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Perspectives and analysis for those who serve China

# China SOURCE



Graham Cousins

China's entry into the World Trade Organization means that more foreign companies will be players in its economy.

## Into the Marketplace

*Glenys Goulstone*

**C**an top executives in multinational companies offer meaningful Christian service despite the demands of their jobs? Can a walnut farmer use his occupation as a platform for witness? Is it possible for foreign teachers to witness to their faith with their students? Each of these questions can be answered with a resounding “yes.” An executive in the telecommunications industry organized shipments of textbooks from wealthy schools on the coast to underdeveloped areas in the far west of China. He and his team did this with an openly Christian motive that was understood and respected by the Chinese authorities. For a Christian professional working in a remote region of China, walnut farming provided unique opportunities to disciple young men from a people group usually resistant to the gospel. “Many students come privately with questions now that they know I am a Christian,” shares a foreign teacher at a university. “God has been so good in allowing me to develop friendships. One student, a ‘very communist’ girl, had no interest in spiritual things at first. Now it’s wonderful to see a softening process going on in her life. A year and

a half ago her parents became Christians. Now she herself confesses to be a Christian.”

For Christians with marketable skills and servant hearts, China is a land of opportunity as never before. There are thousands of openings in education, business, tourism, health care, childcare, agriculture and development work. Throughout China, from the poor, arid reaches of the northwest to the mega-cities of the prosperous east, Chinese institutions and companies are

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eager to benefit from the expertise of foreign professionals. This is one area in which expatriates—especially overseas Chinese—are not only welcomed, but are actively sought after. Unrealized potential exists for Christians to impact strategic sectors in China’s burgeoning marketplace.

English teachers head the “wish list” of every Chinese. Besides the state school system, opportunities now abound in private education from night classes to rich prep schools for children of the elite. Hotels, trading companies, even government offices seek native English speakers to

train their staff. China's entry into the World Trade Organization means that more foreign companies will be players in its economy, and a significant rise in the number and variety of jobs available to outsiders in the Chinese marketplace can be expected. Since early 2000, the government has been strongly pushing its policy of "opening up the west" in order to introduce more resources to China's less-developed inland regions. This also will mean foreign firms and development organizations will be welcomed into more areas than before, bringing with them much-needed capital and skilled manpower.

Openings in medical work, social work and rural development are multiplying. Some charitable organizations have been able to access more sensitive

relationships. Eventually other members of his team with more fluent language abilities had the opportunity to explain the gospel to this suffering family. The woman accepted Christ shortly before she died, and her son is now close to believing. This family belongs to a people group of over a million in which there are probably fewer than 200 believers.

### Team Support

China is not a place for lone rangers. Chinese society and culture value relationships and networking. Belonging to a known and trusted group puts a person ahead in relationship building. Unconnected individuals are vulnerable to greater difficulties and misunderstandings in their dealings with Chinese institutions and authori-

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those who learn of a suitable job in a city in which they already have Chinese friends. Others follow a sense of guidance, are drawn to a particular locale, find their niche and have a very positive experience. Some development workers and business executives may feel that closely relating to a Christian organization would be inappropriate for their roles. Yet others, perhaps employees of a big corporation, may be dispatched to China without having the chance to link up with a suitable Christian agency for pastoral care.

In most cases, the time and effort invested in becoming part of an agency is well spent. As with any relationship, there are benefits and responsibilities. The advantages of fellowship and networking are great as is the value of having experienced mentors and pastoral visitors. However, being part of a local group for fellowship will probably necessitate regular meetings, and making friends with other foreigners can absorb time and energy. This may mean less time is available for friendships with Chinese people. Many agencies hold annual conferences as a time of fellowship and training. Help with logistics, such as travel arrangements to, from and within China and freight handling, is another plus. Christian resources that are useful in helping Chinese friends may be more easily obtained when one belongs to a wider network through which these resources can be accessed. These types of services must be paid for in some way, and salaries earned in China may not cover all of a professional's costs. Thus, the issue of support-raising deters some people from joining an agency. However, they may find that the love and prayers that follow financial support strengthen their hands immeasurably.

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areas by pursuing appropriate development platforms. Examples of such platforms are primary education in rural areas (building schools and providing classroom resources), crop development, reforestation, anti-drug programs, vocational training and community health education. Orphanages and child welfare centers are now more likely to invite foreigners to participate in their work, as are institutions for the handicapped and elderly. A development worker, although unable to speak much of the local language, befriended a family whose mother was seriously ill. Through hospital visits and gifts of medicine, this Christian and his family built a close re-

lationship. Eventually other members of his team with more fluent language abilities had the opportunity to explain the gospel to this suffering family. The woman accepted Christ shortly before she died, and her son is now close to believing. This family belongs to a people group of over a million in which there are probably fewer than 200 believers.

ties. In the early days of reform and opening up, foreigners did not often function in organized groups. As time went by, agencies and organizations were established to provide administrative and pastoral support. A large number of these agencies and organizations continue to operate in China today, each with their particular ethos, goals and platforms. They play an important part in recruiting personnel, orienting newcomers and helping to facilitate language studies. In many cases agencies offer fellowship and mentoring, vital links to home countries and in-service training.

However, some professionals choose to operate independently. There are

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Building agency ties takes patience and effort. Agencies require a certain level of screening, preparation and support-raising, thus the time of departure may be delayed. For those in a hurry to get started, such delay may be impractical or unacceptable. On the other hand, operating solo also has its negatives. Privacy is a rare luxury in China, and being under much surveillance can be an unexpected irritant. Proper orientation and the reassurance of having colleagues nearby is more possible when linked to an agency, and may help a newcomer deal better with this unfamiliar sense of being constantly watched—even if by friendly eyes.

Isolation and overwork are common risks for dedicated professionals that can lead to depression and relational problems. Lack of fellowship may lead to a professional's faith becoming shipwrecked thus destroying his or her Christian testimony. Individuals or families who chose to be on their own should ensure that mechanisms are in place that will provide accountability and prayer support. One of the first steps for each individual or family desiring to enter the marketplace in China should be weighing the pros and cons of being part of an organization or of going it alone.

### Team Players

What kinds of people survive and thrive in China? Experience shows that they need to be clearly called and well equipped with the right blend of humility, commitment, flexibility and faith. Christian professionals should be well prepared professionally and spiritually and faithfully supported. They should recognize that patient hard work is required to succeed in language study and cultural adaptation. They need to be single-minded but team oriented both in terms of the fellowship they are part of back home and the Christian group they may join in-country. Before embarking on a



Graham Cousens

## Professionals working in China are there as marketplace Christians.

challenging role overseas, their fruitfulness as witnesses in the workplace should be proven at home.

Selection and appointment of professionals for China service is a key factor in their ultimate success. Recruiters from an agency with a demonstrated track record in placing and supporting workers in country and with first-hand knowledge of the situation on the ground are best able to screen and prepare newcomers. They are also qualified to advise concerning professional requirements, spiritual qualities and placement options. Various personal factors on the candidate's part, such as location preferred, professional qualifications, spiritual gifting or people group interest, will affect the agency-candidate match. Health, family, children's education and language-learning issues should also be taken into account.

Professionals in their early twenties right up to the late sixties are welcome. Members of each generation have their own unique and valuable contributions to make. Provided there are no health or family concerns, older people can be wonderful additions to a team. Not only do they have professional and spiritual maturity, they can also become wonderful surrogate grandparents to younger families!

### Marketplace Friendships

University leaders and local Party officials invited a company executive to a banquet. During the conversation, one Chinese host commented that the reason for a certain country's backwardness was "religion." The Christian guest then quietly shared that, by contrast, Christian values in Western societies had fostered progress and development. Compassion for the underprivileged, justice in the face of exploitation, vigorous scientific research and professional integrity had contributed much to industrial and social advance. The conversation stopped abruptly and the subject was changed; nevertheless, who knows what seeds of interest

might have been sown in the hearts of listeners at that table.

On another occasion, a foreign affairs official plainly asked the invited guests, "Do you think God can be known personally? I used to think questions about God to be foolish, but now I just wonder if there is anything to it." This man's closest colleague had recently accepted Christ, and one of the foreign guests knew the questioner well enough to follow up immediately with the loan of a well-chosen Christian book.

Professionals working in China are there as marketplace Christians. They are accepted and respected as they rub shoulders with their Chinese colleagues. There is nothing undercover or dishonest about what they are doing; rather, they give of their time and skills in a spirit of friendship and service. But what of their impact for Christ? Just as lay Christians in open countries are able to witness through their lifestyle and relationships, so professionals in China are able to watch God open up doors of friendship and give special opportunities for faith sharing. Chinese friends will be curious and receptive to a Christian witness, but at the same time may have serious misconceptions due to atheis-



# Mission in Practice:

## Minding your Es, Ps, and Rs

*A Personal Reflection*  
by Sharyl Corrado

**W**hile the author's reflections are based on observations she made in Russia, countries of the former Soviet Union and of East Central Europe, there are parallels for those serving in China. In the future, should China allow expatriates greater access to the country, her insights would be even more pertinent.—Editor

### Emotionals

In three years of living in Russia, as well as traveling in East Central Europe and the former Soviet Union, it has been easy to view Christian missionaries on a continuum, from “emotionals” on one end to “professionals” on the other. When the Soviet bloc was just opening up, the majority of missionaries I met tended more toward the emotional end. These I refer to as “Es”. Es were the first to arrive and make their home in the newly opened countries. They were excited about the deep spiritual hunger and made the most of the unexpected opportunities. Desiring to follow the Lord's call, they felt it was wrong to stay home when so many people longed for the Gospel. At their large, well-advertised evangelistic events, thousands heard the Gospel for the first time.

While God used these Es in mighty ways, patterns emerged over time causing trouble. Often Es had minimal theological training, little knowledge of language and culture, and few skills in cross-cultural adaptation. Often working alone, they lacked accountability and supervision. Some fell into unhealthy romantic relationships with recent converts. Observing their lives, nationals became disillusioned with,



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rather than drawn toward, the Gospel. Lack of theological training left new Christians confused while cultural insensitivity led to Western-style churches with little hope for long-term sustainability under national leadership. Es often burned out quickly or left their ministry for personal or financial reasons, leaving new Christians to fend for themselves.

### Professionals

While this was going on—especially during those first few years after the Soviet bloc opened up—respectable, traditional mission agencies were steadily preparing what I refer to as professional or “P” missionaries. These organizations had solid reputations in missiology and decades of experience sending missionaries worldwide. Their missionary candidates completed a rigorous training process with theological education, formal language school, training in cross-cultural adaptation and a lengthy period of deputation. Specialists helped them prepare budgets allowing them to live comfortably, provide quality schooling for their children, rent or buy quality facilities and supplies for their ministry and travel to necessary conferences and training opportunities, as well as periodic visits to family and supporting churches. Their

budgets included valuable training materials, such as the *East-West Church & Ministry Report*, allowing them access to the latest developments and resources available and helping them form strategic partnerships in crucial areas. Seldom were they allowed to leave for their destination without full financial support pledged or even received. They often were sent in teams, providing fellowship and accountability. Once in country, “pastors to missionaries” visited caring for their emotional and spiritual needs. These missionaries were indeed professionals, and while it took longer for them to arrive and get settled, it appeared that they were the answer to the problems posed by Es.

Despite their training and knowledge, over time, problems have emerged in the lives and ministries of Ps as well. Often full agendas with strategic plans leave little time for relationships with neighbors or even church members. Language learning is put to the side or viewed as a necessary evil that takes time away from vital ministry. Ps sometimes enroll in highly structured language courses taught by specialists from completely different cultural backgrounds which results in frustration. While Ps feel their classes are poorly taught, the teachers do not understand why their students dislike

their well-prepared lessons. It is not uncommon for Ps to spend their first year in language learning, beginning “ministry” later.

After struggling through the language-learning process, or giving up and working through a translator, Ps face another obstacle: determining what and how to teach nationals. Common complaints are that national Christians are not honest about their own needs, refuse to provide constructive feedback and take little initiative in the ministry preferring foreigners to remain in positions of leadership. I remember my own frustration when told by a young Christian, “Why should I lead a Bible study? I am a fulltime student, hold a part-time job and on weekends travel five hours each way to the family *dacha* to plant potatoes for the winter. You get paid by Christians in America to lead Bible studies!”

### Relationals

Is there a solution to these legitimate concerns? While new problems will arise, and Satan will do everything in his power to disrupt ministries, every once in a while I observed foreign missionaries with a bond to the local people that many others lacked. I will call these relational or “R” missionaries. To be an R is not something that replaces E or P tendencies. Indeed, proper training can provide valuable insights and there are legitimate reasons to feel strong emotions.

The promises of Christ are exciting: forgiveness of sins and eternity in paradise, the Holy Spirit in our lives, victory over the Evil One! But neither emotion nor professionalism alone leads to success. Relationships over time bring about not only a change in beliefs, but also in values and priorities that spring from personal conviction rather than the expectations of others. It is in relationships, not lectures, sermons or literature, that people make the connections between head and heart—between what they learn and how they live. It is in relationships that issues surface and can be addressed: fear, insecurity, sin, guilt, family struggles, pov-

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tic, anti-religious indoctrination. While it is important to counteract these false impressions, above all it is a privilege to discuss spiritual issues with seekers after truth.

For some professionals, God will open opportunities for fellowship with Chinese brothers and sisters. Chinese speakers may worship at Three Self Churches and find spiritual refreshment. Where unregistered churches are concerned, non-Chinese expatriates probably should keep a distance from organized activities. Avoiding group gatherings does not, however, preclude informal contacts with individuals or families, and these can be mutually supportive and a beautiful testimony to the unity of Christ’s Body. In both the open churches and the house churches the situation varies enor-

## Ultimately, the goal of both the agency-linked and the independent worker is to be effective.

mously across the country; a good general rule is to proceed with caution, bearing in mind that often Chinese brothers and sisters must bear the consequences of the actions of outsiders. Overseas Chinese, being less visibly ‘foreign,’ may enjoy greater freedom in fellowship with Chinese but need to be sensitive to each situation and receive counsel from local leaders.

### Effective Players

Ultimately, the goal of both the agency-linked and the independent worker is to be effective. What do we mean by “effectiveness”? Let me offer a working definition. “Effectiveness” consists of:

- Professional excellence that conveys credibility and integrity to Chinese employers and colleagues. This stands as a strong non-verbal witness.
- Christian character expressed through moral, ethical and relational quality. This includes a healthy, active prayer life.
- The ability and desire to build

meaningful relationships through which the gospel can be commended and communicated.

### For A Time Such As This...

Dr. Samuel Ling observes, “many forces are competing to shape the 21st century Chinese mind.”<sup>1</sup> He draws attention to the resurgence of indigenous religions, pervasive materialism, anti-foreign nationalism and the media. These forces bear strongly on people pouring into the cities while urbanization is changing the face and soul of the nation. At the same time, because the majority of Chinese Christians live in rural areas, the Chinese church is not well equipped to reach these urban masses. By contrast, foreign Christian professionals are uniquely positioned to present Christ to this increasingly influential class of

city dwellers. Together with their support teams back home, they can have a powerful ministry in prayer. Through their loving Christian service on campuses, in the marketplace and in neighborhoods around them, God is at work.

Twenty years ago these doors of opportunity were just beginning to creak open, and foreign Christians kept an extremely low profile. Now the external social environment is vastly different and the internal heart condition of many Chinese is more receptive. The time is now—the harvest is ripe. May God raise up many humble servants to do His work at this moment in China’s history.

### END NOTE

1. “Putting Christianity on the Map for Chinese Intellectuals,” Samuel Ling. *ChinaSource*, vol. 1, no. 4, Winter, 1999, p 7.

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## Enamored by the Awakening GIANT?

### Maintaining the Integrity of the Gospel

Samuel Ling



China today is undergoing an unprecedented total transformation. She is a contradiction in terms: a communist dictatorship overseeing a capitalist economy. A socialist society only 25 years ago, today she is facing the rise of a new postmodern generation of young people. She also faces some fundamental options. What will be the core values of her worldview as she steps into the 21st century? Which ideas will guide her future?

From a Christian perspective, there seem to be four alternatives for China to choose from: (a) an angry, anti-foreign nationalism, (b) a resurgence of folk and native religions, (c) the pursuit of money and pleasure or (d) the Christian worldview. There is ample evidence for the first three. The influence of the Christian worldview is dependent on the sovereign grace of God and a strong presence of Christians in China, both mainland Chinese and Christians from overseas who live out the power of the kingdom as salt and light. As this is worked out in day-by-day living, differing parts of the church will have different roles. There are some things the non-Chinese church can do which the overseas Chinese church cannot do. The overseas Chinese church can do certain things that the non-Chinese church is unable to do.

Today, the church needs to commis-

sion and groom a new generation of middle-management “China experts” with China experience. These individuals must learn the language (an absolute must which is frequently neglected today), they should have a firm foundation placed by seminary training which believes in the inerrancy of Scripture, they must have much experience among the Chinese and perhaps a doctoral degree in Chinese history or intercultural studies. Such individuals do not grow on trees. We have to groom them.

However, as we groom these indi-

viduals, we must be certain that they hold to a strong, unqualified confidence in the Bible, the inerrant Word of God, and a high view of God, Scripture and the cross. More than anything else, what China needs in the 21st century is a clear message of the sound, complete gospel—not a watered-down version.

Timothy Richard, the colorful 19th century Welsh missionary to China, had a very enlightened view of missions. As a student in Haverfordshire

in England, he wanted his seminary to offer Asian languages and history as preparation for missionary work. Through direct involvement in disaster relief in the 1870s, he saw that education was China’s greatest need. He dialogued with Confucian and Buddhist scholars and sincerely befriended them. He introduced science, history and other branches of Western learning to China’s brightest minds. In 1895, he hired Liang Qichao to be his secretary; Liang was a leader in the 1890s who belonged to the younger generation of radical scholars who

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called upon the Emperor to institute a constitutional monarchy. Richard translated dozens of books and booklets into Chinese including a 19th century history of Europe. He had a wonderful vision of God’s providence and His call to provide for his fellowmen.

As Richard was busy translating books into Chinese and encouraging the radical reformers of China in the 1890s, Abraham Kuyper, Holland’s prime minister and founder of the



Free University of Amsterdam, addressed Princeton University. Kuyper, a theologian in his own right, reminded the church in America never to forget that the primary battle in history will always be an antithesis between truth and error, God-centered culture and man-centered culture. Richard and his fellow reformer-missionaries, some of the most brilliant minds whom the church in England and America sent to China, became Universalists by the 1910s. They no longer believed in the exclusive claims of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Richard's grand vision proclaimed:

I don't believe the Mohammedans are unchristian in their worship of one true God instead of idols. I don't believe that the high moral teaching of any religion is devilish and unchristian. Christianity has the power of assimilating all that is good in other religions. We come here to counteract their false teachings and to fill up what is wanting just as Christ came not to destroy but to fulfill.<sup>1</sup>

Richard did not sail from Britain as a liberal or Universalist. He was a zealous evangelical, burning with the fire of revival. What happened? What led to this downward spiral of doctrinal belief and vigilance? Was it the fact that he was enamored with Buddhism? No, I think not. He changed because he was enamored with the sleeping, but awakening, giant—China. Interacting with her most brilliant minds, her scholars and intellectuals, he was not alert enough to realize his own need to keep his doctrinal vigilance.

Richard had a vision of China opening up—a vision that we see being fulfilled today in the year 2000. Thousands of English teachers and students are learning from Western English teachers in China's universities. "Cultural Christians" and other "Scholars in Mainland China Studying Christianity" are eager for an in-depth understanding of what the Christian faith can do for China. Yet, the slide toward universalism is a real possibility—now, even as it was back then.

As we serve in China, we cannot afford to offer her people a diluted version of the Word of God. There are non-negotiables we must adhere to.

1. We must proclaim a God who is

"infinite, eternal and unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth," not a God who is so open and vulnerable to our fragile existence that our surprises are God's surprises too.<sup>2</sup> Broken hearts and lives need a strong Savior not just a sympathetic friend who will walk with them.

2. We must make the claim that Scripture is the divine proclamation of God, not just a document which witnesses to and records an existential en-

counter that allows it to become the Word of God.<sup>3</sup> (The latter is a view currently very popular among American and Chinese evangelical theologians.)

3. We must proclaim the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ as propitiation for the sins of men and women, not just as therapy for broken lives. The gospel has therapeutic powers and fruits—but therapy is not the gospel!

4. We must not forget that God has revealed himself through (a) the things which were created, and (b) his work in human hearts. This is general revelation. Man's culture, art, philosophy and religion are not general revelation; they are man's responses to God's revelation and are subject to error and idol-building. God may work through man's culture and graciously provide man with redemptive analogies that help him to bridge the gap in his understanding of God; however, these are not part of God's general revelation.

5. We must affirm that the church's mission in China is threefold: (a) evangelization (the conversion of men, women and children; (b) the maturing of the church (a better terminology in my view than indigenization or contextualization); and (c) ultimately, the church transforming the society and culture around her, and becoming a missionary-sending church. The

work of English teachers and other professionals in China contribute in a very valuable way to all three aspects of the goal. But we must not do one at the expense of another.

Today we are sending English teachers, language students, medical professionals and businessmen to China in the name of Christ. We, too, are enamored by the awakening giant—except this time, the giant has awakened. China is willing to receive English teachers for her universities and

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schools; she is open to religious study programs at universities; she accepts business people from the West; she allows medical professionals to provide teaching and assistance. As Christians, we need to proceed in reaching China in a spirit of friendship, servanthood and dignity. We should endeavor to be a blessing and friend to China without jeopardizing the safety of the church of Jesus Christ in that land. There are many avenues of involvement for us in this great country and many ways in which we can offer to serve China. But as we serve, we must not—we *cannot* afford to offer China a watered-down version of the Word of God.

#### END NOTES

1. Timothy Richard to Baynes, Shansi, May 18, 1894; quoted in Rita Therese Johnson (Sister M. Virginia Therese, MM.), *Timothy Richard's Theory of Christian Missions to the Non-Christian World*, Ph.D. dissertation, St. John's University, Jamaica, New York, 1966, pp. 70-71.

2. Pinnock, Clark, "Systematic Theology," in *The Openness of God*, InterVarsity Press, 1995, p. 114. Gregory Boyd has joined the chorus in offering that the future is open to God as well as to humans. This "openness of God" theology is portraying a God who is finite.

3. Barth, Karl, *Epistle to the Romans*, 1919.

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# Reverse Culture Shock:

## When Your Body is Home, But Your Mind Isn't

Wayne Martindale

**C**oming Home Crazy—the apt title of Bill Holms' witty, irreverent, yet insightful book on returning from China—describes how many feel after returning from China, even after only a short period. My wife and I had taught in China a mere three months before leaving on 45 minute's notice in the wake of the June 4th, 1989, Tiananmen tragedy. Even with a week in Hong Kong and another in Japan with understanding friends, it still took us six months to adjust back to American culture. Why couldn't we feel at home when we had the same jobs, the same house, the same church and the same friends as before leaving? The simple answer was: we were not the same.

Our reactions to our home culture were classic. Americans were overweight (we had lost 20 pounds each—although they have now come back with a vengeance); everything was too big and too overdone—from scores of cereals in the store to lavish furnishings in the simplest home. It all seemed a bit obscene and very unfair that we had so much and our new Chinese friends so little.

To make matters worse, most conversations about this life-changing experience lasted about 30 seconds: “Were you in any danger?” “No, we felt very safe.” “Great, glad you're back. So long.” There were actually many opportunities over the months, and even years, to speak in detail which helped a great deal. Nevertheless, Americans on the run, without having a scheduled event to focus attention, don't have much time for spontaneous, in-depth conversation. Still, we were bursting at the seams with stories and excitement over new friends as well as frustration over the Chinese government's recent brutality in Tiananmen Square.

Our values had changed. For the first time in our lives, every day we had been meeting people who wanted to

talk about ultimate issues, questions of faith. We had gotten along just fine living from the contents of six suitcases—one third of that being books. Now, we were considering a possible career change and down-sizing our house. We were ready to talk and we wondered how others could be so uninterested in half the world's population. Didn't they understand how little the rest of the world had? Why weren't our neighbors interested in eternal values?

Of course, our expectations were unrealistic. It is hard to relate to another person's experience with the same understanding or enthusiasm. But what seems so obvious now, was a source of frustration then. We were expecting and had prepared for culture shock, but no one even hinted at the often more traumatic experience of reverse culture shock. Even so, everyone will go through it, just as surely as everyone goes through an initial culture shock—even when prepared for it. However, knowing about it can lessen its intensity, and actively processing the experience can both shorten the unpleasant phase and maximize the benefits. Like all tough times, it is a prime

### What you should know about reverse culture shock

#### Symptoms

- Anger
- Sense of injustice at abundance
- Discomfort in old routines
- Priorities of others seem wrong
- Feeling that no one, or too few, understand you
- No one cares about your experience beyond surface niceties
- Depression
- Shock that things cost so much (cheaper to live in China)

#### Causes

- Heightened spiritual focus while abroad
- Feeling of accomplishment; doing something important and valued
- Celebrity status—in many settings you stand out just by looking different and everyone is curious; now you are anonymous
- You were the expert, even if only on American daily life
- Changed values (spiritually, materially, culturally—you have moved from a relational culture to a more task oriented one)
- Slower pace abroad



- A dizzying array of new tasks, like driving in fast traffic, using a computer, shopping with debit card

#### What Helps

- A supportive network of friends, family and church
- Talking—in varied formats from informal to small group to lecture/sermon
- Teaching others what you have learned (takes work)
- Being patient—it will take a minimum of 2-3 months to adjust (up to 6 is not unusual)
- Having a plan, staying engaged, having some structure in your life
- Maintaining spiritual focus; reading and studying Scripture, praying
- Meeting (or at least phoning or emailing) with others who have had similar experiences
- Prayer from those who know you



time for spiritual growth and character development. It should be embraced.

Included here are the three main things to know about reverse culture shock: the symptoms, the causes, and what helps in coping and learning. Not all of the items will apply to every case, but each is common. Ironically, the more effective a person's adjustment to the foreign culture and the more positive the experience, the more intense the adjustment back.

Some individuals may need special care. Experiences that take us out of our comfort zones can unleash dragons within, both psychological and spiritual, calling for professional counseling in some cases. Some may have

returned from situations involving intense spiritual warfare in which cases healing prayer may be more appropriate. Seek the blessing and ministry of your church. If you are not asked to share your experience, take the initiative in calling the pastor or other church leaders. Above all, spend much time in prayer, especially in thanksgiving.

**Note:** Special thanks to Ardath Smith, counselor to returning teachers for English Language Institute, for many valuable insights.

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Continued from page 5

erty, addictions. It is in authentic relationships that lectures, sermons and literature can be applied gently to the very real—not theoretical—issues of everyday life. I do not mean at all to downgrade theological education, biblically based preaching or the production of culturally relevant, doctrinally sound literature. But these tasks must be based on relational knowledge of relevant issues rather than a theoretical knowledge ABOUT the people or situation addressed.

One way to build relationships is to come in not as teachers, but as learners. While teachers are respected and even obeyed in many Slavic and East European cultures, they are also viewed as unapproachable and distant. This is evident in the shock and discomfort many Russians feel, for example, when asked by unassuming American teachers to call them by their first names and to use the informal rather than formal form of "you." Learners, on the other hand, are vulnerable, are to be cared for, and may be approached without fear. The result is a sharing of problems and solutions rather than a one-sided, teacher-pupil relationship. Nationals are more willing to address hindrances to ministry if they are asked regularly for advice about language, culture and daily life. Their self-worth is reinforced when they are not simply recipients of Western expertise and charity, but contributors to the ministry with knowledge and experience that is valued.

Depending on situation and personality, this approach can take many shapes and forms. While there is no one correct method—and my personal experiences are not applicable for all—I believe we should allow personal relationships to humanize and to energize our emotional and professional approaches to the Great Commission.

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- Healing prayer and/or counseling in special cases
- Reading Peter Jordan's book (see below) before even leaving for China—definitely before coming back
- Being conscious of the need for Christ to increase and yourself to decrease (we often unconsciously want to be front and center with our new knowledge and experience)
- Keeping your expectations of others low; what you want to share and others want to hear may be very different
- Recognizing that having to give time to stressful activities like finding a house or job or deciding on a school will add to the shock and adjustment time

- Not making life-changing decisions until you have had time to adjust
- Recalling and using your cross-cultural training to deal with reverse culture shock
- Adopting the stance of observer, not of a judge; thinking about what you see
- Being realistic about what you can change in your home culture—but do not give up the beneficial perspective you have gained—that of seeing your country through Chinese eyes
- Remembering that culture shock faded with time—reverse culture shock will also.

## Further Reading

Peter Jordan. *Re-Entry: Making the Transition from Missions to Life at Home*. Seattle, WA: YWAM Publishing, 1992. Very readable, Christian perspective.

Elisabeth Marx. *Breaking Through Culture Shock: What You Need to Succeed in International Business*. London: Cambridge University Press/Nicholas Brealey Publishing, 1999. ISBN 1-85788-220-2. A current treatment of culture shock for those who want a helpful resource on the front end. As the title shows, the primary audience is business, but much applies to professionals in any field.

The Peace Corps web site has good, manageable treatments of Reverse Culture Shock. <http://www.peacecorps.gov/rpcv/careertrack/REENT/rentwha.html>

Marcia D. Miller. "Reflections on Reentry after Teaching in China." *Occasional Papers in Intercultural Learning*, No. 14 (December 1988). An excellent account of adjustment after an intensive, isolated, one-year teaching stint.

## Peoples of China

# Getting on Target

Jim Nickel

The door to China continues to open. While missionaries as such are not welcomed by the authorities, opportunities abound for qualified Christians to enter and work in China in a wide variety of fields. As churches outside China are able to break free from traditional approaches that do not fit the current situation in China, some very effective ministry strategies are developing.

A critical component of many of these strategies is the targeting of one or more specific groups of people. Hundreds of distinct unreached people groups have been identified, and an increasing number of churches and servant ministries are focusing their efforts upon reaching one or more of them with the gospel. For this we praise God. What is being done needs to be continued and expanded.

However, there is an additional challenge that needs to be faced. Most of the information being disseminated about unreached peoples in China focuses only on the minorities. This is due in large part to the fact that the peoples of China have been examined almost exclusively through an ethnolinguistic paradigms.<sup>1</sup> This, and the fact that the church has grown at an amazing pace in parts of China over the past 50 years, has led to the popular misconception that most of the population of China should be considered reached.<sup>2</sup>

I refer here to the Han Chinese, the majority population of China, which comprises over 92% of the population—close to 1.2 billion people. The unreached peoples among them are not as easily identified as those among the minorities, but they are no less real. Simple logic suggests their existence. The approximately 100 million people

classified as minorities in China are comprised of over 400 distinct ethnolinguistic groups. Would we not expect to find that a bloc of humanity ten times as large has at least that many

Ken Benintendi



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## The peoples of China speak a multitude

subgroups within it

Even from an ethnolinguistic point of view, a careful study of the Han peoples of China reveals that they are not one people group, but many. The peoples of China speak a multitude of diverse languages and dialects. While a common written script creates a certain level of commonality, there are significant differences in the speech patterns of various sub-groups of the Han, as well as many diverse cultural practices. These differences are deeply rooted in different ethnic backgrounds.

In recent years Beijing-style Mandarin Chinese (called *putonghua*) has been taught throughout China, and most of the population of China can understand it. The government has

worked hard to unify the country, and these efforts have resulted in some homogenization of the population. However, for many Chinese, their local dialect is still their heart language, and their local customs are more precious to them than those lately imported from afar. It is folly to ignore this reality if we are serious about reaching all the peoples of China with the gospel.

More than twenty years ago David Liao, a Christian leader of Hakka descent, wrote a book about his people

entitled *The Unreached, Resistant or Neglected?* In the book he argued convincingly that the Hakka people, who had been classified as resistant to the gospel, had actually been neglected, as few missionaries had bothered to learn their language and culture. Since the Hakka are classified as Han Chinese and most are fluent in Mandarin, missionaries assumed that they had largely been assimilated into the majority culture. But the Hakka people are fiercely proud of their heritage, and it has only been since missionaries learned their language and presented the gospel in culturally appropriate ways that any real progress has been made in their evangelization.

In this case, the barrier to the

spread of the gospel was not one of understanding, but of acceptance. This appears to be the case in many segments of the Han population of China. The gospel may be heard or read with a certain measure of understanding, but it comes to the people in such a foreign manner that they do not see it as having any relevance to their lives.

As important as ethnolinguistic differences can be, it is equally important that we consider other ways of defining unreached people groups. If we are to

effective discipling strategies.

As the demographics of the church in China today are analyzed, it is evident that the church is growing rapidly among some segments of the population, but not in others. Why is that? It is clear that there are some major barriers to the flow of the gospel from one group to another within China.

What is not clear is exactly what those barriers are, and what can be done to overcome them.

Major new research efforts focused

reaching China with the gospel. Targeted evangelism and church planting strategies have repeatedly been demonstrated to be more effective than generalized approaches.

While such research efforts are going on, existing China ministry efforts need to be evaluated and new China ministry efforts need to be developed in light of what we do know. For example, we know that the church in China is largely a rural church, yet the country is rapidly urbanizing.

How can we refocus our efforts so as to become more effective in reaching the cities of China with the gospel?<sup>3</sup>

As is evident from the number of questions raised in this article, this author does not claim to have all—or even very many of—the answers to the challenges facing us in identifying and reaching the peoples of China. We at ChinaSource welcome input from any and all who have something to contribute to this discussion. The task before us is huge; we must pool our best thinking and resources as we confront it, and then acknowledge that it will only be by the grace and power of God that we will be able to complete it.

#### END NOTES

1. The AD2000 Adoption Guidance Program answers the question "What is a People Group" in this way: "A people is a significantly large ethnic or sociological grouping of individuals who perceive themselves to have a common affinity for one another. For evangelistic purposes, it is the largest group within which the gospel can spread without encountering barriers of understanding or acceptance. Although there are other types of people groupings, in the context of this program, the word people refers to ethnolinguistic people groups."

2. To be fair, it needs to be noted that the Han Chinese are now being included on preliminary lists of the Harvest Information System being circulated by researchers at the AD2000 and Beyond Movement, as well as others. This author deeply appreciates the responsiveness of these valiant laborers to his and others' input in recent years.

3. See the Summer 2000 issue of *ChinaSource* journal for more on this subject.

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Graham Cousens



## of diverse languages and dialects.

fully understand the challenge of the unreached in China, we must also consider what might be called sociologically-defined people groups. Generational differences in China today are very significant, as are educational levels and occupations. Defining people groups in sociological terms is not the favorite approach of those who want to track our progress in bringing closure to the task of world evangelization. Most people are part of several different sociologically-defined groups, making it impossible to count them only once (a necessary component of any tracking methodology). However, identifying and targeting such sociologically-defined people groups is absolutely essential to the development of

on the Han Chinese, similar to those already underway among the minorities, need to be undertaken. These efforts need to look at not only ethnolinguistic differences, but sociological and other kinds of differences as well. The questions that must be asked and answered, without the limitations imposed by unwarranted *a priori* assumptions, are:

- *What groups of people in China have yet to be effectively penetrated with the gospel?*
- *What are the barriers that must be overcome in order to reach them?*
- *How can these barriers be overcome?*

These are questions that can and should be asked not only by researchers, but by every Christian interested in



## Living Wisely in China

When Westerners come to China, how can they adapt to the Chinese culture? Many people immediately think of the language issue. Although language is crucial to inter-personal relationships and communication, it alone is not sufficient in dealing with Chinese people. Language is only the starting point for understanding the Chinese culture. Even a foreigner who has lived and worked in China may still have difficulty figuring it out. Following is an attempt to help one better understand Chinese culture and how to relate to Chinese people.

### *Taiji*: a conversation of hidden strength

Any morning, before the city is awakened by the business and noise of the day, look at the parks throughout China. You cannot miss the crowds of people working out—among them the most visible are the *Taiji* (*Taichi*) lovers. These people slowly, yet constantly and gracefully, change the positions of their arms and legs as they concentrate and breathe deeply. Some of their slow movements seem useless and one might wonder what purpose they serve. Yet, those who understand Chinese martial arts know of the strength hidden in *Taiji* whose principles are “apparent softness overtakes toughness” and “gentle but firm.”

To some extent, *Taiji* reflects the Chinese culture and its way of solving problems. No matter what changes the rest of the society has gone through during hundreds of years of history, *Taiji* remains exactly the same. Year after year, Chinese practice *Taiji* in the morning. Some principles drawn from *Taiji* have been gradually made known to society. These principles, that go beyond the physical fitness aspect, tell us that “the use of quietness overcomes motion,” “apparent softness overtakes toughness,” “apparent looseness outside, actual tightness inside,” “avoid tough hands but attack weak spots,” “surprise and win,” and “withheld strength may go unnoticed.”

Later, when people described these skills or ploys adapted by politicians, warlords, entrepreneurs or merchants to be the winners in their respective fields, they used the term *Quanshu* (clever stratagems for politics and business). *Quanshu* also has the meaning of hidden conflict as drawn from *Taiji*'s character of hidden strength. When two individuals are in an unannounced struggle, they are said to be “playing *Taiji*.” Chinese often rely on this non-verbal message to make themselves understood in the struggle to protect their interests. This way of dealing with others is not found in the West; nevertheless, it is at the core of Chinese

culture. Not knowing about it may be costly to the Westerner.

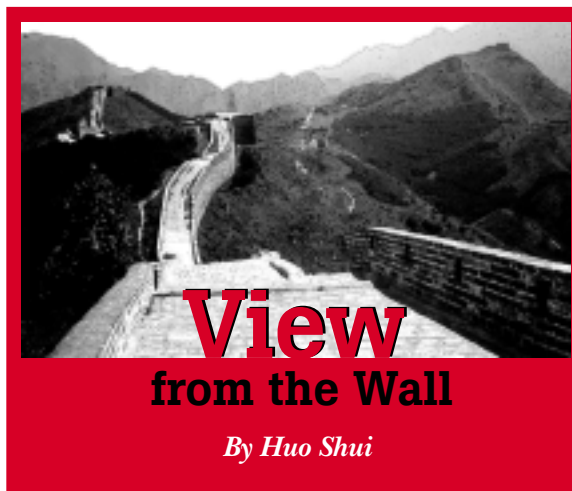
China continues to be in a technological growth period; it now boasts over ten million internet subscribers. Fashionable young people may care nothing about *Taiji* but admire basketball players like Jordan and Johnson; however, *Taiji* culture is still prevalent. When a Chinese responds to you slowly, you need patience. Practicing *Taiji* requires “inner strength.” “Inner strength” refers to the resilience that can absorb a punch as well as hit back, but in a pleasant manner. A fast-reacting person often finds himself having to change his mind; but one who restrains himself from making a quick response usually has well balanced ideas for decision-making. The individual using this type of thought process is referred to by the Chinese as a “master of calculation” and cunning. He will never strike up an argument with you nor clearly announce his intentions. He never forgets to smile—

but his smile is a bit mysterious. He does not necessarily have evil purposes in mind and cannot simply be labeled as a “good” or “bad person;” however, for self-protection he feels that “beating around the bush” is his only option. You may find that this person is more likely to be middle-aged and fits into a *Taiji* lovers category. This mental practice of *Taiji* is a part of Chinese wisdom; it follows the Chinese wherever they go.

### Eating and drinking: the passport to Chinese society

“Have you eaten yet?” used to be the most common greeting in China. This greeting has now faded from use. Eating, however, still enjoys unshakable status in Chinese culture. No other people of the world are more serious about eating, more focused on eating or more capable of getting the best out of eating. Over 2000 years ago Confucius said: “Never settle on an imperfect meal.” China gave birth to world famous cuisines including Sichuan, Cantonese, Shandong, and others. China also has MacDonalds, KFC and pizza. Wherever you go in China you will be impressed by the number of restaurant signs—even in poor backwoods areas. Likewise, Chinese restaurants are found in distant places.

Chinese love eating. Why? Eating in China is not just a simple personal activity; rather, it fits together the unrelated pieces of life. Eating is a cultural and social activity. Many events in life require a large get-together meal that is in accord with tradition, fosters the accomplishment of other activities and allows people to express their emotions. These events include Spring Festival celebrations, family or class reunions, weddings, funerals, admission to the Communist Party, promotions to leadership, asking for help, thanking others for help, opening a business, settling in a new home,



## View from the Wall

By Huo Shui

farewells, conflict resolutions, celebrating successes—and the list goes on. Anything can be an excuse to go out for dinner.

Reports say that several hundred billion Chinese *yuan* are spent on banquets in China each year. Restaurants have become a performing stage for people eager to achieve their ends. They display intimate feelings, cope with bosses, negotiate prices and resolve conflicts. Obviously, food is not the real issue for either the host or the guest. Refusing to “perform” on this stage means that many things one may want to see happen will not be accomplished. Not understanding the significance of eating in Chinese culture means you will miss a valuable shortcut to getting complicated things done in China.

Eating is also a means for friends to express friendship and gratitude. If you would like to expand your network of relationships rapidly, invite your friends to the neighborhood eateries for simple meals. Over time you will acquire a long list of people interacting with you. If you do not take initiatives or accept invitations, you may be misunderstood and thought difficult to relate to as a person. Remember, the most appropriate occasion to exchange information, improve communication, resolve conflicts and affirm friendships is always at the dinner table.

### ***Mian Zi* (face): the treasure that never wears out**

No one wants to be *diu ren* (embarrassed in front of people, a “lost person”); every individual has a sense of self-esteem. This human characteristic is extremely pronounced in Chinese culture; it has been observed to an extent that is beyond a Westerner’s imagination. For example, a Chinese may wrong you and be fully aware of his wrongdoing, but if you point this out to him or criticize him with another person present, he will desperately defend himself denying any offense. However, if the conversation takes place between just the two of you, he will readily ac-



### **Eating enjoys unshakable status in Chinese culture.**

cept your criticism. The facts you point out are the same, but his reaction is different due to the changed situation. The reason: *mian zi*. This comes out in other situations as well. For example, if you ask someone for help, few people will give you a negative answer; most will say: “Sure, no problem.” Is it really “no problem?” In actuality, there may be many problems, but the individual will not admit it. When you follow up on the issue, the individual will say, “Oh, this needs to be delayed a little bit. Please be patient, because....” Eventually, you will find that from the very beginning this person was unable to help you. Another common example is seen when friends go out for dinner together. When dinner is over, since they have not talked about who will pay for it, everyone will be fighting to pay the entire bill. Each one is afraid of being thought a tightwad.

A story goes that many years ago in Shanghai a man lived in the slums. He would go out on the street only after putting on his one decent jacket, combing and slicking back his hair, shining his shoes and spreading pork lard on his lips to pretend to be a wealthy man who had just enjoyed a

greasy meal. That’s what *mian zi* is. Today, similar incidents occur, only in more subtle ways. For example, some unemployed people actually “work” for *mian zi*. They leave home as usual in the morning as if they were going to work, but they do not end up at their previous workplaces but stay with friends or go to parks or cinemas to kill time.

When you invite friends over or to join you for an outing, you need to first examine each person’s special needs. How free is this person? Has he or she eaten yet? If expenses are involved, who will pay for them? You need to think these things through and not ask your friends for information. Even if you do, you will only get polite answers that do not reflect what is truly on their mind. Chinese deem it a virtue not to bother others with questions. Between friends and acquaintances it is harder to ask for a favor precisely because of the relationship.

### ***Zhong Yong*: the moderate way**

*Zhong Yong*, or “being moderate,” is the most essential principle for living in China and the primary principle that the Chinese subscribe to. What does it mean to “be moderate” in the Chinese context? Put simply, it means never going to extremes, never confirming things absolutely (always leave some margin or wiggle room), never pushing ahead to be first—yet avoiding being left behind. People may say they see things in black and white, but in reality they favor gray. Gray seems less risky and allows flexibility.

Five thousand years of Chinese tradition defies anyone who tries to fully understand it. While one need not fully grasp the meaning of these traditions, these four seemingly simple principles discussed above should be taken seriously. It is wise to deal with the Chinese in the Chinese way. If you are not convinced, try it your way—and see what happens!

*Huo Shui* is a former government political analyst who writes from outside China. Translation is by Ping Dong.

## Book Review

# People of the Hour

*The “Chinese” Way of Doing Things: Perspectives on American-Born Chinese and the Chinese Church in North America* by Samuel Ling with Clarence Cheuk. *China Horizon*, 1999, 229 pp. ISBN 1-892-63202-0, paperback. Order from Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, PO Box 817, Phillipsburg, NJ 08865; Ph 800.631.0094; Fax 908.859.2390. Cost: \$12.99 + S/H.

A review by John Peace

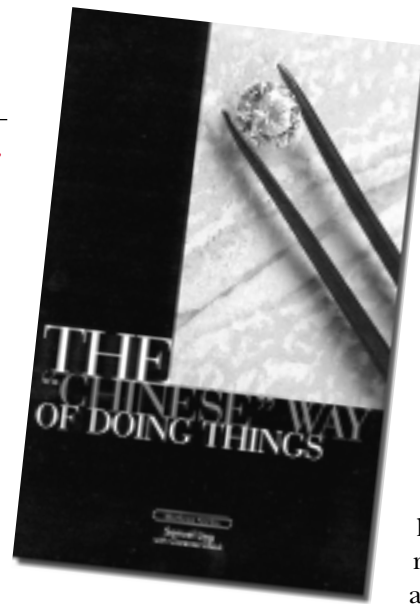
As Samuel Ling begins his book, he expresses his appreciation to Asian Americans who, over the past decade, have offered him critical suggestions for his writing. He states, “They have opened my eyes to the increasingly complex picture of the cultural milieu within which the twenty-first century Chinese church lives, moves and has her being.” In this volume Ling examines many of these complexities.

His book is divided into five sections. In the first section, he introduces the reader to representatives of various Chinese groupings in America. In the second, he examines the “perplexities” of Chinese history and culture, overseas Chinese communities, American society and culture and Chinese Christian communities in North America. Section three deals with the present state of ethnic Chinese placing American Chinese in global perspective. He highlights some of the differences between overseas-born and American-born Chinese and offers a bicultural profile of Chinese church ministry.

As he writes, Ling demonstrates that to some degree or another Chinese in North America are all influenced by

both Chinese and Western culture. To reach the complex needs of a very diverse people as well as of individuals who themselves reflect differing degrees of cultural assimilation, Chinese churches must know whence they have come, must understand where they are and must make plans for where they want to go. In a word, the church must take to heart the attitudes and suggestions of this book that are subtle, broad-minded yet profound. Simplistic notions and simple solutions will not work.

As he moves into section four, with great boldness, Ling asks searching questions about our current ways of doing things, challenges both overseas-born Chinese (OBCs) and American-born Chinese (ABCs) to change and adapt to one another and offers practical, hard-hitting suggestions for bi-cultural ministry in the new century. He points “beyond the ‘Chinese’ way of doing things” with a fresh look at a “theology of culture” that calls for a “deep-level transformation of worldview” that will allow “us to make proper responses to the cultures in



which we find ourselves and to witness effectively to the biblical faith.” He calls us to “be serious about all of God’s revelation—the whole counsel of

God, nothing less—yet sensitive to the processes of intellectual and cultural change.”

One powerful chapter exhorts Chinese Christians to realize that they are “people of the hour” presented with “tremendous opportunity.” God is calling them to devote their energies to the vital task of “bridging racial and linguistic gaps” with a radical emptying of self, a renunciation of ethnic pride and a reliance on

the Holy Spirit. “The bridge we are called to be is a bridge of servanthood.”

Ling’s fifth, concluding section, excellently summarizes his previous sections, identifies where people are at in their understanding of the issues, and gives suggestions for exploring Scripture’s truths.

Several attributes enhance the message of this work. Ling writes with clarity and precision. Each sentence contributes to the whole and his illustrations help establish the case; it is a densely packed book. He also writes with breadth providing us with historical, sociological, psychological, and theological descriptions of the North American Chinese church. His sound theological training and extensive experience in Chinese churches around the world provide depth and prevent him from making broad generalizations and drawing shallow conclusions. Firmly grounded in the Word of God,

**One powerful chapter** exhorts Chinese Christians to realize that they are “people of the hour” presented with “tremendous opportunity.”



he measures methods and worldviews by that infallible standard; he will not allow custom or culture to dictate the agenda. On the other hand, he poses challenging questions about the way we have “done” theology; perhaps we need to re-evaluate some of our long-held views. Nevertheless, Ling is no arm-chair theologian; he is also a pastor. His “Afterward” section presents the gospel and its liberating implications for each believer beautifully and powerfully. Read it for yourself, slowly, with tears of sorrow and then with the laughter of unquenchable joy.

An index and a bibliography (with references to T.K. Chuang’s *Ripening Harvest and Mainland Chinese in America: An Emerging Kinship*), as well as some tentative answers to Ling’s provocative questions in chapter twelve would have been helpful. Hopefully, a future edition will contain these. Despite his best intentions, I found a few references to such concepts as “linear thinking” and “Western, corporate-style leadership” that needed either more definition or a more Biblical treatment. Also, there is an occasional grammatical error.

Let us conclude with one of dozens of eloquent passages:

This is our vision: to let the earth hear God’s voice. This is our mandate: to preach the gospel among all peoples—our own Chinese kin, and all non-Chinese as well. This is our motive: not to perpetuate the Chinese culture, not to embrace Western culture wholesale for its own sake, but to seek God’s kingdom and his righteousness, and be renewed by the transformation of our minds as to what is acceptable, what is good, what is the will of God in both Chinese and non-Chinese culture (Matthew 6:33; Romans 12:2).

The bottom line: Dr. Ling has given us a brilliant book. All who minister among Chinese, in North America or anywhere else in the world, should buy and read it carefully as soon as possible.

*John Peace, Ph.D., is a pen name for a scholar who has worked among Chinese in Asia and America for 25 years.* 卍

## Resource corner

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# Serving China Revisited

In this issue of the journal we focus on those who serve cross-culturally in China today.

In the second chapter of Philippians, the apostle Paul looks at three critical areas related to service that we would do well to revisit as we consider what it means to serve China.

## Our Motivation

After appealing for unity among the Philippian believers, Paul then asks them to examine their motives for serving: "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit..."

What drives our involvement in China? Do we gauge our success against organizational goals developed apart from the input of our counterparts in China or Chinese brothers and sisters overseas? Or is it truly our desire that they be successful in what God has called them to do, even if we can't take the credit?

## Our Attitude

Being willing to seek out and accept their input requires, in the

words of Paul, that we "in humility consider others better than ourselves." It requires acknowledging that God is doing something unique in their midst and that we need to learn from them first before deciding how best to serve them.

Submitting ourselves to our Chinese brothers and sisters also entails risk. Instead of asking, "Would you like us to do thus and so," we must be prepared to simply ask, "What would you have us to do?" Then we need to step back and enable them to accomplish what God has laid on their hearts to do. Their ways of doing things may

not fit our traditional mold. The breaking process that ensues may be painful. Together we must ask God to give us new wineskins, that together we may be filled anew with His Spirit.

## Our Approach

Finally, Paul says, "look not only to your own interests but also to the interests of others." We are confronted with the question: "For whom are we doing this?" Is it the prestige of working in a "closed" country in an exotic

part of the world that fuels our efforts? Is it the superlatives—the biggest, the fastest, the furthest, the most—that make China so appealing to potential supporters?

Whatever we do, we must ask ourselves whether it ultimately serves to strengthen the existing church in China and to enhance its witness in Chinese society.

Our true motivation and our example is Jesus Christ, "who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made Himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness."

Christ, for our sakes, was willing to empty Himself and become a servant. We can do no less.

*Adapted from "On Serving China: A Reality Check," by Brent Fulton in the ICS Connection, Fall/Winter 1996, pp. 3, 4.*

*Brent Fulton, Ph.D., is the president of ChinaSource and the editor of the ChinaSource journal.*



Brent Fulton

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