

Exciting Opportunities

City Ministry - With an ever increasing number of workers from all over south-east Asia, we're looking forward to developing a Mandarin-speaking ministry that partners alongside the Tuesday and Thursday lunchtime talks. Initially this is likely to involve monthly prayer meetings, occasional Wednesday lunchtime Mandarin-speaking Guest Events, hopefully leading to people joining us on Sunday afternoons (in the same venue).

Integration - Another advantage of meeting centrally on a Sunday is that it will hopefully facilitate greater integration within the wider church family. As well as encouraging people to join us after the 10:30, or before the 4pm or 6pm, it also should make it easier for members of the church family to bring along any Mandarin-speaking non-Christian friends/colleagues/neighbours etc.

Envisioning - In cities across the world, Overseas Chinese have tended to set up 'Chinese Churches'. At St Helen's, we want to model a different approach. Convinced that outposts of God's kingdom should demonstrate the power of the gospel to unite people of different ethnic backgrounds, especially in such a multicultural city as London, it's fantastic to be able to belong to an international church family, whilst laying on congregations for people in their heart language. Wouldn't it be fantastic if similar such models sprung up all over the world?

Partnership

We wouldn't have got to this stage without partnership with the church family. Looking to the future, we're ever more aware of the importance of working together. Whenever you meet a Mandarin-speaker, do think about inviting them along to the new 2:30 service. And above all, please do join us in prayer; that through this relatively small, diverse, congregation, the Lord would see fit to advance his Kingdom, here in London, and across the nations; not least that the Church in China would in some way be helped to make progress in greater maturity - to the praise of God's glorious grace.

Please do check out the website if you'd be interested in learning more.

<http://www.st-helens.org.uk/internationals/gospel-home>



Ever since Gospel Home was established, it has been a central part of the St Helen's international ministry. As a result, members of the Mandarin-speaking congregation have benefited greatly from the partnership of the wider St Helen's church family. We praise the Lord for all you've done to serve us by baking cakes (Women on Wednesday), by introducing Chinese acquaintances, by contributing financially, and above all by praying for the Lord to work in us and through us for the advance of his kingdom.

Praise the Lord. Looking back over six years, there is a huge amount to give thanks for, not least for many lives transformed by the gospel - including people from Mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Britain, Singapore, Malaysia, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the US.

As we contemplate the years that lie ahead, there's lots to get excited about. In recent months you might have heard that Gospel Home is about to embark on a new chapter in its life. In addition to soliciting your prayers, we thought we'd take this opportunity to explain something of the rationale for a change in model, as we move our Sunday afternoon gatherings to St Peter's Cornhill, for the new 2:30pm service.

October 2005	8-12 people started meeting at Henry & Becca's house every Sunday afternoon
September 2006	Dunzhong joined the staff part-time, whilst studying at Cornhill
April 2010	with too many people and no room to grow, we divided into 2 groups and began 2 services on a Sunday (2pm and 4pm), with a combined service once a month
May 2011	with both services nearing capacity, we started holding the combined service at St Peter's once a month
September 2011	2:30pm weekly service begins at St Peter's

The initial rationale for meeting as a household church was with the intention of preparing Mainland Chinese to return home better able to make the transition into local churches. Over the years we have benefitted greatly from being a small tight-knit community, facilitating active participation, depth of relationships, and hopefully a clear understanding of what it entails to be a gathering of God's people meeting to hear his word. Whilst our number have always included a number of Chinese who are based in the UK longterm, the majority of folk are in London for a limited period of time.

Given such a transitory congregation, it hasn't made sense to plant more household churches - especially since we have tended to have a relatively small proportion of mature brothers and sisters, let alone those who can lead and teach God's word (in Mandarin). The decision to divide into 2 services was with the aim of creating space, getting more people involved, and increasing the size of the core membership. Praise the Lord - this is exactly what He has done over the last 15 months, and now we are at the point where we have run out of space to keep growing.

Move to St Peter's

Since beginning to meet at St Peter's on a monthly basis, we have become increasingly aware of the very real advantages of meeting more centrally. Six years ago, it would not have seemed appropriate to meet in a large building, given our desire to prepare people to return to China. Whilst religious freedom there continues to be a sensitive subject, over recent years it has become more and more common for unofficial/non-registered churches to meet in larger more public spaces, rather than private homes.

Given our desire to train up partners for the Church in China, not least brothers and sisters convinced of the priority of expository preaching, it makes sense to adopt a model that will allow returnees to integrate into similar churches; after all, humanly-speaking equivalent urban network churches are more likely to have a trickle-down effect on the wider church, compared to that of a small house church. Undoubtedly we are going to have to be careful not to lose some of the real strengths gained from being a small intimate congregation, with a high level of participation. As you'll see below however, we're very excited about some of the opportunities that come with moving to St Peter's.

Unchanging Commitments

Our Aim... as with all the congregations at St Helen's, is to bring glory to God in everything that we do, and in all that we are; we want to know Jesus Christ, and we long to make him known to people of all kinds, in London, and around the world; and in our case, especially in and through the Church in China.

Our Approach... is to keep God's word and prayer central, as corporately and individually we seek to live godly lives that aim to build one another up, reach out to the lost, and send out gospel partners into the harvest field; again in our case, with a particular focus on preparing people to serve Christ in Mainland China.