**Silk Roads: Exploring Christianity**

**Chinese Christian life in Durham**

**Video running time: 8 minutes 20 seconds**

Hi, I'm Gisela and I live in Durham in the UK right now and I'm a German-born Chinese. I grew up in Schwäbisch Hall, near Stuttgart in Germany. My granddad lived and worked in Germany - that's our third generation - but my relatives are from Hong Kong, so we have roots back in China, Hong Kong and Germany. I was born in a Christian family, so I was baptised at 14 years old.

**Tell us about the Chinese Christian community in Durham**

We have about 20 - 30 attendees at the church in Elvet, we worship there and a lot of them are international expats, meaning people who have emigrated from China, Hong Kong, Malaysia and Taiwan to the UK. Some live permanently here and are local.

And we have British-born Chinese people who grew up here. We also have BNO people - British National Overseas - people from Hong Kong who have immigrated just now.

We also have international Chinese students. Not only that, they may come from China, Taiwan and Malaysia, so we have a mix of rich heritage of different people from different countries.

The Chinese Church started in back in 2014 when we first initiated - mostly from Bible studies. Maybe a group of Christians, they met together and started a pray group or Bible study group. And from that we increased in members and numbers and gradually it became a church.

**How does faith play a role in your everyday life?**

So yes, let me talk about what we do in a week. On Monday we have cell group so that's for adults to meet together - Christian families. People want to have fellowship with each other.

On Tuesday we have Bible study, so a lot of times the Pastor will engage us a with a Bible passage and we discuss it.

On Wednesday we have prayer groups. So a group of us will have several prayer issues and bring up stuff that we want to pray about.

On Thursday we have morning prayer sessions at 8:00am. And on Fridays we have the Durham Chinese Christian Fellowship, in collaboration with Durham University, so a lot of Durham University student will join us and we have dinner together at the start and then we talk and worship and then we may have games session or discussion groups. At the end we finish with a prayer.

On Saturday we have the Youth Fellowship for the children. So for the British-born Chinese that need a tutorial, we will give them a math class or anything they need help with their homework. After that we will teach them Sunday school stuff, so we teach them Bible stories, we tell them about the Biblical doctrine, and then maybe we have some games. We try to engage the youth fellowship to be more engaged with the Church community.

And finally, on Sunday we will have our worship session. So we have the sermon, the worship and then the prayers and Holy Communion - all of our routine.

So normally on a day to day basis when I wake up, the first thing I do is do my daily prayer – daily morning prayers. So I do sometimes like to wake up early, maybe 4:00am to do my prayers if I can. So I probably do the Lord's prayer and then any concern and worries I have throughout the day, I do pray.

So I love Bibles! I have so many historical, different Bibles. So what I love to do is highlight all the pages of the Bible. It's beautiful English and this one is a facsimile, which is an actual copy of it. So I like how they – I think they use pen to write because back then they don't really do printing.

And then I like to pick my favourite Bible verses. So I just mark them and I read them now and then again.

So in my daily devotion I do maybe about 3 chapters a day of Bible reading and after that I like to have some reflection on it and sometimes do write journal and notes about what I learned and what I hear from God. And I write that down maybe electronically or on paper.

**Is there part of the Bible that is particularly important to you?**

So yes, obviously the Lord's Prayer, that is very simple to do for me if I want. If I'm tired, I can pick up a prayer, I just open the Bible, and then there's a little prayer. And then I just read it out and I feel a lot of calm and peace when I do it; a lot of consolation and knowing that God is here for me and I’m seeking his will in my daily life.

And talking about the Bible, that is very important to me. I do read it on a daily basis when I can. So Bible verses, for example in John chapter 3, verse 16 it says:

For God so loved the world that

he has given his only begotten son,

that none that believe in him shall perish,

but shall have everlasting life.

How wonderful is that? We can hear that God’s love for us is much that he was willing to give his only son. Can you think of like... you are you're a parent and then you give your child away in that way. This is a big love. It's more like agape love. It's sacrificial and something very unconditional, unconditional love.

**Why is going to Church important to you?**

So yeah, why is going to church important for me? It's important to have fellowship with other believers and when we go to Church we meet other Christians, and we can have a nice fellowship. We can encourage each other in our faith and we can have a community.

For example, we have dinner together, food. We can have Bible study, prayer group and that's all in like a big group. It is nice to be with people that are similar minded and alike to you, and the best thing is that is how the body of Christ is, so when all of us are together, God is always among us anyway. It helps that we can know each other's lives so we can help each other when we maybe fall in sin.

Or maybe we don't know something we need to ask questions in life. We do support each other in that way. So not only that, you can have community care, so my Church members are great because when I was pregnant - I had a baby - they gave me everything I needed. They gave me all the baby stuff and then I had like herbal soup and I had food.

I felt so grateful and I appreciate so much that the love our Church members give each other - the support. We do see each other on a daily or weekly basis and it helps us to have a sense of community.

**Thank you to…**

Gisella and the Chinese Christian community in Durham for their help in creating this video

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