



East Gates

INTERNATIONAL

Seeing Beyond the Impossible™

May-June 2016

*D*ear East Gates partner,

Greetings from Seattle and China. As always, we have much to share with you in our newsletter. In June, we had the opportunity to be in Shanghai, Hangzhou and Wenzhou. These major financial hubs seem to change radically each month. The government continues to build housing for farmers and their families, hoping they will work in the city versus countryside. These scenes below are far more common now.

*W*hen it comes to consumerism, the U.S. and China lead the way. One can directly see how it's affecting family life, culture and the younger generation. China is a master at copying the West. Statistics vary, but as of July 1st, there will be about 721.5 million Chinese that use the internet and social networking in China.* That's more than three times the population of the U.S. Like most Americans, Chinese find buying online extremely convenient these days.

*D*isneyland, the Magic Kingdom, is now open in southeast Shanghai. Chinese parents tolerate waiting two-hours in line. With China's "one-child" policy no longer in effect and the middle class with more disposable income, venture capitalists are now funding amusement parks throughout the land.

*S*o how is the globalization of China affecting the Chinese peoples' view of Christianity these days?

*I*n talking with a scholar from the Department of American Studies at Fudan University in Shanghai, she said, "Today, most Chinese view Christianity from three main perspectives: 1) It's a Western religion they would like to make more Chinese. 2) It's a Western religion they would like to observe through the two main traditions by which it was introduced to China -- Catholicism and Protestantism. 3) Christianity is fun.



A Chinese farmer, on the subway, who has moved into the city for work.



Fast speed trains whisk by high-rises built to house farmers and their families as urban sprawl continues to spread over fertile soil.



Cell phone users start very young.



In June, one will find large flat screens with Halloween and Christmas ads in train stations and airports.



* International Telecommunications Union (ITU), World Bank, United Nations Population Division

Christianity is fun. That's a comment worth researching. We will need to revisit that observation to understand the real meaning behind the response. Interestingly, many Chinese become Christians because they feel that anything from the West must be the best. Those who study overseas discover quickly that is not the case.

At present, the Chinese government recognizes five religions -- Buddhism, Taoism, Protestantism, Catholicism and Islam. Within certain parameters, they are allowed to practice their faith in the country. Nowadays, other religions are trying to make inroads -- Mormonism, Jehovah's Witness, Baha'i and many others. Judaism is not on the list because Jews believe one should not evangelize. Their thought is that if one's way of life points to God's truth and the Source, then in time, hearts will change on their own. Interestingly, China's government views Judaism more as a culture versus a faith.

Today, the majority of Chinese in China have smart phones and like for many of us, it has opened a whole new world of news and information that the government can't completely control. When teaching and talking to Chinese of all classes and backgrounds, many questions arise such as: 1) Why does Christianity have over 33,000 denominations? 2) Why do you have so many different translations and versions of the Bible? Don't you only need just one? Everyone seems to have his or her own interpretation anyway. 3) The U.S. has as many human rights issues as China but why does America make it seem like China's problems are far worse? 4) Why are there so many shootings in a country that has, "In God We Trust" on the dollar bill? 5) When Moses wrote the first five books of the Bible, did he envision Adam and Eve naked, standing next to a tree with a serpent wrapped around it like we see in English Bibles? 6) Would Jesus play mahjong, cards or dance? 7) Our church doesn't mind us having a Rolls Royce or other fine things but our pastor doesn't want women to have their ears pierced or wear jewelry based on I Peter 3:3. Why? 8) Does God love believers in the registered and unregistered churches? I think so. Why can't we?

Most of our quality time is spent with believers sitting around a table, face to face, listening to their hearts, answering questions as well as learning from them. It's easy to speak in front of a large group like Jesus did on rare occasions but the most effective times were when He was in an intimate gathering like at the last Passover meal. It's the same way in China. It draws less attention and lives are touched.

"Although I have many things to write to you, I prefer not to do so with paper and ink, but I hope to come to see you and talk with you by word of mouth, so that your joy may be complete." ~ II John 12



Chinese believers come from mixed backgrounds that involve Buddhism, folk religion and strong cultural superstitions. Add to that a myriad of Christian denominational tenets that different missionaries have taught them over the years. When you look in their faces, you have to think, "What's going on inside their heads?"



In June, Christina was able to share how a believer's true identity is found in the God who created them. The more they study the Bible and allow God's Spirit to reveal His true nature and theirs, they will be more at peace. A confused soul is one who gives allegiance to Buddha, Jesus Christ and the god of this world. It will never work. Sarah (left) is gifted in healing and deliverance. Christina and Sarah work together while in China. Powerful testimonies to come in future newsletters.



A Buddha beads and Cross bracelet. We tell believers, you cannot serve two masters. It may be a form of godliness but there is no good luck or power! (Matt.6:24; II Tim.3:5).

CHINA'S DEAF MINISTRY -- 10TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION JUNE 10, 2016



There are over 30 million Chinese in China who are deaf. That's approximately one-tenth of the U.S. population. On June 10th, hundreds gathered from 14 provinces to celebrate the 10th anniversary of China's Deaf Christian Ministry. 22 different fellowships, all related to assisting the deaf, were represented, including East Gates.

As a whole, Chinese culture does not place great value on those who are deaf or physically challenged. As a result, many of them lack genuine love and parental instruction when they are young.



Frustrated family members do not have the time, patience or tools to communicate with their inner world. Some give up completely. Therefore, many in the deaf community today are socially inept, ignorant about gender relationships, chastity and marriage. That's why there is a great need for teachers who can express God's truth to them in a way they can understand.



No matter how gifted the signer, more sign language needs to be developed to properly convey Bible scripture. For example, the words *tolerate* and *suffer* have different meanings but the same hand signs.

As teachers shared stories, it was amazing to find that most of them felt inspired to start a deaf ministry exactly 10 years ago. As one teacher expressed, "It was as if God was saying to us all, *'It's time to love my deaf children in China.'*"

During the celebration, key leaders stated how it was so encouraging to have East Gates walk alongside them during times of intense personal trial and ministry hardships. Brother Zhao, host and organizer said: *"East Gates' greatest gift is their vision and showing us what can be done. They give us hope."*



Brother Zhang (left) from Zhangzhou and Brother Zhao (right), host and organizer from Yueqing, celebrate in praise and worship for what has been accomplished for the deaf in a decade.



East Gates team (left to right): Bassanio, Sonny, Christina and Michael cutting the 10th anniversary cake.

"AND IN THAT DAY SHALL THE DEAF HEAR THE WORDS OF THE BOOK..."

Isaiah 29:18

Much progress has been made for China's Christian Deaf community in the past decade. We pray more gifted and qualified teachers, committed to loving the deaf as Jesus would, will come alongside us. Michael Tseng (right) is our main trainer for the deaf and focuses his time in the southeast Fujian province area.



GOD'S LOVE HEALS....

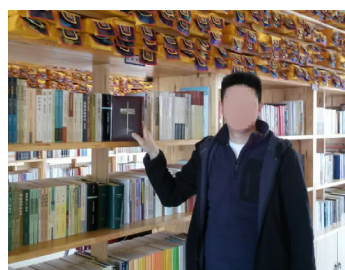
"THE EARS OF THE DEAF WILL BE UNSTOPPED."

Isaiah 35:5

In closing, while in Shanghai, we met with Brother Li, whose ministry field is Tibet. His calling, along with other team members, is to share God's Word with the lamas or Tibetan Buddhist spiritual leaders in Seda, Ganzi prefecture, Sichuan province. Here, 50,000 to 60,000 monks may study at the largest Buddhist Institute in the world. Over the years, Li's team has developed good relationships with a few local lamas. The Chinese Bible is now in one of their libraries. We've introduced Brother Li to Brother Yang, whom we've featured before. He has a calling to reach the Tibetans. Please pray for all of us as we listen to God's leading in this special area.



Sedar monks worshipping during a festival.



Li's co-worker locating a Chinese Bible in the local Sedar library.



Li's teammates with Tibetan Buddhist monk friends in Sedar. Faces pixelated for privacy.

Your faithful prayers and gifts continue to prepare the Bride of Christ in China. Thank you.

John E. Graham *Christina*

Ned and Christina Graham