



# PRAY FOR EAST ASIA

## **Pray for Urban China**

Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name

— Philippians 2:9

## **Country Profile**

### **About Urban China**

China is urbanizing at a rapid rate. With 40,000 people moving to the cities daily, and an estimated 1 billion people who will be dwelling in China's cities by the year 2030, this staggering, unprecedented rate of human migration makes urban China one of the most densely populated, and highly influential places in East Asia. This 'urban billion', made up of people from every social strata in Chinese society - from the nations' political leaders, to the migrant from the countryside, and everything in between - have ended up in the mixing pot of urban China, people all hoping to 'make it' in the competitive world that is modern China. From here, policy and commerce dictate life for the whole of China, and for the small-town and rural Chinese flocking here in droves, bringing with them their hopes and dreams of a better life, from here they bring home to the rest of the nation not only money, but ways of life and even ideologies that they have picked up in the big city.

By 2030, more than 220 cities in China will be home to populations of 1 million or more, housing over 70% of China's population. Of these, at least 20 have a population of 7 million or more. This demographic shift, coupled with China's rapid economic growth, has brought many sociological challenges for the whole country. These include a widening gap between rich and poor, intense work pressure, strains on the family (especially for the almost 300 million migrant workers), an increase in human trafficking, environmental concerns (as pollution has reached dangerous levels), and a deepening moral crisis.

### **The Urban Chinese church**

The Chinese church, along with the rest of all other 'religious groups', went through a period of extreme oppression in the 1960s. However, the 1990s began a period of growth and revival in the urban church, despite continued persecution. It is difficult to know for certain the number of Chinese believers, estimates range from 80 - 120 million believers in the whole of China — a large number, yet still a drop in a bucket considering the massive remainder of the population (1.3 billion people) who are Buddhist, Muslim, or, for the most part, atheist.

The cities themselves are home to particularly low concentrations of Christians, no more than 3%. From large 1000-people strong churches meeting in office buildings, to small 'family' fellowships meeting in people's homes, the urban Chinese church is quite different to the rural house-church scene, for the large part made up of intellectuals - professionals and university students - though can even be a place where the 'gold-collar' (the ultra rich) fellowships with the 'black-collar' (the migrant worker).

The openness of being a believer in urban China varies - in some cities believers are often able to worship openly



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in house churches, and declare their faith to their neighbors and colleagues, while in other equally large cities, local authorities crack down on even the Government sanctioned church. Even as policy on religion tightens, we see the role these believers as vital, being a light in these massive urban centers, reaching their own sphere of influence, and bringing the hope that Jesus gives into the lives of the people crammed around them, and beyond them to the rest of the nation.

## Population

- **China:** 1.4 billion
- **Urban China:**
  - **1990:** 300 million (29% of China population)
  - **2010:** 670 million (50% of China population)
  - **2030:** 1 billion (71% of China population)

## Percentage of Christians

- **Whole nation:** up to 10%
- **Cities:** 2-3%

*Lord, you know the needs of The Urban Billion. We pray that you would meet the needs of all levels of society from the businessman to the student and, from parents to children - both the privileged and the underprivileged, from those in power to those cast aside by society. Please work through Your church to bring hope to people in every walk of life and share the good news of Jesus with them.*