

Urban Han Chinese



Quick Facts

Population:* 450,000,000

China: 420,000,000

Thailand: 7,000,000

Myanmar: 1,600,000

Vietnam: 1,200,000

Religion: Ethnic, Buddhism

Believers: 0.44%

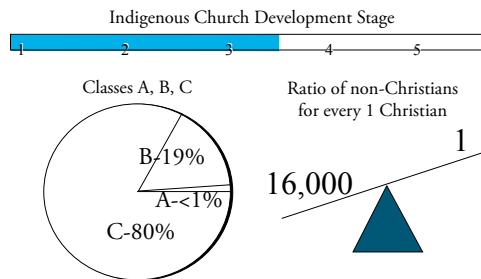
Scriptures: NT, OT

Ministry Tools: JRGT

C Status: 3 **M Status:** 3

MS Subgroups: 500+

*Populations living in least-evangelized cities and subgroups.



Class A- Are members of a Culturally Relevant Church
Class B- Have close access to a CRC, but have not yet joined
Class C- Have no reasonable or close access to a CRC

evangelical Christian. They are included here because of the uneven distribution of Christians in their population. Rural China, for example, is over 20% Evangelical, but Urban China is less than 1%. Over 400 million Chinese live in these least-evangelized cities, making this the world's largest block of unevangelized humanity. There are also 6 major Han sub-groups, totalling 100 million people, which are still unreached.

How To Pray:

☞ There are 40 Chinese mega-cities (over 1 million in population) which are less than 1% evangelical Christian. Pray for spiritual breakthroughs in each one.

☞ Pray for the growth of strong house-church networks in every least-evangelized Han-chinese sub-group.

☞ Ask God to use the faith and spiritual gifts of rural-Chinese believers who immigrate to the cities to reach the more secularized urban-Chinese.

☞ Pray for spiritual breakthroughs on the 1,200 universities and college campuses in China, and for the salvation of the entire Communist party.

Every year, 9 million Urban Han Chinese die without Christ.

Identity: The Han Chinese are the largest ethnic group in the world, though like many large peoples they are not homogenous. Hundreds of dialects and cultural traditions have developed over the centuries.

Lifestyle: The urban Chinese lifestyle ranges from the extremely rich to the poorest of the poor. There are over 1 million millionaires living in China's cities. There are also many millions living in shanties and unsanitary conditions. Every year massive numbers of rural Chinese come to the cities looking for work. They are exploited, underpaid, and harassed by local authorities seeking to stem the tide.

Customs: The Chinese have an incredibly rich cultural history, famous for their inventions of gunpowder and paper, as well as for their unique art forms. The Cultural Revolution in China changed many customs, as well as added a few, such as chain smoking.

Both Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping lived to ripe old ages, smoking packs of cigarettes each day to their grave. Another cultural revolution enhancement is the practice of *guanxi*, or getting good "connections" with those in power. With limited goods controlled by party officials, the Communist Party has become a club for the elite suppliers.

Religion: Chinese traditional religion centers on the veneration of ancestors, the appeasement of various spirits for good fortune, and the balancing of spiritual forces called *chi*. The latter practice, known as *Feng Shui*, has become popular even in the West. Buddhism is making strong inroads, especially among the Han diaspora in Thailand, Taiwan, and Singapore. These new converts are now investing heavily in sending Buddhist missionaries to the mainland.

Christian Outreach: The Chinese are the only group included in this volume whose overall population is over 1%

Urban Han Chinese (cont.)

LEAST REACHED CHINESE SUB-GROUPS



| Sub-Group | Population | % Evan. |
|-----------------|------------|---------|
| Xiang | 38,000,000 | 0.13% |
| Hakka | 35,000,000 | 0.34% |
| Thai Chinese | 6,000,000 | 0.23% |
| Dan | 4,500,000 | 0.22% |
| Pinghua | 2,400,000 | 0.21% |
| Burmese Chinese | 1,600,000 | 0.14% |
| Shaozhou | 1,000,000 | 0.50% |
| Waxiang | 350,000 | 0.14% |

XIANG

The Xiang, or Hunanese, are the largest least reached people in the Han Chinese people cluster. They can be found primarily in Hunan province, as well as in Sichuan, Guanxi and Guangdong. They are famous for being the fiercest warriors among the Chinese and for their historic resistance of foreign invasion and influence. Culturally they have been described as the most conservative and clannish of the Han Chinese peoples, and exhibit a strong national pride regarding their heritage and identity. Over one hundred years ago, a Hunanese soldier once boasted to a Christian missionary of Hunanese men, “there is no danger of their ever believing in Jesus or His religion taking root.”

HAKKA

The Hakka (a word which means “strangers”) are scattered throughout southern China, with a concentration in Guangdong. It is believed that they originated from northern China, possibly from a non-Chinese origin, though today they all claim to be Chinese. Over the centuries they were forced to continually migrate south. As a result of this frequent migration, unlike other Chinese sub-groups which dominate a particular region, the Hakka live in non-contiguous isolated communities surrounded by other Chinese peoples. Traditionally, the Hakka lived in large, completely enclosed circular compounds made up of an extended family that might include over a thousand people. There are also two million Hakka in Taiwan, 1.7 million in Malaysia, and 650,000 in Indonesia. In almost every area of China and among the Chinese diaspora they have proven the most resistant to the gospel.

THAI CHINESE

The Chinese in Thailand make up around 12% of the population, making them the third largest Chinese population after China and Taiwan. Most have adopted Buddhism, the Thai culture and language, and Thai surnames (something forced upon them in the 1920s). Their origins were mostly from Southern Chinese provinces, beginning with Chinese traders from Fujian and Guangdong that intermarried with Thai women. Later as immigration from China increased, cross-cultural marriages declined significantly. Over time the community became incredibly wealthy, provoking widespread anti-Chinese sentiment. As trade with China has increased over the last decade there has been a revival of interest in Han culture and language, especially among Thai Chinese young people.

DAN

The Dan are also known as the Tanka, or “boat people.” Traditionally, this entire group lived on house-boats, along with their chickens, cats and dogs. They worship a fishing goddess called Tin Hau and construct floating temples in her honor. Though the Chinese insist the Dan are a non-Chinese tribal group, the Dan themselves do not accept this designation, and speak a dialect of Cantonese known as Yuehai. They have been much maligned and persecuted throughout the centuries, and the communist government has banned them from living on boats. As a result many migrated to Hong Kong (around 150,000 at one point), Vietnam, Malaysia and Thailand. There are very few known believers among them in China, though outreach in Hong Kong has seen positive results.

Urban Han Chinese (cont.)

40 Least-Evangelized Chinese Mega-Cities

City, Chinese Population, % Evangelical

| | | | | | |
|--------------|------------|-------|-------------|-----------|-------|
| Beijing | 10,000,000 | 0.30% | Baotou | 1,900,000 | 0.79% |
| Zibo | 4,000,000 | 0.20% | Changde | 1,800,000 | 0.11% |
| Changchun | 3,400,000 | 0.29% | Jingmen | 1,800,000 | 0.17% |
| Taiyuan | 3,200,000 | 0.22% | Leiyang | 1,800,000 | 0.08% |
| Liupanshui | 3,000,000 | 0.50% | Leshan | 1,600,000 | 0.06% |
| Zaozhuang | 2,800,000 | 0.43% | Lianyuan | 1,600,000 | 0.09% |
| Guiyang | 2,600,000 | 0.19% | Fuling | 1,500,000 | 0.33% |
| Lanzhou | 2,600,000 | 0.46% | Gongzhuling | 1,500,000 | 0.20% |
| Qiqihar | 2,300,000 | 0.35% | Qinzhou | 1,500,000 | 0.17% |
| Suizhou | 2,300,000 | 0.13% | Tianshui | 1,500,000 | 0.33% |
| Tai'an | 2,300,000 | 0.22% | Wafangdian | 1,500,000 | 0.33% |
| Anshan | 2,200,000 | 0.45% | Zigong | 1,500,000 | 0.27% |
| Pingxiang | 2,200,000 | 0.11% | Mianyang | 1,400,000 | 0.29% |
| Shijiazhuang | 2,200,000 | 0.23% | Liuzhou | 1,300,000 | 0.19% |
| Xiantao | 2,200,000 | 0.14% | Qujing | 1,300,000 | 0.15% |
| Guigang | 2,100,000 | 0.19% | Xiangxiang | 1,300,000 | 0.12% |
| Nanchang | 2,100,000 | 0.33% | Honghu | 1,250,000 | 0.16% |
| Datong | 2,000,000 | 0.15% | Zhangjiakou | 1,100,000 | 0.18% |
| Jilin | 2,000,000 | 0.15% | Panzhuhua | 1,000,000 | 0.20% |
| Suining | 2,000,000 | 0.25% | Xining | 1,000,000 | 0.40% |

Each of these 40 Chinese cities is over one million in population and less than 1% evangelical Christian. In these 40 cities are over 100 million individuals. Less than 200 small evangelical churches are permitted by the Chinese government in these cities. Any evangelistic or religious activity outside these sanctioned facilities is illegal.

Despite the difficulties, however, the tide is beginning to turn according to many leaders. With massive immigration from rural areas rapidly increasing the population of every city, it has become difficult for the government to monitor unregistered church activities. At the same time, the draw of young people into the cities has significantly slowed the growth rate of house-churches in the countryside for the first time in thirty years. Even so, should this growth be transferred to the cities, the net result will be greater for the Christian faith, as the trend in China is towards increased urbanization. Pray that those believers who move to the city looking for employment will also bring with them the power of the gospel and the light of Christ into their workplace.

China's future may very well depend on how the country embraces Christianity, and many Communist leaders understand this reality. The pursuit of economic prosperity has replaced the communistic idealism of the past, creating both moral uncertainty, as well as new freedoms for Christians who make a positive contribution to China's national progress. Remarkably, the Communist government has actually been examining the connection between the Christian faith and the prosperity of the West. Additionally, high level talks between Communist party officials and leaders from Christian countries have been exploring ways that Church and state can work harmoniously together for the good of society.