

Piercing the Darkness

“if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.” John 8:36

China's minorities are a small yet significant proportion of the total population. It is thought that about 9% ie. 117m people belong to China's minorities of whom there are more than 500 distinct ethno linguistic people groups. Among them are the Hui and Uighur, Muslim people with a long and proud history who have now spread across and settled in many parts of China. There are some very small Christian communities among them but by-and-large these people have no awareness of the gospel and little opportunity to believe. In this issue we bring a couple of glimpses of how the Lord is working among these people in 2 different parts of China. Please pray for the unreached peoples of China and uphold those whom he is calling into this work. Thank you for your prayers, interest and support.

An Unexpected Friendship

It has been our prayer since the beginning of our term to have Chinese friends who have no knowledge of English, so that we can practice our Chinese. Well it seems our prayer has been answered.

From our point of view, some of the tastiest noodles in town are to be found in the 'Hui' restaurant close to our flat. (The 'Hui' are a Muslim minority group mostly found in Mid and North West China). We have been going regularly for the last three years, we are known by the young owner, his wife and his brother. However, apart from the pleasantries and asking about their new baby, our relationship hadn't got much further than that.

It wasn't until the beginning of November when they asked for a photo of us, that a rapport began. After some hesitation we decided to invite them (Michael and Mary) to our flat for an afternoon. The thought of communicating in

Chinese for two hours seemed daunting to say the least and besides, would they even accept an invitation from non-Muslims? To our surprise and delight they accepted and said they were free that afternoon! We quickly ran home to prepare for our visitors and rang a friend 'in the know' to pick her brain about how to be sensitive to their culture and not offend them. We were told "sweet tea and dried fruit would be safe". The afternoon was enlightening to say the least.



Hui Market Trader

Quite separated by their religion and culture from the majority Han Chinese, the 'Hui' seldom intermarry and keep strictly to their traditions. We learned that Michael had only met his sixteen-year-old bride on their wedding day! Arranged by a matchmaker, she was chosen from a small town half an hour away from his. After the wedding celebrations they left their province, to travel four days by train to a city in SW China to build his noodle bar business.

Soon after the wedding Mary became pregnant and had their first child about a year ago. (Minority people in China are allowed more than one child). We had been asking Mary on most visits to the restaurant about her baby and so when they came to our house we had prepared some questions especially for mothers. As my wife got her book out and asked her first question, Michael stopped talking and listened intently. I told him what they were doing but he just kept staring at them. After a few questions it became clear Mary was getting a little upset. They explained that their baby wasn't with them but in their home province with the paternal grandparents! Because of the restaurant business Michael said, there wasn't enough time

to care for their child so that's the way it had to be. He said, Mary consequently cried often at night. We explained about a mother's heart being knitted together with her baby's and so her crying was very normal. We were certainly honoured that they would share such personal things.

Since that day, we've spent an afternoon in the park together as they had a day off for a Muslim Festival. The restaurant is open 24/7, so being able to spend time together with them isn't easy. In an effort to try to overcome this, my wife had an idea that she could ask Mary to teach her knit! So once a week my wife has been sitting with Mary around her coal stove in the noodle bar learning how to knit. They have asked if we are Muslims and we said no, we responded that we believe in Jesus Christ. We so want our lives to shine and bear witness to them. If we're honest, we feel really out of our depth but maybe that's not such a bad place to be.

CG & LG ~studying Chinese in SW China

Please pray that the bonds of friendship you have just read about would continue to grow and that many Hui people may find in God a loving heavenly father through faith in His Son.



Uighur craftsman

A Spiritual Battle

The native population of Xinjiang Province in the far Northwest of China there are Uighur people, who have their own language. They are predominantly Ardent Muslims, who are defensively proud and protective of their distinctive heritage. Quite a number of them come to my city to study as we are the nearest major university town – though it takes them 2 or 3 days by bus and train!

This year there are a couple of dozen of them at my University. They are very community minded and hospitable and like to readily get to know other minority groups – including westerners. It has been my privilege right from the start of term to have been befriended by about a dozen of these in particular; they have faithfully visited my home every Monday night for months and frequently visit at other times or invite me to social events. There is just one tiny and very basic Uighur restaurant nearby where many of them often eat. I have got into the habit of frequenting it and hence getting accepted and acquainted with a wider number of the regulars.

I am planning to travel in Xinjiang next summer and visit many of them on their home territory. Several of the lads in particular have become very good friends. I know they appreciate the friendship and I have the privilege of them being quite devoted in their care for me.

Some of them will not be here in the second semester, though there will undoubtedly be some new Uighur folk; I have had opportunities to be very open about my faith and to share my standpoint, but Spirit meets powerful Muslim Spirit and there is a battle!

PB ~teaching English in NW China

Please pray the Lord might strengthen these special relationships and that many Uighur people would open their hearts to the message of the gospel.

**To support the work and for further details and information about opportunities, please contact
Kathy Porowski – CFC Coordinator P.O. Box 10444, Santa Ana, CA 92711-9998.
Caring for China is a 501 (c) 3 registered nonprofit organization.
To make a tax deductible donation to Caring For China,
send checks to: Caring For China 3300 S. Fairview St. Santa Ana, CA 92704**