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# ChinaSource Quarterly

## Reaching Migrant Workers in China

Reggie Reimer,
Guest Editor

華源協作
CHINASOURCE

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# Reaching Migrant Workers in China

**ChinaSource Quarterly** **Spring 2022, Vol. 24, No. 1**

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## Editorial

# The Struggles and Strengths of China's Migrant Workers

*By Reggie Reimer, Guest Editor*

Arriving in Beijing in 2007, I was struck by the many unfinished buildings and construction cranes that dotted the skyline, and there seemed to be a BMW for every bicycle. At that time, the movement of rural migrants into major urban centers was in full force, with an estimated five million living in Beijing alone. As a newcomer, I felt like the nation's longstanding rural/urban divide was boiling over before my eyes.

The entrenched *hukou* system, along with the opportunities it either afforded or excluded, had created—or perhaps revealed—a class-based society. Migrants tended to be poor and sometimes looked down upon, had little access to education and health care, and took jobs no one else wanted. They were the unskilled factory workers, trash collectors, restaurant servers, security guards, vegetable sellers, and the primary construction force behind the building of China's cities, highways, and rail lines. Over the years, hundreds of conversations and dozens of friendships brought me into the migrant world. I regularly heard stories of financial pressures and the painful struggles of separated families.

Now, fifteen years later, much in China has changed. Factories have closed due to increasing wages and decreasing demand, and construction has slowed. Movement into the major cities has also slowed considerably, and migrants are beginning to move out to smaller cities, often in their home provinces. This issue of the *China Source Quarterly* looks at the lives and trends of China's migrant population.

In interacting with migrant workers, what I have found most compelling are the stories of their personal lives. One of our articles focuses on the stories of five migrant women as each one shares from her individual experiences over many years, as well as her aspirations for the future.

> Among the hundreds of millions of migrants are the many whom God has called to preach the gospel, make disciples, and plant churches.

Another story is that of the Living Waters family of churches. Among the hundreds of millions of migrants are the many whom God has called to preach the gospel, make disciples, and plant churches. Migrant church planters have often found themselves with fast-growing churches, planted among people who share similar village backgrounds, and who face common pressures. The 20-year story of Living Waters is one of God's grace at work through constant societal change.

We also include a perspective on one of the groups most affected by rural-to urban migration—the tens of millions of left-behind children. Through the stories of a group of church volunteers from Hong Kong who have been serving those children we learn more about their plight.

To add background to these compelling stories, a pastor and experienced church planter offers an analysis of

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# Thinking about Multiplying Migrant Worker Churches in Urbanizing China

*By Mark Chu*

Image credit: A friend of ChinaSource.

Over the past over twenty years, migrant worker churches have grown significantly and become a large part of the church family in China. However, with the process of urbanization, over the past five years, migrant churches in first-tier cities such as Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Shenzhen, have not enjoyed advantageous environments for existence and development, and their size and influence has been shrinking. Like many other migrant worker pastors in first-tier cities, I have been serving full time at migrant churches for many years, and I hope that these churches will be able to break through the current dilemma and continue planting churches during this wave of urbanization.

This article is composed of three parts. The first part will summarize the situation of migrant workers in China; the second gives a brief introduction to the relationship between China's urbanization and migrant worker churches. Finally, I will offer a few suggestions about how to multiply migrant churches in this new era.

## Overview on Migrant Workers in China

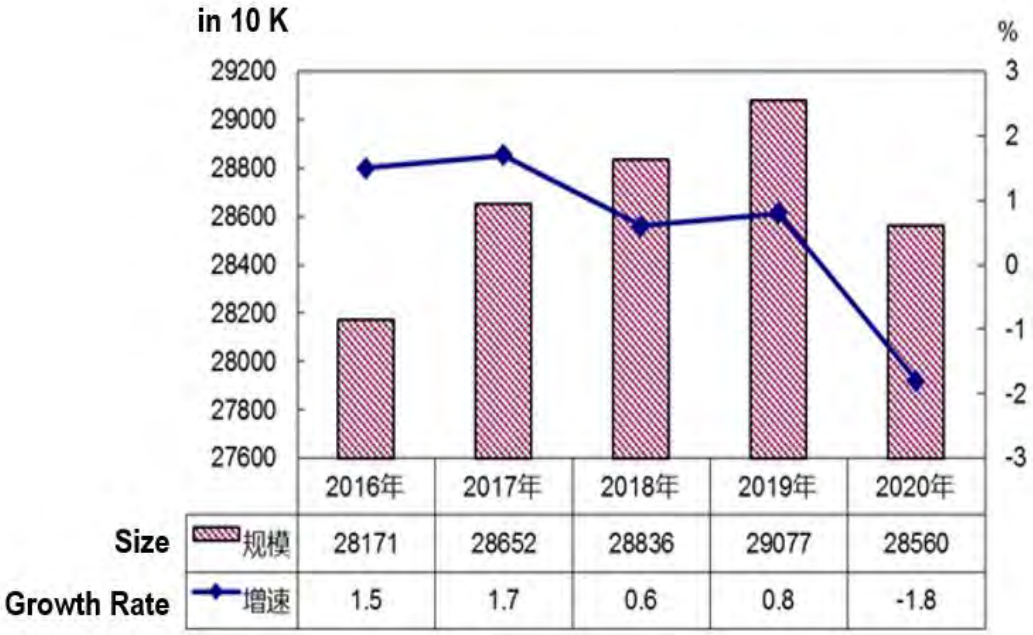
According to statistics announced at the end of August 2021 by the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development of the People's Republic of China (PRC), in 2020 the urbanization rate of the country's permanent population reached 63.89%, and the number of cities hit 687.[1]

In April of 2021, The National Bureau of Statistics of China issued its "2020 Report on the Monitoring Survey of Migrant Workers." According to this report, in 2020 there were 285.6 million migrant workers in China,[2] equaling 98.2% of the previous year's total. In comparison with the previous year, this is a decrease of 5.17 million and a drop by 1.8% (please refer to Chart 1 for details).[3] The slow-down of migrant workers' moving is one of the natural outcomes of a high rate of urbanization. More and more migrant workers can enjoy a stable life and work in cities, and this brings a positive impact on these migrant churches so they can keep growing and reaching out.

Taking a general look at the average growth rates of the national population in the periods of 2000–2010 and 2010–2020 (please refer to Chart 2), we may observe the following: the first-tier cities' population remains concentrated but has a slowed-down growth rate; the second-tier cities keep having inflowing population and the growth rate is moving slightly upward; the third tier's average growth rate is slightly below the national average; and the fourth tier is having a growth rate that is obviously lower than national average and a negative increase over the past ten years. This indicates that overall, the third- and fourth-tier cities' population keeps decreasing.[4]

There are still about 280 million migrant workers, the majority of whom flow into the second- and third-tier cities. This provides us with some references in terms of locations where we should give priority for migrant worker churches' planting. Over the next ten years, the focus of planting migrant churches should move from first-tier cities to those of second, third, and fourth tiers.

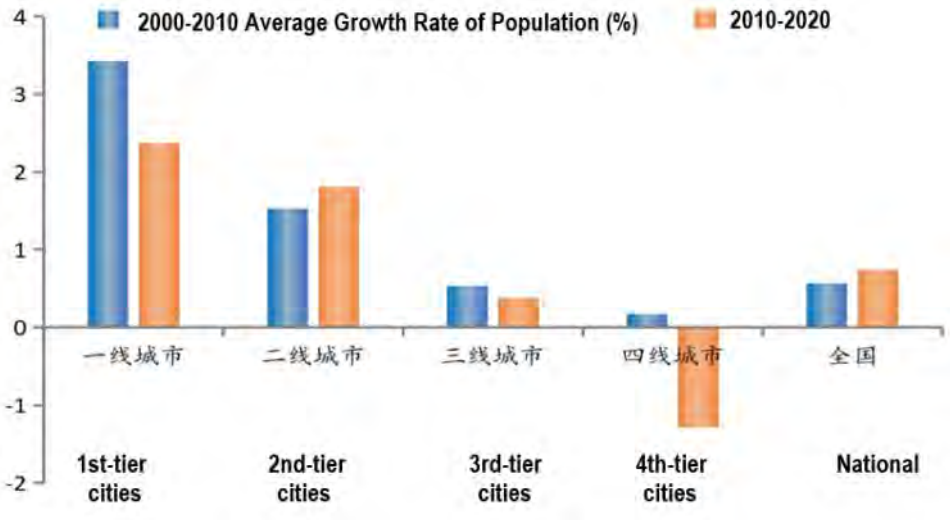
Chart 1 Migrant Workers' Total Numbers (Size) and Growth Rate




| | | 2016年 | 2017年 | 2018年 | 2019年 | 2020年 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Size | 规模 | 28171 | 28652 | 28836 | 29077 | 28560 |
| Growth Rate | 增速 | 1.5 | 1.7 | 0.6 | 0.8 | -1.8 |

*Data resources: National Bureau of Statistics of China*[5]

Chart 2 Average Growth Rate of Population
in 1st–4th Tier Cities in 2000–2010 and 2010–2020




*Data resources: National Bureau of Statistics of China*[6]

## Relations between Urbanization and Migrant Worker Churches

China is going through rapid urbanization, with the urbanization rate increasing by about 1% each year.[7] Urbanization, as a part of social transformation, brings us challenges and opportunities, and these affect churches as well. Village Christians move from rural areas to cities with economic concerns as their initial motive. Their internal desire for growth in faith, as well as problems and pressures they face in cities, push them to look for churches that can nurture and care for them spiritually.[8] Under these circumstances, migrant churches in cities come into being.

Shining Gao states that urbanization is the process during which village populations move to the cities, resulting in more, and larger cities, and higher percentages of city population.[9] In modern society, relatively concentrated population in cities, and the conveniences brought by advanced technology, also benefit the development of religions, including Christianity.

Hao Yuan also believes that the springing up of migrant churches is closely related to the population flow in China (migration movement).[10] Benefiting from the revival of Christianity in villages, migrant worker churches are developing fast in cities. Since the mid-1990s, Christianity started to grow in villages in the provinces of Henan and Anhui, and it continues to grow in this period of urbanization, promoting the formation, development, and revival of migrant worker churches in cities.

## Suggestions for Planting Migrant Worker Churches

In recent years, urbanization in China has not slowed down. The first-tier cities are growing in industry, drawing "high-end" enterprises and talents and, at the same time, sending migrant workers who were engaged in "low-end" industries back to villages under misleading policies. Migrant churches in the first-tier cities need great efforts to take a single step forward, and their sizes are shrinking gradually as those in low-end industries leave. Migrant workers and their churches are facing another migration; however, there are always opportunities in a crisis.

In 2018, the Chinese government announced a policy encouraging cities with populations under 3.5 million to grant migrant workers city household registrations. Some fast-developing provincial capitals (mainly those in second-tier cities) have started to absorb increased population to expand their size as migrants can live there more easily. This trend is going to become more and more obvious, and cities of third and fourth tiers will copy them. In addition, due to a series of advantageous policies, such as revitalizing villages, alleviating poverty through development, encouraging migrant workers to return for employment, and so on, more villagers now choose to stay in their hometowns to work and even to start their own businesses. In this case, there is still huge potential to continuously plant migrant churches in the cities or towns where migrant workers' original household registrations are or in other second- to fourth-tier cities.

When talking about the value and meaning of church planting, Tim Keller gives the following suggestion:

> The only way to be truly sure you are increasing the number of Christians in a town is to increase the number of churches.…The vigorous, continual planting of new congregations is the single most crucial strategy for 1) the numerical growth of the body of Christ in any city, and 2) the continual corporate renewal and revival of the existing churches in a city.[11]

Under the new wave of urbanization in China, pastors in migrant churches need to have "the perspective of the kingdom," and keep planting vigorous churches with new concepts and new models. In order to multiply migrant worker churches, I suggest the following:

*1. Take initiative instead of remaining passive.*

Taking initiative means that leaders in migrant worker churches need be equipped with a sense of "foresight" and a vision for church planting, being able to comprehend the opportunities brought by migration. They must work out strategies and plans in advance, determine the beginning point of church planting among the migration in new first-, second-, third-, and fourth-tier cities, plant churches in new areas relying upon mature ministry workers who move there or with other church planting partners. Leaders of migrant worker churches should embrace a modern and transformative way of thinking, which is actually the power that pushes migrant churches to move on.

*2. Grow in mobility instead of being satisfied with stability.*

The current strategies of church planting that migrant worker churches use need be flexible. Wherever believers go, new churches must be planted. Pastors of migrant churches are supposed to break through the old thinking of "defending our own corner." Instead, they are going out together with believers in the midst of the migration wave, guiding and encouraging mature believers—such as leaders among the believers, church planters, deacons, and so on—to embrace the vision and burden of church planting after they arrive in new cities. Even before these migrant workers leave for new cities, leaders can motivate them with a sense of mission, equipping them with spiritual responsibilities and tasks. While upon their arrival they are seeking a better life in cities, at the same time they are striving to live out the Lord Jesus' great mission—to train disciples and to multiply churches.

*3. Work in teams instead of as a one-man show.*

Pastors and planters of migrant churches should value teamwork and cooperation while planting churches, including the cooperation among churches in neighboring cities, pastors of churches in cities, migrant workers, pastors of different migrant worker churches (this is particularly important), seminaries, and planted churches. Comprehensive cooperation can bring all sorts of resources together and draw out the best of them. Advanced networks of communication and transportation in modern society make this type of cooperation possible.

*4. Develop a cycle of multiplication without gaps.*

Dandelions are good at making use of the wind to complete their self-multiplication. Migrant churches should follow the way of the dandelions and plant churches of Christ everywhere. This is the so-called "Dandelion Pattern of Church Planting."[12] Migrant churches may borrow the pushing and pulling powers of the migration wave, having one or a couple of mature churches send eligible planters to establish churches in target cities and provide new churches with manpower, materials, and spiritual support. After the "baby churches" grow mature enough, they in turn keep sending or supporting church planters. This cycled pattern of "double-proliferation of church planters and churches"[13] is known as the "dandelion model" of planting migrant churches, which embodies the value of "life does not end; the harvest is endless."

*5. Upgrade from monoculture to diversity.*

This refers to the diversity of the target groups of church planting. Since the 1980s, the composition of migrant worker churches has been rather homogeneous, with the majority of the congregation being middle-aged and made of migrant workers moving from villages to cities. Rarely could these people settle down in cities, and it was normal for them to keep moving around. In recent years, the migrant population has grown younger and has a higher educational background. In addition, the state has officially announced a policy to

allow migrant workers to have their households registered in cities. Therefore, migrant workers can have their households registered in the cities where they work and settle down there. New churches in the future will reflect a mixture of people from cities and villages, permanent residents and migrant workers, middle-aged, seniors, younger generations, and so on.

Diversity is also manifested by the areas of church planting. The core areas of church planting are cities with concentrated populations. Based on these, new churches will be spreading into neighboring satellite cities and towns. In areas such as Beijing-Tianjin-Shanxi Province, Yangtze Delta and Pearl River Delta with highly concentrated populations, church planters are using cities as their bases and planting diversified churches in neighboring areas.

## Conclusion

Today, urbanization is the important economic policy in China. The huge migrant population needs a stable work and living environment as well as spiritual health.

Migrant worker churches are duty-bound to spiritually nurture this group. On the one hand, they need to rely upon God's guidance and protection to keep the churches alive and stable under special circumstances; on the other, they should grasp church planting opportunities brought about by migration to spread the gospel widely and win cities and the migrant population for Jesus Christ.

*Mark Chu (pseudonym), is a migrant pastor, completing his doctoral research on migrants in China.*

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[1]"住建部：我国常住人口城镇化率达63.89%" ("Ministry of Housing and Urban-rural Development: The Country's Urbanization Rate of the Permanent Population Has Reached 63.89%,") Chinanews.com （中国新闻网）, August 31, 2021, https://www.chinanews.com.cn/gn/2021/08-31/9554999.shtml. Accessed January 24, 2022.

[2]As defined by National Bureau of Statistics of China, "migrant workers" are all people that still have a rural household registration but engage in non-agricultural work in their home area or leave their home area for work for more than six months per year.

[3]2020年农民工监测调查报告(2020 Migrant Workers Monitoring Survey Report), National Bureau of Statistics, April 30, 2021. http://www.stats.gov.cn/tjsj/zxfb/202104/t20210430_1816933.html. Accessed January 20, 2022.

[4]2021中国人口大迁移报告（2021 Population Migration Report) by 任泽平, Yicai.com, 2021-06-09 https://www.yicai.com/news/101077169.html. Accessed January 20, 2022.

[5]See note 3

[6]See note 4

[7]Yingxiao Jin, 2013, *Study on New Types of House Churches in Beijing*, The Alliance Press: Hong Kong, China, 37.

[8]Jianbo Huang, 2012, *Village Churches in Cities*, Tao Fong Shan Press: Hong Kong, China, 2.

[9]Shining Gao, 2011, "Process of Urbanization and Christianity in China," *Religious Studies*, 117-118.

[10]Hao Yuan, 2016, "Migrant Worker Churches in Contemporary Chinese Urbanization," *International Journal of Sino-Western Studies*, 54.

[11]Keller, Tim, 2012, "Why Church Planting?" https://www.acts29.com/why-church-planting/

[12]The Dandelion Pattern of Church Planting conveys the image of dandelion seeds being easily spread by the wind with church planting following the same pattern—a geographic gospel saturation. The author's thoughts about this concept have been taken largely from the Chinese versions of two books: Gary McIntosh's *One Size Doesn't Fit All: Bringing Out the Best in Any Size Church* (translated by Hu Jiaen), (1999/2001), Taiwan, Taipei: Huashen, and Jim Belcher's *Deep Church: A Third Way Beyond Emerging and Traditional* (translated by LiWangyuan), (2009/2014), Taiwan, Taipei: Campus.

[13]Craig Ott and Gene Wilson, 2011, *Global Church Planting: Biblical Principles and Best Practices for Multiplication*, Baker Academic.

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current migrant demographics and how the church might adapt in these changing times and continue to evangelize migrant workers.

While several "China watchers" have written excellent books on the migrant phenomenon, we review a recent one, *The Myth of Chinese Capitalism*. The book addresses policies at a macro level and shares the stories of individuals affected by those policies.

I have learned a great deal from my migrant friends' determination and willingness to sacrifice. I hope these articles will serve to paint a picture of them and their world.

## The Unfinished Story of Living Waters

*By Tim Liang*

Image credit: A friend of ChinaSource.

The world of China's migrants is constantly changing, which means the state of migrant churches and the strategies of church planters are also in flux. The twenty-year story of Living Waters churches can help us understand some of the changes, as well as the current challenges.

Established in 2001 in Beijing, the Living Waters churches began by giving attention to migrant workers. This was a time of rapid urbanization in China, and the main reason that the majority of migrant workers moved into the city was to escape poverty in their villages. Therefore, both new city churches and migrant churches grew very quickly at this time. Some of the migrants who had come to the city had already become Christians in their hometowns. When they came to the city to work, they would share the gospel with great zeal and brought to the Lord many who had not previously heard the gospel.

As young church planters, my wife and I were still in Bible school and for security reasons could not openly share our identity as students. Because of that, some of the believers were suspicious of us. However, after a year of building relationships with them, they could observe our lives and service, and for the next three years the work grew quickly. As we look back, we realize that this rapid growth in the early days was the work of God's Spirit who, of course, is always at work. There were fewer churches in those days, and a lot of people were coming into the city looking for a place to belong. It was relatively easy to preach the gospel to people from the countryside.

In 2004, after Brother Xu (our leader) was married, he and his wife moved next to the church and began serving there full time. In 2006, my wife and I also moved next to one of the churches. By this time there were five or six Living Waters fellowships in different places. A pivotal year for Living Waters was 2007 as three important things happened. First, we developed a relationship with a city church and thus could gain a fresh perspective on what it actually means to be part of the migrant community. Second, we began to return to our hometowns to help the village churches and went to smaller cities to help train other workers. Third, we began to use a team model for ministry, and became a team of three couples. These three things would have a great impact on the growth and development of Living Waters.

In 2009, we got to know Teacher Peng, and this also had an impact on Living Waters. One aspect was that through him, we got to know other migrant church planting pastors. Also, in 2011 we began a full-time program to train younger co-workers, and through this we were able to grow even more. All of this happened as we continued to work towards building a strong team of coworkers.

Together with Teacher Peng, in 2015, we began a new and larger team comprised of various pastors who were focused on reaching migrants. We called this new team Harvest. Our hope was (and is) that Harvest will be a truly indigenous Chinese mission organization. All of the Harvest workers, including those in Living Waters, have experienced difficulties, yet, at the same time, have known the deep and present grace of God. From the beginning until now, Harvest has recruited new members, most of them relatively young. We are all moving forward together and expectantly.

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## Reflections from a Foreign Friend: My Years with China's Migrants

*By Reggie Reimer*

Image credit: A friend of ChinaSource.

In 2010, for the first time in history, China's urban population surpassed that of its rural counterpart. It is expected that the historical rural/urban divide of 80% to 20% respectively will be reversed by the year 2030, all in line with the central government's aggressive urbanization strategy. The unprecedented demographic shift and rapid urbanization have been accompanied by deep social pressures, dividing millions of families across the nation, and depriving an untold many of adequate education and health care.

It is helpful to understand the political and social background of today's migrants. In 1958, Mao Zedong instituted the system of family registration (*hukou*) as a means of tracking all of China's citizens and to prevent villagers from migrating to the cities. All social services such as medical care and education were tied to the *hukou*; the sick would be treated and children would receive an education in their hometowns, the place where they were registered.

When the economic reform era began in 1979 under Deng Xiaoping, foreign-owned factories and industries sprang up by the thousands, all requiring cheap labor for building, manufacturing, and maintaining. Uneducated villagers began pouring into coastal areas, finding employment as unskilled laborers on construction sites and in factory assembly lines, as security guards and cleaners, trash recyclers and fruit sellers. Throughout the 1980s, the initial waves of migrants transformed—seemingly overnight—coastal towns into megacities, and further swelled the population of already large cities like Beijing, Shanghai, Wuhan, and Guangzhou. Within 30 years, 300 million villagers had left their homes in search of a piece of China's growing economic pie, fueling the engine of the world's hottest economy.

The price paid by the migrants, however, has been steep. For one, China has been slow to change the *hukou* system, leaving migrant families for decades without access to standard education and medical care. Many families felt forced to separate, and it was not uncommon for a family of three (two parents and a child) to be living apart from one another with both parents working in different cities and the child being cared for by relatives in the hometown. The villages themselves have been decimated with only the elderly and the children left behind in many of them. In addition, as villagers and urbanites now live side-by-side in cities, most migrants can describe their experiences of being discriminated against by wealthier and more sophisticated neighbors. There have also been countless stories of migrants working on the basis of a verbal contract but not receiving promised wages and then finding no legal recourse.

At present, it seems that the "migrant phenomenon" is slowly subsiding. There is a national strategy to encourage industry in lower-tiered cities so that more migrants can find work closer to their hometowns. However, the process of "settling China" cannot happen overnight, and the needs within the migrant world will persist for some time.

**The Urban/Rural Divide**

When I was studying Chinese, I came across an interesting and telling sentence in the course reader. The top-

ic of the particular lesson was discrimination, and the sentence went something like this: “City people discriminate against village people and village people discriminate against mountain people.” My teacher affirmed that this was indeed the case. That urban/rural split, a physical reality pre-Deng when never the twain shall meet, became a social and emotional experience in the era of migration.

China’s urban churches differ from migrant churches, the former largely comprised of middle class, educated Christians with greater earning potential and the latter of poorer, uneducated people generally reflecting village culture. An educated Beijinger, a devoted Christian, once told me that she has more in common with people outside China than with people from the villages.

In Beijing, I lived in a nice apartment, and many of the other residents were wealthy businesspeople who drove high-end cars, but the security guards were all young men from the countryside, most in their early 20s. They were paid less than minimum wage, and even this was often withheld at the whim of the management company who would regularly cite quite minor infractions. They were housed in a dormitory space next to the underground parking: two concrete, dank, and windowless rooms for about 12 of them.

One of the guards was 25-year-old Guohong from a village in the neighboring province of Hebei. His wife and young son lived back in his hometown, and Guohong would send most of his monthly wages back to them, though he often complained that his wife was spending the money faster than he was earning it. We spent a few years developing our friendship; I would visit him and the other guards in their dormitory, and Guohong would occasionally come to my flat. Though we would both eventually leave Beijing, we have kept in touch over the years, and he always addresses me as “older brother.” He has traveled around, working on construction sites in different provinces—Inner Mongolia, Fujian, and Jiangsu—usually staying for a year or two in each place and continuing to send most of his earnings to his wife. Eventually, however, he discovered that she had been having a long-term affair and had been using his earnings to support the other man. They were divorced, and then Guohong’s son moved into his parents’ care. Guohong continued to work in construction and sees his son occasionally. He is one of 300 million who make up the “migrant crowd,” each of whom has a story to tell.

Another young friend is Xiao Fan from the province of Henan, who set up a small noodle shop close to my home in Beijing. We became close friends, first as a customer in his shop and then especially when, one night, I helped mediate a dispute between him and his 18-year-old kitchen assistant. At 30 years of age and single, Xiao Fan was earning just enough to support himself and to send a little back to his retired parents in the village. Eventually, he closed his shop in Beijing and moved to Nanjing for two years where he opened another noodle shop. Then he closed that shop and returned to Beijing where he opened yet another noodle shop. Now in his late thirties, he is haunted by the fact that he has no marriage prospects and very little to offer a potential wife. He is like millions of migrant young men desperately trying to find enough economic success to make him “marriageable” but all the while watching his youth slip away.

My friendships with people like Guohong and Xiao Fan have allowed me to enter the world of migrants. By entering their worlds, I have been given an opportunity to “see and know,” as Christ did, that is, to witness first-hand the pressures that they face and have thus become more acutely aware of these vulnerable sheep who need a shepherd. These men were certainly intrigued by the novelty of forming a friendship with a foreigner but even more drawn by the experience of having someone from a higher (in their minds) social class express interest in them. The relational chasm between wealthy urban Christians and migrants remains, something that is not uncommon in our world, but felt more acutely, perhaps, in China’s cities. How can we help disciples of Christ in the city see and know the plight of their rural counterparts so that they can learn the compassion of Christ?

**Missions: Empowerment, Christian Multiplication, and Full Circle**

The ongoing movement of hundreds of millions of people throughout China—the "floating population"—is one of the best vehicles in the world today for fulfilling Christ's global mandate. The father of republican China, Sun Yat-Sen, described the Chinese diaspora as being like sand scattered throughout the world and encouraged them to return to their homeland to help rebuild it. Today's *internal* diaspora is also scattered like sand in every part of the nation. Christians who are part of this movement of people are more like seeds than sand, bringing the life and light of the kingdom to places in which they have been scattered.

Stephen is a church planter now in his mid-40s, originally from Henan, who moved to the southern part of Beijing. He came to the city with his wife and two children, found a job to support his family, and began sharing the gospel. Some years back, Stephen had attended a Bible school in his hometown and from that time on realized that his mission in life was greater than just working to support his family. Within two years after moving to Beijing, as a result of both his and his wife's gospel witness, Stephen had planted two churches. He quit his job to focus his attention on building the growing body and planted several more churches. Over the years he has trained coworkers to help care for the growing flock.

The Beijing government has enacted policies that have pushed many migrants away from the city. Some are moving to other, more welcoming cities, and some are returning to their home provinces, choosing to settle down in smaller cities closer to their hometowns. Stephen is finding this to be an opportunity to commission his flock. Having spent years equipping them, he is now sending them to plant churches in other places. A few years ago, two of his closest coworkers were commissioned by his church and have already planted new churches close to their own hometowns, one in Henan and the other in Hunan. From empowerment to multiplication, the mission has come full circle.

Another example of the missionary potential for China's internal diaspora may be drawn from two coworkers, Moses and Gregory. Now in their early 40s, both Moses and Gregory have been planting churches in Beijing for over 15 years. They met as teenagers in a village Bible school that has operated for some 15 years near the border of Henan and Anhui. Each year young people graduate from that same school, and Moses and Gregory have influenced their lives. Some become full-time evangelists or church workers, but most migrate to the cities for work. Hundreds have been scattered throughout China from Xinjiang in the far northwest to Shenzhen in the southeast and virtually every major city in between. For example, one traveled to Dongguan in the south, started selling *mantou* (steamed buns) on the street and sharing the gospel with customers. A church was established, and a young pastor couple was recruited to further develop the work. Other students from that village Bible school are now living and proclaiming the gospel among Uighur Muslims in Xinjiang as well as among the Miao people in the south.

Moses and Gregory keep in touch with this slice of diaspora from their hometown. They have brought these graduates together for leadership training and to encourage them to keep sharing Christ wherever they are planted.

The migrant world continues to undergo change. While there has been much pain and struggle within this slice of society, God has used the migrant phenomenon to bring many to himself. Through the movement of Jesus' followers, the proclamation of the gospel has been and is going into every corner of the nation.

*Reggie Reimer (pseudonym) has served alongside migrants in China for 15 years.*

## Caring for China's "Left-Behind" Children

*By Cherry Wong*

Image credit: Ajay Karpur via UnSplash

*Due to the government's* hukou *registration requirement, many children were left behind in villages as their parents went to work in the cities. While a few fortunate ones were looked after by their mothers, most were in the care of extended relatives, mostly aged grandparents. These are the "left-behind" children that Cherry Wong and other volunteers have been visiting and holding camps for over the past decade. In this article, she tells of some of her experiences and children she has worked with.*

This past Christmas Day, we received a number of greetings from our brothers and sisters in China. We had last met with them about two and a half years ago. Since 2018, our work with them organizing summer camps for the left-behind children had been increasingly difficult due to the government's tightened religious policies. I remember the constant need to change venues to evade the surveillance of local officials; we also had to cancel a number of camps at the last minute. However, nothing would compare to the challenge posed by the COVID-19 pandemic as everything came to a halt. I can still vividly recall the last day of our summer camp in 2019 when we promised the children that we would return soon; that pledge has still not been realized.

We had long been aware of the issue of left-behind children (留守儿童) in China but had never personally encountered them. Then, in 2013, an opportunity arose when Brother Cui, a migrant pastor that we met in Beijing, asked if we could deliver summer camp programs to the left-behind children in his hometown. Who would have missed a golden opportunity like this! We thanked God for opening this door, and we immediately jumped to accept the invitation. "Mind you," Brother Cui continued, "there are hundreds and hundreds of children in the villages; you may need to recruit more volunteers." This started a journey that has lasted for many years.

The first time we ventured into the villages outside a city (in Henan province), we were surprised by their isolation and backwardness. There were no proper paths or signposts; nevertheless, the children were able to locate our activity centers which were the village homes of faithful Christian families. Most of the children had been left behind in the villages as their parents worked in the cities; a few fortunate ones were looked after by their mothers, but most were in the care of extended relatives, mostly aged grandparents. The little ones spoke in their local Henan dialect not yet having mastered Putonghua. That initial encounter was really an eye-opening experience for us. Despite our extensive preparation, we had to make spontaneous changes to our programs as the village environment was very different from what we had expected. Open fields became makeshift classrooms and playgrounds.

After the first summer camp, the local Sunday school teachers asked if we could visit again during spring break. We then established a pattern of visiting the left-behind children in various villages on a regular basis of twice a year. Soon, by word of mouth, we were invited to other villages in Henan province to provide summer

and winter camp programs for these children. We praised the Lord for opening up more opportunities to share the gospel with them.

Every morning when we arrived at a village house, many children were already there waiting for us. Some who were as young as four or five years old came with their older siblings and friends. Many of them had to walk over an hour to get there. On rainy days, they had to trek through thick mud and slippery paths and in the cold of January through layers of snow. When they arrived, they would all have red faces, cracked with cold rash and blisters due to the extreme winter weather. However, this did not bother them much as they were more eager to join all the activities and hear stories about Jesus. These children have developed the tenacity to endure these extreme weather conditions, a skill that we city dwellers have yet to master.

Despite the huge number of left-behind children joining the camp, we managed to get to know some of them well. Due to the lack parental concern, many of them were reticent and withdrawn, not knowing how to express themselves or handle their emotions. When dealing with setbacks, these children tend to remain uncommunicative, and some even resort to violence to get their own way. Once a group of relatively older boys fought over a piece of plastic fruit, something that children in Hong Kong would not even bother to pick up. We immediately separated them and explained that using force was not the way to solve the problem. Over time, we gradually established a bond with these children; some started to open up and even invited us into their homes.

We had been visiting an isolated village two hours from a city for three consecutive years. There we met an old couple with their four grandchildren: three older girls and a younger brother. The parents of the children worked in the city and only returned a few times a year. Like most traditional Chinese families, the old couple doted on the younger boy, though doing this unknowingly. The grandmother constantly punished the two older girls by having them crouch outside the house for an extended period of time. We observed that these girls were detached and reticent. On the other hand, the younger boy had difficulty interacting with others because of the way he was being brought up.

Another boy, “Ennis,” grew up in a village in the original area we had visited. His parents were very devoted Christians and they helped out in the camps. The couple’s greatest concern was that this son had been lazing around in his room for years. Knowing his situation, we tried to approach him, and through repeated efforts, we observed his improvement during our visits. He started reading the Bible and helped with camp activities. We were all overwhelmed with joy and praised the Lord for opening his heart.

“Mike,” a nine-year-old boy, demonstrated extreme bravery and tenacity. The teachers would take the children to a nearby stream to play. One day, Mike was cut by some sharp rocks and his toes were bleeding seriously. We immediately sent him to the closest clinic a few hours away, and he had to brave several stitches. When he returned to the camp, he did not complain or cry but was more curious to know what he had missed during his absence.

“Evelyn” was originally from a village, but she had gone with her migrant parents who serve in pastoral ministry to Beijing. For years, the family had been struggling with her schooling due to China’s *hukou* system (household registration system). As she was not entitled to public schools in Beijing, her parents had to send her to private schools. However, due to the lack of government support, these schools charge exorbitant fees which are beyond the means of most migrants. The real challenge came when Evelyn reached middle school age as affordable private schools were virtually nonexistent. The parents had no choice but to send her to her hometown to continue with her secondary school education while living with her grandparents. When Evelyn returned to Henan province, it was found that she was much below the required standards in most subjects,

and she had to repeat two lower grades. It has now been five years since Evelyn has been studying in Henan. We were overjoyed to know that she has become very motivated and mature throughout the years. She now ranks among the top in her grade.

We have missed working with these children over the past two years due to COVID-19, but this gap has only made our hearts grow fonder for them. Thank God that through WeChat, we are able to connect with the village teachers and hear updates about some of the children. Now, Ennis is helping out at church and Evelyn is motivated to enter a good university. We are so thankful that the Lord has given us a connection with all these children.

*Cherry Wong (pseudonym) is a fourth generation Christian who has been visiting migrants and left-behind children for over a decade. Being an English teacher, the Lord has equipped her with what she has learned in her profession to further his kingdom. She and her church volunteers started visiting a migrant family church in a Beijing suburb in 2012, and from that connection the Lord brought them to know about the left-behind children and to work with them.*

**The Unfinished Story of Living Waters**

**Continued from page 9**

The last ten years of living in Beijing have been especially difficult for migrants. The reasons include decreasing job opportunities for migrant workers and the lack of opportunities for children's education. Moreover, Beijing is growing into a new and modern city which means that most affordable and typical migrant housing has been torn down. For this reason, many have chosen to leave the capital and move to the satellite towns and cities around Beijing or to other places altogether. In light of this, Living Waters has also begun to plant churches in other areas. At this point, Harvest Mission, of which Living Waters is a part, has undertakings in Beijing, Hebei, Henan, and Guangdong. It has also begun church planting in the Northwest. We are hoping and praying for more and younger coworkers, and together we will continue to plant churches, train more workers, and be sent on mission.

*Tim Liang (pseudonym) is a veteran migrant church planter.*

## The Journeys of Five Migrant Women

*Reggie Reimer*

Image credit: A friend of ChinaSource.

ChinaSource Quarterly's *guest editor interviewed five migrant women who moved to Beijing at various times during their lives. He asked each one nine significant questions: When did you first leave your village for the city? Where are you from? Why did you come to the city? What was your experience when you first came to the city? What was your life like at that time? During these years, what are significant challenges you have faced? As you look back, do you feel that your life has improved? How have you experienced God's grace and faithfulness? Do you plan to return to your village one day? Following are the replies of these women.*

**Sister Dong from Henan Province**

In 1989, I left my village in Henan province and went to Beijing. I decided to go to the city because, at that time, there were few fields in my hometown. A family of five people only had four *mu* of land (less than 1 acre)—not much for that many people. Every year there was not enough food to eat, and there was no other income.

When I first arrived in Beijing, I didn't have money to rent a house. I started to work on construction sites. Later, a fellow villager introduced me to recycling. We lived in the cheapest and most dilapidated houses. At that time, the winter in Beijing was colder than it is now—and summer is also not easy. However, rural people have suffered hardships and "clenched their teeth." They can earn a little money and feel that the hardship is worth it.

> When it comes to God's grace and faithfulness, there is too much to talk about.
>
> *—Sister Dong from Henan Province*

We ate the cheapest foods, lived in the cheapest places, and wore the cheapest clothes. It was all about saving money. In the first few years, people watched our places like thieves, and we felt they wanted to steal from us. Later, we often moved as the city managers changed their policies. Landlords always increased the rent. When the children grew up, we spent money on them. Nevertheless, economically, we are better off now.

When it comes to God's grace and faithfulness, there is too much to talk about. At that time, there was a meeting place in the recycling compound. I have been meeting at that church and serving. It has been the grace of God for so many years. However, we are getting old, so we must go back to our hometown and eventually into a home for the elderly.

**Sister Wu from Anhui Province**

In 2010, I came from Anhui province to Beijing. My husband's sister's family sold vegetables at a Beijing vegetable market, so my husband and I came to Beijing to sell vegetables with them. At that time, all the people from the countryside worked in the outdoors area. We had no income at home, so it seemed to be the only

way to make money. When we first arrived in Beijing, his sister's family helped us. We couldn't rely on them all the time, so we needed to work hard. I felt that earning money was really not easy.

During that time, we got up early. We started selling vegetables by getting up earlier than the dogs and going to bed later than the chickens. It was very hard. There has definitely been pressure. For example, vegetable prices are low, and they are not easy to sell. We aren't earning much but need to pay for rent and food.

Later, when we had children, the pressure became even greater. It's better now than before, but we still have to work hard to earn money. The kids are all going to school, and they need money for everything. I believed in the Lord relatively early, but sometimes, when I was busy working, I didn't participate in fellowships for many years. I have only begun to attend meetings in the last two or three years. I owe God very much, and I am really grateful to God for watching over me these years. We have bought our own house in a county close to Beijing, and it is very likely that we will not return to our hometown in the future. If we do go back, it would be in the last few years of our life. Don't we Chinese return like "the leaves to their roots (叶落归根)"?

**Sister Chen from Shandong Province**

I came to Beijing from Shandong province 19 years ago—to earn money! Back in my hometown, I thought that the city was full of money, and then, when I arrived, I realized that it was really hard work to earn money! I didn't have the skills; I could only rely on my strength.

I owe God very much, and I am really grateful to God for watching over me these years.

*—Sister Wu from Anhui Province*

When I think about it, life back then might not have been as good as being in my hometown, but there was no choice; for the sake of earning a living we need to press on. Although it is not easy to earn money—even with hard work—still, I have slowly accumulated some. However, prices have risen so fast, and I feel that I have not earned as much as I need.

Our food and clothes are better than before, and I have improved a lot, but I feel that my life is more tiring than before. Thanks to God's grace, my children have married and now I have grandsons. That is the purpose of gaining money. God's care has been realized, and my son now has a good job. He bought a house in the city, and I am helping him care for his children there. Later, in the future, I will return to my hometown.

**Sister Chen from Henan Province**

I am from Henan Province, and I came to Beijing in 1999 to do business in the tourist area of Badaling, Yanqing.[1]

Before we were married, my husband had worked in Beijing, and I joined him here after getting married.

In the first few years, business in the tourist sector was pretty good. In Beijing winters, we froze to death, but I was also making money, so I felt very happy. Life at that time was generally pretty good. However, there were not many people in Badaling, and we had to go a long way to buy food and daily necessities. There were also quite a few problems. The tourist business declined and did not do much business for a few years, and the booth fee we were charged was too high. So, I came to the city and worked for two years in waste recycling. Later, I opened a private kindergarten and worked for several years. However, city management was strict,

and I often suffered from disease of the hands, feet, and mouth. Since I was unable to complete some procedures, I was forced by various government departments to close.

On the whole, I don't think things have improved much. I haven't saved the money I earned earlier, and now there are many places where it is difficult both to earn money and buy necessities; everything is expensive.

To be honest, my faith is not very good. Before, when I was not busy, I was part of a church, but attended very few gatherings. My two sons grew up in Beijing. I know that God's protection is upon them. It's a long story, but in general, God didn't abandon me. I will most likely go back to my hometown when I am old.

**Sister Wu, Migrated at 19**

In 2007, when I was 19 years old, I came with my parents to Beijing. I was no longer in school, so my parents brought me along with them. At that time, I was young and found the city quite exciting. I depended on my parents for everything. Back then, they had opened a small supermarket which was generally better than other migrant jobs.

My personal challenge has been my marriage. After getting married, I was forced to divorce my husband because of his extramarital affairs. Now, I am working alone to support myself. Financially I am okay, but I am afraid of getting hurt again emotionally. I am living alone and asking God to prepare a way for me.

When you ask if I think my life has improved, what aspect of life do you mean? Food, clothing, shelter, and transportation are better than before, but that is not all of life. I have a daughter who lives with her dad. She was very ill when she was a few months old. The hospital issued notices of critical illness several times, but with the help and prayers of church ministers, brothers, and sisters, she recovered. She is very healthy now, and I know that this is the grace of God.

I still love my family very much. I currently have taken out a loan for a house in my hometown thinking that if there is no suitable person for me to marry, I will have a place to live in the future.

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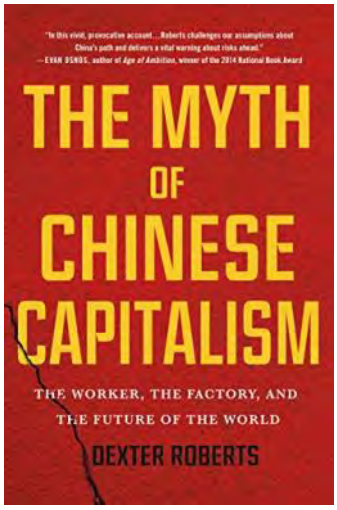
[1]Badaling is the site of the most visited section of the Great Wall of China, approximately 50 miles northwest of Beijing's city center. It is within the Yanqing district that is within Beijing municipality.

## Book Review

# The Factory, the Family, the Future

*Reviewed by Noah Samuels*




*The Myth of Chinese Capitalism: The Worker, the Factory, and the Future of the World*, Dexter Roberts. St. Martin's Press 2020, Hardcover 288 pages. ISBN-10: 1250089379; ISBN-13: 978-1250089373. Available from Amazon.

Joseph Stalin is often quoted as saying, "The death of one man is a tragedy, the death of millions is a statistic." Putting the man and his practices aside, Stalin's point here is clear. The weight of tragedy is felt when it is personified. This is exactly what Dexter Roberts seeks to do in his book, *The Myth of Chinese Capitalism: The Worker, the Factory, and the Future of the World*.

Being based in Beijing for over two decades, Roberts is well versed in economics, Chinese history, politics and how all these factors play together on the world stage. This book, while it certainly is a useful glimpse into the ever-increasing economic influence of China in the world, seeks to expose how the growth of the Chinese economy has impacted the workers in the "world's factory." In his own words, Roberts describes his motivation behind this book and the research that it came out of by saying, "I wanted to see how the *laobaixing*, literally 'old 100 names' or regular folks, were faring during the new [economic] reforms" (p. xxii). By putting a face in the factory and a name in the numbers, Roberts helpfully paints a context for the struggle that is life for migrant workers from Shenyang to Shenzhen. For this reason alone, the book is a useful read. A better understanding of reality for millions of people, who are readily recognized but seldom known, will hopefully cultivate a heart of compassion for those who are left out of the benefits of the ever-growing prosperity within the Middle Kingdom.

**Summary**

With each chapter of this book, Roberts acts like a jeweler slowly turning a diamond to examine its intricacies from different vantage points. For Roberts, it is not the brilliance and beauty of a jewel, but the Chinese economy he has under a microscope. From each new vantage point this economy reveals an increasingly troubling reality. Roberts exposes these realities to prove that "The myth…that China's [economic] development path and authoritarian system will become a model for countries around the world and perhaps replace the already battered Western one of freer markets and individual rights…is unlikely to prove true and how instead China's growth could seriously slow, shattering the expectations of millions of Chinese, very possibly leading to social unrest" (p. xxxiv). This thesis is teased out over the book's seven chapters.

In Chapter 1, Roberts opens the doors to a world that most people know exists but have never seen: *The Factory*. Behind most products in our lives are the countless migrant workers who often seem, "As if their lives revolved around an elusive quest to find the rare factory that actually cared about their well-being" (p. 18).

Chapter 2 is perhaps the most heart-wrenching portion of the book and could stand as a worthwhile sociological essay on its own. *The Family* describes the catastrophic implications of the migrant worker's life on his or her loved ones. The two words, "migrant" and "workers" say it all. These are millions of people who have migrated from one place to another looking for work. These are people who, in seeking for better opportunities, often leave behind not just a poor hometown but some of society's most vulnerable: their aging parents and young children.

Chapter 3 exposes the inherent and created problems in China over *The Land* that its people inhabit and work to cultivate. Roberts notes that, "Leaders like to point out, while [China] has a fifth of the world's people, it has less than a tenth of its arable land" (p. 64). This is a real difficulty, but the policies that the modern government has implemented to address this problem have only intensified those difficulties.

Chapter 4 shifts focus to the delicate line that *The Party* seeks to walk in driving China's economy forward. Trying to keep balanced on this line is the necessity of both a compliant and "dirt-cheap labor force [which is] key to China's continued economic growth" (p. 94).

Chapter 5 is perhaps the most surprising section as Roberts introduces the necessary challenge of implementing *The Robots* into China's economy. Rather than simple evidence of advancement, automation in factories can also expose the devaluation of migrant workers whose jobs quickly become obsolete. As companies constantly look for ways to cut costs and increase productivity, Miao Wei, the former president of the auto giant Dongfeng Motor Company, has said coldly, "The people part is the most complicated" (p. 117).

Chapter 6 paints another migration picture—not one of villagers migrating to the industrial centers looking for work but of former factory workers *Going Home*. This is not just a homecoming for Spring Festival; rather, it is another effort to develop modest wealth beyond the big cities. At the direction of Premier Li Keqiang, the government is seeking to ignite, "A virtuous circle: [where] migrants return to villages; they demand goods and services; more returnees open businesses to serve them; local economy flourishes; more move back" (p. 150). However, due to a host of challenges, this circle may not be so easily completed and, "not a few returnees are likely to fail" (p. 166).

Chapter 7 looks ominously into what the current economy and policies in China could create for *The Future*. While not projecting a complete dystopian future, Roberts does warn, "Without a free press, an opposition party, or meaningful elections, the people have few outlets other than taking to the streets" (p. 190).

**Reflection**

As Roberts slowly makes each turn of the Chinese economy, the reader is presented with a different, stark reality facing the millions of migrants caught up in the pursuit of the "China Dream." Woven throughout each of these worrying realities is one common thread. This common theme serves as the undercurrent for nearly all concerns of the migrant's experience: the *hukou*—the policy that allows the central government to control residence and migration. As Roberts claims, "More than anything else, [it] explains how China has ended up with today's imbalanced, deeply unequal society" (p. 3). It is by tracing out this theme that Roberts does some of his best and most compelling work.

By establishing the *hukou* policy, the government has allowed China to become industrialized without becoming urbanized (p. 4). Migrants can travel to industrial centers for work but are kept from permanently moving to these cities because they are unable to obtain a *hukou*, or permanent residence permit. There are a host of limitations with not having a *hukou*, but perhaps one of the most glaring consequences in a city like Shanghai is that "more than one million migrant children who reside there are barred from attending public schools" (p. 40). Migrants then are forced with the decision: leave behind the enticing financial opportunities in the development hubs or leave behind their children. For many, the lure and necessity of finances force their migration to the factory.

The term *liushouertong*, or left-behind children, has become common throughout China. It refers, "to the estimated sixty-one million offspring of migrant workers who grow up separated from their parents, or one in five of all Chinese youth" (p. 34). Roberts helpfully allows the weight of this reality to be felt by the reader. His

point is to put a solemn face and torn family to the statistic of millions of migrant workers.

Among migrant workers, families are not only broken by divorce, but by division. As Roberts notes, "most of the children of migrants, will see [their] mother and father only once or twice a year, during the rare leave they get from whatever factory, construction site, or restaurant kitchen employs them" (p. 38). China's economic development since 1949 is a marvel that economists will endlessly study, but Roberts' work is more than an economic analysis. It is an enlightening look at the vile cost by which economic development has come: the destruction of millions of families.

As I read *The Myth of Chinese Capitalism*, my mind was flooded with faces of students and friends I know and love in China who fit into the category of migrant worker or left-behind child. After reading this book, I will never hear someone say, "My parents worked in a factory as I was growing up," the same way again.

Perhaps more than he knows, with this book Roberts puts his finger on a deep-rooted evil that is far more theological than it is economic. Discord within a family is not rooted in economic disparity but is an effect of the fall. At the fall, separation was introduced not only between man and God, but between men, and particularly within a family. Nevertheless, it is with this dark backdrop that the gospel and the church it creates has an opportunity to shine brighter than any diamond ever has.

Within the church, and particularly the church in China, migrant and manager can be united in something far greater than the pursuit of wealth. Within the church, all Christians, regardless of economic status, face a *hukou* dilemma. We have all lost our residency on this earth, but we have gained something far greater. We have gained a citizenship that is not bound by provincial borders, market trends, or political policies. We have gained a citizenship that can never be taken away because it has been granted by a good king.

Roberts did not help me gain this theological interpretation, but he did help color it in. I think of times in China when I sat around a table of pastors, some were educated at the best universities and others were one of the thirty-three million students whose meager education came from a rural boarding school (p. 46). Or I think of *liushouertong* friends who would share prayer requests and pray with the kids of big city elites over a canteen table. Those times were always encouraging, but now I see that they were miraculous.

**Conclusion**

So much of Dexter Robert's work, *The Myth of Chinese Capitalism*, is commendable. From his ability to bring clarity to the complicated Chinese economy to his helpful historical perspective, I highly recommend this book. However, perhaps the highest compliment I can give this book is that, from an unfamiliar economic model, he makes the migrant worker's experience familiar. In doing so, he helpfully exposes that the economic model, "that powered China's rise for decades…still today doesn't provide a fair chance for one-half of the people in whose name [the party] rules and is leaving them out of its grand visions for the future" (p. 198).

*Noah Samuels* (pseudonym) has lived in China for over a decade pastoring and working alongside local churches.

## ChinaSource Perspective

# No Ordinary People

*By Kerry Schottelkorb*

Image credit: A friend of ChinaSource.

*There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal. Nations, cultures, arts, civilizations—these are mortal, and their life is to ours as the life of a gnat. But it is immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub and exploit—immortal horrors or everlasting splendors. This does not mean that we are to be perpetually solemn. We must play. But our merriment must be of that kind (and it is, in fact, the merriest kind) which exists between people who have, from the outset, taken each other seriously—no flippancy, no superiority, no presumption.* —C.S. Lewis, *The Weight of Glory*

In this issue of the *ChinaSource Quarterly (CSQ),* the writers have consistently painted a picture of China's migrant workers, those "immortals" who are relentlessly loved and pursued by the God who created them and have a divine right to hear and see the gospel of Jesus Christ proclaimed and lived out, walking in community with his followers; becoming “everlasting splendors.”

We are introduced to "the entrenched *hukou* system [which,] along with the opportunities it either afforded or excluded, had created—or perhaps revealed—a class-based society."[1] We learn about the urban/rural divide and the considerable life and systemic social barriers migrants have and are facing.

The impact is staggering:

- Over a thirty-year period starting with “the economic reform era [which] began in 1979 under Deng Xiaoping...300 million villagers had left their homes in search of a piece of China’s growing economic pie, fueling the engine of the world’s hottest economy.”[2]

- “There are still 280 million migrant workers, the majority of whom flow into China’s second- and third-tier cities.”[3]

- There are an “estimated sixty-one million offspring of migrant workers who grow up separated from their parents, or one in five of all Chinese youth.” These *liushouertong*, left-behind children, come from families “not only broken by divorce, but by division,” as “most of the children of migrants will see [their] mother and father only once or twice a year, during the rare leave they get from whatever factory, construction site, or restaurant kitchen employs them.”[4]

The composite of this *Quarterly* takes us much further than the painful results of the *hukou* system. You will find no hand wringing and minimal finger pointing here. We are privileged to be introduced to men, women, and children who have experienced, and continue to experience, crushing loss through separation and discrimination. We hear their stories of perseverance, courage, and transformation in Christ.

I was also deeply moved by the writers whose calling is based on love and sustained by the grace of God, those who work through the body of Christ in China and see that China's "'floating population'—is one of the best vehicles in the world today for fulfilling Christ's global mandate."[5] The church is at its best when it has the heart of compassion that Jesus expressed when he saw the crowds who were "harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd" (Matthew 9:36). This is especially true when that heart of compassion leads to friendship and community in Christ.

Brennan Manning wrote in *Ruthless Trust: The Ragamuffin's Path to God*, "The litmus test of our love for God is our love of neighbor." As you read this issue of *CSQ*, note the commitment the authors have to the ministry of incarnation, as indicated by their calling to their migrant friends whom they want to get to know, love, respect, and honor; as C.S. Lewis said: "No flippancy, no superiority, no presumption."

As I read, I kept thinking about a portion of "The Lausanne Covenant" faith statement that states: "World evangelization requires the whole church to take the whole gospel to the whole world." As you dive deeply into these articles, you will be encouraged that this powerful, eternal dynamic is being lived out mightily, one precious life at a time.

*Rev. Kerry Schottelkorb is the president of ChinaSource.*

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[1]See "The Struggles and Strengths of China's Migrant Workers" by Reggie Reimer.
[2]See "Reflections from a Foreign Friend: My Years with China's Migrants" by Reggie Reimer.
[3]See "Thinking about Multiplying Migrant Worker Churches in Urbanizing China" by Mark Chu.
[4]See "The Factory, the Family, the Future" by Noah Samuels.
[5]See "Reflections" by Reimer.

## ChinaSource Publications

**ChinaSource Blog**
A platform where China ministry practitioners and experienced China-watchers offer timely analysis and insight on current issues relating to the church in China. Posts feature voices from those inside and outside China.

**ZGBriefs**
For those who want and need to keep up on what is happening in China, we monitor more than 50 different news sources and curate the most relevant and interesting stories out of China each week.

**ChinaSource Quarterly**
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