



East Gates

INTERNATIONAL

Seeing Beyond the Impossible™

July - August 2019

*D*ear East Gates partner,

It's hard to believe we're now in August already. 2019 seems to be flying by. Thanks to your genuine prayers and gifts, East Gates' Kingdom work in China continues despite the increasing challenges (i.e. persecution, monitoring, censorship) and now the volatile situation ensuing in Hong Kong for the past three months.

After Britain handed Hong Kong over to China on July 1997, China established a "one country, two systems" governance model whereby Hong Kong was allowed to oversee its own political and legal system and China would be responsible for its national defense and foreign relations. Over the past 22 years, however, Hong Kong has sensed its coveted freedoms erode to where they no longer want to stay silent.

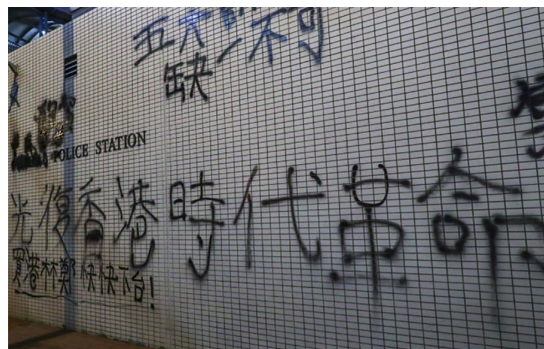
While in Hong Kong two weeks ago, we spoke with different locals and co-workers. As always, the situation is complicated or as the Chinese would say, 复杂 (*fuza*). Also, most everyone on this side of the world communicates using China's most popular messaging app called "WeChat" (*weixin* or micro messaging) and Facebook's equivalent, "WhatsApp." Unfortunately, these social media platforms are littered with legitimate and fake news. With today's technology, it's hard to discern if "on the scene" video shots are real or not real. One thing is for certain, much of today's news is meant to frighten and intimidate. Confuse and bemuse. Entertain and defame.

*I*n the meantime, China's troops are preparing to bring order to Hong Kong if necessary. In a public announcement, Yang Guang, spokesman for the Chinese Cabinet's Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office, made it clear to what he called the "*small group of unscrupulous and violent criminals and the dirty forces behind them*" by stating, "*Don't ever misjudge the situation and mistake our restraint for weakness.*"

Guang's comment has now gone viral and it made us think how 2000 years ago, our Lord and Savior, while suffering on the Cross for humanity's pervasive sins, could have easily said the very same thing but He didn't. He didn't because He knew what was perceived as immense weakness, was in reality, breaking the curse of eternal death and opening the floodgates to eternal life. Today, millions of Chinese know this Truth and it has set them FREE. Turn this page and you will see.



According to the *South China Morning Post*, close to 2 million or 1 in 7 Hong Kong citizens came out to protest China's extradition bill (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2019_Hong_Kong_extradition_bill) which is presently suspended. Photo: Sam Tsang, SCMP



Hong Kong's more vitriolic and radical protestors have been chanting and vandalizing government buildings with the Chinese characters "Liberate Hong Kong, revolution of our times." Beijing's patience is running thin. Photo: Edmond So, SCMP

FOR THIS I WAS BORN, AND FOR THIS I CAME INTO THE WORLD, TO BEAR WITNESS TO THE TRUTH. EVERYONE WHO IS OF THE TRUTH HEARS MY VOICE.

JOHN 18:37

One of the main reasons why our living God came down in the flesh was to reveal Truth. In fact, He literally stated that this is why He was born (John 18:37). In a world now filled with disinformation and deception, those who have chosen the Way, the Truth and the Life (John 14:6) are honing their spiritual and physical senses to discern between good and evil, righteousness and unrighteousness. Most importantly, they're learning how to live and apply these biblical virtues in a Godly manner.



The joy of the Lord is present in all the co-workers as they serve together.

Chinese believers whom we have supported and equipped for years have been going out and sharing God's Truth with all those whom God leads them to. Recently, they spent a lot of time preparing for a celebratory gathering whereby they would share not just God's good news but Life-giving news!



Each gathering takes much prayer, preparation and financial investment.



Interested attendees gather to listen.



Presentations go well into the night. The focus is on God's heart for harmony in the family and His eternal plan for humanity.



The attendees receive prayers, Bibles and church information.



A believer gives out flyers and raffle tickets for free gift drawings.

* Side note: Given the present religious climate, church names and locations are not mentioned.

It's always encouraging to hear these wonderful testimonies because unfortunately at the governmental level, there is much accusation and disharmony. On July 20, 2019, the Chinese Christian Council (CCC) published an article on its web site (<http://en.ccctspm.org>) stating it emphatically disagreed with the US State Department's "Statement on China" which addressed the Chinese government's serious suppression and discrimination acts against its religious believers. The article mentioned how heads of the Chinese Christian Churches said it's not surprising how the US government has politicized religious issues and used religion to interfere and apply pressure on China's internal affairs. The CCC emphasized how in recent years, Chinese Christianity has adhered to the Three-Self principle of being self-governing, self-propagating and self-supporting. Now in the new era (with President Xi Jinping at the helm) they were hoping to continue with these guiding principles along with being a vibrant member of the universal church. Emphasis was placed on the fact the present Chinese government desired full freedom of religious belief for Chinese churches and Christians and based on all the positive developments over the years, it was not empty talk.

Despite impressive factoids such as China now having 21 national seminaries, 21,000 full-time evangelists and the central government-run, Amity Printing Press printing its 100 millionth Bible as of July 2012, Christians inside and outside of China strongly feel these progressive developments occurred *prior* to the present regime. With the present leadership, there has been a major shift. Christianity with Chinese characteristics now means withdrawing Bibles from internet distribution, heightened video surveillance of churches, removal of thousands of Crosses, increased levels of persecution and just recently the revision of children's textbooks that mention "God," "Christ," or the "Bible." According to the Chinese Ministry of Education, the 6th grade reading list contains four overseas writers so Chinese students can better understand the culture of other countries. One of the books is the classic, *Robinson Crusoe* by Daniel Defoe. In the scene where Robinson Crusoe rescues three Bibles from a wrecked ship, the Chinese revised version of the book substitutes the word "Bibles" with "a few books." Obviously, this changes the whole essence of the novel because it negates Robinson Crusoe's conversion to Christianity through the Bible. Chinese youth are not naive and realize such changes significantly alter the literary quality and original intent of the author.

So although the CCC may have its particular perspective and rhetoric, it appears most Christians inside and outside of China feel quite different. Although there is still engagement with overseas churches, there seems to be a major disconnect with what is said and what is now the current trend. East Gates is fully aware of all these issues and tries to stay out of the contentious religious and political debates. Our focus is to look for the positive and be the best asset we can be to all Christians in China.



There are days when you feel like this store vendor in Seattle!



We assist and provide counsel to a brother whose vision is to build a hostel/retreat with the very top floor being a prayer room for all nations.



We teach House church brothers and sisters how to go deeper into prayer and how to pray with each other. Much needed for these times.

Wherever two or more are gathered in my Name,
there I AM in the midst of them.

Matthew 18:20



It's always inspiring to see our fellow brothers and sisters prayerfully and faithfully studying God's Word in this age of great deception and disinformation. They know it took the sacrifice and investment of people like you for them to receive it. Thank you.



Communion



Church service

*T*hank you for your faith, hope and love in the God we serve together during these momentous times.

Please keep our staff and Chinese brothers and sisters in your daily prayers. Truly, God hears and answers the prayers of His saints. With God ALL things are possible! Luke 1:37

In deep gratitude and shalom...

Ned and Christina

Ned and Christina Graham