

Connections

The Journal of the WEA Mission Commission

A GLOBAL WRITERS' ROUNDTABLE SPEAKING INTO
THE CHALLENGES OF WORLD MISSION TODAY

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CHINA

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Editorials

3 Bertil Ekstrom

From my Corner

3 K. Rajendran

From India with Insight

5 William Taylor

The Editor's Heart and Mind

China: Church and Mission

6 Patrick Fung

China and beyond, issues, trends, opportunities

10 Patrick Tzang

Three streams of Chinese Protestant church and government reactions

13 Tony Lambert

Church and State in China: A Sixty Year Saga

17 Huo Shui

China, the Greatest Christian Nation in the World?

19 Anonymous

Reflections on the church in China

21 Brent Fulton

The changing face of Christian leadership in China

23 Huo Shui

What churches in China need today: The Living Water

25 Brent Fulton

Policy, implementation, and shifting official perceptions of the church in China

27 Four Key China Questions for the World

28 Patrick Lee

Business as Mission in China

30 Sam Chiang

Strategic options for the "Back to Jerusalem Movement"

33 Harry Hoffman

Member Care in China

Resources and Reviews

34 Samuel & Roberta Chiang

What will they say? Bibliographical review essay of four books

37 China resources on the Internet

38 Reviews on books on China from previous issues

41 Rose Dowsett

Reflections in Mission Structures

42 Report on IPA

From my Corner ...



Bertil Ekström
Executive Director

A boy's dream came true some years ago when I visited China for the first time. I'd had some contact with the Chinese multi-ethnic culture through immigrants in Brazil, many of them running restaurants or working with all kind of businesses. Some of my schoolmates came from Chinese families and I was often invited to their homes. The interest grew as an adult in mission when meeting Chinese leaders in conferences and consultations and, especially with the growing Christian presence in China and its emerging mission movements.

But nothing can replace the personal experience of walking on the streets of a particular country and encounter local people in their daily life. The strongest memory from this first visit is certainly the home-group gathering in one of the cities in the south. People came to this small house, usually two by two, from different directions with intervals of up to ten minutes in order not to call the attention. Twenty believers shared their testimonies and the three hours meeting felt short. During the songs the windows were at first closed but then opened so the neighbours could hear the word of God.

Today, the "BRIC" countries (Brazil, Russia, India and China) are considered coming economic powers but already important players on the global scene. With huge populations (particularly India and China) and

an enormous richness in natural resources, these nations can determine the future economic balance (or imbalance) on a worldwide scale. Of these four, only Brazil is considered a "Christian" nation, although there are old Christian traditions in Russia, China and India. The percentage of Christians is growing in all these countries and an "emerging-emerged" missionary force is easily verified in all four BRIC nations.

The growth of Christianity in China is perhaps one of the most spectacular surprises in the Church History of the twentieth century. Yet it is also the cause for deeper reflection on the role of cross-cultural mission worldwide. Under the leadership of locals and nationals the Chinese Church grew enormously and one can wonder if the presence of foreign missionaries would have favoured or disfavoured that growth. An important lesson, though, is that wise and Spirit-led contextualisation and handing over to national leadership are crucial factors in the development of any church movement.

This issue of *Connections* is about China. There is certainly not a single and uniform way of describing this complex and diverse country. The perspectives have to be different and in the multi-faceted presentation a panoramic and general picture can be discerned. And there are undoubtedly other views that should have been included as well. A recent visit to Taiwan reminded me of the reality of inland China as well and it was refreshing to see how Taiwanese churches are praying for reconciliation, respectful relationship between the countries and stronger co-operation with Chinese churches.

When something is successful in Brazil the expression "a Chinese business" (*negócio da China*) is often used. The expectations on the Chinese churches and mission movements are very high and we are all praying that it will be a successful enterprise in close co-operation with mission initiatives from other parts of the world.

Bertil Ekström serves the WEA Mission Commission as Executive Director. He is a staff member of *Interact* as well.

CHINA INCREASINGLY OPTS TO FOLLOW CHRIST

K Rajendran
chairman, board MC

Thank God: A mind-boggling caption in a recent magazine from Hong Kong said that there are more followers of Christ than Communist workers in China! A Chinese Christian leader I met passing through Indonesia said that more than 200,000 people participate in his ministry's correspondence Bible study course! Praise God for the exponential increase in the number of Christians in China and the number of people seeking to know the biblical Christ.

Fragile, Handle with Care! That a strong traditional Chinese culture, which once advocated worship of their kings and shunned Christianity, eventually welcomes Christ is an amazing phenomena. This phenomenon has to be handled with cultural sensitivity. It will be a pity if this opportunity was lost by the blunders of enthusiastic foreign "crusaders" and returning Chinese Diaspora Christian scholars who might import foreign-looking Christian elements, reminding the Chinese of the suppressing European cultural past.

The Christ message being planted must be Chinese in nature. Theology, Christian practices, festivals, celebrations and missionary endeavours must come afresh from the local Chinese as their own. Commercialized Christianity via Santa Claus, Christmas trees, reindeer, Easter eggs, etc., must be discouraged. These elements, if imported, will curb the interest that the Chinese have in following Christ.

If the people of China become mass followers of Christ, many nations will consider the same. This can happen if following the biblical Christ becomes a truly Chinese experience and not the imposition of other cultural habits of Christianity. We, the zealots, must therefore discipline ourselves to be true servants, assisting Chinese believers to be authentic disciples of Christ in heart, not necessarily reflected by the external forms we know!

Influencers, Shakers and Movers: Huo Shui points out that the growth of Christianity includes influential people from society, such as the politicians who make decisions for the nation. The image of Christianity is being changed from something weak to strong. This is not the case in many of the countries of the world, but something to work towards.

A New Social Class: Patrick Fung similarly directs our focus on a new social class, comprising of the rising rich middle class, private entrepreneurs and the scholars who return from overseas. Many NGOs are run by Christians who will influence Chinese society.

Leadership: Fulton's article highlights the need for leadership development in the Chinese Church—this is not only a cry of the Chinese world but the whole Christian world. As in the Chinese Church, the two-thirds world churches are struggling to create leaders who not only shepherd the newly growing followers of Christ, but who, with dignity, will be able to stand for what is best and relevant for their cultures.

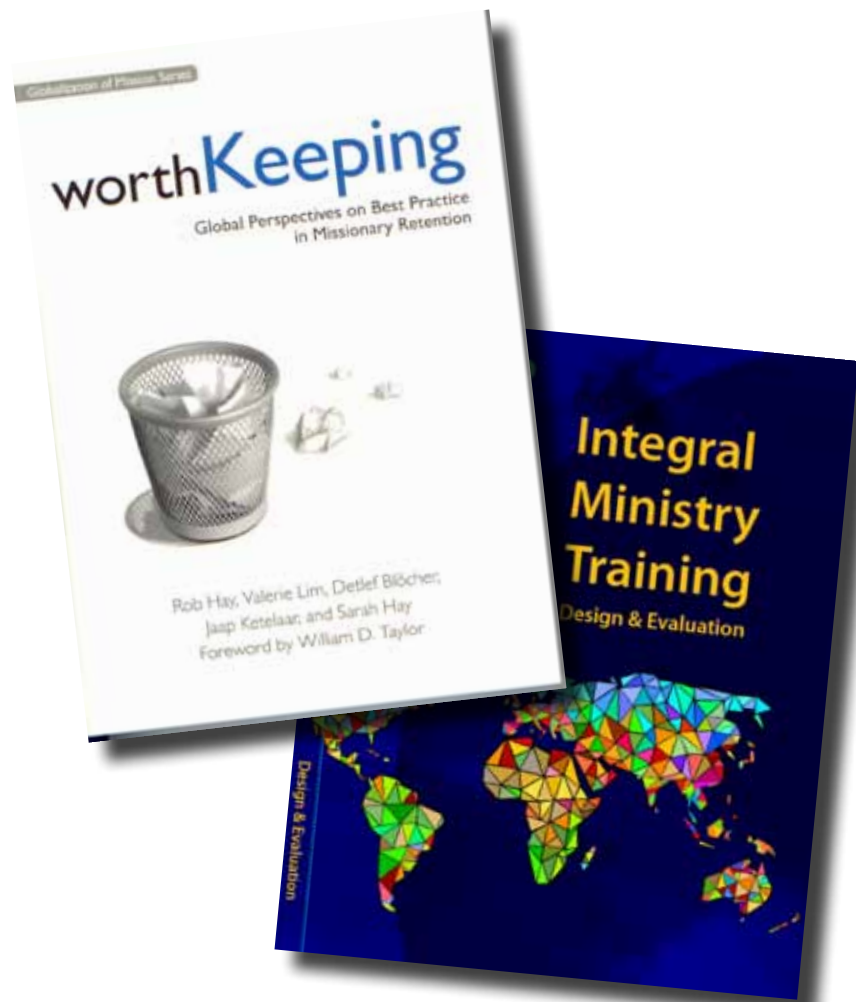
The Evangelicals: Tony Lambert points out the number of Chinese evangelical Christians may have surpassed the USA by now!

Let us read these articles and carefully reflect on how we can support what God is doing in China and beyond. Let us pray that this spiritual revolution will influence the nations of the world to follow Christ. «

K. Rajendran is in charge of the India Missions Association (IMA). He also is the chairman for the Executive Committee of the WEA Mission Commission



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From the heart and mind of the editor



William Taylor
editor Connections

“China”

Just that word, that name evokes and provokes a vast set of diverse responses. On October 1, 2009, the People's Republic of China celebrated its 60th Anniversary with a powerful spectacle, testifying to China's growing global role (economic, political, military, cultural). Both leadership and masses gathered to demonstrate and celebrate as President Hu Jintao stated, “Today a socialist China embracing modernization, embracing the world and embracing the future stands lofty and firm.”

For the thoughtful Christian observer, however, there is so much happening behind the public scenario. Our perspective is that of the missional leader, attempting to understand and affirm what God is doing in China today, what these implications might be for the future, and what might be the role of the church outside of China. Only God knows why he did not allow a collapse of the Chinese system, as he did the Russian system, which in turn opened the gates for an “invasion” (temporary?) of people and ministries from all over the world. The results of this period, 1990-2009, in Russia merit a serious evaluation. China is very different.

Back in 1960, as a student at Moody Bible Institute, we students and faculty grieved at the apparent death of the Christian Church in China. We know that histori-

cally this happens, as Philip Jenkins has recently documented in: *The Lost History of Christianity: The Thousand-Year Golden Age of the Church in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia—and How It Died.*

But the Chinese church did not die; rather, God had walked it through a deep transformation as the Gospel spread across that vast nation in a context of unprecedented unrest, hostility, persecution and martyrdom. Only decades later would the rest of the world discern the magnitude of the marvelous work of the living God.

Connections provides a set of diverse perspectives on the stories of Christians in China today. You will find writers speaking from their experience, some well known, and others whose names are withheld for obvious reasons. Some articles are more panoramic—China and beyond, the sixty year saga, the three church streams. Other articles are more specific—leadership issues, business as mission, the role of Christians in the rest of the world; thoughts on the “Back to Jerusalem Movement”.

The book reviews by Robbi and Sam Chiang are instructive.

A personal note.

This past January I spoke at a week-long series of meetings sponsored by Alliance Bible Seminary on Cheung Chau island, with a missions symposium in Hong Kong. There it was my privilege to spend time with James Hudson Taylor III, a godly patriarch missionary and lover of all things Chinese. He had responded to one of my papers, and I felt both honoured and humbled. Little did we know that soon he would go Home on March 20, at the age of 79.

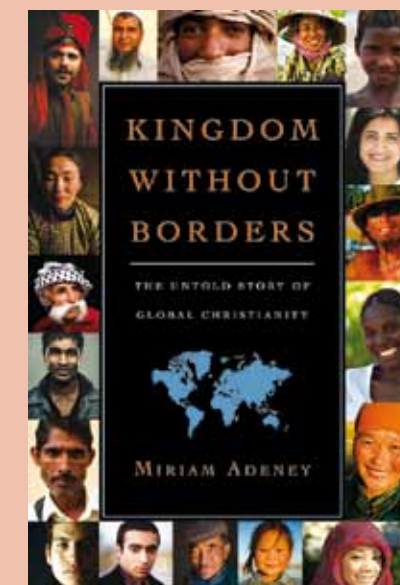
Read on, reflect, pray, ask God how He is teaching the global Church to discern the ways the Spirit blows, and the combined impact of word, spirit, sign in the growth of the church in China. «

William Taylor is Ambassador at large of the WEA, and staff member of the WEA Mission Commission.

Kingdom Without Borders is for people who care about the eternal, supra-cultural Gospel of Jesus, about witness, discipling, leadership training, sustainable development, ecology, the arts, world religions, ethnotheology, multiethnic churches, persecution, human trafficking, conflict resolution, AIDS, trauma healing—in other words, people who want to live as responsible global Christians.

Weaving together cultural data, personal experiences, and theological insights, the book helps make sense of global complexities.

Regional foci are China, Latin America, Muslim world, Buddhist world, India, and Africa. Topics include local theologies, indigenous leadership training, sustainable development, appropriate teaching media from songs to internet, church growth, persecution, trauma counseling, ecology, world religions, and best practices in mission.



China and Beyond:

Issues, Trends and Opportunities

Patrick Fung

China's Biggest Asset: People

As many as 800,000 travelers jammed around the Guangzhou (Canton) railway station just before the Chinese New Year amidst the worst snowstorm in fifty years. The storm prevented them from making it home for the Lunar New Year family get-together, but their factory dormitories were closed for the holidays. Wen Jiabao, "The People's Premier," visited the worst hit areas, urging calm, patience and hope, while calling on local leaders and factory owners to do all they could to alleviate the suffering.

China's biggest asset is people, masses of people.

The study of Chinese people has always been challenging. Though early researchers were aware that China had a large number of different tribes and peoples, there was generally no systematic approach to gather biographical data in the early 20th century. Some of the most influential research was a survey published by John Kuhn, a well known China Inland Mission missionary, who documented one-hundred tribes in the Yunnan Province in 1944.

"Everywhere we kept finding tribes, many of whom we had never heard of, until our hearts were thrilled. On December 23 we tabulated the one-hundredth tribe! One hundred tribes in Yunnan! And two-thirds of these had never had a gospel witness."

In 1953, over 400 minority groups submitted to the Chinese government for recognition, of which 260 came from Yunnan Province alone. Since then, many revisions have been completed. In 1976, the State

Council of the People's Republic confirmed fifty-five officially recognized minorities, comprising nearly 10% of China's population. Some of the largest minority groups include the Zhuang (18m)¹, Hui (10m), Tibetans (5m), Yi (8m), and Uygur (9m)².

Printing Fifty Million Bibles

For many years, one of the greatest needs of the church in China was the supply of Bibles, the Word of God. Older believers still keep hand-copied Bibles, which were very common in the 60s and 70s. However, Amity Press, based in Nanjing celebrated the printing of fifty million Bibles in China last year. Only in 1988 did Amity begin its first full year of production, with half a million Bibles printed. By 2009, it supplied an estimated 25% of the world's new Bibles—and most for domestic use. The company is a partnership between a Chinese Christian charity and United Bible Societies (UBS). Of the fifty million Bibles Amity has printed so far, 80% of them, Chinese-language editions, are sold through official churches within the mainland for as little as ten Yuan (Chinese dollar) per Bible³. The factory, with a 600-strong workforce, is printing Bibles in ninety languages, ranging from Slovakian to a broad variety of African dialects, as well as seven Chinese minority languages, including Lagu, Miao, and Yi⁴.

- 1 The Zhuang are China's largest minority. The Zhuang are animists and ancestor worshippers. In 2002, scholars claimed to have discovered the birthplace of Buluotuo, the very first Zhuang. This has resulted in a revival of Zhuang culture and a renewed interest in ancient Zhuang religious texts.
- 2 Paul Hattaway, Operation China, (Carlisle: Piquant, 2000).
- 3 South China Morning Post- Post Magazine, Nov 25, 2007, p. 28.
- 4 David Aikman, Jesus in Beijing, (Washington:

With so many Chinese Bibles printed, one may wonder where all these Bibles go? There are 55,000 state-registered Protestant churches in China and perhaps four times as many house churches. The number of Christians in China is estimated to be between 50 million to 100 million. Certainly, the church in China is alive and growing.

Turning Back the Clock—The Arrival of the First Protestant Missionary in China

More than 200 years ago, Robert Morrison, the first Protestant missionary to China, arrived in Canton on September 8, 1807. As a matter of fact, the East India Company refused Robert Morrison passage on any of their ships bound for China or accommodation upon arrival, fearing that he would interfere with their unconscionable opium trade. Morrison set out on his mission of love, knowing full well he could not succeed alone. "Do you really expect that you can make an impression on the great Chinese empire?" a US shipping agent asked him. "No, Sir. I expect God will," he said. As a trailblazer, Morrison spearheaded landmark work that others would benefit from and build on. He not only compiled the first Chinese-English dictionary, but during his first twelve years in China, with the help of local scholars, Morrison also translated and published the first complete edition of the Bible in Chinese⁵. This was no small undertaking: no one had undertaken such an effort since the time Nestorian monks first came to China with the gospel 1200 years earlier.

- Regnery Publishing, Inc., 2003).
- 5 Patrick Fung, "A Call to Christian Professionals," MSI Regular Bulletin, Issue 48, 2007.

Diaspora Chinese Scholars

Statistics from China's Ministry of Personnel in 2005 show that, overall, barely a quarter of Chinese scholars who have studied abroad return to China. By the end of 2005, over 930,000 Chinese scholars had studied abroad with approximately 230,000 returning to China over the last decade¹. In an effort to attract another 200,000 overseas Chinese scholars to come home in the 2006-2010 period, the Chinese government is making an effort to help these top scholars lead research in the various fields back in China². Of course, we remember that former Chinese leaders like Deng Xiao Ping and Zhou En Lai studied overseas. According to statistics, around 60,000 Chinese students are in the UK at any one time. Over 52,000 of these students are studying at UK Higher Education level, around 6,000 at Further Education level and the rest at Independent schools and colleges³.

A mission scholar from OMF coined the term "Majong" theology to describe the recent phenomena of the Chinese diaspora movement. In response to the developments in quantum mechanics, Einstein complained that God does not play dice—the universe's physical functioning is not based on chance. Neither is its missiological functioning. "God is 'washing' or shuffling the mahjong tiles," he said. Mahjong is the classic Chinese game similar to a combination of playing cards and dominoes, in which the tiles are shuffled

- 1 XinHua News Agency, January 5, 2007.
- 2 Just in the year 2003, the total number of students and scholars studying abroad is 117,300, among whom 3,002 people are state-funded, 5,144 employer-funded and 109,200 self-funded. In the same year, a total number of 20,100 students and scholars returned from overseas studying, among whom 2,638 are state funded, 4,292 employer-funded and 13,200 self-funded. As for the geographic distribution of the overseas Chinese students and scholars, the statistics for destination in 2003 are as follows: 10.5% to Asia, 1.8% to Africa, 49.8% to Europe, 15.4% to North America and Latin America, and 22.5% to Oceania. Among those who have returned in 2003, 25.1% are from Asia, 0.2% from Africa, 42.7% from Europe, 22.7% from North America and Latin America, and 9.3% from Oceania. As for those who are still studying abroad, 22% are in Asia, 0.6% in Africa, 28.1% in Europe, 36.4% in North America and Latin America, and 12.9% in Oceania. (From China's Ministry of Education, http://www.moe.edu.cn/english/international_2.htm).
- 3 UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office/ China Scholarship Council: May 2007 Press Release http://www.uk.cn/bj/aboutnew_index.asp?menu_id=337&artid=2454

or washed after each game. From this, we derived the term mahjong theology to advocate diaspora ministry. By God's sovereignty, God is "shuffling" people from various ethnic groups and cultural backgrounds all over the planet. Just as God "shuffled" Rahab and Ruth into the community of faith at different points in history, so now He is shuffling the Chinese across the world. In Acts 17:26-27 we are told that God made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth and He determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us. So He still does this today as He did then.

Although it would be difficult to verify, it is estimated that nearly 10% of the Chinese scholars returning to China have become Christians⁴. One of the greatest challenges for these Christians as they return home is integrating back into the society with a new identity, their identity as followers of Christ. A clash of values becomes obvious. Many of these "Hai-Gui" need support and encouragement to grow in their faith.

The Back to Jerusalem Movement

The BTJ movement is not a recent one. The original idea of taking the gospel "back to Jerusalem" was given to at least five different Chinese Christian groups or individuals during the 1940s. Mark Ma, Simon Zhao and Mecca Zhao were prominent pioneers. In 1942, Mark Ma was called by the Lord to go to Xinjiang to preach the gospel to the Muslims there. The next year the Back to Jerusalem band was formed with the goal of preaching Christ to the outlying areas of China such as Xinjiang and Tibet but also beyond—to the seven countries of Afghanistan, Iran, Arabia, Iraq, Syria, Turkey and Palestine. Several Chinese Christians got as far as Xinjiang, but by 1950 all activity stopped. Some were imprisoned. For nearly fifty years, the vision seemed to have died. But in 1995, Simon Zhao shared with house-church Christians in Henan his vision—and BTJ started up again on an even bigger scale.

In the past few years, the BTJ movement was actively promoted in the West and through a number of significant publications. In 2003, there was the claim that a minimum of

- 4 Paul Pruitt, A paper: "Why we must engage in Chinese diaspora ministry," 2007.

100,000 Chinese missionaries will be trained and sent out over the next few years as a tithe of the house-church movement. This vision has generated a lot of excitement among Western churches and even huge donations have been made in support of this work. However, it is becoming apparent that the plan of training 100,000 missionaries for cross-cultural work is far from the real situation.

It is encouraging to note that church networks in several regions, including those in the South-West and in the North-East have been actively involved in training workers for cross-cultural work. One local network has sent out 150 cross-cultural workers to serve among different peoples in China. Churches in one major coastal city are also actively involved in cross-cultural work, particularly in the North-East among the Chaoxian people. The number of cross-cultural workers being trained throughout China, though unverifiable, is probably in the range of hundreds not thousands. One North-East house church network has sent more than ten workers to Outer Mongolia. While churches in the past have been focusing on training evangelists and church planters, now more churches are aware of the need for equipping believers, particularly the young people, for cross-cultural work. Curriculum is being developed and, increasingly, training materials are being prepared.

The other major need is setting up a mission structure. Ralph Winter has claimed that one of the biggest failure of missionaries in the past 200 years is not church planting, but mission planting. The Chinese church will certainly be giving priority to cross-cultural work to places within China and then, in the future, to places beyond China. There have been individual examples of missionaries sent out from China to the Middle East in the past few years, but attrition rate has been high because of lack of training and preparation and mission structures. Also, role models are very important. This is an area where God's people from outside China can play a role through sharing of experiences in cross-cultural mission work.

The Power of Urbanization

One of the greatest challenges for churches in China today is the need of the "Min-Gong," the migrant workers. It is estimated that there are 120 million "min-gong" in China

today, including some who are Christians. According to the 5th China's National Census studies, the overall number of migrant children reached nineteen million¹. It is also estimated that every year nearly twenty million people in China migrate to cities from villages in rural areas.

What is it that characterizes the *mingong* in China? Firstly, they have changed their main job from farming to urban work. Secondly, they still belong to the peasant category according to the government records, normally recognized as the lower social class. Thirdly, normally they are not employers but employees. Often their rights are abused by lucrative employers in urban cities. Fourthly, as they are considered rural people, this people group is often marginalized in the urban cities. Many young people leave rural churches and yet are unable to settle in urban churches because of work demands, cultural shock and other factors. Many rural churches describe their church situation as "*huang-liang*," meaning "desperate" as only the "old and the weak" remain². Prior to 1980, church growth in China mainly occurred in the rural areas. However, since 1990, the urban church grew rapidly with the increasing urbanization of China. In 1949, the urban to rural population ratio was 1 to 9 (10.6% to 89.4%). In 1970, it was 1 to 5 (17.4 to 82.6%). In 1980, it was 1 to 4 (19.4 to 80.6%) and since 1985, it was 1 to 2 (36.6 to 76.3%)³.

Many urban churches are grappling with the issue of how to reach out to these migrant workers. To most, reaching out to the "*mingong*" is cross-cultural ministry because of the vast differences in cultural backgrounds and social situations. One of the positive outcomes of the urban migration is increasing partnership between Christian businessman and churches. Factories in urban settings create job opportunities and as well as opportunities to reach out to these young people. Partnerships also seem to develop between rural churches and urban churches. Some of the rural churches are taking proactive steps in sending their own pastors as "missionaries" to cities to reach out to the migrant workers. The opportunity of urban mission becomes tremendous.

1 Nov 2007, "ChurchChina."

2 Nov 2007, "ChurchChina."

3 China's Statistical Year Book, 1992.

Rapid urbanization and globalization have forced many church leaders in China to re-think ministry needs. For the past thirty years, training of Christian leaders in China has by-and-large been focusing on evangelism, church planting and equipping of the Word. Little has been taught on mission or missiology. However, this scene is changing. More churches are beginning to think seriously of mission. They want to know more about sending structures, how to support cross cultural workers, how to teach mission in Sunday schools, etc.

One researcher described the seven trends of mission ministry in China:

1. from rural to urban
2. from coastal to the inlands
3. from reaching the grass-roots to reaching multiple social class
4. from direct evangelism approach to integrative approach
5. from receiving to giving
6. from ministries within the country to overseas and cross-cultural ministries
7. from territorialism to partnership

One of the potential contributions of the global church to the church in China is to facilitate indigenous mission movements. It is important to plant churches but it is even more important to plant missions⁴. We need to facilitate what is truly indigenous and yet a biblical movement. The church in China is ready to take the step of faith. It is looking for role models, the integration of the word, deeds and character.

It is also important not to forget the many Christian students in universities in big cities. The early history of the Christian student movement in China is a glorious chapter generally unknown today⁵. The China Inter-Varsity Fellowship was founded in 1945. One-hundred sixty-eight young students from many universities and colleges met for a historic conference in August 1945 on the hills outside Chongqing. This conference marked

4 Ralph Winter, who taught and researched in mission for thirty-five years, made the comment that "the most serious mistake in all of Protestant mission history is the failure of Western missions to create mission structures in the mission field. "The Challenge for Koreans and Americans Together," a lecture delivered by Ralph Winter, Seoul, November 2005.

5 This exciting story was chronicled by David Adeney in his book, *Chinese Christian Students Face the Revolution*. (out of print)

the beginning of a revival among students in China⁶. Two years later, this became the largest Christian student movement in the world before it was closed down in the early 1950s.

A New Social Class

There is also a new social class rising in China, of nearly 150 million, made up of CEOs of private enterprises and intellectuals who have chosen their own professions (e.g., lawyers, doctors, accountants, managers, etc.). They represent capital worth one-hundred trillion dollars and are 1/3 of China's tax base. The former President began to bring their influential segment into the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) with his "3 Represents" theory, which extends its membership to private entrepreneurs.

China's economy already showed signs of improvement in the second quarter of 2009 despite the global economic downturn with an annual growth rate of 7.9% between April and June in 2009⁷.

With the rising of a rich middle class and private entrepreneurs in China, we also see a tremendous increase in the number of NGOs in China. It is difficult to estimate the number of local and foreign NGOs in China as there were no official records up to a few years ago. However, some estimate that there could be up to one million NGOs, including those run by Christians. While churches in the past were more inward looking, churches in China today are actively seeking ways to have a more holistic approach in ministry, serving the local communities. Also, there are more than one-hundred registered Christian bookstores in China today.

China and Beyond—Away from the Centre

The word "China" means the Middle Kingdom. Certainly, with its rising economic power, China once again is gaining the world's attention. The study of the Chinese language has become one of the most popular subjects in many universities in the West. Many Christians have high hopes for China—that the Chinese church will play an important role in the world's mission movements.

6 Leslie Lyall, *A Passion for the Impossible*, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1965), p.124.

7 BBC report, August 11 2009.

Some scholars, such as Philip Jenkins and others, emphasize a shift of power from Western churches to those South of the equator¹. In contrast, Professor Andrew Walls, "a historian ahead of his time"², insightfully highlighted the concept of polycentrism: the riches of a hundred places learning from each other. He believes that there is no one single centre of Christianity or one single centre of missionary activity. He said, "One necessitates the other."

To quote Professor Walls further, "But the southern Christian lands do not constitute a new Christendom. Few of them have become homogeneous Christian states. Christian faith is now more diffused than at any previous time in its history; not only in the sense that it is more geographically, ethnically, and culturally widespread than ever before, but in the sense that it is diffused *within* more communities. It forces revision of concepts, images, attitudes, and methods that arose from the presence of a Christendom that no longer exists"³, "Interconnectivity," a key word used by Thomas Friedman in his famous book, "*The World is Flat*," will become important in the future of missionary movements.

While we rejoice in the growing church movement in China and the strength of the China church, we should not forget the Lord is doing a far greater thing than in China alone.

Much study has been done on the Asian Missionary Movement. Research from 1990 by Dr. Bong Ring Ro, a well known Korean missiologist, revealed a growing Asian missionary movement. The number of Asian missionaries rose from 1,000 in 1972 to 21,000 in 1990. Other reports suggested that Asian missionaries reached 67,000 in 2000⁴. Hong Kong sent out 376 missionaries in 2006 with 53% in cross-cultural work⁵. South Korea has sent out a total of 14,000 missionaries serving in 180

1 Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom—The Coming of Global Christianity*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

2 Tim Stafford, "Historian Ahead of his Time," *Christianity Today*, February 2007.

3 Andrew Walls, "The Old Age of the Missionary Movement," first published in *International Review of Mission* 77 (January 1987), p. 26-32.

4 Tan Kang San, a case study of OMF International's involvements with Asian Missionary Movements: *Implications for Mobilizing the Asian Church*, 2000.

5 Reports from the Hong Kong Association of Christian Missions, 2006.

countries^{6,7}. Therefore, the China missionary movement is only part of God's redemptive plan. Yet we are living in an exciting period of history as we see this plan unfold.

The church in China will continue to grow. Partnership with the world-wide church of Christ will be the key to seeing a vibrant missionary movement among different peoples. There is much to learn from the church in China, particularly on suffering. Yet the global church of Jesus Christ also has much to share with the Chinese church: our experience in cross-cultural ministry, mission structures as well as equipping and training of cross-cultural workers. True indigenization is only meaningful when peoples from different tribes, tongues and nations, are serving together with mutual respect and a common purpose, that is, to be ambassadors for Christ. The potential for China as a sending nation in global mission is tremendous.

Coming Full Circle

The publishing of a small booklet, "*China: Its Spiritual Need and Claim*," in 1865 marked the beginning of a significant mission movement in China, that is, the vision and commitment to bring the gospel to the inlands of China. Hudson Taylor, having just spent seven years in China, felt the burden to challenge Christians in the West to pray for China and to bring the good news to the Chinese people, particularly those in the inlands. He wrote his booklet with detailed information on the spiritual needs of the Chinese people in the different provinces. No one could imagine the effect that this one man could bring. Latourette, one of the most reputable historians in church history, commented on Hudson Taylor, "This one man [Hudson Taylor], frail in body and of no unusual intellectual powers, called into being a mission which, consecrated to one great task, the giving of the Faith to all Chinese who had never heard it, was to bear witness to the Gospel in every inland province in China."

Hudson Taylor wrote,

"It is a solemn but truthful thought that

6 Patrick Johnstone, *Operation World- 21st Century Edition*, (Gerrards Cross: WEC International, 2001).

7 Timothy Kiho Park, "Korean Christian World Mission: The Missionary Movement of the Korean Church," *Luce Colloquium of Korean Christianity*, Nov. 17, 2006.

our every act in this present life—and our every omission too—has a direct and important bearing both on our own future welfare, and on that of others. In His name, and with earnest prayer for His blessing, this paper is penned: ...The writer feels deeply that, as the Lord's steward he is bound to bring the facts contained in this paper before the hearts and consciences of the Lord's people. He believes, too, that these facts must produce some fruit in the heart of each Christian reader. The legitimate fruit will undoubtedly be—not vain words of empty sympathy, but—effectual fervent prayer, and strenuous self-denying effort for the salvation of the Chinese....⁸

Beloved brothers and sisters, we cannot but believe that the contemplation of the solemn facts we have laid before you has awakened in each one the heart-felt prayer: Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do, that Thy name may be hallowed, Thy kingdom come, and Thy will be done in China?"

Today, we see a growing thriving church in China. Yet, the work is not finished. We pray that there will be an indigenous, mature and vibrant church movement in China reaching out to others, those who are both near and far.



8 Hudson Taylor, "*China: Its Spiritual Needs and Claims*," 1865, p. 30.

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Introduction

China fell under Communist rule in 1949. To many Western observers, that seemed to be the beginning of the demise of the entire Christian Church in China. Pessimism spread far and wide, parallel to both the Korean War and the Cold War, as the Chinese Protestant Church was cut off totally with the rest of the world. Many Christians even believed that not only was the Church in China wiped out, but also that mission in general was failure.

In the midst of a pessimistic and deterministic atmosphere at the time, Arnold J. Toynbee, based on his comparative study of world history and civilizations, made a prophetic statement—the 21st Century belongs to the Chinese. That was beyond the widest dream of many people. However, history has proven him right.

Both economically and geopolitically, Toynbee's prophecy has become reality. With the success of the Beijing Olympic and the manned space program, China now emerges as a confident superpower, seeking for her rightful place on the world stage. While Toynbee's interest is not in the Christian Church in general or mission in particular, China unveiled her bamboo curtain to outsiders to reveal growth and vitality in the Church, which surpassed everyone's expectations.

With common reports of spectacular growth, the outside expectations for the Chinese Church has risen to new heights, bordering even on wild dreams and unrealistic proportions: A dream of the church sending a 100,000-strong army of Chinese missionaries to do cross cultural ministry in the most difficult places on earth. While many dreams do come true, most do not. For the few which do come true, they are not without sacrifice and efforts. This is true for the experience of the Chinese Church over the past sixty years.

God is in control of history. However, he does tend to work things out through human efforts. Can the Church of China continue to grow and live out what God intends for her? It really depends on God's will and the Church herself. How should we, God's people outside China (even just across the offi-

cial border), work with God and the Chinese Church to make the best dream come true? This is the key question we should ask. As political and government control is still the dominating cultural sub-system in China, our immediate question is the following: "How should Protestants and churches outside of China relate to the Communist government and Protestant churches in China?"

This question is especially meaningful on the eve of the 60th Anniversary of the establishment of the People's Republic of China (October 1, 2009). This article seeks to provide at least a partial answer to this question by tracing the historical development of the three streams of the Protestant Church inside China during the past sixty years under Communist rule. People outside of China have tried to put China's churches into different camps or categories according to the observers' own position or frame of reference.

The most common is the binary, dichotomistic division, which divides along the government category of the approved "Three-Self churches" verses the illegal "House churches." According to the observers' own tradition or conviction, one is usually labeled as good and the other bad. This Manichean division is counter-productive, as it uses political affiliation or relationship with government as its dividing line. More importantly, this model is no longer capable of describing the reality of the Church in China as the nation is opening up in nearly every area and there is increasing diversity among the churches.

Dr. Don Snow has tried to increase the categories of Christian community in China by creating five categories, thus avoiding the trap of the binary model¹. This model is much better than the binary one and I would recommend to anyone who is not familiar with the Church in China to read his excellent article. However, this model is descriptive yet static, lacking the ability to track the past and look into the future.

¹ Dr. Don Snow, "Understanding the Christian Community in China," China Contours Archive, September 18, 2003. Can be accessed at http://www.christianityinchina.org/Common/Admin/showNews_auto.jsp?Nid=450&Charset=big5

THREE STREAMS OF CHINESE PROTESTANT CHURCH AND CORRESPONDING GOVERNMENT REACTIONS

Sik Wah Patrick Tsang

I. The Three Streams of Chinese Protestant Church¹

I prefer to use the term "streams" instead of "categories" because it allows us to gain a sense of historical movement and projection into future. If we use the churches' orientation toward the government as a defining quality, there are now three streams of churches in China. The first stream represents the churches which are submissive, supportive or friendly toward the government, and we can call them the **Red Stream**. Certainly, there is great diversity among this stream, ranging from actively "Patriotic," to simply passively obeying the local authority. Their orientation reflects a positive outlook in working with the government.

The second stream represents the churches which share a negative outlook in working with the government. Basically this group of churches wants minimal involvement with the government. The stream ranges from churches who simply do not see the need to register with the government to the hard-core defender of separation of Church and State, or the traditional "House Church." We can call them the **Black Stream**, as they do not have legal status in the eyes of the present regime.

The third stream is represented by the churches who have a more neutral, and perhaps as well, an active orientation toward the government. They are neutral because they do not see government authority as inherently good or bad. They do not work for or against government policy, but seek to work with the government on their own terms.

¹ The three streams classification has been used by different people and circled around on the internet for some time, especially on websites based inside China. It is difficult to name the original author.

This **Yellow Stream** seeks to take charge in their relationship with the government. They will initiate the process of registering as a church, but without accepting the Three-Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM) and China Christian Council (CCC). Some of these churches have even taken the local government to court.

In a sense, they consider themselves full members of society and participate in shaping the social environment. This is something new for the Chinese Church following the Anti-Christianity Movement in 1920s. Since that widespread movement, Chinese churches have shied away from politics or public affairs, except the left-leaning organizations. The other two older streams are basically passive in their dealing with the government. The Red Stream seeks to cooperate and take orders from the establishment. The Black Stream avoids contact with the government as much as possible. The Yellow Stream is only emerging, but it provides a promising alternative, in particular to the younger and better educated urban population.

II. Historical Development of the Three Streams of Chinese Protestant Churches:

The sixty years of the People's Republic of China can be divided roughly into two major periods of thirty years. The first period runs from 1949 to 1979, from the beginning of the new Republic to the end of the Cultural Revolution. The second period runs from 1979-2009, from the beginning of Deng's reformist policy to the present day.

The beginning and early demise of the Red Stream (1949-1979):

Before the Communist regime in 1949, Protestant churches in China belonged to many different denominations and traditions. Right before the Communist take-over of China, some major Protestant denominations sponsored the Chinese Churches Ecumenical Movement, but it failed to unite the churches. It is ironic that the goal of unity, at least administrative speaking, was achieved with the strong hand of the Communist regime.

With the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, the new regime started to build a system to place all organized religions under state control. For that reason, the Communist government sponsored the establishment of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM) and the China Christian Council (CCC). For all practical purposes, the two organizations are intrinsically related and can be considered as one. With government help, all visible churches in China were merged into one body under a centralized leadership. This is the beginning of the Red Stream. It is thus created with the help of state power for the purpose of control and to place the Church under subordination. However, the fate of this stream was very unfortunate, even with her conciliatory stance with the ruling regime.

The first period (1949-1979) was a period of systematic oppression and persecution, with the eventual demise of the Christian Church as the ultimate state goal. By the end of this period, there was no visible church and no public Christian witness of any kind across China. Pastors and committed Christian leaders, whether they worked for the government or not, were either thrown into prison or exiled to the rural areas for reeducation. Externally, the Church seemed dead. In reality, the confessing believers had only run underground in this difficult period.

The first thirty years of the Republic was plagued with wars (such as the Korean

War and the Vietnam War), with failed social programs and policies, and with power struggles within the ruling party; these produced a legacy of ten disastrous years of the Cultural Revolution. The pragmatic failure of government policies along with ideological struggles and massive political movements brought destruction and widespread suffering to the whole nation. The period was one of great suffering; however, it also set the stage for the later growth of Christian faith. The fire of suffering not only purified the Church, but also removed many barriers against Christianity: Confucianism, folk religion and other better organized religions like Buddhism.

The amazing growth of the Black Stream together with the re-emergence of the Red Stream (1979-2009):

The second thirty-year period of the Republic began with Deng's reformist regime returning to power. During this period, the Church in China re-appeared with spectacular growth and vitality. It is in this period that the Black Stream overtook the Red Stream to become a prominent part of the Protestant Church in China. The Black Stream is composed of rural house churches without legal status. They believe in simple Biblicism and carry an independent spirit. With no regard for government sanctions and restrictive traditions, they took hold of the reality of relaxed government control and addressed the gospel to the receptive hearts of the people through all forms of evangelization.

Although the Red Stream churches also experienced significant growth, their growth is limited by government red tape and their responsibility to maintain the status quo. In the first part of this period, both the Red and Black stream of churches grew at a fast pace. However, growth for both started to taper off over the last ten years of this period.

With the success of the reformist agenda and policy, China gained great national achievements and progress in both economy and society, in urbanization, the growth of higher education and the emergence of a viable middle class. However, both streams of the Protestant Church were unable to catch up with the new reality, and thus, their church growth slowed down.

The rural based Black Stream churches

suffered a huge brain drain as their young and strong-bodied adults migrated to the urban areas for jobs and a better future. Church growth in urban areas was limited by the rural background and lower education level of their leaders. Their illegal status also worked against them on two fronts. First, the government exercised tighter and better control in the urban areas—the middle class of the urban people had too much to lose in participating in an “illegal activity.” Second, their lower social class and education level became a hindrance for the intellectuals and more affluent population of the urban areas.

Legal status and public presence has helped the urban Red Stream churches in ministry and growth. In recent years, large church buildings with sitting capacity of thousands have been constructed up in cities across the country. However, the close relationship between the churches and local government does turn away people who are not comfortable with that. Being a Christian is still a stigma in China, and thus it has a negative impact on one's standing in the eyes of many people, obviously including the ruling regime.

The greatest limitation on the growth of the Red Stream is the shortage of pastors. The number of graduates from Bible colleges and seminaries run by the China Christian Council simply cannot meet the present need of local churches, not to mention potential future growth. Personal quality and education level are the other challenges, because most of the students in those ministry schools come from a rural background. It is difficult for them to minister to the better educated and affluent city folks.

The formation of a new stream of the Protestant Church in China:

The Red Stream was created by design and with government help, whereas the Black one was more or less a reaction to the former one. But, unlike the first two streams, the Yellow Stream appeared out of necessity and as a response to the new situation of China, especially in context of the rapid development of urban areas.

The members of this new stream come from diverse sources. They may come from the first two streams. They may be returnees from overseas study (Australia, New Zealand,

Europe, USA and Canada) or from work in another nation where they heard the Gospel. They may be the fruits of the ministry of a host of international ministries. The majority of them are younger, better educated, middle class urbanites. They do not fit in with either one of the two older streams. What sets them apart is their commitment to find a future of their own and their willingness to engage the government on more balanced terms, or their own terms.

III. A new context and a road never travelled before

The present author is not championing one stream over the other. We have to accept that all three streams are part of the Protestant Church in China, despite the weakness and problems we may identify with any one of them. As outside brothers and sisters, even if we are Chinese, we should not pit one against the other. From both a biblical and a strategic point of view, we should encourage the convergence of the three streams in order for them to become a major river of God's power and grace to China and beyond. No matter what stream we may identify and work with, we should always have this in mind.

The unity I am talking about is not the failed “Church Ecumenical Movement” before the Communist take over, which focused on administrative power structures and church traditions. What should bind the three streams together is our fellowship in the common Faith and common purpose of being salt and light for the society. But before we discuss some more concrete actions, we should make some notes on the social reality in China.

The present regime is a popular government:

Contrary to the common impression provided by Western media, the Chinese government enjoys widespread support from its citizens. This may be a hard pill for a lot of outside Christians to swallow. But nearly all the pastors I have met and served alongside from Mainland China, from both Red and Black streams, say that the present regime is the best they ever had. This does not mean the situation is up to par with the Western world or there is no abuse, but great improvements have been made.

In fact, this should not surprise us if we

look into what the present regime has accomplished in the past thirty years:

1. Provided enough food on the table for the average family. That is a daunting task and great accomplishment in itself.
2. Defended the country's sovereignty and provided a stable society for all.
3. Regained respect from foreign countries and provided a promising outlook for the future.

If we take into account the fact that no other Chinese regime has accomplished these in the past 200 years, the general support the present government enjoys should not surprise anyone. We must acknowledge that the present regime has indeed done a lot of good things for the country and the people. Therefore, we should be very careful not to take an opposing stance against the government too easily.

Christianity does not enjoy popular support in China:

The simple fact is that Christianity has never been popular in China. We have come a long way from the horrible “Boxer Uprising” or “The Anti-Christianity Movement” of the 1920s. However, Christianity is still a minority with minimal public support. We should understand and learn how to help the churches in their disadvantaged position and how they can engage the government with due respect.

Crisis and opportunities ahead:

China is heading the right direction with great accomplishments, yet not without problems and dangers. She has vast territory, great cultural and racial diversity, and religious complexity. The recent riots in Tibet and North Western China should help us to see the sensitivity and tension present in the areas of race and religion.

IV. Looking Forward:

The word “crisis” in Chinese is composed by two characters: “danger” and “opportunity.” We should be careful about the dangers and take hold of the many opportunities provided by the many changes in China. As outsiders, we should try to be a positive and helpful force instead of a negative and destructive

force for the cause of the gospel and the benefit of the Church in China. I have the following suggestions:

1. In terms of relationship with the churches: Promote unity among the three streams and refuse to be drawn into schism and conflicts.
2. In terms of relationship with the government: Pay due respect to authority and work with the government if at all possible. As a good guest, we should avoid domination and defiance. We need to earn their respect before asking for what we think we deserve.
3. In terms of serving the people and their country: Service is the best witness for the gospel. Keep in mind that rapid development and urbanization have caused a lot of stress and pain for the Chinese people. We should also seek to be agents of peace in bringing reconciliation and harmony wherever we go.
4. In terms of our approach: It must be holistic. We must combine Kingdom building with country building. Both the evangelistic mandate and the cultural mandate are integral components of the full Great Commissions of Jesus. A stable and prosperous China means blessings to all parties involved, especially the Protestant church in China.

Conclusion:

By God's grace, China has come a long way from its turbulent past. Christianity is now given a real chance to present the good news of Jesus Christ to everyone in China through the three streams of the Chinese Protestant Church. Our actions will help or harm their effort in evangelizing China. Let us be wise in our dealing with the Church and the ruling regime and be a constructive force in China, for the Kingdom's sake. “

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Church and State in China: A Sixty-year Saga

Tony Lambert

As China commemorates sixty years of the People's Republic on October 1st this year, it is fitting to trace the often stormy history of Church-State relations. The survival and amazing growth of the church cannot be understood outside of the overall socio-political context.

China has a long tradition of bureaucratic control over religious affairs, dating back to at least the Tang dynasty (618-906 A.D.) The absence of belief in a transcendent God meant that the religious conscience was never strong enough to dare claim equality, let alone superiority over, the Imperial State. The Tang Emperors crushed and then tamed Buddhism, which had threatened to become an independent political power. No church, Pope or Reformer emerged, as happened in Europe, to provide a check and balance to the Imperial State. Later, the Board of Rites supervised all religious affairs, even down to controlling the numbers of monks and nuns in Buddhist monasteries. The Confucian scholar gentry were skeptical of religious superstition, and wary of Buddhist and Daoist-based secret societies which easily mutated into centers of disaffection against the ruling dynasty when it became weak and corrupt. This long tradition of bureaucratic control over religion has been built upon and refined by the present Communist Party bureaucracy.

Chinese Christians were ill-prepared in 1949 to face the overwhelming pressures soon to be exerted on them by a totalitarian State. Loyalty to Scripture demanded they give their ultimate allegiance to God. This sat uneasily

with the State and Party's demands for absolute obedience.

As Mao developed his own unique form of Marxism, so his demands became ever more all-encompassing, penetrating into the church and family circle and into the conscience of the individual in a way which went further than the Russian Stalinism from which he drew his inspiration.

1949-1979: The Years of Darkness

Premier Zhou Enlai met with Protestant Christian leaders in 1950. The Party's demands were simple: express patriotic obedience to the new regime and sever all relations, particularly economic, with foreign missions and denominations. By 1952 the vast majority of the thousands of foreign missionaries (in the case of Protestants, largely American and British) had withdrawn. In 1950-51, what was to become the Three Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM) was established to control all Protestant denominations. It was one of five similar "patriotic" religious organizations set up at the Party's behest to control the five tolerated religions—Buddhism, Daoism, Islam, Protestantism and Catholicism. Wu Yaozong, an obscure secretary of the YMCA, rose to prominence as one of the few Protestant leaders prepared to collaborate with the Party in bringing the churches to complete political subservience.

The TSPM avowed strict adherence to the three principles of "self-government, self-support and self-propagation" in all church affairs. These biblical principals were first mooted by Henry Venn in the 19th century and to varying degrees were implemented by different denominations and missions—perhaps most successfully by the indigenous Chinese churches such as the Little Flock and the Jesus Family which sprang up in the 1920s and 1930s.

However, they were never fully successful, as many churches remained effectively controlled both organizationally and financially by foreigners. On the face of it, the TSPM's program seemed a breath of fresh air and hundreds of thousands of Christians signed up to its manifesto. However, time was to show that in reality the church had thrown off its foreign masters only to replace them with an atheistic Party bent on total control and even eradication of

Christianity. "Self-government" in particular was fraudulent—the Party made it its business to interfere in ever more detail in the spiritual affairs of the church from the early 1950s onwards.

After 1949, Christian leaders, and later Christian believers, were faced with a narrowing range of options. Few wished to go the lengths of Mr. Wu in virtual total capitulation to the demands of the State. But at the opposite extreme, few ultimately took the stand of Wang Mingdao, the famous independent Beijing pastor, who spoke out against



the TSPM and boldly fought for the spiritual independence of the church. For most, some degree of collaboration was unavoidable as even silent disapproval of the growing totalitarian control of the church became almost impossible.

In the early 1950s, churches were torn apart by vicious "accusation campaigns" where members were encouraged to denounce leaders who were deemed by the TSPM and the Party to have been too closely allied with imperialism. Some were even driven to suicide, and many were imprisoned. In these early days, many rural churches were effectively closed down as they were often "borrowed" by local Party officials who

deemed the endless cycle of meetings to implement land-reform, denounce landlords and counter-revolutionaries, etc., as of far greater importance than Christian worship. In the cities, churches were increasingly politicized as many faithful pastors were silenced to be replaced by those whose messages were often Marxist with a thin veneer of Christianity. (A favorite sermon for such leaders was the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, whose stark message of heaven and hell was re-interpreted along class lines to denounce the evil capitalist and extol the impoverished proletariat.)

Some Christians who wished to preserve the biblical faith began quietly withdrawing to worship in small group meetings in their homes. I have met a few such, who can trace the origins of what later became the explosive house-church movement back to the early 1950s. However, it was extremely dangerous to meet privately. By the middle-1950s, the TSPM were denouncing illegal house-church meetings. In 1958, the remaining city churches were unified in the final abolition of all denominations, which brought the church under the total control of the TSPM. In Beijing, sixty-four churches were reduced to just four; in Shanghai, long a Christian center, some two-hundred churches were reduced

to about a dozen. The few foreign visitors to China in the late 1950s and early 1960s reported that the church seemed to be dying, largely attended only by elderly people.

Mao encouraged the growth of Maoism into a quasi-religious cult of increasing fanaticism. A whole generation of young people grew up knowing nothing of the outside world, and devoted to his person and his teachings as encapsulated in the "Little Red Book" of his sayings. In 1966, Mao launched his master-stroke of the Cultural Revolution to overthrow the Party old guard who were increasingly uneasy with his radical policies which had led to over twenty million deaths in the great famine of 1960-61, after hundreds of millions of peasants had been forced into "people's communes." The Red Guards sought to destroy every vestige of the old society—and religion was a prime target. In 1966, the last remaining city churches were desecrated and closed. Even the TSPM was deemed suspect politically and its pastors denounced, imprisoned or sent to factories or farms to work in often harsh conditions. The Party's entire structure of control of religion through the Religious Affairs Bureau was effectively dismantled. Religion was forced underground. When I first went to China in 1973 there were no public signs of religious activity anywhere—all temples, churches and mosques had been closed. The Mao cult was all pervasive.

The few foreign observers at the time were generally pessimistic about the fate of the church in China. The South China Morning Post in Hong Kong reported in August 1966, as Red Guards desecrated cathedrals and burnt Bibles, that "the final page of the history of the Christian religion has been written." More sweepingly, an academic at the University of Washington stated categorically in 1973 that "the evangelicals' few Chinese converts were swallowed up by history, leaving ...scarcely a visible trace." How wrong they were! It is ironic, perhaps, that they made the same mistake as the Party bureaucrats and the Red Guards—seeing the Christian faith as consisting only in outward church institutions, structures and rituals.

A few percipient observers detected the survival of the faith in small, informal home meetings. As early as 1962, a writer in the

Hong Kong Standard stated: "... although the visible and formal churches are dying out in the Mainland, the invisible, formless, non-political and true ones are growing in numbers in Shanghai, Nanjing, Beijing and other cities. ... They meet irregularly but not infrequently for prayer meetings, Bible study and fellowship."

By the early 1970s, reports were leaking out to Hong Kong from nearby coastal provinces such as Guangdong and Fujian that there were indeed many such meetings springing up. By this time the full ferocity of the Cultural Revolution had passed, but all religious activities were very much underground. As more and more people throughout China felt betrayed by Mao, so the small groups of Christians quietly began to share their faith with first their families and then friends and neighbors. The genuine love of Christians shone more brightly against a backdrop of a society totally geared to hating and denouncing the class enemy.

1979-2009: Years of Revival, Growth and Growing Acceptance

In 1976, Mao died. In 1978, Deng Xiaoping took power and embarked on a radical program of economic reform and modernization and opening to the West. As part of this "open door" policy, the Party decided in late 1978 to restore the Party's edifice of religious affairs, revamp the moribund "patriotic" religious organizations including the TSPM, and grant limited religious freedom to the five major religions, including Protestantism. By this time, many Christians were meeting in house-churches, and there was an explosion of evangelism as they took full advantage of the new Party policies reversing Mao's "leftist" policies of persecution.

It is important to remember that the house-churches preceded the new TSPM churches by several years. In many cases, house-churches were formed in the early 1970s or even earlier; TSPM churches only began to re-open in 1979-1980. Unsurprisingly, many Christians were suspicious of the newly re-opened TSPM churches, particularly those believers who had suffered through TSPM collaboration with the Party in the 1950s and 1960s. These suspicions,

along with well-grounded concerns regarding the lordship of Christ over His church and biblical orthodoxy, have led to the development of Chinese Protestantism along two separate streams—the TSPM registered churches and the unregistered house-churches. This division has continued over the last thirty years until today.

In April 1979, the first Protestant church was re-opened for worship in Ningbo on the south-east coast. It was followed rapidly by churches re-opening in many major cities across the country (along with temples and mosques.) During those early days in Beijing, I witnessed more and more believers turning up for worship every Sunday, often quietly weeping for joy that they could openly worship after thirteen years (and in many cases after over twenty years) of persecution and suppression of Christian worship.

In 1980, the China Christian Council was formed as a sister organization to the TSPM to oversee church building, the opening of seminaries and the publishing of Christian literature. The TSPM concerns itself with the more political tasks of passing down the Party's religious policies and ensuring the political correctness of pastors and church workers by a systematic program of political education.

The last three decades have seen a massive expansion in the number of registered churches and meeting-points—from zero in early 1979 to over 55,000 today. They include the massive new Chongyi Church in Hangzhou, built in an imaginative modern Chinese style to accommodate 15,000 worshippers—the largest Chinese church in the world. China also now has the world's largest Bible press in Nanjing. Over fifty million Bibles and New Testaments have been published and distributed within China—a considerable achievement. Millions of Scriptures have been brought in from overseas, as many poor farmers in rural areas still do not have easy access to Christian literature.

In 1982, the Party published its detailed religious policy in "Document 19." Various other documents have followed. In principle, the Party still looks forward to a future atheistic, scientific, Marxist utopia in which religion will have died out. Crucially, religion is not to

be extirpated forcibly as under Mao, but to be tolerated and made use of under Party supervision. The documents state that only registered churches under the TSPM are legal. House-churches may be tolerated to varying degrees but should ultimately register with the State. This automatically means they come under the TSPM, which is a “people’s organization” under Party control.

In recent years there may be a few exceptions to this rule, but the idea now current in the West that there is a huge “third force” of independent house-churches registered with the State but independent of the TSPM is largely a mirage. In the run-up to the Olympics last year, if anything control was tightened. House-churches still periodically suffer harassment and occasional persecution. Although overwhelmingly evangelical at the grass-roots level, the pastors and theological students of the TSPM churches are periodically subject to a politicized “theological construction” campaign whose aim is to enforce liberal theology and Marxist ideology on the church.

There is no denying that the church is in a much better position than thirty or forty years ago. The church (at least the registered church) is a recognized part of civil society and the Party and State increasingly value the contributions made by Christians in setting up clinics, hospitals, old people’s homes, kindergartens, etc. In the Mao years, the State took over all church-run schools and hospitals, but now in a more open society, society’s ills can no longer be swept under the carpet or masked by propaganda, so the State is much more open to allowing NGOs and the churches to engage in social welfare work. House-churches are also involved but because of their technical illegality, they have to be much more careful, although private individuals can set up companies and charities.

House-churches do not advertise their presence, but are now too numerous for the State to suppress. However, they are still subject to persecution. In 1983, the Party launched an “anti-spiritual pollution campaign” and hundreds of house-church leaders were arrested. Since then, there have been periodic clampdowns. At the local level, house-churches may suffer repression if local cadres persist in outdated Maoist beliefs. There are

even a few rural counties where all Christian expression (even of the TSPM /CCC variety) is banned, although this is illegal under the Constitution.

Overall, the situation has markedly improved for the church. Party and State have recently affirmed the place of religion in a socialist society in positive terms. The contribution of religious believers to building a “harmonious society” is now officially recognized. The parameters of what is permissible are constantly being broadened. To give two examples: for many years, all Sunday school and youth work was banned. In some places this is still true, yet in many cities TSPM churches now hold thriving Sunday Schools. Similarly, censorship of Christian publications has been loosened in practice. Many Christian titles are on sale in State bookshops, and there are now over 400 privately-owned Christian bookstores.

It is ironic that as secularism is marginalizing Christianity in Europe, in China the opposite process is happening. The State’s tolerance of Christianity, if still sometimes grudging, cannot be divorced from the reality of spectacular growth and revival. In 1949, Protestant

since been denied.) Two recent polls taken within China pointed to 40 million, and even the TSPM admits to 20 million for its own followers (not including the house-churches).

This means that China may already have overtaken the United States in having the largest community of evangelical Christians of any country in the world. The socio-political consequences of this trend are immense and are attracting the attention of secular commentators in the West. Christianity is no longer regarded as necessarily a “foreign religion.” The Gospel has penetrated every echelon of society with increasing numbers of students and intellectuals turning to Christ. The Party itself has admitted that several million of its supposedly atheistic membership are in fact Christian believers. China is no longer a “dot on the missionary map” but is poised itself to become a major partner in world mission. As China heads rapidly towards achieving its goals of becoming an economic and political superpower, it may be that it is being prepared as an instrument of divine providence in fulfilling the higher goal of the Great Commission to spread the Gospel worldwide. «



Christians were a despised, tiny minority numbering only 1 million. Since the Cultural Revolution that number has exploded to probably over 60 million (a widespread report that the Head of the State Administration for Religious Affairs had admitted 130 million has

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CHINA, THE GREATEST CHRISTIAN NATION IN THE WORLD?

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SINCE CHINA OPENED ITS DOORS AND BEGAN REFORMS IN THE LATE 1970S, FOREIGN INFLUENCE HAS BEEN VISIBLE AND SOCIAL CHANGE UNDENIABLE. THE VISITOR TO BEIJING, SHANGHAI, GUANGZHOU OR SHENZHEN, SEEING THE NUMEROUS SKYSCRAPERS, PRIVATE CARS, TRAFFIC JAMS, McDONALDS, BLUE JEANS, BUSY AIRPORTS AND NIGHT CLUBS, MAY FORGET THAT THERE IS STILL A BIG CULTURAL GAP BETWEEN CHINA AND THE WESTERN WORLD. THE REALITY IS THAT CHINA IS EXPERIENCING THE PROCESS OF WESTERNIZATION.

Indeed, this is true in many ways. China joined the WTO and implemented a market economy. Now, even its educational system is geared toward satisfying market demand. English is gradually replacing pinyin. Millions of Chinese travel overseas each year. Western nations and companies have increased their investments in China annually.

However, when we shift our focus to the Chinese political system, we notice that political reform has not kept pace with market reform. Western influence is obvious in the economic realm, and the Chinese government encourages people to embrace such influences calling this “connecting with the world.” Nevertheless, in the political realm, China stubbornly resists any Western influence. The Communist Party still has a tight grip on power. If any changes occur within the political realm, they come very slowly. Sometimes, the Party needs to appear as if it is making progress in political reform, but its approach is generally passive. For example,

direct elections are still limited to village and township levels. As a whole, the Party’s resistance to Western influence in the area of political reform has been successful.

A Spiritual Vacuum

One very unique but subtle social change occurring in China today is that of ideology—people’s spiritual beliefs. Even though the government has lessened its tight control over the grass roots working class level, it nevertheless hangs on tightly hoping to win the ideology battle. The government is still in control of the mass media. Religion is still viewed as a “negative element” of society that requires tight control. After the 1999 Falungong incident, the government formed “Office 610” to combat the spread of “evil cults.” It began to pay a lot of attention to all religions.

Despite the fact that the government has not let up its tight grip over people’s ideology and spiritual beliefs, the Chinese people have all but given up on Communism. They have endured sixty years of communist propaganda and have grown tired of hearing the same line over and over. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the Eastern block nations, coupled with China’s own economic boom, further convinced the Chinese people that Communist and Socialist ideology are hopeless and irrelevant. They recognize that the hope they put in Communist ideology in the past is merely a mirage today. Nowadays, what troubles people is what should replace communism as the core ideology or spiritual belief of the Chinese people.

Some people have thought Confucianism should be brought back. They proposed

combining Confucian ideology with capitalism to fill the spiritual void. However, this approach would soon be proven unrealistic. Confucianism teaches loyalty to your rulers and emphasizes different levels of social class. These concepts will never be

accepted by today’s people whose thinking is more scientific and democratic. It is impossible to ask people to return to a society that existed two thousand years ago. Today’s Chinese live in a vibrant market economy. Materialism, not religion, fills their minds.

At the same time, various religious beliefs were able to experience unprecedented growth despite the government’s efforts to curtail them. The fastest growing religion by far is Christianity. Many people turned to Christianity because they were thoroughly disappointed with classic Marxism, and they were looking for something to fill that spiritual void. On the other hand, the rapid spread of Christianity can also be attributed to strong evangelistic efforts by Chinese Christians, overseas Chinese Christians and foreign Christian workers. It is difficult to determine how many Christians there currently are in China, but even the most conservative estimate would place the number in the tens of millions.

Why is Christianity the fastest growing religion in China? Is it possible for other religions to surpass Christianity? The answers are very clear. Christianity will continue to be the fastest growing religion in China in the next one hundred years. No other religion can surpass Christianity in number of believers. Although Buddhism and Daoism are regarded as having a part in China’s culture and history, and while Buddhism is popular

in southern China, neither religion carries the evangelistic fervor that Christianity does. They are not popular among the intellectuals or the political elite. Furthermore, most professed Buddhists and Daoists do not have a good grasp of their own doctrinal teachings because they are difficult to understand. Very few people delve deeply into the teachings of these two religions. Most of their followers put their emphasis on external forms and functions of worship. The relationships and fellowship among followers of Buddhism and Daoism are also loose and unconnected. All these factors make it difficult for them to catch up with Christianity.

Islam is organized and has experienced clergy to teach Islamic doctrines. However, the spread of Islam is limited to certain minority people groups in China. Very few people among the Han majority (90%) are Muslims. From these perspectives, it appears that no religion in China today is in position to meet the needs of the Chinese people more than Christianity.

Historically, the Chinese people have always had reverence toward “heaven.” In contrast, Marxism’s popularity in China lasted no more than fifty plus years. Personal stress and conflicts resulting from rapid social transformation argue for a greater role for religion. Many people seek spiritual shelter in an ever competitive society. In the past, Communism provided a sense of belonging for people in addition to its ideology. However, as corruption has become a fast spreading cancer of the Communist party, people no longer feel a sense of belonging by joining the Party. As personal income and living standards continue to rise, a lack of peace, joy and purpose in life are prevalent among many Chinese. A crisis regarding what life is all about plagues people from all levels of society

No Longer a Foreign Religion

Christianity in China before 1949 looked very much like a foreign religion. However, after 1949 when China shut its doors to the outside world, there were virtually no foreign missionaries in China anymore. Yet, even in the midst of many political movements—especially the Cultural Revolution—

the number of Christians grew despite the absence of foreign missionaries. The Christian faith also became more indigenous. Today, when you visit a church in China, whether it is a house church or a TSPM church, you can no longer say that Christianity is a foreign religion. The churches are led by Chinese. You see Chinese Bibles. You hear Chinese worship songs. You experience a Chinese style of worship. The church looks and feels Chinese. Christianity in China has taken a form that is indigenous and contextualized. These things testify to the fact that Christianity has finally taken root in *Shenzhou*—in China, the land of God.

Another important fact about Christianity in China is that more and more movers and shakers of society are becoming Christians. In the past, people tended to picture Christians as rural, female and uneducated. Today, you can find Christian fellowship in almost any university. Christians commonly include professors, doctors, lawyers, engineers and managers. You can even find believers among government officials. During the Christmas season, books with Bible stories tend to be the hottest sellers in bookstores. No longer are voices heard in society attacking Christianity. Regardless of the government’s attitude toward Christianity, people usually have the impression that Christians are kind, ethical and law abiding citizens.

Setting Examples

What kind of influence are Christians having on society? It may still be too early to tell. This is because Christians do not have a voice in the state controlled mass media. The government still does not allow purely civilian newspapers, TV stations and publishers. Everything in the media must be approved by the government. Therefore, there has not been any reporting on how Christians are impacting society.

On a personal level Christians do contribute greatly in shaping changes in values and worldview. The Christian idea of “love” touches many hearts. Unfortunately, the concept of repentance is lacking in Chinese culture. This poses a challenge for individual salvation. From this angle, it seems that the road to full acceptance of the Christian world-

view is still long and winding. Nevertheless, it is safe to say that the foundation for Christianity to spread in China is in place. While most Chinese no longer hold hostile attitudes towards Christians, by and large they have not recognized the need for repentance. Individual Christians may be the light and salt at home and in the workplace, but the church as a whole still does not have permission to enter the center stage of society.

Despite these limitations, Christianity’s impact on society cannot be underestimated. It has provided truth, salvation and hope. These are the issues in some of life’s deepest quests. What kind of hope are people looking for? That is, without an authentic faith, without an absolute moral standard, without reverence from a repentant heart, without a sacrificial calling, a person will never experience all he or she is created to be and, as a nation, China will never be truly strong. When the truth of God is hidden in people’s hearts, it will, one day, be expressed in an unpredictable and powerful way.

Although the Chinese people have not accepted Christianity entirely, neither have they rejected it. The door is wide open. The question is how to enable millions of people to hear the Gospel. Although currently evangelism is done one-by-one on a personal basis, in time it will confront and challenge Chinese society publicly.

China is on the road to becoming a world power. The question is not if it will, but rather what kind of influence it will exert on the world scene. What path will the nation take? In fifty years China will be a world superpower possessing a large population and destructive weapons; it will rival the U.S. and other world superpowers. It is clear that international criticism, slander, or so called “containment” do not help China or the rest of the world. Only a change in the ideology and spiritual beliefs of the Chinese people will ultimately help a powerful China to become a responsible and reliable world power. “

Huo Shui is a researcher and former government political analyst who writes from outside China (Translated by Tian Hui)

REFLECTIONS ON THE CHURCH IN CHINA

Anonymous

Thank you for this opportunity to share my reflections on the changes in the Chinese church and its current situation. Although my own knowledge of the church is limited, I will share based on what I have seen and experienced in my own situation.

During the past thirty years, China has seen far-reaching transformation. The reform and opening policy has impacted every level of society, including the church. I will focus here on the structural changes and challenges of the urban church.

The emergence of the urban church in its present form is a fairly recent phenomenon. I began pastoring in the urban church in 1990. At that time, there were not many churches in the city, and most were affiliated with the TSPM. However, since the turn of the century, the flourishing urban house church has caught the attention of many.

Before 1949, the church was centered in the cities. However, after the New China was founded, the urban church came under attack—pastors were imprisoned and the urban church disappeared. As government control in the countryside was comparatively weak, the rural church was able to survive. After China’s opening in 1979, church revival began in the countryside and expanded greatly in the 1980s. This is a very important phenomenon. God’s light poured over the countryside, raising up many churches and committed, faithful servants.

China is primarily a rural society, so it is extremely significant that the gospel took root in the countryside and that this resulted in a dynamic church that is full of life. It could be said that this was the first time the gospel really took hold at the root level of society. The rural church that emerged was

very indigenous and “Chinese” in its way of pastoring and traditions of leadership—a beautiful thing. I have heard recently from a coworker that the rural church continues to enjoy revival.

However, due to several factors, the rural church has been severely limited both in its witness and impact on society. Due to the lack of trained leadership, the church is fertile ground for cults or denominational thinking. Indigenous can produce a confused

During the past thirty years, China has seen far-reaching transformation. The reform and opening policy has impacted every level of society, including the church.

mixture of Christianity and local folk beliefs. The rural church also exhibits the characteristics of the “three mores”—more sick people, more old people, and more women, as well as more poor people, and this blunts the effectiveness of the church’s witness. Further, the 1990s mass migration to the cities has deprived the rural church of leadership and weakened it.

Meanwhile, God has opened a new mission field in the cities. The emergence of the urban church is a result of several external factors. The first factor is the accelerated pace of urbanization. China has now become over 45% urbanized. The rapidity of the urbanization—from not even 19% thirty years ago to nearly 50% today—has weakened the government’s ability to control urban society, hence allowing the urban church to develop. Also, many rural pastors and believers have followed the tide of people moving into the cities.

Second, 1989 brought an ideological crisis to intellectuals and many others. This, as well as globalization, brought changes to the way many people looked at the Christian faith. Globalization had the additional affect of bringing overseas organizations to China, and these organizations helped spread the gospel in the cities. Further, the 1990s brought internal problems within the TSPM, resulting in a number of godly leaders leaving for unregistered city churches. These factors brought needed strength to the urban house church, contributing to revival.

The growth of the church continues to be vigorous. I returned from overseas study recently and helped start our current church shortly thereafter. After less than two years, we have about 600 believers in the church. Thus, the rapid growth of the urban church is visible.

The urban church is moving from “subsisting” to “thriving” as it undergoes great change. It is overcoming various internal and external obstacles and is using various means to promote the work of the gospel. The change is evident in many ways:

A. The church is moving from “hidden” to “open.” Urban house church Christians used to worship in secret meetings, hidden away in someone’s home, afraid to sing too loudly for fear of being discovered. The believers wouldn’t all arrive at one time, but would arrive gradually in twos or threes. Now, the church is in the public domain. Beijing and Shanghai both have churches of significant size, including a number containing more than 1,000 people. In the words of my coworkers, the house church is starting to “break through the water’s surface.”

B. The church is moving from evangelism to pastoring. We know that it is important not only to preach the gospel, but also to cultivate the spiritual life of the flock. We, urban pastors, often meet together to discuss how to take better care of the believers.

C. The church is moving from independence to networking. Before, leaders were afraid of bringing too much attention to one another and to themselves. Now, there are gatherings of leaders, not only at the city level

but also at the national level. Leaders discuss together the growth and development of the church—a change worth noting.

D. The church is moving from self-marginalization to active self-expression. Because of the influx of intellectuals into the church and the rising social status of believers, the church has begun to pass beyond the margins of society and become more active in identifying themselves publicly. For example, some urban believers are now using existing regulations to protect their own basic rights. Churches in Beijing that previously were nameless are now taking on names. Some churches have their own magazines. In all these ways the church is overcoming its attitude of being marginalized and exerting its own identity.

E. Further, churches are not only talking about rights, they're also talking about responsibility. In the aftermath of the Sichuan earthquake, the urban house church produced a number of well-known organizations such as China Christian Love Action and Cypress Leadership Institute. We feel that it is important to participate as active members of this society. The church is taking a step toward playing a more active role in society, rather than being marginalized on the sidelines.

Challenges

Of course, in the midst of this revival, there are many challenges ahead for the urban house church. **First**, pastors are challenged to discover how to confront the very complicated urban society and effectively shepherd the congregation. Discovering believers' needs and building them up as disciples in this complicated environment is a difficult task. With other Beijing pastors,

discussions continue on whether large congregational gatherings or small group formats are more conducive for this challenge. God will guide us in this area.

Second, we are challenged by the question of how to relate to and work with the rural church. How can we serve together according to the unique gifting each has received from the Lord in order to have a more effective witness?

Third, we must discover how to position the church in the midst of a new social environment. Recently, several research institutes, including the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and Beijing University, have held symposia on Chinese religion and society. In each of these, the question of the "house church" has been raised. Previously, this topic had been off limits in scholarly meetings. Now, it is not only being raised but also being



discussed in depth. We believe this work will give the government a more accurate picture of the house church and also have an effect upon future religious policy.

I am very optimistic about the future opportunities for the house church in this kind of environment. In this more open society, people are not only asking, "Who are

you?" they are also asking, "What is your place in society?" I believe we need to discuss as Christians how we can be responsible people in all areas of society so that we can be a community that influences those around us. This is very important. In the past, it was enough just to hang onto our faith, regardless of how much persecution we had to endure. Now, we need to actively fulfill our responsibility.

Fourth, the church needs to pay attention to new challenges accompanying the more accommodating political environment we are experiencing. The changing political environment has produced societal changes such as worldliness, materialism, and the emergence of new religious trends (for example, narrow nationalism combined with Buddhist thought). These new ideologies could become the greatest challenge to the church in China.

The **fifth** challenge we face is globalization, of which China is now a significant part. No one can change this reality. In the environment of globalization, how will the church position itself? The church needs to explore how we will see ourselves within the larger family of believers worldwide, how we will participate in world missions, and, internally, how we will respond to the emergence of denominationalism, etc.

To close

We must face many issues. Nevertheless, just as the Lord has guided us during the past 200 years, He will continue to guide us into the future. «

The name of the author is known to the editor.

WHAT DOES THE PHRASE, "CHINESE CHRISTIAN LEADER" EVOKE IN YOUR MIND?

The Changing Face of Christian Leadership in China

Brent Fulton

Depending on where one has been or what one has read about China, this phrase might conjure up images of a rugged rural house church evangelist itinerating between villages in China's vast heartland, or of a white-haired minister in a state-approved city church, preaching to a congregation of grandmother types quite similar to the pastor.

While still accurate in many parts of China, these images do not begin to portray the spectrum of diversity that exists among Christian leaders in China today. They are found not only in traditional church roles, but are scattered throughout the society as the church takes on a new and profound significance in China's rapidly changing society. Here we attempt to sample some of that diversity by presenting portraits of some very different leaders within the Chinese Christian community. Some are actual individuals; others are composites drawn from several similar leaders who shall remain anonymous.

God in the Marketplace

Last year while on a domestic flight back to South China, I reached into the seat pocket in front of me and took out the in-

flight magazine. Inside was a lengthy article on the Chinese economy. I didn't recognize the author's name at first, but the young, energetic face staring back at me somehow looked vaguely familiar. Looking at the characters underneath the photo, I realized the author was Zhao Xiao, a prominent economist and President of the Cypress Leadership Institute. The oft-quoted professor, who also teaches part-time in a university in Beijing, co-founded Cypress with a mission to "empower servant leaders to be salt and light in society through commerce, culture and education." Zhao and his colleagues pursue this vision through writing and publishing, conferences for business leaders, and training Christian educators.

Zhao traces his own faith journey back to research he did in the United States earlier this decade for a paper entitled "Market Economies with Churches and Market Economies without Churches." His understanding of the need for a foundation of morality to undergird the economic system became required reading in Chinese economic circles and has informed recent Party discussions about the need for an economic system based on trust. Having experienced church life in America, Zhao to begin studying the Bible—not in an effort to find God, but rather in an attempt to satisfy himself that God does not exist. "Three months later, I admitted defeat," Zhao said. "[The Bible] talks about the history of the relationship between God and human beings, and this kind of book does not exist in China."¹

What Zhao Xiao is seeking to accomplish at the macro-economic level, Brother Wang, a business owner in a city east of Beijing, is pursuing at the grassroots of China's highly entrepreneurial business community. I intersected

¹ Evan Osnos, *Jesus in China*, http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/stories/china_705/interview/xiao.html.

with Wang as he returned on a red-eye flight from an overseas trip. Over coffee and rolls at Starbucks he explained that he was originally from Wenzhou, an eastern seaboard city famous for its large network of entrepreneurs, who can be found literally all over the world pedaling their wares—and planting churches. Sometimes called "The Jerusalem of China," Wenzhou boasts the highest percentage of Christians of any city in China.

Brother Wang does double duty, representing a large international company while also serving as a regional overseer for believers in several provinces who are affiliated with the Wenzhou church network. Wang's latest endeavor involves launching a fellowship of likeminded entrepreneurs in his city for the purpose of mutual encouragement. Together they help one another to solve business problems, study Scripture, hold each other accountable in their personal and family lives, and seek ways of impacting their community. While our conversation started along the lines of business, before long we were discussing the topic closest to Wang's heart—how to encourage his two teenaged sons in their faith. With divorce rates skyrocketing (even among Christians) and most parents too busy to spend time with their children, a stable family life has become a casualty of China's rapid economic growth and social change.

More than Half the Sky

Chairman Mao asserted that, "Women hold up half the sky." If the truth be told, most in China would likely agree that it is much more than half. In the Chinese church this would certainly appear to be the case.

In a minority area near one of several borders that China shares with its ethnically



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diverse neighbors, I met Pastor Zhang, a diminutive yet winsomely confident provincial leader in China's official Protestant organization, The Three Self Patriotic Movement. Herself an ethnic minority who has gained the respect of the country's predominately Han Chinese political leadership, Zhang is typical of many strong evangelicals within the "official" church who serve to interpret the interests of believers to China's ruling party while seeking to carve out a larger social space for Christians. Told by a foreign friend living in the city that churches here numbered more than thirty, we were quite impressed—until we ran the number by Zhang and she corrected us: "No, we currently have eighty-two churches."

Having attended a service the evening before in which we noted that the ushers, song leader, emcee, and pastor—not to mention the preponderance of those in the congregation—were all female, we were interested to hear Pastor Zhang's take on the perceived gender imbalance within the church. While acknowledging the problem, she went on to explain that the church was seeking to address it by creating more activities that would appeal to men. Along these lines the church had recently secured a piece of property outside the city and was preparing to construct one of China's first Christian retreat centers, one of the main purposes of which will be to host family activities in which men will feel comfortable participating.

Like Zhang, Sister Li has spent most of her life serving in the church. As a young evangelist who rose up through the ranks to become a respected leader in one of China's major rural house church movements, Li has witnessed both the glorious revival at the heart of one of the fastest growing church movements in history, as well as the pain of broken relationships, burnout, and oppression at the hands of local political leaders. Coming out of a church culture that had encouraged young women to remain single in order to fully dedicate themselves to serving the Lord, Sister Li has—like many of her fellow evangelists—subsequently married and now lives a somewhat more settled life as she raises school-aged children.

Today the movement's top leader is no longer in China. Various splinter groups have emerged out of what was once viewed as a rather monolithic church structure. Sister Li

now spends her time focused on equipping Chinese Christians for cross-cultural outreach, in fulfillment of the "Back to Jerusalem" vision that was given to the Chinese church in the 1940s and has been revived in recent decades. Partnering with experienced missionaries from outside China, she facilitates the training of a handful of evangelists in areas including language learning, cross-cultural communication, comparative religions, and vocational skills that will enable them to serve as "tentmakers" once they are overseas.

A Cup of Cold Water

For the past few decades it has been assumed that the powerhouse of the Chinese church was in the countryside, where a small army of evangelists like Sister Li labored amidst massive revival. However, since the late 1990s the church's center of gravity has been shifting to the cities. Here a new generation of leaders is pioneering a different kind of church among China's urban influencers. Predominately college educated, many have overseas study and work experience and advanced degrees. While generally not in direct opposition to the officially sanctioned churches under the TSPM, these leaders nonetheless choose to work outside the official umbrella.

Last year's massive earthquake in Sichuan province proved to be a turning point for China's emerging urban church. A key figure in the church's response was Brother Job, an intellectual and professional from a city in Eastern China who typifies the new awareness among urban believers of their God-given role in society.

Within days of the quake, Job and his colleagues from cities across China were on the scene, coordinating the delivery of emergency supplies donated by churches around the country. Only a few months earlier, in the aftermath of some of the most devastating snowstorms in China's recent history, these same leaders had gathered to discuss how they as Christians could do a better job responding to such crises in their country. Little did they know at the time that God was preparing them for protracted involvement in Sichuan. In Job's words, "The May 12th earthquake thrust underground Christian churches in China onto the surface, from the sidelines onto center stage. They became sons of light, building a

city on a hill that cannot be hidden."

In the past year, Christians have not only provided relief supplies; they have also been instrumental in erecting and staffing temporarily schools, rebuilding homes, and caring for orphans. To meet the demand for services and coordinate the efforts of Christians from around China, the believers formed—with the blessing of the local government—an NGO called China Christian Love Action. Evidence of local officials' regard for their work came some months after the quake, when they indicated that a museum would be erected to remember the quake and those who responded, and that they wished to include a flag with the CCLA logo—a cross emblazoned with the group's name—in one of the displays.

Surveying these portraits of leadership one cannot but help but be encouraged by the church's incredible potential to glorify God in a multitude of ways amidst a rapidly transforming society. As China's role in the world has changed, so has the role of the church in China, and so have the roles of leaders within that church. These roles are multidimensional and multifaceted, taking the church beyond its traditional four walls and living out what it means to be salt and light in every corner of society.

One is also; however, sobered by the realization that none of these leaders is older than 50 and that they have virtually no older leaders to whom they can look for guidance in facing the many challenges that greet them with each new day. Apart from a few older "uncles" who emerged out of the Cultural Revolution in the early 1970s, the previous generation of leadership simply does not exist, as no pastors were formally trained in China from the early 1950s to the early 1980s.

With China's emerging role in the world, the issues that these leaders confront in days to come will no longer be limited to matters of their own country. Together with Christian leaders globally, they will be called upon to decide and act in ways that have implications beyond China's borders. Hence the importance now for the international faith community to update and fill out its understanding of China's emerging Christian leaders, and for these leaders to build new bridges to the church outside China. «

WHAT CHURCHES IN CHINA NEED TODAY: THE LIVING WATER

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Huo Shui

Over the past thirty years, overseas sending organizations have earnestly studied the lessons gleaned through the experiences of modern day workers in China. These organizations have subsequently modified their methods and, in turn, have seen better results. At the same time, however, China has been constantly changing. The environment and conditions for service today are vastly different than those in the past. The pace of this shift is often not understood by Christians overseas. Therefore, sharing the gospel in China today requires both eyes to be open—one eye toward lessons learned from the past and one eye on the churches' needs in the present.

Small and Mid-Sized Cities: Focus of Future Church Growth

After thirty years of open reform, the Chinese economy has expanded rapidly. One indicator of this expansion is the rate of urbanization. Government reports show that in the year 2008 fifty-nine percent of the Chinese population resided in towns and cities. This percentage will continue to grow to seventy or seventy-five percent within the next ten years. With this urban population increase, the urban church should grow as well.

In early 2009, Chinese house churches held their fourth urban conference. House church leaders from all parts of the country convened to discuss church growth. Participants acknowledged that the focus of Chinese house churches has shifted from rural villages to cities, and urban churches will see the most growth. In fact, attendance at rural churches has been very low. Most young and middle-aged adults have jobs in the cities; only the elderly, disabled and children stay in the villages. The evangelistic emphasis has definitely shifted to the cities. However, the discussion around cities

should not be confined to mega-cities such as Beijing, Shanghai or Shenzhen. There are far more small and mid-sized cities with populations between 100,000 and 500,000 which attract more of the vast, rural, labor force. The majority of these smaller cities are often overlooked by overseas agencies. In fact, these cities, including some larger ones in central and western China, have almost no workers from overseas. These smaller cities of China are the weak links that require fortification.

Theological Education: Short-Term Seminars to Systematic Training

Because of its social makeup, the Chinese church had been in survival mode for a long time. Church leaders were unlikely to have any formal theological instruction or even any type of schooling. This lack of training was very common in rural churches.

In urban churches today, leaders, as well as members, are much more likely to have received higher education, including some who have returned to China after studying abroad. This higher level of literacy and culture among church members demands leaders with comprehensive and systematic theological training. As a result, having preachers with inferior qualifications, or having no preacher at all, is a challenge many house churches face. The vast majority of church leaders are not seminary-trained. This lack of qualified leaders is a reflection of how quickly churches in China have grown; it is also indicative of the practical attitude Chinese churches have toward formal theological training. It is not that the theological training is unavailable but that most training is geared toward meeting the needs of the moment. Today, it is more urgent to raise the theological qualification of existing church leaders

than to strategically train the next generation of pastors.

Inadequate resources limit current training to a condensed format: a few speakers address a quickly assembled group from the area. Students have little time to digest what they have learned before heading back to their hectic ministries. This utilitarian style of "catch-up" effort is a kind of last resort given the bigger political climate and similar to the earlier "learn now and apply now" approach during the Cultural Revolution. This patchwork method is unworkable in the hope of developing a new generation of excellent Christian leaders.

For now, within the entire country, the Chinese government has generally suspended all active offensive action against house churches. Other than a few specific locations and individual incidents, the two sides are at a truce—house churches are still not recognized by the government but are not restricted by it either. This changeover is actually a tremendous opportunity for strategic growth in the house churches. Rather than focusing on increasing attendance, they should put their efforts into raising the quality of their leaders. If every local house church were led by a formally trained pastor or minister, the entire house church movement would have a very different outlook.

Overseas agencies should no longer conduct brief training sessions in China, but should instead invest in solid, long-term theological education in order to develop gifted leaders who are sought after in every urban church. Short-term seminars and retreats are useful for church members who should in turn make sure the right pastors can receive either two or four-year advanced degrees in theology. It is difficult to gauge the exact number of seminaries needed throughout

China, but each province should have at least three and a minimum of one-hundred nation-wide. Every provincial city with a population over 500,000 should have a campus, totaling 1,000 campuses in the entire country, similar to the military school campuses set up by both the Communist Party and Kuomintang during the Sino-Japanese War.

The process can be divided into two main stages. First, identify a select group of church ministers and leaders in each province with a certain level of education and ministry experience and then send them to North America, Korea, the Philippines or



Singapore for two years of training. After receiving diplomas, they would become the teaching staff in future seminaries in China. Second, local churches should register education and training centers in their own cities and recruit students to learn from the formally trained faculties. Students should be selected by local churches and should commit to full-time study for at least fifty percent of the duration of the training. If it is possible to form a coalition accreditation board with members from seminaries inside and outside China, the graduates would receive degrees recognized both domestically and internationally. Pooling resources together to invest in seminaries in China should be the goal of every Christian organization overseas.

Otherwise, if and when the Chinese government relaxes further its policies and legitimizes house churches, churches throughout the nation will find themselves in a quandary of not having adequate pastors, in both quantity and quality. Now is the time to invest in the future.

Church Administration: Standardized Structure and Contents

In the past, external pressure forced house churches in China to be cloaked in secrecy. A church's leader, for security reasons, often made decisions unilaterally. Under more normal circumstances, particularly in cities,

this authoritarian style of leadership cannot bring about healthy church growth. Many house churches, especially the larger ones in the cities, have begun to put internal structures, guidelines and by-laws in place. This is not only a sign of maturity for the house churches but a necessity to ensure growth. Nevertheless, the social environment in China is very complex and varies widely from city to city. As far as internal church administration, in terms of both the essentials and the discretionary, there are no set patterns to follow. In addition, church denominations do not exist in China. It is still not clear what administrative model should be adopted by a particular church or if a standardized system for

all house churches is even needed. Most churches are experimenting with different approaches according to the leader's understanding.

Many factors impact the way a church is governed, including social geographic location (city verses countryside), physical geographic location (coastal versus inland), and member demographics. Other unique issues such as real estate ownership can also potentially affect church dynamics and relationships within the body. Overseas Christians can help churches in China recognize the importance of their internal systems, the significance of democracy, transparency and openness, and the principles and diversity for governing a body of believers. Also, Christians from overseas should be cautioned against over-emphasis on any specific denomination or its traditions lest churches in China again follow blindly one set of sectarianism.

Mission: Power for Church Development

For a Christian, the foremost mission is to evangelize. A church without missions is dead. However, when the authorities loosen their grasp on churches many churches become too comfortable. Some white-collar churches in the cities become like country clubs or social gathering places for their members. Rather than spreading the gospel, they spend their time talking about themselves and their family problems. China can never be changed by overseas workers alone without active sharing of the gospel by Chinese believers. Overseas workers should aim to advance the competence of witnessing among Chinese churches. Once a church enthusiastically participates in outreach, it will be transformed from the inside out, and as it tries to equip others, it will discover its own weaknesses. To help each church in China to begin its own missions work and to regard missions as an imperative responsibility should be the goal of each and every Christian worker to China.

Another caution is to note that sharing the gospel is about glorifying God, not putting on a show for others to see. Often times when a person considers missions, returning to Jerusalem or traveling through

foreign lands come to mind. They have big ambitions and big plans in far away places but overlook the people around them. This is the deception of human vanity. Where is the mission field? Right where we are! Chinese churches have tasted God's goodness and are now ready to share with their own people. Overseas Christians should make sure believers and churches inside China understand this.

Social Services: A Light on a Lampstand before All People

Traditionally, Western churches are a source of social services and charity work. This is one aspect the churches in China are lacking. Of course, the recognition of Christianity and the legitimacy of house churches have played a big role in the church's social standing. As countless volunteers from house churches joined the relief effort after the 2008 Sichuan earthquake, local government and residents began to notice and applaud Christians' social services. However, opportunities of this nature are rare and unique. Without long-term and deliberate planning, churches and social services do not readily merge. Most churches are busy with their own affairs, worrying about whether exposing their identities is agreeable with the authorities.

Will too much charity work impact the church negatively? Very few even consider service part of church survival or growth. Social work is just not part of what a church is about. The reality is that there are too many social ills in China today. The government does not and cannot do anything for those who are subsisting on the margins of society. Therefore, local officials are willing and happy to see volunteers provide for the needy. As long as a church is recognized in the community, it should proactively provide social services, concretely demonstrating Christ's love to its neighbors, being a light on a lampstand for God. Overseas churches have rich experience in the area of social service and thus have much to offer. What is more, if churches in China can shine in their social service work, it could one day very well lead to full acceptance by the government. «

POLICY, IMPLEMENTATION, AND SHIFTING OFFICIAL PERCEPTIONS OF THE CHURCH IN CHINA

Brent Fulton

Persistent reports of Christians in China being harassed, fined, detained, and oppressed through discriminatory policies often lead outside observers to conclude that the Chinese government is pursuing a concerted and consistent policy to restrict Christian activity and stem the growth of Christianity. While these troubling incidents remain a reality of life in China, a survey of the larger picture suggests that they are the exception rather than the rule, and that there may be room for cautious optimism concerning future policy toward China's Christians.

The Chinese Communist Party's basic stance toward religion has not changed since it was spelled out in Document number 19 in 1982. Commonly referred to as the "three designates" formula, this policy restricts religious activities to approved locations, requires that they be conducted by approved clergy, and limits their scope to the geographic sphere in which a given member of the clergy is permitted to practice. In theory, the policy limits the growth of the church by rendering itinerant evangelism illegal, severely restricting the number of leaders qualified to serve in churches, and effectively placing a cap on the number of churches that can operate in any given city or region.

Ever since Document 19 was released, there has existed a gray area in which activities that are neither specifically permitted nor specifically prohibited are allowed to exist. Although Party policy has basically not changed for more than twenty-five years, and although the types of incidents mentioned at the outset of this article continue to occur, this gray area between "normal," or registered, religious activities and those activities that result in official

prosecution has grown significantly. Without discounting either the reality of incidences of Christian persecution or their seriousness, what is remarkable is how much Christian activity takes place on a daily basis that is technically not allowed yet goes unchecked.

Policy vs. Implementation: Unraveling the Mystery

In any given week, somewhere in China, urban believers are holding services in rented office buildings, hundreds of unofficial Bible schools are offering classes, children are attending Sunday schools and youth meetings, books containing all kinds of Christian content are sold openly in bookstores across the country, businesses are conducting chapel services for their employees, students are meeting for campus Bible studies, local Christian-run non-governmental organizations are offering a host of services to individuals and families with various needs—and those involved in these activities suffer no repercussions at the hands of authorities. Yet during that same week, somewhere else in China, believers could be detained, fined, arrested, or otherwise harassed for participating in any one of these activities.

Since the gray area activities are, for the most part, not specifically proscribed by law, it is up to local authorities to decide whether and when to prosecute. Given the sheer number of Christians in China (estimates vary from 60 to 80 million or more) and the fact that most are operating outside the official Three Self Patriotic Movement/China Christian Council structures, it would be impossible for authorities to systematically and consistently go after anyone whose activities fall within the gray area; to do so would consume an inordinate

amount of government resources, and in any case would not be considered a priority for the Party, whose chief concerns are continued economic growth and social stability.

Where, then, is the tipping point? Why are some (in reality, most) gray area activities ignored, while others are attacked with a vengeance? There are a handful of triggers which, if present in a particular activity or situation, will greatly increase the likelihood of official intervention.

Foreign involvement (real or perceived) in religious activities will greatly increase the chance of these activities being restricted. The presence of foreign personnel or foreign funds suggests to Chinese officials that these activities are being engineered or at least supported from abroad, and that the foreign entity involved is seeking to use religious activities in China for political ends. The interplay during the past year between the government and ethnic groups that enjoy foreign support from high-profile religious leaders abroad is the most obvious case in point; however, Christian groups can also run afoul of the government by receiving foreign funding, allowing foreigners to preach or teach, or utilizing overseas entities as a mouthpiece when they face government pressure. The Chinese government is particularly concerned about foreign NGOs channeling funds to social groups in China whose agendas are suspect, especially when these NGOs are perceived as having an “anti-China” agenda.

Related to this first trigger would be whether the Chinese group or individual in question is perceived as having political motives. Criticizing the government, taking an activist stance on sensitive issues such as urban migrant or ethnic minority rights or AIDS, or supporting those who do would likely attract government attention and provoke a negative response. Leaders even in the official church, although enjoying a somewhat protected status, risk quick censure and loss of position should they become involved in any unsanctioned political activities.

The size and scope of the unofficial group and its activities is also a factor. It is generally considered safe to have unofficial “house” meetings of 30-40 people. Beyond that, most groups choose to divide and then continue

to grow (although there are some unofficial urban groups meeting on a regular basis that number several hundred or more). A group that is part of a larger network, particularly if the network spans several provinces, is also much more likely than an isolated entity to draw official attention.

Complicating the effects of these factors are the political winds that blow frequently across China, sparked by the efforts of top leadership to address some pressing issue or crisis. While generally not directly related to Christian activity, these political winds can nonetheless create great difficulties for believers. In both the run-up to last year’s Beijing Olympics and this year’s 60th anniversary of the founding of the People’s Republic, for example, a huge security net was cast over the city of Beijing. Gatherings of Christians that had hitherto gone unnoticed, or at least untouched, were shut down, and not a few Christian leaders were detained.

It goes without saying (although it can be missed or conveniently overlooked by outside observers eager to identify cases of “Christian persecution” in China) that blatant criminal activity on the part of Christians is grounds for prosecution. In a well-publicized case earlier this decade, Gong Shengliang, founder of the South China Church, a large unregistered Christian movement, was arrested and quickly received a death sentence. Apparently framed on trumped-up charges of abusing young women within the church, Gong soon became somewhat of a poster child for the persecuted church in China. As a result of mounting international pressure, his sentence was commuted to life in prison. Concern over Gong’s case continued for years until evidence finally came to light indicating that he was indeed guilty of raping numerous teen-aged church members, among other crimes. Unfortunately, the international community’s unquestioning assumption of Gong’s innocence severely tarnished the image of overseas Christians in the eyes of Chinese officials, who saw Gong’s supporters as uninformed and politically motivated.

Finally, the degree of corruption and greed among local officials will have considerable bearing on how Christians are treated. If Christians are seen as an easy mark for fines—particularly when it is known that the

believers in question can attract funds from overseas—then local officials may prey upon them for personal gain. Anti-crime campaigns with quotas for a certain number of arrests can also prompt local officials to crack down on Christian activities that had previously gone on unhindered. On the other hand, in areas where Christians enjoy good relations with officials (some of whom may be believers themselves), church activities are less likely to encounter interference by local authorities, unless or until a directive comes down from higher in the system requiring official action.

The Shape of Things to Come?

While in practice the space for Christians to operate (within the parameters listed above) has been gradually increasing, policies, as mentioned earlier, have been basically stagnant. However, events during the past year suggest that a shift may be under consideration that would bring existing policies in line with reality.

In March 2008, unregistered urban church leaders from across China met to consider how they could more effectively engage in addressing social needs. These leaders not only advised the Public Security Bureau (PSB) of their intention to meet; they invited members of the PSB to attend as observers.

These theoretical discussions took on a much deeper meaning in the aftermath of the Wenchuan earthquake on May 12th. The result was a coordinated and still ongoing relief and rebuilding effort that is indeed precedent-setting, in that there are a number of aspects that in the past would have been considered threatening to the government. First, it consists of a large number of unregistered churches working together in a coordinated effort. Secondly, it is very overtly Christian, with the lead organization, an indigenous NGO, using “Christian” in its name and a cross in its logo. The Chinese government has not only allowed this work to continue, but the Civil Affairs Bureau has helped to facilitate the work.

In November, 2008, the Research and Development Centre of the State Council (China’s equivalent of a Cabinet) hosted the first-ever official consultation on the house church, drawing together scholars from vari-



ous universities, government researchers, officials, and a half dozen recognized unregistered church leaders. One of the house church representatives in that meeting spoke of the need for the house church to communicate with the government, while at the same time holding firm on the position taken unanimously by the house church leaders participating in the meeting:

“Only God can control the spirituality of faith; no worldly authorities have the right to control a man’s spirit...House Churches (any true church) will only submit to Christ and reserve the right to make decisions on their own, and they would rather die than to accept the control of any worldly authorities...The government has been entrusted by God with the authority to maintain external public order. If the government can limit its governing to areas of maintaining public order in external conduct, then according to the teachings of the Bible, the House Church will definitely obey those in authority within the boundary that God has set.”

A key factor in the current situation is how the unregistered church now engages government. This kind of engagement is happening not only in big events such as the March and November meetings, but more significantly it is taking place on a routine basis at the grassroots level, with profound effect. Many unregistered church pastors and leaders meet on a regular basis with a Public

Security Bureau official or a police officer to discuss a broad range of topics. These exchanges in the past were mere interrogations. These days they are more often seen by many church leaders as an opportunity for a discussion about mutual concerns. This act of reaching out exemplifies the manner in which many urban unregistered church leaders are building bridges of trust with government.

Christianity continues to gain ground as a legitimate area of intellectual pursuit as well as a legitimate topic within China’s ongoing social discourse. As recently as fifteen years ago, there was only one Christianity Research Institute in a Chinese university which was independent of the religious bureaucracy and control. Today there are more than thirty.

The strides that are being accomplished for the cause of religious freedom are primarily a result of the efforts of China’s own people from within the country through positive interaction with their government. Chinese officials are watching and carefully weighing the future role of the church in Chinese society. In this very fluid environment, the international Christian community has an opportunity to be proactive in supporting Christians who are carving out a new space for the church in Chinese society and in encouraging government officials to take risks in not merely allowing but also sanctioning a new degree of religious freedom. «

Q&A ON CHINA TODAY FOR THE REST OF THE WORLD.

WE ASKED A COLLEAGUE WITH DEEP EXPERIENCE AND INSIGHT THESE FOUR QUESTIONS.

1. How can the church around the world best pray for China and our sisters and brother in the faith?

Pray that God would raise up Chinese leaders, men and women after His heart, to lead China’s growing church. Pray for wisdom in responding biblically to opportunities presented by China’s rapid social change—massive urban migration, redefinition of family roles, the “one-child” generation, rampant materialism, and the lack of a moral and ethical foundation. Lift up the believing “Daniels” and “Esthers,” in business, government, education, and the media; that they would know their role in bringing about godly transformation within these institutions. Pray for the training of Chinese missionaries to go cross-culturally, both to ethnic groups within China and beyond China’s borders. Pray for China’s leaders, that they would recognize the positive role that Christians are playing in the building up of their nation. Ask God to make China a blessing to the nations.

2. What are the roles of any kind of cross-cultural workers within China today, whether Korean, Western, Latin, Indian, African, Chinese diaspora?

Business is the language of China today and as such presents myriad opportunities for believers from other lands to live out their faith in the marketplace. Teachers of English and other subjects are still welcome

in Chinese universities and, increasingly, in private high schools and even primary schools.

Opportunities exist in less-developed areas for professionals in agriculture, medicine, small business development, appropriate technology and related fields. Those with Chinese language ability can assist in training church leaders, whether at the formal seminary level or through informal mentoring. Perhaps the greatest need is for those from outside to model personal commitment, integrity, a healthy family life, and godly stewardship in whatever sphere in which they have been called to serve. This way Chinese Christians will see more role models in a variety of church and vocational contexts.

3. What mistakes must be avoided in this potential expat ministry in China?

To put this in the positive:

Invest in People, not Projects. Talk to local believers whose lives have been positively impacted by foreigners in China, and you will learn that the foreigners placed a high premium on friendship. They realized that their calling was first to serve, and that this service needed to take place in the context of relationships, not primarily by dispensing programs or building structures, as important as these activities may be.

Build Local Capacity. Foreign teachers have done much in past decades to equip Chinese church leaders. Yet, going forward the emphasis needs to be on investing in those who will equip their peers.

Be Catalytic. Aim to build relationships that result in local people and resources coming together to accomplish more than you as a foreigner will be able to do alone. Those whom you connect will thank you, and, should you need to leave prematurely, the work will go on in your absence.

4. What can you tell us about the Back to Jerusalem Movement?

During the 1940s several Chinese Christian leaders in different locations at dif-

ferent times received a similar call to take the Gospel to Muslims within China's borders and to Muslim nations beyond. The distinctives of the movement included: a sense of Christ's imminent return, intentional reliance on God alone to provide the resources needed, a Muslim focus, and totally indigenous leadership. The vision was revived in the 1980s when house church leaders begin to meet with recently released evangelists of the original "Back to Jerusalem" band who had been imprisoned in the 1950s after traveling as far as Xinjiang Province in China's far West. These church leaders took up the cause and began advocating the training and sending of evangelists from within China. Today dozens have been sent out of China with varying degrees of success and scores are being trained in cross-cultural ministry both inside and outside China, often with the assistance of experienced cross-cultural workers from outside China



In the Beginning, Poor Vision

I knew, over thirty years ago, that I was supposed to live in China. Just after arriving in the late 80s, I learned that foreigners could have their own businesses. I believed I should try to use business in some way but was not sure how. I had owned a small business previously. If I had put my vision into words then, it would have looked like this: *I will serve God and the church by teaching, using my company as a platform and my business as access to reach influential people to disciple for Christ.* Now, that does not sound too bad, does it? But, as I look back, I see that Jesus disagreed with virtually all of it.

Our Business Was the Ministry

Jesus had been showing us that our business was not about access to influential people, it was the core of the ministry itself. I began to see this clearly when we had about two hundred employees. At that time, I looked carefully at Jesus' story of the talents and the minas and realized that all Christians were business people by definition. We are given resources belonging to our master and a command to "do business until I return." When He returns, He will look for increase or profit. Anyone who cannot offer Him any profit will be in great trouble. We cannot safely ignore this delegated responsibility.

So, I began to try to find out what resources had been given to me. Money? Power? Wealth? I did not have much of those. Then I thought, "What is valuable to Him?" Immediately, I began to think about people. They are certainly valuable to Him! Yikes, I had two hundred people depending on me as my employees! What if I were responsible for them in some way? What if one day the Lord sat across from me at a table and said, "Tell me, what did you do to invest in Xiao Chen, the cleaning lady?" Or, what if I said to Him, "Here, Lord, you gave me three talents, and I have produced three more." Then he answered, "Three? What do you mean three? I gave you six!" I became more than a little concerned. So, I thought of a plan—it was really more of a cop out. I decided that, when I would talk with the Lord on that day, if I could say that I had brought those people to Him through prayer, then, maybe it would go better for me.

THIS ARTICLE WILL BE DIFFERENT. INSTEAD OF DISCUSSING GREAT NATIONWIDE TRENDS AND GLOBAL IDEAS, THIS STORY COVERS AN AREA OF ABOUT THREE KILOMETERS AND DEALS WITH ONLY ONE SMALL COMPANY. IT IS MORE ABOUT WHAT WAS DONE WRONG THAN RIGHT. HOWEVER, IN THE PROCESS, WE HAVE SEEN A LITTLE OF WHAT JESUS HAS BEEN UP TO AND THOUGHT IT MIGHT BE ENCOURAGING

BUSINESS AS MINISTRY IN CHINA

Patrick Lee

While I had been told by the Lord not to actively share the gospel through words (that is another story), two other local employees were sharing the gospel verbally, and by now twenty employees were relatively strong believers and could pray effectively. I called them together and explained my problem. I needed their help. Could they each take ten names and agree to pray every day for each of those individuals? I just wanted to get their names before God every day. They agreed. So, we made laminated pages, each showing about ten people, pictures and basic information. On Saturday mornings we often got together for three to four hours of prayer. We would each switch our cards with someone else and then pray for the individuals on the new card the next week.

During the next six months, people started coming to Christ, until approximately eighty percent of the company confessed they were believers. There was no plan or strategy. Things just flowed together in a very natural way. Each week, between two and ten people seemed to find Christ. Then, I realized one day, that for three weeks I had not heard about anyone coming to Christ. I was worried that we had done something to offend the Lord.

I asked three people if they had heard of anyone receiving Christ lately. Those three had led twelve people to Christ that week, but none of them were in the company. It seemed we had saturated our market (our company), and the Lord was moving into other areas (neighborhoods and relatives). Jesus was showing us that the business was not access to ministry opportunities, but was, indeed, the ministry itself.

Transformation Begins

We began to teach the Scriptures, and our employees began to understand they had an obligation to their communities and families. Nightly prayer meetings developed in their community. Many groups of believers were formed. Many lives were changed.

Today, at the beginning of each work day, a handful of employees meet to sing praise songs. During lunch breaks, groups form to study the Scriptures, pray and sing. At the end of the day, someone takes time to talk to the Lord about anything that came up during the day. We do not want to take home a burden that only He can handle. During times of trouble, you will find people praying in the workshops, hallways or on the roof.

Recently, I asked one of our ex-beggars if anything was happening in the community where many of our employees live. He immediately told me six stories. I will share three. In the meat market, a fight broke out and a meat seller, waving a cleaver, rushed someone. Out of the crowd jumped a man who stood between the two and stopped the fight. He spoke calmly and got the two to resolve their problem.

A girl was hit by a car. The driver fled and she was left lying on the road in pain and unable to move. A large crowd gathered to watch. Again, someone stepped out of the crowd, checked the victim, picked her up, put her in a cab and went to the hospital with her.

On a walkway, a bike rider came too close to a girl who was walking. A peddle hit her in the leg, cutting her and ripping off her skirt. A couple was approaching and saw the incident. The husband took off his jacket, wrapped it around her and took her to a hospital to care

for the cut.

My friend then said all those who acted were from our company. I began to believe Jesus when He indicated our business was the ministry for us.

Two- to Four-Second Windows of Opportunity

Another thing Jesus taught us was that to be ready to seize investment opportunities, we needed to be ready to act. Sometimes, these opportunities came in two- to four-second windows of opportunity.

One day, I parked my car at the company and noticed a dwarf-like gentleman who said, "Hi Boss." I explained I did not know him and I was not his boss. He answered, "You will be soon. I have been looking for this company for a long time" (apparently we have a reputation in the beggar community). The clock started ticking, and I had to decide on the spot if I was going to do anything. When he spoke, he revealed some sort of mental handicap. I decided it was an investment opportunity from the Lord. It took us three months to help him get his ID straightened out. Eventually, he landed a trial position. He quickly became a believer.

People from the street often have no work experience and find it difficult to learn how to conduct themselves in a working culture. One individual in our factory, when he saw me walking down the aisle, got up from his position to come over and talk with me. I explained that he must stay in his position and continue working to add value, and if not, he could not stay. However, he wanted to do things differently. Sorry, I said.

Then, he asked to be allowed to talk to each group leader, one day at a time. He noticed that they often had tasks they did not like to do. He wanted to be able to do those tasks for them—to serve them. I agreed to try this for a while. Six months later, he was elected the most valuable employee in the company. His language difficulty disappeared. I even overheard a mature Christian say she liked being in Bible studies with him because he had such great understanding of the Scripture. He has one big smile and is often heard singing hymns as he works.

His Company, Not Mine

Another of my vision misconceptions was that I would use my company to serve Christ. The stories of the talents and minas helped me see that the resources never belonged to the servants. They were stewards. I began to see that I too was only a steward. The company was, indeed, His.

When I started believing this, it brought many, many changes. For example, when I viewed it as my company, and my accountant left, I prayed: “Lord, please help me. I need a good accountant, and You know good accountants are very hard to find. Please help me!” As a steward, I began to pray, “Lord, Your accountant got married and is leaving town. You need a new accountant.” It is much easier when we take our correct position and let him handle the rest. He did promise an easy yoke, right?

Once I understood the company was His, He began to assemble a team to run His company. One of the wonderful team members He brought was a man who had spent many years in a city several hours away doing poverty relief work. He joined us, and we planted a daughter factory out in the mountains where he had been doing his relief work. Our thought was to take some of our factory work to that area. He has managed it very well and the community is being transformed through the financial input of our employees. Now, there is a thriving church there.

True Religion Cares for Orphans and Widows

My partner also had a passion for helping orphans. In his past work, he had started a foster care program that brought handicapped orphans out of institutions and into homes in the community. It has been entirely managed

by local believers. We had been praying for our local orphanage, perhaps because it is a good place to see kingdom activity happening. However, for years, we could do nothing. Then, one day, the local orphanage director just happened to meet our folks at the hospital because we were sponsoring operations for orphans from another city. Intrigued, he visited our company and is now allowing us to help the local orphanage. There are many children with cerebral palsy. We have started a special needs program in which we locate and train people to care for these children. It has been so successful that we have taken it to one other city and are now preparing to take it to another one.

So, Jesus has shown us that while we may be a small company, if we are willing, through us He can:

- plant a factory and a church hundreds of miles away in a very poor community
- lead a majority of our employees to faith in himself
- transform the lives of beggars through work and a viable identity in the body of Christ
- raise up a trained force of Christians to help orphanages care for children with cerebral palsy and other handicaps and provide foster care for many handicapped orphans who can then live in a normal home
- raise up a large group of faithful people who will invest hundreds of hours in prayer for the Kingdom of God in their neighborhoods
- cause many people to live out the characteristics of Christ

So, what has Jesus been showing you? «

Patrick Lee has been in business for 26 years. While in the collectible market, his company was recognized as the best in the world in their particular market segment which they innovated into existence.

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MY VERY FIRST TRIP TO MAINLAND CHINA WAS IN AUGUST 1990.

MY FIRST STOP WAS SHANGHAI. I RECALL THAT WHEN I WAS CROSSING THE LARGE BOULEVARD NEAR WHERE THE MAIN TRAIN TERMINUS WAS LOCATED, I FELT I HAD COME HOME! UPON REFLECTION, IT WAS NOT THE FOOD, NOR SOUNDS, NOR ANY OF THE ENVIRONMENT, IT WAS THE LOCAL DIALECT—SHANGHAISE. THOUGH I COULD ONLY MUTTER A FEW WORDS IN THAT DIALECT, I DO KNOW THAT I GREW UP LISTENING TO IT FOR OVER 25 YEARS, AND IT WAS EXPRESSIVE, COLORFUL, LOUD, SEEMINGLY ARGUMENTATIVE—AND IT WAS MY HEART LANGUAGE.

Towards the end of that ministry trip I also visited my relatives. They made many local dishes, talked about the best places to get *xiaolongbao* and invited me to taste my mother’s favorite dish from when she was a youngster there—steamed lotus root. The relatives told stories about the long lost tribe of Israel, about the Cultural Revolution—its various activities and the regretful loss of books burnt—and about Chinese history.

I remember sitting there, nodding politely, listening. Finally, without much verbal interaction from me, they asked me if I had understood them. I indicated that I had understood their verbal communication. But then they got specific and asked if I had understood or learned about Chinese history when I was growing up (in Taiwan). I confessed that I did not know or recall much about Chinese history. I was not certain which impression I had left with my relatives: the Taiwanese education system was not very rigorous and did not teach Chinese history well, or, that I was a poor student of history. Knowing them, they probably granted me grace and decided the educational system in

STRATEGIC OPTIONS FOR THE BACK TO JERUSALEM MOVEMENT

Samuel Chiang

Taiwan did not provide good instruction on history. However, the real truth at that time was that I was a very poor student of history in general. I made a point to learn history and become a student of the subject. I discovered that Chinese history was inviting.

Orality in Society

The richness of Chinese history gives a strong foundation to the continued practice of an oral preference culture—where storytelling, poetry, art, drama, chants, dances and other cultural forms of communication are highly treasured. With approximately 400 dialects spoken in China, there are many distinguished cultural customs which are passed from generation to generation through oral means.

In Western societies, the historical development of languages has generally followed a track where individuals commence life as “oral” learners; then as we went off to school, many of us learned abstract shaped items called alphabets. We found that in sequencing these letters we made sounds and words; by stringing them together we composed logical sentences.¹ We learned to read. The Chinese language evolved along the lines of hieroglyphs with the special feature of combining sound and image. In contrast to the more abstract thinking societies, Chinese society has been much more imagery (or concrete) based.² Working in China must take into account this huge contrast and the resulting logical approach versus a more imaged-based approach.

In a fast changing society where rural migrants are drawn to the mossy smell of “green” in the cities, there are two large tensions that exist between city and rural folks. Guangdong, the melting pot province that

still serves as the world’s factory, plays host to many migrant workers from all over China. While the population generally unites together with “putonghua,” that is Mandarin, the migrants meet “heart to heart” when they discover a dialect in common, such as Hakka, spoken by their peers. This “oneness” by dialect, through its historical culture, actually unites people—for those who speak it—and divides people—those who do not speak nor appreciate the underlying customs.

The second tension can probably be described as “having culture,” versus “having no culture.” In the Chinese thinking, this is further exacerbated with a “literate” versus “illiterate” comparison. In a 2008 UNESCO publication, China listed those having literacy as recognizing a minimum of 2,000 characters for those living in the cities and a minimum of 1,500 Chinese characters for those from rural villages.³ A difference of 500 characters is not significant, but the underlying prejudice is huge—often equating illiterates as having no culture. Imagine carrying this baggage all around Asia and forgetting the richness of other oral preference cultures!

Orality as Practice

Oral preference learners⁴ not only include the illiterate but also the functionally illiterate and semi-illiterate. In general, an illiterate is one who cannot read or write, one who hears words but does not “see” them. Words to them are pieces of sound and picture with some meaning. A functionally illiterate person may read simple materials but does not receive or share concepts through print, nor do they transmit values through print media.

A semi-literate person may have gone to school and may have the marginal skills for a specific context, like work, but learns best and most easily through oral communications. Moreover, there are both literates and post-literates who are highly efficient in the language but prefer to learn orally. When China acknowledges a literacy rate of approximately ninety-one percent, that amounts to approximately 117,000,000 who are illiterates (that is the combined populations of Canada, Spain, and Kenya). So, how many more hundreds of millions of functional illiterates and semi-illiterates are there? Or, what is the general population size of the oral preference learners?

The Chinese church both inside and outside of China, in general, can be commended for a literate approach in discipling the church and reaching the general population; however, just how effective are we in reaching the larger body made of oral preference learners?

In general, oral speaking societies or communities use various forms of complementary oral communication forms to transmit knowledge in farming, family protocols, food preparation, medical treatments, medicine and other practices including religion. There are five powerfully linked tools for the practice of orality to take place: adherence to memory recall; practice through repetition; use of storytelling; employment of visual objects or symbols; and dissemination through the avenues of the arts, song, music, dance, drama and poetry.⁵

Indeed, Chinese society today continues to make music and tell stories—in larger cities, storytelling competition is a large event. There are forms of artistry (*Xiang Sheng*) that are appreciated year round. And who can forget the experiences of going to Chinese herb-

alists who practice their craft with distinction (and often keep the oral knowledge within the family-klan).

Orality for the Road Ahead

“The Back to Jerusalem Movement” captures both imagination and excitement. In a Bing search, one can find over to 2.6 million entries. Many of them report that there are 100,000 Chinese missionaries who are part of the Back to Jerusalem movement. How will they go cross-culture? How will they engage peoples of the surrounding nations—Central Asia and also the Middle East and North Africa?

Let us look from within China first. Aside from the Han Chinese, there are 55 other officially recognized minorities in China. The ethnic minorities represent approximately 105 million people. Will the Chinese church, and indeed, the international church, be willing to learn the heart language of the ethnic minorities, or will they force the ethnic minorities to learn the Chinese language so that they may be reached? Heart language choice matters in reaching the unreached.⁶

The ethnic minorities within China, each with their colorful and rich history, share neighboring borders with other countries including Myanmar, Laos, Thailand, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Mongolia, Russia, India, Afghanistan and Tajikistan. Which strategy will the Back to Jerusalem Movement missionaries take? Will they keep the cultural prejudice of “illiterates” as having “no culture” or will the new missionary force come to appreciate the unique culture of each people group?

Going beyond the borders of China, crossing through the neighboring countries, travelers including the missionaries from the Back to Jerusalem Movement will encounter large religious blocks: Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam. The approach to these long-lived historical religions requires a different strategy, one that includes an understanding of worldviews, gaps and barriers, as well as a combination of oral strategies.

During these early days of the Chinese missionary preparation, will the Back to

Jerusalem Movement examine which strategic approach to take (print versus oral)? Will the missionaries from China be willing learners of Buddhist and Hindi worldviews so that they can be more fruitful? Will the missionaries from China be willing to learn and distinguish that Islam is incredibly diverse? Will the missionaries from China be willing to learn the Persian culture and contrast this to the Arabic culture?

The history, language and culture of China inform reflective practitioners of mission that many of the critical elements already exist to bring the gospel to other major religions. Orality as a practice and a communication strategy is deeply embedded DNA within the Chinese culture. By prayer, adopting contextualized oral strategies in the heart language and buttressed by history, the missionaries of the Back to Jerusalem Movement can engage, converse and live out the gospel among the Buddhist, Hindi and Islamic cultures.

International Orality Network, a global network of over 100 mission agencies, provides extensive resources and training to reach the oral preference learners. (A short resource list is provided at the end of this article.)

Will we, together, be willing to assist the Chinese church to know that the very historical foundations of the orality practices from China are suitable as practice and are an indispensable strategy along the Silk Routes across Asia? “

This article first appeared in China 20/20, a publication of ChinaSource, August 2009. Reprinted with permission.

Samuel Chiang serves with the International Orality Network. He and his family have lived in Hong Kong since 1991 serving China and the global church.



1 A body of literature and studies have matured on “Multiple Intelligences.” See link available as of 08/July/2009 at www.thomasarmstrong.com/multiple_intelligences.htm for an overview primer on this subject. For resources on this subject see: literacyworks.org/mi/resources/index.html

2 For a good discussion on these concepts please see the Chinese Traditional and Simplified versions of the book *Making Disciples of Oral Learners*, ed. Avery Willis and Steve Evens, (London: ILN, 2009), pages 93 & 94 in both books.

3 Education For All Global Monitoring Report, 2008. Link available as of 08/July/2009 at unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0015/001547/154743e.pdf

4 There are also literate and highly literate people who prefer to learn in an oral form. These are categorized as “secondary orality learners.”

5 Paul H. DeNeui, *Communicating Christ Through Story and Song: Orality in Buddhist Contexts*, (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 2008).

6 See J. Dudley Woodberry, *From Seed to Fruit: Global Trends, Fruitful Practices and Emerging Issues amongst Muslims*. (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 2008). Clearly, learning the heart language is a necessary variable for both initiation of communities of believers and increased fruitfulness. A combination of “heart language” and “learning strategy” incorporation further increases the fruitfulness.

ORALITY RESOURCES

- I. HOW YOUR CHURCH CAN START A STORYING PROJECT.
 - A. IN THE U.S.—VISIT WWW.REALLIFEMINISTRIES.COM/LEADERS
 - B. IN AN UNREACHED PEOPLE GROUP—VISIT WWW.FINISHINGTHETASK.COM
 - C. IN A BIBLELESS PEOPLE GROUP—VISIT WWW.ONESTORY.ORG
- II. HOW TO DO BIBLE STORYING.
 - A. VIDEO OF GRANT LOVEJOY “INTRODUCTION TO ORALITY” DOWNLOAD AT WWW.

ORALBIBLE.COM/VIDEO.HTM.

STORYING WORKSHOPS WWW.SWBTS.EDU/INDEX.CFM?PAGEID=1082 (FT. WORTH, TX, MAY 19-23, NOV. 3-7) AND WWW.ONESTORY.ORG

- C. WWW.CHRONOLOGICALBIBLESTORYING.COM
- D. WWW.ORALSTRATEGIES.COM
- E. WWW.AVERYWILLIS.ORG

III. ORALITY MINISTRIES.

WWW.INTERNATIONALORALITYNETWORK.COM
WWW.ONESTORY.ORG
WWW.GO2SOUTHASIA.ORG
WWW.GODS-STORY.ORG/BIBLEATLAST.HTM
WWW.SIUTRAINING.ORG
WWW.STORYRUNNERS.COM
WWW.WYCLIFFEONESTORY.INFO
WWW.YWAMONESTORY.ORG
WWW.ORALSTRATEGIES.COM
WWW.ST4T.ORG

IV. MISCELLANEOUS

ALL THE FOLLOWING RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE FROM WWW.IMB.ORG FOR \$5.00 EACH

TELLING GOD’S STORY VIDEO
 MAKING DISCIPLES OF ORAL LEARNERS (AVAILABLE IN CHINESE, SOON IN KOREAN, INDONESIAN AND SPANISH)

ORALITY AROUND THE WORLD DVD
 “TELLING THE STORY” WORKBOOK—A PRIMER ON CHRONOLOGICAL BIBLE STORYING

FOLLOWING JESUS: MAKING DISCIPLES OF ORAL LEARNERS—SEVEN AUDIO MODULES OF 400 STORIES

C. ORDER “MAKING DISCIPLES OF ORAL LEARNERS” AUDIO BOOK FOR \$5.00 AT: WWW.STORYRUNNERS.COM/RESOURCES/MDOL.ASPX
 D. BASIC BIBLE STORYING BY DR. J.O. TERRY: WWW.CHURCHSTARTING.NET/BOOKS.HTM

E. ORALITY CONSULTATIONS

1. WWW.INTERNATIONALORALITYNETWORK.COM
2. WWW.CALL2ALL.ORG



Harry Hoffman

MEMBER CARE IN CHINA

Harry Hoffman

Member care in China is growing. Experiencing new life as they become Christians, more and more Chinese are motivated to be missionaries, both within the country as well as outside of China. Central Asia, the Middle East and the Muslim and Buddhist world are regions many of the Chinese believers feel called to.

In May 2008, the church in China was mobilized in response to the earthquake in Sichuan China. Christians made up 70-80% of the volunteer workers, having been sent by their churches from all over the country. Many of the volunteer workers, leaving their jobs and home, committed to live and serve for two years within the disaster area. As my team and I helped and served, taught and trained, gave and counseled alongside the local volunteers, the following member care related topics appeared to be of great importance to the church.

The Church as a Sending Body (System Care)

Local Churches were and are still sending people into the earthquake region to help, serve and comfort victims. The “Role of the Sending Church” is a big member care related topic in many parts of the world, and the “Code of Good Practice,” both for sending churches and sending agencies is frequently discussed. Looking at China, there are good examples of sending churches and not so good ones.

Trauma Care (Emotional Care)

The workers who volunteered in Sichuan after the earthquake were faced with trauma and crisis. Meeting children who lost their parents, visiting communities who lost 80% of their children and teachers after the school collapsed, and facing death and shock all around is not an easy task. It takes a certain set of skills, information, training and courage to be able to effectively and relationally function in an environment of trauma and death.

Closely connected is the topic of “Secondary Trauma,” which refers to those people who care for, or are involved with, those who have been directly traumatized. My team and I have produced booklets and spent dozens of hours training volunteers about trauma and

secondary trauma. The training has been received very positively, but it is a new topic, which has never been addressed and taught in Chinese churches before.

Personal Wholeness (Self Care)

Dealing with trauma and secondary trauma can bring people to the end of themselves. The topic of self care is discussed much in the Chinese church, which, generally speaking, is quite performance and task oriented. For sure, the ability to accomplish much is a strength of the Chinese church. We ran and are still facilitating “People Helper Trainings,” teaching people skills for self reflection and basic counseling. Self care communicates a major paradigm shift to the Chinese Church, and the demand for these kinds of trainings is huge.

Team Work (Relational Care)

Rumor and research says that one of the main reasons for missionary attrition is problems and conflicts with other missionaries. In my experience, the same is true for Chinese missionaries. The sociological changes in China over the last thirty years resulted in large scale diversity and perceived dichotomies, one of which is the change from Confucian thinking and social structure to something new, which hasn’t yet been labeled. This makes team work and relationships very difficult and one of the highest training demands.

Member care in China is developing. We have been teaching about member care in local missionary training schools, but has not been a big draw. Usually, one finds 20-30 year old candidates full of motivation and passion to reach the lost. However, I was 29 when I moved to China and 32 when I burned out. Only then was I willing to hear and learn from other people’s experiences. There are many success stories of Chinese missionaries. But more and more we hear about stories of crisis, broken marriages, domestic violence, the need for inner healing, depression and losing faith. Member care is vital for Chinese missionaries to be prepared for the issues they face on the mission field. “

For more information on Member Care in China: <http://www.chinamembercare.com> or email in English or Chinese: MemberCareChina@gmail.com

What Will They Say?

Samuel E. & Roberta Chiang

The following books, all written on China in the recent years, will be discussed:

Baptism (An English Translation of Xizao, Paperback) by Yang Jiang, Translated by Judith M. Amory and Yaohua Shi

Published by Hong Kong University Press, 2007

ISBN 978-9622098312

China Witness: Voices from a Silent Generation (Paperback) by Xinran

Published by Vintage Books, 2009

ISBN 978-0099501480

Samuel Chiang, Global Coordinator—International Orality Network, along with his bride, **Roberta Chiang**, serve the global church with a special focus on the Church in China; he also serves on the Board of ChinaSource. Roberta has assisted in the marriage partnership over the past twenty plus years, while Samuel has assisted in the parenting partnership. She is very interested in the area of spiritual direction, the ancient church, loves to read and garden. They have three children and have lived in Hong Kong since 1991.

Out of Mao's Shadow: The Struggle for the Soul of a New China (Paperback) by Philip P. Pan

Published by Simon & Schuster, New York, 2008

ISBN 978-1-4165-3706-9

Factory Girls: Voices from the Heart of Modern China (Paperback) by Leslie T. Chang

Published by Picador an imprint of Pan Macmillan, London, Great Britain, 2009

ISBN 978-0-330-50670-0

In 2049, at the centennial anniversary celebration of the founding of the People's Republic of China, what will the Chinese say about this period in their history? How will they characterize these first sixty years? Will they consider this to be an "inflection" point for China in the 21st Century due to the build up of wealth, creation of opportunities, and willingness to engage risk?

Will they capture this period with patriotism and strength, as they have hosted the Olympics, shall host the World Expo, and are releasing, imminently, an epic film about the founding of the New China featuring Chairman Mao? Or will they bracket this period as the Zhou Li Bo era? (China's long standing and very "hot" comedian, for whom the crowds willingly fork-over US\$55 to just

hear him crack a-joke-a-minute in his 120 minute long soliloquy. He is so hot that scalpers are able to charge US\$439 per ticket per show—princely sums at a time when China's economy is still being compared to that of Angola.)

Or will they label this period as both a time of globalization and global de-leveraging with profound effects on Chinese citizens? (The boom—bust cycles are a literal economic revolution, a trend that Chairman Mao could not have contemplated.)

China, in its second revolution within the last forty years, is seeing the emergence of two societies, two cultures—rural and urban—and the division is creating tension. Rural people are either coming or going, and in the cities, people are arriving or exploring further ashore. Families are divided into the older (Cultural Revolution relics), and younger (one child policy—princes and princesses), the haves and the have-nots. Furthermore, families have to sort through two ideologies or religions—atheism or communism, and Buddhism or Christianity. These combustible variables are yielding a lack of peace and harmony in China.

A range of authors have tried to capture the moods and the generations within China. We have selected four different authors, two from within China, and two Diaspora Chinese. The subjects of these authors cover a span of over sixty years, documenting tales of four generations—of liberation, cultural revolution, the 1989 generation (referring to the 1989 Tiananmen Square Protests), and the current mobile generation (migrant workers who are utterly dependent on their sole device—the mobile phone).

It is clear that historical epochs have consequential implications, and the four

authors, through story, interviews, narratives, and personal biographical sketches, provide an understanding of individual and collective memory.



Remaking a New China

Baptism, written by one of China's famous playwrights, Yang Jiang, deploys a clever use of fiction to describe the tumultuous period of post-liberation into the Cultural Revolution. She is an avant-garde writer who published her first and only novel in the 1980s, when speaking up was not the new normal.

The original Chinese title of the book was "Xizao." It literally means "bath," and was designated as one of the first mass movements of "The Three Anti-Campaign" of 1951, directed against corruption, waste, and "obstructionist bureaucrats." Targeting bureaucrats, managers, former members of bourgeois classes, businessmen, professionals, and intellectuals, the "bath" was expected to remake, these individuals, for the New China.

The campaign of "washing" was similar to the western idea of "brainwashing." The idea was to have all the "filth" of the Old Regime "washed away," so that rebirth could take place in the "New China." The translators of this novel chose the English term "Baptism," (as opposed to the Chinese title "Bath") because it implies a similar concept of "passage through water leading to a new life."

Written in three parts, part one describes how New China recruits talent from every quarter, part two shows how this cast of characters was really in need of "washing,"

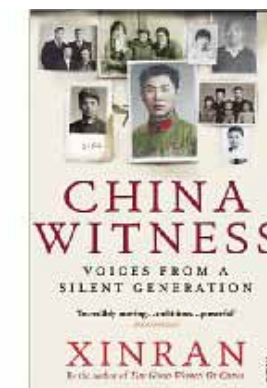
and part three relates how these people conducted themselves throughout the campaign. Character descriptions make for entertaining reading. Readers are easily enticed to align oneself with some, and to dislike others. Ultimately, the reader begins to understand the prevalent fear that dictated how people behaved, what drove individuals to come up with more and more creative ways of self-criticism until there was nothing left hidden and no such thing as a private life; and ultimately, what destroyed families and institutions.

Yang Jiang's goal was to show how these intellectuals were reformed, after describing what they were like before the hoped-for reformation. The cast of characters reflected this "need for washing," but they are, unsurprisingly, human. They represent any man or any woman, anywhere in the world, in their humanity—some have affairs, or think of having them, some are unscrupulous in their desires to "get ahead," some are crafty in their business dealings, teenage children are rebellious, and the entire cast, in general, resists, for the most part, this "new authority." Out of fear, they all pass their remake with flying colors, but the washing does not have the anticipated effect. Any discerning reader would ask these questions: what did they change from, why did they have to be changed, and were they really changed, or not?

Yang Jiang's novel captures the epoch history and memories of that period. Officially, in 1981, the Chinese Government rewrote the history of the Cultural Revolution. The official version is the one studied in schools. The population that lived through the Cultural Revolution literally clammed up and tried to erase their memories. Yang Jiang's novel describes fictional lives within real events, and keeps the memories of living in a surreal period in China's history alive.

Who really writes history, and who are historical figures? Would historical figures have implemented a change or contributed to continuity? Are their ideas and actions considered influential at that time or afterwards? Finally, what was the effect of the Cultural Revolution that may be linked to a larger theme?

Preserving Memories



Xinran has written a touching book titled *China Witness*. As a famous former radio show host, she recorded twenty interviews over a period of two years, beginning in 2006. Her journey took her throughout China, and in her words, she wanted to "record the emotional responses to the dramatic changes of the last century," because "China's younger generations are losing touch with earlier generations' struggles for national dignity."

The average age of the interviewee was in the seventies, with the oldest being ninety-seven. Through her interviews, Xinran is able to preserve memories, establish milieu and describe the character of people. These are the people who have clammed up, but they are also the people who have lived through the "unofficial" history. Their "class" backgrounds are diverse, from Yao Popo, the medicine woman, and a policeman who entered the police force as the People's Republic was founded, to overseas educated people, like the "pioneers of China's Oil," and General Phoebe. The interviews make for enjoyable reading. At times, Xinran digresses a bit too much in "psychoanalysis" of a person or situation, but not enough so as to cause the reader to lose hope. It is also obvious that she is still working through her own "China angst"—dealing with the implications of her parents joining the party, her mother's absorption with it, and then her own "communist youth" years.

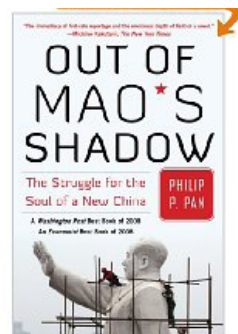
There is a theme, over and over again throughout the interviews, that "life was extremely hard, sometimes beyond endurance, but it was also very simple." Almost without fail, each interviewee, when asked if they would share the story of their times of

want and uncertainty with their adult children and grandchildren, said “no.” They said: “They would think we were foolish. They would laugh at us. They wouldn’t care. Everyone these days is only interested in money and material things. They can’t understand us.” Again, “fear” rules the day.

The Cultural Revolution left an indelible mark on Chinese history. The implications of this period are being lived out by the generation that Xinran interviewed—often with fear and confusion. The changes they have endured continue and are further compounded by a society undergoing economic revolution. In their lifetime, for example, this generation has witnessed the transition from a two-wheel society into a four-wheel society—there are approximately 1,000 new cars added to the roads in the city of Beijing, each day!

Hope

How will China continue on its path of economic development? How will the older generation be taken care of? Who will speak into issues on the environment and sustainability? Can a nation move forward without dealing with its past?



Philip P. Pan’s *Out of Mao’s Shadow—The Struggle for the Soul of a New China* is an important contribution to the knowledge of China, the character of its people, and the possible trajectories of the nation. Through eleven in-depth factual narratives, the readers are guided toward a ray of hope for the possibility of the birthing of a soul of the New China. Pan covered the spheres of media, business, government, medical, education, and law with an underlying positive tone on religion (Christians who are influential). He focused on the 1989 generation, those who came of age during the Tiananmen Square Protests, now in their forties.

Who writes the unofficial history? Pan rivets the reader with the story of a dead heroine from the Cultural Revolution, who wrote over 400 pages of Chinese characters in her own blood while in prison. It was discovered later that she had also written documents of 180,000 and 200,000 words in blood. It took a daring film maker to document the discontinuity in history and to preserve a long-ago voice. Modern technology “YouTubed” this documentary, now a reference point to “sanity” during the insane time of the Cultural Revolution has been preserved.

But he does not stop there. Pan deals with large macro-societal issues, ranging from medical care to how one actually does obey the law in China. Approximately 70% of China’s wealth is concentrated in about 4% of the population. In lucid prose, Pan brings to reality the skewed distribution of wealth through factual stories of miners, corrupt officials, a rich entrepreneur (who followed the law), and the razing of houses. Just as a reader feels alliance with the real heroine in her cause, a reader would feel equally outraged and sympathetic to those who lost out in the race to get ahead.

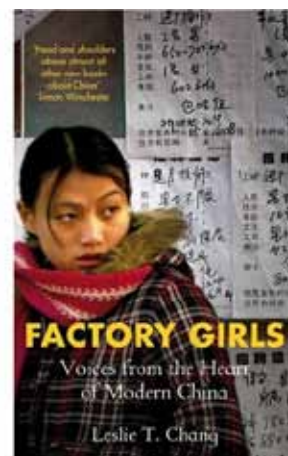
Economic development ushered in human darkness, but a distinct ray of hope exists with the 1989 generation; they are not afraid to seek the truth, and to speak out about it. Buried in one of the chapters is the story of a network of Christian lawyers who are working to make systemic changes. Pan uses such examples to demonstrate hope for China.

Fear

In this time of global de-leveraging, China is awash in excess capacity. In the province of Guangdong, affectionately known as the world’s workshop, approximately 20% of all factories sit currently unused. However, the remaining factories still employ millions of people, producing “Made In China” goods. Where do the employees come from? Are they full of fears and shame like the older generations, or are they truth seekers like the 1989 generation?

Officially known as migrant workers, many of the factory employees are female, under-aged, and come from rural villages

in various provinces across China. Leslie T. Chang has written a fascinating account of the female migrant workers who have produced household goods and world class brands.



In her book, *Factory Girls—Voices from the Heart of Modern China*, Chang provides a portrait of the modern Chinese women: young adults (16—30) who are risk-takers, think nothing of lying, practice deception to get ahead, capable online and capable in English, constantly taking “just-in-time” courses on etiquette and technical subjects, send money home, send more money home, and may have multiple sexual partners.

Wonderfully nested in the book is Chang’s own quest to discover her roots as well as a braided story of how the Chinese handle roots and genealogies: the Chinese view history of family genealogies not as facts or recorded stories, but as a means to establish a moral standard to guide the living—“genealogy listing is a history not of simply what happened, but what ought to happen if people behaved as they should.” (If you did not behave a certain way, you are not included in the genealogy!)

Chang aptly demonstrates that family tensions exist, stemming from changes in the nature of relationships. In the fast-paced mobile phone culture, connections mean everything and relationships can be discarded as people may change jobs every two to six months. Relationships are redefined in terms of “what can I get so that I can get ahead.”

Factory girls are changing the power structures within China. In a Confucianism context, what the father of the Chinese family says is “the law.” In a generation of break-

neck speed economic development, the talk of money is everything. It breaks the law, replaces the law, and in family circles, dissolves the traditional Chinese family structure. What the father says is no longer “law.” The migrant girls, through money, change the family power structure.

Trajectories to the Future

The Liberation of China ushered in a foreign system—Communism; people lived through the various “Anti-Campaigns” to “remake” themselves for the New China; they did what they were told. Cultural Revolution marked a dark period in China’s history; people survived, buried their memories, and lived in fear and shame. The 1989 generation, in contrast, continues to seek the truth.

The mobile generation takes risks, broke the mold of fear and shame, and “remade” themselves into new people; they love the test of life! Yet, their quest for economic advancement is leading them in the same direction and characteristics that China was trying to be liberated from: corruption, waste, and obstructionist bureaucracy.

The older generation can be excused if they feel somewhat confused—the very *raison d’être* of the liberation and revolution for which they gave their lives seems to be wasted. Furthermore, the ever advancing Chinese currency, the RMB, adds to changing family dynamics—the family structure is inverted and subverted, again.

Seasoned China watchers, are searching in their hearts for the true motherland. Is it any wonder that church leaders in and outside of China might be challenged in determining how to assist the Church to be relevant? Are we surprised that crowds of people paying Zhou Li Bo so that they can laugh? What will the celebrants in 2049 say about this period in history? “

CHINA RESOURCES ON THE WEB

www.afcing.org/bookstore

Large selection of simplified script evangelism, apologetics, and discipleship resources.

www.amitynewsservice.org

Communicating the news and views of the China Christian Council. Includes directory of registered churches in China.

www.asiaharvest.org

One of the most comprehensive sets of profiles available on China’s ethnic minorities, written by Paul Hattaway, author of *Operation China*.

www.bdconline.net

The Biographical Dictionary of Chinese Christianity--recording the life stories of hundreds of significant figures in Chinese Christianity across the centuries and around the world.

www.chinasource.org

Articles, book reviews, training resources, forums and blogs related to faith-based service in contemporary China. Includes links to other helpful sites plus information on ordering the quarterly *ChinaSource Journal*.

www.digitalbiblesociety.org

Information on ordering *Chinese Treasures*, a CD-ROM containing four Chinese versions of the Bible, commentaries, Bible study resources, video resources, and 177 Chinese Christian books in both simplified and traditional script, contributed by 30 different organizations.

www.globalchinacenter.org

Historical and cultural analysis of Christianity in the Chinese context, both in China and among the Chinese diaspora.

www.gmi.org/store/CD.html#OpChina

Operation China CD-ROM available from Global Mapping, Inc.

www.omf.org/omf/us/resources_1/newsletters/global_chinese_ministries
Global Chinese Ministries, a monthly newsletter for praying for Chinese peoples all over the world.

www.prayerforchina.com
Daily prayer items, profiles on well-known Christian figures in China, and information on ordering the Intercessors for China prayer calendar.

<http://ricci.rt.usfca.edu>
The Ricci 21st Century Roundtable on the History of Christianity in China contains profiles of key institutions and individuals and a directory of relevant archives worldwide.

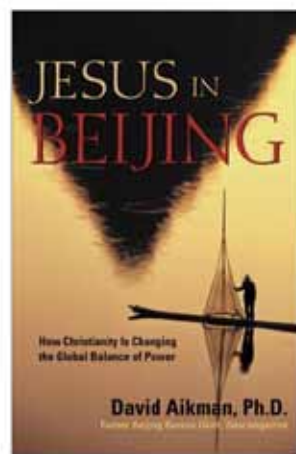
www.servingchina.com
Connects interested individuals with short- and long-term service opportunities in China. Also contains useful background and orientation resources.

www.zgbriefs.org
Weekly email summary of the news in China, including church news, sent free-of-charge.

BOOKS ON CHINA, ALREADY REVIEWED IN AN EARLIER ISSUE

At the turn of this century, China captured the imaginations of many with the lure of billions of people to be served, and equally tantalizing billions of dollars to be made in trade. Consider this: China alone accounted for 41% of the growth of the total world oil demand in the last 12 months;¹ 40% of the world's cement; 31% of global coal; 30% of iron ore; 27% of steel products; and 25% of aluminum.²

Borrowing from the geo-political practice from the United States of attempting to secure one's own backyard (Latin America), with its neighbors in the Association of Southeast Asian Countries.³ This will create the world's largest tariff-free trade zone for nearly 2 billion people, with a combined gross domestic product of more than 2 trillion US dollars by 2010.



- 1 British Petroleum (BP) statistics for China, as reported by Asia Times, www.atimes.com/atimes/China/F123Ad09.html
- 2 www.ceramicindustry.com/CDA/ArticleInformation/features/BNP_Features_Item/0,2710,125927,00.html
- 3 The 10-member ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) are: Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam

David Aikman's *Jesus in Beijing*, a study of China's Christian history within her regional and global context, is significant.

Libraries are stacked full of books on the military, political, and economic prowess of nations, but seldom is there a contribution from a sociological viewpoint, and much less from a Christian perspective supported by a cast of Christian characters. That is why this book is remarkable, significant and destined to become a 'timeless' book, required reading for many years to come.

Succinct yet finely detailed, Aikman starts with the historical journeys of the Nestorians, Franciscans, Jesuits, and the 19th century Protestants to China. He shows how 'tent-making' and illegal 'smuggling' to support ministry in China have precedents back in the 1800's. His short section on 'Opium Boats and Christian Tracts' may lead readers to reflect that perhaps God had a very good reason to close China to the outside world in the middle of the last century.

After introducing the roots of Christianity, and how China's doors closed and reopened to the outside world, Aikman aptly moves on to establish the 'Patriarchs' of the modern Christian faith in China, a faith that is – vitally! – indigenous. Perhaps not wanting to offend, he fails to mention three decades-worth of pastors and Christian leaders who disappeared during China's attempt to wipe out Christianity, but he does focus instead on those whom God has preserved: Wang Ming Dao, Allen Yuan, Samuel Lamb, Moses Xie, and Li Tianen. Biographical descriptions and contextual nuances will allow any student of Christian history to appreciate these presentations as eyewitness accounts.

Furthermore, Aikman has probably whetted many people's appetites for a fuller

account of China's Christian history from 1949—1979, yet, as fewer and fewer of these original patriarchs remain alive to tell their stories, a wealth of Church history from that era is being lost forever.

Subsequent chapters titled 'Uncles,' and 'Aunts, Nephews, and Nieces' wonderfully present the body of Christ in China. While not covering the whole church body in China of course (there are many other church networks that are not mentioned), a real sense of body dynamics at work emerges. Aikman explores three areas of interest: the house church 'networks' and the possible numbers of Christians in China; theology and an indigenized 'Confession of Faith'; and an additional cast of multi-generational leaders who are making an impact in China. While I suspect much foreign assistance was provided to put together the 'Confession of Faith,' I do believe the articles were a significant achievement in that the house church groups came to a common agreement on the precious faith – no small achievement given the difficulty Chinese Church leaders have on agreeing on many things.

Only a brief four pages in the book are devoted to Lu Xiaomin, or 'Sister Ruth', who has been enabled by the Holy Spirit to write many songs, which have become known as "Songs of Caanan." I suspect there will be many future volumes on Sister Ruth, and many derivative stories across China on how the indigenous songs are used by God.

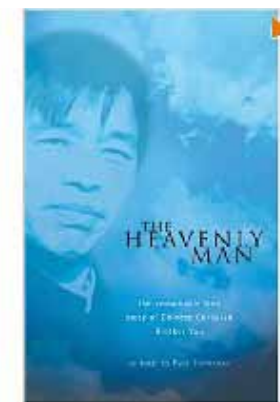
Overall Aikman's survey of Christianity in China skillfully weaves a tapestry of the China Church that incorporates such diverse themes as seminary training, the ministries of foreigners in China (and their code words), the State Church, the Catholic Church, some of the mainland Chinese Christians overseas, and the relationship of official bodies in the international realm.

Jesus in Beijing has not been without its critics. *The Wall Street Journal* review took Aikman to task for providing only anecdotal evidence to support a book that claims to be a serious sociological study. Elsewhere, especially among people who have participated in China ministry, suggestions were made that Aikman was 'paid' to write the book in order to expose and to bring down the Church in China. I find both accusations absurd.

Aikman's sincerity is well known and his claims for Christian transformation and global power are well founded.

One of the revealing themes that was somewhat teased out in the book is the "Back to Jerusalem" movement, and the potential actualization of this goal. Aikman simply broad brushes this issue, and leaves it in a curious state. The heart of the question regarding the 'Back to Jerusalem' goal is, "Would China be able to send 100,000 evangelists across the Silk Road to bring the gospel back to Jerusalem?"

Paul Hattaway has written two books touching in different ways on the 'Back to Jerusalem' theme: *The Heavenly Man*, co-authored with Brother Yun, and *Back to Jerusalem*. Both books have raised the dreams and ire of many!

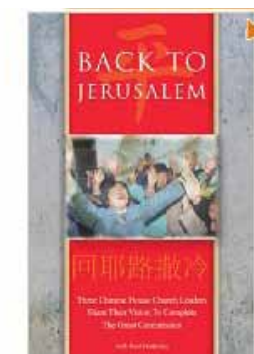


The Heavenly Man is a quasi-auto-biographical account of Liu Zhenying, known as Brother Yun, who is the 'heavenly man' of the title (the book explains the origin of the name). In the broadest sense, this book is one man's perspective on how the Church in China has developed (though Aikman provides a much better, deeper, and broader perspective).

From a spiritual/devotional viewpoint it is a passable book, as no one can, or should argue with someone else's experience in Christ. But the book professes to be more than just a devotional read.

Brother Yun is presented as the 'authorized representative' who speaks for the house churches around the world. In fact, we are told, a grouping of house churches with 58 million adherents, called the Sinim

Fellowship, drafted a letter to this effect.¹ However, the Sinim Fellowship is only mentioned once in Aikman's book, and the 'authorized representative' who is to speak for China and is recognized by the 'uncles' is not mentioned at all (nor are Paul Hattaway's books). Was this just an oversight? Or did Aikman's journalistic instincts tell him to stay away from the real controversies? I suspect the latter!



So what about *Back to Jerusalem*? Is the concept a vision, or a legitimate movement, and what will be the future of the mainland Chinese Church in Central Asia and into the Middle East?

The origin of the 'Back to Jerusalem' vision came to several groups of people in China, and is well documented in Aikman's book. However, Hattaway's *Back to Jerusalem* gives the impression that the entire house church movement, especially in the rural areas, is imbued with the 'Back to Jerusalem' vision. I do not believe this is really the case.

The original vision to preach the gospel from China 'Back to Jerusalem' was to involve only seven countries: Afghanistan, Iran, Arabia, Iraq, Palestine, Syria, and Turkey. One of the original groups formed to carry out the vision was called the 'Back to Jerusalem Evangelistic Band,' but it could hardly be called a movement. In fact, all activities associated with 'Back to Jerusalem' stopped in 1949—1950, though by that time some of the Chinese Christians had got as far as Xinjiang.

¹ Hattaway, Paul. *The heavenly Man: The remarkable true story of Chinese Christian brother Yun*. Monarch Books UK & USA, 2003 p 291

In Hattaway's book, the original vision has been greatly expanded to include not only the Islamic world, but also the Buddhist and Hindu worlds. He gives a list of not seven but 51 countries. Is this really a new vision, or a self-serving vision from the West? Many Christian leaders in China have the desire and passion to take the gospel back to Jerusalem. I have heard this passion expressed myself as early as 1991. But if you were to ask these church leaders which countries are involved in this vision, many could not name the original seven, let alone the enlarged list of 51!

Chinese publications, such as the *Great Commission Bi-Monthly Journal* takes the Silk Road, the traditional route from China to Jerusalem, as the one running through Central Asia and into the Middle East.¹

This agrees with Aikman's research and understanding of the original 'Back to Jerusalem' intentions.

However, in *Back to Jerusalem*, Hattaway and his associates insist on two additional silk routes, which conveniently include the Hindu and Buddhist worlds. Such an enlarged vision would require an army of people for its fulfillment, and raises the question if there are really 100,000 Chinese cross-cultural missionaries prepared and ready to go into the difficult parts of the world, legally. Many China Church watchers have become resoundingly concerned with the claims of this new movement.

The rural house church movement in China is currently facing tremendous challenges. Regional development and globalization means the mossy smell of money is located in the cities, and many of the younger house church leaders are migrating there. The rural house church is, once again, gray-ing swiftly. These same migrating lead-

ers are also discovering the challenges of the cities, educational differences, legal means of work-ing, and accountability. The new social-edu-cation-legal realities are very significant.

If the rural house churches are aging swiftly, and if the younger leaders are in a mode of urban migration, where does that leave the 'Back to Jerusalem' movement, which is, in fact, tied to the rural house churches? What about the 100,000 cross-cultural missionaries who are under training and are ready to go? I ask the question: Where are they? How many are under training right now or able 'to go,' legally. There seems no evidence of any such mass training under way.

I believe the 'Back to Jerusalem' vision is alive, and is still in the hearts of many church leaders in China (comprising of people in house churches, official churches, and Christians in the market place). This is why Aikman's chapter on "Artists, Writers, and Academics," is significant and ties in well with China's Christian future. Could it be that God is creating several layered strategies to bring the Gospel back to Jerusalem?²

Aikman has excelled in telling China's contemporary Christian history up to the new century. *Jesus in Beijing* is a first-rate, timeless book that is a must-read for anyone who is interested in what God is doing to prepare China in the 21st Century. «



Sam & Robbi Chiang

2 For an insightful look at the back to Jerusalem Movement, please refer to the december 2004 issue of china 20/20, www.china2020.org

1 Great Commission Bi-Monthly (ISSN 1537-1875), April 2004

TORREMOLINOS AGREEMENT

Gathered around the theme "Back to Europe" in response to the Macedonian call to "come over and help us" (Acts 16:9), approximately 40 church and evangelical mission leaders who work in Europe met to pray and discuss the need to evangelize Europe and to strengthen the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ on this continent.

Upon the conclusion of our meetings, we first and foremost express our gratitude to God for the Spirit-led and sacrificial work of European churches in the past and at present, both on this continent and beyond. Secondly, we recognize that God is raising a missionary force from other regions of the world. Therefore, and in light of the continent's urgent need to receive the Gospel afresh, we call upon churches

from around the world to join together to re-evangelize Europe.

Furthermore, and because of the spiritual crisis spreading throughout Europe, we affirm that this missionary effort demands an integrated, intentional and united effort between European churches and the rest of the world.

Therefore, we commit to:

1. Encourage a prayer movement from around the world for the spiritual renewal of European churches.
2. Promote the mobilization of missionaries from other continents to contribute to evangelism, discipleship and church planting in Europe, as

well as the spiritual renewal of churches in spiritual crisis.

3. Facilitate, in cooperation with European churches, the integration of the missionaries that God is sending into the harvest force that is already in Europe.

With the purpose of extending God's Kingdom on the continent of Europe, we commend ourselves in brotherly and sisterly love to the grace of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Torremolinos (Málaga, Spain), May 15, 2009 «





INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIP ASSOCIATES-IPA

Russ Simons

We've changed our name!

What used to be IPA-Interdev Partnership Associates, is now **IPA- International Partnership Associates**. This change was timely because IPA has grown from 14 to 44 partnering associates from around the world. This more accurately reflects who we are.

Guided by our Mission: "To the glory of God: Christ's Church present, unified and ministering effectively among all peoples", March found most of us in Costa Rica for our yearly Summit. At this Summit 3 more Latin Americans joined IPA. It was the first time for some of us to hear some sessions from Spanish into English through simultaneous translation equipment.

We are passionately driven to do all we can to reach the remaining least reached peoples. Our means to accomplish this ambitious goal is through church and mission agencies from the north and south working together as true partners.

Last year, it was most fulfilling to join with MANI (Movement for African National Initiatives) in Feb08, in South Africa, and the WEA Mission Commission, in Oct08, in Pattaya, Thailand.

In both gatherings IPA served as advisors to have more interactive sessions resulting in concrete outcomes. Bertil Ekström, Executive Director, WEA Mission Commission, stated:

"The leadership of IPA played a crucial and decisive role in the Mission Commission consultation held in Pattaya, Thailand. Based on their experience and knowledge in conducting evaluations, analysis and partnership dialogues, IPA was responsible for leading the whole process of missiological reflection and planning of future activities by the different task forces, networks and forums related to the MC. The conclusions and outcomes of the consultation serve as invaluable tools for defining the priori-



ties and for guiding the work of the MC in the next three to five years. This was made possible through the excellent collaboration and facilitation of IPA".

One challenge this year is the complete re-design of our partnership training materials, to make them more relevant and flexible to the emerging missions world. Secondly, we have set a goal to mentor young leaders with collaborative competencies, and to invite them to our future Summits. At our Costa Rica Summit, we were mandated to seek those with partnering DNA, to walk with them in their journey to become the next generation of authentic partnering leaders. «



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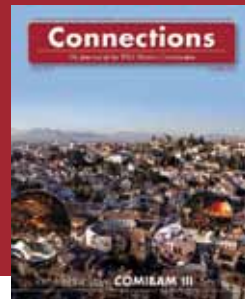
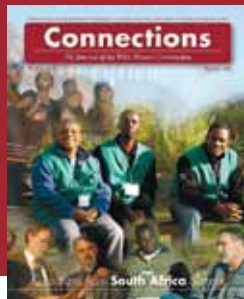
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