

The number of Christians in China is expected to exceed that of the United States by 2025. The North Central Jurisdiction young adult mission program, Discover . . . Mission, is forming a team to go to China in 2019 to learn how this can happen in an officially atheist nation.

A proposed mission team of twelve United Methodist young adults will travel to mainland China July 17 through July 31, 2019, to connect with and experience one of the fastest growing church bodies in the world.

The young adult mission journey is sponsored by United Methodist Volunteers in Mission, North Central Jurisdiction under its young adult leadership development program called **Discover . . . Mission**. The China Christian Council and Three Self Patriotic Movement have provided an invitation to Bishop Hee-Soo Jung, co-leaders Reverend David Newhouse and Mrs. Christy Newhouse, and Discover . . . Mission. The team will meet with China's Christian leaders, interact with young adult Christians, and partner in Christian service.

Reverend Newhouse reports: *"China is perhaps the longest contiguous civilization on earth. There is historical evidence that Nestorian monks first introduced Christianity around 635 AD but Christianity did not proliferate. Catholic Franciscans tried again in the 12th century and Jesuits in the 15th. It was not until the 19th century that Protestant Christianity was introduced alongside other Western incursions into Chinese culture. Christianity has taken root in the last century in part because the church has become indigenized and is compatible with deeply rooted Chinese values and culture. The Communist authority in China acknowledges this compatibility even as it maintains atheism as its official approach to religion.*

So the church in China is flourishing. Our experience with Chinese Christians will be an inspiration and a witness to the love of Christ and the transformational power of Christ in a society where faith expression is always under the gaze of suspicion even if accepted as a pragmatic social value. We will return to the US a different people . . . challenged, transformed and awakened."

Discover . . . Mission's purpose is to develop United Methodist young adult leaders while interacting with young adult Christians in cross-cultural settings. Rev. and Mrs. Newhouse have been certified VIM leaders with journeys to Russia, Brazil, Minneapolis, Minnesota, Humboldt Park, Illinois and Kalamazoo, Michigan and one previous journey to China in 2010. Bishop Hee-Soo Jung, current Bishop of the Wisconsin Area and President of the General Board of Global Ministries, has traveled to China on behalf of The United Methodist Church on multiple occasions. In addition to these leaders, Discover . . . Mission China 2019 will have a bonus leader, Ms Ruhong Liu, a citizen of China and the Asia Regional Coordinator with Global Ministries of The United Methodist Church.

Up to twelve young adults (age preference 18-35) will be selected from US applicants. The early applicant (December 1, 2018) estimated cost is only \$2,650 per person (\$3,150 single hotel occupancy) for all North Central Jurisdiction young adults and \$3,250 per person (\$3,750 for single hotel occupancy) for all other applicants. **Discover . . . Mission China 2019** will meet Christian leaders in Shanghai, Nanjing, and Beijing, experience and partner with Amity Foundation Christian services, and work alongside young adults through the YMCA (exact projects not yet determined.) While the focus is learning, spiritual growth, and leadership

development alongside Chinese Christians, there will be opportunity to visit recognized national sites like the Great Wall of China, The Forbidden City, and the Summer Palace.

Amity Foundation is a non-governmental organization that seeks to manifest the love of Jesus Christ in Chinese society through its work in education, health, and rural development. The Amity Printing Company in partnership with the United Bible Society prints bibles for the church in China and for Christians in over 100 other countries. The YMCA also seeks to serve the society and benefit elderly, teens, children and persons with disabilities.

Reverend Cara Weiler, an ordained Deacon of the Michigan Conference and certified VIM team leader, credits her young adult journey to Liberia as a transformative life experience and a significant part to her recognizing a call to ordained ministry. *“I learned so much through this experience and in the relationships I formed with the young adults from Liberia. Their faith and joy was inspiring within the context of the civil war and devastation they’d endured. Worshipping together was also an experience of wonder for me as individuals from across the countryside arrived early to be together and then sang and danced together for hours. This was my first international mission experience and it has remained one of the most formational of my faith journey.”*

This gift of discovery has been experienced by dozens of young adults, many of whom have gone on to leadership as ordained clergy, mission personnel, and local church laity in The United Methodist Church.

Bishop Jung has communicated with other bishops to encourage each annual conference in the Midwest to nominate one or two strong candidates and offer support resources to make the journey to China a life changing and spirit building experience. Potential participants would be encouraged to contact their District Superintendent, Volunteer in Mission Coordinator, or the Bishop’s office to initiate participation.

Applications are being accepted at the offices of Ms. Tammy Kuntz, Coordinator of UMVIM-NCJ and Discover . . . Mission. **UMVIM-NCJ will subsidize all qualified applications received from young adults in the North Central Jurisdiction by December 1, 2018, to make possible the cost of only \$2,650 (\$3,150 single hotel occupancy.)** The stated cost includes a \$1,200 allowance for airfare from Chicago O’Hare to Shanghai with the return from Beijing to Chicago.

For applications/information contact: Tammy Kuntz, umvim-ncj.coor@gmail.com, 624.325.8741 or David Newhouse, pastordavid.bumc@gmail.com.

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