

LANZHOU 兰州

Lanzhou, the capital of Gansu Province in northwest China, is the 18th most populated city in China. According to the 1990 census, more than 1.6 million people lived in Lanzhou, a figure expected to rise sharply to more than 2.1 million in the year 2000, and 2.9 million by 2010. Almost 40,000 immigrants permanently settle in Lanzhou every year, the majority being impoverished farmers from other parts of the rugged and barren Gansu province.

Although the Han Chinese comprise around 95% of the population of Lanzhou, the Hui also make a significant and highly visible minority. More than 67,000 Hui call Lanzhou home, as they have done ever since their ancestors migrated down the Silk Road from Central Asia at least seven centuries ago. In addition, 6,000 ethnic Manchu, 1,700 Tibetans, 1,700 Dongxiang and 1,400 Mongols form communities in Lanzhou. In all, 38 of China's officially recognized 55 minority groups have people living in the city.

Lanzhou has been an important military base and trading post since ancient times in Chinese history. The feared Tibetans and various aggressive Muslim peoples who lived just beyond the city limits. Several violent Hui Rebellions against Chinese rule in the 1800's reduced the population of Lanzhou. Tens of thousands of Hui were

Population:
1,617,761 (1990)
2,174,100 (2000)
2,921,700 (2010)

Province:
Gansu

Major Ethnic Groups:

Han 94.9%
Hui 4.2%
Manchu 0.4%
Tibetan 0.1%

Christians:
25,000 (1.1%)

massacred. It was not until the 1950's that the city developed as an industrial center. Thousands migrated to Lanzhou from surrounding provinces after the railway lines from Baotou in Inner Mongolia and Baoji in Shaanxi Province were constructed to Lanzhou. Only about 200,000 people lived in Lanzhou at the advent of Communism in 1949. The city, which lies 1,600 meters (5,248 feet) above sea-level, owes its life to the Yellow River that flows through it. Just a few miles either side of the river banks the soil is sandy and impossible for growing crops. Because of this, the city of Lanzhou is spread out along a long, narrow strip about 20 miles in length.

Although the city has a long history, there are few old buildings or tourist attractions in Lanzhou. One that does remain is the White Pagoda Temple, a temple and park located on the north bank of the Yellow River overlooking the city. The temple was first constructed during the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368).

The Binglang Caves, located in a canyon beside the Liujiaxia Reservoir on the Yellow River, are several hours by bus and boat from Lanzhou. The caves are one of the spiritual strongholds of Buddhism that remain in the area. They house 183 grottoes and 694 statues of Buddha. The

Binglang Caves first appeared during the Western Qin Dynasty (221-207 BC), although most of the statues date from the Tang Period (618-907 AD).

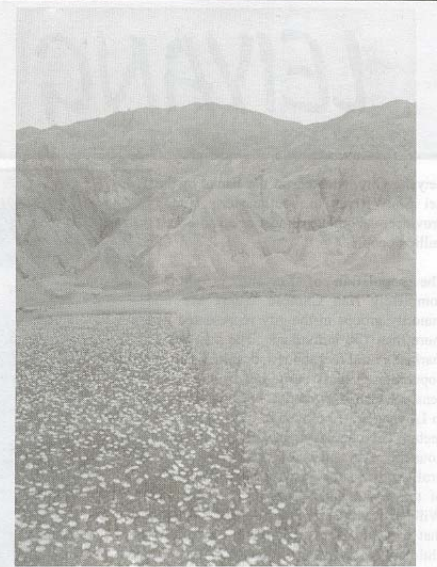
Although Nestorian missionaries first brought the Gospel along the Silk Road into this part of China in the eighth century, all record of Christianity vanished from the area until Catholics entered Gansu in the 17th century.

The first Protestant missionaries to base in Lanzhou were Easton and Parker of the China Inland Mission, who, after experiencing much hardship and months of travel, arrived in Lanzhou in January 1877. In 1922, the Protestants recorded 1,336 converts in the entire province of Gansu, while the Catholics claimed 7,249 communicants.

The remoteness and difficulties of life in Lanzhou made for a high turnover of missionaries over the next seven decades of missionary activity in China, until all foreigners were expelled from the nation at the advent of Communism. The lack of literacy also made work harder for the missionaries. Even in 1990, more than 100,000 of the city's 600,000 adult women were unable to read and write.

In the 1940's the Baptists from Jiangsu Province and Shanghai sent their own indigenous missionaries to Lanzhou. They were joined by groups such as the China Congregational Hall and the Gansu Central District Evangelistic team. As a result of these faith-filled laborers, about 25,000 Christians are found in Lanzhou today, which is approximately one percent of the city's population.

Ninety-nine out of every hundred Lanzhou residents, however, do not know Christ. Few have ever heard the Gospel before. They are hell-bound and without hope in this life or the next.



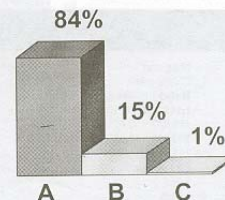
Barren, moon-like mountains give way to the fertile Yellow River valley in this picture from the countryside near Lanzhou City. Most people in Gansu Province live along the thin strips of arable land near the river.

Pray for Lanzhou

- 1 Lanzhou is one of the most unreached provincial capital cities in China. Pray it would soon come to be known as a city that calls on the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 2 Pray God would strengthen and envision the Christians in Lanzhou to impact every segment of their community with the Christian message.
- 3 Pray Christians from all around the world would heed God's call to proclaim the Gospel to the people of Lanzhou.



Status of Evangelization (Awareness of Christ and the Gospel)



A = have never heard the Gospel or the name of Christ
B = were evangelized but have not yet become Christians
C = Adherents to any form of Christianity

Overview of Lanzhou

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| Pronunciation | : "Lahn-joe" | Employed people | : 929,667 (57.5% of total population) |
| Old Spelling | : Lan-chou | Main Industries | : Industrial 40.2%; Agriculture 16%; Professional 15.6% |
| Location | : Gansu Province, northwest China | Educational | : University: 4.8% |
| Population | : 1,617,761 (1990 census) | Attainment | : High School: 60.2% |
| Males | : 855,948 (52.91%) | (highest level) | : Primary School: 24.2% |
| Females | : 761,813 (47.09%) | attended) | : Never attended any level of school: 10.8% |
| Households | : 410,620 | Population under 15 | : 19.6% |
| Average household | : 3.94 people | Adult Literacy | : 89% (men 94%; women 83%) |
| Divorced people | : 10,336 | Major Nationalities | : Han 1,536,459 |
| % of population | : 0.64% | | : Hui 67,345 |
| Centurians (1990) | : 3 people aged 100 or more | | : Manchu 6,172 |
| Immigrants to City | : 37,833 per year | | : Tibetan 1,719 |
| From same province | : 24,560 (64.9%) | | : Dongxiang 1,716 |
| From other provinces | : 13,243 (35.1%) | | : Others (33 groups): 4,350 |
| | | Christians | : 25,000 (1.1%) |