



[Shenzhen International Airport China by Chris, on Flickr](#)

*China is experiencing a third diaspora. From South Africa to Ukraine, from Peru to Australia, 18 million Chinese have moved abroad legally, along with many others entering countries illegally, and have settled in 150 different countries since the reforms of 1978 through 2008.<sup>1</sup> They are by no means a homogenous group. Professionals, business men and women, semi-skilled and unskilled workers, students and the wealthy, for a variety of reasons are leaving China, some for the short-term and others long-term. Do these people have opportunities to hear the Gospel, and what impact is it having on them? Are Christians in their host countries reaching out to them? Are those who leave China as Christians ministering to their countrymen and others? What about the diaspora Chinese church? This edition of the ChinaSource Quarterly looks at some of these issues.*

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.leftcom.org/en/articles/2008-09-01/chinese-imperialism-a-new-force-in-africa>

## Editorial

### China's Great Leap Outward

By Brent Fulton

China's internal migration has indelibly altered the demographic and geographic landscape of the country. Today, for the first time in history, more Chinese live in cities than in the countryside.

China's massive migration -- the largest in the history of the planet -- is not only internal, however. Since China began reopening to the outside world in the early 1980s, a growing flood of Chinese migrants has managed to reach literally every corner of the globe. This migration is also of historic proportions, as Mainland Chinese are quickly outpacing those from all other traditional sources of Chinese migration, such as Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Southeast Asia, combined.

Statistics drawn from the diverse locations surveyed in this issue of ChinaSource quarterly help to tell the story:

- There are at least 40 million overseas Chinese outside of greater China (Mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macao). Among them, there are at least 20 million Mainland Chinese migrants who began to emigrate from China since the 1980s.
- Less than a decade ago, Vancouver had only a handful of Mandarin speaking congregations or churches. Today, close to seventy percent of Chinese churches are Mandarin speaking or have some sort of Mandarin ministries.
- The Chinese population in Japan has increased four-fold since 2000. Today, one-third of all foreigners and two-thirds of all foreign students are Chinese.
- It is estimated that 750,000 Chinese have immigrated to Africa to work.
- Presently, about 500,000 diaspora Chinese are residing in the Middle East.

As several writers have suggested in this issue, China's "leap outward" has two clear implications for the expansion of the gospel among and through the Chinese. This outward migration comes at a time when Christians in China are increasingly zealous to take the gospel beyond China's borders. The "Back to Jerusalem" vision has animated much of the church with a sense of mission. Providentially, the growing ability of Chinese believers to go abroad, including to countries that do not welcome traditional Christian workers, provides a means of putting feet to this vision.

Meanwhile the growing presence of millions of Chinese in diverse locations across the globe hastens the call for the "other boat," as one author in this issue puts it, referring to the great numbers in his own region who are potentially open to the gospel message -- if the church had sufficient resources and equipping to reach out to them.

The common denominator in both these opportunities is the great need for more cross-culturally trained workers. These are needed both among Chinese believers who find themselves -- intentionally or through various circumstances -- living abroad, as well as among Christians in these "host" countries where more and more Chinese are settling. Where Chinese congregations already exist, leadership needs to welcome the reality that the future growth of their churches will likely be due to the influx of new members from China. Where Chinese Christians are currently few in number, local bodies will need to be challenged with the God-given opportunity before them. Language learning and much cultural adjustment on all sides will be necessary steps in ensuring that China's outward migration becomes both a great ingathering as well as a great blessing to the nations to which the Chinese are now going.

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

### For Further Reading

China: An Emerging Destination for Economic Migration at  
<http://www.migrationinformation.org/Profiles/display.cfm?ID=838>

Living In Between: The Chinese in South Africa at  
<http://www.migrationinformation.org/Feature/display.cfm?id=875>

Europe Attracts More Migrants from China at  
<http://www.migrationinformation.org/Feature/display.cfm?ID=144>

The China Monitor July 2010 at  
[http://www.ccs.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2010/07/China\\_Monitor\\_JULY\\_2010.pdf](http://www.ccs.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2010/07/China_Monitor_JULY_2010.pdf)

China's "wealth drain": Its rich emigrate at  
<http://globalpublicsquare.blogs.cnn.com/2011/06/13/chinas-wealth-drain-its-rich-are-set-on-emigrating/>

Mission among the Chinese Diaspora - A case study of migration & mission  
<http://www.enochwan.com/english/articles/pdf/Mission%20among%20the%20Chinese%20Diaspora.pdf>

# Missiological Implications of Chinese Christians in Europe

By Kim-kwong Chan

## Diasporic Mainland Migrant Churches in Europe

Diasporic communities become an important socioeconomic focus as the volume of transborder migrants increases mainly due to economic push-pull resulting from globalization. Missiologists, as well, began to look into the missiological significance of this phenomenon, and diaspora missiology has become an emerging topic among mission minded Christians.<sup>1</sup> This article focuses on the emergence of the Chinese diasporic community in Europe and its implications for global mission.

There are at least 40 million overseas Chinese outside of Greater China (Mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macao).<sup>2</sup> Among them, there are at least 20 million Mainland Chinese migrants who began to emigrate from China since the 1980s.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, the new Chinese immigrants of recent years, be they worldwide or European, are mostly from Mainland China. The rough distribution of these populations is as follows: Europe (1.5 million), United Kingdom (.5 million), Latin America (1 million), Africa (.5 million), North America (7 million), Australia and Oceania (.1 million), Asia (30 million).<sup>4</sup>

Among the approximately 1.5 million Chinese in Europe, Chinese Christian churches or fellowships appear in most major cities in European countries<sup>5</sup> totaling at least 250.<sup>6</sup> These sustainable Chinese Christian communities even appear in countries that previously had no record of a Chinese church, such as in Eastern European countries like the Autonomous Republic of Crimea.<sup>7</sup> No accurate statistics exist for the Chinese and Chinese Christians in Europe as it is a fluid situation with spontaneous mission activities initiated by autonomous Christian groups. However, a rough comparison between figures from 2002, 2006 and 2010 from the same countries strongly suggests a trend of rapid increase of Chinese, also mirrored by Chinese church numbers.<sup>8</sup>

Year	Country	Chinese population	Chinese churches/fellowships
2002	Spain	35,000	10
2005	Spain	100,000	20
2010	Spain	131,000	28
2002	The Netherlands	5,000	14
2006	The Netherlands	100,000	20
2010	The Netherlands	120,000	25

The increased number of Chinese Mainland immigrants in Europe has caught the attention of the more mature Chinese churches in the UK, USA, Canada, Taiwan and Hong Kong as they regard these new immigrants as mission targets. There are three main groups among the new migrants: students/scholars/intellectuals/professionals; merchants; and laborers (legal or otherwise). Each group has different ecclesiastical features.

The student/scholars/intellectual/professional group is often the target of mission groups both on campuses and among the Chinese communities. The common features among these new Chinese Christians are that most are highly educated as many of them hold advanced degrees earned in their host countries. Most of them learn about Christianity outside of China which precludes their having any roots, understanding or connections with Christian communities in Mainland China. Most of these new Christians formed groups in their host countries that began as fellowships and gradually evolved into independent congregations with a structure and formation similar to that of non-registered churches in China, namely congregational and non-liturgical. While many of these Christians would try to settle in their host country because of their professional skills and academic training, almost all are still intimately linked with family, colleagues or professional activities back in China. Currently, Chinese graduates increasingly choose to go back to China as economic prospects are getting better in China than in Europe, and some manage to establish returnee churches/fellowships in China.

The Wenzhou merchants dominate the merchant groups in Europe, and the churches among this group are established more by Wenzhouese with roots in China than by mission agencies overseas. They convert their fellow merchants who share similar linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Their church mode is almost the exact replica of what it is like in their home churches in Wenzhou. Hymnology and Bibles are brought from China. Even though they may live at or next to historical or contemporary centers of Christianity, their church life and activities seem to be thousands of miles and hundreds of years apart from their fellow Christians in their host countries. These churches seem to be more a global extension of the Wenzhouese church in China than a local expression of Christian faith by migrant Chinese. Their leaders are highly mobile creating much instability as they will go where there are business opportunities.

There are few studies on the last group of Chinese migrants, the laborers, as almost all of them are either irregular migrants making them difficult to study or living at the fringe of society and often difficult to track down. Because of their frequent illegal status, they are not in the official statistics, and they often live in secret, afraid of being caught by the authorities of their host countries. Many end up in the sweatshops or restaurants controlled by organized crime that is often related to human trafficking and may conduct illegal activities such as prostitution. These migrants are too ashamed to tell people back home. Few pay attention to this hidden group living on society's fringe which numbers tens of thousands, and so far, no mission has targeted this



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deprived group. The Chinese authorities have also chosen to ignore them since, as illegal people, they are not under the jurisdiction of the consular service of the Chinese Embassy.

This increasing number of Chinese Christians and the newly established churches have a significant impact on the overseas Chinese communities as these Christian communities often become the most important, organized, Chinese group in the migrant community. This is especially true in remote areas with a low Chinese, migrant population. Often these Christian groups are the sole agents providing support for newcomers. It is not uncommon for the Chinese churches to operate Chinese language schools as part of their Sunday School program, to provide Chinese language and cultural studies to the children of these new immigrants who often want their children to retain the Chinese cultural identity. Also, the free Chinese meal often offered after Sunday services in many Chinese churches in Europe, may be one of the few rare treats of a taste of home for many church attendants—Christian or otherwise. The apolitical, cultural and charitable nature of the Christian churches often makes them not only more popular than other Chinese associations in diaspora that frequently have political agendas and affiliations, but also the key players in the Chinese diasporic community, especially in Western countries where churches are often respected by the civil authorities. So, these Chinese diasporic churches serve not only the spiritual, but also the social needs of the Chinese diasporic community. They are a mission to the local community.

Other than a few well-established Chinese Churches in major cities such as London or Paris, where historically there has been a strong Chinese community, there is virtually little impact by these groups felt beyond the Chinese community for there is often minimum contact between these groups and their Christian counterparts in the host country. Therefore, there is little, if any, impact made by the growth of these new Chinese Christian communities on the local Christian landscape other than a few token or symbolic influences. Under reporting of these new Chinese Christian groups in the official Christian statistics of the host country is not uncommon due simply to the lack of contact or access to these ethnic Christian groups. Even though the number and size of these Chinese Christian communities are on the increase, so far their influence has been limited to within the Chinese community which seldom goes beyond its ethnic boundary.

### **Impact of European Chinese Churches in China**

However, the impact of these new groups can be felt in China as more of these newly converted, overseas Chinese return from Europe to China for either a short-term visit or long-term stay. These Christians, while in China, generally will not participate in the government sanctioned, registered churches for they simply may not feel accustomed to their style of religious activities, or they may have a negative impression received in Europe about them (with the exception of, perhaps, the Wenzhouese Christians). They may establish their own groups, usually among their colleagues or friends, who are usually in professional or intellectual classes with a certain degree of affluence, or they may join existing groups. These clusters of highly educated Christians form cell groups with a theological stance that identifies more with overseas churches than with Chinese churches in Mainland China. Their presence is being felt already in certain circles in China such as business, professional and academic. They belong to neither the government registered Three-Self/Christian Council nor are they necessarily a part of the traditional non-registered networks; they often set up their own churches with more links to the overseas Christians than to local Chinese Christians.

With the increase of Chinese in Europe, these Christian groups will also be on the rise. Their presence will contribute to an increasingly diverse Christian community in Mainland China that will bear a strong international flavor and intellectual atmosphere—both characteristics that are currently lacking among the Christian communities in China. Perhaps, in the long run, these characteristics will help to shape the Christian community in China into a community with a stronger global perspective than it currently has. In time, this will encourage a sense of global mission among the Chinese Christians in China. Furthermore, these Chinese Christian returnees with extensive bicultural exposure are potential, ideal candidates for cross-cultural mission work.

### **Mission Movements from European Chinese Churches**

There are already mission movements from these Chinese Churches in Europe, especially from the more established ones in the UK and Italy. Most of the mission focus is on the new Chinese diasporic communities such as new Mainland Chinese immigrants who have arrived in Europe, or, in some cases, on short-term missions to Mainland China.<sup>9</sup> In fact, many of these new Chinese diaspora churches owe their existence to such mission outreach. The Chinese church in Bucharest was established by COCM, a mission agency founded by Chinese Christians from the UK that focuses on evangelistic work among Chinese in both the UK and Europe. However, the lack of general coordination between the various mission agencies of the Chinese church that are targeting similar diasporic communities, as well as the lack of a total pan-European picture of the dynamic pattern of Chinese migrants, limits the efficiency of the mission effort as it reaches out to this diverse population of Europe's Chinese community. In addition, a general lack of ecclesiological vision often results in difficulty establishing sustainable church polity and ecclesiastical structures. This often leads to fragmentation and division—an undesirable yet commonly seen mode of church growth (in numbers) among Christian communities in Europe.

As for the missiological potential among the Chinese Christian communities in Europe, it seems that the Christian population among the diasporic community is still on the low side; many of the Christians are young in spiritual maturity and face the challenge of settling into a new environment (except for the more mature Chinese Christian community in the UK). Therefore, the current Chinese community in Europe seems to be more of a target mission field, a diaspora community that requires mission work rather than a mission sending pool which could do mission work beyond the diaspora scenario. Furthermore, as most of the Chinese mission agencies are focusing on evangelism, there are still few missions to those Chinese in Europe who are living on the fringes of society, often as slaves or fugitives exploited by various groups.

### **Conclusion**

Granted, there are Chinese Christians who are establishing European footholds by taking advantage of China's global economic expansion, such as the Wenzhouese Christian entrepreneurs and new Chinese migrants. These Christians face the difficult task of survival to establish their roots in the host country before they can have any religious influence among the Chinese diasporic population. Only after they are firmly established, which usually occurs with the second or third generation—as in the case of Chinese in North America—can they have sufficient resources to reach the local population or beyond. Many of these newly established Christian communities in Europe are still relying on support from mission agencies or their home churches in China.



Furthermore, the emergence of Sino phobic sentiments among European nations with an increasing Chinese political-economic impact can generate negative influences on the survival of Chinese diasporic communities; hence, Chinese Christian communities in such a context are often rather unstable, such as those in Italy and Spain. Even with an extremely stable international business and political environment that favors Chinese merchants and migrants, it will be a long, ecclesiastical, developmental process before these Chinese Christians in Europe can have a significant influence on the Christian world via cross-cultural proselytizing of their host populations and beyond. At present, these congregations are often an extension of existing Christian communities from Mainland China, Greater China, or other diasporic communities, composed mainly of newly arrived Chinese migrants. Their current task is survival, expansion and consolidation.

These Chinese congregations in Europe serve not only as the spiritual but also as the social resource to enable the healthy development of the Chinese community in diaspora. They also provide high, moral values to their members as well as inner strength to sustain them in the various hardships they face. On the positive side, these congregations can act as bridges to link the often self-contained Chinese communities with local communities through their common interest in religious aspiration. Often, they can also serve as a channel of good will from the Chinese community to the host society to decrease negative feelings often held by local populations. For example, the Chinese church in Bucharest supports the local orphanage as a sign of good will on behalf of the Chinese community. This benevolent act has provided a positive image of the Chinese which counteracts the typical, popular image of greedy Chinese held by Romanians in general.<sup>10</sup>

Chinese in the European diaspora are part of the great population migration trend that began in the late 20<sup>th</sup> Century and will certainly be on the rise in this 21<sup>st</sup> Century. This population movement will not only rewrite the ethnic and population profile of many countries in Europe but will also reshape the contour of world Christianity. The sheer size of the Chinese population—hence the increasing Chinese population in Europe—cannot be ignored as it enjoys one of the highest conversion rates. Currently there is a desperate need to convert the new Chinese migrants in Europe. More emphasis on missiological teaching among these churches is required to provide a global worldview to balance the current ethnocentric existences commonly found among these churches. More studies on this migration trend are needed to co-ordinate mission strategy and church planting efforts; more emphasis on social justice and compassionate ministries to those being exploited is required; and above all, there must be a more co-operative effort among mission agencies in order to maximize the limited resources for this particular field. With a more sustainable Chinese Christian community in Europe and with most of its members biculturally trained, perhaps this new contingent of Christians, living in virtually every country of Europe, can become a new wave of missionaries not only to its own kinsman, but also to other ethnic groups.

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<sup>1</sup> For example, see Enoch Wan, *Diaspora Missiology: Theory, Methodology and Practice* (Private Publication, 2012), available at <https://www.createpace.com/3697446>.

<sup>2</sup> The Overseas Compatriot Affairs Commission of the Republic of China (Taiwan) has 39.46 million as of 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2009. See [www.ocac.gov.tw](http://www.ocac.gov.tw).

<sup>3</sup> There were 28 million overseas Chinese migrants in 1985 and 35 million in 2000 showing an increase of 7 million, over a 15 year period. The majority of these new migrants are coming from Mainland China. If one uses the conservative rate of increase of these past 15 years, 20%, there would be at least an additional 7 million Mainland Chinese migrants by 2005 and another 8.5 million by 2010.

<sup>4</sup> This author tabulates this rough estimate from various sources. It is just a rough estimate for there is no agency dedicated to keeping track of such figures.

<sup>5</sup> For example, see Mary Wang, "Recent Situation of Chinese Mission Work in Europe," in *Great Commission Bi-Monthly* no. 61 (April 2006): 3-13. This contains perhaps the best estimated figures on Chinese and Chinese churches in Europe, but it only includes ten countries where Chinese Overseas Christian Mission (founded by Mary Wang) has established its work. There is no figure on the other 20 plus European nations. However, the figures in almost all of these ten countries are much higher than what Enoch Wan had quoted in 2002, perhaps a reflection of the rapid increase.

<sup>6</sup> This is an estimate given by a missionary who works in Europe and shared these figures in 2007 at a mission conference. See [http://www.gospelherald.com.hk/news/mis\\_359.htm](http://www.gospelherald.com.hk/news/mis_359.htm). It seems that this figure is higher than what Wang (see previous footnote) gave in 2006, perhaps a sign of the rapid increase of Chinese migrants in Europe since 2005.

<sup>7</sup> There has already been an established Chinese Christian Church in Kiev, Ukraine for a decade, and there are a substantial of Chinese living there. However, this writer recently came across a VCD on the third anniversary celebration of the founding of the Simferopol Mandarin (Chinese) Church in the Crimea Republic of Ukraine. Simferopol, with a small population of 330,000, already has a sufficient number of Chinese living there to sustain a Chinese Christian Church!

<sup>8</sup> The figures for 2002 are from Wan (2002) and the figures for 2006 are from Wang (2006). CCCOWE did an update in 2010, see *Chinese Church Today* (February 2011), pp. 8-10.

<sup>9</sup> For example, the Italian Chinese Churches Association has had a mission team serving Lisu Christians in Yunnan since 2009. Personal communication with Christian leaders in Baoshan, Yunnan, February, 2012.

<sup>10</sup> This author's field observation in 2004 and 2005.

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## Mainland Chinese on the African Continent<sup>1</sup>

By Paul Pruitt

For the last 12 years, China's economy has been growing at more than 9% per year. Fueling this growth is massive urban expansion. China's urban population is increasing at a rate of 10% per decade. Over the next 20 years, some 360 million people will move from the countryside to cities in China. Already in January of this year, for the first time in its history, urban residents outnumbered those living in the countryside. Over the next twenty years, China will build 20,000 to 50,000 new skyscrapers, and more than 170 cities will require mass transit systems by 2025. By 2030, China will need an oil supplier the size of Saudi Arabia to meet its demand for energy consumption.<sup>2</sup> This growth explains China's insatiable appetite for raw materials with which to build residential dwellings, office buildings, highways, subways, railways, electronics, appliances—the list is endless. But where can China find such a vast amount of raw materials to meet the needs of its rapid urban expansion?

Every year, China does \$10 billion worth of trade with Africa, and the numbers keep growing. Africa has many of the natural resources that China needs to fuel its economy—oil, minerals, water, timber, ore, platinum, cobalt, chromium, diamonds, copper, clay, zinc, silver—and land! These are found in practically every country in Africa—in abundant supply! As a result, it is estimated that 750,000 Chinese have immigrated to Africa to work. In return for the raw materials they need, China is investing heavily in Africa, building roads, highways, bridges, dams, railways, hospitals, schools, office buildings—just about anything and everything—all across Africa.

This means that Chinese are moving to Africa at the rate of 75,000 per year—engineers, construction workers, miners, doctors, nurses, chefs, restaurant workers, house keepers, security guards, teachers and others. There are 900 China-approved companies in 49 countries, meaning that Chinese inhabit nearly every country on the continent of Africa.

Africa offers these Chinese individuals increased opportunities to start their own businesses and make money. Many do so in restaurants, retail, wholesale, trade, Chinese medicine and merchandise. Back in China, the sheer numbers of small enterprises throughout the country make competition extremely stiff, so success stories from Africa that are making their way back home are stoking the fires of ambition and drawing thousands away from their homeland to try to strike it rich in Africa. Over and over the difficulties of getting a business up and running in China with red tape, bureaucracy and competition were heard. By contrast, the opportunities in Africa are boundless and it costs very little to get started.

While it is probably not possible to give completely accurate figures in terms of the numbers of Chinese in various countries across Africa, information collated on the internet has been surprisingly consistent. South Africa has the largest number of Chinese at 350,000—almost half the number in all of Africa. Angola and Nigeria follow with estimates from 40,000 or 50,000 to 100,000 with twelve other countries ranging from 10,000 to 40,000.

However, the vast majority of these diaspora Chinese have never heard the Gospel. On the entire continent, there are no more than 12 Chinese churches or fellowships. A variety of factors are responsible for this including language, cultural and educational barriers along with a lack of personnel to reach out to them. In addition, not all Africans are the same. There are marked cultural differences between East and West Africa as well as between Anglophone and Francophone Africa.

## South Africa

Of the 350,000 Chinese now living in South Africa, 75% are from mainland China. They come as government contract labor workers, businessmen, and students. Many come from Fujian; however, 50% - 90% of these enter illegally, so they are afraid to talk to people. Nevertheless, they see South Africa as “greener pastures” and so are willing to take the risks and put up with a lot of inconveniences, such as corrupt policemen who stop them and demand bribes. As in other parts of Africa, South Africa is seen as a stepping stone to the West.

With “money as their god,” most of these Chinese have never heard anything of the gospel or of Christianity. Currently, there are only six or seven Chinese churches among these 350,000 Chinese in South Africa. Thus, the need for Christian workers is undeniable. In addition, most Chinese cannot speak English, one of the two official languages of South Africa. However, one Mandarin speaking missionary currently working with Chinese in South Africa, said that, for now, printing and distribution of Chinese Bibles and literature is more easily done in that country.

## Other African Countries

Apart from South Africa, in all of East and West Africa there are only five Chinese churches and two Chinese fellowships with just four full-time pastors. Fewer than 200 Chinese are in any kind of church or fellowship at all. In addition to these small congregations, there are some who work with the Chinese community in various ways. The Lord gave two Nigerian Christians a dream about the Chinese and now, with vision and passion, several of them regularly visit Chinatown to encourage those who are Christians and present the Gospel to others. A Mainland Chinese doctor and his wife are ministering in Uganda via clinics. Other Christians in various locations are involved in Bible studies, visitation and literature distribution. In one Nigerian city, literature could be distributed at a construction site without difficulty. In another situation, Chinese shopkeepers were using their business as a means of spreading the Gospel. However, without question, the workers are far too few.

Even fewer are those who actually speak Mandarin; thus, most Africans are unable to communicate with the Chinese. Language barriers present a great challenge.

Those currently engaged in ministry are both men and women from a variety of backgrounds. Some are Africans who have a burden for the increasing number of Chinese they see around them. Other workers are from Taiwan, Hong Kong, Korea, Western countries and Mainland China. While these may have a desire to reach the Chinese, the varying cultural backgrounds and styles can create difficulties.

A constantly changing population among the Chinese is another factor. The largest church in East and West Africa, found in Nairobi, numbers between 40 and 50 members but has a high turnover rate due to people either returning to China or immigrating to the West. In Addis Ababa, Chinese generally stay for one to three years but not longer. Most definitely plan on returning to China.

In some places, such as Uganda, there is almost no effort being made to reach out to the Chinese. Forty-nine Chinese enterprises have invested close to \$62 million in diverse fields ranging from light industries to agricultural goods to construction materials and equipment. An additional ten Chinese companies are involved in road and housing construction for the local population. These have drawn an estimated 20,000 Chinese to the country, most of whom are from China's countryside. Thus, while the Ugandans have a good attitude towards the Chinese, education and language are major issues preventing outreach to them.

## Challenges

The challenges to ministering to the diaspora Chinese found in Africa will vary by country. However, below are some of those that are faced most frequently.

*Language and cultural issues:* Language barriers keep Chinese isolated from those in their host country and prevent the African church from reaching out to them. In some cases, not only is language an issue, but since every African country presents a different cultural environment, nationality and leadership styles can also present challenges. In some countries, the attitudes of the people of the host country towards the Chinese present problems.

*Time issues:* When they first arrive, many tend to work extremely long hours since they have borrowed money to get to Africa and need to pay it off as soon as possible. For others working on contracts, work hours are set by the employer. For example, in one city, where the Chinese are involved in construction, they live in compounds and work 12-hour shifts with no days off.

*Accessibility issues:* Many of the compounds where the Chinese live do not welcome outsiders. These require creative means to gain access. One missionary, who suggested that the men needed counseling (since they were away from home, family and so on), was given access in this way.

*Living conditions:* In some countries, living conditions are difficult. There may be water and power cuts; food and living expenses can be high. These create additional stresses.

*Education:* Many Mainland Chinese are relatively unschooled, not having completed primary education. They are practically illiterate and have great difficulty reading a Bible or Christian literature. With these people, storytelling becomes an important part of ministry.

*Length of stay:* While some immigrants come to stay, others are in Africa as short-term contract workers. Once their contract is up, they go home. As a result, the Chinese population is constantly shifting.



*Documentation:* Depending on the country, obtaining visas and work permits may take time and be difficult. There can be a high level of bureaucracy and corruption can be a major challenge. As mentioned above, many come illegally and work “under the radar.”

*Nationality of Christian workers:* An important issue to be considered in ministering to the Chinese is the worker’s nationality. Depending on the country and its attitude toward various ethnic groups, this may or may not be a major issue. In some countries, relationships can be very complex. Partnerships between the African church, Chinese and Westerners will be important requiring the investment of time and patience.

*Ministry model:* Varying models of ministry are already being used. Medical personnel, business men and women as well as full-time Christian workers are already present. Different countries may require varying platforms for ministry. Some believe that Business as Mission could be the most appropriate model; others desire full-time and short-term workers, and still others think that local volunteers would provide the best approach.

## Conclusion

Without doubt, the current Chinese diaspora in Africa provides an open door for reaching Chinese men, women and families with the Gospel. However, at present, ministry among them is in its infancy. Remote working conditions, language barriers, and the lack of missionaries to them mean that very few have access to the Gospel. If the African church is to reach the Chinese around them, they will need help—help learning the language, help understanding Chinese culture and worldview, and help understanding the best way to reach the hearts of the Chinese. In addition, it would seem that both Chinese and non-Chinese missionaries would be a valuable resource, and partnerships would be essential.

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<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise noted, the information in this article has been taken from “China and The African Continent,” and “Africa Trip Report (Kenya and West Africa)” by Sydney Witbooi, both unpublished documents of OMF that report on exploratory trips made in 2010 looking at Chinese migrants in Africa.

<sup>2</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Urbanization\\_in\\_the\\_People's\\_Republic\\_of\\_China](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Urbanization_in_the_People's_Republic_of_China)

<sup>3</sup> On this trip, we were told that many wealthy Chinese in Africa are returning to China to build new, large houses or business buildings for themselves or for their relatives. As neighbors see these buildings go up, they are deciding to go to Africa themselves in the hope of also cashing in on opportunities.

*Paul Pruitt is a director at an agency that serves among the Chinese diaspora. For further information, contact Paul at [paunao@gmail.com](mailto:paunao@gmail.com).*

## Intercessory Notes

Please pray

1. For the many believers worldwide who become friends with Mainland Chinese and share the Gospel with them.
2. That God would use this time of transition and change in the lives of diaspora Chinese to bring them to himself.
3. That those specifically called to minister to diaspora Chinese would have God’s leading and mind in knowing the best approach to take and his encouragement in learning language and culture as necessary.
4. That the church would seize this opportunity to present the Gospel and minister to the great number of diaspora Chinese.
5. That the new Chinese Church Voices blog will enhance understanding of the Chinese church among non-Chinese speakers and be fruitful in encouraging dialogue.



## Peoples of China

### Global Snapshots: A Look at the Chinese Diaspora around the World

Various authors

#### Japan

The Chinese population in Japan has increased four-fold since 2000. Today, one-third of all foreigners and two-thirds of all foreign students are Chinese. The Japanese government is promoting Global 30 to accept 300,000 foreign students by 2020. The door to Chinese students is wide open. On the other hand, Chinese professors come to teach at various universities. Many trainees also come to learn from Japan. Tourists as well as business people from China benefit the Japanese economy. Most Chinese people stay in large cities such as Tokyo, Osaka, Nagoya, and Fukuoka; however, they can also be found throughout Japan. Many of them are wealthier than previously; yet, some are still struggling to survive in one of the most developed and highest priced countries of the world. Young Chinese couples leave their small children and babies in their homeland with their parents so that they can work hard and save much money. The number of international marriages between Japanese and Chinese is also growing.

This situation shows us that God is sending Chinese people to Japan, a country with religious freedom but with less than one percent of the population Christian. How is God reaching out to this new Chinese diaspora? A Chinese-Canadian couple joined a Japanese church to lead its Chinese congregation. Since there are many universities in the area, many Chinese students live near the church. A Korean missionary started his ministry for Chinese in a Korean church. He adopted a cell group style since it helps in training young Christians to learn how to start a house church when they go back to their homeland. In Osaka, a Japanese pastor takes care of Chinese students as he works with an NGO. This lets him show them the love of Christ, and makes it easy for him to communicate Christ to them. Several Christians and missionaries, who have a burden for the diaspora ministry, are trying to reach out to foreign students including the Chinese. Their strategy is to focus on the market place. In a suburb of Tokyo, a Chinese Christian lady, who is a member of a Japanese church, opened an empty apartment unit in a building she has to Chinese wives, who are married to Japanese husbands, for a Bible study. A young pastor is sent to this group by a Chinese church. Not only are Chinese churches and Christians reaching out to the Chinese diaspora, but the ministry is also now being carried out with the cooperation of the non-Chinese church in Japan. This is the time to call for the “other boat” in order to strengthen the “net” to “catch” plenty of Chinese friends in Japan. (See Luke 5:6-7)

—Jonathan Yasuki Tsutada works in Japan with the Chinese population.

#### Canada

Less than a decade ago, Vancouver had only a handful of Mandarin speaking congregations or churches. Today, close to seventy percent of Chinese churches are Mandarin speaking or have some sort of Mandarin ministries. Most of these churches have been established as a result of a significant influx of immigrants from Mainland China in recent years. According to Dr. Peter S. Li, Professor of Sociology of the University of Saskatchewan, the number of immigrants from Mainland China continued to climb from the late 90s until it reached forty-two thousand in 2005, and this growth has been steadily maintained annually. Though usually only thirty-five to forty percent of these immigrants ended up residing in Vancouver, they have already made a significant impact on churches as well as the community at large.

Many of these Chinese find themselves going to church not long after their arrival; some go because of different services that churches provide such as ESL classes and children’s programs, but some go because they were already believers back in China, and they want to look for a new spiritual home. The need for Mandarin-speaking ministry has rapidly and dramatically increased as a result. While Cantonese-speaking congregations are aging and shrinking, suddenly new opportunities are showing up at our doorstep. Just as the Chinese word for “crisis” (*weiji*) consists of both “danger” and “opportunity,” issues like pressure on resources and tensions from cultural differences are creating both challenges and dangers for churches that are endeavoring to reach out to these Mainland Chinese. However, my church can testify that this is a God-sent opportunity. We started a Mandarin worship service in 2006 with about twenty people, half of which were mission-minded Cantonese-speaking members who had originally emigrated from Hong Kong. Today, our Mandarin worship attendance is over one hundred and sixty and continues to grow.

—Paul Chiu is a local church pastor in Vancouver.

#### New Zealand

The past two decades have seen large numbers of mainland Chinese moving to beautiful New Zealand. Auckland, the largest city, is the most popular destination for both students and longer term immigrants. It is home to perhaps 80% of NZ’s 200,000 Chinese.

International students in NZ come from over 100 nations—the largest group being Chinese. Several students from China attend the multi-cultural church where my wife and I serve on Auckland’s North Shore. In addition to university students, pupils are coming for primary or high school, often accompanied by one of their parents.

Concerning longer term immigrants, there are two main categories—investing immigrants (投资移民) and skilled immigrants (技术移民). Those coming as investors clearly need to be very wealthy to qualify. In some cases, the wife and children remain in NZ while the husband spends most of his time in China or elsewhere engaged in business. It is a far from ideal kind of family life. The bulk of immigrants however come as skilled professionals who have to settle down and make a living. In today’s tough economic climate this is not easy. Some are very successful—I can think of a couple of engineers and an architect. Many, however, find that they cannot so easily transfer their China skills and experience to the new country. For example, James, who was a medical doctor in China, gave up trying to get local qualifications (because of his limited English) and now runs a lawn mow-

ing company. Many immigrants face similar problems. Despite their training and expertise, it is not easy getting into local Kiwi companies—as a lawyer, engineer, artist, teacher, university professor or manager. There are cultural as well as language hurdles to overcome.

However, Chinese immigrants are gifted people. With hard work and ingenuity they begin to find a niche for themselves. For example, in Auckland many are making a very significant contribution to the building industry. Our church has been engaged in a major building extension and we have been able to use Chinese builders, plumbers and gas fitters, water-proofers, electricians, painters, furniture makers, roofers, carpet layers and so on.

It is common for immigrants to bring their retired parents over to New Zealand—for short-term visits, often to help with children. While some parents prefer to return to China (where there is more to do (更热闹), more friends, more independence, no language problems, etc.), many do choose to settle. This is a whole group of people needing to be reached.

Making a living is not always easy for recent immigrants. Many work long hours—sometimes seven days a week—and money often becomes a snare. Marriage and family problems are all-too-common.

Praise the Lord—Chinese immigrants, young and old, are being reached for Christ. Chinese churches (of which there are about 60 in Auckland) and multi-cultural churches, like our own, are seeing many come to faith. Many of these new believers had had no contact with the Gospel in China. One young immigrant, who my wife led to Christ several years ago, is now involved with another Chinese sister in producing an excellent monthly gospel newspaper in Chinese. *Morning Star* is widely read even by non-Christian Chinese. There are also major outreach events such as the recent meetings with evangelist, Yuan Zhiming, supported by a team that included “Canaan Hymns” song writer Xiao Min. Over 4500 attended the two nights of evangelistic meetings and two hundred responded to the Gospel.

All this is still but a drop in the bucket for there are many more as yet unreached.

*—Peter Anderson served in Hong Kong and China for 29 years and currently pastors the Mairangi Bay Community Church in Auckland, New Zealand, a multi-cultural congregation that is 68% Chinese.*

## **Nigeria**

YJI and MLI, who are married and in their late 40s, come from Fujian and grew up in a coastal town making salt. When it became difficult to make a living, they decide to strike out overseas like many in their village. They went to Nigeria in 2005 and now have a retail store that sells men and women’s shoes, handbags and perfume.

Since coming to Nigeria, they have not made any friends. The competition for business is so fierce that usually no one talks to another Chinese or helps another Chinese for “another person’s gain is one’s own loss.” There is a small Chinese Christian fellowship of about six which YJI regularly attends since she is a Christian. However, she does not see the other Chinese, small business owners in the fellowship as friends. Everyone is very guarded about their lives. One time she was so sick she was laid up in bed for a week and did not talk to anyone, nor did anyone inquire as to why she was not seen for a week or about her well being.

YJI had only a couple of years of elementary school and her husband has only a middle school education. They did not speak English when they first arrived. They are without legal identity, so every month, they are forced to make payoffs to various groups—police, immigration, etc.—in order not to be jailed and deported. Even with those payments, MLI has been arrested three times by immigration; only more bribes kept him out of jail.

Since YJI is a Christian, she wants to tell others about Jesus, but MLI is not, and so she has a hard time. She feels inadequate because she does not know the Bible and how to answer objections. Daily devotions are difficult because she is not able to read. Another shopkeeper, who is a Buddhist, sometimes argues with her about which religion is better. He says that Christians are not better protected; they are still arrested, get sick, die and so on. She does not know how to answer him.

Currently this couple is “looked after” by an African pastor who does not speak Mandarin so he cannot minister nor communicate with them or other Chinese. In reality, they do not go to him when they have a question for communication is impossible. All this absolutely illustrates the need for a proper Chinese-speaking pastor to be sent who can work from the Bible in teaching and setting up a structure to ensure that disciples are made. More trained workers are needed in Africa!

*—Mr. Nehemiah works with the Chinese Diaspora in Africa.*

## **South Africa**

All those from Fujian that I know, are shopkeepers (selling clothes and/or groceries) and came here to “make money.” They say there is no way they can make money where they come from. (Most living here are from Fujian province with a few from Beijing and Shanghai.)

Most of the time, the head of the family comes first, and after some time, the wife and then the children follow. The grandchildren are born here, and when they are about one year old, they are sent back to Mainland China to live with their grandparents. Some of the adults would love to return to their birthplace, but they feel that they have not made enough money yet. Many live illegally in their shops which they rent. Even if they rent a house, there is usually more than one family living together in the small dwelling. Each entire family, consisting of husband, wife and at least one child, share a bedroom.

People from Beijing and Shanghai tend to be very different; they are the educated and work in banks or possess IT businesses. Most of them are men who are on contract for two to three years. They have wives and family back in the Mainland. Some of them return once every three months for a visit.

—Ina has been working with Chinese in South Africa for nearly two years.

### United Kingdom

Twice a week our volunteers pick-up Chinese so they can come to our English classes to practice their English. We offer English classes for visiting Chinese who represent a very specific group—visiting scholars and academics who have been sent to the UK to do research in their area of expertise. They are truly high-flyers in the academic world. While their academic English is good, they long to practice casual conversation, and so they greatly value our conversation classes. They also use the time to ask cultural questions.

Most are communist party members and atheists, but many arrive with a curiosity about Christianity and hunger in their hearts. They are offered a Bible study with colleagues in the city and a good number take that opportunity. Some become believers and return to China knowing Christ. Others return to China, not believing, but with a new view of Christians. And then there are those that return not yet believing, but they come to faith after they return. We see examples of all of these.

These visiting scholars are usually only here for six months or a year, so our window of opportunity to build a relationship is small. However, we have a good group of local, British, Christian volunteers who help with this. In addition, it is essential, whenever possible, to link the returning believers with Christians back in China.

—Mary and Mike have been working with Chinese in the United Kingdom for a number of years.

There are several married, Chinese women who have been in our city for ten years or more, have obtained postgraduate degrees, have jobs in academia and bought houses. They have professed faith in Christ, but are still on the edge of things church-wise. None of their husbands are Christians. In the same church, there are many Chinese students who are actively engaged in a Mandarin-speaking home fellowship and in evangelistic and other Christian activities. The first group of women, being more settled with husbands, children and busy professional lives, do not fit in well with the younger students.

These women exist in a kind of twilight zone. They have British citizenship or permanent residency, but they also have family in China, and a degree of uncertainty about continued employment in the UK. I sense these couples are constantly weighing the pros and cons of staying or returning. One lady lives in the UK while her husband lives in China; they each make one or two visits a year.

All are generous friends to the local Christians they have known the longest; however, I don't think they feel part of the family. One or two of us who know them best continue to pray and try different ways of helping each of them belong.

—Emily has been working with Chinese students in a United Kingdom university city for fifteen years.



Image Credit: [Chinese New Year by suzienewshoes, on Flickr](#)



## Book Review

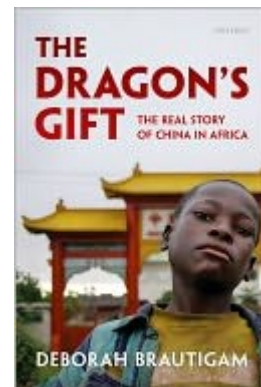
### *The Dragon's Gift: The Real Story of China in Africa*

by Deborah Brautigam

Reviewed by Samuel Chiang

*The Dragon's Gift: The Real Story of China in Africa* by Deborah Brautigam. Oxford University Press (New York: 2011), 416 pages. ISBN-13: 978-0199606290; ISBN-10: 0199606293; paper \$21.95.

China's performances on the global stage continually invite scrutiny as to her intentions, actions and spillover effects. In a country where might is right, inevitable questions will leap to the forefront as to her action in "aid": Is it with strings attached? Who does it really benefit? Is this a foreign policy? Do they assist with capacity building? Is there partiality in aid support that might appear to support rogue regimes? Is China using aid primarily to gain access to natural resources? Does China make corruption worse?



Deborah Brautigam has masterfully written a book that seeks to bring a quartet of disciplines into perspective: history, macro and microeconomics, aid models and attitudes are combined with China's transformative aid policy going global along with its mammoth corporations. She frames the disciplines through officially promulgated policies that include: Eight Principles for China's Aid to Foreign Countries, Four Principles of Economic and Technological Cooperation and Five Measures for Assisting Other Developing Countries. She brings the practice of aid alive through the lenses of China's Overseas Economic and Trade Cooperation Zones, and, of course, through China's large corporations.

In the first three chapters she describes the historical context of aid from the West with ample details so that one understands the slowly revolving practices of aid. Missionary ventures and the subsequent formation of large funding bodies were clearly noted so that the reader can understand the mindset of aid and aid agencies. She skillfully weaves China's own humble beginnings on aid, the first developing country to provide such a program in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, so that the stream of consciousness about aid is not lost. Furthermore, she aptly describes the motivation for China to participate in aid programs and documents well China's framing principle from 1964, which serves as the foundation of China's approach on aid to foreign countries.

Nevertheless, just because one has a set of principles on aid does not mean one has an aid policy or practice. So, who served as China's mentor? Surprisingly, it was Japan. At the opening of the new economic era in 1978, Japan was ready to assist with both turnkey projects and technical expertise for capacity building to fuel China's modernizations. In return, Japan sought repayment in natural resources and commodities. While there is no love lost between the two neighbors, the "practicality" of the arrangement made it palatable. China saw the classroom and teachings on aid, liked what was taught and has sought to duplicate it.

At about the same time, the donor world and aid organizations were also changing their tune. They stopped funding infrastructure types of projects which meant that many of the African countries, needing this type of aid, had nowhere to go for funding. China then decided to put into practice what she had learned from her mentor—Japan—and a new era of developmental aid in Africa took place. The Chinese were intensely practical, experimental, not risk averse and able to bulk-up in their own institutional growth, which resulted in conducting aid with grants, bartering, and concessional loans.

Chapters four through seven provide a detailed look at how aid actually worked in both macro and microeconomic perspective. Ms. Brautigam's prowess to interview in Chinese, live among the people (both in China and Africa), dig through reams of statistics and parse them is not lost on the reader. The maps, charts and graphs make this section a curious read at crawling speed. While the author shines on her mastery of showing how China does aid across Africa and how China's "dragon head" companies go global, the author often loses the plot on "aid," and is mesmerized as to how companies actually work in concert with the state to achieve their purpose, which the author calls "aid."

Storytelling case studies, dotting across Africa where Chinese "dragon head" corporations are operating, fill the pages for chapters eight, nine and ten. In essence, the author makes the argument that China has created her own path for aid, and it is one that she admires greatly.

However, what is instructive in these chapters is that aid is operating at the statecraft level, and Africa is choosing to consider different models of aid coming from European countries as well as from North America. Different models have different systems of accountability, spillover effects and potential aid values to be released. The author does not advocate which model might be the best, but the reader is certain that the practical Chinese method of aid is to be well regarded. She buttresses this argument by showing that some African countries are turning away from the traditional Western aid agencies and are turning towards China.

Interestingly, in these chapters one also comes to realize why there are so many Chinese in Africa—over a million! There are three clear forces at work. First and foremost, there is the foreign policy angle. When the Chinese government encouraged corporations to go abroad, the smaller entrepreneurial enterprises also went abroad. They sought out opportunities. While this is not aid oriented (and the author did lose the plot), it became clear that there was money to be made. The second force at work is that the Chinese are committed to capacity building and transferring technical knowledge; as time went on, some people actually stayed. This clear commitment is well documented and admirable! Finally, there is also the angle of the recipient country at work. Pending on the country, some clearly were ready to work into the next phase and receive all the capacity building training; however, some were not, and the Chinese had to stay on.

Perhaps chapter eleven is the most sobering chapter. The author consistently delayed responding to "hard" questions throughout the book and made certain that the reader was not going to receive satisfaction until the last chapter—after she had laid out the case for the Chinese aid program, process and expansion. Then, she deals with some tougher questions that include the environment, human rights, corruption and unfairness. By now, she has lost almost all of her objectivity; she acknowledges the issues but is unable to respond well to each of the tough questions. Clearly, she has a high regard for China, the government and all the



*guanxi* it has.

A contextual book like this cannot even be published without referring to the “quotable” *guanxi* found in China and across Africa. Hence, what is written is truly a contribution to knowledge. In addition, there are nuggets of gold in the more than 65 pages of Endnotes. The index is also a great help to the reader.

The continually disturbing feeling that this reviewer finds is the biased nature of this book. Thinly veiled, the prose leans toward the Chinese government, the foreign policy of aid, and the growth of the Chinese, global, behemoth corporations. In fact, on one page, the author quoted a government official who essentially did not look positively towards the entire continent of Africa.

The case of “aid” as defined by the author for China, addresses how state actors, corporations, and governments win, but it fails to address these questions: How does aid trickle down into society? How does aid change and transform? How are dependencies created by aid?

For mission organizations and specialists who wish to know and understand how China and aid organizations from around the world work in Africa, this is a good reference book. For policy makers and grant makers who wish to know how their grants might produce certain values and transformation, or not, this book will cause a rethink.

*Rev. Samuel Chiang was born in Taiwan, grew up and worked in Canada and graduated from Dallas Seminary. He has started several businesses including a foreign joint venture with a local government in China and also served as the Chief Operating Officer of TWR, an international media organization. He has written extensively on China and Asia, has authored book chapters in diverse genres including innovation, orality, and persecution and has been published in five languages. He has traveled extensively across Africa and currently serves as the Executive Director of the International Orality Network, a voluntary network of well over 1200 organizations dispersed across all time zones, that exists to influence the Body of Christ to make disciples of the 70% of the world's population who are oral learners. He and his bride, Robbi, have three Gen Y children.*

## Resource Corner

### ChinaSource announces the launch of its new blog:

#### [Chinese Church Voices](#)

[Chinese Church Voices](#) aims to:

- Broaden our understanding of the issues facing the Chinese church.
- Provide a platform from which non-Chinese speakers can access – listen in on—conversations taking place within China's on-line Christian community.
- Draw from a variety of sources representing both the registered and unregistered Chinese churches, clergy and laity.
- Translate sermons, articles, blog posts and micro-blogs that are written by Christians in China.

According to statistics released by the Chinese government in January of 2012, the number of internet users in China has surpassed 500 million. With the recent advent of blogs and micro-blogs, the internet has become the closest thing that China has to a “public square” where people can express their ideas and opinions on a variety of topics—within limits, of course. Contrary to the common perception outside of China, religious topics are within those limits.

Dr. Mark Strand, Executive Director of Evergreen, points out that:

*For too long we have not heard Chinese voices in the discussion taking place in the West about the Chinese church. At best their voice has been in the third person. It isn't as if Chinese Christians haven't been talking, for the discussion here in China has been both robust and profound. But we in the West have not worked hard enough to expand our discussion to include them. This new web site will go far to redress this issue.*

Dr. Daniel Bays, Professor of History, Calvin College, observed:

*This could be an extremely important addition to the (unfortunately) limited number of dependable sources of information about the church in China. Here is a resource, it appears, that we will be able to count on for sober and thoughtful content.*

