If we displease God, does it matter whom we please? If we please Him, does it matter whom we displease?
Leonard Ravenhill

Prayer Study #269
First Love Ministries, Inc of Perry, Georgia USA
Operation World: A Look at China
(all information taken from *Operation World 7th Edition* by Jason Mandryk)

An emphasis at First Love should be that we are part of the Body of Christ worldwide, not just the American Church. We should make ourselves aware of the Church in other countries, especially the Persecuted Church. The Voice of the Martyrs and Open Doors are two organizations that keep us abreast with what is going on in other parts of the world. The Lord is calling some here to GO, some to stay so they can give and can provide resources, but all to pray. In this study we will look at the People's Republic of China.

The People's Republic of China is located in Asia and is the fourth largest state in the world. The population continues to grow with 1.3 billion reported in 2010. The capital of China is Beijing (Peking). Over 44% of the population regards themselves as non-religious. 28.5% identify with local folk religions. 12.5% are Buddhist. Nearly 8% are Christian (Of this number, the state reports 50 million Christians in unregistered house churches). 1.87% are Muslims.

Answers to Prayer

1. The survival and growth of the Church, in spite of some of the worst persecution of Christians in the world, are two of the decisive events of our generation. The Church has grown at a staggering rate, unparalleled in history, going from 2.7 million evangelicals in 1975 to over 75 million in 2010.
2. The faith and commitment of Christians, again in spite of the harshest and most widespread persecution of the Church in history, is legendary.
3. Christians are now found in every stratum if Chinese society.
4. Christians are engaging in social causes and impacting millions.
5. The government's attitude and approach toward the Church is changing. The government realizes it cannot stop 50 million believers. It also applauds the work of faith based organizations that are trying to address social ills.
6. There is growing unity within the Church.

7. Missions from China to unreached minorities in China and unevangelized nations beyond is flourishing.
8. Christian media in China has been powerful. For many years Christians have broadcasted into China with little visible evidence of response. Now Chinese Christians are able to listen to Christian radio, get on the Internet, and publish Christian materials in Chinese.

Prayer Challenges

1. The window of opportunity for spiritual receptivity may not be open indefinitely.
2. Chinese rising role on the world stage make some say this will be the "Chinese Century." Yet the country remains politically oppressive, and the government is wracked with corruption.
3. China remains officially atheist with well over 70 million members of the Communist Party.
4. Challenges of population growth have caused a great gender gap with men outnumbering women by 30 to 40% in some areas, widespread abortions mandated by the government's one child policy, lack of young workers, and insufficient elder care.
5. Social and health needs in China overwhelm the available resources. Millions have TB, diabetes, and hundreds of thousands are HIV positive. China has the highest rate of suicide in the world (nearly 300,000 per year.
6. China faces environmental disasters on a scale unforeseen. Pollution of water sources, for example, has surpassed crisis levels.

Foreign Christians are not welcome in China as missionaries, but foreign experts and businessmen and teachers of English, community development workers, tourists, and Chinese family members who return to China to visit their ancestral homeland are welcome, and often Christians can get in through one of these avenues.

Bibles are in short supply in China. Millions of Christians in China remain without access to a Bible. Sometimes one Bible is shared among 100 house church members.

The counting of Christians in China can be clouded by those who prefer publishing lower numbers (the government) and those who prefer larger numbers (Christian agencies). Recently, state officials have published statistics on the number of Christians that is more in line with claims by Christian researchers.