

ZALANTUN 扎兰屯

The city of Zalantun, located in the northeastern part of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region in northern China, is home to about 550,000 people in more than 100,000 families. Despite its comparatively small size, Zalantun is one of the largest four or five cities in Inner Mongolia.

Although it is situated within Inner Mongolia, Zalantun has a feel more like nearby Heilongjiang Province. This is reflected in the ethnic composition of the city. Although 87% of the people in the city are Han Chinese, the leading minorities are the 28,000 Manchus, 16,500 Mongols, 5,000 Daur, 1,500 Hui and 1,000 Ewenki. Zalantun is located more than 1,000 km (617 miles) from Hohhot, the capital of Inner Mongolia.

The Ewenki minority group, who total about 30,000 in China, are traditionally semi-nomads who lived in tents. For centuries they moved around the forests in search of good hunting and fishing spots. They moved ever four to five days on average in the summer months, and every two to three weeks during the winter. The Ewenki are also found in Russia and Mongolia. Although some of the Ewenki who moved to the grasslands have come into contact with the Mongols and converted to Tibetan Buddhism, most Ewenki remain shamanists. Each village has its own shaman who is called upon to act as a

Population:
415,498 (1990)
558,400 (2000)
750,400 (2010)

Province:
Inner Mongolia

Major Ethnic Groups:

Han 86.9%
Manchu 6.7%
Mongol 3.9%
Daur 1.2%

Christians:
2,000 (0.3%)

mediator between the spirit-world and the community. He often goes into a demonic trance and gives messages to the people. When an Ewenki dies, the corpse is wrapped in birch bark and placed high in a tree to decompose naturally. Few Ewenki in this part of China have ever heard the Gospel, although a different subgroup of the Ewenki, living near Hailar much further northwest of Zalantun, is reported to contain more than 100 Ewenki Orthodox Christians.

Life is slow and difficult in Zalantun. In 1990, a mere 38.7% of the city's population had jobs, among the lowest for any city in China. Not many residents of Zalantun have any desire to leave their part of the world.

Strangely, Inner Mongolia was considered a difficult place for the Gospel by Protestant missionaries, and a relatively easy one by Catholic workers. Catholic work in Inner Mongolia could be said to date back to 1291, when John of Montecorvino, a Franciscan monk, was sent by the Pope to the court of Kublai Khan, the great Mongol ruler. More recently, Catholic work in the province restarted about 200 years ago and soon numbered thousands of converts, mostly among Han Chinese settlers rather than the native Mongols. In the early 1920's, the Catholic Church listed 105,695 baptized converts in both Inner Mongolia and Outer

Mongolia. By the time foreigners were expelled from China in the early 1950's, the Catholic church in Inner Mongolia numbered around 200,000 adherents. How come the Catholics had such great success? One 1922 reported explained, "Very often the incentive held out to the heathen is an economic one. The converts are invited to live on the land, each family is given an ox, a plow, a small field and sufficient seed. They cultivate the land and pay back to the Catholic Mission a small percentage of profit each year." (Stauffer, *The Christian Occupation of China*, p.271)

During the Boxer Rebellion of 1900, missionaries suffered great hardship in this part of China. Seven Swedish missionaries and their seven children associated with the Christian & Missionary Alliance tried to flee the violence by camel into Inner Mongolia. "Robbers intercepted them and took everything, even their clothes. In the trauma two of the missionaries gave birth. French missionary priests found the fourteen and the two infants naked in the desert and subsisting on roots. The priests gave them covering and took them back to the Catholic mission station. News came that a Boxer army was approaching. 'Our way is cut off,' the Alliance's Carl Lundberg wrote. 'If we are not able to escape, tell our friends we live and die for the Lord. I do not regret coming to China. The Lord has called me and His grace is sufficient. They way He chooses is best for me. His will be done.... When the Boxers attacked, the priests and two of the Alliance men, Emil Olson and Albert Anderson, tried to escape. They were captured, ordered to undress, then made to kneel for beheading. The others fared no better. The Boxers killed them with guns and swords, then set fire to the church.'" (Hefley, *By Their Blood*, p.18)

During the Cultural Revolution in the 1960's, Christians in Inner Mongolia again suffered horrific persecution as part of an experiment by the Communist Party to control religion. Today, there are only a small number of believers in Zalantun, amounting to about 0.3% of the city's population. Most people in Zalantun are still waiting to hear the Gospel for the first time.



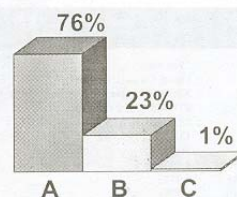
Zalantun is an impoverished city in Inner Mongolia with many young people. The city is practically devoid of any Christian presence. Little evangelism has ever been conducted in Zalantun.

Pray for Zalantun

- 1 Pray that those who died for the Gospel in Inner Mongolia did not die in vain. Pray a strong and powerful evangelistic church will emerge in Zalantun, bringing life and peace to the sin-weary.
- 2 Pray the revival that has started in far-away parts of central Inner Mongolia will spread throughout the whole region and to the needy northeastern reaches of the province.
- 3 Ask the Holy Spirit to help the Catholic and Protestant believers in Zalantun become the fragrance of Christ to the lost.



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 Zalantun

Pronunciation : "Za-lahn-toon"
Old Spelling : Cha-lan-t'un
Location : Nei Mongol Autonomous Region, northern China
Population : 415,498 (1990 census)
Males : 214,945 (51.73%)
Females : 200,553 (48.27%)
Households : 95,321
Average household : 4.36 people
Divorced people : 2,039
% of population : 0.49%
Centurions (1990) : 3 people aged 100 or more
Immigrants to City : 2,797 per year
From same province : 1,468 (52.5%)
From other provinces : 1,329 (47.5%)

Employed people : 160,902 (38.7% of total population)
Main Industries : Agriculture 58.9%, Industrial 15.4%, Commerce 8.6%
Educational : University: 0.2%
Attainment : High School: 40.8%
(highest level) : Primary School: 42.4%
attended) : Never attended any level of school: 16.6%
Population under 15 : 31.5%
Adult Literacy : 83% (men 88%; women 77%)
Major Nationalities : Han 361,087
Manchu 27,764
Mongol 16,239
Daur 4,810
Korean 2,563
Others (17 groups): 3,035
Christians : 2,000 (0.3%)