



CHINESE CHURCH SUPPORT MINISTRIES

CHINA PRAYER LETTER



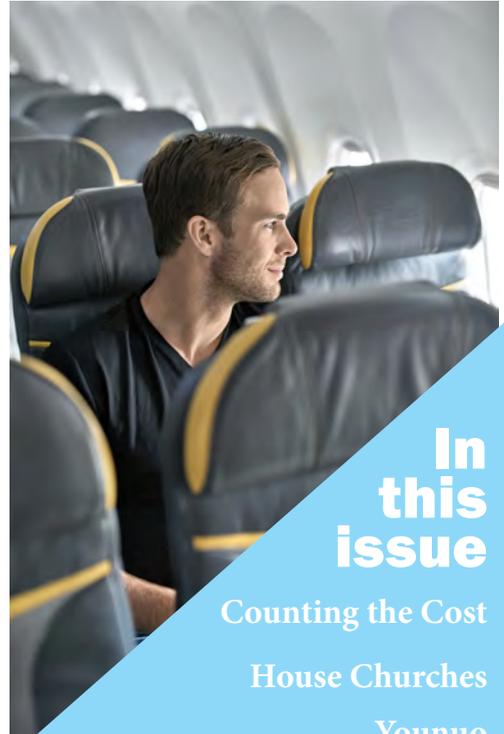
JANUARY 2019

Counting the Cost

As China continues to actively hunt down and expel foreign Christian workers it raises the question of what Churches and networks in home countries can do to walk alongside these families. By gaining an awareness of the challenges they face and the traumas and adjustments they will work through their church families can help them recover.

An in-China worker spoke to CCSM, “In the last couple weeks more families have come under investigation. One family, our neighbours, were deported. We don't know many details. Our hearts were broken to know that we couldn't support them through this difficult process. At the same time, we know that many others were there to stand with them.

These families have lost their homes, many of their



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Seeking to serve, strengthen and support the church and the people of China

possessions, businesses, country where their hearts are, relationships, and in some peoples' eyes, reputations. It was, and continues to be, a very high price to pay. With all that loss, they find themselves back in a country they didn't plan to live in, without jobs or homes, trying to figure out... what's next? And grieving.”

Sent home at short notice, often as little as 24 hours, they arrive back exhausted and emotionally shattered. Practical assistance would no doubt be appreciated by those that have been hit hard financially and need to start again, especially those with family responsibilities.

No doubt there will be worry about those they had been mentoring and any new converts. Will they be strong enough? Will they continue in their Christian

walk? Do they have the solid foundations needed to discern truth from deception?

And worry about those they associated with - will their Chinese social credit score be affected? Will other Christian workers be traced and sent home through confiscated computer and phone records? Having a place and time to rest, take stock and strategise the path ahead would also be a welcome luxury that many will not be afforded.

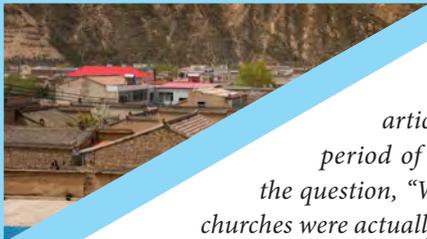
The enemy's darts will aim to inflict maximum damage. Self-doubt, defeat and even a sense of shame or failure. Workers who have not long been in China before being forced to leave will certainly have questions to ask God. They may not have had time to see the results of their labour.

A missionary may begin to question, “Did I hear the call correctly?” Doubt, when allowed to hit its target is a very effective weapon. It is important for wounded returnees to not become isolated. It is a time for those around them to support, strengthen and encourage.

Our contact in China reflects, “It's easy to look at all the loss. But that's not all there was to this. Through the process these people bore witness with their words and with their lives of God's grace and love. They loved their investigators. We experienced the "Spirit of glory and of God" resting upon them. (1 Peter 4:14) We are confident that he was and will continue to be in control.”



House Churches



Part 4 of an article by Robert Menzies, “The Future of the Church in China: Why China’s House Churches will Prevail”. This article was written in 2017, just prior to the current period of persecution of the house churches. Peter asks the question, “What would happen if the TSPM and the house churches were actually allowed to exist on equal footing?”

In his essay he compares the TSPM churches and the house churches in three key areas: church structure, theology, and worship patterns. In this exert he looks at the House Church Structure:

When I attend TSPM churches I am always encouraged, but generally I know that I will not be an active participant in terms of edifying the larger group. In comparison, at a house church virtually everyone participates and anyone may contribute a song, a testimony, or a prayer. When I attend a house church service, I always go with a sense of

expectancy, knowing that I will have many opportunities to share, to pray, and to encourage others.

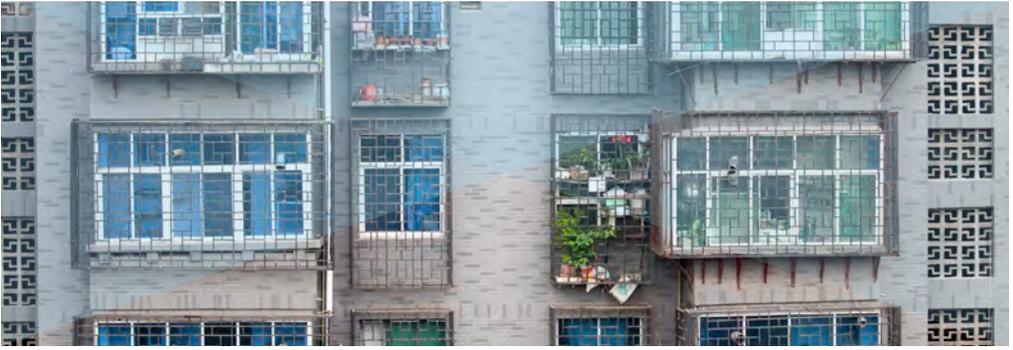
In contrast with house churches, many traditional and state churches around the world insist that their ministers go through a rigid path of professional training. They also emphasize a clear path

International Short-Term Teams

- * Mercy
- * Medical
- * Intercession
- * Trekking
- * English Cultural Exchange

April 2019:

Cultural Exchange; Cycle/Intercession; Mercy; Medical; Come, See & Do Youth Leaders Teams



of hierarchical authority that features accountability. This kind of institutional approach may foster stability, but it also encourages conformity and stifles flexibility, creativity, and risk-taking.

The ethos of house church movement is noticeably different. We may sum up by saying that the house churches are the “free market capitalists” in the economy of church life in China. Rigid control from a central bureaucracy is generally not possible and rarely tolerated; rather, the calling, gifting, and vision of every believer is affirmed and encouraged. Churches are thus planted with little or no encouragement or financial support from denominational or network leaders, often by surprising people with a strong sense that God has called and empowered them for the task at hand. It matters not if they are young, unschooled, or female. Their call and their spiritual gifting are paramount.

Some time ago house church leaders from two different networks met together in my home. It was fascinating to watch how these leaders interacted with one another.

was apparent that these three questions touched upon matters they viewed as significant and foundational for church leadership.

First, they asked about their conversion experience. Second, they wanted to know about their call to ministry. Finally, they asked about their experience of persecution (that is, their time in prison). Their conversion, their call, and their suffering – these were the marks of a true minister.

There was something very basic, very compelling, and very New Testament about their approach. It was all reminiscent of Acts 4:13, “When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus.” Christians in the house church movement see this life-transforming encounter with Jesus as the essential ingredient for effective ministry. Since other qualifications fade into insignificance by comparison, everyone is potentially a pastor, evangelist, or missionary.

Younuo

An account of a great and terrible worldwide flood has been recorded in many cultures around the world and in Southern China one of the people groups that has carried this story down through their generations is the Younuo. They have passed on a legend of waters that rose up so high on the earth that they reached to the heaven. A man then sounded a gong at the rooftop of the earth which woke up the Thunder god. The Thunder god saw man's distress and came down to rescue them, causing the flood to retreat.

Approximately 22, 000 members of the Younuo tribe, known locally as the Hong Yao (Red Yao), live in closely-knit villages within the Longsheng and Xing'an counties in northern Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region.

Younuo have been classified as Bunu and as such are categorized, along with several other smaller groups, under official Yao minority group. Their language has six tones and is closely related to Wunai, spoken in the Hunan mountains.

They are neighbours to members of the local Dong and Miao minorities who also live in the region.

Younuo were traditionally hunters but this has diminished in recent years and deer and wild pigs are becoming scarce.

Despite having passed down a flood story they are still waiting to hear the true account of the flood. Paul Hattaway,



in his book "Operation China" estimates that only 2% have heard the message of God's redemption but there is not one recorded believer or church among them.

The Younuo, and all the Bunu, are classed as "unreached". Rev. W. H. Oldfield longed to reach the people of Guangxi in the early part of the 20th century. "How we wished we could speak their dialect and tell them plainly the gospel message..."

No missionaries are in Guangxi Province that have learned this dialect. No gospel recordings, Jesus films or Christian broadcasts have been produced in their language.

Oldfield went on to add, "They live, they die unreached, unhelped, and unheeded. For decades they have been groping in darkness, for decades more they will have to grope, unless someone comes to give them the message."

As China continues to raise the level of income and education and

spread the use of the Chinese language across minority groups, the Younou may possibly stumble across the Christian message of the flood on the internet. But how much more powerful it would be to hear it in their own language and to have the full gospel explained.

After all, myths begin when truth is lost.

They evolve to fill the gaps misplaced in history. But they are a powerful confirmation of the truth when it is revealed. The Bible says that the Lord will not return until every tribe and tongue has had the opportunity to hear his message. For the Younou this opportunity seems so tantalisingly close to their reach.



Not Guantanamo

Earlier this year reports reached the United Nations of over a million Uyghur people being detained in re-education camps in China's most western province, the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR).

There are about 11 million Uyghur in Xinjiang. The estimated number of camp inmates equates to every second Uyghur household losing a parent. The majority of Uyghur adhere to the Muslim faith, but a handful of Christians are also known to have been interned in the camps.

government is difficult to comprehend and China has been accused of human rights abuse in the foreign media. In response, The Global Times, a Chinese owned English language newspaper, included an article on the 20th November 2018 expressing China's viewpoint.

The article explained the education and training programs were for residents who have been influenced by religious extremism and for poverty alleviation, and that they were obtaining positive results. No terrorist activity has been reported in 22 months.

Li Wei, a Beijing based anti-terrorism

PRAYER POINTERS

Counting the Cost

Pray for the Christian workers who have been deported from China. Ask God to strengthen and encourage them. [1 Peter 5:10]

Thank God for the willingness of these workers who risked and lost so much for your sake. Pray that they will be restored and blessed going forward.

Pray for the seeds of faith that have been sown in China through the witness of these foreign workers. Ask the Father to complete the good work that he has begun in the lives of new believers.

House Churches

Pray that the House Churches will continue to develop mature and spiritually gifted Christian leaders despite the current limitations on house churches meeting together.

Thank God that he uses ordinary men and women from all rungs in society to share his message.

Pray that, like Peter and John, the Chinese church will be filled with courage so that they will be able to share the life-transforming power of Jesus with others.

Younuo

Thank God that there is still a memory of the great flood in the legends of the Younuo. Pray that this legend will draw them to the true story of the flood and God's salvation plan for mankind.

Pray that the Younuo will hear the Good News soon and that another generation will not perish before they hear the "still small voice" of the God who made Thunder.



PRAYER POINTERS

Not Guantanamo

Pray for China's leaders and authorities who must maintain peace and prosperity in this vast nation.

Pray for the many wives, husbands and children who have family members in re-education camps.

Pray that in this time of repression and suffering he will draw Uyghur people to him.

Pray that Christians will have opportunity inside and outside the camps to share the hope they have in Christ.

The Chinese Exodus

Thank God that despite the social alienation and prejudice experienced by migrant populations, He is able to give his people respect, identity and a place of belonging.

Pray that Chinese believers will lead the way in addressing and improving the plight of the transient and undervalued migrant community of workers.

News from CCSM UK

Pray for the Gift of Life to reach many in China in 2019

Pray for those Christians facing challenges to receive encouragement and to be rooted deep in Christ

Pray that the 2019 Intercession Team will be full and will achieve spiritual breakthroughs as they walk in China

Pray for protection for all our Teams and those they visit, that God will enable them to bless and serve and proclaim Jesus



Chinese Church Support Ministries

Seeking to serve, strengthen
and support the church and
the people of China

expert, told the Global Times, "Trainees who used to be influenced by extremism were narrow-minded and had nothing but hatred in their hearts. Now they have changed a lot. They have learned the national laws and regulations as well as some vocational skills." Some Uyghur herdsmen had even been given free televisions.

The Global Times reported that some poorer Uyghurs had been relocated to villages and were encouraged to work in local factories. An official in Kashi (Kashgar), who asked for anonymity, told the Global Times that "an economic and technological park in Kashi can have 3,000 workers living and working there. There are schools, hospitals and other infrastructure around it. Factories launched by companies from many places, including Guangdong, Shanghai and Shandong, enjoy favourable policies. The factories are close to the source of raw materials and a relatively low-cost labour force."

Foreign media who criticised the Xinjiang policy were said to have either political intentions or a lack of knowledge of the situation in Xinjiang and the item pointed out that the United Nations' Human Rights Council had finally given China a passing grade in its last review of China's human rights development in early November.

What was not explained was that much of this grade was awarded through a peer review process in which any, or all, of the UN nations are invited to comment.



Because China's review attracted a large line up of over 150 nations, the allocated time given to each was reduced to just 45 seconds. Most nations used this time to praise China's efforts to raise her people out of poverty. Only a few Western nations spoke on their concerns about diminished religious freedom and mass internments. Turkey was the only Muslim nation that voiced concerns. China's global reach in foreign trade, investment and aid has amassed her many friends in the political arena. As the famous Voltaire once said, "When it is a question of money, everybody is of the same religion."

The Global Times piece bold-typed the heading, "Xinjiang's efforts to

replace extremism with opportunity are not like the Guantanamo Bay tactics the West imagines.” Perhaps China could help to alleviate these imaginings if the current secrecy surrounding the re-education camps and the absence of independent scrutiny were addressed.

The journalist referred to 15 Western ambassadors in China who sought a meeting with the top regional official

in Xinjiang and quoted the Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying who called the request "rude and unacceptable," and said, "I would like to reiterate that Xinjiang as an open region welcomes those who go there with goodwill. Anyone harbouring malicious intentions and prejudice and seeking to interfere in China's internal affairs will be firmly rejected."

The Chinese Exodus

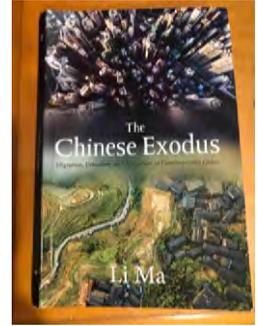
Migration, Urbanism, and Alienation in Contemporary China

– Book Review

As this book points out, “the dominant narrative of the Bible is a story of migration on many levels”. The pain of disorientation, exclusion, discrimination, exploitation and sense of being uprooted is threaded through the Bible from the expulsion from Eden, through Israel’s wandering in the desert, it’s slavery in Egypt, exile in Babylon and the persecution and scattering of the early church.

Author Li Ma brings to the forefront the pain and suffering experienced by China’s internal migrant workers, a population of millions motivated by financial need who leave rural homes and poor areas to seek opportunity China’s cities.

Migrant populations are the backbone of China’s working force and economic



boom. Li Ma recalls one particular migrant neighbourhood housing over 40,000 people, many of whom were working on the facilities of the Beijing Olympics. The entire village was bulldozed prior to the Games.

In 2017 a crackdown on illegal housing saw the mass eviction of over three million migrant workers from their accommodation.

This book takes the reader on a journey to understand the historical torrents and social forces that have shaped the life trajectories of these people who are oft considered disposable, suffering under the whims of market forces and communist policy makers. It raises some gruelling questions.

Li Ma skilfully weaves together the sciences of politics and economics, statistical modelling, human migration and Christian theology.

She discusses the Christians' role in social justice, aid work and outreach amongst the migrant community. The reader is inspired to contemplate a more wholistic application of the Christian gospel which has social and even political implications because of Jesus Christ's Lordship over all creation.

In this ground-breaking and poignant book, Li Ma takes the reader well beyond the boundaries of sociological analysis and theological discussion. She paints a human face on the faceless migrant population and gives a deeper understanding of their lives. She presents insights into the environment

and challenges aid workers and NGOs experience when hoping to work with this transient portion of Chinese society. Many of the perceptions captured in this book can be transferred to the wider migrant and refugee populations worldwide.

Ultimately, she points out that through all of redemptive history God shows the human race that it is not the land that makes a people "home" but God himself.

Author Li Ma has a PhD from Cornell University. She is a senior research fellow at the Henry Institute for the Study of Christianity and Politics at Calvin College. She is the co-author with Jin Li of *Surviving the State, Remaking the Church*. *The Chinese Exodus* is published by Pickwick Publications, 2018.

News from CCSM UK



Happy New Year! Let us give thanks to God for all His blessing in 2018. Despite the challenging environment in China, people turned to Christ, Bibles and Christian books were distributed, children in foster homes and orphanages were cared for, those without medical aid were helped and treated, and many travelled into China as part of a Team that served and were also blessed themselves.

**The Spirit and the bride say, 'Come!'
And let the one who hears say, 'Come!'
Let the one who is thirsty come; and let
the one who wishes take the free gift of
the water of life.** [Revelation 22:17]

At the end of Revelation these words remind us to join with God in saying "Come" to Him. To receive the free gift of the water of life – the gift of life!

At this start of a new year let us look forward to all that God will do and let us encourage each other to hear God's words and proclaim them – "Come".



If you read the article entitled "In Jesus Name" in the December edition of the China Prayer Letter, you will have heard about the most recent Intercession Team that went into China. It is a very positive article and I hope inspires you to pray.

What is on my heart is to see more people joining the Intercession Team in 2019. Please pray with me that we have a bigger team and that God draws those He wants to go on this team.

Please consider if you can go, and if not, is there anyone you know, perhaps in your church who could be the right person for

this team?

In the challenging times in China we need, more than ever, the power of prayer exercised across the land. Please pray for warriors to go into China and take God's power with them.

As always, I can provide more information about the trip and the application form. We still have doors open to work in China, to visit China with Teams and to distribute literature, please pray that these doors remain open, and that we will be faithful to step through these doors. Whether by prayer, by giving money or by going ourselves – we have an obligation to serve God with what He has put in our hands.

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