



The Burning Bush—Online article archive

God at work behind the Bamboo Curtain



The inside of a government controlled church

Two Free Presbyterians, who are seeking to carry out missionary labours from a base near Beijing in China have sent the following report.

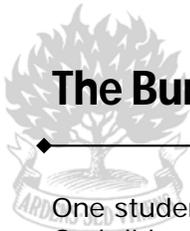
China, home to 1.3 billion people (around 22% of the world's population), is experiencing a religious revival and now boasts the fastest growing and largest Christian Church in the world. This is even more remarkable when you consider that China declared itself an atheistic country after the Communist party took control in 1949. At that time there were less than 750,000 believers and the Communists rapidly imprisoned or killed all leading church members and pastors and boasted by the mid 1970's that Christianity had ceased to exist in China.

This revival has been, by and large, limited to underground or unregistered churches although some embers have permeated the government controlled three "self churches". In our recent stay in one city we visited one of the three self churches (see picture) and learned that the church has had to expand to allow 4,000 worshippers access. However, the number seeking admittance is so great that they now have three morning services each of which is packed out.

James Hudson Taylor IV recently confirmed that the number of house church Christians in China probably was somewhere between 60-80 million. This would be in line with the evidence of our visit where we met house church leaders who each had thousands of Christians under their control. My wife and I attended one fellowship run by a fundamentalist pastor from USA which has 22 young students from the nearby university meeting in his home. All of these students were converted in the last 12-18 months and were full of evangelistic zeal for the Lord. Many of the Christians we met read through the complete Bible every month and are open in spreading their Christian faith.

Whilst working in one university in the last few months we have had the privilege of pointing four young students to Christ. These young believers have joined a local house church which has sixty congregations associated with it. Persecution of believers is still a very real threat although in some cities even Christian bookstores have been authorised to open.

There are many opportunities for Western graduates to teach English and share the gospel with young people there. The only qualification is that you need to be a native English speaker with a university education. It is indeed rare in our experience to speak to young Chinese students and face apathy or outright hostility to the gospel. This is remarkable as the children are taught in school that evolution is a scientific fact and that there is no God.



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One student shared with me that his textbook had a chapter dedicated to proving that God did not exist. Surely as the Scriptures testify: “None can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?”

If you are interested in working as a “tentmaker” for at least 6 or 12 months in China, then please contact the editor of The Burning Bush who will be able to put you in touch with those who can furnish more details.