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ChinaSource Quarterly

Student Ministry in China

Tim Brookings,
Guest Editor

華源協作
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Student Ministry in China

ChinaSource Quarterly **Summer 2021, Vol. 23, No. 2**

In this issue . . .

Editorial

Campus Ministry within Mainland China

By Tim Brookings, Guest Editor

Most of us have heard stories about rapid church growth in mainland China. But what about campus ministry? With all the stories about Chinese church growth, it is harder to find stories about the dynamic campus ministry that has developed within mainland Chinese churches.

In this edition of *ChinaSource Quarterly,* we hear from several writers who have been intimately involved in the campus ministry there. Two of the writers (including myself) are foreigners who have lived in mainland China for many years, partnering with local believers in the campus ministry there. The other three writers are all mainlanders who are key leaders within campus ministry networks there. For security reasons, all the writers have used pseudonyms. I am grateful that these writers have shared their perspectives about the campus ministry that has been happening in mainland China for more than one hundred years.

In his lead article, Zhu Zi Jian gives us a fascinating history of campus ministry in mainland China. Zhu passionately describes how the Chinese church has navigated decades of challenges throughout the development of campus ministry.

Chen Xin's article describes how campus ministry has helped shape today's church in mainland China. He also reflects on the current state of campus ministry and the challenges facing it today.

With the articles by Zhu and Chen presenting the broad sweep of campus ministry in mainland China, the three remaining articles bring focus to particular issues. My article looks at the role of foreigners through the decades. From the beginning, foreigners have been involved with campus ministry, often taking leadership in pioneering situations. As the indigenous campus ministry faces a challenging future, foreigners still have a have a role to play, but quite different from what it was even just ten years ago.

Nyima Rongwu's article sheds light on the particular challenges of ministry with minority students. Nyima states a compelling case for ministry with people from minority backgrounds, considering the whole person and patiently navigating cultural differences.

The concluding article by Qian Jia describes how campus ministry has become a growing force for cross-cultural missions. Qian acknowledges the challenges that young people face in living out their calling. She leaves the reader with a sense of hope for the future, as young people in mainland China seek to join in God's global mission.

My book review brings attention to a decades-old book that still rings true today. In *China: Christian Students Face the Revolution,* David Adeney gives a firsthand account of the early development of China InterVarsity. Adeney's insights from 1973, as China was just on the cusp of reopening, give the reader some interesting food for thought in light of the present-day realities that we see in mainland China.

On behalf of all the writers for this edition of *ChinaSource Quarterly,* I want to thank ChinaSource for this opportunity to shed light on the ongoing campus ministry in mainland China. We hope that readers will gain a

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The History of Student Ministry

By ZHU Zi Xian

Image credit: Tim Brookings.

Broadly speaking, the history of student ministry in China is nearly as long as that of modern Protestant missions in China. Robert Morrison founded the Anglo-Chinese College in Malacca in 1818 to educate and influence Chinese youth and children. This was the first school of Western education for Chinese people. Thereafter, Western mission agencies coming to China focused on expanding missions and furthering the influence of the church through education. By 1950, on the eve of the complete withdrawal of Western mission agencies from China, there were 20 colleges and universities in China, more than 300 secondary schools, and more than 6,000 primary schools.[1] From this we can see the influence of missions on education.

It can be said that in recent Chinese history, student ministry that truly left a missionary influence on university campuses started with the YMCA's mission to China. David W. Lyon (1870–1949) gathered students from multiple universities to found China's first YMCA group in Tianjin in 1895. John R. Mott, head of the North American YMCA, visited China the following year. Mott visited many universities, preaching and giving lectures, which led to the establishment of 22 YMCA groups. This helped bring about the first national YMCA conference held in Shanghai during that same year.[2] Under the influence of the Student Volunteer Movement (SVM), more and more North American missionaries came to China, starting a wave of missionaries from Western churches to Chinese intellectuals.

However, in 1919 the May Fourth Movement, characterized by its patriotism, erupted in China, and it gradually evolved into a nationalist awakening throughout the whole society. It forcefully attacked everything from "the West," and every Christian organization in China was seen as part of the Western powers. The Anti-Christian Movement that broke out in 1922 even more directly attacked Christianity. Responding to the anti-Christian movements triggered by an ever-increasing nationalist sentiment became an unavoidable issue for Western mission agencies.

At the same time, North American churches were becoming divided over the debate between liberal theology and fundamentalism. The YMCA was deeply influenced by liberal theology which led it to change the emphasis of its missionary work from individual salvation to the salvation of society as a whole. This shift coincided with the backdrop of China at that time; Christianity needed to prove that it was not a tool of aggression by Western powers, but rather a servant of "saving China." Marx's communist ideology was also spreading among university campuses and young people.

As a result, the YMCA in China struggled to survive in Chinese society under the political movements, nationalist movements, and liberal theology, but it also gradually deviated from its mission. When the Sino-Japanese War broke out in 1937, the target of domestic nationalist sentiment shifted from the West to Japan. However, with the loss of much of the country's territory, many national universities moved inland. The YMCA, based in Christian universities in eastern China, was hit hard by foreign aggression, and its influence was greatly weakened.

During that time, God raised up a revival of the fundamentalist churches as represented by the China Inland Mission (CIM). This also led to the revival of the evangelical student movement. The chaos of war caused se-

vere damage to the former organization of Western mission agencies, but the continuing support of the West by the Nationalist government and the relaxation of control over university campuses provided a relaxed environment for the evangelical student movement. Moreover, the spiritual revival of fundamentalists energized this student movement.

As early as 1938, CIM missionaries Paul Contento and his wife used English training classes in Kunming to contact and serve students, attracting more than two hundred students to attend. On this foundation, Paul Contento formed "Asia's First" campus fellowship (InterVarsity Christian Fellowship).[3] After this, Pastor Zhao Jun Ying and Pastor Yu Li Gong went to Guangxi, Guizhou, Kunming, and other places to preach, and they had the opportunity to make contact with thousands of young students. Later, when Pastor Zhao Jun Ying went to evangelize at university campuses in Chongqing, the students responded enthusiastically. In the auditorium of National Central University, every night students streamed in to hear the sermons, and the number of students believing in God grew every day.

Amidst this atmosphere, the first Chinese Christian University Students Conference was held in Nanshan, Chongqing in the summer of 1945, with Pastor Zhao and the China Native Evangelistic Crusade as the main organizer in cooperation with Pastor Jia Yu Ming's Nanshan Bible Seminary. During this meeting, China InterVarsity Evangelical Christian Students Fellowship was established, with Pastor Zhao Jun Ying as the director-general.

With the help of CIM worker David Adeney, China InterVarsity used campus evangelism, student conferences, and retreats as its main ministries to promote the revival of the largest evangelical student movement during wartime. Unlike the YMCA student ministry, China InterVarsity was more focused on personal rebirth, salvation, testimony and repentance experiences, passionate evangelism, the work of the Holy Spirit, and the authority of the Bible.

From that time, the ministry of China InterVarsity grew rapidly, and student fellowships were established on many university campuses across the country. In 1947, China InterVarsity organized in Nanjing the second national Christian University Students Conference. More than 300 college students from around the country participated. Under the influence of this conference, a large number of college students dedicated themselves as full-time gospel workers, including Zha Yi Kun (David Cha) from Soochow University, who went to Taiwan after 1949 and founded Taiwan's Campus Evangelical Fellowship.

Also in 1947, an evangelical student movement—the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students (IFES)—was established in Boston. Pastor Zhao Jun Ying participated on behalf of China InterVarsity, which was the largest evangelical organization among the 10 founding member countries. By 1949, China InterVarsity had established student fellowships in 89 universities across the country (except for the Northeast and Taiwan) with more than 20,000 students involved.

However, with changes in the national situation, China InterVarsity was affected in many ways and gradually became unsustainable. Pastor Zhao Jun Ying left mainland China in 1948, and despite the help of missionaries, the ministry of China InterVarsity had difficulty expanding. With the arrest of Wang Ming Dao in 1955, the Christian Tabernacle was closed, and Beijing InterVarsity was suspended, marking the official end of China InterVarsity in mainland China. However, this wave of the fundamentalist evangelical student movement did not stop. The seeds sown by China InterVarsity continued to take root and grow overseas. David Cha founded the Taiwan Campus Evangelical Fellowship. David Adeney traveled across Southeast Asia, promoting the establishment of evangelical student organizations. Zhao Jun Ying and Yu Li Gong went to North America to continue serving Chinese international students there.

In mainland China, leaders of the YMCA who held liberal theology, such as Wu Yao-Tsong and Tzu-Chen Chao, joined the Three-Self Patriotic Movement (Three-Self Church) in 1950, which represented their theological and political integration and identification with communism. On the other hand, fundamentalists such as Wang Ming Dao went to prison for refusing to compromise.

A resurgence of the Chinese student evangelical movement came after 1980. Three important forces contributed to this resurgence: many English teachers sent from North America who shared the gospel as foreign teachers on Chinese university campuses; a large number of campus workers from the United States and South Korea who were sent by Campus Crusade for Christ to China; and campus outreach by fundamentalist house churches in urban China. Starting around the year 2000, the evangelical student movement on Chinese university campuses experienced a nationwide revival which continued until around 2010. This was a golden decade for the Chinese university campus gospel movement.

Many factors led to this phenomenon. In addition to the Western workers re-entering Chinese university campuses, the Chinese government sought support from Western countries (especially the United States) to develop the economy and so relaxed social controls, tacitly letting people choose their own faith. Furthermore, the political movements of the past decades had eradicated the dominance of traditional culture and folk beliefs, which led to a spiritual vacuum in people's hearts. In addition, during this period of rapid economic development, people felt lonelier. Christianity filled the emptiness of people's hearts during this era and gradually became fashionable. Of course, another reason has been the interest of Chinese intellectuals in Western civilization after the 1980s. After the political movement of 1989, many intellectuals' ideals of home and country were shattered, prompting them to convert to Christ.

The revival of the contemporary Chinese evangelical student movement has had an important impact on the Chinese church. First, large numbers of university graduates flowed into cities, especially cities in eastern China, leading to the revival of urban churches. Second, there has been increasing attention on societal issues, such as caring for marginalized groups, social justice, publishing ministries, and Christian education. Third, the Chinese church has been prompted to participate in global missions. In the past two decades, the Chinese church has sent many young graduates on missions to Central Asia, Southeast Asia, and other regions. These missionaries have high educational and professional skills so they can quickly learn the local language, integrate into the local cultural situation, and work with international organizations. For the foreseeable future, university graduates and young professionals will continue to be the main force of the Chinese church in world missions.

Nevertheless, relative to China's population and the size of university campuses, the above-mentioned revival can only be regarded as a spark. According to official data from the Chinese Ministry of Education, by 2018 China had a total of 2,663 schools of higher education with 28,310,300 students in undergraduate and junior colleges.[4] According to this author's understanding, the current number of Christians in various evangelical campus ministries in China is at most 0.5% of the total number of students. Compared to the student movements during revivals in North America, there is a world of difference. Even compared to the campuses of Chinese universities a hundred years ago, it is not a hopeful outlook. In addition, since the implementation of the Revised Religious Affairs Regulations in 2018, the Chinese evangelical student movement has continued to encounter strong persecution and tremendous pressure, making survival of the ministry more difficult.

Whether we look at history or the current situation, the evangelical student movement in China has a long and difficult path. However, this author believes that the Lord of history will also be the Lord of Chinese university campuses. As he has worked in the past, I believe he will also work in the future.

ZHU Zi Xian (pseudonym) is a minister from a mainland Chinese house church who received the gospel and became a Christian while a university student. Upon his graduation, he received God's call to serve in campus ministry and for more than ten years devoted himself to this. After getting married, he and his wife moved to southwest China to serve minority student groups there. Currently, he is studying at Dallas Theological Seminary in the United States.

Translated from Chinese by ChinaSource. The original article in Chinese is available for download.

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Student Ministry in China

Adapting to Present Realities

By CHEN Xin

Image credit: Tim Brookings.

Campus ministry in mainland China developed along two tracks: through the work of international organizations, and through Chinese church networks. During the 1990s and the 2000s, one particular international organization played a major role in reaching huge populations on campuses over all the major cities across China. A whole generation of rootless young people with profound longings for ultimate truth encountered the well-trained and quickly growing movement of confrontational evangelism. This resulted in an overwhelming explosion of campus ministry. This evangelical explosion brought many to faith, and it also challenged and equipped many young believers as leaders. In turn, many urban churches greatly benefited, and many more churches were brought into existence.

While this wave of ministry brought great renewal to the church in China, it also led to some long-term impacts on both the church in general and the student evangelical movement in particular. Many churches found it hard to adapt and partner with this movement's style. The disconnect has been so serious that even some of the churches started by the movement's graduates and ex-staffers show negative attitudes towards the movement's philosophy of ministry and even the whole idea of student ministry. These attitudes have become especially pronounced as many of the emerging churches in urban settings are struggling to figure out their theological identity. These tensions increase even more in the area of church politics.

Their obvious task-oriented strategy of evangelism and discipleship, coupled with the high demand for loyalty to the movement itself, also resulted in serious tensions between the movement and local churches. Their high "drop-out" rate after graduation has also long been recognized as a problem. Many graduates found it hard to adjust to a church context that was significantly different from their campus fellowships which had clear "vision" and "mission" as well as structures and mechanisms to achieve them.

While the ministry of this international organization was happening, many indigenous churches in both urban and rural areas were also deeply moved by their own commitments to the Great Commission, leading them to start indigenous ministries among local students. Even as early as the late 1970s, churches in urban settings restarted small-scale house gatherings. After some church leaders were released from labor camps and prisons, some had a desire to reach the younger generation, especially those youth who had grown up in Christian families. Leaders like Wang Ming Dao, Lin Xian Gao, and Yang Xin Fei lived and served in major cities where there were many young people, including those in newly reopened college campuses.

Gradually the special needs and great potential of students were recognized, and specific groups for ministry to them began within the unregistered urban churches. They inherited many of the Chinese house church traditions, and while they usually started small, some of these groups later became sizable and quite influential.

There were also younger people who grew up in regions like Wenzhou, where local churches not only survived but even thrived through the dark ages of the Cultural Revolution. These young people became Christians and developed a passion for reaching intellectuals. One group started a medical professional fellowship

in the 1990s that then started serving among medical students on campus as well as other target groups.

There were Christian students who had been saved while on campus, and then developed a great passion for their fellow students. One particular case led to the formation of a local indigenous student ministry organization which has been serving on campuses in Wenzhou and other places for over thirty years.

Some traditional rural church networks even sent out staff teams to do campus ministry in different cities around the country. After caring for youth in their Sunday School classes, these rural churches sent out campus ministers to go along with these youth to the various universities they attended.

A church-based network of student ministries also developed during this time. It grew very quickly from 2000 to 2010, and it still exists today. Many of its groups tend to focus on the students who have Christian backgrounds.

After so much activity on campus, there has been a decline in campus ministry in China during the last ten years as the whole society has gone through dramatic changes. Looking at the current situation, it seems that the message and strategy which worked so well three decades ago have become dramatically less effective. Today's younger generation feel much less interested in ideological debates. In a society with more wealth and cultural confidence, the "advanced Western civilization" seems much less appealing. At the same time, the gospel, which is often seen as coming out of that "advanced Western civilization," starts at a disadvantage in the minds of many young people today.

With China's fast economic growth and passionate narrative about a bright future, a certain version of the Chinese national dream is surprisingly popular among the contemporary, younger generation. At the same time, the social Darwinian anxiety to be successful is squeezing out their passions for other things. Today, even undergraduate students are worried about their residence registration (*Hukou*戶口) and their property location (related to school districts which are tied to property ownership). This constant struggle with anxiety among college students was hard to imagine ten years ago.

However, this does not mean the gospel itself is less powerful. We have observed that numerous students who have grown up in local church settings are going back to church after wandering around in their faith while on campuses. Countless seekers are coming to faith after long interactions with believers in daily life settings or through more long-term, interactive styles of seekers' programs hosted in churches and fellowships. Reflecting these trends are the increasing percentages of second-generation believers in fellowships in most types of campus ministries.

In the past few years, some major churches and church networks in China have started paying attention to student ministry due to a growing passion for global missions. As these churches and networks come to understand that student ministry has historically fueled many great mission movements, they have again placed a major emphasis on campus ministry. My hope is that we discern why we are doing campus ministry and then consider how we can do it for the glory of God.

I have deliberately saved for last the ongoing concerns about political pressures. For many decades, the church in China as a whole and campus ministry in particular has continually dealt with these pressures. But the questions are what such political pressures might take away from the church and why the church should be afraid that their rights might be taken away by an earthly power.

In a social Darwinian society, both individuals and entire people groups and nations are dehumanized in many ways. It is also true that a person can even treat him- or herself in ways deprived of human dignity. Deep

down the human mind knows this is never right. There are multiple, competing narratives these days, but there is only one Word Incarnate who lives within and through his people. He is the answer, and his people are to emphatically proclaim that answer through their faithful lifestyle of following in his steps.

Governments can take away earthly "rights" that Christians feel they possess, but our Lord determined to enter a world full of authorities depriving people of their rights. He called us to follow him, apart from the world, and sent us into this world as his fellow sojourners and witnesses of the real kingdom he has proclaimed. The most critical challenge to the church and to campus ministry is always how deeply we realize and appreciate this kingdom that is already, but not yet manifest, and our citizenship in it.

Today there are many different issues facing Chinese society compared with what previous generations experienced. How the church in China makes the hope of the gospel manifest through our transformed lifestyle is more crucial than ever. An incarnational approach should have an impact on our way of doing theology, our strategy, our practices, and lifestyle. With these ideas in mind, the equipping and empowering of Christian students is critical.

CHEN Xin (pseudonym) came to faith on campus at the end of the 1990s. After three years of a master's degree program in preventive medicine, he moved into full-time campus ministry. He and a co-worker started a medical student fellowship while working with an international ministry organization. He later started a church with medical school graduates, which he still pastors today, and he participates in campus ministry whenever possible. Chen and his wife have been married for 17 years and have four children.

 Continued from page 2

deeper understanding of how the Chinese church has followed the Lord into ministry on university campuses around the country. With the restrictions on campus ministry intensifying, and with the opportunities for foreigners to serve on campus decreasing, may we seek ways to support the mainland Chinese church in its efforts to serve campuses there.

Tim Brookings (pseudonym) grew up in the US but has mostly lived in western China since 2004. His focus has been campus ministry and developing partnerships with indigenous campus ministers around China. He and his wife are hoping to

Ministry among Minority Students

By Nyima Rongwu

Image credit: Tim Brookings.

In 1921, Shu Qingchun started attending English evening classes at the London Missionary Society West City New Church (Gangwashi) in Beijing. These classes were part of a program of activities supporting the poor and disadvantaged Manchu residents in that area. Before 1912 the Manchu minority were the ruling people in China. Now, in the capital, they were often destitute. Those in other parts of the country were despised and occasionally faced violent attacks. The pastor, Bao Guanglin, took Shu under his wing, and a year later Shu was baptized. Soon after this he was recommended for a teaching position in London where he wrote his first novels. Little did he know that the pen name he chose then would become one of the best-known names in twentieth century Chinese literature: Lao She (老舍).

The account of the young Manchu Lao She coming to faith in Beijing a century ago is instructive for ministry among minority students today. Interestingly, it shows that minority student ministry is not new, having a history of at least a hundred years, and that similar methods of outreach (English classes) were used then as now. More importantly though, it illustrates at least three insights that we should remember as we reach out to minority students:

1. the typical context of minority student ministry: that of the students' relative poverty and facing discrimination,
2. a methodological key: that of long-term compassionate engagement,
3. a necessary attitude: that of seeing students through God's eyes, eager to see them discerning God's calling on their lives and living it out.

Poverty and Marginalisation

The areas in China where most minority peoples live, the Northwest and Southwest, are generally poor. One area with many Hui Muslims in southern Ningxia, Xihaigu (西海固) has been a byword for aridity, poverty, and suffering for centuries.[1] The Tibetans live in the highest and most hostile plateau in the world with many obstacles to economic development. It is often difficult to recognize minorities living in more coastal areas of the country since their clothing and culture have become almost indistinguishable from the majority Han people. However, in more mountainous, northern or western areas, minorities have often been able to retain their distinctive dress, language, traditions and religion. The most prominent examples of these would be the Tibetans, Mongolians, and Turkic language speakers such as Uyghurs, Kazakhs and Kyrgyzs. Many of these students come from agricultural or sheep/cattle rearing backgrounds with few educational resources. At the best of times, they face significant challenges to get into university; more often, they face discrimination in schools and especially in the workplace. Recent media reports have highlighted the painful plight of Uyghurs. Other minorities are facing similar issues (especially Tibetan, Kazakh, Mongolian and Hui), but their stories have not been so widely disseminated.

Need for Long-term Relationships

The general impression of minorities as being different from Han (even exotic), but poor and needy, has attracted all kinds of mission outreach activities. Short-term mission trips (previously from overseas, now increasingly from more coastal areas domestically), sponsorship programs, and longer-term stays are just some of these activities. Where short-term trips have continued year after year to the same cities, and where sponsorship programs have been combined with regular family visits and vacation tuition programs, these activities have often borne fruit. Individuals have come to faith and fellowships have been established even in Qinghai, Tibet and Xinjiang. However, an unfortunate tendency is for visits to be just one time or for sponsorship programs to be only about money.

As the Chinese government promotes the pairing of richer and poorer provinces, highlighting stories of rich, resourceful outsiders being givers and poor locals being receivers, mission activities may fall into the same narrative. Because the poverty and lack of resources is so obvious, even long-term Christian workers can think that they know what needs to be done and how the locals need to change. Money is brought in, along with trainers and handbooks. The locals may see outsiders merely in terms of what they can bring economically (this is less the case for local missionaries, since their lifestyles tend to be closer to that of their students). The locals lack the confidence to challenge the outsiders when training is not contextually appropriate. What is needed is real relationship with the outsider showing that he/she is genuinely interested in hearing what the local has to say.

This is where language learning is key. Even though university students are all able to function in Chinese, they open up at a whole new level when they see that you know their heart language. Generally, we have found that foreign, long-term workers are more willing to put in the time to learn minority languages. Perhaps because they feel they can function with Chinese, only a few Chinese, long-term workers pick up enough of the parent language to engage minority students in their heart languages.

The need for long-term, in-depth, heart-to-heart relationships is even greater for adherents to the "whole person" religions of Tibetan Buddhism and Islam. For these students, even if they do not seem to be particularly religious or even know much about their religion, it is an identity that cannot easily be given up. This is a major difference from ministering with Han Chinese, and one that is often neglected by both foreigners and mainland workers who are used to working with Han Chinese students. We have often heard about foreign mission organizations or mainland churches remarking that evangelism and growth in Tibetan and Muslim areas is very slow. Sadly, the response of these agencies and churches is often to move workers to where they can be more "productive" or even to blame the cross-cultural workers for the lack of fruit.

Seeing Students through God's Perspective

Children in poor minority areas are continually being exhorted to work hard so that they can get into better schools and escape poverty. Primary school children in rural parts of Tibet and Xinjiang are encouraged to study hard so they can get into special "Tibet classes" or "Xinjiang classes" in prestigious high schools in other parts of the country to break away from privation. High school students remaining in poor areas are encouraged to get into universities in the coastal megacities so they can flee poverty.

However, the fact is that the vast majority of students will not be able to "escape" to better pastures and will be forced to stay in their own province for university. For these students, talk of working hard and escaping poverty no longer works. They know that those able to escape left long ago. This "learned helplessness" is often a source of frustration to those ministering to minority students and is compounded by the

fatalism of Islam. Common complaints are: "These students are not willing to dream!" or "I don't know how to motivate them!" After repeatedly trying and failing throughout their academic careers, many students believe that the life they have has been assigned to them and it is pointless to imagine anything else. Sayings such as "God loves you and has an amazing plan for you" do not mean anything to them unless the person who says them has shown appreciation and belief in the students themselves.

One source of frustration when ministering to minority students is their slowness of growth as disciples. This slowness is understandable when considering how they have learned to compartmentalize their lives. Young minority believers have at least three life compartments: the Marxism-affirming, Communist Party-loving life they present in the university; the mosque/temple-going life they present to their families; and the Christ-worshipping life they present to the fellowship they have just joined. It takes time for them to work through what their new faith means for each part of their lives. What often happens, though, is that the student minister is in a rush to see students taking part in what they define as important discipleship activities, whether that is 7am prayer meetings, inductive Bible studies, or evangelizing fellow students. If participation in these activities is used to measure the student's progress as a disciple, there is a danger of this serving more as a filter of their personality than as actual growth of their love of Christ.

Because of tensions between minority peoples and the Han majority, often with complicated historical roots and many more recent manifestations, foreign and mainland workers tend to see opposite facets of their students' stories. Foreign workers tend to sympathize with minority students' feelings of being discriminated against, seeing them as those being sinned against. Students may be attracted by reassurances that God is a God of justice and cares for them. However, there is a danger that the students' own sinfulness and personal need of salvation through Christ's work on the cross is downplayed. Mainland workers often see minority students' plight as their own doing or due to the "backwardness" of Tibetan Buddhist or Muslim culture. Students may be forced into faster repentance and putting away the "old man." Yet, this creates a danger that the students are left with deep struggles concerning their minority people group identity and an inability to see how Christ can redeem their culture. One solution can be more fellowship between foreign and mainland student workers allowing each to have a more complete picture of how God sees these students.

Minority Christians, especially from Tibetan Buddhist or Muslim backgrounds, are quite rare. They are often fluent in either their minority language (if they went to a minority language-speaking school) or Chinese (if they went to Chinese-speaking school), but not both. Christian students fluent in both their minority language and Chinese often find themselves in great demand and even more so if they speak English as well. Fluent in two or three languages, they are needed to teach language to cross-cultural workers, help translate the Bible and other materials, dub audio-visual evangelistic tools, and interpret for visiting speakers. While all these activities are very meaningful, the focus can end up being the completion of other people's ministries rather than the spiritual growth of the student or helping him or her to discern God's calling and equipping them to live out that calling. There has also been a lack of leadership training. In the last two years, following the mass exodus of foreign workers, many student fellowships have been left without leaders and young believers without mentors.

Conclusion

Minority student ministry is a rich combination of fun, challenges, frustration, seeking the Lord for wisdom (and patience and love), praise, and gratitude for being able to partner with the Spirit in this work. We do have many models that have gone ahead of us, inspiring us and giving us confidence, not least that of Bao Guanglin and Lao She a hundred years ago. Bao Guanglin and his church reached out to the poor and marginalized Manchu community, walked alongside Lao She for a season and did not keep him in Gangwashi Church.

Bao helped Lao She expand his horizons and facilitated his studies in Yanjing University which in due time led to the teaching invitation in London, and eventually to his becoming one of China's most prominent Christian novelists.[2]

We are grateful for the large number of foreign workers who have poured out their lives for minority students, often in very tough environments. We grieve with them as many have recently been forced to leave. At the same time, we are thankful that more and more mainlanders are gaining a heart for minority student ministry. Pray that God will call more long-term workers with compassionate hearts who are committed to language learning. Pray that God will open their eyes to see how he is shaping these students into beautiful creations.

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[1] The Hui author, Zhang Chengzhi (张承志), tragically details the history of the Jahriyya Sufi Order in his *History of the Soul* (心灵史), with the latter part of their story set in Xihaigu. The continual suffering this sect has faced both through violence and the aridity of the land is seen as communal penance, offered up on behalf of humanity.

[2] Lao She's faith journey is not easy to discern. Some commentators claim that he was a "rice Christian," drifting away from Christianity soon after arriving in London. However, in *Lao She, China's Master Storyteller*, Britt Towery stresses the importance of reading between the lines of Lao She's apparently cynical treatment of missionaries in his novels. She believes that, in fact, Lao She was describing what Christian living should be like. Wang Ming Dao records in his memoirs that Lao She was in prison with him at one point for the "crime" of listening to his sermon.

Nyima Rongwu (pseudonym) developed a heart for students while teaching secondary students in 1997. Since then, he has been serving in various university fellowships in China. Over the past decade he has been mainly in the Northwest part of the country, ministering locally as well as networking with other campus workers in the region.

Campus Ministry in Mainland China

The Role of Foreigners, Past and Present

By Tim Brookings

Image credit: Joann Pittman.

For more than one hundred years, campus ministry in mainland China has developed in a variety of ways. Through periods of civil war and world war, and through the ebb and flow of government restrictions, students and faculty have remained resilient.

Throughout these years Christians from many nations have come to China, working alongside local believers as they share the gospel on university campuses. As the Chinese church has grown, the role of foreigners in campus ministry has also had to change. What roles have foreigners played on mainland Chinese campuses over the decades? How should foreigners serve now as campus ministry in mainland China continues to develop post-Covid-19? This article will focus on the role of foreigners as campus ministry has developed in mainland China from the early twentieth century until now, concluding with some suggestions about the road ahead.

Pre-1949: Flourishing Amidst Difficulty

More than one hundred years ago, as modern university campuses in mainland China became established, Christians from other nations came to China and preached the gospel on campuses. Groups like the YMCA and Student Volunteer Movement (SVM) sent missionaries to China during the first two decades of the twentieth century. Many of them saw much fruit in their ministry on campus during those early stages, but after that early period of flourishing, an anti-Western backlash during the 1920s contributed to the weakening of these ministries.

Like in other parts of the world, campus ministry expanded in mainland China during the 1930s. As Christian students on campuses around the country began to organize Bible study groups and prayer meetings, missionaries with the China Inland Mission (CIM) began to see opportunities for outreach on campuses. With the invasion of eastern China by the Japanese in 1937, many university campuses were forced to relocate to western cities such as Chengdu, Chongqing, and Kunming. Since so many universities were located in close proximity at that time, Chinese and foreign workers could easily reach out to multiple campuses. CIM workers, including Paul and Mary Contento and Eric and Edith Liberty, found opportunities to teach English on university campuses and also join evangelistic activities.[1] Foreigners partnered with Chinese itinerant workers like Zhao Junying (Calvin Zhao) as they preached on these relocated university campuses. Even as the war with Japan raged in China from 1937–1945, university campus fellowships flourished. By the mid-1940s, China InterVarsity had become organized as a national movement.

After the defeat of the Japanese in 1945, university campuses moved back to their own cities. Though the civil war between the Nationalists and the Communists intensified during these years, the China InterVarsity ministry continued to grow. A key CIM worker who partnered with this movement was David Adeney. As an itinerant staffer throughout eastern China during the late 1940s, Adeney built trust and relationship with Wang Ming Dao, Calvin Zhao, and other key leaders of the China InterVarsity movement.[2] Like other CIM workers before him, Adeney came alongside the Chinese church leaders as they preached on campus. While the movement was Chinese-led, Adeney and other foreigners provided valuable assistance and encouragement.

As China InterVarsity became further established, campus workers organized significant national student gatherings in the latter half of the 1940s. China InterVarsity joined the US, UK, and seven other national student movements to form the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students (IFES) in 1947. At the time, China InterVarsity was the only Asian student movement within IFES, and it was the largest national student movement in the world. Even with the backdrop of civil war, Chinese and foreign workers serving China InterVarsity felt hopeful for the movement's future. The events of 1949 radically changed that picture.

1949–1979: Foreign Missionaries Depart, Campus Ministry Goes Dormant

When the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) established the People's Republic of China on October 1, 1949, campus ministry in mainland China initially continued moving forward. With the CCP's stated promises of "religious freedom," there was hope that the CCP would allow the ministry to continue on campuses.

Sadly, that hope proved to be unfounded. China InterVarsity's students and staff workers soon faced increasing pressure under Communist rule. Campus fellowships either disbanded or moved to meeting in secret. Key leaders including Wang Ming Dao and many others were eventually arrested. All foreign missionaries had to leave mainland China shortly after the CCP assumed power. David Adeney himself left China in 1950, leaving behind many connections and relationships. Though a founding member, China InterVarsity could no longer be a part of IFES. All outward signs pointed toward a disappearance of the student movement in China.

For 30 years after foreign workers left mainland China, very little information could be found about life within mainland China. Many wondered if the church would survive. Would campus fellowships be able to continue their ministry? After more than ten years of seeing fruitful ministry among students, foreign workers could do little more than wait for news about their friends and pray for them.

1980–Present Day: Gradual Opening Up; Many Opportunities and New Challenges

With the onset of the CCP's "Reform and Opening Up" policy in 1979, the world outside China could finally start seeing a clearer picture of life inside mainland China. By the early 1980s, foreign workers had again started to live and serve in China, especially on university campuses. As China welcomed more teachers and students from overseas, various international organizations sent workers to study Chinese or to teach English. Foreign Christians saw opportunities to share the gospel on university campuses, and many Chinese came to faith.

By the 1990s, it was apparent that there was a revival taking place on university campuses. Though the restrictions on "proselytizing" were quite strict, many foreigners found ways to share the gospel discreetly at a relational level. Varying levels of partnership were formed between foreign workers and Chinese believers. Some of these partnerships led to fellowships that still exist on campuses today. In many cases, though, these partnerships led to the formation of campus fellowships that were not well contextualized. Chinese students were often more inclined to relate with foreigners and learn about Christian faith from them rather than in Chinese church contexts. With foreigners often being an attractive draw for friendship and relationship, translating those relationships into a truly indigenous student movement could be a very tricky thing. In any case, for about thirty years foreign workers in mainland China were able to find ways to navigate university campuses and participate in the work that God was doing there.

The last decade or so has presented new challenges for foreign workers serving at university campuses in mainland China. Under Xi Jin Ping's leadership, the CCP has brought increasing restrictions to many areas of society including universities. Local Chinese fellowships have been forced to adapt to the changing environment. Foreign workers have also had to adapt as their opportunities for ministry on campus have decreased.

During the past few years there has been a major exodus of foreign workers. Some have likened this wave of departures to that of the early 1950s. For the foreigners that remained, the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 made the environment for ministry even more challenging. Again, outward signs point toward a bleak future for foreign involvement with campus ministry in mainland China.

Future Hopes: How Can Foreigners Stay Involved?

Even before these recent years of tightening restrictions and the departure of foreigners, the church in China had already begun to stand on its own. Indigenous campus ministry networks have become more organized, raising up more full-time workers and volunteers to work with campus fellowships. In recent years, these campus ministry networks have also gained a vision to send students and staff as cross-cultural workers. They are also becoming more aware of the need to reach international students who come to China, many of whom come from majority-Muslim countries and other places where it is hard for them to hear the gospel. While they are seeing these ministry needs, Chinese church leaders have also recognized their need for assistance in these areas of ministry.

Foreigners today have an opportunity to come alongside the Chinese church as they seek to grow in these new areas of cross-cultural ministry. Whether to minority-dominated areas of western China or to other countries, Chinese young people are seeking opportunities to serve the Lord cross-culturally. Chinese leaders are asking for people who can help mentor students and young graduates who are from their networks and feel called to cross-cultural ministry. As they are invited by campus ministry networks to get involved with this kind of mentoring, foreigners can have a great influence in empowering the Chinese church.

The role of foreigners in campus ministry within China has constantly evolved over the years. The opportunities for foreigners today will not look like they did even just twenty years ago when the current campus ministry was still taking shape. With more mature campus ministry networks now serving on campuses throughout China, foreigners should listen well to the Chinese church leaders and see where they could use support. Much like the CIM missionaries serving on campuses in the pre-1949 era, foreign workers can see much fruit by coming alongside the indigenous campus ministry networks and empowering them in their work on campuses and beyond. May it be so!

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[1] See *Tell Us a Story: John and Edith Bell*, which describes and shares photos about the campus ministry in Lanzhou that Eric and Edith Liberty joined (pp. 161–2, 174–5).
[2] See *China: Christian Students Face the Revolution*, by David Adeney, published in 1973.

Tim Brookings (pseudonym) grew up in the US but has mostly lived in western China since 2004. His focus has been campus ministry and developing partnerships with indigenous campus ministers around China. He and his wife are hoping to be back in western China soon.

Students Joining in God's Global Mission

Opportunities and Challenges

By QIAN Jia

Image credit: Tim Brookings.

My mind goes back a few years ago to an auditorium in a country neighboring China. I was present at a six-day China Youth Mission Conference attended by 1200 students, young adults, church leaders from China, and invited guests. On the last evening of the conference, when the lead pastors made the altar call for missions, I saw young people stepping out from their comfortable seats and coming to the stage, one after another. It was like streams flowing from every section of the auditorium, converging to form a river, and then a sea. As the conference organizer, I was so excited to see youth being mobilized, through this event, for the future of the mission movement.

Yet, it is not just about the future. The mission force has already emerged through student ministry within and without China. Although this was the first initiative by Chinese churches to organize a youth mission conference, particularly for students and young adults, the long existing impact of student ministry has already contributed to China's mission movement.

On the stage, there was Renai,* who shared her testimony of serving in Central Asia with a well-known campus ministry. Renai is the fruit of that ministry and had served on its staff for a few years before going to Central Asia. She represents one of many young, Chinese missionaries who have been well trained in campus ministry and continue to serve in campus ministry overseas.

There was also Du Liang, a minority student, who caught the vision for mission through a local student ministry and decided to serve as a teacher for another minority group.

Yanwei was a volunteer on the conference logistic team as she had already spent one year in the country where it was held and could communicate well in the local language. Yanwei had gone there as an intern for two years with an international agency that intentionally trained fresh graduates to serve overseas. This kind of internship provides cross-cultural experience and shapes an intern's understanding of mission that has a life-long impact. Like many other participants, Yanwei decided to stay on for long-term service after the mission conference.

On the conference planning team, there was Xi Le who came from one of the student ministries that is more influenced by national churches. Xi Le was on staff with a pioneering, local, student ministry in the mid-2000s. There she caught the vision for world missions and was later sent by her mother church to work in Africa.

Last, but not least, are Linyu and Anmei who were both plenary and workshop speakers; they are fruit of stu-dent ministry from other parts of the world. Both Linyu and Anmei became believers when they were studying overseas as international students. Among their peers, many were willing to go back to China as returnees to serve in ministry. Yet God also called people like Linyu and Anmei who were willing to serve in other countries and with other people groups.

In all their stories, catching the vision for missions or serving in missions through student ministry is a common theme, just like what we have heard from other parts of the world. Expanding vision for mission is a key element in student ministry. Whether it is through independent campus ministries, local church-initiated ministries, international agencies, or overseas Chinese student ministries, focusing on the next generation will require continually introducing the mission aspect of faith practice. All these different streams eventually contribute to the wider mission movement from China.

A few years have now passed since that first China Youth Mission Conference. What has happened to those young people who stepped forward at the altar call and committed themselves to God's mission? Some have started their cross-cultural internships. Some, after a few short-term trips, are now working on a theological degree and preparing for long-term service. Some are now serving in local mission agencies, and they continue to mobilize and draw people closer to God's heart for missions.

This conference is just one of many mobilization events happening in China today through which young peoples' hearts are being touched and stirred. Yet, from the day they sincerely commit themselves to missions, they start an uneasy journey in the context of today's China.

As different groups try to follow up with these young people, we notice some significant challenges. There are not enough follow-up efforts or mission fellowships to sustain their passion. Mission conferences are onetime mobilization events. With the limited capacity of hosting large youth mission conferences in China's context, only select students and graduates have had the chance to participate in such an event. Many young people left those conferences with a great passion for missions, yet afterwards found few people to share their passion with or to join them in taking action in missions. Mission mobilization and mission education are still far from routine activities in the agenda of a church or student ministry.

It is widely understood that from the day they make their commitment, it may take a few years for young people to actually get to the mission field. Who can be responsible to do missional discipleship along the way and make sure that these young people are growing in the spiritual disciplines that will prepare them for cross-cultural missions? Most local churches and student fellowships do not have the capacity to give full attention to these young people and help them grow in understanding missions. At the same time, mission organizations are not yet in a place to journey with such young people.

Family expectations and the pressure to get married are among the most significant day-to-day issues facing young people when they think about missions. In the end, if they discern that "going to the mission field" may not be God's calling for their life (or not at this stage of life), but they are willing to be part of God's grand mission, what can they do? There are no easy answers to these challenges. Many more mentors are needed to help develop these young people as they journey toward missions.

Another question to consider is: "How are these young people going to be sent out and supported"? Many of them were discipled and caught the vision for missions when they were at university, often far away from their home. For those who grew up in small rural churches, it is almost impossible to expect that their home churches will have the same vision for missions as they do or be willing to support them prayerfully and financially. Some churches would also expect that if these young people, who have had more training in the city, really want to serve the Lord, they would go back to serve their home congregations. At the same time, many young people will not have established strong relationships with a local urban church during their college years since most of their time will have been spent in a student fellowship. There is a gap that needs to be addressed for deeper relationships and support systems as they transition into the local church after graduation.

These challenges can be seen anywhere in the world, but they are seen more often in China. Most churches have not established any organized structure to support missionaries, let alone support a newcomer who is a fresh graduate. Other than the well-known, established, campus ministries that have a much longer history of support staff, some local student fellowships have tried to send and support fresh graduates with the support of their alumni. Such models are still being tested as they consider the supervision, financial sustainability, and member care needs (especially for reentry) that must be addressed without a specific mission department that focuses on such matters for the long term.

One other challenge is the limited experience that most young people have in both life and ministry. Like in a typical Chinese family where youth only need to focus on their studies and do not need to take on much family responsibility, in most traditional church settings the young people are carefully "protected" and are not given much opportunity to serve. A lack of life experience limits the ability of these young people to adjust and survive well on the cross-cultural mission field. For example, it is frequently reported that young interns only start learning how to cook when they get to the field—and many of them struggle. As they grew up, all their meals were taken care of. At the university, they either had meals at the campus canteen or easily had food delivered. These amenities are nowhere to be found in the country where they serve.

In addition to cross-cultural challenges, a lack of ministry experience limits their full engagement in serving the local communities. It is definitely hard for young people to move forward in cross-cultural missions without gaining certain experiences in their home setting first. In a culture that does not really encourage innovation and adventure, young people in China are not given much leeway to explore missions as are those in the West. Young people need to be given more opportunities for service at home in order to prepare them for the mission field.

Despite these challenges, the passion for missions continues to grow among young people. In the summer of 2020, the second China Youth Mission Conference was held as an online event during the pandemic. Quite a few alumni from the first conference came to serve on the planning team and brought in new perspectives. The highlight of the event was the participating small groups giving reports of the mission projects they had completed during a two-day practicum. Some studied the history of missions in their own church; some researched the working conditions of city cleaners; others interviewed Muslim restaurant owners and recorded their daily work routines. The presentations spoke loudly of what God had put on their hearts for his glory in this generation. We anticipate with great optimism that the stories of the Haystack Prayer Meeting and the Student Volunteer Movement will be repeated in China. Perhaps they already are!

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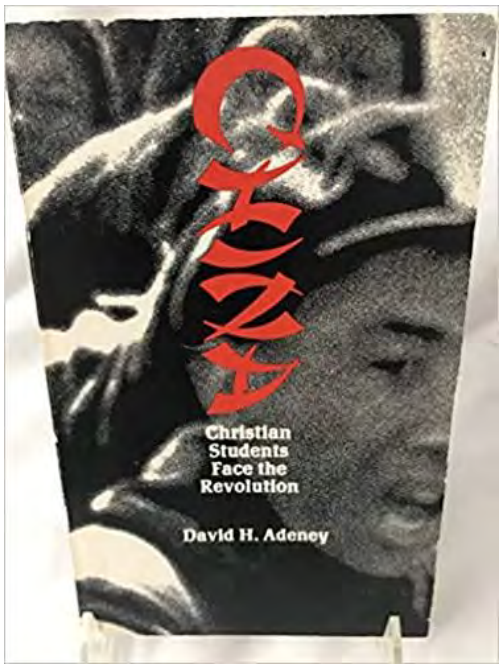
[*] All names are pseudonyms.

QIAN Jia (pseudonym) caught the vision for missions during her student years. With a strong passion for mobilization, she served cross-culturally for a few years and then became heavily involved in the indigenous mission movement in China.

Book Review

Campus Ministry in Pre-1949 China

Reviewed by Tim Brookings



China: Christian Students Face the Revolution by David Adeney. InterVarsity Press, 1973, 130 pp. ISBN-13: 978-0877843542; ISBN-10: 0877843546. Limited availability on Amazon.

From 1937 until 1950, CIM missionary David Adeney witnessed the birth and early development of the modern Chinese student ministry against the backdrop of World War II and then civil war. In *China: Christian Students Face the Revolution,* Adeney recounts those turbulent years of ministry. This short book is a fascinating account of university campus ministry in pre-1949 China, but it is also a remarkably prescient analysis of Communist China that remains relevant today.

Chapter 1 begins with Adeney's arrival in China in 1934. The reader can see that from an early stage, Adeney and his co-workers sought to relate closely with indigenous believers. The chaos of civil war between the Communists and Nationalists, and later the invasion of Japanese, presented many challenges to both foreign missionaries and Chinese believers. Adeney's family left China for a furlough in 1941, but war prevented them from returning for more than four years. Upon his return in January 1946, Adeney joined the work of China InterVarsity on a full-time basis.

In chapter 2, Adeney describes a very active environment on campus from 1946 until 1949. Communist student groups and China InterVarsity groups were both growing in influence. As Adeney describes their activities, it is striking to see the evangelistic fervor of both groups, each one seeking to share their message with students on campus. While student ministry on campus remained relatively open during these years, Adeney's narrative also describes the challenges that Christian groups faced. When the police raided their apartment one night and prepared to arrest a Chinese staff worker, he and Adeney knelt in prayer together as the police officers watched. The impulse of prayer recurs throughout this book as the staff workers and students involved with China InterVarsity continually committed the challenges of those years to the Lord.

Chapter 3 focuses on 1949–1950 as the Communist Party established the new government. Adeney describes the rapid change of atmosphere on campus where activity among the Christian students became severely restricted. Adeney does not mince words about communism and its requirement of total dedication and commitment. He aptly compares communism to a religion, noting that zealous students would often speak of their conversion to communism as a kind of salvation experience, where they came out of "the darkness of superstition into the light of Chairman Mao" (p. 46).

The zeal of communist students led to increasing pressure on Christians in the early 1950s, which Adeney describes in chapter 4. In the face of very active criticism and denunciation from communists and others on campus, Christians were forced to either defend or denounce their faith. Some students managed to endure the criticism, but others left the faith altogether. As Christian groups weathered these severe restrictions and attacks on their faith, they continually prayed for one another to have the courage to face their accusers and not recant their faith. Yet there was also grace present to restore those who recanted but then sought to return to Christian fellowship. Adeney tells a particularly poignant story of one student leader in Shanghai who

tearfully rededicated his life to the Lord after he had neglected his faith (p. 69).

In chapter 5, we read about Adeney's involvement in the publication of an apologetics book in 1950, "probably the only Christian apologetic published under the Communist regime" (p. 78). For a brief window of time, this book, by Wu Yung-chuen, was able to be distributed widely among Christian students. Unfortunately, the hoped-for "religious freedom" under the Communist regime quickly evaporated. The book was suppressed by the government, and the author, Wu, was arrested. In light of the challenges faced by Wu and other Chinese believers, Adeney issues a compelling challenge to Christians in the West. "Living in a free society, Christians may choose the intellectual and spiritual climate in which to live, but if political conditions change and they find themselves in a communist society, they will immediately be confronted by an inescapable challenge to their faith" (p. 83).

Chapter 6 describes how the continuing pressure on Christians led to a divided Chinese church. On one side were leaders such as Wu Yao-tsong and Yang Shao-tang who joined the Three-Self Church organized by the Communist Party. In the eyes of many Chinese Christians, these leaders compromised their Christian faith by participating in the formation of the Three-Self Church. On the other side were the leaders such as Wang Ming Dao who decided not to join the Three-Self Church, equating such a decision as a betrayal of God. Adeney's personal relationships with these key leaders bring these stories to life. While he had compassion for Yang and the difficult decision he made for the sake of continuing his ministry, he also had admiration for Wang and his principled stand. In the end, we see that both sides suffered major consequences, leaving Yang a broken man and Wang a long-term prisoner.

Adeney concludes his book with a chapter commenting on the future of ministry in communist countries such as China. He describes the kind of commitment and discipline that it would take for a Chinese Christian to move back to mainland China and serve the Lord. He also asserts that outsiders should not dismiss the real achievements of the Communist Party in lifting the nation out of poverty (p. 115). Particularly striking is his assertion that, "A Christian message which only stresses individual salvation and shows little interest in the needs of the masses will have little attraction for communist youth. The Christian witness will have to be actively involved in ministering to the needs of the society in which he lives" (p. 119). This statement harkens back to a reflection earlier in the book where Adeney states that he and his fellow missionaries realized after leaving China that they had not been sufficiently sensitive to the needs of the masses of the people (p 38). In other words, Adeney asserts that a narrow gospel message focused simply on personal salvation would not be sufficient. A more holistic gospel message that connects with both the individual and the wider society can address the needs and interests of any society, including communist China.

Adeney closes by speaking of the presumed situation of the church in China with worship outside of the Three-Self Church strictly forbidden. It is fascinating to read this account now, knowing that the information available to Adeney and other China-watchers in 1973 was so limited. Particularly intriguing is one of his last assertions about China's growing influence in Asia. He says, "Even now many different delegations from Southeast Asia are touring China, and in the future, we may expect to see businessmen, technical experts and educators from mainland China in the cities of Asia and Africa" (p. 129). What would Adeney think of the influence China has had in Asia, Africa, and the whole world less than 50 years later?

Adeney's words from 1973 have much relevance and connection to what is happening in China today. His reflections on past ministry and the need for a more contextualized gospel still ring true. As we consider today's context, how much more do we need to heed Adeney's words of "being sensitive to the needs of the masses of people"? As we see the Chinese Communist Party growing even more powerful than it was during

Adeney's lifetime, how much more do we need to consider the pressure that the Party places on Chinese Christians?

The restrictions on campus ministry today are remarkably similar to the restrictions and challenges that Christian students faced in 1950. After a period of relative openness and freedom to work, the space for campus ministry has shrunk in the face of the Communist Party's reassertion of control. In today's more restrictive atmosphere, much like the atmosphere of the 1950s, Chinese students and staff workers have had to adapt and find ways to continue the work.

China: Christian Students Face the Revolution serves as both a historical testimony and an insight into the current reality. We could do well to heed the words of this missionary of the 1930s and 1940s as we seek to continue participating in the work that God is doing through campus ministry in mainland China.

Tim Brookings (pseudonym) grew up in the US but has mostly lived in western China since 2004. His focus has been campus ministry and developing partnerships with indigenous campus ministers around China. He and his wife are hoping to be back in western China soon.

ChinaSource Perspective

Too Much for One Issue

By Narci Herr

When my husband, Glenn, and I returned to the US after our years in Hong Kong, we wanted to stay involved in ministry related to China. We had started to serve with ChinaSource while still in Hong Kong and it was a great fit for us as we moved back, especially as several ChinaSource team members were already working virtually. One concern we had was that we would miss the day-to-day personal interaction we had had with Chinese people. We did not want to serve only online. So, we looked for a place where we could be involved with ministry among Chinese students and scholars. The Lord brought us to St. Louis, and we have found volunteering with various campus ministries to be rewarding, fruitful, and fun.

Almost immediately we became involved in the Tuesday Lunch for Internationals. As the name indicates, a free lunch for international students and scholars was available every Tuesday during the academic year. Several campus ministries were involved, and local churches of various denominations provided the lunches. It was a great place for meeting students, building friendships, and promoting the activities of the campus ministries. It was also a great place to learn about the history of campus ministry in St. Louis. We were amazed to learn that the lunch was first started over 40 years ago as an outreach of the Baptists. Over the years it had developed to include other denominations and campus groups and had changed locations several times. But it was still going and still reaching students.

To me, that was a long history. I remember wondering—who was even thinking about international students 40 years ago. This issue of *ChinaSource Quarterly (CSQ)* shows just how uninformed I was about the history of reaching Chinese students in China and overseas. For instance, I did not know that the first Christian student conference held in mainland China predated the start of the North American-based Urbana Conference by one year and the second mainland conference which was organized by China InterVarsity took place in Nanjing the following year in 1947. Indeed, as the articles in this issue point out, student ministry in China is well over one hundred years old—even outreach to minority students in China goes back nearly as far.

As we thought about doing an issue of *CSQ* on student ministry, we realized that not only does student ministry among Chinese students go back in history longer than many of us might think, but it is also broader and more varied than might appear. So, for the first time we are dedicating back-to-back issues of *CSQ* to one theme. This issue looks at student ministries within mainland China, the autumn issue will look at other aspects of student ministry both in China and beyond.

Just as campus ministry in mainland China is facing additional pressures today—so is ministry among Chinese students overseas. The Tuesday Lunch was already facing challenges in 2019 but all campus ministry has faced the challenges of Covid-19 and the restrictions that the pandemic brought about. As we learn more about reaching Chinese students—and other internationals—in the pages of this issue of *ChinaSource Quarterly* and the next, may we be better prepared to pray and participate in God's ongoing work among them.

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[1] "About Urbana," *InterVarsity Urbana Student Missions Conference*, accessed July 5, 2021, https://urbana.org/about-urbana.

[2] Zhu Zi Jian, "History of Student Ministry in China," "Student Ministry in China" in *ChinaSource Quarterly*, Vol. 23, No. 2, July 2021, https://www.chinasource.org/resource-library/articles/history-of-student-ministry-in-china.

[3] Nyima Rongwu, "Ministry among Minority Students," in *ChinaSource Quarterly*, Vol. 23, No. 2, July 2021, https://www.chinasource.org/resource-library/articles/ministry-among-minority-students.

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