



## China News Summary August 2009

Compiled by The United Methodist China Program  
General Board of Global Ministries  
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**Typhoon Morakot wreaks havoc in Taiwan and Zhejiang.** Taiwan was ravaged by typhoon Morakot which pelted the island with nearly 80 inches of rain in two days, an amount that caught authorities off guard in a region used to typhoons, said the BBC. Sixty-three persons were reported dead in Taiwan, and 61 persons officially missing. Thousands more have been displaced. The rain caused mountain sides to collapse and entire villages to disappear in massive and unexpected mudslides. At one point it was thought that 700 persons in the Taiwanese village of Hsiaolin were all lost when their village was submerged by a landslide,

but many in that village made it to higher ground before the village was destroyed. Morakot caused \$225 million in agricultural damage, cut power to 30,000 homes, and left 750,000 homes in Taiwan without water, said the BBC. In Zhejiang province, China Central Television reported that eight people had lost their lives, three were missing and that 1.4 persons were evacuated from their homes because of rapid flooding. Beijing estimates the total economic loss on China's mainland is 10 billion *yuan* (US\$1.5 billion). (*"Taiwan mudslide survivors found"*, August 12, 2009; *"Typhoon Morakot causes massive floods and landslides in Zhejiang"*, CCTV, August 12, 2008)

**Give a gift of Amity mooncakes to the elderly and orphaned.** The Amity Foundation has invited supporters both overseas and within China to give a gift of Amity mooncakes to orphans and the elderly in the run up to Mid-Autumn Festival. The mooncakes are made at the Amity Home of Blessings bakery in Nanjing which employs Down syndrome clients, residents of the Home. For a gift of \$15 toward the mooncake project, the Home will home bake 8 mooncakes to be presented in a decorative box. The mooncakes are destined for two church-run homes for the elderly in Xuzhou and Yancheng, Jiangsu province (280 persons in total) as well as 400 elderly persons supported in homes by the Nanjing Social Welfare Institute, a long-term Amity partner. In addition Amity will supply mooncakes to the 1100 orphans supported through the Amity Orphan's Project in northern Jiangsu province. The Mid-Autumn Festival is one of the most important festivals in China, held on the fifteenth day of the eighth month of the lunar calendar, which is October 3 in 2009. In Chinese mythology the moon is the dwelling place of immortals and myths associated with the moon relate to longevity. Recipes for mooncakes vary but sweet mooncakes are generally made with lotus seed paste, the whole yolks from salted duck eggs, and are wrapped in a thin rich pastry that carries a decorative design on top. Amity's mooncakes are imprinted with its carved seal logo which is name in Chinese characters (*ai de*). To give a gift of mooncakes visit Amity's website: [http://www.amityfoundation.org/wordpress/?page\\_id=840](http://www.amityfoundation.org/wordpress/?page_id=840). The Amity Foundation is a Chinese social service organization inspired by Chinese Christians as a way of living the gospel of Christ in Chinese society. It is one of GBGM's main partner organizations in the People's Republic of China. (Source: [amityfoundation.org](http://amityfoundation.org); United Methodist China Program)

**Uyghur-Han tensions result in nearly 200 deaths.** Tensions between the Uyghur ethnic minority and Han Chinese erupted into deadly violence which resulted in the death of 197 persons and injury of 1,700 others in Urumqi the capital of the Xinjiang Autonomous Region in northwest China, reported the *China Daily*. The riots began as a peaceful demonstration which demanded the government investigate the deaths of two Uyghur migrant workers in Guangdong province—nearly 3,000 miles from Xinjiang—who were beaten to death by a mob of Han Chinese co-workers, reported the *Christian Science Monitor*. The Uyghur migrant workers had been accused of raping a Han woman, although the rape later proved to be a fabricated story posted on the Internet. While the scale of the violence was unprecedented—President Hu Jintao flew back from the G8 summit in Italy to attend to the matter—there have there have been underlying tensions in the region for years, said the BBC. Some Uyghurs support outright independence which China severely objects as it lays claim to the area as far back as the 10<sup>th</sup> century, indicated the *China Daily*. Other analysts connect the current unrest to poverty and long-standing Uyghur complaints of

Han discrimination in the Xinjiang Autonomous Region, said the *Christian Science Monitor*. In recent years, the capital Urumqi has seen a great number of technically-savvy Han Chinese who moved into the area and assume higher salaries, especially in the oil-industry. Xinjiang Autonomous Region is now 55 percent ethnic minority (mostly Uyghur) and 45 percent Han, although there are small towns and cities in Xinjiang like Kashi (Kashgar) which are almost entirely ethnic minorities. Of the 197 killed in the July riots, over 135 were Han Chinese, over 46 were Uyghurs, and one was Hui ethnic minority, reported the *China Daily*. Of the 197 killed, 12 were shot dead by police, said Xinhua, China's state news agency. Xinhua also reported that the migrant worker in Guangdong who posted the false rape story was a disgruntled factory worker who has now been detained along with over a dozen others involved in the murder of the two Uyghur workers. ("Man held over China ethnic clash", *BBC News*, June 30, 2009; "History of the Uyghurs", *China Daily*, July 13, 2009; "Incomplete picture of Xinjiang unrest", July 6, 2009; "Uighur resentment at Beijing's rule", *BBC News*, July 6, 2009; "Deadly riots in western China take unprecedented toll", *Christian Science Monitor*, July 6, 2009; "China locks down restive region after deadly clashes", *New York Times*, July 7, 2009; "What China is doing to quell Uighur-Han unrest", *Christian Science Monitor*, July 7, 2009; "Fears of further mob violence prompts Uighurs to leave Urumqi", *Guardian*, July 9, 2009; "Most Xinjiang dead Han Chinese", *BBC News*, July 11, 2009)

**Chinese Communist Party celebrates 88 years.** The Chinese Communist Party celebrated its 88<sup>th</sup> anniversary on July 1st. On the occasion it announced that it had around nearly 75.9 million members and that 10 million people apply for membership annually, said the *People's Daily*. In 2008 the party recruited 2.8 million members of which 80 percent were under the age of 35. Recruits from students saw the biggest surge in 2008, up 71,000 members, reported the Party. ("China's Communist Party members nears 76 million", June 30, 2009, *People's Daily Online*; "The party's over", *South China Morning Post*, July 15, 2009)

**China's leaders: spend more, save less.** To get through the economic crisis, the Chinese government is encouraging people to save less and spend more, reported the BBC. The push is a difficult one as the average Chinese is culturally known for frugality, a Confucian virtue. The country is commonly known as 'a nation of savers' and the typical Chinese saves an average of 30 percent of his/her disposable income each month, reported the BBC. At the beginning of the economic downturn in 2008, Chinese banks saw a 21 percent rise in bank deposits suggesting a kind of comfort and familiarity that people have with saving rather than spending, reported the *Christian Science Monitor*. One of the reasons that Chinese people save is because its current social security system is weak. In the 1980s China dismantled the 'iron rice bowl' (guaranteed cradle to grave health and welfare care) as part of its embrace of a market economy. It is now having to re-invent a national welfare system for its people. The most recent is the adoption of a national health care plan. For many Chinese their savings accounts are a kind of 'self-insurance' should a family member fall on hard times, lose their job or need medical attention. Also, it is not uncommon for Chinese to save and pay cash for a new apartment or expensive luxury item, in part to avoid any inauspiciousness that debt may bring. To boost Chinese domestic spending and help the economy rebound, Beijing has launched a 13 percent subsidy to be applied to all new household appliances like washing machines and refrigerators. ("Can China's frugal savers help the economy", *BBC* July 16, 2009; "To lift economy, China urges citizens to spend more", *Christian Science Monitor*, January 8, 2009)

**Cautious good news for China's economy.** China's economy is recovering at a slow but steady rate, posting a 7.9 percent growth rate between April and June, reported the BBC. The slight quickening of China's economy, although labeled tentative by many Chinese economists, comes at a time when western countries continue to experience recession. The success has been put down to two important factors, one of which is massive 4 billion *yuan* (\$585 million) stimulus package unveiled in November, the effects of which are now just being felt; the other is the willingness of banks to loan substantial amounts of money to the country's business sector, both state-owned and private. The later, loans to the business community, is something that western banks remain reticent to do. Companies have used the cash injection as a way to avoid shedding jobs and to invest in new equipment so that manufacturing continues to upgrade, reported the BBC. Many of the government's new infrastructure projects, fueled by the stimulus package, are employing the countries migrant worker population who had been laid off from manufacturing jobs in the export sector. The Chinese government is now expecting to achieve an 8 percent growth for 2009 as a whole, compared to the 1 percent to 1.5 percent expected by the United States, said the BBC. ("China grows faster amid worries", *BBC News*, July 16, 2009; "To lift economy, China urges citizens to spend more" *Christian Science Monitor*, Jan 2008)

**World's richest countries agree to cut greenhouse gas emissions.** Leaders of the world's richest countries, the G8, met in L'Aquila, Italy and paved the way to a comprehensive climate change agreement

in Copenhagen in December by agreeing to limit global warming to 3.6F (2C) above 1990 levels, said the United Nations Environment Programme. The leaders of the G8 also pledged to reduce their harmful greenhouse gas emissions by 80 percent by 2050 and urged developing countries, including China, to cut their emissions by 50 percent over the same period, said *the New Zealand Herald*. Critics say the goals are too long-term and have no structure to back them up. Even United Nation's General Secretary Ban Ki-moon harshly criticized the meeting for not making deeper cuts in greenhouse gas emissions in the immediate future, said the BBC. In addition, critics have pointed out that cash grants and loans will also need to be made to two-thirds world nations if they are to be expected to also contribute to greenhouse gas reduction. China, the world's largest producer of CO2 emissions has already made strides to meet previous international targets and its efforts were praised by Ban Ki-moon in a July visit after the G8 summit. China signed the Kyoto Protocol of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in 1998 and ratified the Protocol in 2002, something the United States failed to do and Beijing also set a 20 percent reduction in domestic energy consumption as a national priority which it included in the most recent Eleventh Five-year Plan (2006-2010), reported the BBC. China is one of the world's top leaders in wind and solar technology; its renewable energy sector is worth \$17 billion and employs one million persons, said the United Nations. China hopes to provide 15 percent of its energy consumption from renewable sources by 2020, reported the BBC, which represents a medium-range target that Beijing feels is missing from the recent G8 meeting agreements. The G8 countries are France, Germany, Italy, Canada, Russia, Japan, the United States and the United Kingdom. Joining the G8 meeting in Italy were main developing economies: China, Brazil, India Mexico, South Africa and Egypt. (*"G8 leaders agree to global warming goals", United Nations Environment Programme, July 8, 2009; "G8 set new global warming targets", BBC News, July 9, 2009; "G8 agree on bold target for carbon emission reduction", New Zealand Herald, July 10, 2009; "China offers three-point proposal on tackling climate change", China Daily, July 11, 2009; "China unfairly seen as eco-villain", BBC News, June 16, 2009; "Ban criticizes G8 climate efforts", July 9, 2009; "Climate change pact 'needs' China", BBC News, July 24, 2009*)

**Mainland athletes boycott opening and closing ceremony of World Games in Taiwan.** China mainland boycotted the opening and closing ceremonies of the World Games held in Kaohsiung, Taiwan in July, although the mainland team of 59 participated in eight events. The boycott was an objection to Taiwan's president, Ma Ying-jeou, opening the ceremony, a role usually reserved for a head of state. Beijing considers Taiwan a province of the People's Republic of China, a position that dates back to the split between the Chinese Communist Party headed by Mao Zedong, and the Guomindang under Chiang Kai-shek's leadership which fled to the island of Taiwan after losing the civil war in 1949. The Guomindang was the ruling party until 2000. Since the Guomindang's re-election to power in 2008, Ma Ying-jeou has jettisoned some of the country's pro-independence stances and increased economic ties with the mainland, a move that has arguably brought increased stability to the region. Professor George Tsai of Taipei's Chinese Culture University said that Beijing could have demanded the World Games follow Olympic protocol (where Taiwan is referred to as Chinese Taipei and marches under the Olympic flag), reported AP. Beijing, he said, had shown 'goodwill' in allowing Ma to preside over the games. Ma did not attend the closing ceremony, reported the *China Post*, and thanked Beijing for supporting the Games with its athletes. The Games were attended by 4,800 athletes from over 100 countries and will next be held in 2013 in Cali, Columbia. (*"China snubs World Games opening", BBC News, July 16, 2009; "China boycotts opening of World Games in Taiwan", Associated Press, July 16, 2009; "Ma thanks Beijing for supporting World Games", The China Post, July 29, 2009; "World Games closing ceremony boycotted by Chinese athletes", indiaserver.com, July 27, 2009*)

**Hu Jintao personally congratulates Ma Ying-jeou on election as party chair.** Chinese Communist Party chair, Hu Jintao sent a congratulatory message to Taiwan's Ma Ying-jeou, upon Ma's re-election as chair of the Guomindang Party, Taiwan's ruling party. What makes this exchange unique is that Hu is also the president of the People's Republic of China and Ma is the president of Taiwan, making this the first direct exchange in 60 years between the presidents, although Beijing does not recognize Taipei's sovereignty as a separate nation. Ma said he was expecting a telegram from Hu Jintao as he received one when he was elected chair of the party in 2005. At that time, however, he was not the president of Taiwan. Neither used their presidential titles in the exchange, said the BBC. Since Ma came to power in 2008, Beijing and Taipei have signed deals to establish permanent air, sea and postal links. Both the Chinese Communist Party and the Guomindang follow a one China policy. (*"China, Taiwan in direct exchange", BBC News, July 27, 2009; "Taiwan president wins party vote", "Ma Ying-jeou", New York Times, July 27, 2009; "Jintao congratulates Ma Ying-jeou on his election as KMT chief", Asia News, July 2009*)

**Shanghai residents encouraged to have two children.** International media has reported that the Shanghai municipality may be loosening family planning policy requirements to encourage second

children in families that have not traditionally been allowed to have a second child, reported *Time*. However that policy has been in place since 2004, said Xie Lingli, director of the Shanghai Population and Family Planning Commission. Couples who are only children themselves are allowed to have a second child. By reiterating old policy it is thought that Shanghai officials may have been drawing attention to the 'greying' of China which has become a growing concern, indicated *Time*. The remarks of Xie Lingli may also signal that Beijing is actually rethinking its family planning policy. Analysts predict that by 2050 there will be only 1.6 working adults to support each retired person, compared to 7.7 in 1975, said the BBC. Twenty-one percent of Shanghai's population is now over the age of 60 with only 10.6 percent under 18, said the *South China Morning Post*. While there have been relaxes in China's one-child policy, over the years there has been a trend among young adults who were born under the one-child per family policy to not want second children. "There is little drive to have children in modern society," said Peng Xizhe, director of Fudan University's Institute of Population Research, in an SCMP report. Young professional couples see raising one child enough stress in itself, reported the BBC. (*"The one-child enforcers who are pushing for two"*, *South China Morning Post*, July 24, 2009; *"Shanghai urges 'two-child policy'"*, *BBC News*, July 24m 2009; *"Is China's one-child policy heading for revision?"*, *Time*, July 27, 2009)

**Authorities stop illegal abduction of babies in Guizhou.** Since 2001 over 80 newborn children from a rural county in Guizhou province had been illegally taken from their parents by local officials and sent to orphanages where they had been adopted through foreign adoption agencies, reported the *China Daily*. Family planning policies allow second children for rural couples, but if those two children are females, some couples keep trying for a male child. If families have more than two children, couples are asked to pay fines which is legal, said Zhou Ze a lawyer and professor with China Youth College for Political Sciences. But for officials to bribe parents and take away children from those families regardless of how many children the family has, is illegal abduction, said Zhou in a *China Daily* interview. In the Guizhou case the couples were offered approximately US\$3,000 for a child and the profit was split between the corrupt officials and the orphanages. China has toughened the procedure for adoption in recent years, in part to curb human trafficking and to insure that children are placed with suitable families. (*"SW China: baby girls taken and sold for adoption"*, *China Daily*, July 3, 2009; *"Babies in China seized then sold for overseas adoption"*, *Guardian*, July 3, 2009; *"Chinese babies sold for adoption to US and Europe, report claims"*, *Telegraph*, July 3, 2009)

**Macao gets new chief executive.** Macao elected a new chief executive, Fernando Chui Sai-on, who will become the territory's third chief executive since it became a special administrative region of the PRC in 1999. Mr Chui gained a PhD in public health from the University of Oklahoma and comes from a wealthy Macanese family involved in construction, tourism and healthcare industries, said *China Bulletin*. He was the only person to run for the top position after receiving 286 of the 300 votes in the government's Election Committee for the Chief Executive, said UCAN. His nomination made any other candidate invalid as a candidate must receive 50 election votes from the committee to stand. (*"Catholic leaders express hopes for new chief executive"*, *July 30, 2009, UCAN; China Bulletin, CTBI, July 2009*)

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