

ChinaSource Quarterly

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## Editorial

### China and the Global Church

By Brent Fulton

The articles in this issue are taken largely from a gathering last year of Christian leaders from Mainland China along with representatives of several dozen international organizations involved in the region. These leaders shared their vision for the future of China's church, and together the participants discussed how Christians from inside and outside China might serve together in the days to come.

From at least three perspectives, China's church is poised to play a major role in global Christianity in the coming decades. Looking at sheer numbers, China before long will likely have both the world's largest concentration of Christians as well as the largest concentration of unreached peoples. Assuming increased interaction becomes possible in the future between the church internationally and the church in China, both official and unofficial, China's Christians may be expected to have a significant voice within the global Body of Christ. At the same time believers worldwide who are committed to see all peoples reached for Christ will continue to focus on China as a major mission field.

China's growing international clout -- economically, politically, diplomatically, and culturally -- will reflect the priorities of Chinese leaders in all of these areas of influence. The global community will increasingly have to come to terms with "the Chinese way of doing things." However, should the Gospel continue to become more mainstream in China, Christians in these spheres will have opportunity to bring a new set of values to this global dialogue. Together with their counterparts in other nations, they could lead the way in forging Christ-centered approaches to the pressing issues facing the world in this century.

Finally, as travel to other countries becomes more commonplace, and as Christians in China mature in their vision for the spread of the Gospel beyond China's borders, a new wave of Christ's ambassadors will likely emerge from within China. Fledgling efforts at cross-cultural ministry training and sending, some of which have proved disappointing both to those who were sent and to those doing the sending, indicate that this movement will not develop overnight. Cultural, spiritual, and logistical hurdles need to be overcome before China will see a full-fledged contemporary indigenous missions movement. Nonetheless, the seeds have already been planted for a Spirit-led thrust outward to regions where Christ's name has yet to be proclaimed.

In this issue we examine the factors that have brought the Chinese church to this point of significant global involvement. With cautious optimism we explore, through the eyes of some who are themselves involved in writing this new chapter, the contours of what this new era could look like, mindful that these initial thoughts are but opening phrases in a conversation that will continue to evolve in the coming decades.

*Brent Fulton is President of ChinaSource and the Editor of ChinaSource Quarterly.*

### The Chinese Church and the Global Body of Christ

By Ezra Jin

It is a great honor to be able to attend this conference and to share what God is doing in China and in the world. I pastor Zion Church in Beijing and also serve in a seminary. I was born in northern China and in 1986 I entered Beijing University. During my junior year, I experienced the Tiananmen Square event. Two months later I visited a church, and two months after that someone shared the Gospel with me. That desolate fall afternoon, in the corner of a TSPM church, I received Christ as my savior. That very night I knew how I should spend my life.

In 1992 I quit my job in a foreign company in Beijing and decided to go into full-time ministry. Perhaps I was the first person with a bachelor's degree who entered seminary in China following the Cultural Revolution. After studying and teaching in the seminary for seven years and serving in the TSPM church for ten years, in 2002 I came to Fuller Theological Seminary to study. In 2007 I went back to start a house church, called Zion Church, in Beijing. I do not know how you feel, but having served in the TSPM for more than ten years I knew that it was not pleasing to God. So when I returned, I decided to serve in the house church.

At the time I started my church in 2007 in an office building in Beijing, a minister from North America came to visit. He said, "If your church can last more than three months it will be a miracle." At that time we had a 300 square meter meeting place. This visitor said that there had never before been such a large meeting place for Christians in Beijing, so I was challenging the government. This was not a "house church." In addition, since the Chinese house church has no tradition of giving regular offerings, how could we pay more than \$4,000 per month in rent?

However, we've been at it for more than four years! We have experienced many challenges, but we're still here. Our worship space has been extended to 8,000 square meters. Every weekend we have about 700 people. We have successfully planted two more churches around Peking University and Beijing Normal University. We have also sent two missionary families—to Lanzhou and to Yunnan—who have successfully started churches there. People from other churches in China visit our church and say, "Pastor Jin, certainly you must have someone in the government helping you behind the scenes." I reply, "I do have someone helping me behind the scenes—in heaven."

Four and a half years ago when I started this church, I could not have dreamed of what we see happening today. Every Sunday we have about 10-20 newcomers, 80 percent of whom are coming to church for the first time. When I was serving in the TSPM church everyone who attended was older than me. But in my church today they're all younger than I am. They have very good educations and very good careers. God's work in China today is really wonderful. It's like Ephesians 1:18-19 says; we really do not know the hope to which He has called us, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe.

I have been asked to share about the role of the Chinese church within the global Body of Christ, and so I share my experiences as an evangelist who has served the Lord for more than 20 years in China. I'd like to share from I Corinthians 12:26: "If one member suffers, all suffer together. If one member is honored, all rejoice together;" and from Galatians 6:2: "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." I will be addressing three 30-year periods: 1949-1978; 1979-2008; and 2009 to the present.

### **1949-1978**

During this time the Chinese church was forced to be separated from the global Body of Christ. The Communist Party came to power in 1949, and in 1950 they expelled all foreign missionaries from China. More than 150 years of Protestant missionary work in China came to an end. The Chinese church lost its most important leaders and was orphaned. In 1953 the Party launched the Three-self Patriotic Movement, the goal being to sever all connections between the Chinese church and the church overseas, particularly anyone in the Chinese church who was considered an "imperialist."

The Chinese church experienced a political movement that was unthinkable to the church outside. Some Chinese Christians, contrary to their own consciences, were willing to accuse the foreign missionaries and even the faith in order to stay within the movement. Others refused and suffered persecution and imprisonment, including Wang Mingdao, Watchman Nee, Moses Xie, and others. Even the survival of those who stayed within the TSPM, going through a difficult process in order to change their own perspective, was by no means guaranteed. As the revolution gained momentum, the TSPM churches began to be shut down. Eventually, there were no churches to be seen anywhere in China. I know many of you prayed for China during that time, and some organizations in the midst of this darkness persevered in faith, delivering Bibles and spreading the Gospel message.

### **1979-2008**

In 1979, China opened its doors and resumed its interactions with the outside world. We saw revival in countryside, followed by the revival of the Three-Self church in the cities. After the Tiananmen incident in 1989, the urban house church also began rising up. China began experiencing the most rapid urbanization process in the history of the world. The cities became an area where the government was not able to exert effective control. At this time many Christians from around the world found creative ways to enter China. The global church began serving in China in various ways, including Bible distribution, Christian publishing and broadcasting, church planting, personal evangelism, theological training, social services, and evangelism among minority peoples. The revival in China cannot be separated from this support and participation by overseas Christians. At the same time, there have also been some negative effects, including the emergence of denominationalism, heresies brought in from abroad and corruption of leaders due to financial issues. Nonetheless, during the past thirty years the Chinese church has experienced great growth.

### **2009 to the Present**

Now we've entered a third era. Some people would ask why I put the beginning of this era at 2009; is this not rather arbitrary? However, this year was very significant in Chinese history. Chinese intellectuals entered into a heated debate about whether or not China's reform would continue. The reform launched by Deng Xiaoping, emphasizing economic prosperity, had lost its ability to motivate, its popular support, and its direction. All of the negative effects of reform were being felt by the people at large. All the celebrations marking the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the PRC were tinged with the realization that the tensions in society had reached the boiling point. At the same time we saw new trends emerging in the Chinese church. The Wenchuan earthquake in Sichuan in 2008 opened up for the church a new space in which to rise up. The Chinese church suddenly leapt into action, revealing its latent power and resources.

In addition, at this time church leaders in China responded to an invitation from the International Lausanne Committee to send a sizeable group of participants to the Capetown 2010 conference. Although in the end we were not able to participate due to the pressure from the government, the Chinese house church had in the previous two years of preparation developed powerful networks, and its passion for world mission had been aroused like never before.

I believe these phenomena point to the dawning of a new era beginning in 2009. I believe that in the next 30 years, whether in breadth or in depth, the global body of Christ will connect with the Chinese church much more than before. I also see the church in China facing six challenges in the next 30 years. These challenges are not ours alone, but are for the global church as well.

### **Six Challenges**

*First, China will remain the largest mission field in the world.* During the next 30 years, China will still contain the largest number of nonbelievers and unreached people. We must give attention both to the extreme level of difficulty as well as to the extreme strategic significance of the evangelization of China. In the past, I was very encouraged by reports of the number of Christians in China, for it increased my faith and gave glory to God. However, more and more I do not pay as much attention to these numbers. For no matter how many believers there are today, China is still less than five percent Christian. China has 2300 county-level cities. According to one study, only one third of these cities possibly have a church. The further west one goes, the fewer

Christians one finds. The evangelization of China demands the concern not only of Chinese Christians, but of the church worldwide.

*Second, there will be a breakthrough in the relationship between church and state in the next 30 years which will bring a new wave of revival and growth.* Many foreign observers talk about signs of a new relationship between church and state in China. But China is a huge country; the government is not going to suddenly change its religious policy. During the first thirty years following the establishment of the PRC, the religious policy of the Chinese government was characterized in broad terms by the “opiate of the people” theory, with the goal being to exterminate religion. Since opium was harmful to the people, it needed to be destroyed. During the second 30 years, under the United Front policy, the patriotic religious organizations were used to control religion. Religious activities within patriotic religious organizations like the Three-Self Patriotic Movement were allowed, but those outside were targeted for persecution.

Today, it is clear both to the people and to the government that the past policies were a failure. All the police and all the officials I have talked to agree with me that the Chinese house church can never be destroyed. In the next thirty years, the theory of building socialist civilization will be the main guiding principle for the government. In this environment the government will promote a policy of acceptance, forbearance and even support for religion. In the quest to build socialist civilization, Christianity will become a dynamic force. In the Chinese policy environment, this is a revolutionary conclusion. Once the Party comes to this conclusion, no other force will be able to oppose the church in China. Why have Shouwang and Zion Churches not been destroyed by the government? Because the whole picture has changed. Yet very few people in China today understand that God has opened a huge door for the Chinese church.

*Third, this is a new era in terms of the role of Christians in the midst of China’s social transformation.* China’s society is awaiting a huge transformation, like a pregnant woman who is just about to give birth; however, she needs the strength to do so. Many people are looking to the church to provide this strength to help the Chinese society give birth to a new day. I believe the next thirty years in China will be similar to the period of the 1920s to the 1940s. At that time a thousand years of feudal rule collapsed, and a new republic was established. This was also the most dynamic period in history for the church in China. The church was active in every area of society—education, culture, politics and economics. The significant transition in the next 30 years will be from the Party’s authoritarian rule to the emergence of a modern nation. There is no force that will be able to stop this development, for whoever gets in the way will be destroyed. I believe that the elites of today have the potential to play an important role in this social change. I am particularly looking forward to how Christians can play a role similar to that of believers one hundred years ago who, during a time of epic change, made a great contribution to the Chinese people and nation.

*The crux of the matter, and my fourth point, is whether we will be able to build local churches that are full of life.* Only if the church can bring healing to the individual, build healthy families, establish a supportive community and provide moral direction to society, will the Chinese church receive favor that is far beyond anything we can imagine today.

However, the challenges in shepherding the church are great. During the past four and a half years, I have met many people in China from all walks of life. They all share one thing in common; they all have been wounded. They cannot see any hope in front of them. Could the church really bring healing to these people, bring meaning to their lives, build communities, build strong families and bring a dynamic power to the society—this is the question the church needs to seriously consider. We know there is a dearth of well-educated pastors in China today. We also need a breakthrough in the relationship between the house church and the TSPM.

*Fifth, we see the need to work together to develop leaders and to establish all kinds of new training, research and educational institutions.* Can we seize this opportunity—to develop church leadership, as well as leadership throughout Chinese society? If the church can provide a new generation of leaders for China then God’s name will be lifted up.

*Finally, and most importantly, in the next thirty years China’s house church will be much more involved in worldwide evangelism and mission.* We have been singing the song, “Missionary China,” for the past twenty years, and we believe this will be a reality in the next thirty years. The house church in China is joining forces with the larger world church in places such as Brazil, Africa and Southeast Asia in order to do our part in the task of world evangelization. While China remains the largest mission field, it might also become the world’s largest sending country.

### **Looking to the Future**

However, most important is the future. The revival of the Chinese church will surely result in its participation in the task of world evangelization. When I was attending a conference in Korea, I met 150 pastors who are working among Chinese students there. In Southeast Asia, Africa and particularly in North America, there are many evangelists from China spreading the Gospel. When I led a retreat in Yunnan province for evangelists who are serving among seven different ethnic groups, I was struck by the fact that, among the Miao nationality, there are two different types of Miao, the Sichuan Miao and the Yunnan Miao, and these two groups are totally different. The Yunnan Miao have already sent missionaries to the Sichuan Miao. Another minority group in southwest China has sent workers across the border to their ethnic “cousins” in a neighboring country. Some from southern China who had planned to attend the Lausanne conference have already established a missionary sending base in Thailand. Recently, I attended a meeting of church leaders in Beijing where one network from northern China was preparing to send four families to Pakistan. All these are just the beginning.

In all of this, what is the unique role of the North American church? First, the American church model will continue to influence the Chinese church in the next thirty years. China will never become just like America, especially where the area of church and

state is concerned. However, the American church model will profoundly affect the thinking of Chinese Christians, intellectuals and social elites. Second, America has the world's largest concentration of Christian human and educational institutional resources. Chinese Christianity and the transformation of Chinese society need this power. The American church is also providing the leadership for the world's largest Christian networks.

I would like to close by offering the following suggestions to the American Church. First, it needs to build a partnership with the Chinese church. American Christians are gracious, easy going and easy to build relationships with; thus they are warmly welcomed in China. The church in America is huge, but the church in China will one day be the largest Christian community in the world. So today we need to begin to cultivate friendship and collaboration, for in the future this will have an effect upon Christianity worldwide.

Next, we need to simultaneously send and receive. We need to send top quality people to China to assist in the spread of the Gospel there. At the same time it is important to reach those who are coming from China. Most of China's best and brightest are coming to America. If they can be successfully reached and disciplined, this will have a decisive impact upon the future course of China. In addition, the best Christian intellectuals must be prepared for leadership in the church. I would particularly like to promote one-to-one sister church relationships between congregations in the United States and congregations in China. In this way they can serve one another's needs and work together to plant new churches. Finally, we need to welcome Chinese Christians to participate in networking with the Global Body of Christ.

*Dr. Ezra Jin is pastor of the Zion Church in Beijing and also serves in a seminary.*

## **An Appeal to the American Church**

*Ezra Jin, October 2011*

*I know the American church has done a lot, but let me encourage you with one small example from a church in Korea. When I went to South Korea three years ago, Chinese students had just begun arriving. There were less than 20,000. This year there are 80,000, and they are found in almost every university in Korea. I have gone to Korea six times this past year to conduct evangelistic meetings among these Chinese students.*

*Last Sunday I was in a soccer stadium with 500-600 of them. This evangelistic meeting was a joint effort of all the Christian student unions, all the Christian organizations in the area, plus all the churches that have a Chinese congregation. I preached the first night, and when I gave the invitation almost everyone raised their hands. I thought my invitation had not been clear, so I asked everyone who was willing to give up their life for Christ and dedicate themselves to spread the Gospel to come and kneel in front of the stage. All the leaders of the sponsoring organizations and I were astonished as 150 people came forward and knelt down. We never see this kind of zealous response to the Gospel—even in China.*

*Twenty years ago, in America, many of China's finest intellectuals found Christ. Within the last decade this movement has died out. In America we do not see the same passion and commitment, as well as the willingness to join forces and work together, as we see in Korea today. A friend from Fuller Seminary told me that each year around 800 government officials and university students go to UCLA to study. They have nothing to do on Sunday afternoons. If you would just prepare lunch for them, they would be happy to show up. We would never have this kind of opportunity in China. If only the church had the energy to respond, who knows how great a harvest we would see.*

*When I was in South Korea, I led a small group. One very handsome young man who attended was quite arrogant, and during the three days of meetings he did not pay much attention. However, at the end when the invitation was given, this young man stood up to receive Christ. As we left he gave me his name card and said, "Pastor Jin, if you're ever in Shanghai please come to see me. My father is the head of the city's security forces. He can do anything in Shanghai." I realized then, if this were China, you would never have an opportunity to bring someone like this into contact with the church.*

## The Future of Christianity in China: A Panel Discussion

*The following is a panel discussion that explores the future of Christianity in China. It deals with both the problems and the opportunities facing the Chinese house church today. The panelists included Ezra Jin of Zion Church, Beijing; Man De, a scholar with China Ministries International; Daniel Li of Blessings Foundation and Franklin Wang, a seminary student from Beijing.*

**Ezra Jin:** Christianity in China has an unprecedented golden opportunity. The major ideology which dominated China for over ninety years has gradually lost its hold; however, all other ideologies and religions are not yet ready to influence the nation. Thus, Christianity currently has a great opportunity. While there are many obstacles which we must face, there are two particular issues we need to deal with. First of all, the Chinese church should try to be a major force in society. Secondly, to be able to do this, the Chinese church must reform itself. Critical to this happening will be the role of the local church. If we can build local churches that are able to bring life and healing to people, then the future of Chinese society will be in the hands of the church. Recently we have seen churches like Shouwang and Zion beginning to be noticed and playing a visible role in Chinese society. This is the reality of the church today.

**Daniel Li:** I don't think the government will totally change its religious policy in the short term. However, in the long term it will have to change. As society continues to modernize, it will have to face the church and religious issues. A big problem in China is the lack of society. Since the state has the power to open and close doors, there is no public arena for the church to operate in. Everything, including the family, is the prerogative of the state.

However, Chinese society has the potential to change family and societal life. Since 2005, Chinese society has become increasingly urbanized. The Chinese government has tried very hard to convert Chinese churches into mere charity organizations, but the churches want to be independent social organizations. Thus, there is tension between the government and church. This has been displayed in the conflict between the government and the Shouwang Church in Beijing. The government can no longer deny the existence of the Chinese house church; it also understands the function of the churches. The core issue is the question of whether the church should be under the control of the government or should be independent. We need to see both the existence and the government of the city churches. First we need to focus on our own local churches. They need strong theological education and more full-time ministers—many of whom can meet the needs of the middle-class population. We need more material written by Chinese from inside China. Finally, we need to mold Christian ideas into Chinese culture.

Nowadays the Chinese church cannot stand due to two reasons. First, there is no discipleship training so the family altar does not exist; so, the family cannot have a credible witness in society. Second, our faith does not have the interface to connect with the mainstream culture. We hope that the overseas church can help us in these areas. The rise of nationalism in China also deserves our close attention. It may become a major force against Christianity as it did 100 years ago. So, the main means of developing the church is to promote the family altar and the church's molding of culture.

The Chinese church is significant in the future development of the world. In Europe, from 2001 to 2010, the Muslim population increased by 24.5 times. The whole of Europe and the UK are becoming Islamized. The Chinese church has not begun mission to Muslim nations, but the Muslims have already come to China. This is a huge spiritual war.

**Man De:** There are five mechanisms for change in the Chinese church. The Chinese policy, after the economic reform, gradually changed, but this change did not favor the church. The government did not destroy the house churches, but neither rural nor urban house churches are officially recognized; the government simply admits their existence. The situation in China will never become like that in American society. The character of Chinese government religious policy can be summarized as follows. The first mechanism for the government to deal with the church is to keep it hidden. They do not want the church to be seen in public. The Lausanne conference is one example; you can exist underground, but you cannot openly show yourself in public. The second mechanism is to deny them legal status. Shouwang church in Beijing wanted legal status, but the government refused to grant it. The third mechanism is to disperse the church. The government does not want the house church to become too large; if the numbers become too great they are forced to disperse. The All Nations Church in Shanghai is an example of this.\* The fourth mechanism is control. No matter whether big or small, the government tries to control unregistered churches if they can find the opportunity. The fifth mechanism is to try to put all the churches under the TSPM by requiring them to register. In Beijing, Shouwang church members have been brought to police stations where they are confronted by TSPM pastors who ask them to join their churches.

In the face of this fivefold mechanism for dealing with the unregistered church, the house church likewise, has a fivefold response. The first is to try to come out into the public. The term "house church" is self-contradictory. A house is private; the church is public. A public identity put under a private entity is self-contradictory, just like the idea of a "socialist market economy." Traditionally, Christians felt that worshipping at home by themselves was fine. Today, a new generation of believers desires legal social status, which is the second form of response. The third response is integration; Christians from different house churches come together to worship in large numbers. Fourth, the house churches seek to be self-governing in response to the government's attempt to control them. Finally, they seek independence apart from the TSPM. While it is not possible to immediately realize complete freedom for the spread of the Gospel, it is possible to push for more space. We believe that under God's guidance, the degree of freedom and the space in which to practice our faith will increase. Thus, we seek to be open, to gain legal status, to be integrated, self-governing and independent as a means of getting there.

**Franklin Wang:** I would like to speak as someone who is trying to see Christianity truly rooted in China. Christianity first came to China in 635AD, earlier than when it came to Western Germany, all the Scandinavian countries, and Eastern Europe. From then until now the biggest question, for all who came to China to do ministry, was whether or not they could establish Christianity in China. How many missionaries should we send to be able to really root Christianity in China? After 1949, missionaries

asked whether Christianity would be in China anymore and would they need to re-evangelize China. But after thirty years, we see that God has answered the prayers of the previous 1500 years and has done a miracle. By the sheer number of Christians in China, no government would be able to take Christianity out of China. Christianity will exist in China; that is clear. The question is, “What kind of Christianity?” Will we have superficial, nominal Christianity combined with the prosperity gospel—a weak Christianity that cannot really change people? Or will we have Christianity that is deeply rooted in the Bible and redefines our identity as a Chinese nation and people? If we define our position in God’s kingdom as the latter, then perhaps China could become the major missionary force of the future.

The metaphor I would like to use for the Chinese church right now is that it is like a teenager. It has great potential but is not stable. Teenagers might imitate what their parents do, but sometimes they do not know why. Just as teenagers must form their own identities, the Chinese church must form its own identity. Chinese Christians, individually and collectively, should understand who we are. The biggest questions I encounter when I try to translate academic theological papers from English into Chinese is that we don’t even have the vocabulary to deal with the theological terms. To be able to have the language, we need a group of scholars who devote themselves to study and develop it. We have a long way to go. For me, as someone studying in seminary, I believe God has given a unique blessing to the Chinese church by raising it up, isolating it for several decades and then opening the door. Now Chinese Christianity has access to the Western church. God blessed the Chinese church with a great tradition and great heritage, but God has also blessed the Western church for over 2,000 years, and it has thought through all those problems that we face over and over again. If we can bring these traditions together to grow this community, this young plant in China, we can grow much stronger for God’s kingdom.

## Q&A

**Q:** What kind of reform is needed for the Chinese church? Format, management, visibility, accountability?

**Daniel Li:** We need all four. Jesus said very clearly, we should not put the light under the bed. In the church we need management and we need truth. In the urban church these problems are becoming clearer. In one church, before 1980, they had more than 200 people. After 1998 they had more than 2,400 people, but today they have only 1,600. Although there are many reasons for this, one problem is management. Today the problem exists among our city churches. These churches, for example, are currently debating whether to follow reform theology or something else.

**Man De:** Now the situation is different from that of years ago. Previously the church was simply trying to survive; today the house church’s existence is an indisputable fact. So, our needs are different. In the first stage, evangelism and discipleship were core needs. Today, the Chinese church can do these things themselves. The Chinese church needs more systematic training and deep theological training, including church management, seminary training, Christianization of Chinese culture and impacting society. We are pursuing this second stage of development, so foreign resources need to focus on the needs of this stage. Then, the Chinese church can be more formalized in its management, establishment of theological seminaries, pastoral training, and its public position and legal status. Evangelism and mission are almost an “automatic” process; they can go ahead by themselves.

**Q:** With 287,000 suicides a year in China, what is the church doing to give hope to those without hope?

**Daniel Li:** In Shanghai we have encouraged overseas Chinese Christians to start counseling centers. There are no more than 100 such centers. The suicide rate in China is increasing at an alarming rate. Between 2005 and 2010 more than 20 professors in China took their lives. The Education Bureau has issued regulations allowing universities to convert their political education courses into counseling classes. It is very difficult to bring a pastor into the classroom to lecture, but to bring him in as a counselor is quite possible. In the course of doing this it is possible to talk about faith.

**Pastor Jin:** The spirit of hopelessness all over China, no matter if rich or poor, is related to spiritual warfare. A few months ago a survey of middle school students in China revealed twenty-three percent had suicidal thoughts within the past three months. This is the highest in the world. The Gospel is the most powerful means to address this. The church has the resources, but just talking about our hope in Christ is not sufficient. The most effective solution is for the church to bring its spiritual life into partnership with counseling organizations.

**Q:** How can the church reach out to society but avoid being so visible that the government responds in a negative way?

**Man De:** That’s what I’m doing in China. We provide professional training in order to change culture within the economic system and the family. Publishing materials, counseling, mercy ministries—all are means of Christianizing Chinese culture. The government appreciates these efforts. In this process we lay the foundation for missions. The church needs to have an impact in the family and society.

**Pastor Jin:** At the personal level or on a small scale we have a lot of opportunities, but when the church gets involved sometimes it’s dangerous because of the church’s lack of legal status. When “illegal” organizations do good things it upsets the Party because it puts the government in an awkward situation. So the best approach is for the church to earn legal status and in this way be positioned to be able to impact society. This is inevitable. My prayer is also that government leaders will come to see that allowing the church to function openly will benefit society.

\*In November 2009, Shanghai’s All Nations Mission Church, China’s largest urban house church, was sealed off by the government. By December it was officially declared “illegal.” It has since disbanded into small-group home meetings. Dr. David Wang. “How Do We Pray for China?” *Gospel Herald* (April 21, 2010) <http://www.gospelherald.net/article/opinion/46266/how-do-we-pray-for-china.htm>.

*For further discussion on this topic, see Two Transformations: The Future of Christianity in China by Huo Shui in the Fall, 2011 issue of the ChinaSource journal.*

## View from the Wall

### Faith Going Public: Urban Christians and Civic Participation in China

By Mary Ma

#### Structural Overview

Before 1949, both governmental and social organizations coexisted in Chinese society along with a primitive civil society. For example, in the cities, urban residents enjoyed some political and religious freedom because the Republican government was not very hostile to religion; many of their officials and military officials were baptized Christians. We know this from memoirs and pieces of church history. In the countryside, the rural gentry class historically acted as governing entities in coordinating local affairs, in providing for the public good and governing either through local customs or moral norms within their own religious traditions. Thus there was an active civil society.

The Communist revolution was a period when civil society was compressed to a minimum. After this violent revolution, the Communist leaders wished to construct a new social order which was a completely new polity. This ideologically fueled party was characterized by revolutionary and anti-traditional values. They basically nationalized all key resources such as land, capital and even labor allocation. They established the *hukou* system in China, and they eradicated the free market and interest-based associations such as commercial guilds and private businesses. In the countryside, the gentry class was completely wiped out. It was a horribly violent period of land reform which led to the Communists' direct penetration into rural villages, something that had never before been accomplished in history. In the cities, the Party placed a stratum of politically loyal cadres in charge of social control, including food rations. The *hukou* system was legalized to impose a differential citizenship among all individuals. From then on, self-governance in rural and urban communities was not allowed—from the 1950s to the late 1970s. Most importantly, social trust and interpersonal networks were undermined after a wave of political movements which encouraged mutual denunciation. This led to a detrimental effect upon society as a whole. This also nurtured a political culture which rewarded betrayal and impersonal political loyalty. These events provide the context for understanding why the house churches emerged as they did in terms of organizational form.

#### Emergence of House Churches

In the 1950s during the land reform campaign, the state began to clean up many social organizations, including folk religious and Christian groups and label them as targets of imperialist infiltration—a very ideologically fueled term having to do with one's political loyalty. During this time, the Protestant group Little Flock (Watchman Nee) went through a very difficult time. Starting from then, the Protestant religion became a target of nationalization. We know that Protestant Christianity had entered China during a very inconvenient time of Western invasion. Around 1900 the Boxer Movement and the Anti-Christian Movement of the 1930s were examples of the aggravated hostility against this Western-style religion.

It is key to mention the rising nationalism during wartime, especially after the US/Korean war, as the trigger for what we know today as the Three-Self Movement. In the 1950s, when the state was clearing out Christian groups, they used the Three-Self umbrella to legitimize its takeover of the church. So politically, it was a mass-mobilization movement in line with the state's war-time policy. Some leaders from the YMCA and YWCA were co-opted by the Communist agenda and acted as middlemen to propagate and mobilize. This was the time when house church leaders emerged and, as nonconformists, defied what became the Three-Self Patriotic Movement. They faced severe persecution, and during this time, the early 1950s, the Protestant churches began to go underground. The famous figure during this time was Wang Mingdao, who wrote his manifesto, "We Act Because of Faith." He was a pioneering leader in this movement.

Some Protestant leaders in China point out that it was the non-conformists who kept fundamentalist, theological tenets compared to Catholic leaders who had a much broader perspective. This started the privatization of the Protestant faith that went from the 1950s to the 1980s. The media was mainly controlled by the state, so Christianity rarely appeared in the media; thus, the public rarely heard of Christianity. Family fellowships during this time consisted only of those who could be trusted. Small cell groups were often broken up by police and had to change location frequently. There was no public space in which to gather and worship. Gradually, during the ensuing three decades, people got used to this form of church meeting which they felt was the usual or normative way of church life. This is significant in that it contrasts sharply with how urban Christians today view the church and what constitutes church life.

#### Development of the Urban House Churches

Since the late 1980s, there has appeared a "Cultural Christian" phenomenon. Many intellectuals who were not Christians at that time started studying Christianity as a cultural phenomenon. Several books were written by key leaders which are still influential among today's young people. The role of intellectual converts was very important. It was also an age of moral decay. Beginning in the mid 1990s, things started to change. Many of these cultural Christians became true believers and joined house churches creating a mass conversion among intellectuals in the 1990s. As we interviewed these intellectuals, we discovered common themes: how they were attracted to Christianity as a culture; then they became dissatisfied with being cultural Christians who did



not connect with the body of Christ; as a result, they changed their lifestyle and became committed to church life. Many also brought up the Tiananmen incident of 1989; some estimate that one-third of the well-known demonstrators in that movement became Christians. It was an event that proclaimed the death of Communism. The whole ideological belief system had to be replaced by something else.

The 1990s was also an era of cultural pluralism and the collapse of the *danwei* (work unit) system. Under the *danwei* system, civil society was compressed and people were put into small groups and arranged to lead a certain kind of life. The collapse of the *danwei* system in the early 1990s was a structural change for many people; they had more liberty and started to *xia hai* (get involved in business). It was also a time of mass migration to the cities. With these cultural phenomena and also the structural systemic change, Christianity also spread to the upwardly mobile urban population.

In the early 1990s, many house church leaders who were imprisoned in the 1950s were released. They continued preaching and teaching in small fellowships; often there was no congregational worship on Sundays. They met during the weekdays in small numbers, and organizational boundaries across these groups were not well-defined. People changed groups frequently, and church commitment to one congregation was not emphasized. Since the late 1990s, the number of educated believers has increased. Campus ministries brought more college graduates and urban professionals into house churches. In varying cities the first urban house church groups, made up of urban professionals and college students, formed about the same time, roughly around 2004 and 2005. Congregational size increased. One church in Shanghai grew from around 10 to over 100 members in three years. This growth led to spatial needs; these congregations could no longer be housed in someone's house or apartment. The typical house church had traditionally congregated in someone's home; as it grew, there was a spatial change as they leased a three- or four-bedroom apartment which could hold up to 70 or 80 people. As they grew to 100 or more, this brought about a new spatial change as congregations rented office space or used multi-purpose rooms. It is very interesting to follow the spatial change which tells a lot about the visibility of the church as they went public with their terms of faith.

Another development was church relief in the Wenchuan earthquake in 2008. Scholars point to this year as the birth of Chinese civil society. This is not an exaggeration; many faith-based organizations started to pop up as the government relaxed its control on religious groups' participation. According to one estimate, sixty-three percent of relief volunteers were Christians. Many were with unregistered faith-based organizations. Also in that same year, the political petition movement, "Charter '08," emerged. It is estimated that ten percent of signers on the document were Christians, significantly greater than the proportion of Christians across the population. Another group was rights-defending lawyers (*weiquan lushi*). A significant number of these legal specialists and activists were Christians, and their Christian identity motivated them to do things that other lawyers would not do. Some unregistered groups also attempted to worship outdoors, including churches in Shanxi, Beijing, Shanghai and Chengdu. The most well-known of these, *Shouwang* in Beijing, chose to do so after being denied access to the building they had purchased. Thus, the spatial aspect became a contested area. Gathering in large numbers in an office building was an anomaly in Chinese society.

### **Civic Engagement**

Common knowledge assumes that in the city, where the GDP is higher or the economy is more developed, NGOs or civil society will enjoy a better institutional environment. However, our research shows otherwise. Shanghai is an international metropolis and economically developed area, but its NGO and house church development are still in process compared with Chengdu, which has seen more visibility of faith-based groups and house churches. Our research has found ten churches in Chengdu that have purchased their own premises, compared with only two in Shanghai. Given the differences in population of these two cities, this is a huge contrast. In most churches in Shanghai you have to attend the midweek fellowship for up to three months and have a referral before you can attend the Sunday service. They use this screening strategy as a security precaution and also to protect against cults infiltrating the church. The context in Shanghai is much more complicated compared to that of Chengdu, which, after the Wenchuan earthquake, became a staging area for Christian groups involved in the relief effort.

Another significant phenomenon is the appearance of Christian publications. We know publicity is very important for groups to be known. Some churches that have many intellectuals have started editing groups. These have launched several magazines in China. Christian bookstores have also become locations for public lectures and other public events. One in Chengdu became a hub of activity among Christian intellectuals.

### **Conclusion**

"Faith going public" is a historical phenomenon as Christianity spreads to the more educated middle and upper classes of urban China. Civic engagement is on the rise among Christian scholars, lawyers and other intellectuals; their active presence in the public sphere and their expressions of faith provide a different narrative over against the mainstream. They tend to be keen in observing and responding to social realities, and their faith provides a rich repertoire of values and means for meeting social needs.

However, there are also many challenges faced by urban house churches. On the organizational level the fast growth of Protestant house churches is a gray sector. Recent events have exposed these religious groups to more publicity. There is still a lack of pastoral resources; especially when churches tend to be semi-secretive they refrain from sharing resources, which creates a lot of segmented patterns. It has been surprising to us to see how disconnected churches in Shanghai have been due to the lack of publicity and also the different views about whether the church should be more public or remain in private. For some people it is hard to change the mindset that was developed from the 1950s to the 1980s.

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## Peoples of China For Such a Time as This

Li Sha and Caroline DuPree

The American family that met Wang\* as he arrived at the LA Airport had done this before, but for Wang it was a first—his first time to cross the ocean, to arrive on American shores. He had dreamed of it but never thought his parents would agree. Eventually, they came to see that it might open up more opportunities for their only child's future. After years of pursuing his passion learning English, he challenged the SATs and filled out several college applications. It was hard, but the native English teacher in his mid-sized Chinese city—someone whom he had developed a trusted friendship with—took Wang under his wing and helped him along the way. When the acceptance letter came from his top choice, a small, private school in Southern California, Wang leapt for joy. Surely the fates were with him...or was it something more?

Last October, ChinaSource sponsored China Challenge to bring leaders together to discuss trends in China in three areas: youth and university students, leader development and business as mission. We brought a team of people representing four different organizations to share research on China's youth and opportunities for ministry. We split the Youth & Student Track into two focus groups: youth studying abroad ages 12 to 18 and students studying abroad ages 18-30.

Through this workshop, we wanted to better understand how to “capture” the opportunities God has given us on the Mainland directly working with youth in all levels of society, from those in destitute situations all the way to those in positions of privilege. We also wanted to take a closer look at the historically unparalleled opportunities we have to reach Chinese studying abroad with the love and message of Christ. We will focus on this latter group here.

Mainland Chinese who head abroad for educational and professional opportunities now range in age from middle school students all the way to middle-aged scholars. According to the Institute for International Exchange (IIE) 2011 Open Doors report, young Chinese like Wang now make up twenty-two percent (almost 160,000) of all international students and scholars in the US, the largest ethnic group by far. This represents a forty-three percent increase in undergraduates and a twenty-three percent increase overall from 2010.

This trend shows no sign of abating, even though the US's relative position worldwide is declining as it shares the higher educational pie with an increasing number of other, less costly locations. The premium, privilege, place and prestige attached to education in the Chinese culture has translated into a continual, growing wave of Chinese students seeking *access* to higher education institutions primarily in the West, with the US leading the way for the foreseeable future.

Whereas the earlier years (late 1980s to mid/late-1990s) saw mostly PhD candidates and post-docs heading abroad for study and research, the flow of Chinese doing so has trickled down—first to the master's level, then, more recently, to the undergraduate level and, increasingly to the high school and even middle-school levels. Factors behind this push include increased demand within China for higher education, limited spaces in Chinese educational institutions (relative to demand), and a growing desire among the younger generation for education that emphasizes creativity, innovation and unique discovery over rote memorization. As the Chinese system adapts to these mandates for change at all levels and as Chinese universities gain more global recognition worldwide—not just in name but in substance—this trend may, indeed, subside.

But for now we have our “Esther” moment. These students are coming to our shores in droves. Most, like Mei Li, have not yet heard the Good News. They are open to our friendship. Indeed, International Student Ministry (ISM) workers consistently find Chinese students and scholars to be their most responsive ethnic group, not only to the assistance and activities that ISM workers and volunteers have to offer, but also to the Gospel.

In addition, as the church grows among the educated in China, and international students return to their homeland, the number of Chinese international students who have been exposed to the Gospel keeps growing, as do the number of believers. One ISM worker recently shared a story about befriending a “typical Chinese undergraduate student.” His family met this student at the airport and, on the drive home, this student ventured to ask if they were Christians because she was! As they settled her into her long-term housing, immigrant Christians from *Burma* welcomed her under their roof! Only 18 years old, she could see God's hand all over her decision to head to the US for her studies.

Most churches think of missions as sending people out to other nations. In the US (and wherever Chinese are headed for study abroad), we have the opportunity to both befriend and open our homes to host international students of all ages. Chinese who come at a young age, especially those at the middle school, high school, and undergraduate levels, often experience a period of intense loneliness as they struggle with the new culture, usually after the initial veneer of excitement has worn off (three-six months). They tend to need more help and welcome it from caring host families. They also can be very open in their hearts to hearing and internalizing Truth, especially if they are the recipients of Christ's genuine love through us. This is the new mission field! We need to “awaken” the American church to this new paradigm in missions.

Wang's story at the start of this article prompts us to consider the salient issues we should be aware of as we live out and share our faith with these young Chinese in our midst. What cultural and societal issues are at work here?

*It is vital that Westerners ministering to Chinese recognize the group-society mentality of their Chinese friends.* For instance,

Chinese travel through their school years as part of a specific group in their class level. Even in college, they follow the exact same path as a subset of their classmates within the same field of study. Stepping out, on their own, from the familiar takes guts. Their “group” and Chinese society as a whole, has always been their reference point. We need to recognize and respect that fact. *When a Chinese student/scholar comes to the US, he or she is not coming alone but usually comes with a mantle of responsibility to immediate and extended family, and, indeed, the entire Chinese nation.* Filial piety—the notion that one has a lifelong duty to one’s parents—is as strong as when Confucius first extolled it as a basic virtue. Most young Chinese heading abroad understand that all the hopes of their parents and grandparents (and often their money, too) have been poured into them. We need to recognize that some will hold back from commitment to Christ because of the risk of upsetting their parents. Over time, we must sensitively help our young Chinese friends understand that becoming a *genuine* Christian will make him/her a better, more faithful son/daughter as well.

*We also need to bear in mind the “mantle of communal responsibility” which our Chinese friends bear.* One Chinese scholar told us, “I have seen how you live and I want to believe, but I can’t because I’m a Communist Party member.” We asked her if she could simply believe quietly in her heart, to which she smiled broadly and responded, “Well, yes. Of course!” In the workplace as well, a *genuine* believer will be a better worker, even if serving in a system that, at its heart, opposes God (remember Daniel?).

*Even with the influence of Western ideas in this increasingly interconnected world, the sheer number of people everywhere in China tends to make a Chinese feel like he/she is just a drop in a much larger “ocean of humanity.”* It is common even for younger Chinese to not see themselves as anything special. One tall, very attractive and talented female graduate student, with an aspiration to become a Chinese/English CCTV anchor, once proclaimed to me, “I might be all those things, but there are so many other Chinese just like me.... I don’t think I have a chance!”

*So, it can be difficult for many Chinese to grasp the idea that they are a unique creation of a loving God, that nobody has been designed exactly like them.* While hard to fathom, over time it becomes an increasingly attractive incentive for them to choose the Christian life. Further, when they begin to grasp that God has a unique blueprint for their lives, new Chinese believers often find ways to blend the group culture responsibilities they have known all their lives with the new calling they have as Christ-followers. Indeed, as we minister to and mentor our young Chinese friends, we must always emphasize that choosing to walk *in Christ* makes us better in all arenas—in the home, our studies, the workplace and even the world.

*Those who seek to love Chinese with Christ’s love need to understand that Chinese as a whole are quite pragmatic, no-nonsense people.* They are people who have been trained to value and memorize facts to gain success; that is what their school system has emphasized. In terms of sharing the Good News, most Chinese are more interested in how Christianity can make them better in *this* life, and they give very little weight to eternal issues. This, too, changes as a Chinese believer matures, but in the initial stages we should emphasize the benefits of choosing a Christian walk for the here and now.

*Finally, influences from Confucianism, the Book of Changes (I Ching), martial arts, Buddhism, traditional Chinese medicine and Communism, among others, have trained the Chinese mind to view the world through the yin-yang lens.* Everything is connected and affects everything else, good and evil coexist and offset each other, and achieving harmony is one of the highest goals for the individual and society. We must keep in mind these influences as we share the love of Christ with all Chinese and disciple the new Chinese believers in our midst. As we do so, young people like Wang will come to see that they have been brought to our shores not just to advance their education but to discover the One who loves them more deeply than even their parents do.

As we consider this “newest wave” of Chinese youth ages 12 to 18 heading to our shores for study, we must not only recognize the need for a paradigm shift in our missions thinking but also seek to embrace these young, impressionable people with the genuine love of Christ. We must recognize the humble honor we have to represent Christ to these young people and the high calling we have to be part of a movement that is changing the face of the most populous nation on earth! We also must acknowledge that *we can do this* because the Spirit of God indwells us and enables us to step up to the task! Remember Esther.

There are many ways we can accomplish this. They include relationship mentoring, serving as hosts and reaching these youth through technology. We can also train and equip families to serve in this capacity. Further, we can offer one-on-one online mentoring and parenting help for both youth here and their parents back home. These opportunities are only limited by our faith and creativity. As we push the boundaries of both, we will come to see that our all-powerful God “will do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to *His* power that is at work in us” (Eph 3:20). Are we available?

\*Name changed for privacy purposes.

*Li Sha leads a group of dedicated believers on both sides of the Pacific who are committed to reaching the hearts of youth in the 12–18 age range and their families with the genuine love of Christ through meaningful mentoring relationships.*

*Caroline DuPree has spent much of her career working with university-level international students and now also serves as a regional program director alongside Li Sha to advance the Kingdom among this younger age group. For more information, see [www.pacificlinkstudents.org](http://www.pacificlinkstudents.org).*

## Book Review

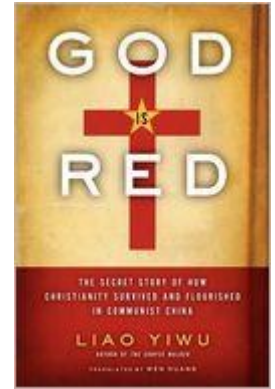
### *God is Red*

by Liao Yiwu

Reviewed by Kay Danielson

*God is Red*, by Liao Yiwu. HarperOne (September 13, 2011), 256 pp. ISBN-10: 0062078461 ISBN-13: 978-0062078469; hardcover. \$16.25 at Amazon.com.

As a dissident writer, Liao Yiwu seems an unlikely author of a book about Christianity in China. His specialty of writing stories of people on the edges of society, however, makes him an ideal candidate to relate the story Christianity in China. Like other such writers in China, he has been in and out of jail and his writings have been banned.



Liao's first encounter with Christianity was in 1998 in Beijing when he met two young men who were active in an urban house church. Inspired by the courage of these believers, he decided he wanted to learn more about Christianity in China. Since he had come of age under the Maoist education system, his notions of Christianity were decidedly negative. Sensing the gap between what he had seen in the church in Beijing and what he had been taught, he set out for Yunnan Province in search of Christians to interview.

In the introduction to the book, the translator describes what Liao found: "In those ethnic enclaves, impoverished by isolation and largely neglected by modernization, Liao stumbled upon a vibrant Christian community that had sprung from the work of Western missionaries in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries" (p. x).

More broadly the book is (again, as the translator notes), an exploration of "the broader issue of spirituality in China in the post-Mao era, when the widespread loss of faith in Communism, as well as rampant corruption and greed resulting from the country's relentless push for modernization have created a faith crisis" (p.xii). As with everything else about China, the picture that emerges is complex.

"Some stories, while unique and colorful, typify the experiences of ordinary Chinese Christians and shed light on the social and political controversies that envelop and at times overshadow the issue of Christian faith in China today. Other pieces capture the dark years of the Mao era, when the claws of political persecution left no place untouched in China and when thousands of Christians, and numberless others besides, were tortured and murdered" (p.xiii).

There are stories of horrendous and senseless persecution during the Great Leap Forward (1950s) and Cultural Revolution (1960s and 1970s) as the government tried to rid Chinese society of any competing beliefs and ideologies. We learn about the persecution and eventual execution of Wang Mingzhi, the only Chinese martyr to have a monument in Westminster Abbey in London. His crime was being an "incorrigible counter-revolutionary." Liao interviews Wang Mingzhi's son and asks him: "Do you feel bitter about the past?" The reply: "'No, I don't feel bitter.' As Christians, we forgive the sinner and move on to the future. We are grateful for what we have today" (p. 115). He then goes on to tell Liao that when his father died there were almost 3000 believers in the county and now there are 30,000.

There are stories of persistence and perseverance against the pettiness of bureaucrats after the persecution eased in the 1980s and 1990s. He introduces us to a 100 year old nun who survived the persecution and now spends her days relentlessly "pestering" the government to return to the church, property and assets that had been seized in the 1960s. We also meet doctors who give up their practices in the cities to work as medical missionaries in the remote mountain valleys of Yunnan, where there is little access to medical care. Local officials, fearing that they have "ulterior motives" and thinking that the Communist Party should have a monopoly on "serving the people" eventually ban their work.

There are stories of an emerging divide in the urban churches over whether or not to be politically engaged to push for change or to function quietly (and gratefully) in the expanding spaces. In Beijing, he interviews a young convert and engages him in a discussion of the participation of Christian intellectuals in promoting political change. The young man responds: "People in your age group are too political. You guys are too interested in politics" (p. 222). He then goes on: "There are a lot of talented intellectuals within government churches too. Some people choose to be outspoken, and others choose to be low-key. Some want to fight the political fight, and others want to stay away from politics" (p. 223).

Finally, there are stories of missionaries who brought the gospel to remote towns and villages, building hospitals, orphanages and Bible schools. Nearly everyone interviewed makes some reference to foreign missionaries. We learn of Jessie McDonald, a Canadian missionary doctor who is thought to have been the last foreign missionary to leave China in 1951, and of Catholics who labored among Tibetans in Cizhong. The significance of their contributions is brought home in the Acknowledgements section at the back of the book where there is a list of the foreign missionaries who worked in the region. In many ways, this book is a story of their legacies.

Shortly after I read this book, I read the book *Mission Impossible: The Unreached Nosu on China's Frontier* by Ralph Covell.\* In it he relates the story of the missionary efforts he was involved with among the Nosu (Yi) people of southern Sichuan in the 1940s. In many ways, *God is Red* is a sequel to Covell's book, as it tells the story of what happened to the church after the missionaries left.

On a visit back to China years later, Covell recounts visiting a small church in Sichuan and being asked by a local pastor his impressions of the area. He writes: “I expressed to him my disappointment over what I had seen—small building, relatively few worshippers, a rather old congregation and an infirm pastor. He quickly asked me, ‘But isn’t it wonderful that they even survived, that they are still there?’ I had to agree with him. My attitude was not right—praise was far more fitting than complaint” (Location 5998, Kindle version).

As we read *God is Red*, we also need to keep in mind this “attitude correction” that Covell talks about. Do we read these stories and find ourselves becoming primarily angry at the system that produced the persecution and suffering or primarily praising God for the perseverance and sustaining grace that was (and is) granted and for the explosive growth of the church in China? In an email to friends, Liao spells out why he wrote the book: “I have the responsibility to help the world understand the true spirit of China, which will outlast the current totalitarian government” (p.xiv). In one sense this book is that story, but even though he, as a non-believer, does not (yet) realize it, it is so much more. It is the story of the power of the gospel to change hearts. It is the story of sustaining grace. It is the story of revival. It is the story of China being filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord.

\*Covell, Ralph, *Mission Impossible: The Unreached Nosu on China's Frontier* (Pasadena: Hope Publishing), 1993.

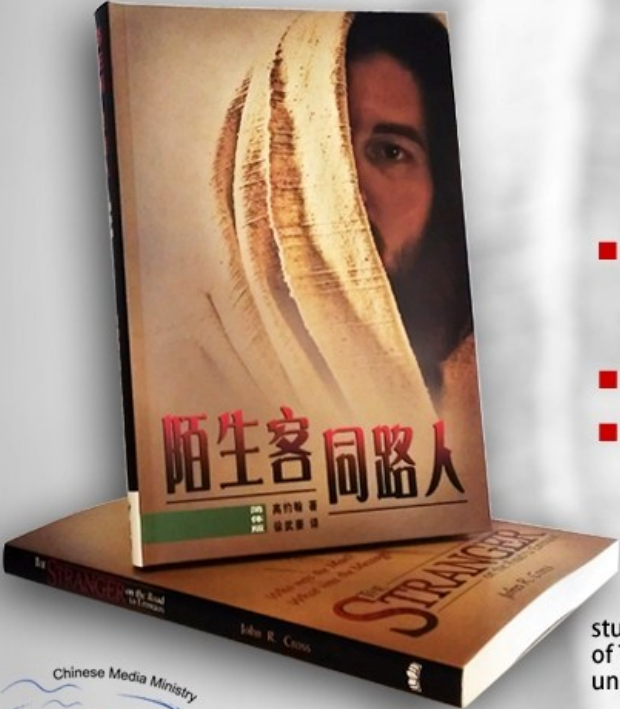
*Kay Danielson has lived and worked in China for over 20 years. She currently works in the field of cross-cultural training and consulting.*

## Intercessory Notes

Please pray

1. For the church in China as it grows, disciples individuals, prepares leadership, becomes involved with social endeavors, becomes active in mission work and interacts with the government.
2. That God will bless the church’s leadership and give them wisdom to know the direction in which they should lead the church.
3. For the more educated middle and upper classes attending urban house churches as they become active in the public sphere and respond to social realities.
4. That international students studying in a strange country and facing new ways will have the opportunity to hear the Gospel and be challenged to give their lives to Christ.
5. That host families to international students and Christian members of host countries will reach out to Chinese students, invite them into their homes, get to know them and introduce them to Jesus Christ.

## Resource Corner



A **POWERFUL RESOURCE**

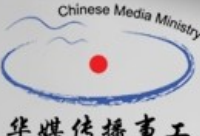
《 陌生客 同路人 》

The Stranger on the Road to Emmaus

— in simplified script Chinese

- Outstanding presentation of the Gospel in chronological form – traces themes through the Old Testament showing God as Creator, the fall and sinfulness of man, God’s holiness, and the need for a Redeemer met in Jesus Christ !
- Excellent visual artwork and graphics !
- Great to give to open non-Christians and new believers, but very helpful to any believer !

From a Chinese Christian worker who mentored a university student “Mianli” who came to Christ largely through her reading of *The Stranger*, “I have not met any believer who had such a mature understanding of the Bible, and so shortly after coming to faith.”



Available at low ministry cost of \$5.50 (B1-9) [English \$9.75 (B1-9E)] from:

AFC – Chinese Media Ministry, Paradise, PA, USA [www.afcinc.org/mclit](http://www.afcinc.org/mclit) [mclit@afcinc.org](mailto:mclit@afcinc.org) 888-999-7959