



Association of Adventist Women

Zhu Ai Zhen

— Woman of the Year —

Spiritual Leadership

2006

Zhu Ai Zhen, a lay elder of the Beijing SDA Church, personifies faithfulness and fortitude in the face of incredible challenges. Her life story is a chronicle of Chinese Adventism in the 20th and 21st centuries. She has lived through the Nationalist-Communist Civil War, the Japanese invasion of China, the Second World War, the Cultural Revolution, the Korean War, and personal imprisonment. She lost four children—two miscarriages and two premature births and has no living children—yet her testimony is only about God's blessings and faithfulness to work everything out for those who love Him.

Ai Zhen was born in 1933 into an Adventist pastor's family during

the Nationalist-Communist Civil War in China. China was in full-scale war with Japan by 1937, and war on various fronts raged in China during the first 17 years of her life. It was a period of great danger, uncertainty, and economic turmoil.

When Ai Zhen enrolled in nursing school at the Shanghai Sanitarium and Hospital in 1949, Shanghai itself was under siege and was about to be liberated by Communist forces. While in nursing school, she was blinded for three months. The experience became a turning point in her life and caused her to deepen her commitment to the Lord.

By October 1, 1949, Mao had re-united



China as the People's Republic of China. Soon the new Communist government took over the Shanghai Sanitarium and Hospital and converted it to the Nursing School of the Navy Hospital, from which Ai Zhen received her nursing degree. She continued to work at the Navy Hospital after graduation, but after a short time she was dismissed for not working on Sabbath.

In August 1960, she married Huang Zhi Ming, an engineer. Only six months after her marriage, she was accused as a counter-revolutionary and assigned to a re-education camp for 10 years, the first three years as a criminal. In the ensuing seven years she was retained in the camp to work as a nurse. During this seven-year period she was allowed to visit her husband two weeks of each year. In 1971, during the latter part of the Cultural Revolution, she was released from her confinement, yet even then she could not rejoin her husband. The technicalities of food rationing made it necessary for her to return to her parent's home where her family divided its rations to include her.

Ai Zhen rejoined her husband in 1973 in Beijing, where she worked as a church volunteer until 1982, when she was rehabilitated by the government and churches were re-opened. She was permitted regular employment again as a nurse from 1982-1989, after which she retired and returned to full-time volunteer work for the church, demonstrating gifts of service, such as taking care of others, showing empathy, and comforting others.

In 1995, she felt compelled to begin a preaching ministry. Although not trained as a theologian, she has a rich experience to share and a large capacity for showing compassion for others.

All told, she has established 10 house churches; membership in individual churches is as high as 200 persons. In 2002, she was ordained as an elder in Beijing. This means that she leads communion services in house churches and conducts funeral services. She preaches regularly and sustains the faith of others through her exemplary life.

This woman, small of stature but tall in the strength of her Lord, has won hundreds of souls for Christ and has ministered generously to their needs. Her exceptional life is a testimony to what God can do even with a painfully shy young woman. Although many of her life experiences have been traumatic, her focus is constantly on the blessings God has showered on her.