

News and Current Events :: Christmas becoming popular in China

Christmas becoming popular in China - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2004/12/27 10:44

[Image: https://www.sermonindex.net/images/forum/2004/may/featured_news.gif]

BEIJING (AFP) - Large crowds thronged China's government-approved churches on Christmas Day, a sign of the growing popularity of the holiday despite government controls on Christianity and efforts to promote atheism.

Churches saw standing room only during Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services attended by the devout and the simply curious.

"I'm not a believer but I've come here to feel the atmosphere," said Yan Zhilong, a 23-year-old office worker, who stood outside the Chongwenmen Protestant church in the bitter cold for two hours with dozens of others because they could not get into the Christmas Eve service.

People were pushing and scrambling outside the gate earlier to try to force their way into the church, which was already packed out with 1,700 people.

"I want to understand more about this Christian festival. I'm very curious," he said, looking around the 134-year-old church after the service.

An increasing number of people dealing with the dramatic changes under way in China -- from the end of government-funded services to unemployment and corruption -- also see Christianity as a source of support.

Re: Christmas becoming popular in China - posted by phebebird (), on: 2005/1/2 4:00

Hi Greg,

This was encouraging to read. When we moved to China in 1999 (we were there until the end of Aug 2000), it was just a couple of days before Christmas. It was amazing to me that NO ONE knew the Christmas story except the few Christians we knew. Even one fellow teacher that had lived abroad had NEVER heard the Christmas story. When I told her, she said, "I've heard this Christ's name before. Can you tell me His story?" Wow, that was an opportunity!

Easter was also amazing that way. We gathered most of the teachers together in our house under the "pretense" of celebrating an American holiday. In the course of the evening, we shared the Easter story. It was amazing to me, having grown up hearing the Easter story all my life, to watch its effect on them. They literally winced when I said Jesus was nailed to the cross, and gasped when He died. I was glad I spoke a little Chinese, though, because at the point where the women encounter the angel at the tomb, I said "the angel said to the women, 'He is not here; He has risen'"; I heard the translator say in Chinese, "He is not here. He didn't die after all. He's still alive." When I corrected her, she said, "But it's not possible for someone to rise from the dead. That can't happen." "It can if you're God," I said, and went on to explain that the resurrection is our only hope.