

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.

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 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. There is also a [video by a visiting young American Chinese](#). 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; William 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.
- COCM have a five-minute video introducing today's younger Chinese students and how to reach them: 'Who are they?'

Social and political context

- BBC country profile <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-13017877>
- Zgbriefs: news summary: current Chinese politics, religion, society, culture. At www.chinasource.org China Source is brilliant: see below.
- *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. Excellent.

- *China's Millennials: The Want Generation*; Eric Fish, Rowman & Littlefield, 2015. Again, a very enlightening read.
- *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. A great read; humane; up to date.
- *Only Hope: Coming of Age Under China's One Child Policy*, Vanessa Fong, Stanford University Press, 2004. Eye-opening account of the implications of being an only child for individual Chinese youngsters and their parents.
- <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 and significance of Deng Xiaoping in opening up China; the June 4th 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 Podcasts, brilliant half hour talks by Laszlo Montgomery, Media Teacup, at <http://www.podbay.fm/show/489369498> if you don't know where 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 the reform and opening up era of 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 the current day, 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](http://www.chinasource.org/), '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 their regular e-letter. <http://www.chinasource.org/> links to [Chinese Church Voices](http://www.chinesechurchvoices.org/) (translated articles by Chinese church leaders) and [ZG Briefs](#) (see above).
- If you want to read more, any of these books would give you an overview of church history, the different kinds of church and the general situation (as at 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' leaflet with short articles e.g. 'The Church in Fujian' or 'Playing for God: Testimony of a Basketball Player (Jeremy Lin Shuhao)'.
- <http://friendsinternational.uk/resources/downloadable-resources/our-periodicals/insight/68-insight-issue-11-winter-201314/file> has an article on returnees' experience of church in China and helping prepare them to settle.

Thought, philosophy and other religions

- *The Geography of Thought: How Asians and Westerners think Differently – and why*, Richard E. Nisbett, 2005. N Brealey Publishing. Thought-provoking and research-based 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 it is important to become aware of are: face; filial piety and hierarchy in relationships; reciprocity in relationships; *guanxi*. These originated long ago but are ingrained in relational 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, anecdotal and helpful explanation of certain Chinese traditional ideas e.g. yin and yang; feng shui; filial piety. To some Chinese 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 can mean a variety of 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. Friends International used to have single sheet briefings on Buddhism and Daoism so ask your area leader. Or 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.

Conferences

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

Training

OMF Diaspora Returnee Ministries can run training sessions for your church or area. Contact drm.cdrm.uk@psmail.com

I run sessions about helping mainland Chinese prepare to return and would be happy to talk with you about related matters: debnott@gmail.com

2. TO USE WITH MAINLAND CHINESE FRIENDS

The above could be discussed with Chinese friends, to get their perspective.

Evangelistic Bible studies

There are various resources introducing the Bible, Christianity and the Gospel to international students in general. E.g. *Passport to the Bible*, by Wagner et al, IVP; *The World We All Want*, by Timmis and Chester; *Christianity Explored* (international versions).

- For a series of bilingual Chinese/English studies in Mark go to 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.
- With some Mainland Chinese, I have found that before a New Testament-based course, it can help to look at *Genesis chapters 1 to 3*. Genesis 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, only becoming damaged by their environment. Some evidence of the existence of God, and that Jesus existed and is not legendary, is important early, as is explanation that science and religion are not incompatible.
- Keith Ranger recommends starting in John 1 (no-one has ever seen God but Christ has made him known, in history). [Jackson Wu](http://www.jacksonwu.org) points out 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/>
- "*The Broken Family Diagram*" by Katie Rawson, can be used with studies on Luke 15, Parable of the Lost Son: Katie Rawson. Illustrating the human problem as a broken relationship can be very meaningful to Chinese. She says "These diagrams are not intended as a "one-shot" gospel presentation, but rather as a way of giving newcomers to the Bible the big picture." See the short video at <http://ism.intervarsity.org/resource/broken-diagrams>

NB I would love to hear from any of you who have found other fruitful ways/resources for sharing the Gospel with the younger generation of Chinese students.

Discipleship

Heading Home with Jesus has much to say on this but, in brief, three helpful things to do are:

- help Chinese friends know how to read the Bible regularly, to nourish themselves, without needing recourse to courses or booklets.
- help them acquire an overview of the whole 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 and teaches interpretation of the Bible. Another resource is *Stranger on the Road to Emmaus*, by John Cross, in English. Vaughan Roberts' *God's Big Picture*, is available in Chinese from Taiwan (see Seaturtles website, below).
- as soon as possible 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 with Chinese-speaking Christians who know the Chinese context. The **Chinese Returnee Retreat, Thrive**, offers that:

Thrive: developed by staff from OMF, FI and COCM. Includes a Returnee Retreat (CRR) and material to use with a mentor before returning home. Retreats are in Chinese and speakers have first-hand experience of China. Focusses on issues and opportunities in following Christ in China, with emphasis on a change in deepest values. The next is in June 2019. Information will be emailed to FI people.

Other helpful resources are:

- Chinese churches and Chinese Christians: please try to ensure your friend experiences worshipping, praying and sharing with other 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*.
- COM, a US-based ministry for Chinese students have four good [preparing to return studies](#)

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

Email 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

Testimony

- Overseas Campus, magazine from US publisher of the same name; <http://ocm.oc.org/>
- *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=MQIz0x-NeoU
- *The Cross: Jesus in China*, by China Soul: DVD in Chinese and English, available to buy from COCM Bookroom, much is on Youtube. Includes many testimonies of Christians in China; also stories of missionaries and earlier leaders of the Chinese faith. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fQIblAtXv80>
- *Biographical Dictionary of Chinese Christianity* (www.bdconline.net): database of short biographies of influential Christians in China (foreign and Chinese) up to mid 20th century. Great for helping mainland Chinese see that they do have a Christian heritage.

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.
- Professor Leaf Huang video lecture on creation and evolution, in Mandarin. From Serve China Trust (see Val Owens).
- <https://www.faraday.st-edmunds.cam.ac.uk/Papers.php> The Faraday papers are written by eminent Christian academics (e.g. John Polkinghorne; Denis Alexander) about the relationship between religion and science; available 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/](http://bookroom.cocm.org.uk/) for Bibles, books and music.
- Serve China Trust (Bibles and *Song of a Wanderer*); David Wells, tel: 0115-9283290, email drwells@globalnet.co.uk or 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>

Websites

- 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 good sermons in Chinese.
- www.baojiayin.com Chinese company who sell legitimately published Christian books over the Internet in China. www.godnewsinchina.com is the English site.
- www.kemushen.com Desiring God; includes John Piper sermons in Chinese.
- www.goddoor.com
- www.biblegateway.com/versions/ The Bible online, various Chinese versions at the end, under Z; includes the new Contemporary Chinese Bible
- 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 has events all year through 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, by OMF with COCM (see Thrive above).

Debbie D, January 2019.