

## Resources for working with mainland Chinese

Designed as a 'tool-kit' to dip into, to help you:

- learn more about contexts and cultures mainland Chinese students come from and return to, so you can more fruitfully share the Gospel with them and help them prepare to flourish in a context which is very different from the UK;
- find resources to use with them and offer them.

Please let me know of others you recommend. **Recent additions are highlighted in yellow.**

This was written for the UK but has much of use to people meeting Chinese students elsewhere.

### 1. FOR YOU

#### Culture and the full gospel

In any cross-cultural ministry it helps to understand the dominant cultures that colour thinking and lifestyle, including our own. The Gospel speaks to *all* cultures, but sometimes our own cultural background limits our view of the whole Gospel. The following books are good introductions for anyone seeking to share Christ across cultures:

- *The 3D Gospel: Ministry in Guilt, Shame and Fear Cultures*; Jayson Georges, 2014. Short, clear, with plenty of examples, helps us grasp the full implications of the gospel in three main cultures: guilt-innocence; shame-honour; fear-power.
- *Crossing Cultures with Jesus: Sharing Good News with Sensitivity and Grace*; Katie Rawson, 2015. Katie has years of experience in ISM, especially with East Asians. Using Jesus as her model for crossing cultures she offers stories, examples, passages for discussion and more.
- *Honor and Shame: unlocking the door*; Roland Muller, 2001. A quick read, giving the basics of the 3 major cultural world views.

#### On Chinese students in general

- Youtube has clips of a [BBC documentary on Chinese education](#). Note the significance of the *gaokao* (university entrance exam) for family as well as student and the military training at university. For more on the *gaokao* see two CCTV documentaries, starting [here](#).
- *Heading Home with Jesus: Preparing Chinese Students to Follow Christ in China*; Debbie D Philip; Wiliam Carey Library, 2018. Tells the life stories of seven who studied abroad and what happened after their return. It describes the mainland context and 'offers a new perspective for understanding what happens when Chinese students encounter Christians abroad and what needs to happen if they are to continue following Christ after returning home.'
- *A Christian's Pocket Guide to the Chinese*; OMF, 2008. Available from Friends International
- [What are our Young People Thinking: How to Witness to Youth of the Post 1980's, 1990's and 1995's](#): Three short thought-provoking articles, translated from Chinese.

#### Social and political context

- BBC country profile <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-13017877>
- [ZG Briefs](#) news summary by China Source: current Chinese politics, religion, society, culture.
- *Wish Lanterns: Young Lives in New China*; Alec Ash, Picador, 2016. The stories of six young people living in a China which is very different from that their parents grew up in.
- *China's Millenials: The Want Generation*; Eric Fish, Rowman & Littlefield, 2015.
- *Home is a Roof over a Pig*, Aminta Arrington; Overlook, 2012. She uses her experience in China & origins of Chinese characters (as in the book title, 家) to explore culture and behaviour.
- *Age of Ambition: Chasing Fortune, Truth and Faith in the New China*; Evan Osnos; Bodley Head, 2014.

- *Only Hope: Coming of Age Under China's One Child Policy*, Vanessa Fong, Stanford University Press, 2004. Implications of being an only child for individual Chinese and their parents.
- *We Have Been Harmonized: Life in China's Surveillance State*, Kai Strittmatter, Old Street Publishing, 2019. The author argues that a new form of dictatorship is taking place in China.
- <http://prayforchina.blogspot.co.uk/> sign up for a weekly short email: pray *and* be informed.

Novels and films can also be enlightening and good to talk about with Chinese friends.

### History

It helps to know something about the Opium Wars (what Britain did and the way we acquired Hong Kong); the founding of the People's Republic (1949); the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976); the dates of Deng Xiaoping's opening up China; the June 4<sup>th</sup> Incident, 1989; Hong Kong's return to China in 1997; that China entered the WTO in 2001 and held the Olympics in 2008. Although much of this happened before today's students were born, they are not unaffected by it as their parents and grandparents experienced much of it, particularly the Cultural Revolution. Googling is one way; the following may be more entertaining:

- [Chinese History Podcast](#), brilliant half hour talks by Laszlo Montgomery. To start, I suggest the 3 minute intro, CHP-001, then The Opium War, CHP-006.
- There are many autobiographical books about life in China before opening started in 1979. The best known is *Wild Swans* by Jung Chang. Others include:
- *A Chinese Life* by Li Kunwu and P Ôtié, Self Made Hero, 2012. Amazing book: autobiography in graphic novel form. Tells the history of the People's Republic, up to 2010, through the eyes of an artist born just after it started. He is the same age as parents of today's students.
- *Son of the Revolution* by Liang Heng and Judith Shapiro, Fontana Collins, 1984.
- *Moving the Mountain* by Li Lu, MacMillan, 1990, includes his experience of 1989.
- *Life and Death in Shanghai* by Nien Cheng, Flamingo, London, 1995.
- *Chinese Lessons: Five Classmates and the Story of New China* by John Pomfret, Holt, 2007. Pomfret studied in China in 1981, returning 20 years later to find five former Chinese classmates (peers of today's students' parents) and write their life stories.

### Church

- I recommend [ChinaSource](#), 'a trusted resource founded .. in response to a growing need within the faith-based community for accurate information on China and its church'. You can sign up for a regular e-letter. The site links to [Chinese Church Voices](#) (translated articles by Chinese church leaders).
- China Soul for Christ published three bilingual Chinese/English videos which tell the story of Christianity in China. Excerpts have been loaded on to Youtube. It is called [Missionary](#)
- These three books give an overview of church history up to 2006:
  1. *Jesus in Beijing*, David Aikman (2006 updated edition)
  2. *China's Christian Millions*, Tony Lambert, (2006 updated edition)
  3. *The Chinese Puzzle*, Mike Falkenstine: less historic detail, but helpfully provocative.
- *Surviving the State, Remaking the Church: A Sociological Portrait of Christians in Mainland China*; Li Ma and Jin Li, Pickwick, 2017. Covered the period 1949 to 2017, throwing light on the church in China today and giving glimpses into the lives of individual Christians.
- *China's Urban Christians: A light that cannot be hidden*; Brent Fulton 2015. Discussion of the church in China today and its context. Aids understanding of the context in which returning Christians live. It helps to have read something else about China first.
- *God is Red: The Secret Story of How Christianity Survived and Flourished in Communist China* by Liao Yiwu, HarperOne, 2012. Interviews & comment; very moving.
- OMF UK produce a monthly 'praying for China' email with short articles.

- [Insight](#), Friends International online journal, Issue 20, Summer 2019, has an article with case studies about three new challenges Christian returnees may face.

#### Thought, philosophy and other religions

- [Jesus: The Path to Human Flourishing: The Gospel for the Cultural Chinese](#); l'Ching Thomas, Graceworks, 2018.
- *The Geography of Thought: How Asians and Westerners think Differently – and why*, Richard E. Nisbett, 2005. N Brealey Publishing. Helpful comparison of East Asian and Western thinking.
- *One World – Two Minds: Eastern and Western Outlooks in a Changing World*, Denis Lane, 1995, OMF. Booklet. Explores how differences in background and thinking play out in political, educational, social, and particularly religious contexts. Each section looks at: Western Approach; Eastern Approach; when East meets West; Christian Viewpoint.
- Google *Yang Liu* and *ost trifft west* (east meets west) to see Berlin-based artist Yang Liu's thought-provoking red and blue illustrations comparing east and west (or Chinese and European) thinking. Great to discuss with Chinese friends. More of her work can be seen on her website: <http://www.yangliudesign.com/>
- Confucian influence runs deep. Concepts to understand include: face; filial piety, hierarchy in relationships; reciprocity in relationships; *guanxi*. These originated long ago but are ingrained in behaviour and communication. Google provides some definitions and examples as does..
- *Watching the Tree: A Chinese daughter reflects on happiness, spiritual beliefs and universal wisdom*, Adeline Yen Mah, 2000: a personal explanation of certain Chinese traditional ideas e.g. yin and yang; feng shui; filial piety. To some students these will be old-fashioned superstition, but they may still unknowingly be influenced by them. Also, some traditional practices are making a comeback.
- *'A Christian's Pocket Guide to Buddhism'*; Alex Smith, OMF, 2009 (also from Friends Intl.) Some Chinese students say they are Buddhists but mean various things, from being a knowledgeable adherent of one of the main schools to having beliefs which are a mix of Buddhism, Daoism and folk religion. Interest in Buddhism is increasing in China.
- Daoism: few students will claim to be Daoist but some Daoist concepts are deeply ingrained. See books by David Burnett e.g. *'The Spirit of China: The Roots of Faith in 21st Century China'* or Chapter 7 of *'Clash of Worlds'*.
- *'A Biblical Approach to Chinese Traditions and Beliefs'*; Daniel Tong; Genesis Books, 2003. One Christian response to certain Chinese festivals, beliefs (e.g. ancestor veneration); traditional Chinese medicine). Very relevant to Taiwanese, South East Asian and Hong Kong contexts but also to some mainland Chinese.
- [The Souls of China: The Return of Religion After Mao](#); Ian Johnson; Vintage, 2018. Portraits of individuals and families (Daoist, Buddhist, Christian) and the state's approach to them. One of the groups looked at is the Early Rain Church in Chengdu. Great observation and empathy.

#### Conferences

Look out for weekend or day Christian conferences about China and the Chinese: e.g. by OMF or COCM.

#### Training

OMF Diaspora Returnee Ministries can run training sessions for your church or area. Contact: [drm.cdrm.uk@psmail.net](mailto:drm.cdrm.uk@psmail.net)

## 2. TO USE WITH MAINLAND CHINESE FRIENDS

Gospel films and a new TV series are available in Chinese or with subtitles:

- [The Jesus Film](#) from the Jesus Project, is the oldest and is based on Luke's Gospel.

- [Another from the Jesus Project](#) is based on John's Gospel.
- [The Hope Project](#) - 'an 80-minute dramatic motion picture presentation of God's epic story of redemption as revealed in the Bible from creation through the promised return of Christ.'
- [The Chosen](#) – the most recent is an app-based TV series about the life of Jesus. Compelling.

#### Evangelistic Bible study courses

- St Helen's Bishopsgate's Mandarin ministry have a bilingual introduction, [the Life Course](#). It uses John's Gospel as a starting point, an approach also recommended by veteran OMF missionary, Keith Ranger.
- For a series of bilingual Chinese English studies in Mark go to [www.seaturtles.org.uk](http://www.seaturtles.org.uk) These have questions and comments which help students start relating Christianity to the Chinese context from day one. There are other studies in John and Romans 8 too, all designed to help students think about the gospel from a Chinese standpoint.
- Before a New Testament-based course, it can help to look at *Genesis chapters 1 to 3* which introduces God as creator, with a purpose for, and deep interest in, human beings. The Fall is important to discuss, as traditional Chinese thinking holds that humans are born good and perfectible, becoming damaged by their environment. Evidence that Jesus existed and is not legendary, is important early, as is explanation that science and religion are not incompatible. The Second Coming and the new heaven and earth need discussing; many Western courses do not mention them. *The World We All Want* by Timmis and Chester is a notable exception.
- [Jackson Wu](#) suggests that if starting with Adam & Eve then certain things should be borne in mind, when reading the Bible with Chinese. Wu's blog has resources for contextualising for those from honour/shame backgrounds. Eg. see <http://jacksonwu.org/2014/04/07/a-gospel-video-from-honorshame-com/>
- There are various resources introducing the Bible, Christianity and the Gospel to international students in general. *Christianity Explored* (international versions) is one.

#### Discipleship

- *Heading Home with Jesus* has much to say on this.
- help Chinese friends know how to read the Bible regularly, to nourish themselves, without needing recourse to courses or booklets.
- help them get an overview of the Bible so they can picture themselves and the church as part of the kingdom God is building, with a past and a future. The Philip Project does that. Vaughan Roberts' *God's Big Picture*, is available in Chinese from Taiwan (see Seaturtles website, below).
- help students explore Biblical responses to issues they will face on return, especially in **relationships** (in the **family** and at **work**) and settling in a **church**. The new believer will benefit from time spent with a mentor who is keen to understand the Chinese context. It is also important that they meet Chinese-speaking Christians who know the mainland Chinese context. COCM and OMF Diaspora Returnee Ministries can help with that.
- The **Thrive retreat**: run by OMF and COCM. Includes a weekend away (or online) (used to be called CRR) and material to use with a mentor before return home. Retreats are in Chinese, with speakers & small group leaders from China or with first-hand experience of China. Focuses on issues and opportunities being Christ's ambassador in China. The next UK one is in June 2021. Contact [drm.cdrm.uk@psmail.net](mailto:drm.cdrm.uk@psmail.net) for information.
- [Complete Surrender: Knowing God in life's challenges and anxieties](#); Zia Muller, 2020: a short 12-day devotional, in English or Chinese. By email from the author or members of OMF CDRM.
- Chinese churches and Chinese Christians: please try to ensure your friend experiences worshipping, praying and sharing with other mainland Chinese. It is important not just that

they assent intellectually that Christianity can be Chinese but that they *see and feel* it. Attending a COCM camp is a great way for them to do this (see below).

- *The I.D. course* by Sue Burt, Friends International
- Studies of Romans 8 and Malachi, on the Seaturtle link below.
- *Returnee Handbook – On the Road of Homebound Journey*; By Overseas Campus Magazines. Written in US but relevant to UK. Chinese and English language versions available from COCM bookroom. An updated Chinese version was published in 2012. An alternative to *'Think Home'*, it can be used in tandem with, say, the *I.D. course*.

CONTACTS in China. FOR YOUR USE ONLY: NOT TO BE PASSED TO RETURNEES

Email [followup@lincministries.org.uk](mailto:followup@lincministries.org.uk) with your friend's name, the city they are returning to, contact details, approx. date of return and brief details of their spiritual status. If they have Christian contacts in that city, LINC will ask them to contact your friend.

Emailing, phoning, Skyping, China: assume communication is monitored. Same applies to the use of Wechat/Weixin, whether in China or the UK. Guidelines, written by Sue Burt, on how to avert unwanted attention for friends in China, are usually sent to new staff and affiliates. BUT DO STAY IN TOUCH UNTIL YOUR FRIEND IS SETTLED IN A CHURCH.

### 3. FOR CHINESE STUDENTS AND SCHOLARS

- Overseas Campus, magazine from US publisher of the same name; <http://ocm.oc.org/>
- [Living Water](#), articles and podcasts on various subjects; from COCM
- *Beyond*, video by China Soul: testimonies of Chinese living in the West, including older scholars. Much of this is on Youtube e.g. [www.youtube.com/watch?v=MQlz0x-NeoU](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MQlz0x-NeoU)
- *Biographical Dictionary of Chinese Christianity* ([www.bdconline.net](http://www.bdconline.net)): database of short biographies of influential Christians in China (foreign and Chinese) up to mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. Great for helping mainland Chinese see that they have a Christian heritage.
- *Missionary*, by China Soul for Christ: history of Christianity in China (see 'Church' above)
- Edwin Su, former editor of Overseas Campus Magazine, has a lecture series in Chinese on (a) [the history of the Christian Church](#) and (b) [the history of the Church in China](#).

#### Apologetics

- *Youzi yin (Song of a Wanderer* in English) by Li Cheng; available from Serve China Trust or COCM: testimony and apologetics from Mainland Chinese scholar's perspective. Found very helpful by many. English translation available.
- [The Faraday papers from Cambridge](#) written by eminent Christian academics (e.g. John Polkinghorne; Denis Alexander) about the relationship between religion and science; online, translated into Chinese.
- <http://veritas.org/talks/> online talks and apologetics by Christian academics

#### Where to get Chinese Christian books:

- COCM <http://bookroom.cocm.org.uk/> for Bibles, books and music.
- Serve China Trust (for Bibles and *Song of a Wanderer*); David Wells, tel: 0115-9283290, email [drwells@globalnet.co.uk](mailto:drwells@globalnet.co.uk) or [val.owens@friendsinternational.org.uk](mailto:val.owens@friendsinternational.org.uk)
- If COCM can't help and you can wait for transatlantic shipping, excellent sources in the US, with bilingual websites, are
  - Ambassadors for Christ <http://www.afcinc.org/en-us/home.aspx>
  - Asia One Bookstore <http://www.asianbookone.com/index.php>

## Apps

- [WeDevote Chinese Bible app](#) available for Android and iPhone

## Websites

- [www.seaturtles.org.uk](http://www.seaturtles.org.uk) – bilingual website for returnees to China, by LINC Ministries: Interviews with returnees on experiences of church, work; Bible studies; sermons; lists of good Christian books in Chinese; links; also a seminar on singleness. **Have a look.**
- Gospel Home is the mandarin-speaking congregation of St Helen's, Bishopsgate. <http://www.gospelhome.org.uk/> has sermons in Chinese.
- [www.baojiayin.com](http://www.baojiayin.com) Chinese company who sell legitimately published Christian books over the Internet in China. [www.goodnewsinchina.com](http://www.goodnewsinchina.com) is the English site.
- [www.kemushen.com](http://www.kemushen.com) Desiring God; includes John Piper sermons in Chinese.
- [www.biblegateway.com/versions/](http://www.biblegateway.com/versions/) The Bible online, various Chinese versions at the end, under Z; includes the new Contemporary Chinese Bible
- [www.digitalbiblesociety.org](http://www.digitalbiblesociety.org) for Chinese Bible downloads

There are many other Chinese websites. Like English ones, some are great and some are not.

## Conferences and retreats

1. COCM [www.cocm.org.uk](http://www.cocm.org.uk) has events all year round for mandarin-speakers. Many Chinese students (and their parents!) have found COCM camps to be turning points:
  - For non-believers: Gospel camps at year-end for families and students;
  - For new believers: Bible camps for students; Easter camps for families and students.
2. Chinese Returnee Retreats, jointly by OMF and COCM (see Thrive above).

Debbie D, December 2020.