

# Brother Duan's Christmas Miracle

## Real Stories from the Suffering Church

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Brother Duan was stranded. It was the middle of winter and the engine of the bus had just given up its battle with the cold. Duan was travelling south and was now stuck somewhere in Henan province.

Duan was a house church leader in Northern China. Now seventy-seven years of age, he still had no home to call his own. On a whim, he decided to trudge off into the night through the fields of snow. As he walked, he felt so alone. He thought longingly of his beloved wife, who died long ago. And then a vision of his little son swam into his tired mind, and a dark cloud settled over his heart.

### Cross on the Doorpost

Duan found a village and knocked on a door with a little cross notched on the doorpost. The door was opened and Duan was warmly welcomed by a Christian family. They were all excited as that night they would travel to a neighbouring town to hear a dynamic Bible teacher, called Brother Wang, from one of the bigger cities. On their way to the meeting, the family told Duan about Brother Wang.

Duan asked, "How old is he?" When they told him he was in his early forties, a look of pain swept Duan's face. He said, "I once had a son. I knew him for only two months. Now he's dead. But had he lived, he would be forty-two today. I called him 'Isaac', because we had despaired of ever having a child, but ten years after we were married, along he came, like we were Abraham and Sarah.

"My wife and I were evangelists in the 1950s. We were both in great danger of arrest. An old school bully of mine called Wu, kept accusing us of imperialism. We worried for our son. One night my wife heard a voice in a vision that said, 'Give your son to your enemy.' She said nothing about it, but the following morning I was reading Genesis 22, and when I read verse 2, 'Go get Isaac, your only son, the one you dearly love... and sacrifice him to me', I felt that God was asking me to do something terrible.

"We shared our thoughts and decided to offer our son to Wu and his wife. A few days later, Wu came to the door and arrested me on charges that were groundless. I was convicted and sentenced to life in prison. During interrogation, I told Wu I wanted to give my boy to him. Wu and his wife were childless.

"When I came out of jail in 1978 I discovered that Wu had adopted my son but the entire family died in an earthquake in 1975."

### Shocked Silence

They finally arrived at the crowded church. When Brother Wang began preaching, Duan got a terrible shock. It was like hearing himself. Even the preacher's phrases were similar. He stood up to see better. The preacher stopped and looked over. There was a minute of shocked silence as both men looked at each other. The physical likeness was amazing.

Duan began to apologise, 'I'm sorry brother for interrupting your excellent message. You see, I had a son, who would be your age now. And if he had lived, he would have looked and sounded just like you.'

Tears came into Wang's eyes, and he whispered hoarsely, "Are you Daddy Duan?"

## **After Forty Years**

Father and son were reunited after forty-two years. Wang had been brought up by Wu, who had been so impressed by Duan's act of giving that he became a strong believer.

Wu used to say to him, "I'm not your real father. He is a great man of God. He gave you to me, and I give you all my love, and the encouragement to put God first, just like your real father."

The elder of the church stood up and declared, "We have seen our sermon tonight. 'Christ came into the world to save sinners.' Just as Duan handed his only son to the care of his enemy, so God handed over his own son to us sinners. Let us rejoice in their reconciliation, and ours too."

