



Steve's China Trip Report Jan '11

Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. Pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ. (Colossians 4:2-3)

Thank you for your prayers and interest in this latest trip. The trip went well and I've arrived home safely and on time (no unexpected stay in Moscow this time!) I took financial gifts of £800 from members at OBF and distributed these among the Sharon Orphanage work, the Morning Light Centre and the Doves Wings Orphanage.

The Work

I visited 2 cities and spent time with 17 CCSM workers. These people are involved in a variety of situations. Several are students at ASM (for more info please look at CCSM's website – they still need a couple more students for next year's ASM if you are interested), some are studying, some are helping to run Doves Wings (the new orphanage for babies). Another couple are helping at Morning Light (a day centre for children with severe physical handicaps) as well as supporting the work in a wing of an orphanage for special children, some help run ASM, one person oversees a sponsorship programme paying for the education of children in poor families (I think there are around 80 children in the scheme – if anyone is interested in further details about this please let me know and I can direct you to the website), another person has been involved in offering some medical support to victims of last year's earthquake, some are helping at a school in a very poor rural region and others are involved in support for the local house church.



Books donated by children at OBF



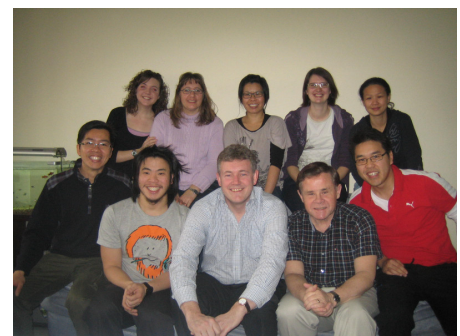
Morning Light centre for special needs children

The majority of my time was spent talking with these workers and praying with them. Alongside this I preached at the Sunday meeting for company workers and taught a module at ASM for the 8 students which was entitled, "How to Read the Bible for all its Worth". This involved 11 hours of teaching a brief overview of the Bible and considering how to interpret the different types of literature it contains. The course was very well received.

The Challenges

Alongside the regular difficulties of overcoming jet lag, adjusting to the more spicy food and having to cross several lanes of fast moving traffic every time I wanted to walk anywhere, there were a couple of fresh new challenges to overcome. The first occurred on arrival at my first city in the North West of China. Having travelled for 22 hours without sleep I arrived at the bus depot ready to catch a taxi to my destination. It was nearly 9pm in a city of several million. Speaking no Chinese, I'd brought with me a slip of paper with the address on it, but the first 5 taxis I flagged down all refused to take me because they didn't know where it was (I assume that's why, but I couldn't actually understand what they were saying). I've learnt not to panic – there's always a solution. A nearby hotel was able to translate '27 Middle School' for me and the bell boy hailed a taxi. I was then able to point and nod my way the apartment from the school (by the way, the schools are numbered in this city rather than having names).

The other challenge was the overnight train I caught between the cities. I had been hopeful of catching some sleep, but the radiator was right by my feet and I simply counted down the hours as the 3 strangers I was sharing the compartment with snored away.



ASM students

The Highlights

There were several. It was great to visit both Morning Light and Doves Wings for the first time. The Doves Wings trip was very brief and the babies were having an afternoon nap, but it was still worthwhile so as to understand a little bit more about the orphanage. At the Morning Light centre I spent an afternoon helping the children with their activities. It was also good to meet many of the staff who are Chinese believers.



Doves Wings orphanage with toys donated by children at OBF

In one of the places I visited I met a volunteer called S who was a believer from a local house church. He shared with me how he became a Christian through some American University friends 7 years ago. He was baptised and is now in his late 20s, but has still not shared with his parents that he has become a Christian for fear of disappointing them. He said that they were 'traditional Chinese'. However he now feels it is the right time to share with them, partly because they are proud of his achievements at University and he thinks that this will stand him in good stead. It's difficult for me to understand the family pressure that some Christians in China face.

Continue in Prayer

As always, I received more than I imparted during the trip. There were a couple of things that people in the organisation shared with me that remind us of the need to continue in prayer for this great country of China. The first was concerning the 3rd Lausanne Convention for World Evangelisation that took place in South Africa in October. I knew that some Chinese House Church leaders were planning to attend this conference (I've been told that up to 200 had hoped to go), however none made it. They were prevented from travelling by the authorities. It is thought that this clamp down was linked to the fact that no-one from the Three Self Church had been invited, though it may still have happened even if they had been. We need to remember our brothers and sisters, particular those in leadership, and continue to pray for them. Many (not all) enjoy more freedom than in the past, but they still face many challenges.



Cots at Doves Wings bought with money donated by members at OBF

Secondly, I heard a story from people working among Tibetans. The Tibetan people group have been very difficult to reach with the gospel, and Tibetan Buddhism has an extremely strong hold upon them. It isn't just their religion but involves their way of life, culture and identity. Hudson Taylor said in the 19th century, "It's easier to take a cub from a tiger than to convert a Tibetan to Christ". Many consider this to be true today. However, reports from one of the 5/6 Tibetan monastery towns describe how one of the senior lamas (a lama is the name of their spiritual leaders) met with 2 other senior lamas for a day of contemplation and discussion. This is quite common. But on this particular occasion it is understood that he took a Bible with him into that meeting and all three were profoundly affected by what they read. Please pray for this people group. Many recently have felt that an openness to the gospel will begin with the Tibetan spiritual leaders, and have been particularly praying for this to happen.



View from my apartment – usually you can't see beyond the second building because of the poor air quality

Future Plans

I'm hoping to return to China in the autumn. I'm also considering organising a team for 2 weeks next Spring (with OBF's agreement), probably with a focus on intercession and if possible to visit several different areas and to see the work among Tibetans, Muslims, orphans and other areas. If you are interested in going let me know. Also, I'm delighted to say that CCSM International Director, Ross Paterson and his wife Christine are coming to OBF on Sun 15th May 2011.