiling's invitation to sit next to her caught him off guard. His heart was again pounding so loudly, he was sure she could hear it. He dared not sit next to her. Instead he squatted at her side, relishing this wonderful moment.

She began to speak softly. "Many people consider that I am very privileged to be the daughter of Principal Woo. He is regarded in this community as a great educator and a very kind man. He has provided well for his family, and we are a very contented family. My mother often says we should be very thankful that the gods have smiled upon us." Meiling paused, and turning to look at Anching, she continued, "But there is something wrong in our family. We live for today, and we fear what will happen tomorrow. There is no purpose in living, and the future is so dark and hopeless."

Anching turned and looked at her in surprise. "I would never have imagined that anyone with your privileges and position in life could possibly feel as I do. I thought my poverty and low position in life was the root of all my problems. Do you feel empty inside like I do?" he asked incredulously.

"Well, not always," she answered honestly. "You see, something is happening to me. For several weeks, I have been slipping off to a gathering of young people at the church near the shoe factory."

"A church?" he exclaimed in surprise. "I thought churches were for the foreigners living in our city. I have heard that they spread corrupt ideas about China."

"That's what I thought also," she replied, "but a friend invited me to attend, and to my surprise, I have discovered that a strange and wonderful sense of peace comes into my heart as I listen to the pastor speak about the true and living God who loves me. He also speaks about Jesus Christ, God's Son, who loved everyone in the world so much that He even died on a cross to forgive us of our sin. He encourages the people to confess their sin to this Jesus, and to bring their sorrow and their problems to Him. The first time I attended, he gave me a book called *The Gospel of John* which tells the story of Jesus and what He did for the people of the world."

"And, is it better than the teachings of China's great teacher, Confucius?" he questioned in surprise. "His teachings have guided China for centuries. He taught the great principles for living peacefully with our fellow men."

"There is something very different about this Jesus," she responded. "Confucius taught us to live right, but he never taught us how to live that way. This Jesus came to tell us how we could live differently. The pastor says when anyone invites Jesus to take control of his life, He actually comes to live within that person and helps him live differently."

"And have you invited this Jesus into your life, Meiling? Is that why you are so different from any other person I have ever known?"

She bowed her head and stared at the ground for a long minute. "I am searching for the answer to life," she said quietly, "but I have not yet found what I am looking for. I am interested in Jesus, and I read *The Gospel of John* every day, but I have not invited Jesus to take control of my life. If I became a Christian, my father would be very angry. He is a very good man, and he has high principles, but he is opposed to this foreign religion. You see, when he attended university in America, he learned a lot about Christianity, but he says he did not find reality in people's lives. They seemed to speak about moral things, but their lives did not measure up to their talk. He could not accept such a religion."

"And do you not find the same thing in this church?" he asked solemnly.

"Although they seem to talk about the same Jesus, I find these people not only claim to be changed within, but they actually give evidence of that change."

"Really?" Anching said with great interest. "You mean, you have met people who have changed their lifestyle?"

"That's exactly what I mean," she answered softly. "The people speak of God living in them, and giving them peace. They tell of answers to prayer and help with the everyday situations of life. One man told about this new power helping him to be free from the bondage of alcohol. Another woman told how she was able to overcome a very bad temper that caused much trouble in her home. Actually, I am really impressed by these testimonies of the change that happened within them. Although I have not invited Jesus into my life, I feel like my life already has some direction and purpose, and there is a sense of wonderful peace beginning to fill my heart."

"You are different than anyone else I have ever met," Anching responded honestly as he looked searchingly into her beautiful eyes. Something stirred within him. He could not explain it, but he longed to be like her, and he longed to stay in her presence forever! "Maybe you would like to go with me sometime and see for yourself," she replied hesitantly.

He thought for a very long moment. He could not believe his ears. This lovely girl was inviting him to go with her to a meeting at a church! *It would be another opportunity to be with her*, he thought, but rising above the emotions of his heart, he realized that what he really wanted was the peace she spoke about. She was talking about something that seemed forever out of his reach: peace and forgiveness.

"I couldn't do that," he finally stammered. "I don't have clothing that is suitable to wear to such an occasion," he said flatly.

Meiling reached out impulsively and touched his sleeve while looking directly in his eyes. "Listen to me," she said firmly. "The pastor talks about eternal life, and he says God does not accept us because of our clothes, or good works. He accepts us because we are willing to follow and obey Him."

"I don't have any money to go to church," he whispered softly.

"Oh, Anching, no one needs money to go to this meeting. It is open to everyone without cost," she bubbled joyfully. "There are all kinds of people in the meeting. Most of the young people are dressed like you. You would not feel alone or out of place. In fact, your heart would stir with a strange warmth when they begin to sing."

"They sing?" he asked in surprise. "What do they sing about? What is there to sing about, really?"

"That's the amazing thing. When I am there, I want to sing even though my heart is breaking and heavy most of the time. They sing about God and His love and compassion for the people of the world. It is so different than the worship at the temple. Oh, you must come and hear it," she said with enthusiasm.

"When is the next meeting?" he asked with growing interest.

"Tomorrow night at seven o'clock. If you would like to attend, why not meet me at school about 6:15. It only takes about twenty minutes to reach the church from there. Will you do that? You will not be sorry, I promise."

"Tomorrow night," he answered, "I'll meet you at school. You know, I feel better already. This started out to be the worst day of my life, but you have changed all that. Thanks so much."

Meiling stood. "I must go," she said softly. "I'm glad I followed you."

"And so am I," he answered with a lilt in his voice.

He didn't fall asleep for a long time that night. He was amazed at his newfound friendship with Meiling, and what she had shared. What was this gospel book all about? Would it have answers to his heart cry for peace? He fell asleep more contented than any night in his memory.

* * * * *

Anching was not prepared for the inevitable meeting with Luping. He was standing in the middle of a group of his rich friends as Anching moved closer to the wall to pass them. Luping stepped out to block his way. Raising his voice in mock sympathy, he said loudly, "So sorry, Anching, that you came in second in the contest. I am surprised that you had the ability to even come near me. Are you sure you did not copy someone else's speech?"

Luping's friends laughed, and added other derogatory remarks that cut deeply into Anching's heart. Lifting his head high, he replied for all to hear, "Luping, I worked very hard on my speech. It was all mine. Not one word was copied. I spoke the truth from my heart. Now the contest is over, and you have been selected as the winner. I congratulate you on your success."

Moving closer to the wall, he attempted to go on his way, but Luping and his friends blocked his passage. "So you thought you could write a better speech

than mine," he chided. "How could a poor factory worker's son think he could compete with me? I have delivered the speech at this festival for the past three years. Everyone knows it's my right, and mine alone," he said with a smirk. "How did you have the nerve to challenge my place in the festival?" he asked haughtily.

Anching felt the blood rising in his neck. His fists clenched. He knew he could throw one blow and knock this nasty fellow to the ground. He could easily whip him thoroughly. Rage was rising as Luping continued to taunt him.

"So, you're ready to fight me right here in the school hall, are you?" he taunted as Anching took a step in his direction with upraised arms ready to fight. The loud voices attracted a growing crowd as Luping's friends continued to egg both of them on. Quite unexpectedly, the crowd parted as Meiling approached the two about to exchange blows. She looked with piercing eyes directly at Luping as he backed away with his friends lined up behind him.

"Luping," she said distinctly, as a deathly silence settling over the crowd, "you are a disgrace to our school. Everyone knows that it is your father's money that buys you the privilege to represent our school each year at the festival. It is not your intelligence that earns you the privilege. If you depended on brains you would end up last!" She spoke defiantly as the crowd of common students tittered with delight. The tense situation was about to explode into chaos when a teacher approached and ordered everyone to move on to their classes. Anching just stood there astonished as Meiling moved on to her class. *There will be serious consequences to this rash act*, he thought.

The battle lines had been drawn. The principal's daughter had defied the rich man's son.

Order Form

Anthony Bollback

1622 Calvin Circle, Kissimmee, FL 34746

Tel: 407-935-1184

DATE:

Name _____

Street _____ **City** _____ **Zip** _____

Quantity

Red Runs The River @ \$14.50 postage paid \$

Exiles of Hope @ \$14.50 postage paid \$

SPECIAL BULK ORDER

BOTH books @\$25.50 postage paid \$

to the same address @ 65.00 postage paid \$ **5 books of the same title**

10 books of the same title
to the same address @ \$120.00 postage paid \$

	Sub total	\$
Postage		\$
TOTAL		\$