



CHINESE CHURCH SUPPORT MINISTRIES CHINA PRAYER LETTER



JUNE 2019

From Candy Canes to Christ

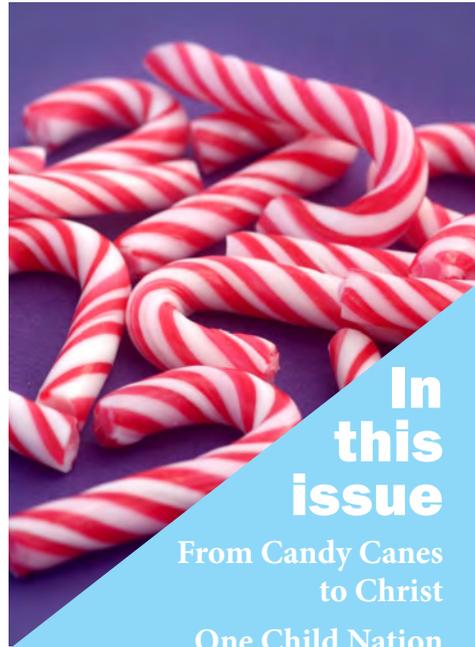
A Chinese university student will soon head to North America to study at a Bible College.

Incredibly, just over two years ago, Jan had not heard the name of Jesus. This is the first part of her story... She writes:

"I was raised in a traditional Chinese family and had no idea who Jesus was until I went to university. I had always been told by my teachers and textbooks that there is no God and believing in a deity is just superstition. So, no surprise, I was an atheist, like most Chinese.

But everything changed for me on Thanksgiving Day in late 2016.

I have always loved learning languages so decided to major in English. The privilege of being an English major is that you can get to meet many foreigners and talk to them. One day, my Canadian teacher brought some New Zealand friends to class. One of the girls (now my best friend!)



**In
this
issue**

From Candy Canes
to Christ

One Child Nation

This Is Also Where I Stand!

Under The Lens

150 Pastors Arrested in Raid

Handling Fire and Fervour

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

invited me to a Thanksgiving Party. As well as learning about the Thanksgiving Festival, it was there I heard the story of Jesus's birth for the first time in my life. I was surprised that there was an actual story behind Christmas! All I knew was Santa Claus and candy canes!

After that I was surprised how many English-speaking foreigners I met and strangely almost all of them seemed to be Christians!!

On Christmas Eve 2016, an American teacher invited me to her house to watch a movie called "The Nativity Story." When I went to the toilet, I saw a note on the wall saying: "God is Love" and I was surprised. What kind of faith is this that makes them put a note on the wall of the bathroom, I thought!

After Christmas, I heard about a weekly Bible study, so I asked if I could join. There I started to learn more about God, but I still didn't really understand.



All of my foreign friends are Christians (isn't that amazing!). I started to think that there must be a reason that so many intelligent people worshipped God. I wondered why they are all so kind and generous. In the end I found the answer. It's God!! Christians love others because God loved them first so that's why. They have Jesus in them, so they have to spread this love to the world!

Another Team invited me to their daily meeting in their hotel. They prayed and I sang the worship songs with them. In that room, I experienced something powerful in my heart and now I know that was the Holy Spirit!

Soon after, a Chinese friend from the Bible Study invited me to visit her church. That was the first time I had been to a church in my entire life and I was deeply touched. After the service, a staff member came to talk to me. I knew that I was ready to follow Jesus and that morning I prayed the Sinner's Prayer! My Christian journey had begun.

Praise the Lord that there's a house church right next to my university. It just takes me 5 minutes to walk to my church. Now I attend three meetings each week and lead a Bible Study for new believers.

But little did I realise what else was in store for me!!"

Next month Jan tells of her experiences in Shanghai, Thailand and North America.

One Child Nation

The Sundance Film festival has been a springboard for countless filmmakers, launching them into international recognition and worldwide audiences. Winning the 2019 Festival's U.S. Grand Jury Prize: Documentary, were directors Nanfu Wang and Jialing Zhang.



Their 85-minute documentary named "One Child Nation" lays bare the harrowing fallout of China's One Child Policy. The policy was the Chinese Communist Party's answer to period of rapidly rising population and spreading fears of food shortages and mass starvation. Between 1979 and 2016 Chinese families, with some exceptions, were only permitted to have only one child.

The oldest of these children are now turning 40. And just as the memories of the One Child Era are beginning to fade, this award-winning documentary

boldly and sympathetically investigates its affects and uncovers the depth of pain and suffering that the scheme left in its wake.

Director Nanfu Wang was born in 1985 in a poor farming village in Jiangxi Province. Her family were among the millions of Chinese who never questioned its policy's validity. The nation was programmed by propaganda, indoctrination and strict enforcement to accept the policy.

Wang's rise from poverty to become a filmmaker based in New York is a story

International Short-Term Teams

Email CCSM at
teams@amccsm.org to
find out what we have on offer.

in itself. Yet it wasn't until after she became a mother herself that she began to contemplate the One Child Policy in the country of her birth. She documents her journey back to China with her son to meet with her mother, brother and grandfather. What they share is an honest and deeply personal revelation of the devastating impact the hardline policy had on their family.

She intertwines her family's story with those of the innumerable other Chinese affected by the population-control endeavour. Wang's parents had two children. Rural families were allowed a second child if the first was not a boy. Her family were lucky to produce a precious male heir – important in China's patriarchal society. One Child Nation explores the outcome for other families who were not so fortunate. Their testimonies reveal the agony of failing to produce an heir that in some cases even led to abandonment of baby girls.



Failure to comply with the policy was met with draconian punishment. A family who conceived more than the legal limit were required to terminate the pregnancy. Doctors, nurses and midwives were expected to carry out abortion procedures, even with

babies up to full term. Unwilling women were forcibly restrained to undergo the procedure and subjected to sterilization. In an interview, Nanfu Wang meets and talks to an elderly village midwife who estimates she conducted between 50 000 – 60 000 sterilizations and abortions.

'One Child Nation' brings to light the tragic consequences for families who had unsanctioned children. The horror of children who watched their siblings being snatched away. Cases where twins were taken and surrendered to orphanages. The thoughts of those that had to enforce the law. Children who were confiscated and sold for adoption. Adopting parents who were lied to about the origin of their adopted children. The ongoing struggles of unregistered 'invisible' children. One Child Nation records the unsung stories of grief, guilt, hardship and regret as a nation grappled with humanity amongst collective fears for survival. This powerful documentary will ensure these stories are not forgotten.

The Hollywood Reporter aptly describes the documentary as, "densely informative yet always grounded in deep personal investment and clear-eyed compassion, this is a powerful indictment of a traumatic social experiment, made all the more startling by the success of the propaganda machine in making people continue to believe it was necessary."

One Child Nation has been rumoured for an Oscar award in 2020 and is scheduled to be released in selected theatres in August this year.



This is Also Where I Stand!

Image: Shouwang Moses blog

The prominent Beijing-based Shouwang Church has joined the growing list of unregistered Protestant churches being forced to close in China.

Shouwang (‘meaning to Keep Watch’) was formed nearly 30 years ago, in 1993. The first meeting was held in secret in an apartment rented by Pastor Jin Tianming and his wife near Tsinghua University. As numbers multiplied, or as meetings were raided by police, the group would split and grow. The house-church spread across the city meeting in people’s homes. Attendees were made up largely of educated middle and upper class urbanites and even included some Party Members.

By 2006 the government harassment of underground churches had eased somewhat and the Shouwang house-groups were finally able to meet together in a rented office block. The church not only came out of hiding, it took this opportunity to evangelise and outreach to the community, distributing food and clothing to the needy. It operated a Sunday School, website and Bible study groups. That same year it sort

official recognition with the State Administration for Religious Affairs but was turned down on the grounds that Beijing Shouwang Church “intended to appoint a pastor who is not authorized by the municipal religious groups which have officially registered and did not have full-time staff who fit the events of the organizations”.

Things turned ugly for the church in 2009 when their landlord succumbed to months of pressure by officials and evicted them. Many of the congregation resolutely elected to continue meeting together in the nearby Haidan Park despite bitter November weather. Images of 500 men and women huddled under snow- and ice-covered umbrellas made international news.

After just two services the media attention, and possibly the timely influence of President Obama’s first state visit to China, caused the government to offer them rental space in a theatre. By the end of December that year the church’s 1000 members had raised enough money to purchase their own building. They paid 27 million Yuan for the new

complex however they were prevented from receiving the keys. The building was later confiscated.

In 2011 they were evicted yet again after the landlord was pressured not to renew the lease. Once more they were pressed to meet outdoors or in public areas but this time the police pounced, taking busloads of worshippers into custody and placing church leaders under house arrest. Pastor Jin Tianming remains in in-house detention today.

Jin Tianming stepped down from his senior pastor role in 2018 and is succeeded by Pastor Zhang Xiaofeng. When Jin Tianming heard of the forced closure of the Early Rain Covenant Church and read fellow pastor Wang Yi's Declaration of Faithful Disobedience, he shared his solidarity with Wang Yi in a letter saying: "my heart was deeply moved. Honestly, before the Lord, what pastor Wang Yi declared as his stance on the relationship between the church and the state is also

where I stand. As for our obedience to God which expresses itself in faithful disobedience, each pastor and church will respond differently according to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, particularly in the approach, the extent, and the areas of involvement. Each Christian may have different expressions because of their freedom of conscience. But the one thing to which we must all share and hold fast to is to obey God and witness to Christ. [*Letter titled "THIS IS ALSO WHERE I STAND!" by Pastor Jin Tianming, Dec 13, 2018, English translation provided by Jason and the China Partnership translation team.*]

The Declaration of Faithful Disobedience is available in English at: <http://www.chinapartnership.org/blog/2018/12/my-declaration-of-faithful-disobedience>

and in Chinese at: https://www.facebook.com/prayforearlyrain/posts/302174883736698?__tn__=K-R]

Under The Lens



Every day, we see and hear more stories published in the Western press about Chinese Government surveillance of its citizens.

- There is now 1 camera for every 8 citizens, and this is forecast to be

1 to 4 by 2020. (In Auckland, New Zealand, the ratio is 1 to 450!). Beijing has just under 5000 police workers in full time monitoring of video footage.

- The concerted attack on the Uyghur Minority in Xinjiang is now well publicized around the world and in China as well.

PRAYER POINTERS

From Candy Canes To Christ

Pray for Jan as she grows daily in faith and influence.

Pray for the many Christian teachers who have such an effect on young lives. And pray that more will take up the challenge to be at the coal face making a real difference.

Praise God for the teams that have gone and touched hearts as per this testimony. Pray with us that there will on-going opportunities in the future to bring the message of hope to people like Jan.

One Child Nation

Praise God that He gives value to every life, and that *He knew us before he formed us in our mother's womb*. [Jeremiah 1:5 (NLT)]

Pray that the One Child Nation documentary will achieve a wide audience and that the World will hear these stories of those that suffered in China.

Pray that those still traumatised by their experiences during this social engineering experiment will be able to forgive and be healed. Pray for God to work in the lives of those who participated in taking the lives of so many unborn children. Pray that they will find Jesus, the great restorer and healer.

Pray that this policy will never again be imposed on China, or anywhere else on the face of the Earth.

This Is Also Where I Stand!

Pray for Beijing's Shouwang Church who are unable to meet compliance with the State's church registration process without compromising the fullness of their faith. Pray that the Father will lead them to find places to fellowship.

Thank God for this example of men and women who have decided to live out their Christian faith in obedience to God, knowing they could stand to lose face, jobs, friends and even their homes and freedom. Ask God to prepare the Western Church so it may continue to obey God and witness to Christ should they experience persecution.

Bless the Shouwang church that it might continue to multiply and bear fruit for the Kingdom of God.

PRAYER POINTERS

Under The Lens

Pray that our brothers and sisters would have wisdom to prepare well for what may lie ahead.

Pray that there would be a Biblical view of the Muslim world – that it is a mission field not a dismissal field.

Help us to pray well for China – recognizing its diversity and its variability from place to place.

150 Pastors Arrested in Raid

Praise the Lord for the great leaders and faithful men of God who have built the China Gospel Fellowship on the foundation of the Rock. Pray that the CGF members will withstand the storm.

Bless the house churches that they will continue to be fruitful and multiply in the face of persecution. May they be a blessing to those that intend them harm.

Pray for God's peace and joy to support and encourage those pastors and believers who live under surveillance.

Pray that the Holy Spirit will teach and guide believers who can no longer fellowship together. Pray they will recognise and reject cults, deception and false doctrine.

Handling Fire And Fervour

Pray for the TSPM pastors who minister under the legal restrictions and constant surveillance of an atheist state government.

Pray that our brothers and sisters in China will not be deprived of the fullness of the Holy Spirit, who has the ability to do the deep work in people's lives.

Pray that as the State attempts to shut down house churches and force members to join the TSPM, their fire and fervency will ignite in the TSPM and be a blessing to the brothers and sisters there. Pray that the "joy of the Lord will be their strength".

Bless those pastors that seek to minister in Spirit and Truth and that seek to advance the gospel. Pray the Lord will equip them with his Wisdom.



Chinese Church Support Ministries

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

- Beijing continues to mount pressure on organisations not under their direct control including non - registered Christian churches.
- Its own citizens, through the now well-known, though still developing, Social Credit System have every aspect of their life scrutinised.



But what does it look like in real life in China? Recently, a frequent visitor to China shared with CCSM their personal observations from the streets....

“My observations (not claiming to be a professional observer!) are:

I spent two weeks in several major China cities and concluded that things are not as clear cut as we often see them from outside the country. ‘Things are seldom what they seem.’

Nothing can prepare you for the proliferation of cameras. They are daunting! I often, as a slightly scary game, tried to plot a course along the streets to avoid their AI faces. This proved almost always to be impossible. Had I been a person of interest, they would certainly have a very complete (and maybe puzzling) history of exactly where I had been.

My many local friends are not too disturbed by the cameras. They agree with the official line that they are there to protect the people. They make them feel safe. “If you have nothing to hide...”

There is very little sympathy for the



Uyghurs amongst the Han Chinese I met. Many approve of the Government’s efforts to make China safe from extremism – in other words most buy the Party line! Some Christians hold this view as well.

Whilst the view from outside suggests local “family” churches are under attack across China, this is by no means an accurate view. Whilst all of the local pastors I spoke to are clearly more cautious, most have had no personal experience of any kind of attack or threat.

The Social Credit System is still being developed and mainly focuses at the moment on credit history. This is again approved of by many Chinese locals. Its future form is likely to be more sinister and this may change attitudes.

China is a complex country and we need to be careful not to try to oversimplify current events.”

150 Pastors Arrested in Raid



Last year on July 14, 2018, we were saddened to hear that Shen Yiping, a founding member of the China Gospel Fellowship (中华福音团契), had passed away aged 71. He had paid a high price for defending the integrity of the gospel and sharing his faith and, like so many other house church leaders of his era, he had spent time in China's re-education through labour camps.

The China Gospel Fellowship, also known as the Tanghe Fellowship (唐河团契), started as an evangelical underground house church movement in 1988 in Tanghe County, Henan. Their slogan was: "One heart, one life, and every last cent for the Lord." It grew rapidly and today is reported to have over five million members nationwide.

As the house churches enjoyed explosive growth in Henan Province, so too did cults such as Eastern Lightning (a.k.a. Church of Almighty) God, Falun Gong, Zhong Gong and literally thousands of others. They sprouted up as people searched to fill the spiritual vacuum left by the Cultural Revolution.

among Chinese house church movements led to a meeting in Beijing in 1998. The China Gospel Fellowship were represented along with three other major house church networks whose leaders signed a house church Confession of Faith. It was penned "in order to help our government and people understand our faith, and in order to draw a clear distinction between us and heresies and cults". It was also a statement to the Western churches, some of whom grappled with the autonomous nature of China's house churches.

The Confession of Faith followed on the heels of a plea written that same year requesting official recognition from both the West and the ruling Chinese Communist Party (CCP). It was called "The United Appeal of the Various Branches of the Chinese House Church" and had been drafted by some of the most influential house church leaders. The Communist Party did not reply.

House church leaders had begun discussions around forming a unification of the denominations.

During



unregistered churches with a strong focus on Henan province. Reports have flooded in of harassment, raids, church closures, arrests, confiscations and cross removals.

Earlier this year there was a mass arrest of 150 China Gospel Fellowship pastors. It happened on the morning of January 15, 2019 as the pastors were meeting together at a hotel in Nanyang city to enjoy a year-end meal, prayer and worship together. During the raid, one pastor suffered a heart attack. The pastors were taken to their local police stations and were made to sign a “statement of repentance” before being released the next day. Their cell phones and vehicles were placed under surveillance. [XIN LU, 02/13/2019, <https://bitterwinter.org/150-pastors-arrested-at-year-end-gathering/>]

one of these meetings in 1999 police stormed the venue arresting 36 of the house church leaders. It was a hard knock to the house church network.

Twenty years later, the CCP and the house churches are still at an impasse. The CCP refuses to recognise the unregistered churches....and the house churches cannot accept the State’s restrictions on registered churches. In 2018 the CCP, began a full scale campaign to quash the

Handling Fire and Fervour

Part 9 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 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 state controlled TSPM (Three Self Patriotic Movement) churches and the house churches in three key areas: church structure, theology, and worship patterns. In this excerpt he continues to focus on the topic of worship patterns:

I have watched TSPM leaders struggle with how to deal with earnest, eager believers who feel led to engage in ministry or evangelism in ways considered illegal in China. It is not easy for these leaders to maintain their integrity as Christians and at the same time stay out of trouble.

In this context, the temptation to avoid taking risks or to allow others to do so must be very strong.

There are undoubtedly a variety of reasons for the largely controlling stance of TSPM churches, but one cannot



avoid feeling that this characteristic of TSPM church life is exaggerated by the need to comply with government regulations. The government wants safe, reliable people controlling the church and its meetings, people that it can depend on not to cause problems or transgress the party line. In the TSPM, too much fire and fervency is problematic.

This assessment is supported by the conclusions and tone of perhaps the most significant work published on the Holy Spirit within TSPM circles, *The Work of the Holy Spirit* (Sheng Ling de Gong Zuo) by Jing Jiu Wei (TSPM of Hebei, 2002). Pastor Jing concludes with this warning:

“...the Chinese church blindly advances the cause of the charismatic movement. I still believe this is not appropriate, for if we compare the quality of the faith of

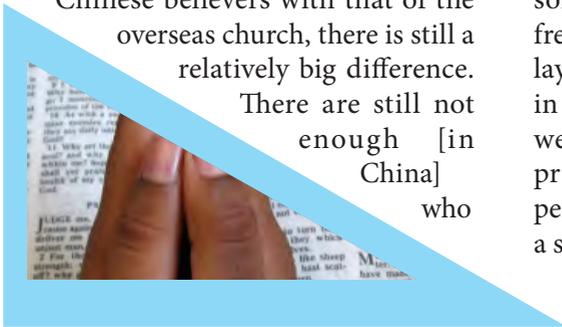
Chinese believers with that of the overseas church, there is still a relatively big difference.

There are still not enough [in China] who

have grasped the truths of Scripture, and in this way, they seek the Holy Spirit without being watchful. My great fear is that they may go astray” (my translation of Jing, *Sheng Ling de Gongzuo*, 375).

One result of this conservative and controlling approach is a largely rational (non-emotional) approach to worship. I find this very uncharacteristic of Chinese people in general. The experience of the indigenous church movements prior to 1949 and the experience of contemporary Chinese churches in the large cities of Malaysia, Indonesia, Hong Kong, and Taiwan point in a different direction.

Once again, my experience in house church settings has been very different. House church services are marked by joyful worship, indigenous songs, testimonies, and fervent prayer. The songs, testimonies, and prayers are frequently spontaneous and initiated by lay believers. The services often result in strong, emotional responses. Crying, weeping, and emotionally charged prayers are not unusual. The most pervasive emotion, however, is generally a strong sense of joy.



CCSM UK

PO Box 5857
Sheffield, S10 9GG
T: 0114 229 5796
National Director: Martyn Wells
uk@amccsm.org
www.amccsm.org

