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## The Effects of China's Global Trajectory

**A** global leader recently characterized the Chinese economy as “unstable, unbalanced, uncoordinated and unsustainable.” Such surprisingly transparent, yet blunt and forthright criticism came from China’s Premier Wen Jiabao.<sup>1</sup> Contrasting this with the Islamic Shia state of Iran, could Mahmoud Ahmadinejad make such an admission having to toe the line with the country’s mullahs; or try to imagine the former French President Jacques Chirac uttering such a sentence. China has arrived as a global player in a globalizing world. Consider the following:

- The investment community called it “Black Tuesday”; the sell-off of equities in the first quarter of this year commenced in Shanghai and had global reverberations in Europe, South America and even the USA.
- China’s steelmaking capacity is expanding so rapidly that its production will rise from five percent of the worldwide total in 1995 to more than 30 percent by 2015. In the process, it will become a leading exporter.<sup>2</sup>
- There are 132 million Internet users in China (representing 10 percent of the population). While the USA leads with 210 million users, the number of users in China exceeds the total combined users from Germany, India and the UK.<sup>3</sup>

- Contrast China’s 461 million cell-phone users with the USA’s 219 million users.
- The Saudi government’s China visit was not for the building up of new customer relationships but for the security found in the new “protector” of oil assets.
- China’s investments in its telecommunications infrastructure have no rival. In this playground, companies like Nokia and Motorola are releasing their latest play gadgets, experimenting in the consumer sector, perfecting the design and then releasing it in the West.

### Déjà vu

However, China has been here before. Along

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with India, it was a global player. Back in AD1400, China and India accounted for 75 percent of the globe's gross domestic product. By the mid 1700s, China and India were the two most industrially advanced and richest countries in the world. Together, China and India made up 57 percent of world manufacturing output, and Asia's total share was about 70 percent. Adam Smith wrote in 1776: "China is a much richer country than any part of Europe."<sup>4</sup> China was weakened through the Opium Wars launched by the British; however, the economic and political ascent is coming full circle, and China is again on the global stage.

China's opening to the West, three decades ago, meant China has become the workshop for the world. Foreign direct investment has poured in and affected peoples' lives, and millions have been

cure its insatiable appetite for commodities and energy resources<sup>5</sup> from Latin America and has a good friend in Venezuela's Chavez to ascertain supplies and mandates.

China and Russia are vying for resources in Africa.<sup>6</sup> However, China's sophisticated approach to Africa is to be noted: trading with Nigeria, Sudan, Angola and Gabon for oil and commodities in return for UN assurances; tapping Zambia, the Democratic Republic of Congo for copper; eyeing the world's second largest yet undeveloped platinum riches in Zimbabwe; rescinding debts, granting aid (with strings attached) and arms to Zimbabwe, Sudan and Ethiopia.<sup>7</sup> China's Africa initiative included the China-Africa summit, a promise of US\$3 billion in preferential loans and US\$2 billion in preferential credit to the continent in the next three

## China's transformation is a literal revolution, and it is one that Chairman Mao could not have contemplated.

lifted out of the official poverty statistics (but many are living just above the poverty line). The demand for raw resources is creating a global shortage in commodities and oil.

Additionally, the World Trade Organization, 2008 Olympics and 2010 World Fair are now embedded into the fabric of Chinese history. Hosting world class events puts the spotlight on China, and there is an intense desire to show the world that China can be different from the past superpowers of the world, even as China has interpreted and dissected past world powers through her home grown video series *China Rises*. Hence, the stage is set with new and historical drivers in which new history will be written in this century.

### Charming Abroad

China is parlaying its influence around the world. While remaining distrustful of Japan, China is keeping a positive diplomatic rhetoric flowing. She is tolerant up to the boiling point of Taiwan's psychobabble towards independence and winking at Kazakhstan's overtures. China is playing in the Americas' backyard to se-

years. Beijing, being a pragmatic global businessman, has little qualms about dealing with dictators.

Perhaps the most interesting and ambitious plan is the establishment of 100 Confucius Institutes globally. The Chinese government notes that approximately 40 million people are learning the Chinese language and projects a figure that will hit 100 million by 2010. What better means to introduce language than through its cultural icon.

### Tensions@home

Globalization is having a large effect on the Chinese citizen who is witnessing a "two-wheels into four-wheels" societal transformation. China's transformation is a literal revolution, and it is one that Chairman Mao could not have contemplated.

China, in its second revolution within the last 40 years, is seeing two societies, two cultures—rural and urban—that is creating tensions. The rural people are either staying or migrating; the urbanites are exploring or touring both at home and abroad, and some are immigrating abroad. Families are divided into

the older (Cultural Revolution relics) and younger (one child policy—princes and princesses). Furthermore, these families have to sort through two ideologies or religions—atheism or communism, and Buddhism or Christianity. Putting these combustible variables together, the lack of peace and harmony can be deeply sensed.

Given the level of unrest<sup>8</sup> called mass incidents, the government is trying to put forth the positive spin of a “harmonious society.” From their own survey and its resulting conclusion, the government understands the critical state they are in, as defined by the globally accepted measure—the “gini coefficient.” A healthy society would show a gini coefficient of between 0.3 and 0.4. Anything over 0.4 is a warning sign of instability, and 0.6 is “dangerous” as a society might undergo a massive disturbance. China’s latest admissible figure is 0.496;<sup>9</sup> clearly, it is well into the warning zone.

What can the government do? Having already studied the 1989 revolutions, especially what took place in Timisoara (Romania), the thoughts of Christianity do not bring comfort. Christians are too active. The Chinese government also studied Islam. The actions of 9/11 also brought ill-comfort, especially when they had witnessed truck loads of armor that were smuggled across the Western border of Xinjiang province; the fundamentalist script is not comforting either. With two monotheistic religions which claim “the Truth” and are anxious to share it with their neighbors, the authorities live in a phobic tension. With both Christianity and Islam out of the question, and with a need to relieve this tension and to weave history into reasoning, they have decided to turn to Buddhism to promote a “harmonious society.”

The Communist government seems to subscribe to the Buddhist’s belief that everyone has self-consciousness, everyone has the character of a Buddha and everyone has self-worth. It is also interesting to note that by “allowing” Buddhism to renew itself, with a new-China face, this is now being used as the poster child for religious freedom with 100 million adherents (as acclaimed by the government). How long will it be before Buddhism takes on the same character as Hinduism has in India: “To be Indian is to be Hin-



Peter Lucinsky

## The government is trying to put forth a positive spin of a “harmonious society.”

du.” How long before we see the adaptation of the script that, “To be Chinese is to be Buddhist?”

Moving from the self to the environment, the Chinese government is also sensing the pressures of industrialization in a globalizing world. It is abundantly clear that China has a water problem, both in usage and with the creeping drought that has hit various provinces. To put this in perspective, Canada has about the same amount of water as China, but only 2.3 percent of its population. As China consumes, the level of water required for production also becomes a factor: it takes about 3,000 liters of water to grow one kilogram of rice, 11,000 liters to grow the feed for enough of a cow for a quarter-pound hamburger, 50 cups of water for a teaspoon of sugar and 140 liters of water to produce just one cup of coffee. When one thinks of Starbucks and McDonald’s in the context of China, one can imagine the diminishing levels of water and aquifers.

In a consuming society there are also other indulgences. The government has put together roughly 1.4 million kilometers of highway<sup>10</sup> in anticipation of automobiles. The transformation of a society from “two-wheels to four-wheels” is well underway with the present own-

ership of cars about 10 per 1,000 people and a projected tenfold growth in ownership anticipated.<sup>11</sup> China already holds the dubious distinction of having 20 out of 30 of the world’s most polluted cities, and with growing mobility in travel (both by road and by plane) China’s CO<sub>2</sub> emission is projected to grow 2.5 fold by 2020.<sup>12</sup> Water, air, and the environment are massive “creation care” matters where Christians have roles and responsibilities.

In the latest figures available, patent filings in China increased sharply in the decade from 1995 to 2004, which pushed the country into fifth place for patent applications in the world.<sup>13</sup> The UN Agency for Intellectual Properties indicated that more than 130,000 applications were filed with China’s patent office in 2004.

Of even greater interest is the recently passed Property Law in China<sup>14</sup> which guarantees equal rules and rights for property owners of the State, collectives and individuals. Globalization has come to China. The admittance of private property law in a communist state surely would cause Marx to turn in his sepulcher (as if he is on a merry-go-round), and enshrine both Premier Wen and President Ho as the new foresighted 21st

**Continued on page 14**



Esther Wang

Mel Sletch

## Globalization and House Churches in China

**T**hirty years ago, China was a closed country. It was not until the late 1970s that people from its coastal cities were allowed to leave to visit overseas relatives. Back then, “leaving China” was seen by some as “selling your country” or “anti-revolutionary.” Inside its iron door, the Chinese were told that “two-thirds of the people in the world still live in destitution and are waiting for our liberation.”

In the 1980s, China’s door gradually opened. Starting like a small stream that turned into a fast-flowing river, people rushed through this iron door to scatter around the world. People used whatever means—government sponsorship, studying abroad, visiting relatives, sightseeing and people smuggling—to reach the outside world.

The world becomes smaller as globalization extends to China. Not only are big cities affected, globalization also affects the smaller cities and villages. Thirty years ago, whenever a foreigner with blue eyes and blond hair appeared in a small town, people would quickly gather around this *lao wai* and traffic would come to a standstill. Today, the “foreigner” walking the same street is likely

a young Chinese with dyed golden hair wearing a foreign-brand jacket.

Without question, globalization has influenced China’s house churches in positive ways. It has:

**1. Gained dual channels of spiritual resources:** From the late 70s, the overseas channel in the form of broadcasting, books, magazines, later VCDs, and training started to flow into China. These were like “manna” to the house churches. At the same time, the testimony and experience gained by the house churches from years of persecution accumulated in the local channel. Spiritual resources from both channels fed and caused the house churches to grow. However, with the passing of the old spiritual warriors, the latter influence waned with

time. While the few that left writings, such as Epaphras Wu, continue to influence, others are simply forgotten.

**2. Developed a more open view of the church and the Lord’s Kingdom:** Globalization has allowed the house churches to see that God’s church is global, and house churches are part of the global church. This realization has pushed the house churches to slowly surface from the underground and to move cautiously from the periphery towards the center of society. House churches have also begun to cooperate with overseas churches and even reach them directly. For example, *Christian Life Quarterly* in Chicago often receives phone calls from far away places in China asking questions related to divorce, the falling of

preachers, church discipline, depression and other topics. Lately, we are also happy to see more cooperation among house churches with some areas even forming their own church associations, although they do not give them that name. Rather, they use the term “united prayer meetings” which, in fact, is a monthly or quarterly prayer and sharing time for major church leaders in one city or area.

**3. Expanded their vision of mission:** Globalization has moved the house churches to become more global in their mission outreach. House churches have started to spread the gospel to surrounding countries. Short-term mission groups have been sent to Mongolia and Burma. Another significant change is the formation of overseas “house churches.” A common saying in China goes like this: “Wherever there is sun, there are Chinese sweating. Wherever there is a moon, there are Chinese weeping.” Starting in the 80s, cheap laborers found their way to many parts of the world. On every continent you can find Chinese restaurants opened by immigrants from Wenzhou and Fuzhou (Fuzhou). Chinese in New York often say there are 52 States in the US—adding Wenzhou and Fuzhou. As a result of the labor migration, some Wenzhou and Fuzhou churches have appeared in New York and Europe. At the same time, “China ministry,” the term used to refer to those serving Chinese students and scholars in North America and Europe, expanded to many work sites in Guam or Israel—where many Chinese laborers were saved.

On the other hand, globalization has also produced some negative influences.

**1. Heresies and cults follow globalization to China:** For example, extreme Pentecostalism had a significant influence on two major church groups in a province in central China. Both groups experienced strong revival for a period of time, but division and desolation followed. Church groups that focused on the fundamental faith and insisted on returning to biblical truth taking the way of “back to the cross” tended to experience a more steady growth.

**2. Exposure to denominationalism has led to fierce arguments and divisions:** Denominational thinking crept in as house churches gained overseas exposure and financial support. A single Chi-

nese church group is sometimes claimed by several overseas organizations as their own. Some house churches keep changing their theological position in order to please the various supporting overseas organizations. Also, some house churches believe they are the true followers of Jesus by claiming that their belief of a certain minor doctrine is biblical—so that others are not. Such narrow views often lead to the breaking up of church groups.

**3. Impractical mission slogans mislead the direction of house churches:** Impractical and unrealistic mission slogans can negatively impact the mission direction, strategy and actions of house churches. Within China, there are 1.2 billion non-believers. Surrounding China, in countries like Mongolia, India, North Korea and Japan, there are major centers of unreached people. Together, they make up three-quarters of the unreached people in the world. These people or countries should be the major mission targets for China’s house churches. Unfortunately, some house churches or their members are sometimes confused by grandiose slogans. Recently, a twenty-year old young man called us from Gansu, China. He told us he saw “Back to Jerusalem” on the Internet and wanted

to lead Muslims to Christ?”

In the end, we suggested that he study the Bible more and serve at his local church. We also encouraged him to begin sharing the gospel with the Muslims around him and to wait for God’s calling.

Joseph Li, a well known house church preacher, once said: “In Chinese villages, many 17 and 18 year olds cannot find jobs in the cities. They are very willing to go overseas as missionaries. In fact, we can easily find 100,000 such willing missionaries, but they are not called by God.”

Globalization will impact house churches at an even faster pace in the coming decade. Increasingly, a greater number of full-time and part-time missionaries and overseas Christian returnees are involved with house churches. More and more Chinese Christians will leave China, worship with overseas Christians, and attend various conferences. All these encounters will no doubt influence the future direction and development of China’s house churches.

One such conference, The “Gospel for China Conference 2007,” to be held later this year, is an example of this kind of influence. Global in nature, it is open to all Christian churches and organizations around the world that have a burden

Increasingly, **a greater number** of full-time and part-time missionaries and overseas Christian returnees **are involved with house churches.**

to join a medical mission to the Middle East or Africa to evangelize among the Muslims. He is a high school graduate with no special skills or language abilities. Our conversation went this way:

“Did you share your vision with the pastor or elders of your church? Did they support you?”

“They don’t appreciate my vision.”

“Are there many Muslims in your town?”

“Yes, many. Han people are the minority here. Muslims are the majority.”

“You don’t need to go overseas. You can spread the gospel to the Muslims right where you live!”

“They don’t want to believe.”

“But, what makes you think you can be more successful in leading the over-

seas Muslims to Christ?”

for China. The conference will provide a platform for broad exchanges among Christian churches and mission organizations from all corners of the world. Specifically, it will allow the overseas Chinese churches to gain a deeper and more balanced understanding of mainland churches and vice versa.

This conference has another special significance. It will be held on the eve of the 200th anniversary of the arrival of Rev. Robert Morrison, the first Protestant missionary to China. Against such a historical backdrop, it will provide a point of reflection on how the Lord opened the door of salvation in China via overseas missionaries. It will explore how today’s Chinese churches, the fruit of missionary

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## Globalization and the Impact of Short-Term Teams for 2008<sup>1</sup>

**B**efore we look at the more specific issues, I think it is essential to set the background for the topic of globalization and short-term teams. Globalization, a natural expansion of capitalism, is commonly used in the context of economics and the social ills it brings. This has led to the well-known demonstrations against the World Trade Organization (WTO), because wealthy countries that emphasize free trade, often at the expense of more sustainable, equitable and democratic growth, dominate it.<sup>2</sup> James Skillen gives a definition in *Globalization and the Kingdom of God*: “What is globalization? In brief, it features the growing interdependence of people throughout the world. Interdependency is multiplying and intensifying by means of ever more rapid means of communication, which are helping to tie the world’s billions of still multiplying people closer and closer together economically, environmentally, technologically and in other ways.”<sup>3</sup>

David Lundy calls multiculturalism and pluralism “kissing cousins of globalization.”<sup>4</sup> His view is that globalization causes multiculturalism and pluralism and vice versa. While multiculturalism is consistent with biblical values as we see unity in diversity based on passages such as Revelation 5:9 and 7:9, we need to re-

sist pluralism that compromises the absolute truths of our faith. No matter which definition of globalization we subscribe to, there is no question that it impacts economics, politics, technology, communications, culture, religion and almost every facet of life, both for better or worse, depending on what aspect one refers to.

The most common sources of globalization are government bodies, economic agents such as multinational corporations, media such as the internet, Hollywood movies and Korean soaps, cultural agents such as pop music, art and fashion, and cross-cultural workers in all shades and hues. This article focus-

es on cross-cultural workers and in particular, short-term teams<sup>5</sup> and 2008.

## Short-Term Teams and How They See Themselves

By short-term teams we mean a small group, the size of which can be just a few to about 30 or even larger, which seeks to reach out in a cross-cultural context for a period of a few days to a few months. As someone who has participated in, mobilized and organized, as well as deployed and received short-term teams for more than 20 years in various countries, I hope to offer some insights as to how short-term teams see themselves, what their possible influence can be on the hosts, both foreign and national, and requisites or factors that affect the success of a short-term team.

Most teams see themselves as contributing towards the “Great Work,” and depending on the nature of the team (e.g. age, purpose, size, country of origin), the organizational affiliation, level of orientation and whether there is partnership with long-term workers on the ground (be they foreign or local) they see themselves as contributors that agencies cannot do without, or as being part of a long process of discipleship.

Most teams are mobilized by organizations or directly by a denomination or church but usually have relationships and/or workers in the host country and therefore have their own set purposes, goals, requirements, programs and networks for recruitment. Some organizations focus on mobilizing short-term teams while others have a mixture of long-term residential and short-term workers. However, the following are common factors that impact the effectiveness and success of short-term teams or programs.

- Clarity of purpose and goals because this then translates into what sort of teams are needed and what they are to accomplish.

- Clarification and convergence of expectations among team members, the sending body (organization or church) and the receiving hosts. (This is especially needed between the short-term teams and the residential long-term workers that will receive them because there is great potential for conflict if there is no convergence or lack of understanding of how short-term teams are part of the

long-term impact.)

- Clear guidelines for recruitment, screening and selection of the team leader and members—this helps to ensure that members have the level of spiritual maturity, character and competence for the purposes of the team.

- Effective orientation, especially cultural (and professional for teams that are there for a professional purpose such as medical teams) and team building before the team sets out so they are as prepared as one can responsibly help them to be.

- Forum for ongoing feedback and care for the team during the program.

- Strong partnerships with the receiving hosts especially if the sending body does not have its own residential workers.

- Length and/or frequency of visits. Generally, longer stays and more regular or repeated visits to the same place, or with the same hosts, will make the team more effective because relationships are established and strengthened with each visit.

- Debriefing so lessons are learned after each team returns to the sending country to avoid making the same mistakes with future teams—this reflects a learning organization.

How the teams see themselves depends on the interaction of the above factors as the vision and mission are key

**The sacrificial giving of the team’s resources, love and humility are often the sources of a positive experience for the residential workers and the nationals.**

in mobilizing like-minded people for the team. Team members are reliant on the organizer and/or team leader to provide information and orientation on how the team fits into the big picture.

In my own experience and observation, as well as through interaction with other organizations, most team members who have received good orientation would not go so far as to think of themselves as change agents but more so as part of a larger change process, as they partner with long-term workers or with nationals. If, on the other hand, they have been hastily recruited, have not been given proper orientation, and have a very gung-ho team leader or

members, they may see themselves as being a “great gift to the host country” and overrun both long-term residential workers and nationals. In this instance, they may end up as negative change agents because the residential workers will have to repair the damage caused, be that to the residential workers or to the perception of Christians by the nationals or local hosts. Having said that, they are capable of being positive “change agents.” This is especially true when they focus on building genuine relationships while sharing their faith in culturally appropriate ways and do not expect to attain numeric goals like having to “share with at least ten unbelievers a day” whether or not the unbeliever wants to hear!

## How Others See Short-Term Teams and Their Influence

Naturally the experience with short-term teams has been mixed, which explains the plethora of articles devoted to this topic just in the *Evangelical Missions Quarterly (EMQ)* alone! Many residential workers who have had positive experiences with teams would agree that the factors I have mentioned above play a great role in what constitutes good teams. Generally, the greater the number of factors for effectiveness that were present, the more

positive the experience that both residential workers and nationals had.

The sacrificial giving of the team’s resources, love and humility are often the sources of a positive experience for the residential workers and the nationals. On the other hand, an attitude of cultural superiority and disrespect for the residential workers or nationals are probably the greatest sources of negative impact, especially on the nationals.

Teams, particularly those coming from wealthy countries, need to be mindful that the local culture and nationals are not empty pages, even if they are unbelievers. God has already been at work in their culture and history,<sup>6</sup> and interna-

tional teams are just God's instruments for more to come to know him and for the local believers to see how God has already been at work—to see themselves, their culture and foreign cultures through a biblical lens.

There is some correlation between the view developing nations have of the wealthy nations and the view believers or unbelievers in developing countries have of international cross-cultural workers, be they residential or part of short-term teams. As there has been resistance by groups to the WTO, there can also be resistance to teams, especially if they are perceived as instruments of dominant powers. Since China has a general perception of Christianity as a Western religion and also holds the view that some countries use religion to influence China's politics and culture or to promote their own ideologies, it is even more critical that cross-cultural teams and workers are culturally sensitive and well trained.

For 2008, with its even more diverse opportunities,<sup>7</sup> it would be reasonable

## There is always an ongoing tension as to what is cultural and what is biblical as foreign believers interact with nationals, believers or not.

to expect an explosion of short-term teams to China, not including the regular teams mobilized by those with ongoing work or experience in China. In particular, one can expect an increase in youth teams in the coming year leading up to the Olympics. It is vital that all organizations and sending bodies be as careful in their selection and have an as up-to-date orientation and training program for their teams as possible. This is critical if we want to improve the public perception of Christians, and if people of all faiths—and especially Christian—are to have an improved environment to make a positive impact on society after 2008.<sup>8</sup>

### Conclusion

Teams from the West can bring about a Westernization of the local culture and influence how the nationals view the world, their own culture and their habits for better or for worse. Likewise, teams from any wealthy or dominant country or region can bring about a similar influence. How-

ever, the change may be reciprocal. Hopefully, there will be a globalization of the acculturation process both ways, as teams, team members, nationals and others interact with growing mutual understanding and respect for each other as equals. It is in this atmosphere that there can be a healthy exchange of ideas and sharing of one's faith.

Local believers must belong to a local group and be part of their national body of Christ in order to have sustainability. Ideally, given mature viable churches, they should be disciplined by nationals with healthy international input, but given some specific situations, they may be disciplined by international groups. Nonetheless, international groups must intentionally plug them into local groups and actively seek local leaders who can disciple or teach them concurrently or subsequently as the situation permits. Far too often, it is not that we cannot find local leaders or groups, but we are myopic and see the "wrong teaching" in the local church but we do

not see the potential of our own "wrong teaching" that brings in our subjective views on non-salvation issues, such as style of worship, gender leadership roles or spiritual gifts.

There is always an ongoing tension as to what is cultural and what is biblical as foreign believers interact with nationals, believers or not. This tension should not immobilize us, but should keep us humble, so that we consciously weed out what is merely our own cultural interpretation from biblical absolutes in the sharing of our faith, teaching or discipleship.

As the world becomes more global, so will the church, organizations and sending bodies. In reflecting the multicultural nature and diversity of the international body of Christ, I believe that international teams can be a positive influence but, at the same time, emphasize their need for openness to be positively influenced by national believers, to learn from them, not just teach them. This form of interaction or integration will then reflect uni-

ty in diversity in the growing global body of Christ as we learn from one another.

### Endnotes

1. For a more detailed academic discourse on globalization and China, see Liu Kang, *Globalization and Cultural Trends in China*, University of Hawaii Press, 2004.

2. Two books on globalization that offer opposing views are: Joseph Stiglitz, *Globalization and Its Discontents*, Penguin Books, 2002, and Jagdish Bhagwati, *In Defense of Globalization*, Oxford University Press, 2004.

3. Quoting Stuart McAllister in his article, "Introduction to Globalization" in a compilation by the Singapore Graduates Christian Fellowship entitled, *The Challenge and Impact of Globalization: Towards a Biblical Response*, 2002, p.4.

4. David Lundy, "Multiculturalism and Pluralization: Kissing Cousins of Globalization," in *One World or Many? The Impact of Globalization on Mission*, edited by Richard Tiplady, William Carey Library, 2003. The Globalization of Missions Series book has a compilation of 16 articles that cover various aspects of globalization such as its impact on the church, missions, theology, women and the poor. It is highly recommended for those who want to have a better understanding of globalization and the Christian response.

5. There are many articles especially in the *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* over the years about short-term teams: "Short-term Medical Teams" by Michael N. Dohnand & Anita L. Dohn, (April 2006); "The Long-term Impact of Short-term Missions" by Randy Friesen, (Oct 2005); "Spring Break Mission Trips: A Blessing or a Curse?" by Aaron Palmatier, (Apr 2002); "Short-term Missions: Building Sustainable Mission Relationships" by John M. Tucker, (Oct 2001); "First Do No Harm: Short term Missions at the Dawn of a New Millennium" by R. Slimbach, (Oct 2000); "Short-term Missions are Great...If," by Stan May, (Oct 2000); "Short-term Youth Teams: Are They Worth It?" by Paul Borthwick, (Oct 1996).

6. I would recommend a recent book by Chan-Kei Thong, *Faith of Our Fathers—God in Ancient China* (China Publishing Group Orient Publishing Center, Shanghai, China, 2006) to gain a better insight into how the hand of God can be seen in the ancient Chinese texts, its written script and sacrificial practices.

7. See [www.servingchina.org](http://www.servingchina.org).

8. Many groups have orientation and training materials. They are constantly updating and making the materials relevant and this is available at [www.servingchina.org](http://www.servingchina.org).

*Tiger Lily* has been involved in tentmaking for 17 years and has been working with short-term teams for more than 20 years in a variety of countries. ■

## China's New Reality: Globalization

Huo Shui

**B**eginning in the late 1980s, Chinese people slowly became aware of an expression frequently appearing in the Western media, a word they could not quite define—globalization. Just as they could not associate the term AIDS with themselves, the Chinese people could not connect with the term globalization. At the time, a great majority of the Chinese had never even met a foreigner. Traveling outside China was extremely difficult, regardless of where one was going, and most Chinese had no idea what a foreign country even looked like. Applying for a passport and traveling outside the country were not issues an average Chinese citizen contemplated.

Twenty years later, China is a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO). Tens of thousands of “foreigners” from around the world come to China daily for business and pleasure. Name brand consumer goods can be easily acquired in major cities such as Beijing and Shanghai, and products labeled “Made in China” saturate every corner of the world market. The world

### Economic

The economy leads the key components of globalization, and the local market and global economies are intimately linked together. In a country such as China, where modernization and socialist ideals are embraced simultaneously, open reform is an essential step toward globalization. Under socialism, the economy is characterized by con-

The world came to China, and China has integrated into the world. **Globalization is now a reality of life in China**, a leading trait of Chinese society.

came to China, and China has integrated into the world. Globalization is now a reality of life in China, a leading trait of Chinese society. At the same time, however, Chinese ideas and opinions on globalization continue to develop. When one sees globalization as a force affecting societal changes and the progress of history, its subsequent impact must involve not only China but the entire world as well. In China, specifically, globalization will spark conflicts and challenges never before seen. These conflicts and challenges have manifested themselves in the following areas.

control and structure within a controlled economic system; the government regulates financial information and directly manages all resources. Hence, reform in a socialist economic system works to shift a controlled economy toward market economy. The process of accomplishing this transition is to gradually replace governmental economic power with free market demands. As a result, the challenges for a government making this transition are numerous—agencies and departments must be eliminated, governmental employees must be dismissed, and so on. The government is forced to



adopt new management styles and can no longer freely order around industry. Of course, the government still has a role in overseeing the economy through legislation and market monitoring; however, its basic function has changed. Roles the government played and grew accustomed to are no longer applicable. In short, the government now treads unfamiliar water.

One significant step toward globalization China took was becoming a member of the WTO. While it is true that WTO membership does not equate to a completely free market, this degree of openness in China is clearly unprecedented. To enjoy the privileges and benefits of WTO, China must adhere to the organization's rules and regulations. For example, management regulations and systems have to be modified or completely overhauled. The impact of membership in WTO on the Chinese administration's policies and practices cannot be overstated. “Reaching an international standard” is not merely raising product quality, but also repre-

sents a paradigm shift in the relationship between government agencies and businesses. Complying with a standard forces both the central power and the manufacturing sectors to become more “transparent.” Hence, the administration faces economic challenges both internally and externally. Faced with the need for continuous economic growth, the enormous pressure of population growth and an increased demand for jobs, the regime has little choice but to “forge ahead with reform” in order to keep up the legitimacy of the Communist Party.

### Political

Globalization implies the expansion of individual space far beyond the physical boundary of a particular country, through communication and interaction with the rest of the world. Any one country cannot create policies or safeguard political power without the influence of the rest of the world. In determining its domestic policies, the Chinese government is under the watchful eyes of a volatile, complex and anti-Marxist world environment. Traditional Chinese no-

## Culturally speaking, globalization utilizes the worldwide mass media and its extensive network to influence the views and opinions of the Chinese public.

tions of national sovereignty, national interests and national security are all being challenged by globalization. Issues once considered purely domestic such as human rights, private property and energy consumption are increasingly taking on an international and global flavor. National politics can no longer be conducted in a conventional, closed-door manner, totally isolated from the outside world.

As globalization weakens the long-held ideal of national sovereignty, China recognizes its need for a stable environment for growth. To secure this environment, China has to adapt its domestic policies to a global reality. One example is voting rights. China has implemented citizen elections at the rural community and township levels on a trial basis. Of course, there is still a long way to go before getting to national presidential

elections, but these trials are a start. As a result, democracy and freedom are no longer abstract theories, but goals pursued daily by ordinary Chinese citizens. In everything they determinedly “defend their personal rights.” This defense of personal rights may very well be the most significant sign of China’s political awakening.

### Cultural

Culturally speaking, globalization utilizes the worldwide mass media and its extensive network to influence the views and opinions of the Chinese public. Driven by capitalism, globalization not only brings China the material progress of the West but cultural progress as well, causing far-reaching effects on Chinese society. After China opened its door to the West, popular Western culture flooded in. Music, fashions and contemporary ideas and values all put down roots in China. Culture globalization, to a certain degree, is already an established fact. At the same time, clashes are inevitable, such as the clash between contemporary and traditional cultures, between mar-

ket and controlled economic theories and between capitalism and socialism. Hence, as China globalizes culturally, the influx of foreign goods such as literature and entertainment is countered with a vigorous promotion of traditional Confucianism. The government hopes the cultural heritage of Confucius and Lao-Tzu can minimize the power of cultural globalization.

### Social

Globalization also revolutionized Chinese society at large by altering value systems, contrasting disparity between the poor and the rich and transforming ideas about marriage and family. Following economic expansion, many social phenomena emerged that had never been seen before. For example, new definitions of marriage and family gave rise to a new set of issues such as cohabita-

tion, homosexuality, a high rate of divorce, DINK families (Double Income no Kids), “second wives,” and cross-continent marriages. Another change has been the major population migration in the form of migrant workers moving to the cities, the wealthy leaving the country and inland Han Chinese moving into minority regions. Any influx of people brings with it property value inflation, transportation nightmares, increases in crime, consumer wastes and environmental contamination. These are the major challenges facing the Chinese leadership.

### Spiritual

When compared with all the challenges mentioned above, the one aspect of globalization that causes the Chinese government the most concern and makes them feel the most helpless is the change in Chinese people’s moral and belief systems. On one hand is the decline and deterioration of traditional morals and ethics; on the other is the people’s increasing hunger for religion. Two researchers at East China Normal University conducted a survey in February 2007 and reported that the actual number of people who have a religious belief is three times the initial estimates. This means China could have over 300 million people of faith. All five of the state-recognized religions (Buddhism, Taoism, Islam, Christianity and Catholicism) are growing, with Christianity growing the fastest. The government is completely powerless in light of this growth. Disillusioned with communist propaganda, the Chinese people are searching for a new set of beliefs, giving folk beliefs and newly recognized religions the opportunity to flourish.

In conclusion, globalization affords China growth and prosperity but also presents new challenges. While benefiting from globalization, China has also restructured itself and assimilated fully into it. It is still too early to tell whether globalization in China is a blessing or a curse. One thing is for certain, though: China now is not the China of the 1980s—and there is no going back.

*Huo Shui is a former government political analyst who writes from outside China. Translation is by Alice Loh. ■*

## China's Global Generation

Kay Danielson

**Q**uanqiu-hua. 全球化 Globalization. It is arguably the ultimate buzzword that has been used to describe one of the ultimate realities of human culture, society and economics as one century closed and another one began. But what exactly is globalization? The *New American Heritage Dictionary* gives this definition: "to make global or worldwide in scope and application."<sup>1</sup> Thomas Friedman, in his book *The Lexus and the Olive Tree* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, June 15, 2000), was instrumental in the popularization of the term as something more than merely "Westernization" or the spreading of American culture, but as a description of how forces such as markets, communications and individuals can balance, and sometimes challenge, the power of the state.

The "global generation" is the one that has come of age in the waning decades of the twentieth century when everything seems to be happening on a global scale. In China, specifically, it is the urban generation that was born and raised after *gaige kaifang* (the policy of reform and opening) launched by Deng Xiaoping in the early 1980s. Following the disastrous economic and political policies of the 50s, 60s, and 70s, Deng believed that the key to China's modernization and development was to reform the economy along free market principles (capitalism) and end China's isolation from the outside world. The moves were gradual at first but have reached breakneck speed with China's entry into the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001.

In a way, globalization is fundamental about three things: inter-connectedness, participation and consumption. Consequently, we can use these three words to describe members of China's global generation: they are connected; they are participants; they are consumers.

Members of China's global generation are connected both internally and externally. They are connected with each other via cell phones, text messaging, online instant messaging and internet chat rooms. By 2006, China had 460 million cell phone subscribers (*Xinhua News Agency*, February 19, 2007). During the two week Spring Festival holiday this year, Chinese people sent 15 million text

Peter Lucinsky



Members of China's global generation are not just connected with each other but increasingly with the outside world.

messages to each other (*China Daily*, February 28, 2007). Simply spend some time in a public space in China and you will see that the urban youth are connecting. Look around. Nearly everyone you see is either talking on the phone or busy sending and receiving text messages.

By the end of 2006, the China Inter-

net Network Information Centre was reporting that the number of internet users in China had reached 137 million (*Reuters*, January 23, 2007). In big cities like Shanghai and Beijing, most users would have computers in their homes, but in the medium and smaller cities, most users access the internet via *wang ba*, or in-

ternet cafes. In fact, it is so common that internet addiction has even begun to be a problem attracting the attention of the government which claims that 13 percent of internet users under 18 are "internet addicts" (*Reuters*, March 13, 2007).

Members of China's global generation are not just connected with each other but increasingly with the outside world. The internet has become a major source of information as it provides them with access to news and events, trends and fashions outside of China. Unlike their parents' generation, they know what is going on "out there" and "out there" is no longer so far away and so foreign.

Members of China's global generation are participants in the global economy and culture. In 1999, when China became a member of the WTO, a phrase that was commonly heard was *gen shijie jiegui*, which means "to connect the track with the world." This was used to describe

outbound travel (*Beijing Review*, February 22, 2007).

Thanks to the connectivity provided by the internet, members of China's global generation are also participants in global pop culture: they swoon over Korean soap opera stars; they play online games with youth all over the world; they download the latest music; and they follow with keen interest all the antics of Britney Spears and other pop stars.

Finally, members of China's global generation are avid consumers. Because they have been the beneficiaries of China's rapid rise in living standards, they have more discretionary income than perhaps any previous generation ever. A recent survey revealed that 44 percent of middle and high school students have their own bank accounts and spend more than Y200 per month. No doubt those figures would be higher for college students and graduates. What they are

## Thanks to the connectivity provided by the internet, members of China's global generation are also participants in global pop culture.

what China was doing. For fifty years, China had run on her own parallel track of politics and economics. The connecting has made possible the participation. They are participating in the global economy not just by manufacturing the goods sold in the West (as was primarily the case in the 1980s and 1990s) but by purchasing resources and even foreign companies.

China's turbo-charged economic development requires natural resources which China does not have, such as oil and gas. These are being purchased from Russia, Africa and Latin America. In 2004, the Chinese computer company, Lenovo, purchased IBM's PC unit for \$1.25 billion (*China Daily*, December 18, 2004), and just this month a Chinese auto-maker purchased the British auto-maker MG and will start building cars in Nanjing.

Another area where Chinese have become participants in the global culture is tourism. According to the Ministry of Public Security, 34.5 million Chinese traveled abroad in 2006 to over 130 countries that have been approved for

purchasing does not seem to differ from what their counterparts in other countries are purchasing. The publisher of the Chinese version of *Seventeen*, an American magazine aimed at teenage girls, says it well: "They are like teenagers that you would find in a rich suburb of Chicago or St. Louis. They want the latest model, they want their computer, they want their camcorder, they want cool Swatches" (*The Economist*, February 12, 2004).

Interestingly, the boundaries between what is a foreign brand and what is not are increasingly blurry. I recently had a Chinese youngster ask me if we had *Mai Dang Lao* (McDonalds) in the United States. It never occurred to him that *Mao Dang Lao* was not a Chinese brand.

As the connectedness and participation of China's global culture intensifies, the effects are beginning to ripple through society. Along with globalization have come many of the attitudes and behavior patterns that are hallmarks of consumer societies. Not content to merely make choices about cell phones and automobile brands, Chinese are increasing-

ly looking to make choices about lifestyle as well. Lifestyles that are increasingly being chosen include co-habitation before marriage and homosexuality. Most major cities have burgeoning and increasingly open gay subcultures. Notions of individualism and personal autonomy are on the rise as well leading to a growing generation gap between this global generation and their parents. Finally, as the members of the global generation become increasingly interconnected with members of their generation outside of China, the gap that exists between them and their fellow Chinese in the rural areas widens. Chinese urban youth increasingly have much more in common with the youth of Seoul, Sao Paulo or San Francisco than they do with the youth in the Chinese countryside.

What are some of the ministry implications of this new global generation in China? First is the diminished influence of Marxism. To be sure, students must still attend classes on Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought and the Theory of Jiang Zemin, but it just does not seem to stick. Materialism, individualism and consumerism have a much stronger appeal.

Second, the global generation has a much bigger knowledge base than was true of the early days of ministry in the PRC. In the 1980s for instance, it was common to meet young people who had never even heard of Jesus Christ. Now it is likely that they have seen the movie *The Passion of the Christ*.

Third, there is a deeper spiritual hunger as the old belief systems of Confucianism and Marxism have been abandoned only to be replaced by the new, empty, systems of radical materialism and consumerism. This deep hunger is leading to an increased openness to the claims of the gospel on the part of this global generation. As a result, this increased openness is leading many to belief and to the rise of an urban church that has great potential to impact China for the kingdom.

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**Kay Danielson** has lived and worked in China for 18 years and currently works in the field of cross-cultural training. ■

# Book Review

## The Human Side of China's Staggering Transformation

***Oracle Bones: A Journey between China's Past and Present*** by Peter Hessler. Harper Collins, 2006, 512 pp. ISBN-10: 0060826584; ISBN-13: 978-0060826581. Hardcover, \$16.98 at Amazon.com

Reviewed by Chan-Kei Thong

Everyone is aware of China's miraculous economic transformation. Her gross domestic product had grown approximately ten times from 1980 to 2004. China broke all records in this regard, for in no other nation in human history had that many people sustained that rate of growth for so long. This trend seems unrelenting for the moment, and the whole world can no longer ignore this phenomenon. When Shanghai's stock market sneezed in February 2006, the markets of the rest of the world—Tokyo, New York, London, Amsterdam—followed suit immediately, for no good reason. A technical adjustment

ent brings these and other socioeconomic changes in China to us in a narrative form. Through the telling of the real stories of his close Chinese acquaintances, he has clothed China's transformation in flesh and blood. This is a work of nonfiction, and Hessler claims that all the characters are real people with real names.

The plights of these migrants are mostly unknown to most Western readers while some of their stories have been circulating on Chinese websites. Hessler traces their journeys not only from rural to urban but from innocence to corruption among the nameless masses. He tells of the first bribe, the sexual advances of Taiwanese bosses, the long working hours, the harsh working environments and the loneliness of uprooted young people—a perspective that is crowded out by China's phenomenal numeric growth. These are marginalized people that are forgotten or ignored by most popular media in China and abroad.

These are marginalized people that are forgotten or ignored by most popular media in China and abroad. **These are real people with very human stories.**

in China was enough to send shockwaves encircling the entire world.

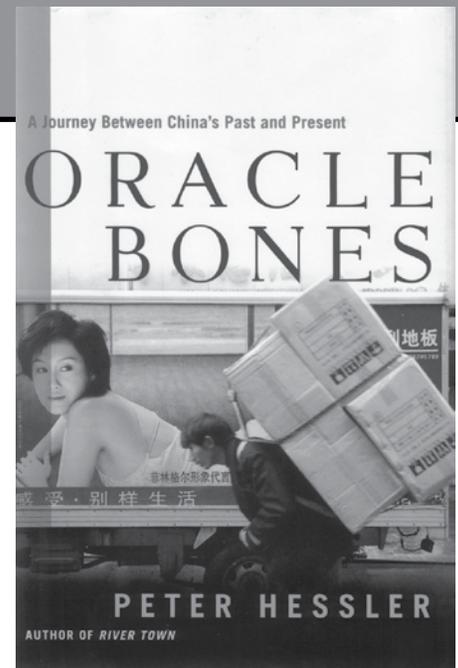
There is another set of staggering numbers to consider when it comes to China. Each year, from 25 to 30 million Chinese are migrating to urban centers in search of the "Chinese Dream." This migration pattern will urbanize up to 800 million Chinese in one generation! This sea of humanity is hard for us to grasp. These millions of peasants are called migrants when they trade their rural homes for the seemingly lucrative urban centers. They are on the move to seek a better life, and they are mostly faceless to us.

Peter Hessler's book, *Oracle Bones: A Journey Between China's Past and Pres-*

ent

These are real people with very human stories. They are like slaves in this new world order all because they are chasing a dream, an endless dream. When they reach the coastal cities, they seek to go further—to America and Europe.

Then there are other people on the fringes of China's megacities. These are the minorities—the Uighurs, Uzbeks, Turks, etc. Through the story of Hessler's special friend, Polat, we see how they are evolving, and how are they fitting into China's grand puzzle. One feels the tension and the uneasiness. Polat starts out in the story as an illegal money-changer and ends up as an emigre to the United States through some dubious means.



Along the way, we get glimpses of the minority community in Beijing—the fake goods trading, the money changing, the prostitution and the displeasure of minorities with the Han Chinese.

Like his Chinese friends, who find themselves stretching or bending their moral codes, Hessler survived in this changing China through various minor infringements of the law. (This book spans the period from 1999 to 2004 during which various Chinese regulations regarding foreign residency were changed

rapidly.) He started out as a clipper for the *Wall Street Journal* in Beijing and then did freelance journalism—though without the proper credentials. In a sense, he became very Chinese.

*Oracle Bones* is a book for those with some knowledge of Chinese history, culture and idiosyncrasies. Hessler writes like a journalist with a fondness for lots of facts, historical details and Chinese phrases and idioms. He weaves the lives of his Chinese friends into a lengthy story. While they do not intersect in real life, Hessler tries to draw a storyline through their common passion for happiness in life. His subject matters stretch through millennia and through a very diverse cul-

ture. This diversity comes through in his book, but it can also be overwhelming to a novice of China.

His language and subject can be too graphic for some. Part of this is due to cultural differences. What is culturally acceptable and mildly expressive in Chinese can become offensive in English. Hessler does not care to soften that. In this way, he brings the readers to the shady world of China, a place where most foreigners have not ventured.

If you are already familiar with issues such as the *Falungong* movement, the birth and growth of the city of Shenzhen, the discovery of the *Oracle Bones*, the NATO bombing of the Chinese Embassy in 1999 and Chinese reactions to it, you will find very interesting and informative on-the-ground reporting of these significant Chinese historical events. Through Hessler, you will also glean Chinese reactions and attitudes towards America. You will find the love-hate relationship played out in real time: America is a friend when Americans are known to the Chinese.

This is a book for those who are not afraid to rub shoulders with the common, and perhaps marginal, people of China.

**Chan-Kei Thong** is the author of *Faith of Our Fathers* and president of *Leadership Development International (LDi)*. He is a Singaporean who has been residing in China for more than 20 years. ■

### The Effects of China's Global Trajectory

Continued from page 3

century communist doctrinaires.

Of practical interest to the church is the concept "all things belong to God." A unique twist to this is that God promised Israel certain property, which was not to belong to others, and this was further divided between the Israelite tribes. Israel is His chosen people (and by adoption Christians are also). The root of property, the concepts of intellectual property and rights are actually rooted in Judeo-Christian teachings and not Western (European) thinking. Could it be that we have yet another opportunity to take China back to the creation narrative and be a part of the renaissance of China?

### Voice of the Church

The "Mediterranean Sea era" lasted for twenty centuries, and "The Atlantic Ocean

era" lasted for five centuries. Now is the start of "The Pacific Ocean era." Mission has moved similarly. The church in China is undergoing a massive change composed of fast-graying rural house churches, growing Three-Self Churches, migrant churches, and emerging business and professional churches. The church is not only peering into the global arena but also learning to sense her role in redemption. Could it be that the church has a response to the "unstable, unbalanced, uncoordinated and unsustainable" remark? Could it be that the church has a response to God-centered stewardship in a society that has a nascent financial sector? Could it be that the church has a response to God's command for creation care for the environment and for the transformation of society?

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**Samuel Chiang** serves as COO for TWR International. Based in Hong Kong, he and his family have been assisting the church in China since 1991. ■

### Globalization and House Churches in China

Continued from page 5

blood and tears, should follow their example by further expanding their vision and mission for global evangelism.

The upcoming 2008 Olympics in Beijing and surrounding cities is another example of a global encounter for the house churches. We believe the house churches should mobilize their members to evangelize at every opportunity they have during the Olympic Games.

China's house churches are at a crossroads today. The need to surface from underground and take a seat among the global church is inevitable. How will house churches change and adapt? Will they respond in a timely manner to societal changes and develop the skills needed to minister to non-traditional groups such as migrant laborers, city white-collar workers, overseas returnees, children and college students? Are they willing to change their old, hierarchical, top-down leadership structures to a shared leadership style that is a common practice in churches around the globe? Are they willing to increase their cooperation with one other to achieve synergy in Christ, rather than working only within their small closed circle? How do they want to live out Christ's gospel in society?

We pray that the Lord will continue to use China's house churches to bring millions of lost souls to Christ. We pray that they will benefit from globalization and avoid its bad influences. We pray that they will establish a solid understanding of the Bible and its teachings, while continuing to hold onto their basic strengths in walking the way of the cross. We pray they will grow mightily in the Lord to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

**Esther Wang** is the executive editor of the *Christian Life Quarterly*. She may be contacted at [cclife@sbcglobal.net](mailto:cclife@sbcglobal.net) for further information on this subject or for information about the "Gospel for China Conference 2007." ■

"He will be the sure foundation for your times, a rich store of salvation and wisdom and knowledge; the fear of the Lord is the key to this treasure." Isaiah 33:6

# Resource Corner

## Peoples of the Buddhist World: CD-Rom

by Paul Hattaway

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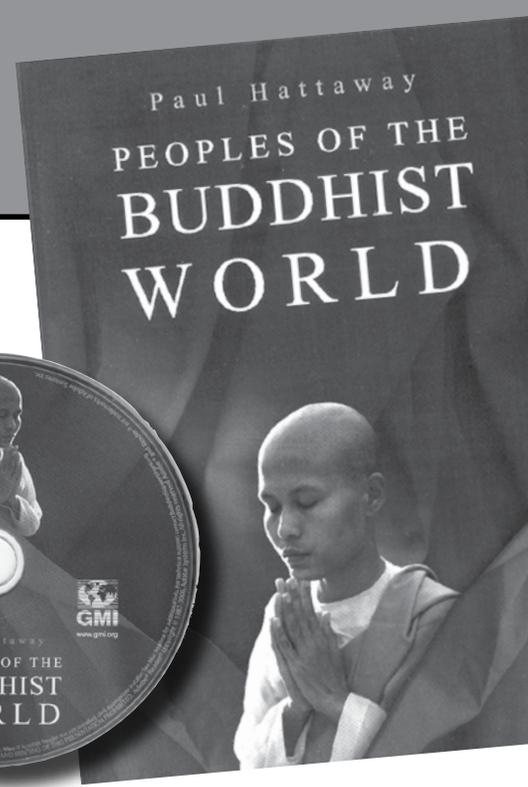
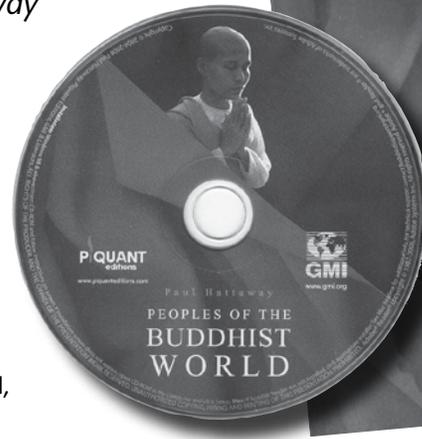
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## Intercessory Notes

### Please pray

1. **For the people of China** who are experiencing rapid change in many areas of their lives. Pray that they will have the ability to cope with the many changes and that they will open their hearts and lives to Jesus Christ who alone can give stability in the midst of change.
2. That as **the government of China** makes new laws and provides direction for the country these will be favorable to Christianity and not impede Christians.
3. **For stability and balance** for the nation of China.
4. **That the church will be God's voice and hands** amidst the rapid change and needs being experienced by the people of China.
5. **That Christians will have the spiritual strength** to remain committed to living according to biblical principles in a nation where new moral standards are often in opposition to biblical teaching.
6. **For rural congregations and pastors** confronting great changes in their lifestyles as well as a need for understanding how to reach others with the gospel in this "new society."
7. **For house churches** as they become part of the global church necessitating changes in their structure, increased cooperation with one another, and new skills to reach a variety of groups with the gospel.
8. **That short-term teams and other Christians who travel to China will prepare well**, realize the importance of their influence in people's lives and seek to serve in a manner that honors Christ and is culturally appropriate.



Brent Fulton, Editor

# China Perspective

## Globalization: Is Anybody Home?

The phenomenon of globalization hit home several years ago as I walked into a Burger King restaurant in suburban Illinois, clutching a newly acquired copy of Samuel P. Huntington's *The Clash of Civilizations*. Surveying the many nations represented among the Saturday lunch crowd—along with those behind the counter serving them—I was somewhat bemused to find that mine was the only Caucasian face to be seen in this decidedly mid-American setting. As I settled down with my burger and book, Huntington's observations about the incredible cultural diversity of a world that is becoming increasingly smaller took on fresh meaning.

The myth of globalization is that "everybody's becoming like us" (whoever "us" happens to be). We consume McDonald's and Starbucks, bank at HSBC, drink Coke, listen to Britney Spears, view the same news footage on CNN (or Phoenix or al Jazeera), wear Nikes and watch stars like Yao Ming perform in the NBA; therefore, we must have a lot in common. The reality is that this generic con-

sumerism merely provides a backdrop against which our less trivial differences stand out in sharper relief.

The only way to make sense of globalization on a personal level is to create our own reality from a vast array of choices in everything from food and entertainment to spiritual beliefs and how to express them. Pondering what to put into this column a few days ago, I found myself seated on a subway in a large Asian city, listening on my MP3 player to a message by a pastor in New York, while around me dozens of fellow passengers were deeply engrossed in conversation in at least three different languages—none with one another. Chatting busily on their cell phones they were (like me) each in a different world, all but oblivious to the presence of those pressing up against them in the crowded coach. Thus, we may find ourselves at home in the same country—even the same neighborhood—but our lives may be worlds apart.

Our custom-designed realities lead to increasingly fragmented lives. We

have the ability to cross cultures on demand—and may do so several times in a day—but our interactions at each of these junctures may have no relevance to one another. At the end of the day we retreat, with the help of our media of choice, into whichever cultural space we find comfortable, seeking a narrative that will somehow string together the disparate pieces of our globalized lives.

Our relationships, not surprisingly, are fragmented as well. Our daily journeys in and out of cultures connect us with many people. Yet the infinite variety of choices available for our individual customized realities means that very few, if any, are able to relate to our lives in its entirety. Nor are we able to relate to theirs.

For followers of Christ, the challenge of globalization is to demonstrate what it means to be at home—to be fully present—in communities where diversity is celebrated yet where a common bond of love allows for genuine relationship. In China, where hundreds of millions are displaced physically because of internal or external migration, or displaced culturally and emotionally due to rapid social change, such communities can provide a welcome response to the realities of globalization.

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

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