



CHINESE CHURCH SUPPORT MINISTRIES

CHINA PRAYER LETTER



JULY 2019

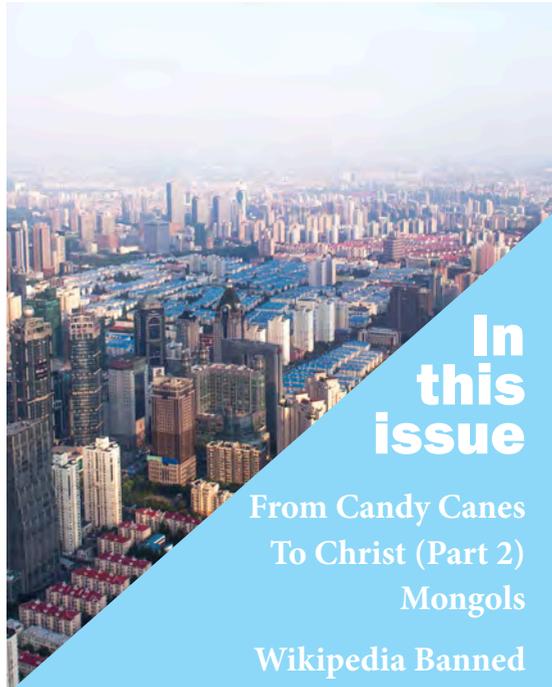
From Candy Canes To Christ (Part 2)

In last month's edition a Chinese student, Jan, shared about how she began her Christian journey. Now she tells us what else God had in store for her...

Soon after I became a Christian, I went to Shanghai to find a part time job during the summer vacation.

It was there that I learned and understood the meaning of the Scripture "My grace is sufficient for you for my power is made perfect in weakness."

I didn't really enjoy the restaurant job in Shanghai, and I could not find a church. You know that in China, churches are usually hidden from sight and they cannot advertise online. So I was feeling lonely and weak. I prayed and a miracle happened! One day some Philipppinos came



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to my restaurant. I saw they prayed before eating so I went and asked them if they were Christians. Actually, they were pastors of a Philippino church in Shanghai and they invited me to come to worship at their church. They were a great support to me during my time in Shanghai that summer. God is so good!

The next winter, I had an opportunity to go to Thailand as a volunteer to teach children Chinese. Apart from me, there were no Christians on this team.

They surprised me at our first lunch by asking me to pray. I did and was able to explain why Christians thank God for all our blessings including our daily food! Some of that team asked me to take them to church back in China.

I found a church in the small Thai City – it had a large cross, so it became a beacon for me when I went into town. I went to church, but it was all in Thai language. But as I was walking out an American man came up to me and told me there was an afternoon English service. It was amazing in that faraway place to find another Christian family. I learned another big lesson in Thailand. When we are low it can be hard to look up. But

when we do, we see that God is the giver of all good gifts in our life and we must always give him thanks. “Every good and perfect gift is from above.”

Later that year, I was baptised. On Christmas Day!!

Back in China, I began inviting non-Christian friends to a local student Club and sharing about Jesus. Within a few months, as a one-year old believer, I was leading Bible studies with university students.

Through some foreign friends, I was invited to go to North America as a Christian Camp volunteer. This was the greatest experience of my life to date. I so much loved sharing with those young American students.

Through contacts at the Camp programme I was invited to apply for a one-year Bible College Programme in America. I did not have the money and it was unlikely China would allow me to do this study at a Christian College.

But once again God did amazing miracles. I was awarded a scholarship to cover all my school costs, a friend offered me free accommodation, others provided me money for living costs and I got my Visa and clearance to travel!

God has been so good to me. I wish I could tell you more but that’s impossible because His blessings cannot be counted.



Mongols

Mongols are descendants of the largest empire the world has ever seen. In its height the Mongolian Empire stretched all the way from Southeast Asia to Europe. Genghis Khan's ruthless Mongol soldiers inspired fear in the Europeans and earned them the name Tatars meaning "people from Hell" (Tartarus).

His grandson, Kublai Khan, founded the Yuan Dynasty, which ruled from 1271 to 1368. During his reign there was a period of religious tolerance and safe travel between the East and West. Trade flourished along the Silk Road and Christianity moved along with it. There were Christians among the Khans' wives and whole villages, and even tribes, became believers. Evidence shows that Christians, especially Nestorian



Christians, evangelised in Mongolia between the 7th and 14th century. But the spread of the gospel message thrived during the Yuan period.

Yet everything that Christendom had gained in Mongolia was to be lost. By the 16th century there were few Christians left. War with the Moslem Mamluks, the Black Plague, infighting and the rise of the Ming Dynasty pushed the Mongol Empire back to its original homeland and scattered khanates. The Silk Road was no longer a safe highway for trade and culture. Buddhism from Tibet became the Mongols favoured religion, often alongside the traditional shamanist beliefs.

International Short-Term Teams

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

Today, over 6 million Mongols live in China, mainly in the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region with some in Xinjiang, Qinghai or other Chinese Provinces. Their families are predominantly Buddhist (55%) and many send a son to the monasteries. According to the Joshua Project only 0.8% are Christian with only 0.4% of these being evangelical Christians. Nearly a quarter of Mongols are non-religious.

The ethnic Mongol population living in Inner Mongolia was decimated in the latter half of last century by syphilis, bubonic plague, high infant mortality, and violence during the cultural revolution. In addition, Han migration into China's Inner Mongolia means that now Mongols comprise only 17% of the population there. Inter-marriage with Han is not uncommon, and children from these marriages are usually registered as Mongol. Inner Mongolia's capital city is Hohhot but only 8.56% of its residents are Mongol. The province's largest city is Baotou.

A relatively new wine industry is developing in the province, and forestry, cashmere, power and steel production are among the key industries.

The Mongol's traditional nomadic lifestyle as herdsmen on the grasslands, living in yurts (round tents), is butting heads with the expanding mining industries. Inner Mongolia has one quarter of the World's coal under its feet. The region is rich in oil, natural gas and rare earth elements. Sadly, many of the rural

villages and herdsmen are having to make way for the open cast mines and water-hungry extraction operations which have lowered the water tables and affected the herdsmen's water supplies.

In recent decades many Mongol herdsmen have been required to settle or urbanise by the government. The rapid transition from rural to city life can generate an identity struggle for these ex nomads who miss the grasslands and their lives farming sheep, goats, Bactrian camels and their iconic Mongolian horses. The younger generation however are becoming accustomed to Wi-Fi, refrigerators and the normal luxuries of city life.

Unlike their neighbours in Outer Mongolia who have changed to the Cyrillic alphabet, the Chinese Mongols have preserved the Mongol script.

A number of Mongolian Bible translations have been undertaken since 1827. Most of these used the word 'Burhan' to refer to God. This has caused some confusion and misunderstanding as it is the same word that they Mongols use for Buddha. Amity Press is currently completing a Bible translation sponsored by the Three Self Church. The Ariun Bible (A 1990 translation by Mongolian Union Bible Society [MUBS] is the most widely used version today. Also of interest is the Mongolian Standard Version, a project of the MUBS, that when completed (scheduled 2026) will be the first translation by Mongolians alone directly from the original languages.

Wikipedia Banned



One of the world's most treasured and visited websites, the online encyclopaedia Wikipedia, is now completely unavailable on the Chinese internet. Back in 2015 the Chinese-language Wikipedia site was blocked, but resourceful Chinese simply accessed it through one of its other language versions. Translation apps are readily available. But in late April 2019 all Wikipedia's language sites disappeared from China's internet.

Wikipedia's immense popularity is expounded by the fact it is written and edited by the online community and freely licensed to all. Any academics, researchers and writers from around the globe are at liberty to contribute. Wikipedia, nicknamed Wiki, constantly evolves. It documents history, events, renowned people and countless other topics.

Five "pillars" regulate the platform. Amongst these are the rules that:

- Content must be from a neutral point of view.
- All articles must strive for verifiable accuracy and cite from reliable, authoritative sources.

For every Wiki article, all previous revisions are listed, including the date and time, the username or IP address of the user who made the change, and an optional edit summary that briefly

describes or explains the change. This built in transparency and community self-policing deter censorship and fake information.

Wikipedia moved from http to the more secure encrypted https in 2015. This effectively removed the option for China's censors to block individual webpages and meant entire websites needed to be barred.

It has been twenty years since China introduced a public security law that made it illegal to access the "foreign internet" without government permission and began to implement the Great Firewall. Now Wikipedia now joins the list of China's banned sites which include Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, Instagram, Pinterest, Reddit, Gmail, Dropbox, LinkedIn, Snapchat and Quora. Since 2014 it seems that any foreign site that becomes too popular in China is likely to be pegged for censorship.

Chinese netizens regularly circumvent the Great Firewall via VPN. According to data from GlobalWebIndex, around 14% (around 100 million) of

China's online population use VPN daily. While VPN itself is not illegal, all Virtual Private Network (VPN) providers must now be government licensed and this includes businesses with their own internal VPN. VPN encrypts and secures data sent over the internet, safeguarding communications and business intelligence. Out of necessity they are tolerated by the government.

Earlier this year, a handful of individuals received warnings or fines for accessing the foreign internet. Anxiety spread among netizens that these cases would set a precedent and that China was moving to more actively enforce its existing 20-year-old law. However, no widespread enforcement has occurred and in reality, this is unlikely. China's Wikipedia, Facebook and Twitter users can breathe easier for the time being.

Unfortunately getting access to a banned app through VPN does not guarantee a user is beyond the reach of China's censors. There are reports of comments and posts being blotted out from foreign Twitter accounts.

Bear in mind that China is a large country with many facets. What is true in one location is not necessarily truth in another. Hong Kong and Macau's internet are not restricted by censorship as on the Mainland. But in the far Western Province of Xinjiang, over a million Uyghur, Kazak and other (mainly Muslim) minority people are reported to have been interned in "re-education" camps in the last two years... and many of these are said to have been detained extrajudicially because they were found with a VPN on their phones or devices.

Christian Brides Trafficked

In April this year an article in the Associated Press drew attention to the plight of young Christian girls from Pakistan's Punjab Region being trafficked as brides to Chinese men. Matchmaking agents especially targeted churches in the region and offered clergy payments to find bridal candidates.

The brokers promised families they would source potential husbands who are well-off Christians and who could provide a better life for their daughters in China. Their offer to arrange a marriage was particularly

enticing to Pakistan's marginalised and impoverished Christian families as there was no dowry to pay, the groom covered the cost of the wedding and the parents were furnished with a payment for their daughter.

After their marriage ceremonies the girls are taken to their new homes in China where they find their new husbands are neither Christian nor well off and that they have been scammed! In addition, some parents claimed they never received the payment they were promised.

PRAYER POINTERS

From Candy Canes to Christ (Part 2)

Pray that Jan will continue to keep safe and grow her ministry to students who so desperately need the hope only Jesus can provide.

Pray that her departure to North America will be smooth and without late problems.

Pray her time at Bible College will establish this special young lady on a pathway to even more opportunity to serve and grow.

Mongols

Pray that the Mongol people will be able to grasp an understanding of the difference between Buddha and Jesus and come to know Him as their Lord and saviour.

Pray that the Mongol people, who have been open to the gospel in the past, will once again seek the Most High God.

Pray that these people, once known as the “People from Hell”, will be given a new name as “People of the Kingdom of Heaven”.

Thank God for the many people who have worked on translating the Bible for the Mongolian people. Pray that the latest translations will be faithful to His Word and will be easily accessible.

Wikipedia Banned

Thank God for that China’s censors have curbed evils such as trafficking and pornography. Pray that it will not be used to cover up corruption.

Praise God that websites like Wikipedia are bringing to light hitherto little-known histories.

Thank God that He uses history to show us how to live for the future. Pray that censorship will not be used to conceal or change His Story, the Word of God.



PRAYER POINTERS

Christian Brides Trafficked

Thank God that the marriage scam has been brought to light and that the Chinese and Pakistan authorities are working to bring the disreputable matchmakers to justice.

Pray for those Christian girls who have been deceived by the scam, who find themselves vulnerable in a foreign land separated from all Christian support. Pray they will be able to hold onto their faith and that they will ultimately bring blessing to their new Chinese family.

Pray that the Father will provide some means of Christian fellowship for them, and that other Chinese Christians will be able to find and reach out to these girls.

"We Need To Do More..."

Praise God for the still open opportunity in Hong Kong to share the Gospel with Mainland visitors – impossible on the other side of the border

Pray for the many volunteers who do this outreach. Keep them safe and may there be much fruit for their faithful effort.

Pray for Annie as she processes all of the April experiences. Pray that we can help as an organisation to make such trips more available to passionate young people.

News from CCSM UK

Give thanks there are many opportunities to serve in China and God is still "on the move"

Pray for Christians in China facing challenges to living out their faith, that they would have wisdom and peace from God in seeking how to respond

Pray for individuals to respond to God's calling to be part of the answer to many needs in China

Pray that we can encourage each other to serve and to encourage those who serve in China to endure day by day



Chinese Church Support Ministries

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



In May a number of Chinese nationals and local Pakistani citizens in Islamabad, Rawalpindi and Lahore were taken into custody by Pakistani law enforcement agencies for alleged fraud, forgery of documents and human trafficking. One of those arrested was a Catholic Priest.

In a Statement by the Spokesperson of the Chinese Embassy in Pakistan, "The Ministry of Public Security of China sent a task force to Pakistan to carry out law enforcement cooperation with the Pakistani side. China will further strengthen cooperation with the law enforcement agencies in Pakistan, effectively combat crime, so as to protect the legitimate rights and interests of the two peoples, and jointly safeguard China-Pakistan friendly relations."

Sadly, for many of these swindled brides, some of whom are pressured by their parents to marry against their will, there is no means of returning to their families. They may find themselves isolated and vulnerable and unable to speak the language. Pakistan's Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) told the BBC that "gangs of Chinese criminals are trafficking Pakistani women in the garb of marriage into the sex trade".

Driving the demand for cross-border marriages is the shortage of women in China stemming from the One Child Policy era and skewed birth rates. Chinese Government Figures show a total of 31.64 million less women than men on China's mainland. But how does this affect those young men of marriageable age? The China Statistical Yearbook 2018 states that young men between 16-19 face a ratio

of 117.7 men to every 100 women. The age group between 20- 24 face a ratio of 110.98/100. Those between 25-29 have a slightly better ratio 104.47 men to every 100 women. These stats clearly indicate that competition is going to get tougher for China's eligible bachelors in the next few years.

Many already look for brides in Vietnam, Laos and North Korea. Pakistan is a relatively new bride market and has sprung up in conjunction with the One Road One Belt Initiative as Chinese migrate to work on infrastructure along the China-Pakistan Corridor.

The male-to-female imbalance is not uniform across all China. Surprisingly, house prices are a factor in affecting ratios. Because men in China are still commonly expected to own a house before asking for a girl's hand in marriage, they may not follow the rush to migrate to the biggest cities, where house prices are inflated. Yet, young women are not bound by the need to provide a house and are freer to migrate. It is not unheard of to find bachelor villages in rural China without any young women.

"We Need To Do More..."

...says 12 year old Intercession Team Member.

Annie joined a recent CCSM Intercession Team into Hong Kong and South China. At 12 years of age – possibly our youngest ever full team member, she and her Mum (originally from Mainland China) are already planning their next trip!



In Hong Kong, the team joined with a partner organisation doing street outreach. The target audience are Mainland Chinese who come across the border for a day's shopping.

Every week the Outreach Team give out thousands of gift bags containing “encouraging information”! A large team of volunteers back at the office packs these bags – typically 10,000 a week!

There is a well proven follow up plan in place so that anyone who wants to know more will be contacted when they get back home.

Annie said she was exhausted at the end of the day having herself shared with hundreds. But she was stunned to learn that many of the volunteers are out on the street 5 days a week! Always smiling. Always showing Christ's love with every word and gesture. She said, “I feel that what we are doing back at home is just not good enough when we see these dedicated, humble workers – such an inspiration to us. We need to do more”



Travelling across the border into South China was another new world to Annie. Lots of different food including fried tarantulas and scorpions. She tried them both!

A visit to an official Three Self Church was interesting – she had never been in a traditional church with hymn books and pews! She felt blessed that her church back home seemed so much more friendly and lively!

The cultural difference was even more obvious in a Minority Village where the team spent some time. Annie wasn't so keen on the "oil soup" but, she said, "the baked rice tasted like Krispies!"

They got to pray a lot for the villagers, enjoyed their cultural performances and visited some families where they had the chance to either encourage the believers or talk about their faith to those not yet followers. They were excited that as they were leaving, and after a time of prayer, one young villager gave her heart to Jesus.

Before heading back to Hong Kong for debriefing and the flight home, the team

had a chance to do some sightseeing. This included a bamboo raft trip down a famous river. Annie spoke about one of the team members, who while waiting for food at the terminal, was seen talking with the stall owner. She was quietly sharing the Gospel. Annie told her how impressed she was, but she replied, "that's what we are meant to do".

Annie and her Mum would like to see more opportunity for young people to take part in teams like this as a family. They are already speaking to their church to see if they can make this happen next year.

News from CCSM UK



As
I write
this I have
been back home
just under a week since
I was travelling around China.

I had the privilege of visiting the workers we have in China, to catch up on how they are, to understand the situations they are in and to try and encourage them as they serve in many different ways. Most of them are aware that there is more surveillance in China, most know of others who have had to leave the country and know of Chinese Christians who are facing challenges because of their faith.

However there are still opportunities

to serve in China. I saw a number of different openings for people who will go to China, go and serve. From teaching posts, to helping with home schooling, to helping with established businesses. Plus on short term teams, there is a real need for Chinese – English bilingual nurses.

If you could be the person to help, or know of someone who could, please do get in touch.

Despite the challenges and doors that have closed, other doors remain open. We can and should stand together in prayer for God to transform China, person by person. Where we have gifts we can offer, we should offer them first to God, who will use them as he knows best.



The passage below is a reminder that in serving we need endurance, to keep on in hard times and easy times. It also reminds us to encourage one another as we receive encouragement from the Scriptures. Especially as in the UK we have free access to the Bible and face no restrictions on reading it, we should be all the more keen to read the Word, to

meditate on it and share what we learn.

As always, if I can come and share in your church or gathering let me know.

Finally if you are going to New Wine, come and see our stand and hear the seminar I am giving in Week One.

"For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope. May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God."

[Romans 15: 4-7]



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