



# CHINESE CHURCH SUPPORT MINISTRIES

## CHINA PRAYER LETTER



MARCH 2019

## The Gift Of Love

*A Mercy Team Member tells her story...*

I returned to China in 2018 to join a Mercy Team for the second time. A Mercy Team involves mainly serving, supporting and helping babies, children and young adults (some with special needs) in both private foster apartments and public orphanages. There is also an opportunity to run a programme in an English class for migrant children. Crafts, songs and games are planned for some visits, but other places may be cuddling babies.

This year we split into two groups and visited sponsored children and high-school students in their village homes. The children are regularly visited by the Chinese workers, but this was the first time European foreigners had visited these families for quite some time.

It was a privilege to be



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

invited into these homes and be offered hospitality. Village families live a very simple lifestyle. Having visitors would incur expense, so we only ate a polite amount of the snacks that were offered. In each home, it felt very welcoming but quite awkward at first. The sponsored child began by being very shy, but after a while, with encouragement, they would start to talk about books and music they enjoyed, and their hopes for the future. At the end of each visit all the awkwardness had disappeared and lots of photos were taken!

In 2017 we had spent a lot of time at a private foster home where children, age 1 – 5yrs, (awaiting adoption) were living in a home environment, and they are looked after by live-in caregivers, who the children call ‘ayi’ (auntie).

In 2018 we spent about 5 days with these children. It was such a good feeling to see the children again as I knew most of them.

While we were there, two new children were added to the family. It was really beautiful to see how the other children immediately embraced and accepted their new little brother and sister. I heard one of the older children, in a concerned voice, tell the ayi that her little brother

was crying. This is a very homely, loving place.

A visiting team gives the ayis a little bit of relief, as they are generally pretty busy looking after the children, cooking, cleaning, washing and shopping. Each day we took some different ‘toddler-suitable’ indoor activities like colouring and stickers, and we also took some outdoor activities like balloons, balls and blowing bubbles for when we took the children to the park each afternoon. One of our team members was a musician, so it was great having him play the guitar. The children loved it!

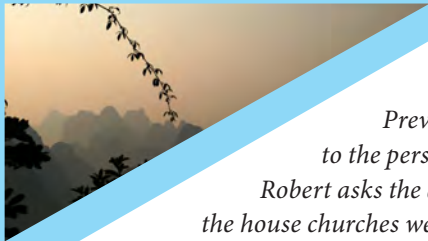
One of my highlights included being able to change dirty nappies! It actually felt like an honour because not only was I being trusted, but somebody was being saved a messy job!

Another highlight was that my limited Chinese was useful. I, along with the musician, had been placed at the Public Orphanage, with around 20 very poorly babies. The caregivers were warm-hearted but obviously stretched. We had no translator with us, but we were both learning Chinese so, between us, we managed to communicate.

I met one little girl with extremely limited movement. It took a good 10-15 minutes talking and playing with her before she finally responded with a smile. My musician team member commented that one day, when we are in eternity, some of these children may come to us and say, “Do you remember me, thank you for spending time with me ...”



# The Return Of Christ



Part 6 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 persecution of the house churches beginning in 2018.

Robert 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 excerpt he looks at the Three Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM) Theology regarding the return of Christ:

Here is one example of the theological dissonance one finds in TSPM settings.

In the summer of 2011 a friend, let’s call him Brother Wang, told me that an urban TSPM church would be hosting a preaching competition. Brother Wang at that time was serving as a member of the church’s ministerial staff. Brother Wang was very excited about the preaching competition. This would be the first of its kind in our area.

Christians from all over the province

were preparing to come and participate in the preaching competition. A panel of judges, including the church’s pastor and other church leaders, would award prizes. Four young men from the local church planned to participate, including Brother Wang, as well as many others from distant parts of the province.

Later, however, Brother Wang told me that he was disappointed. He had worked hard on his sermon, “My Hope is the Second Coming of Jesus.” When the local pastor heard the title of his sermon, he

## International Short-Term Teams

Email CCSM at  
[teams@amccsm.org](mailto:teams@amccsm.org) to  
find out what we have on offer.



told Brother Wang that he should preach on another topic. The pastor said that although he did not have a problem with this topic, there would be a number of government officials in attendance. He indicated that many would find this topic problematic and thus it would inevitably have a negative impact on the judges. Brother Wang was clearly surprised by this turn of events and felt badly. He later left the TSPM church and returned to his house church roots.

When I heard Brother Wang's story, it confirmed my own suspicions rooted in my experience in TSPM churches over the years. In all my years in China, I have yet to hear a sermon on the return of Christ in a TSPM church. I have always felt that there is a sort of unwritten policy in TSPM churches that pastors should refrain from preaching on this topic.

The Marxist critique of Christianity has always emphasized that Christianity is “an opiate of the people” largely because it calls us to think of the future as well as the present and of other, spiritual realities rather than simply the physical realities that we can feel and see.

Of course, Brother Wang's topic reminds us that true hope and an eternal perspective have an important impact on how we live our lives today.

China desperately needs this kind of hope and perspective, but sadly CCP leaders are often blind to this fact. Sadder even still is the willingness of some TSPM leaders to avoid preaching and teaching on this topic because of pressure from government officials.

# Remember Xinjiang

The Church in Xinjiang is not unique in its challenges, but it certainly has more than its fair share.

I recently sat down with an observer who has grave concerns for the Xinjiang Church, in particular the Uyghur people who live there. She fervently requested that the church abroad remember this forgotten land and pray for these fellow believers. Especially now as they have become even more isolated by police state surveillance and very real threat of internment in the province's re-education camps.

Five general observations stood out:

## 1. Need for the Word

The 11 Million+ Uyghurs do not have a complete bible in their own Uyghur Arabic script. The New Testament was translated and first delivered to them by underground courier in 2005. Still, many books of the Old Testament are yet to be translated. Because of Government and Muslim restrictions, obtaining copies of Uyghur scriptures is a great challenge. They cannot be purchased in bookstores in China and are not available for download within China.

Our observer anguished that it is taking



so long to provide the Word of God to the Uyghur.

## 2. Need for the Holy Spirit

The help of the Holy Spirit has not yet been widely embraced by the Uyghur church. Without the knowledge of the Word and Baptism in the Holy Spirit, believers are weak, not being fully transformed and easily fall back into sin.

## 3. The Church's role in Clan Culture

Uyghurs usually grow up within a clan culture and family is heavily relied on to find a job, a place to live and assistance in all aspects of life. Outsiders are not readily welcomed into a clan cliques as once accepted the clan is obligated to extend their help.

Uyghur are predominantly Muslim, and once a family member decides to follow Christ, usually, they lose the trust of their clan and are cut off from their support structure. They naturally look to their new church friends to meet the needs they expected from their old

family. However, they are disillusioned when they find their Christian friends do not welcome them fully as ‘family’, not wanting to meet the additional obligations.

Our observer hoped to see the church in Xinjiang consider taking on this “surrogate family” role. In the early Acts church this community role was strong.

#### 4. Fate Belief

Although they will be reluctant to admit it, Buddhism has featured historically in the now Muslim Uyghur nation, particularly during the Qocho Kingdom period (840-1400s). Perhaps a residue of this is their strong belief in fate.

#### 5. External versus internal righteousness

It is often mentioned that lying is a common trait in Uyghur culture. Lying is

used a self-protection strategy. A small lie can save face, prevent offence and avoid making someone else feel sad. However, our observer cautioned, “It is wise to leave the Holy Spirit to convict a new believer of dishonesty. That new believer must learn to trust the Holy Spirit to provide their protection and support.”

Many hold the Islamic belief that they are righteous if they abstain from pork and drink, yet sexual sin, abortion and sexual abuse within families is rife.

#### 6. Christian festivals are not revered or observed.

Unlike other Christians around the world the Uyghur Christians have not embraced festivals like Christmas and Easter. It weakens them in that they do not see themselves as part of the worldwide body of Christ. It also deprives them of a wonderful opportunity to reflect and share the reason for their faith.



# PRAYER POINTERS

## The Gift of Love

*“God has given each of us some special abilities, so be sure to use them to help each other, passing on to others God’s many kinds of blessings.” 1 Peter 4:10 (TLB).*

Pray that those people who have the gifts of mercy, healing, serving and helps will treasure these gifts and use every opportunity to use them for building His Kingdom.

Thank God for the people who have chosen to work among the disadvantaged and disabled in China.

## The Return Of Christ

Praise God that He is our hope for the future and that He will return for His Bride.

Pray that as the World moves closer to the end of the Age, the Chinese Church, both underground and TSPM churches, will seek to know more about the hope they have in Christ.

Pray that believers in China will be drawn to read their Bibles and discover the hope revealed there about the return of Christ

## Remember Xinjiang

Pray that providing the Bible to minority groups in China will become a priority. Ask for forgiveness that we have been so slow to pass on this treasure to the millions of Uyghur.

Pray that the Xinjiang Church will find ways to access the Bible despite the current climate there.

Pray that the Uyghur will become aware of their need for the Holy Spirit and that they will hunger for Him.

Pray for divine meetings, dreams and visions for this isolated church.



# PRAYER POINTERS

## Blessed To Be A Blessing

Praise God that He values and uses everything we offer to Him.

Pray for Penny and others like her who do not have strong support networks close by. Pray that their lamps will be filled and will shine brightly.

Pray that God will continue to pour out his blessing on these workers that they may be a blessing to the lost in China.

## Visions Beyond The Veil

Thank God that He uses the meek to confound the wise.

Praise God that He has prepared a place for us and that He desires to live among His people.

Thank God that through the cross He has given us power over the powers of death and darkness.

Praise God that His gospel is so simple that even little children can understand.

## News from CCSM UK

Give thanks for Jesus Christ our Lord, give Him all the honour.

Give thanks that we still have open doors to go into China and to support those in the country.

Pray that the Intercession Team will be full and that those God wants in the team will be obedient and go.

Pray for Chinese families returning after New Year celebrations to work and normal life to have a hunger for God and for meaning in their lives.



**Chinese Church Support Ministries**

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



# Blessed To Be A Blessing

I recently met a middle-aged woman taking time out in another country to “refuel” before starting back at her University role in China. Despite being surrounded by people at the university, her cross-cultural work could be very isolating, especially from Christian support. I admired her single mindedness as she used her time outside China to actively seek refreshment from God, rather than chase tourist sites and pleasure activities.

Openhandedly the Lord “filled her lamp” through the prayers and words of the people she encountered. Her hosts took her to beautiful locations, she enjoyed generous hospitality and was even blessed by the weather.

I knew how much this talented academic had given up to follow Jesus. I wondered why this educated, single woman left the security of her homeland along with a blossoming career to live in central China? Being a cross-cultural worker is by no means easy.

I asked her. She shared with me a point in her life where she came to realise, “God owns everything in the world...there is nothing else we can truly give him but our lives.” So, this woman whom I will call Penny chose to offer everything to God... her life.



From that time Penny decided to align herself with God’s dream for her life. She said, “I even repositioned my dreams to be in line with God’s dream.”

“Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness” is something she tries to live by. She redirected her academic and career choices for God’s work and He faithfully opened doors for her.

One area in her life that she has trusted to God is relationships. It can be particularly difficult for long term workers to find a spouse. Especially in Penny’s case where other expats in her location are from different cultural backgrounds. Loneliness has been a struggle. Yet if all we have in our

lives to offer God is a bottle of tears, He will use that. Her personal struggles have provided a connection to others. Penny explained, “Our testimony is our life and relationship with God.”

Even finding close friends is something you cannot expect. Working in a university you are unlikely to find them among your students. And in the current environment you must be especially alert. So, trust is an issue both on campus and in the churches. Spies have been placed in congregations and English Corners to trap Christian workers. Penny has decided to pull back from many activities but is still able to meet one on one with

certain people she is mentoring. She says, “God narrows your circle. I no longer seek out friends. God faithfully brings the right people to me.”

She added, “We are not responsible for a person’s salvation. But we must speak life into people because we have the authority. We can share our testimony, but the Lord works in their heart.” She went on to tell of one girl who rejected Jesus for years, yet God surrounded her with people that told her of God’s love. Years later she asked herself why she resisted when He had encircled her with so many people who showed her His love. Alone she decided to accept the Lord.”

## Visions Beyond the Veil – Book Review

*by H.A. Baker Published by Great Plains Press, 2012, ISBN: 978-0-9885702-9-0*

Harold Baker founded and operated the Adullam Rescue Mission in Yunnanfu, Yunnan Province. It was early in the 20th century. He and his wife Josephine took in street children aged six to eighteen and worked with them teaching daily the gospel message. But, with little fruit they nearly gave up. That was until the children of the home were visited by a wonderful and powerful outpouring of the Holy Spirit!

Harold and the mission workers stood back and wisely did not interfere as the Holy Spirit gave visions and revelations to the children over a period of weeks. As an observer Harold faithfully recorded

many of the children’s experiences comparing them with numerous examples from the Scriptures. Harold carefully cross examined the phenomena and there is left no doubt that these were genuine divine encounters.

True to His ways, God gave His miraculous revelations not to rich businessmen and university scholars but rather to these simple and humble children. They were the most lowly, poor and rejected in society. Beggars and street children, runaways and orphans, many from mountain tribes and minority groups who had very little knowledge of the Bible nor Christian theology.

‘Visions Beyond the Veil’ is not a book for the faint-hearted. The reader cannot take

in this book without being challenged, changed and yet encouraged and empowered in the work ahead. It brings vivid reality to the heavenly realms and the battle for souls.

Through the children's visions and revelations there was delivered such a complete message of the gospel that no-one is left without a clear grasp of their desperate need for salvation and the need to tell others.

Although many of their visions into spiritual realms should have caused the children to be fearful, the opposite seemed to be the case. As they witnessed the power of the blood of Jesus, they understood the authority they had through Him over the powers of

darkness. This book also leaves the reader with a greater understanding of the role of angels.

After their experiences some of the children began to preach prophetically calling people in the villages to repentance. Signs and wonders that we read about in the early Acts church occurred amongst these youngsters bearing witness to the power of the Holy Spirit.

These small children were caught up into the heavens and allowed to see some of what God has prepared for us. The Father has invited everybody if they will simply accept His wonderful gift. This book will bless and encourage all who read this incredible story.

## News from CCSM UK



*To him  
who is able  
to keep you from  
stumbling and to present  
you before his glorious presence  
without fault and with great joy – to the  
only God our Saviour be glory, majesty,  
power and authority, through Jesus Christ  
our Lord, before all ages, now and for  
evermore! Amen. [Jude 24-25]*

Jesus Christ is Lord. That is what we proclaim as we worship, as we witness, as we make disciples. It should be true and

transparent in our own lives, that Jesus Christ is Lord.

No matter what government changes happen in China or in our home country, Jesus Christ is Lord. No matter what climate changes happen, Jesus Christ is Lord. No matter what technology changes happen, Jesus Christ is Lord.

He protects us and keeps us "from stumbling" but more than that He is the reason we worship and proclaim Jesus is Lord – because to Him alone belongs all glory, all majesty, all power and all authority.



We still have doors open to serve in China, to strengthen the church and to support the church in China. Give thanks that we can be part of God's work in these ways. Give thanks that these doors are open.

As I have mentioned recently, we firmly believe in the power of prayer, and are encouraged when we hear of you praying for China. Keep praying !

Could you join an  
Intercession Team  
to China this  
year?

You could be walking and praying in areas that do not have a Christian witness and that especially need God to reveal Himself to men, women and families. You will be blessed in joining such a team, and you will be a blessing to others.

If not you – do you know someone who could go? Please also pray that we have a full team and even two teams that "go and pray" in China.

We do have other teams, if you might be interested in going, contact me for more details.

Martyn Wells



**CCSM UK**

PO Box 5857  
Sheffield, S10 9GG  
T: 0114 229 5796

National Director: Martyn Wells  
uk@amccsm.org  
www.amccsm.org

