



East Gates

Seeing Beyond the Impossible™

INTERNATIONAL

May - June 2017

*D*ear faithful East Gates partner,

We hope your summer has gotten off to a great start. It's hard to believe we're already half way through 2017!

East Gates continues to provide Bibles throughout China. Local believers usually send appreciation letters and photos afterwards showing they received the Bibles in good order and are putting them to use right away.

For example, recently we received a letter from the Mai-yuan Church in Fujian Province. They were delighted to receive the 100 large-print Bibles we sent through a co-worker, Brother Xu. It replenished the Bible shortage they had in the church which was mostly used by the public. They said, "Bibles always bring blessings!"

Interestingly, in their letter, they made note of the fact that more believers are using the electronic version of the Bible at church. They've been discouraging this practice because they believe the inspired Word was carefully composed, written, translated and published with great attention to detail. Also, over the years and behind the scenes, different individuals and organizations have invested much time and finances so the Bible can be published and distributed throughout China. The Mai-yuan church leadership says it not only encourages its believers to read the printed Bible but to love the Lord and to become a true disciple that lives for Christ. Many parents have started their children out at a young age to read Scripture like this two-year old boy on the right. They sent us a recording of him reading Psalms.

The Mai-yuan church closed their letter to us by stating, "May God remember and bless all of those who donated these Bibles to us! May God use these Bibles so more will come to know the Lord who gives "New Life" to people!



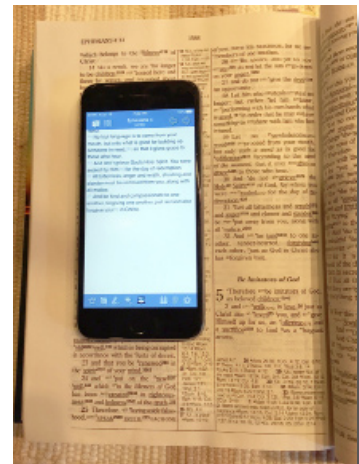
Mai-yuan church Bible Study



The issue the Mai-yuan church raises regarding reading Bible scripture on an electronic device versus book form is a common one nowadays, not just in China but around the globe. The fact there are over 100 million Bible app users in the world reveals this trend. Everything is designed for convenience these days so if one's "life" can be managed through the smartphone, why not access to God's Word? The challenge pastors face, however, is when they find believers scrolling for a Bible passage during a sermon, only to find they are also checking Facebook, tweeting or texting. A Chinese woman pastor in Shanghai wanted our perspective. This was our answer.

Nowadays, one of the greatest threats to the Christian faith is distraction and it comes in many forms like the insatiable desire to constantly check one's cell phone every few minutes. Texting, surfing, checking email, tweeting or posting instagrams constantly keeps the mind going to and fro. One is conditioned to listen to the "ping" and immediately respond or not respond. In this hi-tech age, there has been an exponential increase in knowledge but less wisdom in how to live. Most young people have a myriad of facts but don't understand the greater context of how they all connect. They're too busy staying up with the latest apps, updates and upgrades. As a result, it's too easy, even in the faith-based sector, to create God in your own image or subconsciously want to be God. We shared with a Christian youth group one day how Billy Graham was once asked, "If you could live your life all over again, what would you do differently?" His answer was, "I would spend more time with the One whom I'm going to spend eternity with." The youth replied, "What does that mean?"

We won't explain our entire discussion with this Chinese woman pastor but we did emphasize the fact that given the inevitable cyberspace and virtual world that has come upon us, *how* we teach and *live* out the Bible is all important when it comes to making true disciples for Christ. For example, when it comes to reading Ephesians 4:29, be it on an electronic device or from the Bible, do we live it? Is whatever that comes out of a Chinese believer's mouth a spiritual blessing to the recipient? Are believers obeying this Scripture wholeheartedly or is it viewed as just a suggestion like most principles and rules in China? We told her if the approximately two billion Christians on this planet lived out Ephesians 4:29, in the fullness of the Holy Spirit, what a different world this would be. The same goes for I Thessalonians 5:18. If each professing Christian gave thanks for *everything*, despite what situation or circumstance they were in, then their family life, churches, workplaces and communities would be a far more harmonious place. She nodded her head.



It's not the number of Bible apps you have but how you apply the Word that counts.

When it comes to teaching about God in China, we reveal how our Creator's nature can be found in the micro and the macro, the atom and the galaxies. He even embedded His characteristics in the Hebrew alphabet and words. This is where Chinese and Jewish cultures are similar. The core essence behind the Chinese and Hebrew language is symbolic, much like mathematics. Therefore, there was a time when the Chinese and Jews could grasp the profound meaning and nuances in their daily words throughout conversation. Today, with the digital age, this precious aspect of language is being lost.

For example, in Chinese, my (Christina) name is written 郭瑞玉. In the romanized Chinese or pinyin form it is written, Kuo rui-yu. "Kuo" is my family name and "rui-yu" is my given name. The literal translation of 瑞 (rui) means "pure" and 玉 (yu) means "jade." But if you ask a Chinese scholar who knows classical Chinese, he will refer you to the well-known Kangxi dictionary used during the 18th and 19th centuries (with over 47,000 characters) and show you where 瑞玉 means "pledge of fidelity" or "the covenantal relationship between a husband and his wife."

When I discovered this from my Chinese professor in Nanjing years ago, it gave me a far greater appreciation for the careful thought my grandparents and parents gave to choosing my name. It made me reflect on the new name God will give to each one of us in the Kingdom to come (Rev.2:17, 3:12). So, if the genuine meaning of Chinese words can be found in ancient texts and antiquated dictionaries, then how much more can greater truths be revealed in the original language of the Bible ~ Hebrew? This is where it gets exciting. Our Chinese students thought so too!

For example, the Hebrew word for “man” is *ish* and the word for “woman” is *ishah*.

Man	<i>ish</i>	יִשׂ
Woman	<i>ishah</i>	יִשָּׁה

Notice the two Hebrew letters in “red” that both words have in common, יִשׂ. This is the Hebrew word, *esh*, which means “fire.” Also, if you take the two Hebrew letters that are not common to both words, the ה and the ו, they signify immediately to any Hebrew Bible scholar the name for God or Yahweh, written יהוה. So what does this imply? It means the following...

When Jewish sages read the Hebrew text that has been passed down through the millennia, like Genesis 2:24, they see what we don’t see. As I explained in the simple example of my Chinese name, the meaning of each word, by themselves or in combination thereof have far deeper connotations than just the literal translation.

Genesis 2:24

“For this cause a man shall leave his father and his mother and shall cleave to his wife; and they shall become one flesh...”

Bereshit 2:24

דָּבָר רִשְׁבֵּל וַיְהִי וַתִּשָּׂא בְרָדָו וּמֵאֲתָאָו וַיִּבְאֲתָא שְׂאִי בְּזוּעֵי וְכִלְעַ

Hebrew scholars see in this simple sentence that within the heart of each man and woman abides a consuming fire. When they marry and become one flesh, there can be a fire that destroys or a loving fire that nurtures and kindles their relationship, depending on whether they allow God to dwell in their midst. Although the word for God is not seen in the English translation of Genesis 2:24, it is very present in the Hebrew. In fact, the words translated, “and they shall become” is הָיָה or *hayah* which in Hebrew means “I AM” (Exodus 3:14). So, when a man and woman consummate themselves in marriage and become one, with I AM in their midst, they are now partners in the act of divine creation.

And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. John 1:14



A Hebrew scholar reading the Torah Scroll.



We share with our Chinese students that there is far more to Hebrew scripture than meets the eye. Here, US seminary students hold an authentic 16th century Torah scroll that stretches 111 feet and is made from 60 animal skins.



God places His consuming fire in us hoping our hearts will beat at one with His.

Chinese believers know that Yeshua (Jesus) is making great preparations to return and marry His Bride. We just celebrated Shavuot/Pentecost commemorating God's marriage to the Israelites at Mt. Sinai where God presented His marriage contract, the Ten Commandments and the Torah, to the people. It represents our love, commitment and responsibility to the marriage relationship. The Israelites said, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do!" (Exo.19:1-8). As we all know, it's easier to say, "I do" than to really do. Only through the eternal sacrifice of Yeshua, releasing the full empowerment of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2) can we truly fulfill our love covenant with God. He has provided us everything so we can become One with Him.

According to studies on Christian growth around the world, it's predicted China will have the largest number of evangelical Christians by the year 2030. As you've seen in every East Gates newsletter, we will continue to provide the growing number of Chinese believers with quality Bible materials and discipleship training so they will be prepared to meet their Bridegroom.

Just recently, we met with a large group of House church brothers and sisters that have a good relationship with the local authorities. There was a time when the congregants were spiritually malnourished due to poor leadership but with new "shepherds" that have come in, the church is now thriving. They even started and support a wonderful Elderly Home.



House church sanctuary.



Thankful for all things.



Meeting with pastors and students in their training rooms.



The elderly love their new home where they feel safe and secure.



There's never a shortage of volunteers.



We contribute Christian resources to their seminary library.

Your loving and faithful partnership allows us to help our Chinese brothers and sisters prepare for their marriage to the Lamb! Let us not be distracted. "Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence" (II Peter 1:2-3).

 Christina

Ned and Christina Graham