

## Inspirational Christians: Jackie Pullinger

Jackie was born in London in 1944. After attending the Royal College of Music, she left for the mission field. She went to Hong Kong in 1966, where she is still working.

When Jackie Pullinger was five, she heard a missionary speak about their work telling people around the world about Jesus. She knew that she wanted to do that too. As she grew up though, Jackie put her thoughts of missionary work aside and lived as any other young girl in Britain. Eventually she went to the Royal College of Music.

After visiting with Christian friends she had a dream about missionary work and was determined to follow her girlhood dream and serve God. She decided to go to Hong Kong and ended up working in the Walled City, a place that was known for violence and drugs.



The Walled City in Hong Kong was a only six acres, but had a population of at least 30,000 people. It was an area that was notorious for violence, drugs and gangs.

The area was demolished and rebuilt in the 1990s

When Jackie got to Hong Kong she started a Youth Club. Many of the boys who came were members of the Triad gangs. These boys were rough and used to violence, including murder. They didn't trust this British woman at first but gradually over the years as Jackie continued to live among them they began to respect her.

Who else would live in one of the most dangerous places in the world for the rest of her life? Most missionaries who went to Hong Kong only stayed a few weeks or a few months. They had money and lived in nicer homes. As soon as their money ran out or they got tired of the filth of the Walled City, they went home. They did not have much credibility with the gangs. The gang members expected Jackie to leave like all the rest. Jackie, however, not only stayed, she lived among them.

### Providing Homes

One by one, Jackie helped many of the gang members and drug users to become Christians. She inspired them to give up drugs but they needed practical help as well as her prayers. Therefore, she opened up homes where they could live away from drugs, learning how to live a Christian life.

One danger was that the gangs had a rule that once you were a gang member you were a gang member for life. Although it was dangerous for the boys to leave their gangs. Jackie told them that they had to choose the gang-life or Jesus. The boys who left the gangs expected to be punished. However, the gang bosses started to respect Jackie because she had done what they could not, get their men to give up drugs. They then left the old gang members alone.

### **The St Stephen's Society**

Years rolled by and Jackie opened several more homes. The work grew and with the help of some American missionaries she set up the St. Stephen's Society. It is still in existence today and is one of the most successful organizations in the world, rescuing hundreds of young people from a life of misery on the streets.

Hong Kong's Walled City was eventually pulled down and cleaned up in the 1990's. Jackie has continued her work there. Today there are over 200 people living in different homes coming off of drugs and being helped to a new life. Her charity now works in other Asian countries too.

Jackie Pullinger continued to give her life to the poor and forgotten. Many now have a sweet life in Christ instead of a bitter life on the streets thanks to Jackie's faithfulness.

*A photo of Jackie from 2019*

